



# SOPHIE PEMBERTON

Life & Work

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# BIOGRAPHY

Sophia (Sophie) Pemberton (1869–1959), born in Victoria, B.C., determined to be a professional artist—a career not easily accomplished by women at the time. She studied in respected art schools in London and Paris, exhibited widely, received commissions, and sold well. She made a noteworthy contribution to Canadian art, first with fine realist portraits and figure studies and later with landscapes that hint at Impressionism and modernism. Following her marriage, she continued her practice, becoming an associate of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in 1906. By 1918 a series of debilitating illnesses and family tragedies overwhelmed her, curtailing her art production. During her last three decades, with failing eyesight,



she turned to domestic decorative art. Although she lived in England for half her life, she always kept in close contact with her family in Canada.

#### A PRIVILEGED FAMILY LIFE

Sophia (Sophie) Theresa, the second child of Irishman Joseph Despard Pemberton (1821–1893) and his English wife, Theresa Jane Despard Grautoff (1842–1916), was born on February 15, 1869, in Victoria, Vancouver Island.<sup>1</sup> Her father had come to the colony as a surveyor for the Hudson’s Bay Company and, after British Columbia became a province in 1871, he entered politics, served as a justice of the peace, and developed successful investments in corporations and real estate. Sophie and her siblings—Ada, Fred, Susie, Joe, and Will—grew up in a closely knit family at Gonzales, a large acreage in the Oak Bay area.



LEFT: Teenage Sophie Pemberton poses in a photographer’s studio, c.1885, photograph by J. Berryman. RIGHT: The Pemberton family home, Gonzales, in Victoria, 1890s, photographer unknown.

The Pembertons frequently travelled to England for business and to visit family. The children appreciated their extended family, loved travel, and adapted well to new circumstances—all attributes that benefited Pemberton later in life and gave her confidence.



Sophie Pemberton, *View from Gonzales*, 1882, watercolour on wove paper, support: 26 x 34 cm; image: 15.2 x 33.5 cm, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

Early on, Sophie seems to have had rudimentary art lessons. A certificate from the Reformed Episcopal School pasted into her scrapbook (her Glory Book) documents an “honourable mention” in painting.<sup>2</sup> Her first-known landscapes



date from 1882. Two detailed watercolours, *Fire in the Forest* and *View from Gonzales*, made her, at thirteen, the youngest contributor to "A Souvenir of Victoria" album of watercolours, sketches, and photographs presented to Princess Louise when the viceregal couple visited that year.<sup>3</sup> She sketched other scenes in watercolour or pencil while visiting in the Cowichan Bay and Shawnigan Lake areas just north of Victoria or in the Fraser Valley on the mainland. Working *en plein air* was an acceptable pastime for amateur artists, and several friends, including her neighbour Josephine Crease (1864-1947) and Theresa Wylde (1870-1949), also sketched outdoors, as did Emily Carr (1871-1945).<sup>4</sup>

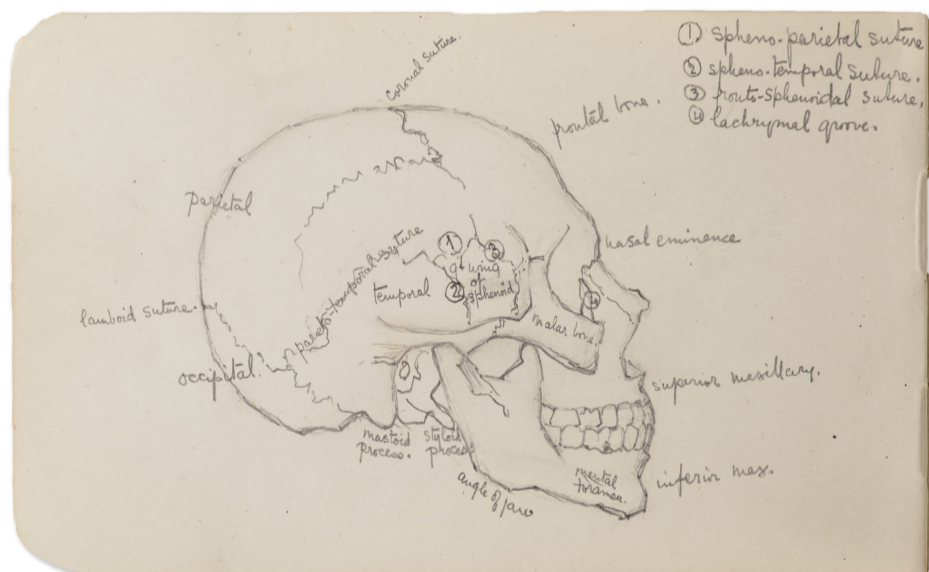
When Pemberton was fifteen, she and Ada began boarding at a small academy for girls in Brighton, England, and stayed for nearly three years, leaving at term's end in April 1887.<sup>5</sup> While they were there, they must have had art classes: Sophie was photographed sitting at an easel and an aunt referred to her work in a letter: "I am sorry Sophie has not commenced oil painting... as it takes some time & experience to do much."<sup>6</sup> Soon after, the siblings returned to Victoria.

#### ART TRAINING IN LONDON

In early 1889 Pemberton, her sister Susie, and their mother returned to England, where Pemberton registered for her first formal art training. Many London academies specialized in classes for "ladies who wish to have the moderate talent which they possess trained so as to be a source of interest and amusement to them,"<sup>7</sup> but Pemberton did not want to be classified as "a dabbler." Instead, she chose a serious school run by portrait artist Arthur Cope (1857-1940) in South Kensington. She studied there for just over a year, following the traditional

academic art program of anatomy classes and drawing plaster casts from ancient sculptures and then live models in pencil or charcoal.

When Pemberton returned to Victoria in October 1890, she continued to paint in her studio at Gonzales, sometimes with Josephine Crease, who would soon leave for art school in England. Her earliest extant British Columbia oil landscape, *Cowichan Valley*, 1891, is a pleasing but unsophisticated rural scene. For Pemberton, Victoria represented only an interlude in her studies, but she was dependent on her parents' permission and financial support.



Sophie Pemberton, *Anatomical Practise*, Cope's School, 1889-90, from Pemberton's *Glory Book*, c.1904-40, pencil on paper, approx. 10 x 15 cm, private collection.





Sophie Pemberton, *Cowichan Valley*, 1891, oil on canvas, 48.4 x 38.2 cm, Vancouver Art Gallery.

In late April 1892 Pemberton returned to London with her parents. She convinced them to allow her to remain in London and register at the Clapham School of Art for September. She agreed to live with relatives who resided nearby and receive an allowance from a businessman who knew her father. As he explained: "The object of her pressing to remain in London when Wife & I returned was as I understood to work at art to become if possible an ARA



[associate of the Royal Academy]... she ought to lose no time & omit no effort at the Studio to accomplish so desirable a result."<sup>8</sup> Though laudable to have this support, it was unrealistic for women to try to gain this status. Despite increasing numbers of women exhibiting at the Royal Academy of Arts, none were elected as associates until 1922.

Pemberton studied at the Clapham School for about eight months, again following the academic program but also taking a woodworking class.<sup>9</sup> A series of clever informal drawings in her sketchbook depict her teachers and some of the models and fellow students. She worked hard to produce a mass of sketches and canvases and regularly sent works home. Her parents, though proud of her output, entreated her not to overwork even as they remained supportive.<sup>10</sup> "The packet of 8 glorious paintings arrived all OK yesterday. Every care will be taken of them."<sup>11</sup>

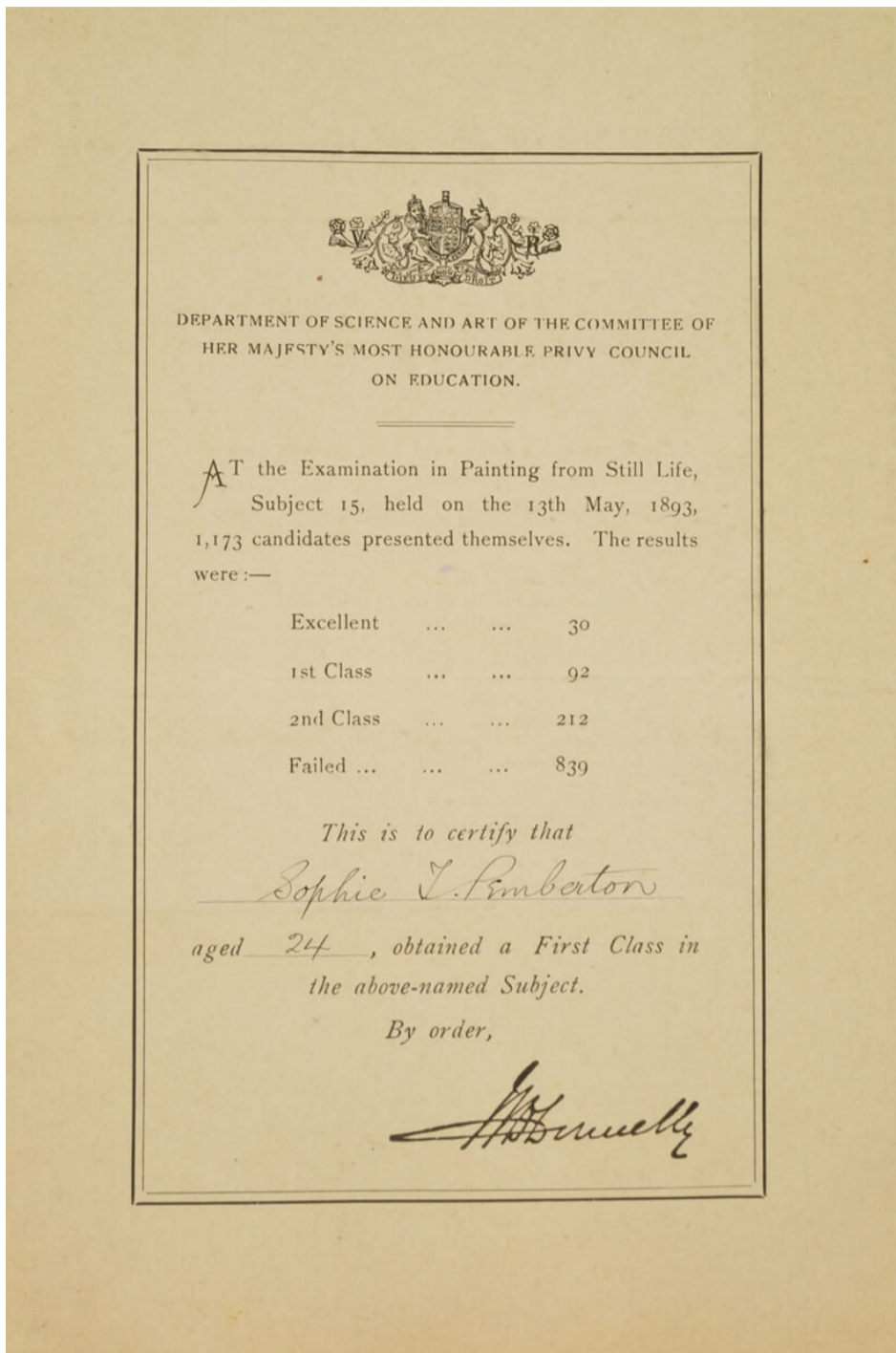


LEFT: Sophie Pemberton, *Miss Hallett*, 1892/93, pencil on paper, approx. 13 x 10 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Lucy Martineau*, 1892-94, pencil on paper, 12.7 x 8.9 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

In May 1893 Pemberton sat for the government-regulated exams set by the South Kensington Schools of Art, which oversaw a syllabus delivered in institutions across the United Kingdom.<sup>12</sup> In two of the three categories she entered, she was one of over a thousand applicants. When the results were announced, she was awarded first-class designations in each of "Drawing from the Antique (May 10), Drawing from the Life Subject (May 11), and Painting from Still Life (May 13)," ranking her in the top 10 percent in each one.<sup>13</sup>

With excellent examination results to introduce her, Pemberton and her father discussed options for switching schools, but he left the decision to her: "Decide on the Studio which will be best for your advancement," he wrote. "Let the difference in price be no consideration, it is not much & sometimes, a higher rate is a decided advantage as regards the class of students who will be your companions for months together."<sup>14</sup>

In the end, Pemberton selected the Westminster School of Art, beginning in September 1893<sup>15</sup> and living at the nearby Alexandra House.<sup>16</sup> "Secure the best rooms to be had independent of cost," her father advised.<sup>17</sup> Her instructor, the portrait and genre painter William Mouat Loudan (1868-1925), was considered to be a favourable teacher.<sup>18</sup> One particularly fine charcoal portrait, *Life drawing of a male*, 1893, survives from this time.



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton's certificate indicating First Class Honours, 1893, from Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40, private collection.  
RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Drawing full length figure*, 1893, charcoal on paper, 64 x 20 cm, private collection.

All might have proceeded positively in such a stimulating environment, but on November 11, 1893, Joseph Pemberton died instantly of a heart attack. Pemberton was heartbroken and, within a few weeks, developed strange physical symptoms including partial "paralysis" in the lower limbs and general weakness. Perhaps it was the first of many episodes of psychosomatic illness she would experience throughout her life when under stress.

There is little detail regarding her art studies during this difficult time, but in March 1894 her mother and sisters arrived and, at term's end, they all went to Italy for six weeks, returning to London via Paris. "We stayed a week [in Paris] as Ada wanted to see a little of the place & it was hard to tear Sophie away from the paintings," her mother wrote.<sup>19</sup> Pemberton's physical and emotional state was still precarious, and she agreed to return home with her family.



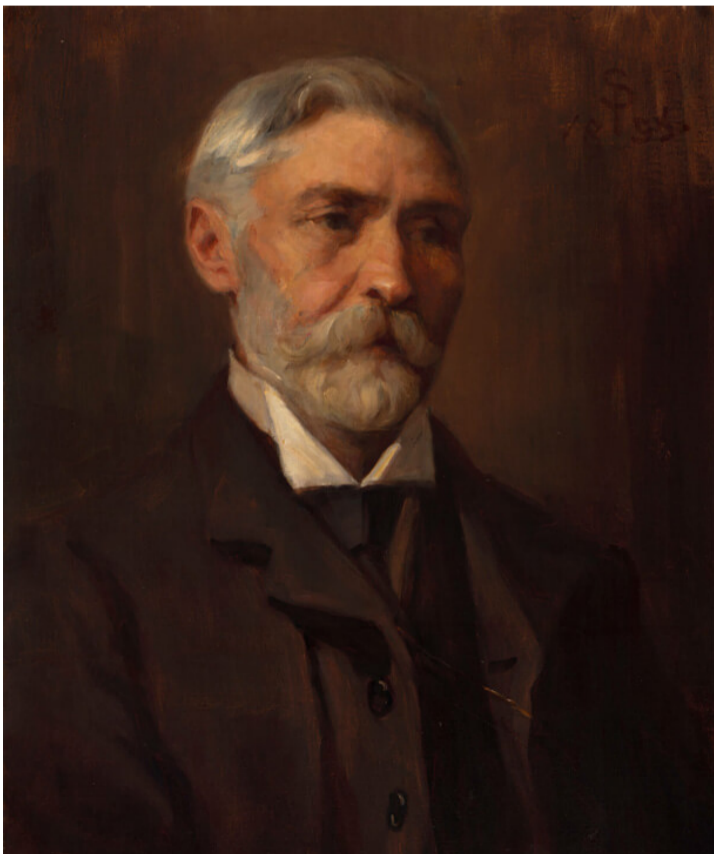
### BECOMING PROFESSIONAL

Pemberton returned to Victoria in time for Christmas. She seemed to rally and resumed her art practice, painting two major series of botanical drawings in watercolour that she presented as gifts to her siblings Fred and Ada. In early January Josephine Crease "saw Sophie and had a chat in the studio,"<sup>20</sup> and a few weeks later Pemberton invited friends and neighbours to see the paintings she had shipped home. This networking reminded Victoria residents of the talented artist in their midst and resulted in at least four commissions to paint portraits.<sup>21</sup>



Sophie Pemberton's studio at Gonzales as maintained by her parents, who dutifully stored the sketches and canvases she sent home from England, c.1893, from Pemberton's *Glory Book*, c.1904-40, photographer unknown.

In London, Pemberton had met the English artist Fanny Grace Plimsoll (1841-1918), who lived part time in Montreal and exhibited there. It may have been this connection that prompted her to submit, from Victoria, two oil portraits from her overseas oeuvre to the Art Association of Montreal (AAM) show in March 1895—in all probability her first major exhibition. At the time, the AAM held considerable prestige and was a significant venue for Canadian artists. *Sweet Seventeen* and *A Normandy Peasant* (dates unknown) were available for sale at \$25 each.<sup>22</sup>



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton, *Benjamin William Pearse*, 1895, oil on canvas, 60.4 x 50.2 cm, Royal BC Museum, Victoria. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Theresa Pemberton*, 1895, oil on canvas, 60.9 x 51.4 cm, Royal BC Museum, Victoria.

These initiatives indicate that Pemberton was back on track in her commitment to her chosen profession. She considered herself a practising artist and began to make arrangements for her return to London. Fortunately, her father had been prescient in his estate planning and had provided that his three daughters, on reaching the age of twenty-one, should each receive \$1,000 per annum to “advance” them in “art, literature or music, or for the purpose of foreign travel.”<sup>23</sup> This clause gave Pemberton the financial freedom to pursue her dreams and to be geographically distant from social expectations back home.

Emily Carr, in contrast, after three years at art school in San Francisco, was in Victoria teaching children and saving for her own London lessons. Her 1895 ink sketches of scenes around Victoria indicate she probably participated in some of the group jaunts organized by Josephine Crease, but there is no record of Carr socializing with Pemberton at this time. A few years later, in England, Carr wrote that she “had not seen Sophie yet.”<sup>24</sup>

In August 1895 Pemberton travelled with a friend by rail across Canada and then to New York, where she boarded the *Umbria* bound for Liverpool. The connections she had from her London art schools proved to be durable and strategic and, by November, she had moved into “artistic cloisters.”<sup>25</sup> Over the next eight years, while living in the stimulating artistic environment of Chelsea and Kensington, she visited renowned galleries and exhibitions, established a social network of English, Irish, Swedish, and Canadian artists, and enjoyed one of the most productive phases of her career.

Pemberton moved into #3 Stanley Studios, Park Walk, Chelsea. By having a studio, she presented herself as a serious artist, and she listed this address in London directories and in exhibitions until 1903.<sup>26</sup> Independent living and the culture of the studio world soon became a liberating tonic for her as her colleagues influenced her career as well as her social views. In 1897, for example, women rented six of the eight studios in the building, and they all exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts. The Swedish expatriate Anna Nordgren (1847–1916), who lived in Studio #4, had founded London’s feminist

91 Art Club as a space where women artists could meet and exhibit. In 1896 she and Pemberton travelled to Normandy and Brittany to paint and, the following year, attended women’s suffrage meetings in London.<sup>27</sup> Two Canadians from Ontario also lived close by: Sydney Strickland Tully (1860–1911) in Studio #7, and Florence Carlyle (1864–1923), fresh from Paris, in Chelsea. Tully and

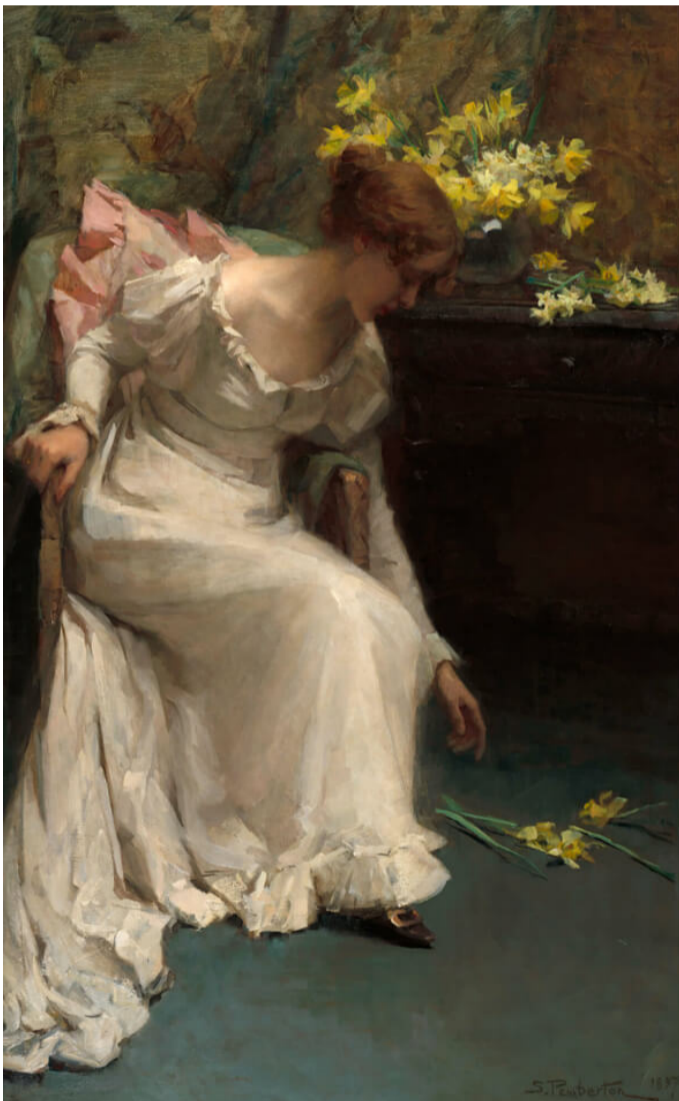


Sophie Pemberton's #3 Stanley Studios in London, c.1896, from Pemberton's *Glory Book*, c.1904–40, photographer unknown.



Pemberton sometimes shared models, such as the older woman seen in a photograph of Pemberton's studio. Pemberton's known 1896 London exhibitions include the 91 Art Club at Clifford's Gallery and the Artists' Guild at the Albert Hall.

Pemberton also showed her paintings in Liverpool, Brighton, and Birmingham. She celebrated her first big break when the Royal Academy of Arts accepted *Daffodils*, 1897, a large oil painted exquisitely in the academic realism style, for its annual London summer exhibition. While travelling with family to Italy that autumn and winter, Pemberton let her studio to the Irish artist Constance Gore-Booth (1868-1927), who had previously worked at the Slade School of Fine Art and was a staunch ally of Nordgren in feminist causes. When Pemberton was in Ireland in the summer of 1897, she visited Gore-Booth at her family estate, Lissadell. It seems that she painted *Little Boy Blue*, 1897, while in Ireland.



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton, *Daffodils*, 1897, oil on canvas, 162.6 x 103.2 cm, Royal BC Museum, Victoria. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Little Boy Blue*, 1897, oil on canvas, 76 x 50.5 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

In 1898 Pemberton repeated her winning combination: strong showings at exhibitions in London and other major English cities as well as her second acceptance by the Royal Academy of Arts. The *Lady's Pictorial* reported: "Miss Sophie Pemberton shows French influence in 'Little Boy Blue' in which the colour is nicely felt; the modelling of the head is good, and the flesh tones are soft and pure."<sup>28</sup>



### PARIS AND THE PRIX JULIAN

In late summer 1898 Pemberton applied to the Académie Julian, established by Rodolphe Julian (1839–1907) and one of the city's most renowned private art schools. It had a solid reputation as an academy where women, though in separate studios, could compete equally with men for recognition.<sup>29</sup> The training there in academic realism might also have been infused with modern influences including Impressionism. Instructors were freed from formulaic teachings, and many, rather than advocating one style over another, allowed the students to follow their own inclinations.

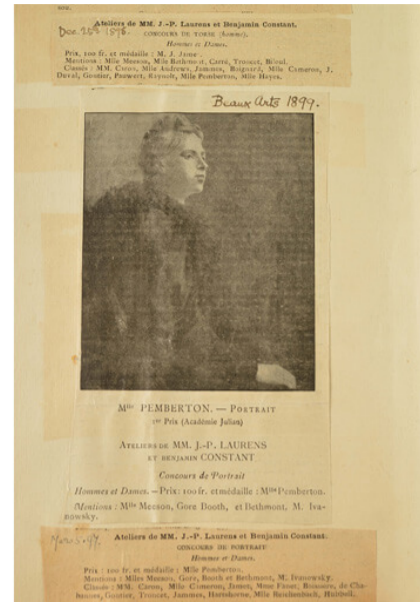
Pemberton arranged accommodation in a furnished apartment on the Left Bank<sup>30</sup> and registered at the women's studios at 5, rue de Berri—one of the ateliers where the well-known academicians J.P. Laurens (1838–1921) and Benjamin Constant (1845–1902) taught. Pemberton studied at Académie Julian for almost two years and, in 1899, she briefly took an evening class with the American artist James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903). By November 1898 her figure studies began to be recognized in monthly *concours* among the students in the atelier and within the wider school.<sup>31</sup>

Three months later, Pemberton shot to prominence when she won the Prix Julian, the medal (along with 100 francs) awarded for the best portrait by a student from the ateliers of Laurens and Constant.<sup>32</sup> Reported in the magazine *Beaux Arts*, it was a significant honour in its time—especially for a woman, because this category was open to both men and women.<sup>33</sup> Julian himself explained, "All the students compete together, and the examining professors are not told either the name or the sex of the competitors till the results are declared. It is astonishing... how often women have the best of it in these trials. Especially is this true of portraiture, which is generally supposed to be more or less a man's specialty."<sup>34</sup> In 1900, when Pemberton again competed against about one hundred other students, "the Julian Smith Foundation Prize of Chicago, worth three hundred francs, [was] awarded on equal footing to Miss Pemberton and to Mr. Edgar Muller."<sup>35</sup>



Sophie Pemberton (right) with classmates Bertha Creegan and Jenny Fontaine at the Académie Julian in Paris, 1899, photographer unknown.

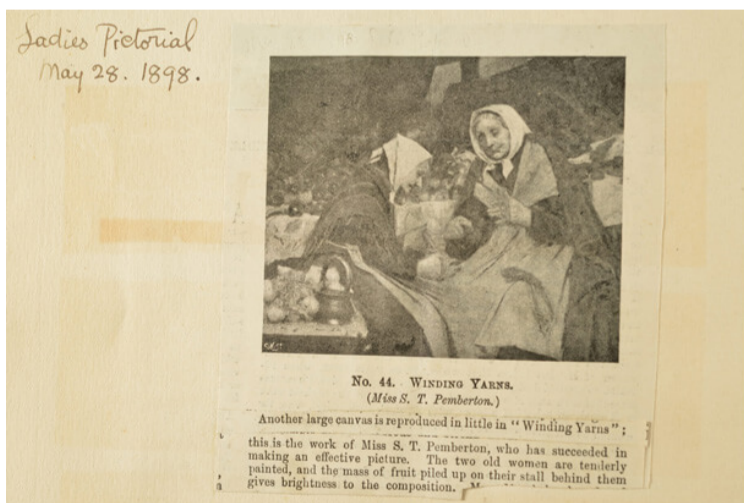




LEFT: Sophie Pemberton (in the foreground to the right) at the announcement of her winning the Prix Julian, 1899, photographer unknown. RIGHT: *Beaux Arts Magazine* clippings announcing Sophie Pemberton as the winner of the Prix Julian medal for the Best Studio Portrait, 1899, from Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40, private collection.

During these two years, Pemberton again exhibited widely, though she was disappointed when a major canvas, *Winding Yarns*, 1898, was not accepted for the Royal Academy of Arts. It did the rounds of provincial exhibitions to great success, however, and seems to have sold. Her portrait *Bibi la Purée*, 1900, debuted in Paris, and she submitted two works to the Women's International Exhibition in London. A large oil, *Tarring Ropes*, 1899/1900, a genre scene of two Cornish fishermen, appeared in the Canadian section of the Exposition Universelle in Paris.<sup>36</sup> During class breaks, she travelled to her London studio, where she stored her canvases and performed the arduous task of preparing them for transport to exhibitions in England and Canada.

In late May 1900, after an absence of five successful years, Pemberton returned to Victoria.



LEFT: Press clippings of the now-lost painting *Winding Yarns* by Sophie Pemberton, first exhibited at the 91 Art Club in London, 1898, from Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40, private collection. RIGHT: Photograph of *Tarring Ropes* by Sophie Pemberton, 1899/1900, from Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40, private collection.

### CANADIAN SOJOURN AND EUROPEAN TRAVELS

Originally Pemberton intended to stay in Victoria over the summer months, but she soon found herself drawn into the social scene in her hometown. Her mother assumed that society and family took priority over art, and invitations to



teas, dinners, and boating parties absorbed her time. Despite the tension, she carved out sufficient time to prepare a major canvas for exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1901. The large oil *Interested*, 1900, depicts two young Victoria women reading together. Later, retitled as *Un Livre Ouvert*, she dispatched it to France for the 1903 Paris Salon.

As the months passed, her old unexplained malady—ongoing weakness in her legs—returned and she spent the first few months of 1901 in a California medical sanatorium. She resumed her artistic production soon after her return, sketching models, completing oils and watercolours *en plein air*, conducting classes for local amateurs, and painting major canvases such as *Spring*, 1902. In early January 1902 she advertised her professional status by exhibiting her new works at Waitt's Hall. The *British Colonist* commented:



Sophie Pemberton painting *en plein air* in Victoria, possibly spring 1902, photographer unknown.

She intends returning to Europe at an early day and has very kindly placed some of her pictures on exhibition.... To be able to see pictures of such merit is an advantage.... [including] her two latest important works, "John-o-Dreams," and "The Twilight of the Lilies." These pictures will be submitted to the Royal Academy and the Paris Salon.<sup>37</sup>

In autumn 1902 Pemberton returned to her studio in England and then to France, where she visited her mentor and friend Amélie Beaury-Saurel (1849–1924), the wife of Rodolphe Julian, a strong feminist, and a successful portrait painter. In December, with fellow Canadian and Académie Julian friend Lillie Cameron (1873–1958), she left for five months in Italy, living in Rome and Florence, painting, learning Italian, and absorbing the legacy of Renaissance art. She was also strategizing about her future—whether to stay in Paris for the winter or, as she wrote to her friend Flora Burns in Victoria, to try "in London again & see if I can get portraits to do."<sup>38</sup> But again, the physical troubles resurfaced, and she was bedridden.





Sophie Pemberton, *Dieppe Farmyard*, 1903, oil on canvas, 47 x 64.5 cm, private collection.

No sooner had Pemberton returned to London than her mother and sisters arrived and whisked her off first to Normandy. She took her bicycle "Susannah," so she could disappear with her portable easel, stool, and art kit to paint outdoors. She particularly enjoyed recording the topsy-turvy architecture in Caudebec-en-Caux before they left for the winter in Italy.

While there, Pemberton managed complicated arrangements to transport paintings stored in her London studio to several exhibitions, meeting all the deadlines: *John O'Dreams*, 1901, submitted to the Royal Academy of Arts; *Un Livre Ouvert*, 1900, to the Paris Salon; and others to Manchester and Newcastle. On her return to London in May, between specialist medical appointments, she networked. As she explained to her friend: "Went by appointment to see Lord Strathcona [Sir Donald Smith, the Canadian high commissioner]; this is a secret as Mother would have wanted to



LEFT: A corner of Sophie Pemberton's Stanley Studio, with paintings including Pemberton's *Bibi la Purée*, 1900, from Pemberton's *Glory Book*, c.1904-40, photographer unknown. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton in her Gonzales studio after her return from France, 1901, photographer unknown.



accompany me & say pretty things... he is coming to the studio with his wife & daughter some day."<sup>39</sup>

Again in 1904 from Italy, she organized for *Bibi la Purée*, 1900, to go to the Royal Academy of Arts and for *Un Livre Ouvert*, 1900, to travel to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (her debut there). From that exhibition, the academicians chose it to be part of the Canadian contingent to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904.

By mid-1904 Pemberton had left #3 in Stanley Studios. Once again she appears to have been at the whim of her family's schedules, and it became more difficult for her to maintain her earlier ambitions. Little is known about her specific success in selling her art, although, judging by the many exhibited titles listed for sale whose whereabouts remain unknown, she must have enjoyed good sales.

In June 1904, Pemberton capitulated to pressures and returned to Victoria, bringing with her almost all the paintings from her studio. That autumn, thirty of these paintings were exhibited at the Provincial Agricultural Exhibition, followed by a solo show, *The Pemberton Pictures*, in Vancouver. The canvases and watercolours showed the depth and breadth of her work in England, Italy, and France. She also completed a commissioned portrait of Dolly, the daughter of Harold Mortimer-Lamb (1872-1970), whom she met when he judged the art works at the fair. They kept in touch over the decades, and he photographed her and purchased more of her paintings.<sup>40</sup>



Sophie Pemberton, *Portrait of Dolly Mortimer-Lamb*, 1904, oil on canvas, 51 x 40.5 cm, Vancouver Art Gallery.



### MARRIAGE AND A TURN TO LANDSCAPE

Pemberton soon became reacquainted with Canon Arthur Beanlands of Christ Church Cathedral. A recent widower, Beanlands, twelve years her senior, had presented a series of art lectures at Gonzales in 1895 and seemed to be an enthusiastic supporter of the arts.<sup>41</sup>

Pemberton, now thirty-five and removed from her independent life and artistic support network in

London and Paris, was again living

at home with her mother, who was becoming more difficult to appease. Plagued by recurring physical ailments, she felt considerable social pressure to conform to expectations: "Mother does not seem very wishful to have me home," she wrote to her friend.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps marriage with a congenial, well-read, and sympathetic arts lover who would support her art practice was the solution. Beanlands had four children between the ages of seven and seventeen, and the three older girls would soon reach adulthood. Only the youngest, Paul, would benefit from mothering—and this child stole her heart.



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton (left) and the small boy who stole her heart, Paul Beanlands, 1905, photographer unknown. RIGHT: The wedding of Canon Arthur John Beanlands and Sophie Pemberton, 1905, photographer unknown.

On September 11, 1905, Pemberton married Canon Beanlands—and her life and path as an independent artist dramatically shifted. Initially she had her own studio in the rectory, but within months it became a space where Beanlands and the children came and went. She was not deterred, however. She turned her hand briefly to journalism and published two articles on models she had known.<sup>43</sup> Over the next two years she continued to paint and received several portrait commissions, including one for her neighbour Lady Crease, whose daughter Josephine continued to be active in the local arts scene, and for prominent people such as Lieutenant Governor Henri Joly de Lotbinière.<sup>44</sup> She successfully applied to be an associate of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts,<sup>45</sup> where she exhibited in 1907, but she sent no paintings abroad.

As she tailored her work to the opportunities available, Pemberton moved away from portraiture to focus on landscape, as she had in 1903 in Brittany. Trips up-island with friends offered opportunities to paint outdoors, and she appreciated the variety of scenery available around Victoria. Her time in England had exposed her to more recent art styles, so she was a few years ahead of Emily Carr, who would not understand this "fresh seeing" until she too studied in France from 1910 to 1911. Meanwhile, she and Carr supported the newly formed British Columbia Society of Fine Arts in Vancouver and Victoria's Royal Jubilee Hospital, for which they each designed "charming posters... which will afterwards be framed and used to adorn the play room in the children's ward."<sup>46</sup>



Sophie Pemberton, *Henri Joly de Lotbinière*, 1906, oil on canvas, 118.1 x 75.9 cm, Royal BC Museum, Victoria.





Sophie Pemberton, *View over Victoria*, c.1902, watercolour on paper, 15.8 x 38 cm, Royal BC Museum, Victoria.

Pemberton decided to present in a solo exhibition of British Columbia paintings at the respected Doré Gallery in London—and booked the space for May and June 1909. In preparation, she painted *Mosquito Island*, 1907, over a few days while visiting friends; *Macauley Plains*, 1907/08, overlooking the Strait of Juan de Fuca; and other works. She experimented also with form, creating *Time and Eternity*, 1908, which focused more on personal expression than on the landscape.

It is remarkable that, despite two lengthy hospitalizations in early 1908, she kept on track.<sup>47</sup> In August 1908 the Beanlands held two “at home” afternoons where she displayed thirty-eight recently completed landscapes—a “charming collection of pictures,” in the words of the *Daily Colonist*.<sup>48</sup> There she announced her move to London, ostensibly for preparation for the exhibition. In fact, she packed for a much longer stay and dismantled her studio. It would be eight months before Beanlands joined her.



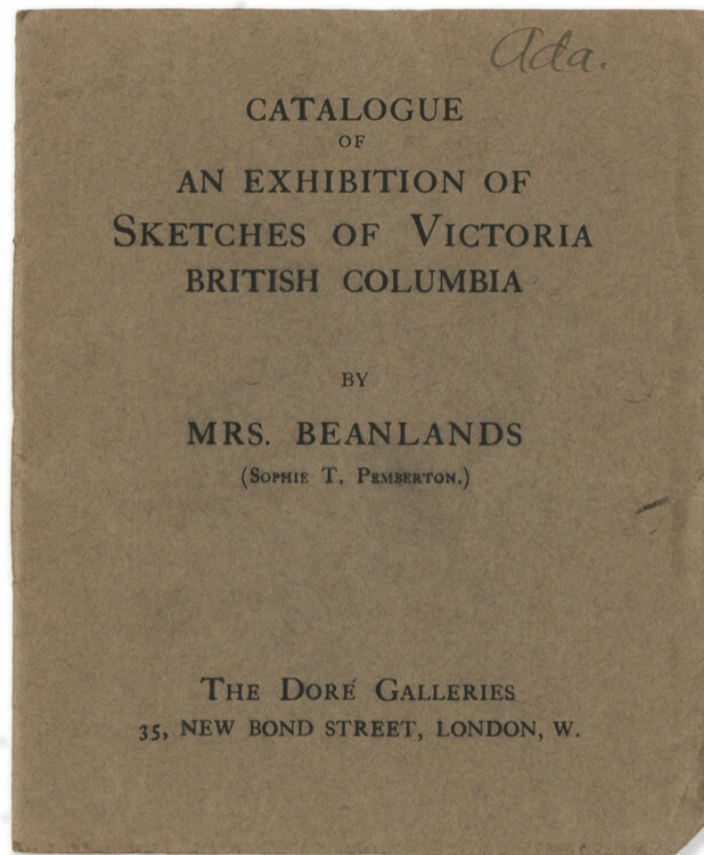
Sophie Pemberton, *Macauley Plains*, 1907/08, oil on canvas, 45 x 75 cm, private collection.

### RETURN TO EUROPE AND FAMILY TRAGEDY

In May 1909 Pemberton mounted *Sketches of Victoria, British Columbia* at the Doré Gallery on New Bond Street. Without revealing specifics, a reviewer reported it was “under very distinguished patronage.”<sup>49</sup> *Studio International* noted: “As a landscape artist she... has developed her own style as a student of nature upon the Pacific Coast, a region of brilliant sunshine and pellucid atmosphere.”<sup>50</sup> “She is an artist of great merit,” wrote the *Daily Express*.<sup>51</sup> With these positive reviews, Pemberton’s exhibition seemed a success, and again, given that the location of most of the works she displayed is now unknown, they



must have sold. Unfortunately, just at that time she was derailed by a family tragedy.



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton (seated) working *en plein air* from the porch at her brother Fred's cottage retreat, named Finnerty's, in Saanich, B.C., 1908, photographer unknown. Pemberton also titled one of her paintings *Finnerty's*, which was included in her 1909 Doré Gallery exhibition. RIGHT: Cover of *Sketches of Victoria British Columbia*, exhibition catalogue for Doré Gallery, London, 1909.

The eldest Beanlands daughter, who was living in Ontario, was badly burned in March and died in June. Beanlands had joined Pemberton in time for the exhibition but was caught on the wrong side of the Atlantic. Grieving, he resigned his post at Christ Church Cathedral and decided to remain in England.

On August 6 Pemberton arrived in Montreal, where she spent a day with Harold Mortimer-Lamb and Laura Muntz (1860-1930). She was heading to Victoria to pack their belongings in the rectory and to fulfill a promise to paint "the angels for mother's chapel"<sup>52</sup>—a decorative mural inside the newly built Pemberton Chapel at the Royal Jubilee Hospital. On her way back to England, she left *A Chelsea Pensioner*, 1903, with Mortimer-Lamb, so he could deliver it for exhibition at both the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts and the Art Association of Montreal.<sup>53</sup>



Sophie Pemberton, *Angels Mural*, 1909, 82.5 x 150.5 cm, Royal Jubilee Hospital, Pemberton Chapel, Victoria.



Once Pemberton returned, the strain in the marriage increased and she spent more time apart from Beanlands, often travelling in Europe. Canadian family members also visited for extended periods. In 1910 she submitted *Memories*, c.1909, to the Royal Academy of Arts and successfully networked for further portrait commissions.<sup>54</sup> Her accomplishments between 1907 and 1910 speak to her discipline and commitment.

In 1912, borrowing money from her family funds, Pemberton purchased Wickhurst Manor overlooking the village of Sevenoaks, Kent. The home's centre was a medieval hall and boasted a seventeenth-century fireplace. Previous owners had restored it well and tended its extensive grounds. The Beanlands moved there in February, and she displayed her canvases on the extensive walls. They participated in local cultural events and, together, became active in the women's suffrage movement. By November Pemberton was a representative for the local branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, and later, in March 1914, on the national council of the Suffrage Service League.<sup>55</sup> But she still kept up with her art. Canvases from these years include a landscape titled *Weald Church, Kent*, 1915, and interiors such as *The Amber Window at Knole*, 1915, which was hung at the exhibition of the Royal Academy in 1916.



Wickhurst Manor in Sevenoaks, Kent, home of Sophie Pemberton and Arthur Beanlands, n.d., photographer unknown.



At that point, further tragedy engulfed the family. Two of her brother Fred's sons, who had often visited Wickhurst Manor, were killed in service during the First World War. In August 1916 Pemberton's other brother Joe died while hiking, followed days later by her mother. The following February the dog-cart Pemberton was driving collided with a lorry, and her head injuries resulted in a long convalescence. Then, in September 1917, Beanlands unexpectedly died. Plagued by debilitating headaches over the next three years, Pemberton struggled as nurses came and went and every remedy proved unproductive. She could no longer read or paint, and, crushingly, in May 1919 her beloved stepson, Paul, was killed in a plane crash.



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton, *Paul*, c.1912, oil on canvas, 52 x 28.3 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, copy of *The Amber Window at Knole*, 1915, mechanical print, 32.7 x 30 cm, private collection.

The friendship of her neighbour Victoria Sackville-West (mother of poet, novelist, and garden designer Vita Sackville-West, who, as Virginia Woolf's friend, was connected to the Bloomsbury Group) proved to be a lifeline, as did a neurological consultation that "cured" her headaches.<sup>56</sup> Lady Sackville-West encouraged Pemberton to use her artist's skills on a small scale by decorating domestic pieces—lampshades, tea trays, glassware—both for herself at Knole House and to sell through her shop, Spealls, in London. Pemberton enjoyed great success with these pieces.



Sophie Pemberton, *Writing desk with hand-painted decoration by artist*, n.d., oil paint with lacquered, gilded, and inlay decorations, 179 x 74.9 x 72.3 cm, Royal BC Museum, Victoria.



### LATE CAREER AND FINAL YEARS IN VICTORIA

In January 1920 Pemberton, at the age of fifty, married Horace Deane-Drummond, a widower fifteen years her senior who had few pretensions about art. With tea estates in Asia, he was well travelled and, in Pemberton's words, "a great gentleman and a keen sportsman."<sup>57</sup> They embarked on a world tour, spending time with his adult children who ran his properties in India and Ceylon and where he hunted big game. Asia was a new experience for Pemberton and, for the first time in years, she sketched—a Hindu temple in Madurai in southern India. "The temple is too wonderful," she wrote. "'Yalis' are these mythological beasts & I have painted the mandapam with them & the shrines & screaming parrots."<sup>58</sup> This realist-style painting is the only known work from her trip. Eventually they arrived in Victoria for an extended stay to meet the family. When Pemberton designed a décor for a new haute couture shop, her "Persian" theme attracted much attention.



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton and husband Horace Deane-Drummond on a fishing adventure in the U.K., c.1920, photographer unknown.  
RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *The Parrot Court, Madurai Temple, India*, 1923, oil on canvas, 56.5 x 72.2 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

In another fortuitous move, Pemberton discussed Emily Carr (whom she had just visited) with Mortimer-Lamb when she saw him in Vancouver in 1921. He then called on Carr, was "greatly impressed" with her art, and told Eric Brown (1877-1939) of the National Gallery of Canada about her, leading to her "discovery."<sup>59</sup>

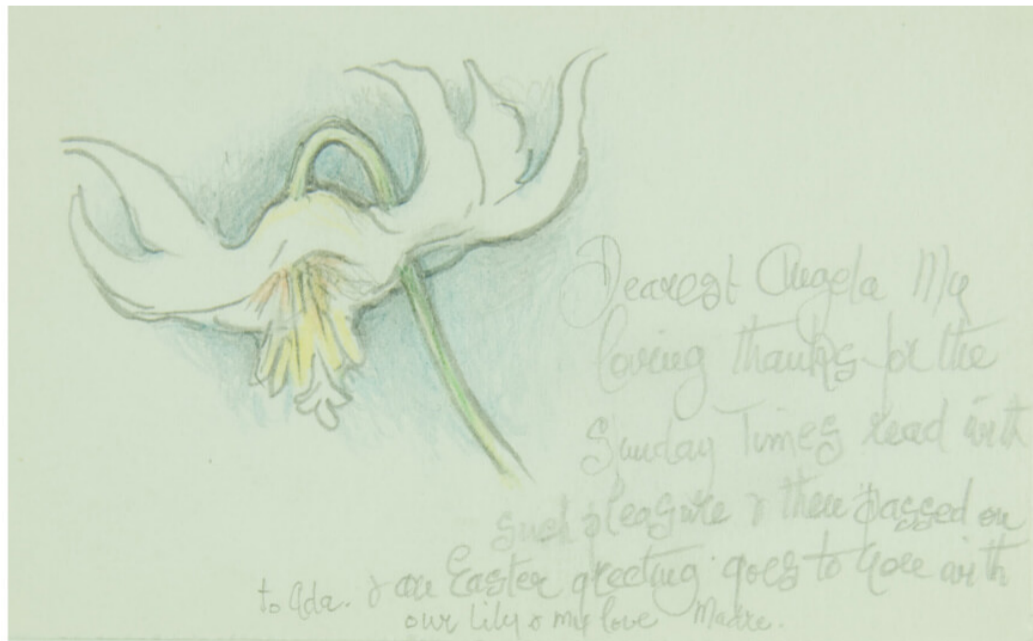


The couple continued their travels, and Pemberton occasionally painted landscapes such as *La Napoule Bay*, 1926, and accepted portrait commissions. In 1930 she was again widowed.<sup>60</sup> After the sale of Wickhurst Manor a few years earlier, they had moved to the Deane-Drummond estate, Boyce Court, in Gloucester. She decided against living there and returned to London, where she took a flat on Priory Walk, close to her old Stanley Studio. She wrote frequently to family and friends in British Columbia, interested in the news from home. During the Second World War, she refused to decamp and survived the Blitz, despite a hit on her house. Failing eyesight limited her to close-up work, but the demand for her painted trays and other small pieces kept her busy.



Sophie Pemberton, *La Napoule Bay*, 1926, oil on board, 28.1 x 35.3 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

In 1949, aware of her own and her sisters' fragile health, Pemberton returned to Victoria, accompanied by her major canvases and favourite furniture. She rented a flat in a genteel Oak Bay building, near the beaches she had explored as a child. Her local reputation was immediately rekindled when the Arts Centre—a small, temporary downtown facility—displayed some of her larger canvases in a successful exhibition that underscored “the crying need for more adequate premises.”<sup>61</sup> A permanent facility opened in 1951, known today as the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton in the rear garden of her London flat, 1947, photographer unknown. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Untitled: Sketch of Lily*, c.1949-54, graphite and coloured pencil on paper, 8.3 x 13.2 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

Pemberton continued to paint small domestic pieces. She was content to go beachcombing for seashells to sketch, along with the flowers in her sister Ada's





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extensive garden. Many of these small coloured-pencil sketches adorn her letters from these years.

In late 1959, after a short illness, Pemberton died. She is buried alongside her parents, with the epigraph "Blessed are the pure in heart" inscribed on the family monument.



Harold Mortimer-Lamb, *Untitled: Portrait of Sophie Pemberton*, 1909, photograph, 23.7 x 18.9 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.





# KEY WORKS

Trained in England and France as a portraitist, Sophie Pemberton embraced the academic realist style, creating images that were accurate reflections of specific individuals. She also painted exquisite and technically difficult figure studies of leisured women as well as genre scenes of people at work. Away from the studio, she broadened her interests and her style, incorporating Impressionist qualities in her landscapes and urban views. In midlife, family tragedies overwhelmed her for a few years and, later, with eyesight failing, she focused on decorative domestic art inspired by Dutch and Flemish painters of mythological birds and detailed floral compositions.



## LIFE DRAWING OF A MALE 1893



Sophie Pemberton, *Life drawing of a male*, 1893  
Charcoal on paper, 61 x 50.8 cm  
Royal BC Museum, Victoria



Sketched in a live model class while Pemberton studied at the Westminster School of Art in London, this head and shoulders work reveals her superior handling of the charcoal medium with fine draftsmanship, shading, conveyance of volume and features, and tonal range. It is one of many works she completed while in art school and demonstrates that, after only a few terms of formal training, she had acquired both technical ability and confidence in her execution. Earlier that year she sat for three South Kensington Schools of Art examinations—life drawing, antique drawing, and still life<sup>1</sup>—and received a first-class designation in each category.

This sketch confirms that she had worked through the earlier phases of study which stipulated that students understand basic physiology and musculature even as they learned to draw. They began using studio props and drawing “in outline from casts of head, hands, feet, and the whole figure... mak[ing] outline drawings of the human skeleton and the anatomical figure, with names ascribed to the bones and muscles.”<sup>2</sup> The drawing master decided when they could progress to the life studio where models—clothed, draped, or undraped—would pose for a set time.



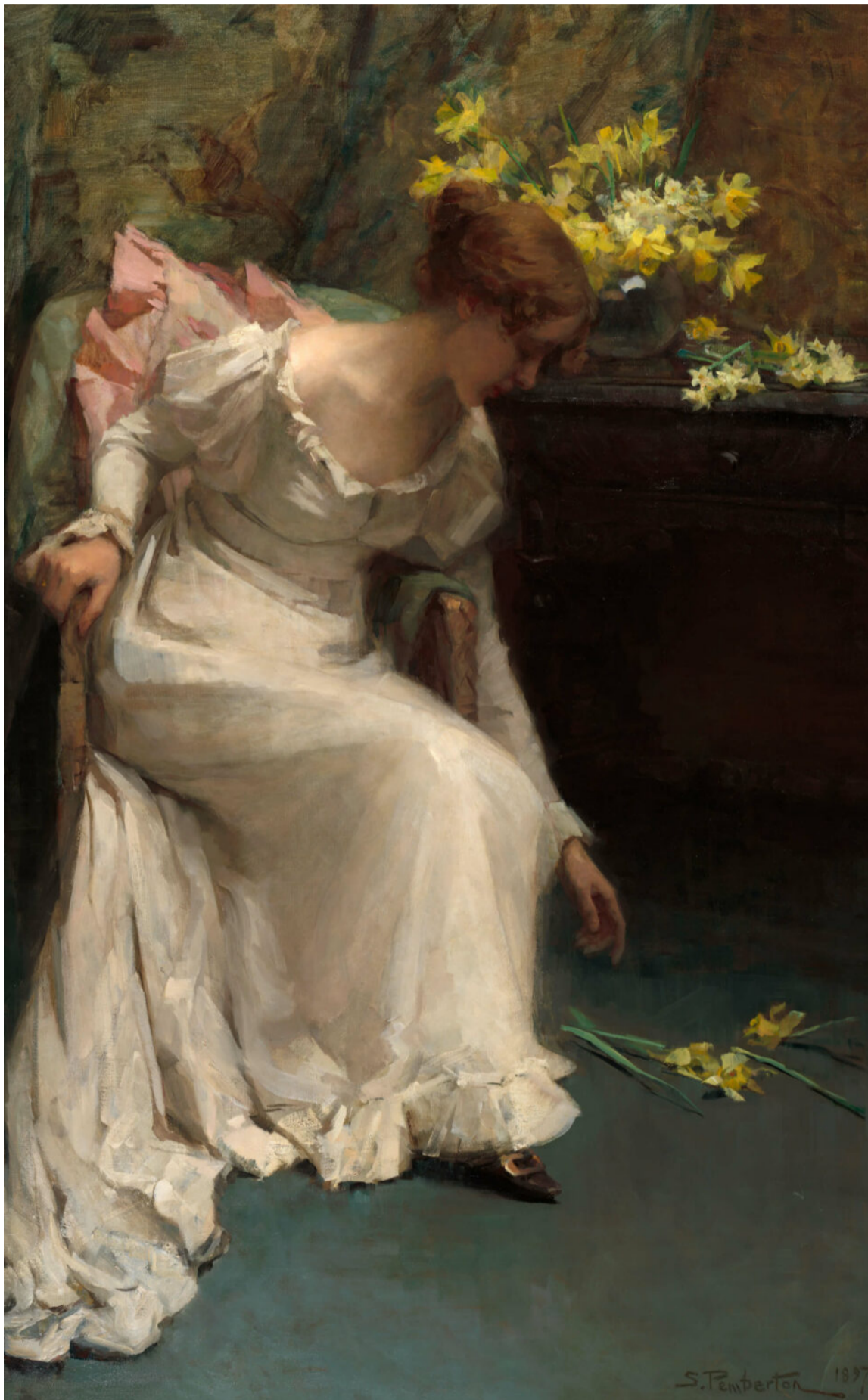
LEFT: Female students at the Académie Julian in Paris, c.1895, photographer unknown.  
RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Full figure male model*, 1898, charcoal on paper, 73 x 46.1 cm, private collection.



When Pemberton enrolled at the Académie Julian in Paris in 1898, she and the other students followed the traditional academic course of instruction, as can be seen in an earlier photograph from a life class with a row of charcoal sketches on the wall. Both male and female clothed models are displayed, but drawing from the nude was also available.



## DAFFODILS 1897



Sophie Pemberton, *Daffodils*, 1897  
Oil on canvas, 162.6 x 103.2 cm  
Royal BC Museum, Victoria



*Daffodils*, Pemberton's first painting to be accepted for exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts, marked a turning point in her art career. It is a life-size, full-length portrait study of a seated woman leaning sideways to retrieve a few flowers that have fallen from the vase behind her. In this technically demanding work, Pemberton demonstrates her mastery of the academic realist style of painting she had learned at the art school run by Arthur Cope (1857-1940). Another inspiration might have been the prominent artist Louise Jopling (1843-1933), whose portraiture included female subjects.<sup>1</sup>

The model twists in her chair, right arm and shoulder facing outward, left arm and torso obliquely turned away, forming a complex version of the classic S curve before the viewer. The dramatic lighting focuses on the blooms even as it accentuates her stance and ripples across the folds in her gown. The highly polished brush strokes are almost invisible. By depicting a moment in time, Pemberton infuses the study with a feeling of intimacy.

*Daffodils* received high praise at the Royal Academy exhibition, where it was placed "on-the-line" at eye level in the coveted Gallery 1. The *Academy Notes* published that year with "illustrations of the principal pictures" included a sketch reproduction of *Daffodils*, one of only eighteen paintings selected from the one hundred oil paintings in that gallery to be reproduced in that format.<sup>2</sup>

The *Chelsea Mail* commented favourably, but, as was typical of much reporting of paintings by female artists, dismissed the subject matter as irrelevant: "A conscientious piece of work, but scarcely worthy, as a subject, of the labour and talent bestowed on it."<sup>3</sup> In contrast, the *Lady's Pictorial* wrote: "A large picture... both unusual and clever. The figure of the seated girl, who stoops to pick up one of the flowers from the floor, is well drawn, and the lines are graceful and pleasing."<sup>4</sup> Pemberton's supportive mother and sisters came over from Canada to see her triumph.

In a very different half-length portrait composition, *A Daffodil*, 1910, Laura Muntz (1860-1930) positions the sitter looking outward to the viewer, clasping a single flower. She paints in the Impressionist style, one that Pemberton partly adopted in subsequent works. Pemberton and Muntz spent a day together in 1909 in Montreal with their mutual friend Harold Mortimer-Lamb (1872-1970), and they may have met earlier in Europe.



LEFT: Louise Jopling, *A Modern Cinderella*, 1875, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 70.8 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Laura Muntz Lyall, *A Daffodil*, 1910, oil on canvas, 66 x 51 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



## LITTLE BOY BLUE 1897



Sophie Pemberton, *Little Boy Blue*, 1897  
Oil on canvas, 76 x 50.5 cm  
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria



This figure study of a young boy wearing a smock-style blue shirt and a leather satchel over his shoulder is disarmingly candid. He pauses on his way across the fields to look directly at the viewer. The painting is important because, for the first time, Pemberton introduced elements of Impressionism into her realist style of portraiture. In comparison with *Daffodils*, 1897, painted the same year, it reveals her versatility as she experiments with broadening her style.

Pemberton may have painted the scene while she visited her friend Constance Gore-Booth (1868–1927) in Ireland during the summer of 1897. The canvas tent, red poppies, and golden grasses around the lad support this supposition, as does the hazy mountain in the distance, possibly Knocknarea, near Sligo, which is visible from Lissadell, the Gore-Booth estate. Other paintings from this trip vary in subject matter, with a focus on cottage interiors. Her style is varied, moving between flat and painterly brush strokes, Impressionistic backgrounds, and splashes of colour on a mixed brush.



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton, *Casimir Markievicz*, 1899, pencil on paper, 24 x 34.8 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Anna Nordgren, *Portrait of a Boy*, n.d., oil on canvas, 64 x 51 cm, National Museum, Stockholm.

Pemberton submitted this painting to the annual exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts, and it was exhibited there in Gallery 9 in 1898. Like *Daffodils*, it was one of the few paintings illustrated in *Academy Notes*. The *Lady's Pictorial* wrote: "Miss Sophie Pemberton shows French influence in 'Little Boy Blue' in which the colour is nicely felt; the modelling of the head is good, and the flesh tones are soft and pure."<sup>1</sup> Later that year it hung at the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, listed with a purchase price of £30. In 1899 Pemberton retitled it for a French audience as *Un retour de l'École* and submitted it successfully to the Paris Salon.<sup>2</sup> Since the mid-twentieth century, it has been exhibited frequently, becoming one of her "signature" pieces.

Pemberton's Swedish friend Anna Nordgren (1847–1916) was well connected in the London art scene and became an important mentor. Her *Portrait of a Boy*, n.d., shows some similarities to Pemberton's study and is also in the Impressionist style. Nordgren's interest in the working classes as subject matter may have influenced Pemberton to move away from her focus on women at leisure.



## BIBI LA PURÉE 1900



Sophie Pemberton, *Bibi la Purée*, 1900  
Oil on canvas, 116.5 x 89 cm  
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria



In this portrait, Bibi la Purée leans forward with an intense gaze, hands crossed, supported by the umbrella he holds. Highly realistic and purposely dark, his face is long with sunken cheeks, yet his eyes are animated and engaged. His receding forehead is illuminated as his body emerges from the shadow, a blue hat almost invisible on his lap, a spotlight on his gnarled hands sporting an incongruous gold ring.

Pemberton first encountered this notorious Parisian, who purportedly looked after the poet Paul Verlaine in 1896 as he lay dying, in the atelier of James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903) in late summer 1899. She even wrote an article about their relationship:

It was at his [Whistler's] evening class that I first saw Bibi la Purée as model; a little old man, smiling and ecstatic, his bright eyes half hidden under a dingy and weather-beaten top hat: his clothes were green with age; his boots were the elastic-sided ones of the last century, and under his arm was a sheaf of old umbrellas... "a dandy even in his rags."<sup>1</sup>

Conceived in the autumn of 1899, nourished by several modelling sessions in which she experimented with variations, and interrupted by her own ill health, Pemberton began to paint the canvas early in 1900. When she finished the portrait, she submitted it to the Paris Salon. "It was hung on the line," she reported, "and was often surrounded by the students, who knew Bibi. I never saw him again. He died soon afterwards—alone and in misery. But his memory will long live in the Latin Quartier and let us hope that an angel has pressed down the scale for his gentle and unknown deeds."<sup>2</sup>



LEFT: Sheet music cover for the song "Bibi La Purée," with an inscription from Bibi to Sophie Pemberton, 1899, from Pemberton's *Glory Book*, c.1904–40, private collection. RIGHT: Florence Carlyle, *La vieille Victorine*, 1893, oil on canvas on hardboard, 72.4 x 59 cm, Woodstock Art Gallery.

When Pemberton submitted the portrait to the Royal Academy of Arts in 1904, it was exhibited as *Verlaine's Friend*. One writer singled it out for its polished style: "Miss Pemberton has evidently studied in the French realistic school, to which she certainly does credit."<sup>3</sup> "'Verlaine's Friend' is quietly impressive,"<sup>4</sup> wrote the *Illustrated London News*; "few portraits in the Exhibition show a stronger individuality.... [it] presents a noble face charged with melancholy thought, excellently painted."<sup>5</sup>

Pemberton kept the painting herself and brought it with her to Victoria in 1949, but it was not exhibited again until 1967. In 2019 extensive conservation work to both the painting and the frame rejuvenated the portrait of Bibi for future generations to appreciate.





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Da Vinci's quote, "A good painter has two chief objects to paint; man and the intention of his soul,"<sup>6</sup> inspired and challenged Pemberton over the years. Perhaps she saw in Bibi la Purée the potential to capture a poignant moment and to celebrate strength of character. Florence Carlyle (1864-1923) had accomplished that goal in *La vieille Victorine*, 1893, exhibited the following year at the Paris Salon where Pemberton could have seen it. It was also at the Art Association of Montreal in 1895, the same year Pemberton exhibited there. There are obvious similarities in composition between these two paintings.



## UN LIVRE OUVERT 1900



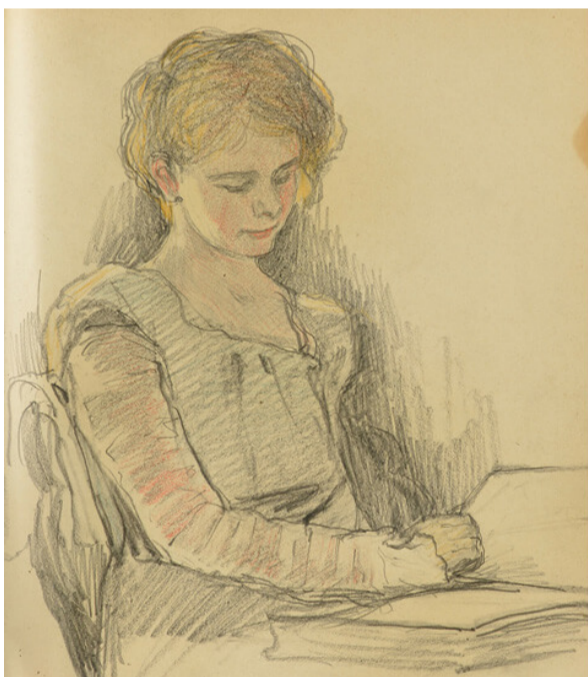
Sophie Pemberton, *Un Livre Ouvert*, 1900  
Oil on canvas, 166.5 x 108 cm  
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria



In this large painting, Pemberton positions the woman on the left in the classic S shape as she holds the book on her lap while her long white gown drapes behind her outstretched leg, resting on an ottoman. The second woman, shown in frontal view, nestles against her companion's shoulder, suggesting easy familiarity. Glowing embers in the fireplace reveal the mantelpiece and the wall behind the women, providing a counter to the strong light source illuminating their figures.

In August 1900, while on a long stay in Victoria, Pemberton sketched two acquaintances, Ethel Vantreight and Ellie Paddon, experimenting with different poses in several small sketches until she found a relationship between the women that appeared natural and intimate. Only then did she draw a life-size cartoon sketch before painting the canvas.

*Un Livre Ouvert* fits into the pattern of women artists who, though creating feminine domestic scenes, explored within them the stylistic challenges that nourished their creativity. Pemberton gambled that the jury for the Royal Academy of Arts would favour the theme, but she also wanted to challenge her own abilities by creating a carefully contrived composition that demanded both planning and aesthetic judgment.



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton, *Sketch for Un Livre Ouvert*, 1900, pencil and crayon on paper, 34.8 x 24 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Laura Muntz Lyall, *Interesting Story*, 1898, oil on canvas, 81.3 x 100.3 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

Pemberton shipped the painting to London, where it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1901 with the title *Interested* in the coveted Gallery 1. Close by hung a portrait by her former art teacher, Arthur Cope (1857-1940). The immediate response was positive: the *Victoria Daily Times* commended proudly, "Miss Sophia Pemberton has distinguished herself in London... her picture 'Interested' was highly praised by critics."<sup>1</sup>

On her return to England in late 1902, Pemberton submitted the painting to the 1903 Paris Salon with the title by which it is known, *Un Livre Ouvert*. Reviews were positive: "[A] painting quite graceful in composition and expression, skilfully and harmoniously painted in a lovely colour," wrote *L'Européen*.<sup>2</sup>





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Pemberton next arranged shipment of *Un Livre Ouvert* to the Manchester City Gallery and then, in 1904, to the exhibition of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in Montreal, where again it garnered praise. “Miss Sophie Pemberton of London,” wrote a reviewer, “is one of the most important of the one-work exhibitors.”<sup>3</sup> When the academicians voted by secret ballot to select works to send to the World’s Fair in St. Louis, Missouri, later that year, this one was included.

Other Canadian artists with connections to England and France also painted scenes that appear as intimate glimpses into family life, and Pemberton knew at least two of them: Florence Carlyle (1864–1923) and Laura Muntz (1860–1930). A few years earlier, Muntz sketched two young children sharing a book in a work titled *Interesting Story*, 1898.



## SPRING 1902



Sophie Pemberton, *Spring*, 1902  
Oil on canvas, 100.5 x 142.5 cm  
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria

In this painting, a young woman sits in dappled sunlight alongside a bouquet of wildflowers. She wears a serviceable skirt and a long-sleeved blue blouse, with a white apron overtop. Her clothing suggests she is a household servant, but the identity of the model is not known.

Despite a bout of poor health that sent her to a California sanatorium in early 1901, Pemberton was productive during her two-year stay in Victoria from 1900 to 1902. In the summer of 1901 she made a series of sketches depicting a young woman who is dressed identically in each one. The first canvas she completed, *John O'Dreams*, 1901, shows her seated on the grass in the chequered shade of summer, an open book on her lap. A young boy lies near her, perhaps listening, but with a faraway gaze.

In 1902 Pemberton repurposed her model in four more canvases. The woman is always contemplative, but in *Autumn* she appears beside an overturned wooden slat basket and a pile of fallen pears. In *Untitled* she sits in an English

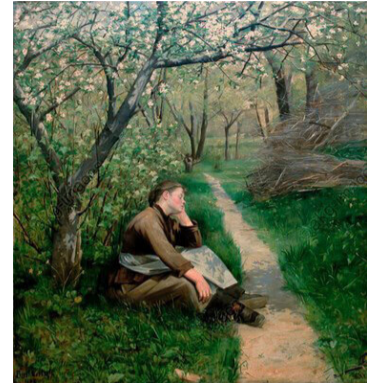
garden.<sup>1</sup> Pemberton reworked *Autumn* five years later and titled it *Penumbra*, 1907, placing the figure between light and shade in a scene that perhaps also references emotional turmoil.

*Spring* is the strongest composition in the series and reveals Pemberton's command of both portraiture and landscape as it blends the figure into an outdoor setting—the technique she used in *Little Boy Blue*, 1897. A contemporary review notes that *Spring* shows “clearly the influence of the French school on Miss Pemberton's style. The coloring is subdued and the relations between light and shade most subtly

rendered.”<sup>2</sup> Pemberton was now working in an Impressionistic style, fascinated with the play of light: the background is rendered in loose, imprecise brush strokes, though, in the Canadian style, the figure is delineated more clearly.

Pemberton sent this painting for an exhibit in Newcastle, England, in 1903, and then to British Columbia in 1904, first in Victoria at the Provincial Agricultural Exhibition, along with another thirty of her works, followed by a solo showing at the Blomfield Studio in Vancouver. It then travelled back across the Atlantic with her to England, where she kept it in her collection, displaying it prominently wherever she lived. When she returned to Canada in 1949, *Spring* appeared in a series of retrospectives during her lifetime and, later, in exhibitions of Canadian Impressionism.

Marie Bashkirtseff (1858-1884), an earlier and high-profile Russian student at Académie Julian, painted *Spring*, 1884, a scene with similar components. The description in her posthumously published diary mirrors Pemberton's *Spring*: “A young woman leaning against a tree, smiling, her eyes closed as if in a beautiful dream, and all around a delicate landscape tenderly green, pale roses, apple trees. I want the sun in it, and I'll do it at Nice in an orchard.”<sup>3</sup> Bashkirtseff's diary was read by generations of aspiring artists, and Pemberton would certainly have known it.



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton, *Penumbra*, 1907, oil on canvas, 94 x 134.5 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Marie Bashkirtseff, *Spring*, 1884, oil on canvas, State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



## CAUDEBEC-EN-CAUX 1903



Sophie Pemberton, *Caudebec-en-Caux*, 1903  
Oil on canvas, 76 x 50.7 cm  
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria



Caudebec-en-Caux was a favoured locale on the north bank of the Seine River for Impressionist painters such as Camille Pissarro (1830–1903) and Eugène Boudin (1824–1898). In the summer of 1903 Pemberton, her sister Susie, and their mother toured Normandy at a leisurely pace, and the girls rode their bicycles in the fine weather. To “sketch” the image in this “dream of a place,”<sup>1</sup> Pemberton set up her easel on a small stone bridge over what had originally been a narrow road with stone and timber houses until the Rivière Sainte-Gertrude, which meanders through the town, spilled its banks at high tide and claimed it.



LEFT: Postcard image of a street in Caudebec-en-Caux, c.1905, photographer unknown. RIGHT: Frances Hodgkins, *Caudebec-en-Caux*, 1901, watercolour, 50.4 x 32 cm, private collection.

Pemberton concentrated on the harmonious blending of stone, wood, and water, the slate rooflines, and the taupe clouds reflected in the slowly moving water. She saw a woman on a washing platform and noted the high drains spouting water. Dilapidated yet arresting rooflines provided variety in texture—a challenge and a stimulus for an artist who had previously focused on portraiture but was increasingly influenced by the Impressionist art she saw around her. Even on a hot August day, the shaded canal, wet stones, green algae water mark, and weathered, shuttered, half-timbered upper storeys seemed a world away from the bustling market square.

Vintage postcard photographs taken from a similar vantage point a few years later confirm the accuracy of her detail. In all respects, *Caudebec-en-Caux* marked a triumph of careful observation for Pemberton, yet she has chosen to apply paint thickly, employing a wide brush that enabled a richly textured impasto. In 1903 she produced a number of landscapes in a similar vein. “There is the ‘touch’ and ‘go’ in them,” wrote a critic the following year, “wrought by a single stroke of the brush.”<sup>2</sup>

New Zealand artist Frances Hodgkins (1869–1947) visited the town two years before Pemberton. She too was charmed and completed a series of watercolour views with a similar palette.<sup>3</sup> “With quaint picturesque streets & subjects in plenty for every day in the year... Caudebec is being most thoroughly painted,” she wrote.<sup>4</sup> A decade later, when Pemberton’s Victoria acquaintance Emily Carr (1871–1945) moved to rural France, she also focused on a picturesque canal and women washing linen. *Crécy-en-Brie*, 1911, clearly shows her own acceptance of the Impressionist style.



Emily Carr, *Crécy-en-brie*, 1911, oil on board, 32.7 x 40.8 cm, Royal BC Museum, Victoria



## SARAH, LADY CREASE 1907



Sophie Pemberton, *Sarah, Lady Crease*, 1907  
Oil on canvas, 92.8 x 73.4 cm  
Royal BC Museum, Victoria

In this life-size portrait, Sarah Crease is every bit the matriarch. She wears a fine lace shawl, cuffs, and scarf to brighten her black silk gown as well as the inherited gold rings, bracelets, and brooches that reflect her status. Pemberton knew Lady Crease—whose daughters sometimes sketched with her—and this acquaintance enabled her to draw on personal knowledge as she worked. She painted Crease’s face in half light, her head slightly cocked to the side, with an engaged yet relaxed expression. The flesh tones of her ruddy cheeks and blue-veined hands suggest health and vigour in a woman who, at sixty-nine, had lived an eventful life.

In the years Pemberton spent in England and France after 1889, she gradually moved away from the academic realism that characterized her earlier portraits. Here she employs visible brush strokes, as she had in her European landscapes, yet she takes particular care to render the facial features clearly as she strives to convey her subject’s strong personality.

Lady Crease, a socially prominent Victoria widow, was an early pioneer in British Columbia, a talented amateur artist, and a supporter of women’s rights and the arts. The previous year she had commissioned Pemberton to paint a posthumous portrait of her husband, and she wanted to create a matching pair. These and other commissions indicate that Pemberton was considered a professional artist by the prominent clientele who sought her out, especially after she was inducted as an associate into the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in 1906.

The fact that Pemberton undertook several commissions after her marriage to Canon Arthur Beanlands signalled that she still considered herself a professional artist and prioritized her work, even as she adjusted to her role as a wife and stepmother. This image was probably Pemberton’s last portrait commission in Victoria. She developed a serious medical issue early the following year, and, once restored, she focused on preparing landscapes that celebrated the diversity and beauty of Vancouver Island for an exhibition she was planning in London in 1909 at the prestigious Doré Gallery. The paintings she completed after her marriage, including this portrait, bore her new surname, Beanlands. While Victorians accepted such a change, when she moved to England permanently in 1908, the different surname complicated her artistic identity and adversely affected her career.



LEFT: Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia Henri Joly de Lotbinière posing for his portrait in the rectory studio, 1906, photographer unknown. RIGHT: Amélie Beaury-Saurel, *Séverine (Portrait of Caroline Rémy, épouse Guebhard, 1855-1929, dite), journaliste socialiste*, 1893, oil on canvas, 122.5 x 88 cm, Musée Carnavalet - Histoire de Paris.





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To avoid similar confusion, Pemberton's friend Amélie Beury-Saurel (1849-1924), an accomplished and somewhat controversial artist before her marriage, had kept her name after marrying Rodolphe Julian, founder of the Paris art school. In her portrait of Séverine, Beury-Saurel captures the confident downward gaze of a trailblazing French journalist and feminist who wears a red flower pinned to her sash—a symbol of socialism.

## MOSQUITO ISLAND 1907



Sophie Pemberton, *Mosquito Island*, 1907

Oil on canvas, 82.6 x 122.2 cm

Private collection

In this careful composition painted on Knapp (Mosquito) Island, just off the Saanich Peninsula, Pemberton introduced many elements to engage the viewer. Around her are blossoming trees in an old orchard, fence posts, suggestions of a tidal beach, and a boat shed sheltering an Indigenous canoe, which provides a sense of scale. A layered series of small rocky islets and larger treed islands draw the eye outward across the ocean toward the majestic snow-capped Mount Baker and Cascade Mountains in the distance, offset from centre. The late morning sun sensed overhead between parting clouds casts a warm pinkish hue and, by illuminating the water, creates a route through the islands toward the peak.

Pemberton painted *Mosquito Island* in just eight days in April 1907 while visiting family friends on the adjacent Piers Island. Clive Phillipps-Wolley, a noted writer and poet, was among Pemberton's loyal supporters, and his wife and daughters knew Sophie and her sisters well. At this time, Pemberton had been married to Canon Arthur Beanlands for eighteen months, but she had not relinquished her



determination to be a professional artist. Not only did she continue to paint, but she left the rectory for two weeks to create a painting that she intended to sell.

Six days after she completed *Mosquito Island* on April 23, 1907, Pemberton exhibited it in downtown Victoria in a storefront window. Some viewers were disgruntled that it differed in its Impressionist touches from the finely detailed and polished portraits to which they were accustomed. As one wrote:

Several passers-by looking at the picture expressed disappointment, but when I suggested that they step back and view it from a distance of twelve or fifteen feet they found their objections disappear. It is a fine painting; colour and drawing are good... and is especially valuable as [a] typical representation of Pacific scenery.<sup>1</sup>



Emily Carr, *War Canoes, Alert Bay*, 1912, oil on canvas, 84 x 101.5 cm, Audain Art Museum, Whistler.

The painting sold within a week. The *Victoria Times* reported: "The picture has been acquired by an English gentleman and will be exhibited in various centres of the home land."<sup>2</sup> Pemberton negotiated with the buyer that she could include it in the major solo exhibition of paintings celebrating the diverse scenery in southern Vancouver Island she was planning for 1909 in the Doré Gallery in London. This painting, along with others sold there, remained in the United Kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

Modernist art was not always understood by British Columbia's more traditional art-goers. A few years later, Victorian residents questioned the 1912 Fauvist-style paintings of the West Coast created by Pemberton's contemporary Emily Carr (1871-1945), who also studied in France. With *War Canoes, Alert Bay*, 1912, Carr reworked her original outdoor watercolour sketch of 1908 in a bold palette.



## TIME AND ETERNITY 1908



Sophie Pemberton, *Time and Eternity*, 1908  
Oil on canvas, 37 x 39 cm  
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria



Pemberton painted this canvas on a chill winter's day from a prominent Victoria hilltop. Although observers might have expected a classic view of Mount Baker, she delivered it with a substantial twist. The mountain is visible in the distance beyond the forested stretch of land and the small islands beneath her viewpoint, but it is not the focus of her composition. Instead, she profiles the twisted remnant of a long dead Garry oak tree, of desolate and almost war-torn character. To the immediate left springs a Garry oak sapling, identifiable by one last desiccated brown leaf, which has grown from an acorn provided years earlier by the now decaying tree.

The title speaks to regeneration, of new life alongside old, but also of the enduring snow-clad mountain. Time is the life cycle of the tree. Eternity, the dormant volcano Mount Baker, is a constant presence, in contrast to the finite existence of Garry oaks that change visibly over the years.

Rather than a picturesque landscape, *Time and Eternity* is one of the rare “think pieces” in Pemberton’s oeuvre, a conceptual shift from the pictorial to an idea. It is very different from *Mosquito Island*, 1907, in which Pemberton emphasized the pleasantness of the scene and presented Mount Baker in all its glory. Here, the dead Garry oak is the principal subject and occupies most of the canvas. The twisting limbs and the play of light and shade on its weathered surfaces attract our attention. In 1909 a London reviewer specifically bemoaned this composition: “If the non-essential detail in the foreground had been eliminated, she would have achieved something comparable with the Japanese masterpieces, in which Fujiyama, the eternal symbol of other worldly beauty, silently rebukes the ephemeral.”<sup>1</sup>

Pemberton painted the canvas in early 1908 at a particularly low time in her life and her marriage to Canon Arthur Beanlands—she would soon undergo serious medical surgery and be hospitalized for almost two months. Perhaps the composition was affected by her intention to leave the rectory in Victoria and return to England. The painting is unusual not only in the assemblage of items it portrays but also in the flat dimensionality and redacted detail of its style. Among Pemberton’s known paintings, *Time and Eternity* is one of the few that adopts a Post-Impressionist approach to express her mood and her personal feelings. She rejected her previous conservative values in order to entertain modernist ideas and experiment with form.

A London reviewer recognized this expansion in a review of her 1909 exhibition at the Doré Gallery in London: “Mrs Beanland’s work carries with it something more than the mere attempt to portray landscape and climate... there is a feeling of mystery difficult to explain.”<sup>2</sup> Harold Mortimer-Lamb (1872–1970), a friend who was also an astute art connoisseur, writer, photographer, and arts



LEFT: Katsushika Hokusai, *Storm below Mount Fuji (Sanka no haku u)*, c.1830–32, woodblock print, ink, and colour on paper, 25.7 x 38.4 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City. RIGHT: Tom Thomson, *The Dead Pine*, n.d., oil on wood, 26.7 x 21.4 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.





patron, purchased the painting when he visited Pemberton in England in 1910, and it remained in his collection until his death.

*The Dead Pine*, n.d., by Tom Thomson (1877–1917), presents a similar composition—a skeletal husk of a once flourishing tree in the centre foreground, interrupting the viewer’s eye from the scenic rhythm of the lake, shoreline, and distant hills. Surrounding this shattered hulk and flashing vivid scarlet leaves, smaller seedlings suggest renewal. Reviewers suggest that, for Thomson, the tree may have represented life’s struggles or his preoccupation with the Great War, in which some of his close friends were fighting. Clearly, this painting is a “think piece” not unlike Pemberton’s *Time and Eternity*.



## DRIVEWAY OF MOULTON COMBE, OAK BAY 1921



Sophie Pemberton, *Driveway of Moulton Combe, Oak Bay*, 1921  
Oil on canvas, 45.7 x 61.7 cm  
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria

Dappled shade spreads over a winding, unpaved driveway leading to Moulton Combe, the house and property of Pemberton's sister Susie and her husband, William Curtis Sampson. It is not a static scene: the bend in the driveway provokes the question—What is around that corner? There is movement too in the branch sweeping diagonally from the ivy-encumbered fir tree on the left. The distant trees, silhouetted against a warmly lit morning sky, are purposefully indistinct.

Despite the hiatus in Pemberton's art practice after the accident in 1916, *Driveway of Moulton Combe, Oak Bay* is a confident painting. Other known paintings during the 1920s include the exotic *The Parrot Court, Madurai Temple, India*, 1923; a formal portrait of *Horace Deane-Drummond*, 1925; a landscape *La Napoule Bay*, 1926; and several commissioned portraits whose present whereabouts are unknown.



Here, Pemberton has presented a canvas of sophisticated thought, a modern interpretation of what she saw before her. The bucolic scene is also illustrative of the changes wrought to the original wild landscape through residential development in Oak Bay, on the subdivided lands of Gonzales—the original Pemberton estate. Arriving in her hometown in 1921 with her second husband, Horace Deane-Drummond, after an absence of over a decade and her recent travels in India and Ceylon, Pemberton would have seen many changes in places she remembered. Uneasy with this development, she avoids painting it and instead conveys nostalgia—an English perennial garden bed amid the Douglas fir.



John William Beatty, *Morning, Algonquin Park*, 1914, oil on canvas, 77.4 x 92.5 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Some of the same qualities—the challenge of capturing dappled light on landscape, coniferous trees, and a changeable sky—are found in *Morning, Algonquin Park*, 1914, by John William Beatty (1869–1941). He also attended the Académie Julian, overlapping in time with Pemberton. And like her, he absorbed the newer influences in art, moving from academic realism toward interpretation of the landscapes he saw around him. Though never in the forefront of Canadian modernists, he progressed steadily with his own way of seeing. This composition was very much an exercise: the scenery was mediocre, with no one feature to arrest the gaze, but presented myriad challenges in its interpretation.



## SERVING TRAY WITH HAND-PAINTED DECORATION BY ARTIST 1921



Sophie Pemberton, *Serving tray with hand-painted decoration by artist*, 1921  
Oil paint and lacquer decoration, 55 x 68 x 7 cm  
Royal BC Museum, Victoria

This wooden serving tray is painted with fanciful exotic birds, luxurious roses, peonies, and trumpet vines against an inky black background, with a rich golden decorative border. It is one of many that Pemberton hand-painted and lacquered from about 1920 on, using her own designs inspired by Flemish and Dutch painters, especially Geertje Pieters (1636-1712) and Jan van Kessel the Elder (1626-1679). Each tray was unique and meticulously planned. Notations and pencil drawings in sketchbooks and her diary reveal the close observation they required and the detail of each element in the designs. She took some of the individual flowers and insects from specific paintings by these artists, revealing her own studies in museums and books.

Drawn by her love of flowers, Pemberton found solace in painting them. While in Victoria in 1895 and in 1902, she created a watercolour series of precise botanical illustrations of wild and cultivated flowers. She placed them alongside lines of poetry that she rendered in calligraphy and gifted many in folios to her siblings. In 1917, following a series of family tragedies and a serious accident, she again found that painting small things rather than her usual large canvases

appealed. Encouraged by her neighbour Victoria Sackville-West, Pemberton began to explore domestic décor. She settled on fanciful compositions, clearly separating them from these earlier botanical illustrations or her portraits and landscapes.

Pemberton hand-painted and lacquered many different objects—inkstands, bookends, tea caddies, and pieces of furniture such as screens, writing desks, and chairs.

The trays proved to be most popular: she received many commissions and donated others to charity. Despite increasing infirmities, she continued painting them into her eighties. They represented not just an alternative artistic outlet but a modest yet steady income. A 1946 photograph captures her painting a tray, with a selection of completed trays behind her.



LEFT: Geertje Pieters, *Still Life of Flowers*, 1670–80, oil on canvas, 79 x 67 cm, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, U.K. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Sketch of a flower based on works by 17th century Flemish artists*, c.1940–43, coloured pencils on paper, 18.7 x 12.8 cm, private collection





# SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

Paintings by Sophie Pemberton were well received in English and Canadian exhibitions and the media. Their success brought the isolated province of British Columbia into focus both overseas and in central Canada. Family support enabled Pemberton to train at prestigious academies in London and Paris and to live independently in her own studio. Community support in turn brought her portrait commissions and frequent reviews in the local press. Although a strong feminist, she was torn between her professional ambitions and her family obligations. This tension thwarted her career in midlife, especially after she suffered a serious accident and turned to painting



decorative objects. It is only in recent years that her significance in Canadian art has been reevaluated.

#### BRITISH COLUMBIA ART, 1870–1950

In 1869 Pemberton was born into a frontier society situated within more populous Indigenous territories. The gold rushes of the 1860s had swelled the economy and the mixed population in this predominantly British society, but British Columbia became a province only in 1871, with Victoria as the capital. The Canadian Pacific Railway finally connected to Vancouver in 1887. Victoria, on Vancouver Island, boasting a modest population of 16,841 in the 1891 census, was even more isolated, both from developments in Vancouver but especially from the much larger urban centres of Montreal, Halifax, and Toronto.



Sophie Pemberton, *Harrison Lake*, 1895, watercolour on paper, approx. 37.6 x 49 cm, private collection.

Although Victoria citizens supported music, theatre, and other cultural pursuits, the visual arts lagged behind. A few local matriarchs such as Sarah Crease encouraged artistic endeavours; topographic artists among British naval officers stationed at Esquimalt, including Edward Parker Bedwell (1828–1882), painted watercolour landscapes; and visiting professionals such as Georgina (1848–1930) and Constant (1842–1910) de l'Aubinière offered group classes. In general, though, as one observer commented, “Artists come to the city, but do not remain.”<sup>1</sup>



LEFT: Female students at the Académie Julian in Paris, c.1895, photographer unknown. RIGHT: Marie Bashkirtseff, *In the Studio*, 1881, oil on canvas, 154 x 188 cm, Dnipropetrovsk State Art Museum, Ukraine.



In this environment, without any art schools, serious young artists had no choice but to go to England, France, or San Francisco for training. Pemberton and her friends Josephine (1864–1947) and Susan (1855–1947) Crease enrolled in art schools in London in 1889; Emily Carr (1871–1945) left for San Francisco in 1890; and Theresa Wylde (1870–1949) travelled to London around 1892. The published comments of a well-connected expatriate Englishman, Clive Phillips-Wolley, allude to Pemberton being a casualty of Victoria’s backwater mentality: “A Victorian artist, native born... had her picture hung in the [Royal] Academy [of Arts] and [Paris] Salon before it was known that she painted in British Columbia.”<sup>2</sup>

Abroad, Pemberton helped to raise the profile of Canadian art, as some exhibition catalogues listed her Canadian residence and reviewers described her as a “colonial artist.”<sup>3</sup> She presented an idea of Canada to her international friends. Within Canada, her visibility in exhibitions organized by the Art Association of Montreal and the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts reminded Canadians in the easterly provinces that artistic talent could herald from the distant West Coast.

It was not until 1909, when the Island Arts Club (later the Island Arts and Crafts Society) was established, that a formal

organization for artists and exhibitions existed in Victoria. A branch of the Federation of Canadian Artists formed in the 1940s organized art shows in temporary facilities—including exhibiting a selection of works loaned by Pemberton family members in 1947 and 1949. Only in 1951, when the population of Greater Victoria reached 100,000, did the city have a permanent art gallery, the Victoria Arts Centre. In 1954 paintings by Pemberton and Carr featured in a joint exhibition there.

### FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Fortunately, Pemberton’s prosperous and socially prominent family supported her ambitions to be a professional artist—an uncommon and difficult goal for women at this time. Leisured women were encouraged to sketch or paint as a pastime but not as a serious pursuit. Pemberton received rudimentary instruction at the private girls’ school she attended. A school certificate in her scrapbook documents her “honourable mention” in painting; she won “a prize for some pretty drawings” at the local agricultural fair in the “under 12” category;<sup>4</sup> and in 1882 two of her watercolour landscapes, *Fire in the Forest* and *View from Gonzales*, were included in “A Souvenir of Victoria” album presented to the visiting Princess Louise.



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton, *Horace Deane-Drummond*, 1925, oil on canvas, 73.2 x 57.4 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Peasant Woman*, 1903, oil on canvas, 75 x 52 cm, private collection.





Sophie Pemberton, *Fire in the Forest*, c.1882, watercolour on wove paper, support: 26 x 34 cm; image: 16.8 x 26.6 cm, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

Pemberton's parents supported her ambitions from the start. In 1893, when they heard her first-class results in the South Kensington examinations, her father wrote: "Your splendid success brought new life to us all & this being a small place it is already the topic everywhere."<sup>5</sup> He provided key moral and financial assistance that gave her confidence and, in his will, a generous allowance that enabled her to continue her art studies, rent a studio, and travel. Emily Carr, in contrast, had to fund her English sojourn through savings she earned teaching art.

On news of Joseph Pemberton's sudden death on November 11, 1893, the family immediately rallied to support Pemberton, who was living with other women art students in Alexandra House. In England, her brother Joe received the news first. "Mr Coggin... told me last night of the sad occurrence & this morning I went over to Sophie to break the news as quietly as possible, & then brought her over to Finchley with me."<sup>6</sup> Valiantly she continued, but grief soon overwhelmed her. By the new year, she was in distress, and a friend from Victoria who was in England alerted the family that she



Gonzales, 1903, photograph by Ernest "Trio" Crocker, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



was homesick, heartsick, and suffering from strange physical symptoms. In March they decided to intervene. "My Mother and sisters are leaving for England tonight," wrote Fred. "Their departure of course has been hurried by the bad news about Sophie."<sup>7</sup>

In addition to this strong family support, every time Pemberton returned home for a visit the local newspapers updated her status, such as the *Victoria Daily Times* commenting in June 1900 that "Miss Sophie Pemberton has returned to 'Gonzales'.... [She] is an enthusiastic art student and her work has attracted much favorable comment in London and Paris."<sup>8</sup> Three years prior, a Vancouver newspaper had also sung her praises:

Those of us who take any interest in anything but dollars and mining shares are delighted by the news.... Miss Sophia Pemberton has fulfilled some of the promise of her childhood... a large picture by her... has been awarded an honourable position in Room 1 at the Royal Academy's Exhibition of pictures in London.<sup>9</sup>

Independence, however, required more than financial support. Pemberton studied in London more than a decade before Helen McNicoll (1879-1915) and, as Samantha Burton, Susan Butlin, and Kristina Huneault have written, gender barriers for both artists held strong.<sup>10</sup> In 1889, when Pemberton enrolled at the school run by Arthur Cope (1857-1940), many notable art schools, associations, and clubs remained closed to women. By 1895, female students at most London art schools still attended separate classes. The Royal Academy of Arts was a male preserve where women were denied membership but, with jury approval, could exhibit. In France, the *École des beaux-arts* admitted women only in 1897. When Pemberton began at Académie Julian in 1898, the owner's wife, Amélie Beaury-Saurel (1849-1924), managed the separate women's atelier even though most of the classes were integrated.



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton's life class at the Académie Julian in Paris, c.1899, photographer unknown. RIGHT: Amélie Beaury-Saurel, *Into the Blue (Dans le Bleu)*, 1894, pastel on canvas, 75 x 82 cm, Mairie de Toulouse, Musée des Augustins.

Social strictures discouraged women from moving freely in public spaces. Whether travelling by rail across Canada, aboard ship on the Atlantic, on excursions to the Continent, or simply to visit galleries, Pemberton was accompanied by a female companion. As her father instructed: "If you prefer an

early return, you will have to exert yourself, to find an escort to prevail on."<sup>11</sup> Likewise, living alone bordered on the scandalous unless women found a small female-run boarding house in an appropriate neighbourhood—as Carr did in England.<sup>12</sup> Decidedly more upscale was Alexandra House, founded for female art and music students, where Pemberton and the Crease sisters all resided while attending classes in London.<sup>13</sup>

When Pemberton began living independently in Stanley Studios, a building constructed for artists, she boldly defied the social norm that obliged single women to safeguard their reputations. The candid photograph of her female friends in her studio provides rare insight into the private freedom residents there enjoyed. On the eve of her marriage, Pemberton wrote nostalgically: "I'm a little bit sad thinking those beautiful bohemian times are gone."<sup>14</sup>



Constance Gore-Booth (left) occupied Sophie Pemberton's #3 Stanley Studios in London, from October 1897 through January 1898, while Pemberton was in Italy. She sits with Irish poet and illustrator Althea Gyles (right), 1898, photograph by Wasey Sterry.

### FEMALE FRIENDSHIPS

In this male-centric art world, women forged their way through informal personal relationships and participation in clubs for women. Pemberton made friends at the art schools she attended in London and Paris and at the Stanley Studios. She also kept in touch with many women she met in England or France who were active in the arts. In 1914, for instance, she reconnected with her close friend from the 1890s, Constance Gore-Booth (1868-1927).



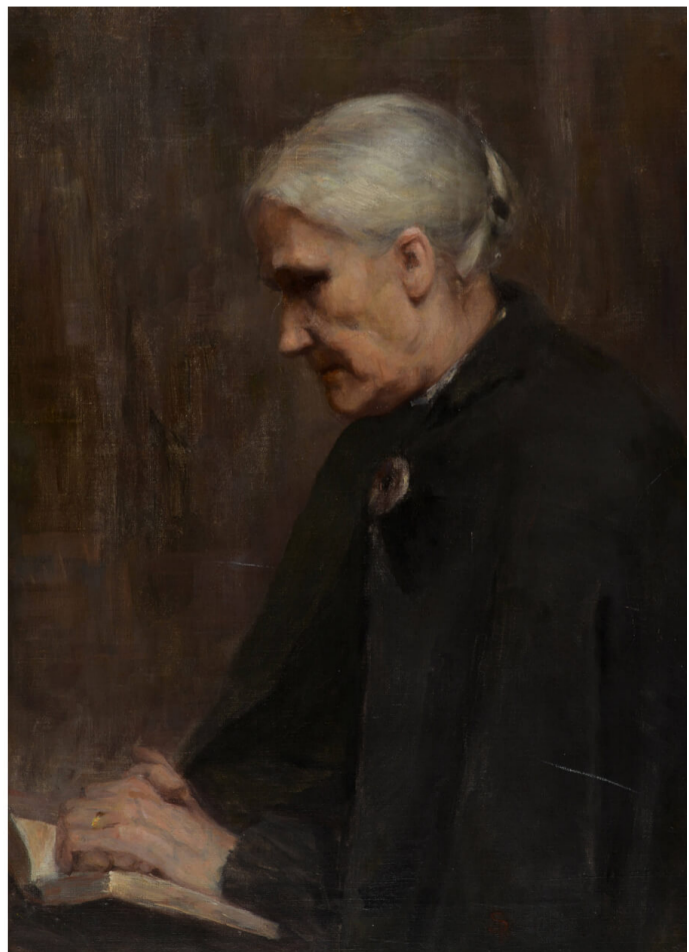
Several older women became mentors and friends for life. The Swedish artist Anna Nordgren (1847-1916) shepherded Pemberton through the exhibition application process in the 1890s, accompanied her to sketch in Brittany, supported her membership in the 91 Art Club, and, in 1910, visited Pemberton at Wickhurst before they travelled to Paris for the Salon.<sup>15</sup> Amélie Beaury-Saurel kept a protective eye over her at the Académie Julian and chaperoned her during many painting sessions with Bibi la Purée. In turn, Pemberton invited Beaury-Saurel to her wedding to Canon Arthur Beanlands in 1905.<sup>16</sup>



LEFT: Amélie Beaury-Saurel, a well-respected portraitist, poses beside a plaster bust of her husband, Rodolphe Julian, 1904, photographer unknown. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Serving tray with hand-painted decoration by artist* (detail), 1921, oil paint and lacquer decoration, 55 x 68 x 7 cm, Royal BC Museum, Victoria.



When Pemberton was overcome by the deaths of family members and a serious accident between 1916 and 1919, her neighbour Victoria Sackville-West at Knole House cajoled her into resuming her creative pursuits on a smaller scale, including painting trays and other domestic items.<sup>17</sup> Sackville-West opened the door to her many influential female friends who were patrons of the arts. "To Knole," Pemberton wrote in just one of many examples, "painted balls, Mdm la Contesse d'Avignon & her daughter came to tea & Sir E. Lutyens."<sup>18</sup>



LEFT: Sydney Strickland Tully, *The Twilight of Life*, 1894, oil on canvas, 91.8 x 71.5 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Portrait of a Woman*, 1896, oil on canvas, 76.5 x 56 cm, private collection



Although documentation is lacking, it is tempting to think that several of the expatriate Canadian women artists also influenced each other. Florence Carlyle (1864–1923), Sydney Strickland Tully (1860–1911), and Emily Carr were in London at the same time as Pemberton;<sup>19</sup> Tully lived at Stanley Studios and, in *The Twilight of Life*, 1894, used the same model as Pemberton did shortly after. Like Tully, Pemberton enrolled at Académie Julian, and, like Carlyle, she studied under Benjamin Constant (1845–1902) and J.P. Laurens (1838–1921). Pemberton arrived in Paris while Laura Muntz (1860–1930) and Mary Riter (1867–1954) were still there, and it is possible that the closely dated paintings of Breton women by Pemberton, Riter, and Carlyle indicate common sketching opportunities. Muntz, Pemberton, and Riter exhibited at the Paris Salon; and Muntz, Tully, Carlyle, and Pemberton were selected for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1904 and the Royal Academy of Arts in 1909.



Left: Sophie Pemberton, *Untitled (Breton Woman)*, 1896, oil on canvas, 34.3 x 28.5 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Florence Carlyle, *Mère Adèle*, 1897, oil on canvas, 36 x 26.7 cm, Museum London.

### PEMBERTON AND WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

Like Helen McNicoll, Pemberton benefited from membership in women's art organizations and joined several suffragist and feminist groups. The 91 Art Club provided a safe space for female artists in London and networking opportunities. Pemberton, along with most of the women at the Stanley Studios, including Sydney Strickland Tully, exhibited there. She most likely also joined the Women's International Art Club, formed in Paris in 1898, which organized a large exhibit in London in 1900 to assert "the claim of women to be admitted within the innermost circles of the profession."<sup>20</sup>



Pemberton's commitment to the cause of women's rights became more public after she and Beanlands moved to Sevenoaks in Kent and she agreed to represent the local organization. Over the years, she joined several women's clubs in London—the Sesame Club (est. 1895), the Lyceum Club (est. 1903), and the Pioneer Club (est. 1892)—enabling further networking for her art and advocacy for social change.

As a strong-minded and committed artist who believed in and actively pursued the rights of women, Pemberton's life appears contradictory. She boldly moved to England in 1895 and, over the next decade, pursued her art career with impressive presentations at major exhibitions there and in France. But various maladies interfered, requiring her to withdraw from a concentrated push toward establishing a fully professional career. We cannot know whether these bouts were psychosomatic as well as physical, but she did live a long and full life.

Pemberton was a dutiful daughter, torn between her intended profession and the traditional familial expectations that unmarried daughters were responsible for aging parents. Her widowed mother wanted her daughters to remain in her orbit and, as executor of her husband's estate, she controlled the purse strings. Pemberton compromised her career because of family obligations demanding extensive travel and frequent houseguests. Her situation was not uncommon: both Mary Riter and Laura Muntz abruptly returned from overseas to tend to ailing family members. "What is the use of being strongminded," Pemberton wrote, "if you can't control yr own conscience?"<sup>21</sup>



LEFT: The Lyceum Club was founded in 1903 at 128 Piccadilly in London, England, for women artists and writers. Rooms pictured include the hall and staircase; the smoking room; the dining room; the drawing room; the reading and writing room; and the arts and crafts gallery. This is the seventh location in a series called Our Ladies' Clubs, as seen in *The Graphic*, April 18, 1908, Illustrated London News Ltd. / Mary Evans Picture Library, U.K. RIGHT: View of Wickhurst Manor in Sevenoaks, Kent, date unknown, photographer unknown, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.





LEFT: Sophie Pemberton (left) with her mother in Italy, 1911, photographer unknown, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton (top), Arthur Beanlands, and his children Paul and Angela in the rectory studio, 1907, photograph by Ernest "Trio" Crocker, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

As Pemberton and Muntz soon discovered, in a tightly gendered society, the social obligations of marriage restricted their professional careers as they lost their freedom to paint with single-minded purpose. Domesticity was clearly expected to be the priority for upper-middle-class women. As the spouse of a cleric, Pemberton had to participate in numerous social obligations. In a rare candid letter from 1905, she confessed to mixed feelings about her upcoming marriage:

I am engaged to a canon. But this is no ordinary clergyman. He is charming, older than me, but very childish in some very literary and therefore very artistic ways. He is now thinking of an atelier that he will add to his house.... But it's awful how I have to change. You have to pay visits, check in, and be useful, and worst of all receive visits.... But I am not scared because I love him with all my heart.<sup>22</sup>



Sophie Pemberton, *Penumbra*, 1907, oil on canvas, 94 x 134.5 cm, private collection.

*Penumbra*, 1907, may have been Pemberton's visualization of her post-marriage situation. As the title suggests, the figure is between light and shade, awaiting the return of the sun.



### REPUTATION AND LEGACY

Pemberton has been described as the first artist from British Columbia to receive international professional distinction.<sup>23</sup> She was one of only a handful of Canadian women artists overseas during the 1890s, and her prestigious exhibition record remains admirable, both for her time and as a woman artist working within an overtly male preserve. Her relative obscurity in Canada, during her lifetime and since, stems from life choices she made as dictated by social expectations or financial worries, her long residency in England, and serious health issues that interrupted her professional trajectory and removed her from public view.

Equally responsible for Pemberton's invisibility was the isolated position of British Columbia in relation to the art scene in central and eastern Canada and to the site of major art exhibitions. One Victoria reporter suggested in 1954 that the "lack of full recognition has evidently been due to a number of factors, among which has been our traditional disbelief in the viability of our native talent."<sup>24</sup> These same observations applied to another Victoria artist, Emily Carr, during the first five decades of her life. Pemberton, moreover, kept many of her artworks and bequeathed them to family members, meaning that they have been exhibited only infrequently.



Sophie Pemberton, *Chrysanthemums*, c.1901, oil on canvas, 59.7 x 90.2 cm, Art Gallery of Hamilton.

Despite Pemberton's success in winning the Prix Julian and the Julian-Smith awards in Paris and her decade of prestigious exhibitions and positive reviews, vestiges of gendered bias in defining the term "professional artist"<sup>25</sup> have also limited her reputation over the last hundred years. The standard interpretation has been that she ceased to be a serious artist after her marriage. Her exhibition record belies this view, although health issues played a significant role.

Pemberton's change in surname after both her marriages contributed to her loss of public identity. For instance, *Penumbra*, 1907 (at the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in 1907), and both *Memories*, c.1909, and *The Amber Window at Knole*, 1915 (at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1910 and 1916, respectively), all bore the surname Beanlands—as did a number of landscapes she painted for her solo exhibition at the Doré Gallery in London. *La Napoule Bay*, 1926, which sold through a private gallery, was signed S.D. Drummond. In addition, Pemberton's focus on interior decorative objects after her health crisis in 1916–18 may well have suggested to some that she had switched to a frivolous pursuit. Yet she never relinquished identifying as an artist. On her return to Canada in 1949, at the age of eighty, she listed her occupation as “artist.”



LET: Sophie Pemberton, *Writing desk with hand-painted decoration by artist* (detail), n.d., oil paint with lacquered, gilded, and inlay decorations, 179 x 74.9 x 72.3 cm, Royal BC Museum, Victoria. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Pen and ink stand with hand-painted decoration by artist*, 1921, oil paint with lacquer and abalone inlay decoration, 11 x 36 x 29.5 cm, Royal BC Museum, Victoria.

Our current understanding of Pemberton's oeuvre and life has been shaped by three retrospective exhibitions—at the Vancouver Art Gallery (1954) and the Art Gallery of Victoria (1967 and 1978). Each one traced her career until 1904 and exhibited paintings held by Pemberton family members and those donated to both galleries and the British Columbia government. Since then, only a few of these works have appeared in exhibitions of Impressionism or Canadian women artists.<sup>26</sup> Many significant canvases Pemberton painted and exhibited during her fifty years overseas have not yet been located, probably because they sold to private purchasers.

The retrospective exhibition that opened in the fall of 2023 at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria included many works held in private collections that have not been seen in the past century. It reintroduced Pemberton to her home town and situated her achievements within the context of her times, providing an opportunity to reevaluate her work and to reassess her career as a Canadian artist of merit.





Sophie Pemberton, *Colonel Schletter*, 1910, oil on canvas, 36.8 x 44.3 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.





**With her ability to work both in the academic realist style and with a more painterly Impressionist approach, Sophie Pemberton satisfied her own inclinations even as she catered to the tastes of her clients. Her earliest portraits follow her formal training, and those painted between 1903 and 1925 include both styles, yet in each they capture the individuality of the sitters and suggest a story. The oil landscapes she created between 1903 and 1926 all reveal the influence of Impressionism. They demonstrate her versatility as she pared down detail and moved away from standard representations toward modernism, painting what she saw and revealing how she felt. In her**

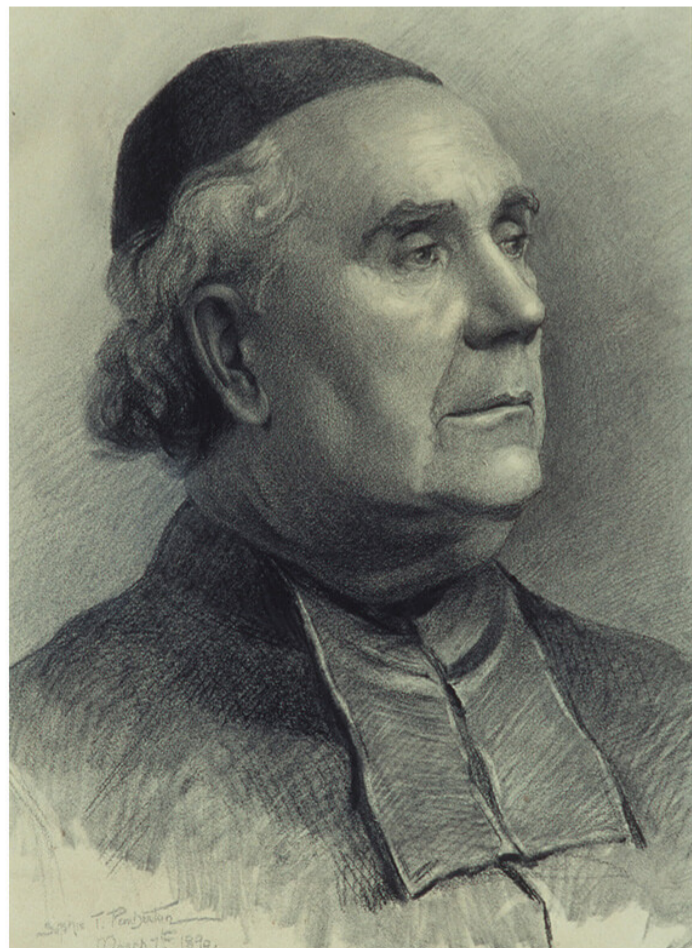
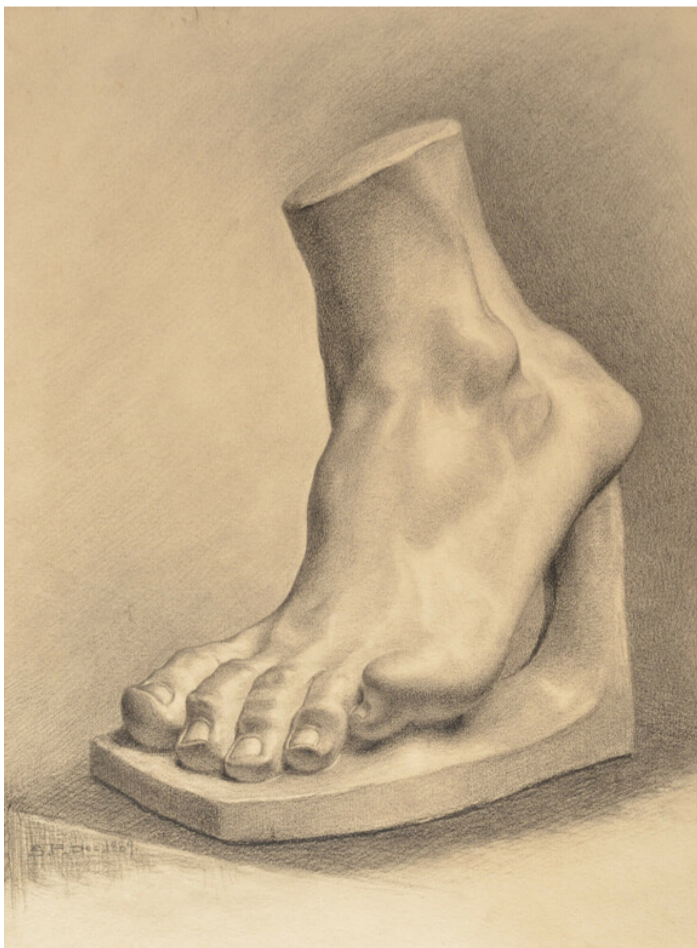


decorative art during the 1920s, she returned to a polished academic style with invisible brush strokes and precise detail.

#### AN EARLY INTEREST IN PORTRAITURE

Pemberton decided to become a professional portrait painter when she was about twenty years old. To fulfill that goal, she studied in three art schools in London, each of which followed the academic syllabus of the South Kensington Schools. Students began by drawing two-dimensional prints or engravings of Old Master compositions in pencil or chalk until they had learned to model accurately with lines and strokes. They then moved to drawing three-dimensional objects, including plaster casts of various body parts, reproductions of Greco-Roman and Renaissance works such as Michelangelo's *David*, and original antique statues in the galleries. Pemberton's *Drawing of a plaster cast foot*, 1889, and *Venus de Medici*, c.1890, created while at Cope's School, reveal her use of chiaroscuro and tonal ranges to achieve three-dimensionality. Anatomical studies were part of the training, as demonstrated by her *Anatomical Practise, Cope's School*, 1889-90, with the parts labelled.

Pemberton soon advanced to the drawing from life classes, where models held poses for a set time while the students drew them, usually with charcoal. In *Portrait of a Cardinal*, 1890, she skilfully used shading to create volume and indicate the play of light on the figure.



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton, *Drawing of a plaster cast foot*, 1889, charcoal on paper, 57.7 x 44.4 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Portrait of a Cardinal*, 1890, graphite, charcoal, and Conté on paper, 56.4 x 38 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

Concurrently, Pemberton enrolled in oil-painting classes, where she learned how to prime the canvas, create an underdrawing, and layer and blend thinned paints that allowed her to work with smooth transitions and invisible brush strokes—the hallmark of the academic realist style as exemplified by the Académie Française and followed throughout Europe. The goal was naturalistic representation and accuracy of detail. In *Plaster Cast*, c.1890, Pemberton reworked earlier sketches of her *Venus de Medici*, rendering the plaster in monotone and adding a cluster of erythroniums (fawn lilies) in the foreground to obscure the breasts of the statue and soften the transition to the stand.



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton, *Venus de Medici*, c.1890, charcoal on paper, 74.3 x 52 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Plaster Cast*, c.1890, oil on canvas, 60.2 x 49.1 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

With *Mansi - An Italian*, 1892, Pemberton, now at the Clapham School of Art, built on her sketches from the life class to create a realistic portrait with almost invisible brush strokes.<sup>1</sup> The face is illuminated, the eyes and lips animated, while a shadow delineates the soft curve of the jaw. The clothing, in contrast, recedes into the background.





# SOPHIE PEMBERTON

Life & Work by Kathryn Bridge



Sophie Pemberton, *Mansi - An Italian*, 1892, oil on canvas, 45.7 x 35.5 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

While in Victoria in 1895, Pemberton painted a series of realistic, three-quarter-view portraits—of her mother, Theresa Pemberton, and a few as commissions, such as *Benjamin William Pearse*. Two years later, when she returned to London and lived independently in her studio, she quickly entered her prime with the highly praised and widely exhibited *Daffodils*, 1897, and *Un Livre Ouvert*, 1900. She also began to experiment, first with *Little Boy Blue*, 1897, painted *en plein air* where she could capture the effects of sunlight on the scene. She painted in the “French style,”<sup>2</sup> as one newspaper commented, adopting some of the techniques of the Impressionists such as Henri Matisse (1869–1954), who had deliberately changed the expectations of artistic style.

Eschewing detail, she worked with short, visible brush strokes and often unmixed colours. She continued broadening her oeuvre with genre scenes of people at work: *Winding Yarns*, 1898, “an extremely capable piece of character delineation,”<sup>3</sup> and *Tarring Ropes*, 1899/1900.<sup>4</sup> The figures in these paintings are compelling and have stories to tell. Pemberton’s emphasis in her portraits was still to reveal the character of her sitters, but she was now providing context too, in the hope of attracting a wider audience.

Once at the Académie Julian in Paris (1898–1900), Pemberton reverted to the academic style for *Bibi la Purée*, 1900. From here on, though, she varied her style depending on the client’s expectations and her own inspiration or the situation. The matching full-figure pair of *Warren* and *Armine*, both 1901/02, *Colonel Schletter*, 1910, and *Peasant Woman*, 1903, are painted in different styles, yet in each portrait it is the faces that draw the eye. When Pemberton painted her second husband, *Horace Deane-Drummond*, 1925, she portrayed him with dignified demeanour—no doubt as he desired.

### A MOVE TO LANDSCAPE

In Pemberton’s social class, the ability to draw and paint in watercolour was considered a pleasant recreation. Pemberton began lessons in her day school in Victoria and continued at the boarding school in Brighton, England. She and her friends enjoyed going on sketching excursions around Victoria and Vancouver equipped with portable easels and art supplies.

When Pemberton returned home in 1900 after her studies at the Académie Julian and an evening class with James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), she was



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton, *Warren*, 1901/02, oil on canvas, 160 x 93 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Armine*, 1901/02, oil on canvas, 160 x 93 cm, private collection.



again interested in watercolour painting and enjoyed sketching days with Josephine Crease (1864–1947) and other friends. *Sketching Picnic*, 1902, reveals her technique. First, she blocked out the scene in pencil; then, with a wet brush, she applied watercolour washes to delineate the tones; finally, with a dry brush, she added the details of figures and trees and highlighted occasional outlines. In *View over Victoria*, c.1902, she used a wet application of paint, allowing colours to spread and blend in a way that blurred the panoramic view and was Impressionist in its result.



Sophie Pemberton, *Sketching Picnic*, 1902, watercolour on paper, 26.5 x 47.9 cm, Royal BC Museum, Victoria.

Pemberton's earliest extant British Columbia oil landscape, *Cowichan Valley*, 1891, is a bucolic but unsophisticated view of a small pond with overhanging trees, grassy banks, and split-rail fences, featuring a Chinese boy and geese at the pond's edge. Twelve years later in Brittany and Italy, a more experienced Pemberton began to work outdoors in oil consistently and to establish her own style. She was inspired by Barbizon painters' reverence for nature, which they painted for its own sake, not as an idealized background to figures, and the more recent Impressionists' focus on spontaneity rather than precision.



LEFT: Camille Pissarro, *Haystacks, Morning, Eragny*, 1899, oil on canvas, 63.5 x 80 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City. RIGHT: View of the Salon d'Automne in the Salle Cézanne at the Grand Palais, Paris, 1904, photograph by Ambroise Vollard.

After several years in England and France, Pemberton had enjoyed ample opportunity to note the rising importance of various landscape genres. She viewed them in gallery exhibitions where she lived and travelled, appreciating artists such as Camille Pissarro (1830–1903) and Claude Monet (1840–1926) and, after 1903, modernist artists exhibiting landscapes at the newly formed Salon d'Automne. She also discussed their works and ideas with friends in her artistic community in both countries.

Pemberton now painted in oil outdoors without preliminary sketches, experiencing nature as she created the finished painting. She liked the wildness and slightly disorderly aesthetic in *Dieppe Farmyard*, 1903. At Caudebec-en-Caux she worked with a palette emphasizing the silvery greys she saw in the



skies and in the smoothly flowing river, as in *The Seine*, 1903. She painted the built environment—the eclectic layering of dilapidated structures against the skies that produced shadowy contrasts. In both *Caudebec-en-Caux*, 1903, and *Market place at Caudebec-en-Caux*, 1903, she retained the freedom to suggest rather than delineate detail.



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton, *The Seine*, 1903, oil on board, 19 x 42 cm, private collection.  
RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Market place at Caudebec-en-Caux*, 1903, oil on canvas, 33 x 46 cm, private collection.

This outdoor work gave Pemberton the confidence to branch out from portraiture into landscape and urban scenes, though, unlike her portraits, she called them all “sketches,” possibly because they were not worked up in the studio. When she returned to British Columbia early in 1904, she continued to paint outdoors in oil, but readjusted to a more pellucid light, again favouring the blues of the ocean and spring camas flowers and greens of the forest, as she had done earlier in watercolour. This palette—in *Mosquito Island*, 1907, and *A Prosperous Settler*, 1908—was strikingly different from the colours she had favoured in Europe.



Sophie Pemberton, *A Prosperous Settler*, 1908, oil on canvas, 50 x 75 cm, private collection.

Just as she had revealed her personal feelings in *Time and Eternity*, 1908, she again veered toward Post-Impressionism in *Weald Church, Kent*, 1915. The image is not so much about the church as her delight in natural forms—the tree



branches and the wildflowers swaying in the wind, the blossoms blooming in the crisp spring air. Pemberton had advanced her art once again.

Pemberton's oil landscapes and outdoor scenes are often paired down in detail and have a painterly quality. Some reviewers saw them as preliminary sketches or unfinished works, yet they are serious studies in a deliberately different style as Pemberton sought to capture a moment, an impression. In 1908 a reporter in Victoria, equating realism with perfection, wrote: "In portraits she displays not only talent but thorough training and technique, and one may unhesitatingly call her a finished artist. Her work in landscapes shows that she is yet a student... whose possibilities are far from being exhausted."<sup>5</sup> Similarly, some of the English critics misunderstood her exhibit at the Doré Gallery in 1909: "As a landscape artist, she is entirely self-taught, and has developed her own style as a student of nature upon the Pacific Coast."<sup>6</sup>



Sophie Pemberton, *Weald Church, Kent*, 1915, oil on canvas, 35.5 x 37.5 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

Pemberton varied her technique, but did not discard her previous ways. In some Impressionist-style paintings she employed bold lines, thickly applied blocks of



colour, and carefully crafted details, while in others she strove for luminosity and almost invisible brush strokes. *La Napoule Bay, 1926*, and *Driveway of Moulton Combe, Oak Bay, 1921*, reveal this versatility as Pemberton, confident in her skill, channelled her emotions through her art.

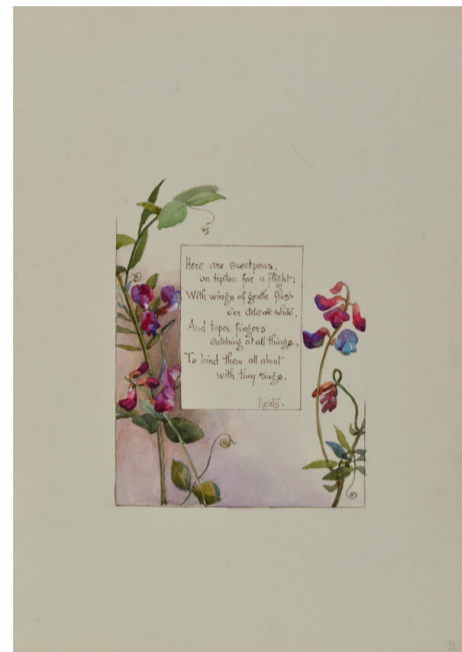
### BOTANICAL PAINTINGS

In 1895, while in Victoria, Pemberton painted two major series of botanical subjects in watercolour, including local wildflowers and cultivated domestic perennials. She presented her brother Fred with "An Affectionate Souvenir," an unbound portfolio of forty-three sheets, each containing a single specimen that Pemberton paired with a handwritten verse from writers ranging from Shakespeare to Tennyson. She also gave her sister Ada a botanical portfolio of thirty-three unbound sheets.<sup>7</sup>

Both Fred and Ada were avid gardeners, so the gifts were thoughtful and appropriate. The portfolios served as souvenirs of Pemberton's sojourns in Victoria between stints at art school.



LEFT: Sophie Pemberton, *Berberis Aquifolium, Oregon Grape, Mahonia*, 1895, watercolour on paper, 36 x 27.6 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Common Vetch*, 1895, watercolour on paper, 27.6 x 36 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



Pemberton painted several other botanical specimens in 1900 and again in 1902 while in Victoria, but she seems not to have produced similar studies in England or abroad. It was a short-lived occupation for her: the only long-standing result was Pemberton's special affinity for erythroniums (fawn lilies), a local wildflower that, in later life, she often sketched in the margins of her letters.<sup>8</sup>

Kristina Huneault suggests that the close study involved to capture the delicate flowers may have been a meditation on identity, not unlike portraiture that "focused on exactitude of likeness and oriented toward viewer recognition. While portraiture traditionally allies identity and interiority... botanical art focuses on surface morphology... a portraitist seeks to capture an individual, the botanical artist... depicts those qualities most typical of a species group."<sup>9</sup>

Pemberton may have been introduced to botanical drawing and painting in 1882 in Victoria at the Reformed Episcopal School under Emily Henrietta Woods (1852-1916), who taught art there and who also contributed a watercolour floral bouquet in the album presented to Princess Louise. Over two decades, Woods created more than two hundred life-size botanical illustrations of wildflowers she observed, each titled with its scientific name.<sup>10</sup> This endeavour may have motivated Pemberton during her Victoria hiatuses from art school.





LEFT: Emily Henrietta Woods, *Wildflowers of Vancouver Island*, 1882, watercolour on wove paper, support: 26 x 34 cm; image: 19.7 x 25.7 cm, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Yellow Tiger Lilies*, 1902, watercolour on paper, 37.9 x 27.5 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

## DECORATIVE ART

When Pemberton was overwhelmed by family tragedies and a long convalescence during the First World War, her neighbour Victoria Sackville-West (whose daughter, Vita, was affiliated with the Bloomsbury Group) persuaded her to use her artist's skills on small, stress-free endeavours in decorative art. Sackville-West sold some of these objects at Spealls, her London shop, one of several boutiques opened by wealthy women whose personal taste dictated the inventory. There was a prevailing artistic interest in bridging the division between fine art and decorative art. As one example, the Omega Workshops (1913-19), a design enterprise founded by members of the Bloomsbury Group, offered decorative pieces that incorporated modernist principles, including painted furniture, tiles, and ceramics.<sup>11</sup>



LEFT: Lady Sackville-West, c.1916-20, photographer unknown, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Matchboxes, small containers, and miniature trays with hand-painted decoration by artist*, c.1924-50, oil paint and lacquer decoration, various dimensions, private collection.

An eccentric and flamboyant woman, Sackville-West soon had Pemberton painting on glassware and wooden furniture and designing decorative detailing for lampshades and screens. Much of this work was destined for Sackville-West's Knole House and, later, for her Brighton residence. Pemberton recorded entries in her diary such as "Painted 2 trays easy leaf design—glass dishes, the green ribbon,"<sup>12</sup> and "Finished the shelves for VS."<sup>13</sup> Occasionally the diaries also

include small sketches or notes of colour combinations. Sackville-West's diaries provide her perspective: "Sophie came yesterday afternoon and we began painting furniture for Vita & Harold's room.... The ground is blue and we decorate it with splashes of colours, encircled in gold lines.... We did 2 'Pedestals' and one chest of Drawers today."<sup>14</sup> Pemberton received compensation for her labour. Notoriously thrifty, Sackville-West sometimes paid her in books from the Knole library or with other treasured objects, including a Persian rug.

From 1918 through 1947, Pemberton parlayed her decorative work into private commissions and raising money for charity. Most popular of all were tea trays, which she painted with delicate gold filigree patterns alongside chinoiserie-style images of birds, insects, and bouquets of garden flowers, often taking inspiration from and copying the oil paintings of imaginative sixteenth-century Flemish painters. Pemberton was inspired in this form of decoration—painting over and lacquering furniture and smaller pieces—in part by the Victorian black papier-mâché furniture inlaid with mother of pearl that had been popular in her youth.



LEFT: *Papier-mâché side chair*, c.1830-60, wood, papier mâché, black lacquer, painted and gilded, mother-of-pearl, caned seat, 83.2 x 44.7 x 38.5 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton, *Tea caddy with hand-painted decoration by artist*, c.1920-30, oil paint and lacquer decoration, 13 x 19.8 x 12.5 cm, private collection.

Pemberton was always busy, as she expanded her practice to include large pieces of furniture such as desks and interior décor. In 1921 she created a Persian theme for a new haute couture shop in Victoria and, at home at Wickhurst Manor, she transformed rooms with floor-to-ceiling paintings. "One room... was painted to simulate a Persian garden in deep rich colours of blue and red,"<sup>15</sup> and the bathroom became an immersive summer garden of delphiniums.<sup>16</sup> Baroque-style immersive interiors that created a total environment were fashionable between the wars, incorporating "pleasurable shocks" and playful "momentary deceptions of *trompe l'oeil*."<sup>17</sup>



In one diary entry Pemberton described her methodology: "We went to the March's Goddendene Farnborough-Cooper & Co. Greek St Soho aniline dyes all colours 1 oz mix with methylated spirits for plaster tinting or shellac."<sup>18</sup>

Unfortunately, when Wickhurst Manor was sold, the new owner "announced her intention of having the [principal bed]room redecorated in a more conventional style."<sup>19</sup>



Sophie Pemberton painting a tray, 1946, photograph by Evie Deane-Drummond, Royal BC Museum, Victoria.





# WHERE TO SEE

**Works by Sophie Pemberton can be found in numerous public and private collections. Although the following institutions hold the works listed below, they may not always be on view. This list contains only the works held in public collections discussed and illustrated in this book.**

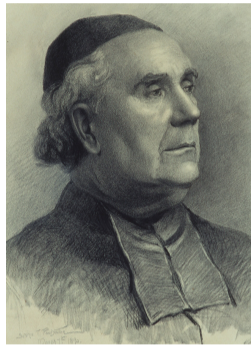


## ART GALLERY OF GREATER VICTORIA

1040 Moss Street  
 Victoria, British Columbia, Canada  
 250-384-4171  
 aggv.ca



**Sophie Pemberton,**  
*Plaster Cast, c.1890*  
 Oil on canvas  
 60.2 x 49.1 cm



**Sophie Pemberton,**  
*Portrait of a Cardinal, 1890*  
 Graphite, charcoal, and  
 Conté on paper  
 56.4 x 38 cm



**Sophie Pemberton,**  
*Mansi - An Italian, 1892*  
 Oil on canvas  
 45.7 x 35.5 cm



**Sophie Pemberton,**  
*Lucy Martineau, 1892-94*  
 Pencil on paper  
 12.7 x 8.9 cm



**Sophie Pemberton,**  
*Berberis Aquifolium,*  
*Oregon Grape,*  
*Mahonia, 1895*  
 Watercolour on paper  
 36 x 27.6 cm



**Sophie Pemberton,**  
*Common Vetch, 1895*  
 Watercolour on paper  
 27.6 x 36 cm



**Sophie Pemberton,**  
*Little Boy Blue, 1897*  
 Oil on canvas  
 76 x 50.5 cm



**Sophie Pemberton,**  
*Bibi la Purée, 1900*  
 Oil on canvas  
 116.5 x 89 cm

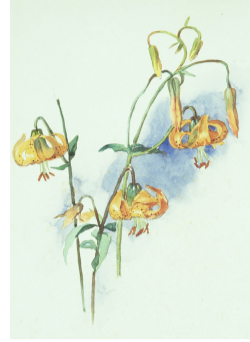




**Sophie Pemberton, *Un Livre Ouvert*, 1900**  
Oil on canvas  
166.5 x 108 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *Spring*, 1902**  
Oil on canvas  
100.5 x 142.5 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *Yellow Tiger Lilies*, 1902**  
Watercolour on paper  
37.9 x 27.5 cm



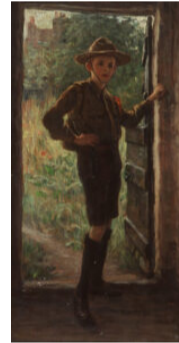
**Sophie Pemberton, *Caudebec-en-Caux*, 1903**  
Oil on canvas  
76 x 50.7 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *Time and Eternity*, 1908**  
Oil on canvas  
37 x 39 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *Colonel Schletter*, 1910**  
Oil on canvas  
36.8 x 44.3 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *Paul*, c.1912**  
Oil on canvas  
52 x 28.3 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *Weald Church, Kent*, 1915**  
Oil on canvas  
35.5 x 37.5 cm



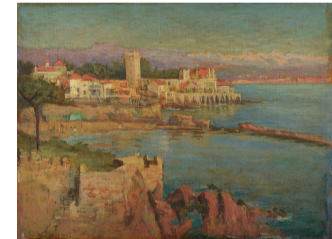
**Sophie Pemberton, *Driveway of Moulton Combe, Oak Bay*, 1921**  
Oil on canvas  
45.7 x 61.7 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *The Parrot Court, Madurai Temple, India*, 1923**  
Oil on canvas  
56.5 x 72.2 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *Horace Deane-Drummond*, 1925**  
Oil on canvas  
73.2 x 57.4 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *La Napoule Bay*, 1926**  
Oil on board  
28.1 x 35.3 cm



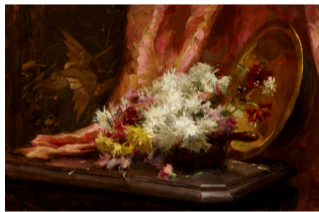
**Sophie Pemberton, *Untitled: Sketch of Lily*, c.1949-54**

Graphite and coloured pencil on paper  
8.3 x 13.2 cm

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## ART GALLERY OF HAMILTON

123 King Street West  
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada  
905-527-6610  
artgalleryofhamilton.com



**Sophie Pemberton, *Chrysanthemums*, c.1901**

Oil on canvas  
59.7 x 90.2 cm

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## LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
613-996-5115  
library-archives.canada.ca



**Sophie Pemberton, *Fire in the Forest*, c.1882**

Watercolour on wove paper  
Support: 26 x 34 cm; image: 16.8 x 26.6 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *View from Gonzales*, 1882**

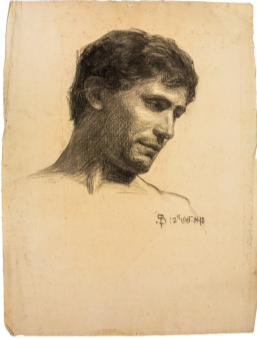
Watercolour on wove paper  
Support: 26 x 34 cm; image: 15.2 x 33.5 cm

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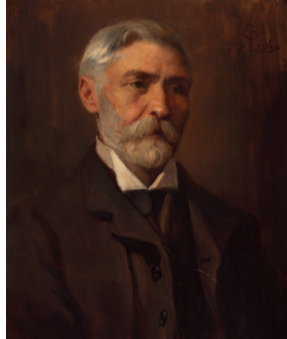


## ROYAL BC MUSEUM

675 Belleville Street  
 Victoria, British Columbia, Canada  
 250-356-7226  
 royalbcmuseum.bc.ca



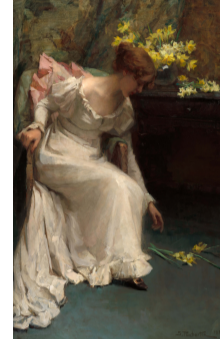
**Sophie Pemberton, *Life drawing of a male*, 1893**  
 Charcoal on paper  
 61 x 50.8 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *Benjamin William Pearse*, 1895**  
 Oil on canvas  
 60.4 x 50.2 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *Theresa Pemberton*, 1895**  
 Oil on canvas  
 60.9 x 51.4 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *Daffodils*, 1897**  
 Oil on canvas  
 162.6 x 103.2 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *Sketching Picnic*, 1902**  
 Watercolour on paper  
 26.5 x 47.9 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *View over Victoria*, c.1902**  
 Watercolour on paper  
 15.8 x 38 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *Henri Joly de Lotbinière*, 1906**  
 Oil on canvas  
 118.1 x 75.9 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *Sarah, Lady Crease*, 1907**  
 Oil on canvas  
 92.8 x 73.4 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *Pen and ink stand with hand-painted decoration by artist*, 1921**  
 Oil paint with lacquer and abalone inlay decoration  
 11 x 36 x 29.5 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *Serving tray with hand-painted decoration by artist*, 1921**  
 Oil paint and lacquer decoration  
 55 x 68 x 7 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *Writing desk with hand-painted decoration by artist*, n.d.**  
 Oil paint with lacquered, gilded, and inlay decorations  
 179 x 74.9 x 72.3 cm

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## ROYAL JUBILEE HOSPITAL

1952 Bay Street  
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada  
250-370-8000  
[islandhealth.ca/our-locations/hospitals-health-centre-locations/royal-jubilee-hospital-rjh](http://islandhealth.ca/our-locations/hospitals-health-centre-locations/royal-jubilee-hospital-rjh)



**Sophie Pemberton, *Angels Mural*,  
1909**

82.5 x 150.5 cm

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## VANCOUVER ART GALLERY

750 Hornby Street  
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada  
604-662-4700  
[vanartgallery.bc.ca](http://vanartgallery.bc.ca)



**Sophie Pemberton, *Cowichan Valley*, 1891**

Oil on canvas  
48.4 x 38.2 cm



**Sophie Pemberton, *Portrait of Dolly Mortimer-Lamb*, 1904**

Oil on canvas  
51 x 40.5 cm

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## NOTES

### BIOGRAPHY

1. See N. de Bertrand Lugin, *The Pioneer Women of Vancouver Island 1843-1866* (Victoria 1928), 284-88; and Harriet Susan Sampson, "Joseph Despard Pemberton," *BC Historical Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (1941): 111, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/pemberton\\_joseph\\_despard\\_12E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/pemberton_joseph_despard_12E.html).
2. Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40, documents her career through newspaper clippings, press reviews, exhibition catalogues, correspondence, and memorabilia. Private collection.
3. "A Souvenir of Victoria," now disassembled, is at Library and Archives Canada, 156539, 1974-018 PIC. Princess Louise, one of Queen Victoria's daughters, was married to the Marquess of Lorne, governor general of Canada from 1878 to 1883.
4. See Josephine Crease, *Daily diaries, 1877*, BC Archives, MS-02879; Emily Carr, *The Book of Small* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004); and "A Bicycle Trip Along the Cowichan, 1895," National Gallery of Canada, 42433.1-12. The Carr, Pemberton, and Wylde families all attended the Reformed Episcopal Church of Our Lord, providing a further link between these girls.
5. The Misses Pletts, 9 Sussex Square, Brighton, ran this school for girls. See UK Census 1881, 1891: <https://search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=GBC%2F1881%2F4307326%2F00230&parentid=GBC%2F1881%2F0005211319>.
6. Aunt Grautoff to Ada Pemberton, July 10, 1885, BC Archives, MS-02365.
7. This description of Mrs. Ward's Art Classes for Ladies is included in Tessa Mackenzie, *Art Schools of London, 1895*, 80: <https://archive.org/details/artschoolslondon>.
8. Joseph Despard Pemberton to Henry Grautoff, February 24, 1893, BC Archives, MS-03035.
9. Her father considered woodworking as important as painting: "The wood carving must of course not be neglected." Joseph Despard Pemberton to Sophie Pemberton, March 13, 1893, BC Archives, MS-03035.
10. Joseph Despard Pemberton to Sophie Pemberton, March 13, 1893, and June 28, 1893, BC Archives, MS-03035.
11. Joseph Despard Pemberton to Sophie Pemberton, July 29, 1893, BC Archives, MS-03035.



12. The South Kensington Schools in London became the Royal College of Art (RCA) in 1896: <https://inaminuteago.com/the-va-and-the-south-kensingtonsystem-for-art-studies>; <https://victorianweb.org/art/institutions/1.html>.
13. The certificates are in Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40.
14. Joseph Despard Pemberton to Sophie Pemberton, July 29, 1893, BC Archives, MS-03035.
15. The terms ran September 15 through June 30, with "a few days' vacation at Christmas." Mackenzie, *Art Schools of London*, 83.
16. Queen Alexandra's House, informally "Alexandra House," situated about 4 kilometres from Tufton Street, was built in 1884 as a residence for women attending art and music schools: <https://www.queenalex.com/history/>.
17. Joseph Despard Pemberton to Sophie Pemberton, July 1893, BC Archives, MS-03035.
18. In 1894 Sophie's mother commissioned him to paint her portrait, which is known only by a photograph in BC Archives, Album C 198703-004, and instructions in her mother's will.
19. Theresa Pemberton to Frederick Bernard Pemberton, July 16, 1894, private collection.
20. Josephine Crease, Diary, January 16, 1896, BC Archives, MS-02879.
21. They include Benjamin William Pearse, Canon William Francis Locke Paddon, Bishop Edward Cridge, and Senator William Macdonald, the latter known only by a photograph in Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40.
22. Letter from AAM to Sophie Pemberton, March 6, 1895, Glory Book, c.1904-40. Neither painting has surfaced since then, possibly confirming that both were sold. Other Canadian friends also exhibited there: Sydney Strickland Tully with a pastel; and Florence Carlyle with *La vieille Victorine*, 1894. "The Spring Exhibition," *Montreal Star*, March 7, 1895.
23. Last will and testament of Joseph Despard Pemberton.
24. Victorians visiting London often connected with each other. In a letter on January 19, 1900, Emily Carr mentioned her intention to see Pemberton, City of Victoria Archives, Pr76 26.
25. This phrase originated in a letter from W. St. John to Ada Pemberton, December 20, 1895, BC Archives, MS-02365.
26. For instance, Pemberton is cited in the "Directory of Artists" who exhibited in 1897. See *The Year's Art 1898: A Concise Epitome of All Matters Relating to the Arts of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, and to Schools of Design*, comp.





A.C.R. Carter (London: J.S. Virtue, 1898), 400, and other published sources including post office directories.

27. *The Women's Signal*, June 3, 1897, 341. Pemberton and Anna Nordgren attended a meeting of women's suffrage organizations in London on May 26, 1897. Nordgren painted portraits of Pemberton's mother and her sister: <https://search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl%2f0002232%2f18970603%2f025&stringtohighlight=nordgren>.

28. *Lady's Pictorial*, May 28, 1898.

29. See Jane R. Becker, *Overcoming All Obstacles: The Women at the Académie Julian* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1999).

30. She lived in a furnished apartment at Hotel de l'Univers et du Portugal, 10, rue Croix des Petits Champs—a fifteen-minute walk from the studios.

31. *Journal des Artistes*, November 1898, Paris: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4577635c/f5.item.zoom>.

32. *Journal des Artistes*, March 5, 1899.

33. An undated clipping from *Beaux Arts Magazine* in 1899 has an image of Pemberton's winning portrait. See Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40.

34. "Julian's Studios: An Interview with Their Creator," *The Sketch: A Journal of Art and Actuality*, June 28, 1893.

35. *Journal des Artistes*, May 6, 1900.

36. Sophie Pemberton to Ada Pemberton, February 27, 1900, BC Archives, MS-02365. *The Official Catalogue of the Canadian Section. Paris International Exhibition, 1900* (Ottawa: Department of Agriculture, 1900?) mentions only "works of art," with no itemization. Pemberton's fellow exhibitors included Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté, Grace Plimsoll, and Lillie Cameron: <https://www.canadiana-ca.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/view/oocihm.91770/114?r=0&s=1>.

37. "Exhibition of Paintings," *British Colonist*, January 16, 1902. *The Twilight of the Lilies* is known today only as a photographic image. Pemberton seems to have missed the deadline for the Royal Academy. *John O'Dreams* appeared in the 1903 exhibition there.

38. Sophie Pemberton to Flora Alexandrina Burns, January 6, 1903, BC Archives, MS-02786.

39. Sophie Pemberton to Flora Alexandrina Burns, June 9, 1903, BC Archives, MS-02786.

40. Pemberton's meetings with Mortimer-Lamb in Victoria, Montreal, and London are found in her Diary, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, SC1227; and in



correspondence, BC Archives, MS-01295, MS-02834. Pemberton paintings received from Mortimer-Lamb are in the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

41. An executive member of the Natural History Society, Beanlands was instrumental in commissioning Pemberton to paint a posthumous portrait of the museum curator John Fannin, for which she received \$100. Minutes of the Victoria Natural History Society, BC Archives, PR-0528.

42. Sophie Pemberton to Flora Alexandrina Burns, April 6, 1903, BC Archives, MS-02786.

43. Sophie Beanlands, "Models I Have Known: Bibi la Purée," *Westward Ho!* July 1907; "Models I Have Known: John Minards," *Westward Ho!* October 1907.

44. Today the portraits are located as follows: Lieutenant Governor Henri Joly de Lotbinière (BC Archives), June Chaplin (unknown), Sarah, Lady Crease (BC Archives), and Henry P.P. Crease (BC Archives).

45. "R.C.A. Officers," *The Gazette*, May 7, 1906. Apparently, a miscommunication about submission dates resulted in the rejection of her earlier application.

46. *British Colonist*, April 23, 1905.

47. *British Colonist*, March 12 and April 4, 1908.

48. *Daily Colonist*, August 7, 1908.

49. *The Queen*, May 22, 1909. The distinguished patronage listed on the small catalogue includes Lord Strathcona, the Canadian high commissioner, but also members of the royal family and peerage. See *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Sketches of Victoria British Columbia by Mrs Beanlands*, Doré Gallery, 1909. Notes in Sophie Pemberton, Daily scripture book, BC Archives, MS-02786, MS-01295. Many British Columbians attended the private opening of the exhibition. *The Province*, June 5, 1909.

50. *Studio International* 47, no. 195 (1909): 129.

51. *Daily Express*, May 26, 1909.

52. Notes in Sophie Pemberton, Daily scripture book, October 1909, BC Archives, MS-01295.

53. This painting was lost in transit on its return to England.

54. Portraits of Colonel Schletter (Art Gallery of Greater Victoria) and of Maud Chaplin (unknown).

55. Sophie Pemberton to Ada Beaven, November 1912, BC Archives, MS-02365; March 27, 1914, "Suffrage Service League," *The Vote* magazine.





56. Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Hurst practised after the war at Seale Hayne Military Hospital near Newton Abbot. He accepted Pemberton as a patient in March 1919 and wrote of her case in Arthur F. Hurst, ed., *Seale Hayne Neurological Studies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1920), 195.

57. Pemberton used these words later on his memorial tablet. *Gloucester Journal*, November 8, 1930.

58. Sophie Pemberton to Fred Pemberton, February 7, 1921, BC Archives, MS-01950.

59. Maria Tippet, *Emily Carr: A Biography* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2006), 126-27.

60. Deane-Drummond died in Scotland. He left his estate to his children but stipulated that Pemberton should receive £500 and, if she chose, the use of their home for life. "Local Wills," *Cheltenham Chronicle*, August 23, 1930.

61. "Exhibit Emphasizes Versatility of Artist," *Victoria Daily Times*, August 10, 1949.

#### KEY WORKS: LIFE DRAWING OF A MALE

1. The South Kensington Schools became the Royal College of Art in 1896: <https://inaminuteago.com/the-va-and-the-south-kensington-system-for-art-studies/https://victorianweb.org/art/institutions/1.html>.

2. Tessa Mackenzie, *Art Schools of London, 1895, 76*: <https://archive.org/details/artschoolslondon>.

#### KEY WORKS: DAFFODILS

1. Jopling ran a respected art school in London that Joseph Pemberton asked his daughter to consider before she settled on the Westminster School of Art. Jopling wrote a book on art instruction and was active in women's suffrage activities.

2. *Academy Notes*, Issue 23 (London: Chatto and Windus, 1897), 33: <https://books.google.ca/books?id=VsQqAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA4&pg=PA4&dq=anna+nordgren+and+pemberton&source=bl&ots=PxF7NfRxHN&sig=zLVLWtCWiy1pwMDiMmulTsNmIDs&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjL3f6e5OfbAhWrJDQIHqzBY0Q6AEIczAQ#v=onepage&q=anna%20nordgren%20and%20pemberton&f=false>. The eleven galleries for paintings included approximately 1,100 individual oil paintings, and at least that number would have been rejected by the jury. A further 600 watercolours were exhibited in a separate room. *Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts 129* (London: Clowes and Sons, 1897).

3. *Chelsea Mail*, May 7, 1897, clipping in Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40.

4. *Lady's Pictorial*, May 29, 1897, clipping in Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40.



# SOPHIE PEMBERTON

Life & Work by Kathryn Bridge

## KEY WORKS: LITTLE BOY BLUE

1. *Lady's Pictorial*, May 28, 1898, clipping in Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40.
2. It is unlikely that the change in title indicated a hidden meaning. Katerina Atanassova, ed., *Canada and Impressionism: New Horizons* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2019).

## KEY WORKS: BIBI LA PURÉE

1. Sophie Beanlands, "Models I Have Known: Bibi la Purée," *Westward Ho!* July 1907.
2. Sophie Beanlands, "Models I Have Known: Bibi la Purée," *Westward Ho!* July 1907.
3. *Womanhood*, June 1904, clipping in Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40.
4. *Illustrated London News*, May 21, 1904, clipping in Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40.
5. *Truth*, June 2, 1904, clipping in Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40.
6. Pemberton sometimes wrote this da Vinci quote (and others) on the verso of sketches or in her diaries.

## KEY WORKS: UN LIVRE OUVERT

1. *Victoria Daily Times*, June 20, 1901.
2. Review in *L'Européen*, May 16, 1903, clipping in Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40 (author's translation).
3. "The Royal Canadian Academy: A Critical Review," *The News*, March 31, 1904.

## KEY WORKS: SPRING

1. *Untitled*, 1902, is in the collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.
2. "Agricultural Fair, Victoria," *The Colonist*, September 25, 1904.
3. Marie Bashkirtseff, *Journal de Marie Bashkirtseff* (Paris: G. Charpentier et Cie, 1887), entry for May 1883.

## KEY WORKS: CAUDEBEC-EN-CAUX

1. Sophie Pemberton to Flora Alexandrina Burns, Monday, August 17 or 24, 1903.
2. "Exhibition of Fine Paintings," *Daily News Advertiser*, October 21, 1904.
3. For letters by Frances Hodgkins in Caudebec, see <https://completefranceshodgkins.com/objects/32590/caudebec-en-caux>.
4. Frances Hodgkins to Kate Rattray, Caudebec, August 27, 1901, Correspondence of Frances Hodgkins and family / collected by Isabel Field,





Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand, Ref: MS-Papers-0085-10,  
<https://natlib.govt.nz/records/22587964>.

## KEY WORKS: MOSQUITO ISLAND

1. "Art," *The Week*, May 4, 1907.
2. "Excellent Landscape," *Victoria Times*, May 1, 1907.
3. Mosquito Island was unexpectedly found in a private home in Wales by American visitors who recognized the distinctive Mount Baker in the painting. They acquired the painting and brought it to the Pacific Northwest.

## KEY WORKS: TIME AND ETERNITY

1. This review was written in London by an unidentified individual with the byline "Canada." "British Columbia Artist," *The Province*, June 12, 1909.
2. "The Doré Galleries," *What's On*, May 22, 1909, clipping in Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40.

## SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

1. Mary Daniell, "Fostering British Columbia Art," *Opportunities* magazine, 1911, reprinted in *The Gold Stripe 2*, May 1919, <http://www.sim-publishing.com/bca/opportu1.htm>.
2. *British Colonist*, November 25, 1906.
3. Newspaper clipping, *Indian & Telegraph*, June 19, 1909, pasted in Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40.
4. The certificate is pasted into Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40.
5. Joseph Despard Pemberton to Sophie Pemberton, July 29, 1893, BC Archives, MS-03035.
6. Joseph Despard Pemberton Junior to Theresa Pemberton, November 14, 1893, BC Archives, MS-02365.
7. Frederick Bernard Pemberton to William Curtis Ward, March 20, 1894, private collection.
8. *Victoria Daily Times*, June 16, 1900. The Pemberton family lived at their property, Gonzales, in the Oak Bay area of Victoria.
9. *The Province*, June 5, 1897.
10. Samantha Burton, "Canadian Girls in London: Negotiating Home and Away in the British World at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," PhD dissertation, McGill University, 2011; Susan Butlin, "A New Matrix of the Arts: A History of the Professionalization of Women Artists in Canada, 1880-1914," PhD dissertation, Carleton University, 2008; Kristina Huneault, *I'm Not Myself at All: Women, Art,*



and *Subjectivity in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018).

11. Joseph Despard Pemberton to Sophie Pemberton, February 23, 1893, BC Archives, MS-03035.

12. Kathryn Bridge, *Emily Carr in England* (Victoria: Royal BC Museum, 2014).

13. Christina Johnson-Dean, "The Crease Family and the Arts in Victoria, British Columbia," MA thesis, University of Victoria, 1980.

14. Sophie Pemberton to Amélie Beaury-Saurel, postmarked June 2, 1905, National Archives of France, Cote 63/AS/26.

15. Sophie Pemberton, Diary, May 7, 1914, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, SC1227. Constance Gore-Booth was now Countess Markievicz, a prominent figure in the Irish Independence movement.

16. Sophie Pemberton to Amélie Beaury-Saurel, postmarked June 2, 1905, National Archives of France, Cote 63/AS/26.

17. Sophie Pemberton, Diary, May 14, 1910, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, SC1227.

18. Partial letter from Victoria Sackville-West to Sophie Pemberton, January 1, 1918, pasted into Pemberton, Diary, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, SC1227.

19. There is no conclusive documentation that Emily Carr contacted Pemberton (who returned to London from Paris between terms) while Carr attended the Westminster School of Art, 1899-1901. On January 19, 1900, Carr wrote to Nellie Laundry in Victoria, "I have not yet seen anything of Sophie." See Bridge, *Emily Carr in England*, 27.

20. Imre Kiralfy, ed., *Women's Exhibition, 1900: Official Fine Art, Historical and General Catalogue* (London: Spottiswoode, 1900), 18.

21. Sophie Pemberton, Diary, November 30, 1919, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, SC1227.

22. Sophie Pemberton to Amélie Beaury-Saurel, postmarked June 2, 1905, National Archives of France, Cote 63/AS/26 (author's translation).

23. This description has been repeated ever since the publication of Colin Graham, "Introduction," in *Sophie Pemberton Retrospective* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1954).

24. *Victoria Times*, February 27, 1954.

25. See Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" in *Art and Sexual Politics: Women's Liberation, Women Artists, and Art History*, ed. Thomas B. Hess and Elizabeth C. Baker (New York: Collier, 1973), 44; Rozsika





Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, 3rd ed. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013); Natalie Luckyj, *From Women's Eyes: Women Painters in Canada* (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1976); Kristina Huneault and Janice Anderson, eds., *Rethinking Professionalism: Women and Art in Canada, 1850-1970* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012).

26. See Katerina Atanassova, ed., *Canada and Impressionism: New Horizons, 1880-1930* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2019).

## STYLE & TECHNIQUE

1. Pemberton wrote on the verso of the frame that she completed the painting at art school between October 31 and November 26, 1892.

2. *Lady's Pictorial*, May 28, 1898.

3. Newspaper clipping, May 28, 1898, pasted in Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40.

4. Pemberton first encountered John Minards and his son, two Polperro fishermen, in 1893. The painting was exhibited at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1900.

5. "Artists and Their Work," *Victoria Daily Times*, August 15, 1908.

6. *Studio International* 47, no. 195 (June 5, 1909): 129.

7. The album Pemberton presented to Fred Pemberton is at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1995.024.001; the album for Ada Pemberton is at the BC Archives, PDP03330. She gave other botanical illustrations paired with verse to her friend Flora Burns in 1900 and her brother Joe in 1902 (both in the collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria).

8. Kristina Huneault, "Botanical Albums as Theoretical Objects: Sophie Pemberton and the Logic of Identity," in *Flora's Fieldworkers*, ed. Ann Shtier (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022), 281-82. See also Kristina Huneault, *I'm Not Myself At All: Women, Art, and Subjectivity in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018), 201.

9. Huneault, "Botanical Albums as Theoretical Objects," 281-82.

10. These albums are in the collection of the BC Archives, PDP03898, PDP05531.

11. For information on Spealls, see Vita Sackville-West, *Pepita* (New York: Doubleday, 1937).

12. Sophie Pemberton, *Diary*, September 14, 1918, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, SC1227.



13. Sophie Pemberton, Diary, April 11, 1919, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, SC1227.
14. Victoria Sackville-West, Diary, May 19, 1918, Indiana University Libraries, LMC 1896.
15. Nicholas Tuele, *Sophia Theresa Pemberton (1869-1959)* (Victoria: Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1978), 26.
16. Sophie Pemberton, Diary, June 9 and 13, 1919, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, SC1227.
17. Jane Stevenson, "Introduction," in *Baroque Between the Wars: Alternative Style in the Arts, 1918-1939* (Oxford Scholarship Online, January 2018), 8.
18. Sophie Pemberton, Diary, July 13, 1919, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, SC1227. The "March's" refer to the studio of sculptors Elsie March and her brothers.
19. *Victoria Daily Times*, December 28, 1922.





## GLOSSARY

### **academic tradition**

Associated with the royal academies of art established in France and England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries respectively, the academic tradition emphasized drawing, painting, and sculpture in a style highly influenced by ancient classical art. Subject matter for painting was hierarchically ranked, with history painting of religious, mythological, allegorical, and historical figures holding the position of greatest importance, followed, in order, by genre painting, portraiture, still lifes, and landscapes.

### **Académie Julian**

A private art school established by Rodolphe Julian in Paris in 1868. Among the many Canadian artists who studied there are Maurice Cullen, J.W. Morrice, Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté, A.Y. Jackson, and Clarence Gagnon.

### **Art Association of Montreal (AAM)**

An institution founded in 1860 by Bishop Francis Fulford (1803–1868) alongside a group of Montreal art collectors, as an offshoot of the Montreal Society of Artists (itself dating to 1847). The Art Association of Montreal organized art shows throughout the city before establishing its permanent headquarters in downtown Montreal. It was renamed the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in 1950, now one of the most visited art museums in Canada.

### **Barbizon**

From the 1830s to the 1870s, Barbizon (a village on the edge of the forest of Fontainebleau near Paris) was a gathering place for French landscape painters who rejected the academic style in favour of realism. This informal group, later known as the Barbizon school, emphasized painting *en plein air*, in and directly from nature, setting the path for Impressionism. Major artists include Théodore Rousseau, Jean-François Millet, and Camille Corot.

### **Beatty, J.W. (Canadian, 1869–1941)**

An influential painter and educator at the Ontario College of Art (now OCAD University), Toronto, who sought to develop a uniquely Canadian style of painting. Beatty was a contemporary of Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven, though his painting style retained more traditional aesthetics than their work did. His most renowned painting, *The Evening Cloud of the Northland*, 1910, is held at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

### **Beury-Saurel, Amélie (French, 1849–1924)**

Primarily a portrait painter and an arts educator, Amélie Beury-Saurel taught at and oversaw the Académie Julian in Paris after marrying her husband, founder Rodolphe Julian. She became the director after his death in 1907. Beury-Saurel was awarded the Legion of Honour in 1923 for her dedication to arts education.

### **Bloomsbury Group**

An informal group of writers, artists, and intellectuals who met regularly at the home of Vanessa Bell (the sister of Virginia Woolf) in London, England. They discussed and shared innovative ideas on aesthetics, literature, economics, politics, feminism, and sexuality, which are considered to have influenced



modern attitudes and art; however, the group is often criticized for their elitist lifestyles. Notable members include Clive Bell, Roger Fry, John Maynard Keynes, Edward Morgan Forster, and Virginia Woolf.

### **botanical drawings**

A form of rendering plant life with detailed accuracy as a way of visually recording and identifying various plant species, botanical drawings generally depict specific plant characteristics, germination processes, and, oftentimes, dissections.

### **Brown, Eric (British/Canadian, 1877–1939)**

As the first director of the National Gallery of Canada, Brown held the position from 1912 until his death. Earlier, he had been curator of the gallery's collection, at the invitation of Sir Edmund Walker, a banker and major patron of the arts. Brown was a passionate builder of the gallery's collections, both international and Canadian, and travelled often to Europe to make contacts with artists and dealers.

### **Carlyle, Florence (Canadian, 1864–1923)**

Major Canadian landscape and figure painter. Carlyle is known for her nuanced and Tonalist-inspired depictions of women. She studied in France with the encouragement of Paul Peel, later moved to New York, travelled extensively throughout Europe, and finally settled in England in 1912. Her work can be found in the collections of the Art Gallery of Ontario, the National Gallery of Canada, the Parliament Buildings, and the Woodstock Art Gallery.

### **Carr, Emily (Canadian, 1871–1945)**

A pre-eminent B.C.-based artist and writer, Carr is renowned today for her bold and vibrant images of both the Northwest Coast landscape and its Indigenous peoples. Educated in California, England, and France, she was influenced by a variety of modern art movements but ultimately developed a unique aesthetic style. She was one of the first West Coast artists to achieve national recognition. (See *Emily Carr: Life & Work* by Lisa Baldissera.)

### **cartoon sketch**

A preparatory drawing on paper to assist with the transfer of large images to a wall or canvas. In a cartoon sketch, the drawing would be to scale; this would facilitate an accurate and detailed rendering onto the subsequent surface. An artist would then outline the drawing with pin pricks then mark the holes with powder to replicate the image on the surface.

### **chiaroscuro**

A term that refers, at its most general, to an artist's use of light and dark and the visual effects thus produced in a painting, engraving, or drawing. Chiaroscuro can serve to create atmosphere, describe volume, and imitate natural light effects. From the Italian *chiaro* (light) and *scuro* (dark).

### **chinoiserie**

A European style of art and decoration that is an interpretation and imitation of Chinese and other East Asian arts. Related to Orientalism, which is the generalizing and patronizing view of non-Western cultures, chinoiserie first



appeared in the seventeenth century. The style is characteristic of Asian motifs, including stereotypical Asian figures, pagodas, animals, extensive gilding, lacquering, and blue-and-white decoration typical in porcelain.

**Cope, Arthur (Stockdale) (British, 1857–1940)**

The son of history and genre painter Charles West Cope, Arthur Cope was a portraitist and an arts educator. He most notably painted portraits of public and royal figures, including Kings Edward VII and George V. Cope was appointed a fellow of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters in 1900, elected to the Royal Academician in 1910, and knighted in 1917.

**Crease, Josephine (Canadian, 1864–1947)**

The daughter of artist Sarah, Lady Crease, Josephine Crease was a watercolourist known for her paintings of the British Columbian landscape. She was among the founders of the British Columbia-based Island Arts and Crafts Society and served as its president in 1939.

**decorative art**

Decorative art encompasses the design and decoration of objects that are both aesthetic and functional. Craft and applied arts are often considered synonyms. The scope of decorative art objects is wide, including items such as basketry, ceramics, furniture, glassware, jewellery, and textiles.

**De l'Aubinière, Constant (French, 1842–1910)**

Constant de l'Aubinière was a painter and an arts lecturer. He and his artist wife Georgina de l'Aubinière travelled to North America in 1882, where they painted and lectured across the United States and Canada. In 1887, the couple were commissioned to create fourteen paintings for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee

**De l'Aubinière, Georgina (British, 1848–1930)**

A painter working primarily with watercolours, Georgina de l'Aubinière was the daughter of artist John Steeple. She studied both in England and France, and she exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy of Arts in London, England. She travelled to North America with her husband, fellow artist Constant de l'Aubinière. There, the couple painted landscapes—including those of British Columbia—operated an art studio, and lectured artists such as Josephine Crease.

**École des beaux-arts**

A major institution in nineteenth-century France, the École des beaux-arts has its origins in the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture established by Louis XIV in 1648. This academy was suppressed during the French Revolution, and the École was established in 1819, becoming the new national art school. It was based on an atelier system in which students worked in studios with different master artists, learning to draw in the academic tradition and participating in regular competitions.

***en plein air***

French for "in the open air," *en plein air* is used to describe the practice of painting or sketching outdoors to observe nature, and in particular the changing effects of weather, atmosphere, and light.



## **Exposition Universelle**

The French term for a large international exhibition that showcases national achievements in areas such as industrialization, agriculture, exports, and art. Known as the World's Fair in English, these public exhibitions were popularized in the nineteenth century and had great influence on tourism, art and design, and international relations.

## **Fauvism**

The style of the Fauves (French for "wild beasts"), a group of painters who took their name from a derogatory phrase used by the French journalist Louis Vauxcelles. As a historical movement, Fauvism began at the controversial Salon d'Automne in 1905, and ended less than five years later, in early 1910. Fauvism was characterized by bold, unmixed colours, obvious brush strokes, and a subjective approach to representation. Among the most important of the Fauves were Henri Matisse, André Derain, and Maurice de Vlaminck.

## **genre painting**

This term refers to paintings that depict scenes of everyday life. Genre paintings were first popularized in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, and typical subject matter includes domestic chores, rural life, and socializing.

## **Gore-Booth, Constance (Irish, 1868–1927)**

Although Constance Gore-Booth was an artist, she is more widely known as a politician and suffragist. She studied painting at the Académie Julian; later on, she was actively involved in Irish nationalist politics, eventually becoming the first woman elected to the Parliament of the United Kingdom in 1918 and the first female cabinet minister in Europe as the Minister for Labour.

## **Hamilton, Mary Riter (Canadian, 1873–1954)**

After studying painting in Berlin and Paris in the early years of the twentieth century, Mary Riter Hamilton established herself as an artist in Europe before returning to Canada. During the First World War, she petitioned to be sent to the front lines as an official war artist but was denied. Instead, she travelled to Europe in 1918 to spend three years painting the war's aftermath. She produced over three hundred works in an Impressionist style, depicting battlefields in France and Belgium.

## **Hodgkins, Frances (New Zealander/British, 1869–1947)**

A watercolourist and art teacher who from 1901 studied and painted in Britain, North Africa, and Europe, spending more than ten years in Paris. Hodgkins settled in England, where she was associated with the Seven and Five Society, a group of modernist painters and sculptors whose work, like hers, moved from traditional styles toward abstraction.

## **impasto**

Paint applied so thickly that it stands out in relief and retains the marks of the brush or palette knife.





## Impressionism

A highly influential art movement that originated in France in the 1860s, Impressionism is associated with the emergence of modern urban European society. Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and other Impressionists rejected the subjects and formal rigours of academic art in favour of scenes of nature and daily life and the careful rendering of atmospheric effects. They often painted outdoors.

### **Julian, Rodolphe (French, 1839–1907)**

A painter, an arts educator, and the founder and director of the Académie Julian in Paris. Active from 1868 to 1968, the Académie Julian was a private art school that offered training in fine art for those who had limited access to official academies, such as international artists or women.

### **Lyall, Laura Muntz (Canadian, 1860–1930)**

A painter specializing in evocative portraits of motherhood and childhood, Lyall was one of the first women artists in Canada to receive international attention. She trained with J.W.L. Forster in Hamilton and at the Académie Colarossi in Paris. Lyall's works convey intimate and sympathetic family scenes with a rich sense of colour and light.

### **Matisse, Henri (French, 1869–1954)**

A painter, sculptor, printmaker, draftsman, and designer, aligned at different times with the Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, and Fauvists. By the 1920s he was, with Pablo Picasso, one of the most famous painters of his generation, known for his remarkable use of colour and line.

### **McNicoll, Helen (Canadian, 1879–1915)**

McNicoll is recognized for popularizing Impressionism in Canada. Born into a wealthy Anglophone family in Montreal, she studied with William Brymner at the Art Association of Montreal and the Slade School of Fine Art in London, and worked in numerous artist colonies across Europe with her close friend and fellow artist Dorothea Sharp. Her works—depicting rural landscapes, childhood subjects, and modern women—are known for their bright quality of light. (See *Helen McNicoll: Life & Work* by Samantha Burton.)

### **Michelangelo (Italian, 1475–1564)**

A sculptor, painter, architect, engineer, and poet during the High Renaissance, Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni was renowned during his lifetime and is considered one of the greatest artists in history. His best-known works include the sculptures *David*, 1501–04, and *Pietà*, 1498–99, the frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, and his design for the dome of St. Peter's Basilica, Rome.

## modernism

A movement extending from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century across artistic disciplines, modernism rejected academic traditions in favour of innovative styles developed in response to contemporary industrialized society. Modernist movements in the visual arts have included Gustave Courbet's Realism, and later Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, and on to abstraction. By the 1960s, anti-authoritarian postmodernist styles such as Pop



art, Conceptual art, and Neo-Expressionism blurred the distinction between high art and mass culture.

### **Monet, Claude (French, 1840–1926)**

A founder of the Impressionist movement in France, Monet created landscapes and seascapes that are among the canonical works of Western art. Introduced to *plein air* painting as a teenager, Monet returned to it throughout his life as a means of exploring the atmospheric effects and perceptual phenomena that so interested him as an artist.

### **Mortimer-Lamb, Harold (British/Canadian, 1872–1970)**

Although Lamb's career was in the mining industry, he was also an art critic. In appreciative articles in *The Canadian Magazine* and Britain's *The Studio*, to introduce the Group of Seven. As a photographer and collector of paintings, ceramics, and photography, he co-founded the Vanderpant Galleries in Vancouver and played a leading role in the Vancouver art scene. He helped found the Vancouver Art Gallery. (See Robert Amos's 2013 book *Harold Mortimer-Lamb: The Art Lover*.)

### **Nordgren, Anna (Swedish, 1847–1916)**

A painter known for genre paintings and portraiture, Anna Nordgren was one of the first women enrolled in the Royal Swedish Academy of Art. She also studied at the Académie Julian, a private arts school in Paris. In 1891 she founded London's 91 Art Club for women artists.

### **Old Master**

A vague and gendered term given to seminal artists who worked in Europe before the 1800s. During this time, artists trained in a guild system, where some pupils became independent "masters." The term is not limited to a particular style, and some old masters include Leonardo da Vinci, Rembrandt van Rijn, Diego Velázquez, and Eugene Delacroix.

### **painterly**

A characteristic or quality of a painting where the brushwork is intentionally visible. Colour, brushwork, and texture render form in painterly works. Artists whose oeuvre would be considered painterly include Vincent Van Gogh, Claude Monet, and Tom Thomson.

### **Paris Salon**

Beginning in 1667, the Paris Salon was a juried annual or biennial exhibition held at the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture (later the Académie des beaux-arts). It became the major marker of prominence for artists, especially between 1748 and 1890, and was known for its crammed display of paintings, covering the walls from floor to ceiling. Through exposure and the connections to patrons and commissions, artists' careers could be made by their inclusion in the Salon.

### **Pissarro, Camille (Danish/French, 1830–1903)**

An influential art teacher and innovator who was largely self-taught, Pissarro was born in Saint Thomas (now the U.S. Virgin Islands) and moved to Paris in 1855.





He participated in all eight Impressionist exhibitions, but in the 1880s his style tended to Post-Impressionism, and he explored the technique of Pointillism.

### **plaster cast**

A copy of a sculpture created by a direct imprint or mould of the sculpture in negative space. When the mould is set and removed from the sculpture, plaster is poured into the mould, which when dried results in a perfect replica of the original sculpture. The use of a plaster cast facilitates wider access to study antiquities.

### **Post-Impressionism**

A French-borne art movement that was developed in the late nineteenth century and built upon the preceding Impressionist movement. Practitioners rejected the naturalistic use of light and colour and infused their works with more abstract qualities, emphasizing harsher lines and shapes, a heavier use of paint and pigment, and expressive, thickly textured brush strokes. Key figures include Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, and Paul Cézanne.

### **realism/Realism**

A style of art in which subjects are depicted as factually as possible. The art style “realism” is not to be confused with “Realism”, a nineteenth-century art movement, led by Gustave Courbet, concerned with the representation of daily modern life rather than mythological, religious, or historical subjects.

### **Renaissance**

The term used since the nineteenth century to refer to the Western art historical period from approximately 1400 to 1600. The Renaissance is associated with the return to classical style in art and architecture, following the medieval period.

### **Royal Academy of Arts**

Established in 1768, the Royal Academy of Arts in London was a central art institution that, along with the Paris Salon, could exert tremendous influence on an artist’s career. By the mid-nineteenth century, European avant-garde movements such as Impressionism began to diminish the power held by the Royal Academy and similar institutions.

### **Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (RCA)**

An organization of professional artists and architects modelled after national academies long present in Europe, such as the Royal Academy of Arts in the U.K. (founded in 1768) and the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture in Paris (founded in 1648).

### **Slade School of Fine Art**

Established at University College London, England, in 1871 through a bequest by philanthropist Felix Slade, the school was envisioned as a place where fine art would be studied within a wider liberal arts environment. The Slade boasts many prominent past teachers and students, including Henry Tonks, Lucian Freud, Augustus John, and Dora Carrington. The school still operates today.



## **Thomson, Tom (Canadian, 1877–1917)**

A seminal figure in the creation of a national school of painting, Thomson is known for a bold vision of Algonquin Park–aligned stylistically with Post-Impressionism and Art Nouveau—that has come to symbolize both the Canadian landscape and Canadian landscape painting. Thomson and the members of what would in 1920 become the Group of Seven profoundly influenced one another’s work. (See *Tom Thomson: Life & Work* by David P. Silcox.)

### ***trompe l’oeil***

French for “deceives the eye,” *trompe l’oeil* refers to visual illusion in art, especially images and painted objects that appear to exist in three dimensions and even aim to trick the viewer into thinking that they are real. Common examples are the painted insects that appear to sit on the surface of Renaissance paintings, and murals that make flat walls appear to open into spaces beyond.

## **Tully, Sydney Strickland (Canadian, 1860–1911)**

An oil painter known for her portraits, landscapes, and genre scenes, Tully studied extensively with numerous leading painters at the Central Ontario School of Art (now OCAD University), Slade School of Fine Art, Académie Julian, Académie Colarossi, and Long Island School of Art. Tully’s *The Twilight of Life* became the first painting by a Canadian artist acquired by the Art Gallery of Toronto (now the Art Gallery of Ontario) in 1911.

### **watercolour**

A painting medium in which pigments are suspended in a water-based solution and the term that refers to a finished work painted in that medium, watercolour has a long history both in manuscript illumination (dating to Ancient Egypt) and in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese brush or scroll painting. In Western art, it became a preferred medium for sketching in the Renaissance and grew in popularity through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially for botanical and wildlife illustrations. It continues to be used by artists and illustrators because of its transparency and the effects possible by laying washes of pure pigment.

## **Whistler, James Abbott McNeill (American/British, 1834–1903)**

Whistler, a painter and printmaker, was a leading promoter of “art for art’s sake”: the doctrine that an artist should create evocative visual experiences based principally on the subtle harmonization of colour, not on sentiment or moral lessons. Believing that painting and music had much in common, he used music references in the titles of many of his paintings, including *Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1*, 1871 (better known as *Whistler’s Mother*). In 1877 the art critic John Ruskin accused him of “flinging a pot of paint in the public’s face” when Whistler exhibited *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket*. Whistler sued Ruskin, but was awarded damages of only one farthing.

## **Woods, Emily Henrietta (Canadian, 1852–1916)**

Emily Henrietta Woods was an artist and arts educator who painted over two hundred life-sized watercolours of plants. Alongside her plant paintings, she included both their scientific and common names, and she sometimes noted





the Indigenous uses of the depicted flora and fauna. Woods was also a former instructor to artist Emily Carr.

**Wylde, Theresa (Canadian, 1870–1949)**

A painter and an arts educator, Wylde, whose speciality was portraiture, held a studio and taught art classes as a member of the Island Arts and Crafts Society in British Columbia.



# SOURCES & RESOURCES

**Sophie Pemberton, a successful artist in her day in both her hometown of Victoria and in England, where she most often resided, has been relatively unknown for several decades. Regarded as a skilled but conservative painter, she fell out of favour because of interruptions to her public visibility and changes in surname after her two marriages. From the 1920s on, she focused almost exclusively on decorative art. In recent years, a select few of her paintings have appeared in exhibitions of Impressionism and Canadian women's art. The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria organized a retrospective of her oeuvre in 2023–24.**





LEFT: Cover of Sophie Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40, closed: 32 x 21 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Sophie Pemberton in her rectory studio, 1908, photographer unknown.

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

This section is divided into two parts: exhibitions during Pemberton's life and those after her death.

#### Exhibitions During Pemberton's Life

<b>1895</b>	Montreal, Art Association of Montreal, <i>Sweet Seventeen</i> and <i>A Normandy Peasant</i>
<b>1896</b>	London, 91 Art Club, <i>Old Garden</i> , <i>Mesnières</i> , <i>Brittany</i>
<b>1897</b>	London, Royal Academy of Arts, <i>Daffodils</i>
<b>1897</b>	London, 91 Art Club, <i>A Brown Study</i> and <i>A Little Waif</i>
<b>1897</b>	London, West Ham Public Hall, <i>Brittany Interior</i>
<b>1897</b>	Brighton, Corporation Art Gallery, <i>A Native of Cork</i> and <i>Blue and Brown</i>



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<b>1897</b>	Birmingham, Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, <i>A Brown Study</i> and <i>Pierre's Cottage, Brittany</i>
<b>1898</b>	London, Royal Academy of Arts, <i>Little Boy Blue</i>
<b>1898</b>	Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery, <i>Little Boy Blue</i>
<b>1898</b>	London, Society of Lady Artists, <i>A Pastoral</i> and <i>A Little Waif</i>
<b>1898</b>	London, West Ham Public Hall, <i>A Little Waif</i> and <i>The Old Smock-frock</i>
<b>1898</b>	Birmingham, Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, <i>Winding Yarns</i> and <i>Afternoon Tea</i>
<b>1898</b>	London, 91 Art Club, <i>A Pastoral</i> ; <i>Pear Blossom</i> ; <i>Winding Yarns</i> ; <i>A Little Waif</i>
<b>1898</b>	London, Alexandra House, <i>Daffodils</i>
<b>1899</b>	London, Old Ham Public Hall, <i>Winding Yarns</i>
<b>1899</b>	Manchester Art Gallery, <i>Winding Yarns</i>
<b>1899</b>	Paris Salon, <i>Un retour de l'École</i> [ <i>Little Boy Blue</i> ]
<b>1900</b>	London, Women's International Exhibition, Earl's Court, <i>Spring</i> and <i>Pierre's Cottage, Brittany</i>
<b>1900</b>	Paris Salon, <i>Bibi la Purée</i>
<b>1900</b>	Paris, Exposition Universelle, <i>Tarring Ropes</i>
<b>1901</b>	London, Royal Academy of Arts, <i>Interested</i> [ <i>Un Livre Ouvert</i> ]
<b>1902</b>	Victoria, Waitt's Hall, solo exhibition
<b>1903</b>	London, Royal Academy of Arts, <i>John O'Dreams</i>
<b>1903</b>	Manchester, England, <i>Un Livre Ouvert</i> and <i>A Chelsea Pensioner</i>
<b>1903</b>	Newcastle upon Tyne, England, <i>John O'Dreams</i> and <i>Spring</i>
<b>1903</b>	Paris Salon, <i>Un Livre Ouvert</i>
<b>1904</b>	London, Royal Academy, <i>Verlaine's Friend</i> [ <i>Bibi la Purée</i> ]
<b>1904</b>	Montreal, Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, <i>Un Livre Ouvert</i>

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<b>1904</b>	St. Louis, Louisiana Purchase Exposition, <i>Un Livre Ouvert</i>
<b>1904</b>	Victoria, B.C. Agricultural Association, solo exhibition (40 works)
<b>1904</b>	Vancouver, Blomfield Studio, solo exhibition (34 canvases plus watercolour landscapes and botanical paintings)
<b>1904</b>	Vancouver, Studio Club, unknown
<b>1907</b>	Montreal, Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, <i>Penumbra</i>
<b>1908</b>	Victoria, In the Beanlands residence (28+ paintings)
<b>1909</b>	London, Doré Gallery, solo exhibition, <i>Sketches of Victoria British Columbia</i> (41 works)
<b>1909</b>	Hamilton, Ontario, Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, <i>A Chelsea Pensioner</i>
<b>1909</b>	Victoria, Mural in Pemberton Chapel (opening ceremony)
<b>1910</b>	Montreal, Art Association of Montreal, <i>A Chelsea Pensioner</i>
<b>1910</b>	London, Royal Academy of Arts, <i>Memories</i>
<b>1916</b>	London, Royal Academy of Arts, <i>The Amber Window at Knole</i>
<b>1916</b>	Sevenoaks, Kent, Sevenoaks Arts and Crafts Society, <i>The Chinese Room at Knole</i>
<b>1916</b>	Victoria, Island Arts and Crafts Society, <i>Apple Blossom; Little Boy Blue; Santa Maria in Trastevere</i>
<b>1920</b>	Sevenoaks, Kent, Sevenoaks Arts and Crafts Society, <i>The Big Room Long Barn and Interior</i>
<b>1920</b>	Victoria, Provincial Arts and Industrial Institute, <i>Pemberton Chapel at Rushden; Daffodils; Henri Joly de Lotbinière; and others</i>
<b>1921</b>	Victoria, Island Arts and Crafts Society, <i>Driveway of Moulton Combe, Oak Bay and a work described as "a mountain vista at Cameron Lake"</i>
<b>1922</b>	Victoria, Island Arts and Crafts Society
<b>1947</b>	Victoria, Little Centre, solo exhibition (at least 10 paintings)
<b>1949</b>	Victoria, The Greater Victoria Arts Centre, solo exhibition (22 works)



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**1954** Vancouver, Vancouver Art Gallery, retrospective exhibition (40 works)

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**1954** Victoria, Greater Victoria Arts Centre, joint exhibition with Emily Carr

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## Posthumous Exhibitions

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**1967** Victoria, *Sophie Deane-Drummond*, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (11 works)

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**1978** Victoria, *The Art of Sophie Pemberton*, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (80 works)

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**2004** Victoria, Maltwood Gallery, *"A Woman's Place": Art and the Role of Women in the Cultural Formation of Victoria, BC, 1850s-1920s*

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**2017** Edmonton, *Undaunted: Canadian Women Painters of the Nineteenth Century*, Art Gallery of Alberta

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**2019** Germany, France, Ottawa (National Gallery of Canada), *Canada and Impressionism: New Horizons*

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**2023** Victoria, *Unexpected: The Life and Art of Sophie Pemberton (1869-1959)* (75 works plus archival records)

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## SELECTED WRITINGS BY SOPHIE PEMBERTON

"Models I Have Known: Bibi la Purée," *Westward Ho!*, July 1907

"Models I Have Known: John Minards," *Westward Ho!*, October 1907

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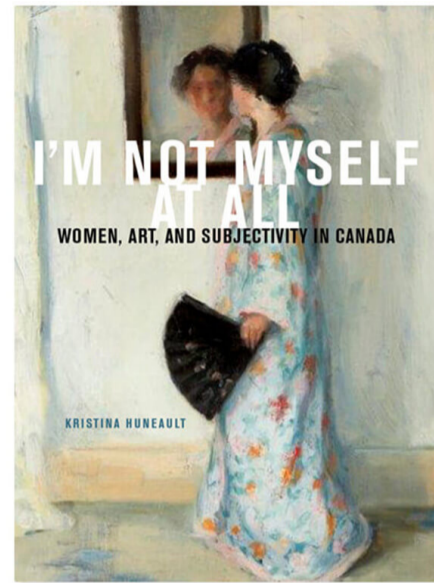
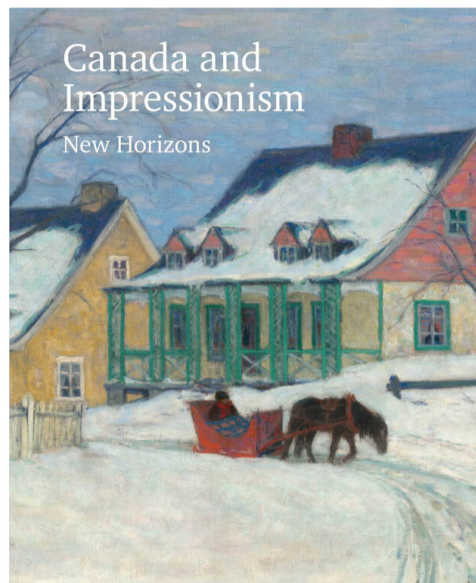
#### EXHIBITION CATALOGUES

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*Sophie Pemberton Retrospective Exhibition*. Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1954.

Tuele, Nicholas Craig. *Sophia Theresa Pemberton, 1869-1959*. Victoria: Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1978.



LEFT: Cover of *Canada and Impressionism: New Horizons*, by Katerina Atanassova, with contributions by Krista Broeckx, Tobi Bruce, Adam Gopnik, Anna Hudson, Laurier Lacroix, Loren Lerner, Tracey Lock, Gerta Moray, Julie Nash, and Sandra Paikowsky (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Verlagsanstalt, 2019). RIGHT: Cover of *I'm Not Myself at All: Women, Art, and Subjectivity in Canada*, by Kristina Huneault (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018).

**KEY ARCHIVES**

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria:  
Pemberton artworks, diaries,  
correspondence, sketchbooks,  
photographs

Art Gallery of Hamilton: one  
painting

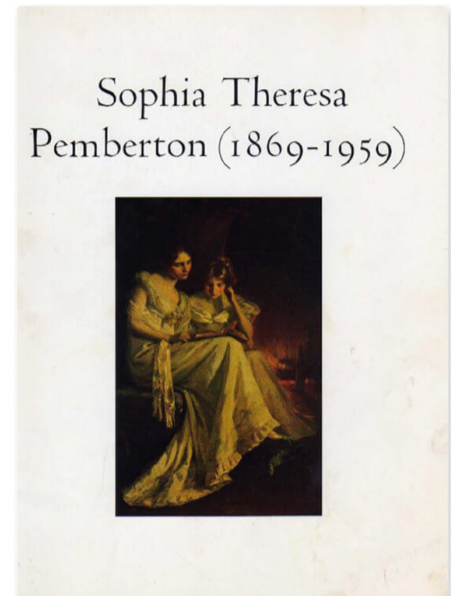
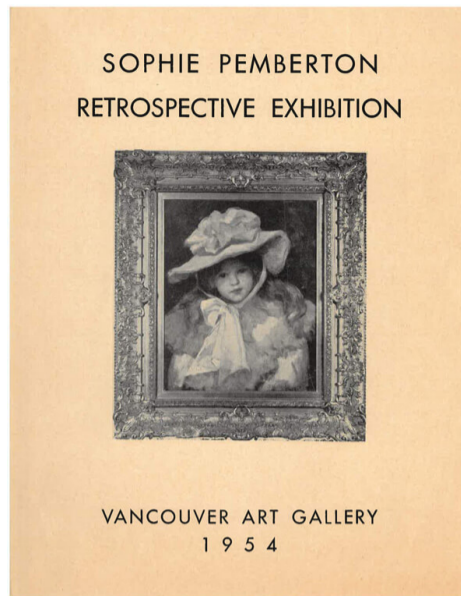
BC Archives: Pemberton artworks,  
correspondence, photographs;  
Pemberton family fonds (textual,  
graphic) and those of friends and  
neighbours; Island Arts and Crafts  
Society; government records (birth,  
death, and marriage registrations;  
wills; probates; correspondence  
regarding commissions)

Individual family and private collections

Library and Archives Canada: Presentation album to Princess Louise, 1882

National Archives, France: Fonds de l'Académie Julian (1867-1946), 63A8/1-63AS/26

Vancouver Art Gallery: Pemberton artworks, documentation, research files



LEFT: Cover of *Sophie Pemberton: Retrospective Exhibition* (Vancouver Art Gallery, 1954). RIGHT: Cover of *Sophia Theresa Pemberton (1869-1959)*, by Nicholas Tuele (Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1978).



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### KATHRYN BRIDGE

Dr. Kathryn Bridge is Curator of History and Art (Emerita) at the Royal BC Museum, Victoria. She retired in 2017 after an extensive career in which she variously served as archivist, historian, and curator. Bridge is also an adjunct faculty member in the Department of History at the University of Victoria. Her research interests centre on archival sources, with emphasis on Canadian women's history and art history, and children and childhood in nineteenth-century settler Western Canada. She curated several major museum exhibitions at the Royal BC Museum, including *Family: Bonds & Belonging*, 2017, and *Gold Rush! El Dorado in British Columbia*, 2015-16, which toured to the Canadian Museum of History, Ottawa. More recently she co-curated *Emily Carr: Fresh Seeing - French Modernism and the West Coast*, 2019-20, at the Audain Art Museum, Whistler, which then travelled to the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton, and to the Royal BC Museum, Victoria; and in 2023 she curated *Unexpected: The Life and Art of Sophie Pemberton (1869-1959)* at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

Bridge has written extensively on the life of Emily Carr, illuminating little explored aspects of the artist's early years, including within the publication *Emily Carr in England 1899-1904* (2014) and the article "Everyone Said Paris Was the Top of Art': Emily Carr's French Journey to Modernism," in *Emily Carr: Fresh Seeing - French Modernism and the West Coast* (2019). Recently she produced *Unvarnished. Autobiographical Sketches by Emily Carr* (2021). She has also written two biographies of mountaineers. Her book about intrepid women travellers, titled *By Snowshoe, Buckboard & Steamer*, won the 1998 B.C. Lieutenant Governor's Medal for Historical Writing. In 2023 her book *Unexpected: The Life and Art of Sophie Pemberton* accompanied the exhibition of the same name.



**"I was intrigued by the gaps in what was written about Sophie Pemberton, one of Canada's earliest women artists to exhibit internationally. It seemed she had been given short shrift, and she was most often invoked in comparison to her childhood friend Emily Carr as an example of the dangers of marriage to aspiring women artists. Pemberton lived half her life in England, painted extensively overseas, and had works exhibited internationally before Carr, yet these years have been little researched, understood, or contextualized. Pemberton needed a full life story to bring her out of the shadows. And so, in late 2017, I began."**



# SOPHIE PEMBERTON

Life & Work by Kathryn Bridge



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## From the Author

I received tremendous assistance from institutions and individuals. With the arrival of COVID-19, my plans to research in the U.K. collapsed. Institutions near and far closed their doors and adjusted business models and staff priorities. But after an agonizing hiatus, the business of providing access to records resumed, albeit with a different focus. My emails waited patiently in queues, but when I received responses, by and large the results were accommodating and thorough. Staff searched in collections on my behalf, often including images in their replies, which was tremendously helpful. One archives technician facilitated remote access by turning the pages of a diary on camera, and I took photos as the pages appeared on my computer screen. I am grateful to the many staff who continue to place the researcher as a priority.

Close to home, Stephen Topfer and Salma Naili at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria provided first-hand access to the Pemberton materials; Diane Wardle, Kelly-Ann Turkington, and reference room staff at the BC Archives facilitated off-site retrieval and on-site access to original records.

Many Pemberton family members shared their knowledge and their collections with me, patiently and graciously fielding my many emails and questions. Thank you, all—your contributions have enabled Sophie Pemberton’s life story to be told in depth and have made the breadth of her artwork visible.

Thank you also to the Access Copyright Foundation for the research support, the wonderful team at the Art Canada Institute for enthusiastically embracing this project, and editor Rosemary Shipton for her insightful comments and shaping of the manuscript. I also benefited from conversations and advice from Don Bourdon, Bruce Davies, India Young, Kiriko Watanabe, Robert Amos, Jack Lohman, and Kevin Neary. Again, thank you.

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Winnipeg Art Gallery (Nicole Fletcher, Olenka Skrypnyk); and Woodstock Art Gallery (Jessica Benjak-Waterous, Mary Reid).

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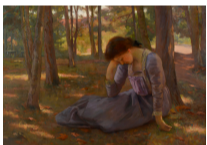
Sophie Pemberton, *A Prosperous Settler*, 1908. (See below for details.)

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## Credits for Banner Images



Biography: Sophie Pemberton in her rectory studio, 1908. (See below for details.)



Key Works: Sophie Pemberton, *Penumbra*, 1907. (See below for details.)



Significance & Critical Issues: Sophie Pemberton, *Caudebec-en-Caux*, 1903. (See below for details.)



Style & Technique: Sophie Pemberton, *Market place at Caudebec-en-Caux*, 1903. (See below for details.)



Sources & Resources: Sophie Pemberton, *Miss Hallett*, 1892/93. (See below for details.)





Where to See: Wickhurst Manor in Sevenoaks, Kent, home of Sophie Pemberton and Arthur Beanlands, date unknown. (See below for details.)



Credits: Sophie Pemberton, *Spring*, 1902. (See below for details.)

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### Credits for Works by Sophie Pemberton



*Anatomical Practise, Cope's School*, 1889-90, from Pemberton's *Glory Book*, c.1904-40. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Angels Mural*, 1909. Collection of the Royal Jubilee Hospital, Pemberton Chapel, Victoria. Courtesy of the Royal Jubilee Hospital. Photo credit: Anne-Marie Sorvin.



*Armine*, 1901/02. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Benjamin William Pearse*, 1895. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (PDP00249). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



*Berberis Aquifolium, Oregon Grape, Mahonia*, 1895. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, In Loving Memory of Armine Pemberton Duke, from her loving daughter Finola (1995.024.001). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Bibi la Purée*, 1900. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Bequest of the Artist (1973.207.001). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Casimir Markievicz*, 1899. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Caudebec-en-Caux*, 1903. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Estate of Theresa Susan Yoder Moyle (1989.002.002). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Chrysanthemums*, c.1901. Collection of the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Purchased with funds from the Volunteer Art for the 100th Project and the Alfred Wavell Peene and Susan Nottle Peene Memorial, 2014. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Hamilton. Photo credit: Mike Lulich.



*Colonel Schletter*, 1910. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Gift of Miss Angela Beanlands (1969.119.001). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Common Vetch*, 1895. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, In loving memory of Armine Pemberton Duke, from her loving daughter Finola (1995.024.001). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



Copy of *The Amber Window at Knole*, 1915. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.





*Cowichan Valley*, 1891. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Dr. Rodrigo A. Restrepo (2000-35-3). Courtesy of the Vancouver Art Gallery. Photo credit: Vancouver Art Gallery.



*Daffodils*, 1897. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (PDP03664). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



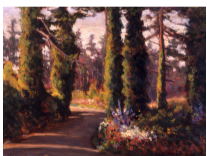
*Dieppe Farmyard*, 1903. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Drawing full length figure*, 1893. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Drawing of a plaster cast foot*, 1889. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Driveway of Moulton Combe, Oak Bay*, 1921. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Gift of George & Lola Kidd (1995.040.001). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Fire in the Forest*, c.1882. Collection of Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (C-113016). Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada / The Brechin Group Inc.



*Full figure male model*, 1898. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Harrison Lake*, 1895. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Henri Joly de Lotbinière*, 1906. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (PDP02263). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



*Horace Deane-Drummond*, 1925. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Bequest of the Artist (1973.203.001). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Sarah, Lady Crease*, 1907. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (PDP02260). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



*Life drawing of a male*, 1893. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (PDP10332). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



*Little Boy Blue*, 1897. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Gift of the Artist (1952.015.001). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.





*Lucy Martineau*, 1892-94. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (SC1227.1). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Macauley Plains*, 1907/08. Private collection. Photo credit: Korinne Hannegan.



*Mansi - An Italian*, 1892. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Estate of Theresa Susan Yoder Moyle (1989.002.005). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Market place at Caudebec-en-Caux*, 1903. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Matchboxes, small containers, and miniature trays with hand-painted decoration by artist*, c.1924-50. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Miss Hallett*, 1892/93. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Mosquito Island*, 1907. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*La Napoule Bay*, 1926. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Anonymous Gift (1982.006.001). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*The Parrot Court, Madurai Temple, India*, 1923. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Bequest of Mrs. H.R. Beaven (1958.001.001). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Paul*, c.1912. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Bequest of the Artist (1959.014.001). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



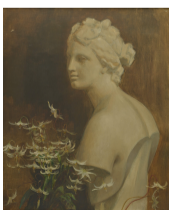
*Peasant Woman*, 1903. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Pen and ink stand with hand-painted decoration by artist*, 1921. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (2020.3.2a-b). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.

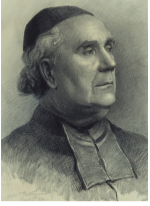


*Penumbra*, 1907. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Plaster Cast*, c.1890. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Estate of Mrs. B.M. Harvey (1982.047.001). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.





*Portrait of a Cardinal*, 1890. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Anonymous gift (1955.024.001). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Portrait of a Woman*, 1896. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Portrait of Dolly Mortimer-Lamb*, 1904. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Mr. H. Mortimer-Lamb (46.2). Courtesy of the Vancouver Art Gallery. Photo credit: Vancouver Art Gallery.



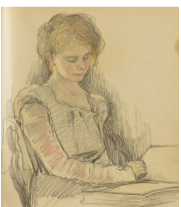
*A Prosperous Settler*, 1908. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*The Seine*, 1903. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Serving tray with hand-painted decoration by artist*, 1921. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (2020.3.3). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



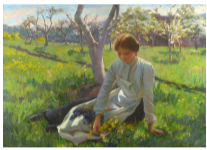
*Sketch for Un Livre Ouvert*, 1900. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Sketch of a flower based on works by 17th century Flemish artists, c.1940-43.* Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Sketching Picnic, 1902.* Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (PDP05167). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



*Spring, 1902.* Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Bequest of the Artist (1973.210.001). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Tea caddy with hand-painted decoration by artist, c.1920-30.* Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Theresa Pemberton, 1895.* Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (PDP05168). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



*Time and Eternity, 1908.* Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Harold & Vera Mortimer-Lamb Bequest (1983.073.001). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Un Livre Ouvert, 1900.* Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Gift of the Artist (1959.012.001). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.





*Untitled (Breton Woman)*, 1896. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Untitled: Sketch of Lily*, c.1949-54. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (SC1226.23). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Venus de Medici*, c.1890. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*View from Gonzales*, 1882. Collection of Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (1974-18-14). Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada / The Brechin Group Inc.



*View over Victoria*, c.1902. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (PDP04896). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



*Warren*, 1901/02. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Weald Church, Kent*, 1915. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Gift of Miss Angela Beanlands (1969.120.001). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Writing desk with hand-painted decoration by artist*, date unknown. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (2020.3.1). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



*Yellow Tiger Lilies*, 1902. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Flora Hamilton Burns Bequest (1989.037.004). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

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### Credits for Photographs and Works by Other Artists



Amélie Beury-Saurel, a well-respected portraitist, poses beside a plaster bust of her husband, Rodolphe Julian, 1904. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (SC1227.10). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Beaux Arts Magazine* clippings announcing Sophie Pemberton as the winner of the Prix Julian medal for the Best Studio Portrait, 1899, from Pemberton's *Glory Book*, c.1904-40. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Caudebec-en-Caux*, 1901, by Frances Hodgkins. Private collection. Courtesy of the International Art Centre, Auckland.

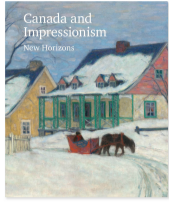


Constance Gore-Booth (left) occupied Sophie Pemberton's #3 Stanley Studios in London, from October 1897 through January 1898, while Pemberton was in Italy. She sits with Irish poet and illustrator Althea Gyles (right), 1898. Photograph by Wasey Sterry. Lissadell Collection, Sligo, Ireland. Courtesy of the Lissadell Collection.

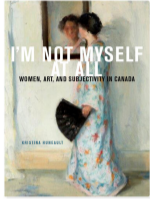


A corner of Sophie Pemberton's Stanley Studio, with paintings including Pemberton's *Bibi la Purée*, 1900, from Pemberton's *Glory Book*, c.1904-40. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.

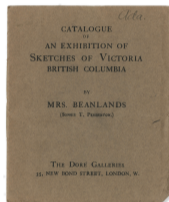




Cover of *Canada and Impressionism: New Horizons*, by Katerina Atanassova, with contributions by Krista Broeckx, Tobi Bruce, Adam Gopnik, Anna Hudson, Laurier Lacroix, Loren Lerner, Tracey Lock, Gerta Moray, Julie Nash, and Sandra Paikowsky (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2019). Courtesy of Arnoldsche Art Publishers.



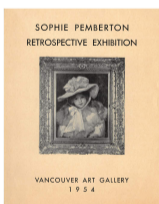
Cover of *I'm Not Myself at All: Women, Art, and Subjectivity in Canada*, by Kristina Huneault (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018). Courtesy of McGill-Queen's University Press.



Cover of *Sketches of Victoria British Columbia*, exhibition catalogue for Doré Gallery, London, 1909. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (NW 759.11 P395c). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



Cover of *Sophia Theresa Pemberton (1869-1959)*, by Nicholas Tuele (Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1978). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



Cover of *Sophie Pemberton: Retrospective Exhibition* (Vancouver Art Gallery, 1954). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



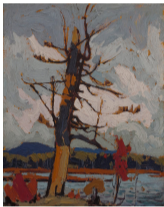
Cover of Sophie Pemberton's *Glory Book*, c.1904-40. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



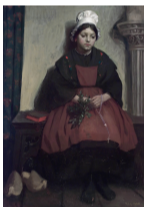
*Crécy-en-brie*, 1911, by Emily Carr. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria, Presented in memory of Edward and Ellen Cridge, 1981 (PDP04682). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



*A Daffodil*, 1910, by Laura Muntz Lyall. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Purchased 1910 (258). Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. Photo credit: NGC.



*The Dead Pine*, unknown date, by Tom Thomson. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, The Thomson Collection (AGOID.69223). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario. Photo © AGO.



*Easter Morning, La Petite Penitente, Brittany*, c.1900, by Mary Riter Hamilton. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Gift of Mrs. Horace Crawford (G-45-152). Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery-Qaumajuq. Photo credit: Ernest Meyer.



Female students at the Académie Julian in Paris, c.1895. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, U.S. (LC-DIG-ppmsc-04833). Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



Gonzales, 1903. Photograph by Ernest "Trio" Crocker. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (SC1227.10). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Haystacks, Morning, Eragny*, 1899, by Camille Pissarro. Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, Bequest of Douglas Dillon, 2003 (2004.359). Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.





*Interesting Story*, 1898, by Laura Muntz Lyall. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Gift of the Government of the Province of Ontario, 1972 (72/18). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario. Photo © AGO.



*In the Studio*, 1881, by Marie Bashkirtseff. Collection of the Dnipropetrovsk State Art Museum, Ukraine. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.



*Into the Blue (Dans le Bleu)*, 1894, by Amélie Beaury-Saurel. Collection of the Mairie de Toulouse, Musée des Augustins, Don Baron Alphonse de Rothschild 1894, Courtesy of the American Federation of Arts (RO494). Courtesy of the Mairie de Toulouse. Photo credit: Daniel Martin.



Lady Sackville-West, c.1916-20. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (SC1227.10). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia Henri Joly de Lotbinière posing for his portrait in the rectory studio, 1906. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (SC1227.10). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



The Lyceum Club was founded in 1903 at 128 Piccadilly in London, England, for women artists and writers. Rooms pictured include the hall and staircase; the smoking room; the dining room; the drawing room; the reading and writing room; and the arts and crafts gallery. This is the seventh location in a series called Our Ladies' Clubs, as seen in *The Graphic*, April 18, 1908. Collection of Illustrated London News Ltd. / Mary Evans Picture Library, U.K. (12548495). Courtesy of Illustrated London News Ltd. / Mary Evans Picture Library.



*Mère Adèle*, 1897, by Florence Carlyle. Collection of Museum London, W. Thomson-Smith Memorial Collection, 1948 (48.A.71). Courtesy of Museum London.



*A Modern Cinderella*, 1875, by Louise Jopling. Private collection. Courtesy of Artvee.



*Morning, Algonquin Park*, 1914, by John William Beatty. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Purchased 1915 (1170). Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. Photo credit: NGC.



*Papier-mâché side chair*, c.1830-60, Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.2061). Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



The Pemberton family home, Gonzales, in Victoria, 1890s. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (A-07779). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



Photograph of *Tarring Ropes* by Sophie Pemberton, 1899/1900, from Pemberton's *Glory Book*, c.1904-40. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Portrait of a Boy*, date unknown, by Anna Nordgren. Collection of the National Museum, Stockholm (NM 7075). Courtesy of Artvee.





Postcard image of a street in Caudebec-en-Caux, c.1905. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



Press clippings of the now-lost painting *Winding Yarns* by Sophie Pemberton, first exhibited at the 91 Art Club in London, 1898, from Pemberton's *Glory Book*, c.1904-1940. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Séverine* (Caroline Rémy, épouse Guebhard, 1855-1929, dite), *journaliste socialiste*, 1893, by Amélie Beaurysaurel. Collection of the Musée Carnavalet - Histoire de Paris (P1449). Courtesy of the Paris Musées.



Sheet music cover for the song "Bibi La Purée," with an inscription from Bibi to Sophie Pemberton, 1899, from Pemberton's *Glory Book*, c.1904-40. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



Sophie Pemberton (in the foreground to the right) at the announcement of her winning the Prix Julian, 1899. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (SC1228.10). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



Sophie Pemberton (left) and the small boy who stole her heart, Paul Beanlands, 1905. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (SC1227.10). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



Sophie Pemberton (left) with her mother in Italy, 1911. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (SC1227.10). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



Sophie Pemberton (right) with classmates Bertha Creegan and Jenny Fontaine at the Académie Julian in Paris, 1899. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (J-08133). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



Sophie Pemberton (seated) working *en plein air* from the porch at her brother Fred's cottage retreat, named Finnerty's, in Saanich, B.C., 1908. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (SC1227.10). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



Sophie Pemberton (top), Arthur Beanlands, and his children Paul and Angela in the rectory studio, 1907. Photograph by Ernest "Trio" Crocker. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (SC1227.10). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



Sophie Pemberton and husband Horace Deane-Drummond on a fishing adventure in the U.K., c.1920. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (SC1227.8). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



Sophie Pemberton in the rear garden of her London flat, 1947. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (LSC4.26). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



Sophie Pemberton in her Gonzales studio after her return from France, 1901. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (F-02807). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.





Sophie Pemberton in her rectory studio, 1908. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (SC1227.10). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



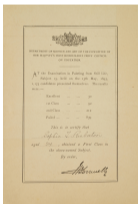
Sophie Pemberton painting a tray, 1946. Photograph by Evie Deane-Drummond. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (J-08132). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



Sophie Pemberton painting *en plein air* in Victoria, possibly spring 1902. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



Sophie Pemberton's #3 Stanley Studios in London, c.1896, from Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



Sophie Pemberton's certificate indicating First Class Honours, 1893, from Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



Sophie Pemberton's life class at the Académie Julian in Paris, c.1899. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (SC1227.10). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



Sophie Pemberton's studio at Gonzales as maintained by her parents, who dutifully stored the sketches and canvases she sent home from England, c.1893, from Pemberton's Glory Book, c.1904-40. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Photo credit: Stephen Topfer.



*Spring*, 1884, by Marie Bashkirtseff. Collection of the State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.



*Still Life of Flowers*, 1670-80, by Geertje Pieters. Collection of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, U.K. (58). Courtesy of the Fitzwilliam Museum. Photo credit: Andrew Norman.



*Storm below Mount Fuji (Sanka no haku u)*, c.1830-32, by Katsushika Hokusai. Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, Rogers Fund, 1914 (JP11). Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Teenage Sophie Pemberton poses in a photographer's studio, c.1885. Photograph by J. Berryman. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (J-08134). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



*The Twilight of Life*, 1894, by Sydney Strickland Tully. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Bequest of S. Strickland Tully, 1911 (405). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario. Photo © AGO.



*Untitled: Portrait of Sophie Pemberton*, 1909, by Harold Mortimer-Lamb. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Gift of Harold Mortimer-Lamb (1978.133.001). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*La vieille Victorine*, 1893, by Florence Carlyle. Collection of the Woodstock Art Gallery, Bequest of Florence Johnston (B 1994. 1994.003.002). Courtesy of the Woodstock Art Gallery.





View of the Salon d'Automne in the Salle Cézanne at the Grand Palais, Paris, 1904. Photograph by Ambroise Vollard. Collection of the Musée d'Orsay, RMN-Grand Palais, Paris (00-006679). Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.



View of Wickhurst Manor in Sevenoaks, Kent, date unknown. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (SC1227.10). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*War Canoes, Alert Bay*, 1912, by Emily Carr. Collection of the Audain Art Museum, Whistler, Gift of Michael Audain and Yoshiko Karasawa (2018.054). Courtesy of Obelisk.



The wedding of Canon Arthur John Beanlands and Sophie Pemberton, 1905. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (I-46770). Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum.



Wickhurst Manor in Sevenoaks, Kent, home of Sophie Pemberton and Arthur Beanlands, date unknown. Photographer unknown. Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (SC1227.10). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Wildflowers of Vancouver Island*, 1882, by Emily Henrietta Woods. Collection of Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (1974-18-11). Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada / The Brechin Group Inc.



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# SOPHIE PEMBERTON

Life & Work by Kathryn Bridge

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