

Richmond Art Gallery  
**SCHOOL ART PROGRAM**  
TEACHERS' GUIDE



Stuart McCall, *Fantasy Gardens, Untitled (4514)*, 2010, Photograph

January 27 – April 1, 2012

*Fantasy Gardens*

Stuart McCall & Neil Wedman



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## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

*Fantasy Gardens* is an exhibition of the work of Vancouver artists **Stuart McCall** and **Neil Wedman**. Through two very different mediums, (photography and drawing) and at two different times (1992 and 2010), both artists look at the themed garden park and its troubled history and recent disarray.

*Fantasy Gardens* refers to the garden centre and theme park located at the corner of Number 5 Road and Steveston Highway in Richmond, BC. In 1984 the land was purchased by Bill Vander Zalm, who was a provincial MLA at the time, and who went on to become the premier of the province of British Columbia in 1986. Vander Zalm expanded the existing gardens and added a medieval village, a miniature train, and a petting zoo, naming the new, Christian-themed gardens "Fantasy Garden World". After selling the park, Vander Zalm was investigated for conflict of interest leading to his resignation from political office in 1991. He was charged with criminal breach of trust, and later acquitted. Fantasy Garden World eventually closed down, and the gardens were left to grow wild and untended for decades. In 2008 the site was purchased by the Townline Group, and the site was slated for redevelopment into mixed residential/retail use and public park space.



Stuart McCall, *Fantasy Gardens, Untitled (4170)*, 2010, Photograph

Upon hearing that the Fantasy Gardens site was going to be redeveloped, Stuart McCall felt compelled to photograph the abandoned gardens before they were lost forever. His curiosity was piqued since he had driven past the site for decades, but had never actually visited the gardens before.

*"I was struck with a sense of sadness for several reasons. I was disturbed that this large bit of wild green space would be lost, and that this piece of local history was to be replaced with more suburban development. ... I got it into my head that I must get in and photograph the garden in its wild state." (McCall, 2011)*

In addition to his interest in the site and its history, McCall was drawn to the gardens because he has a passion for photographing abandoned structures and what happens when nature is allowed to reassert itself. His photographs remind us that despite the permanence of what we build, given enough time natural forces will sweep them away, leaving no trace.

*"My passion for photographing human works in a state of transition is evident in much of my previous work. My series "Encroachment" suggests an imagined post-human world. Looking at our constructions and labours and imagining the length of time before all traces would be gone. Fantasy Gardens offered an excellent canvas to continue exploring this notion." (McCall, 2011)*

Although photographed using a digital camera and combined seamlessly on a computer, the images are reminiscent of large-format photography done primarily early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, due to the wide range of **values** (the lights and darks in an image) and the crispness of the details. McCall chose to remove the colour from the images in order to emphasize the **textures** in each image. Wildly overgrown ivy, soft, delicate dandelion seeds, and tangled clumps of tall grass combine to create rich panoramic vistas of decay and rebirth.



Stuart McCall, *Fantasy Gardens, Untitled (4553) (detail)*, 2010, Photograph



*"When I completed the photography and began processing and printing the images in B&W, it brought to mind the work of my friend Neil Wedman and specifically a charcoal sketch of a garden gate which hangs in my bedroom. The intense textural structure was incredibly similar to my prints. When he reminded me of his series of courtroom drawings made during the corruption trial of Mr Vander Zalm, I was inspired to show the two bodies of work together." (McCall, 2011)*

When Bill Vander Zalm was brought to trial in 1992, Neil Wedman attended the court proceedings every day, and sketched portraits of the witnesses as they testified. Wedman's artistic practice at the time involved an interest in **History Paintings**, which in the past were created to record events of major importance for posterity. Wedman was instead choosing minor and idiosyncratic events to depict in his artwork, and found the trial to fit this agenda perfectly. History paintings usually show leaders in a good light, depicting moments of triumph, and the leaders they portray embody positive traits such as honour and bravery. Wedman's drawings instead show a political leader at his most vulnerable, standing accused of committing a dishonourable act.



Neil Wedman, *The Prisoners' Dock, William Vander Zalm*, 1992-94, pencil on paper

Wedman never did create a painting of the event, so the sketches now stand on their own and take on a new meaning twenty years later. Wedman's expressive portraits capture the emotional state of his subjects, from angst to apathy, as they participate in the trial. The sketches mirror the intense textural quality of the photographs, as they were completed quickly in order to record the events as they were unfolding, and use **hatching** (shading with lines) to create forms and shadows.

Seen together, the photographs and the sketches combine to tell a story of a place where human folly and weakness led to grand dreams falling apart, and how nature, indifferent to human striving, quietly continues on.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### Stuart McCall

Stuart McCall has been creating photographic images and art for over 25 years, and in addition to his art practice, he is also a successful commercial photographer. His images have been published in magazines such as Time, Fortune, Photography Monthly, as well as in books by National Geographic and Douglas & McIntyre. He lives in Ladner BC, and is represented in Vancouver by the VAG Art Rentals and Sales and in Calgary at the Axis Contemporary Art gallery.

Since the 1990's he has worked with Vancouver artist Neil Wedman on various photo based projects which have been exhibited widely. These include "Every Bus Stop from My Place to the Racetrack" 1997, and "Movies 'til Dawn" 2009.

### Neil Wedman

For over 30 years Neil Wedman has been a practicing artist, focussing mainly on painting as the core of his practice, but he has devoted equal attention to producing drawings and works on paper including print editions, book-works and photographs, and has also made a number of short films and other media work. He currently lives and works in Vancouver, where he is represented by the Equinox Gallery, and teaches at Emily Carr University of Art + Design, and Simon Fraser University.



Neil Wedman, *Wilburt Hopper, Chairman, Petro Canada*, 1992-94, pencil on paper

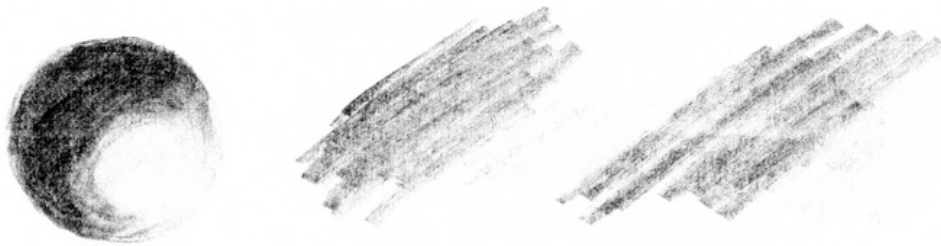
#### **Richmond Art Gallery School Art Program**

7700 Minoru Gate Richmond, BC V6Y 1R9 Phone: 604-247-8300 Fax: 604-247-8368 [www.richmondartgallery.org](http://www.richmondartgallery.org)

## BEFORE YOUR VISIT

Both the work of **Neil Wedman** and **Stuart McCall** use a wide range of **values**, including intense blacks, soft greys, and luminescent whites. Doing so creates an image which has a great sense of depth or 3-dimensionality. Artists use **shading** to create difference between light and dark areas in an image. Shading can be done with soft-lead pencils or charcoal which can create a range of greys through using different pressure, and smudging with our finger or a cloth. When we only have black (i.e. a felt pen, etc.) we cannot use shades of gray or other colours to show the differences. Instead we use techniques of mark-making such as heavier or lighter marks or different distances between the marks. Here are some techniques for you to try, and for your students to experiment with creating different values.

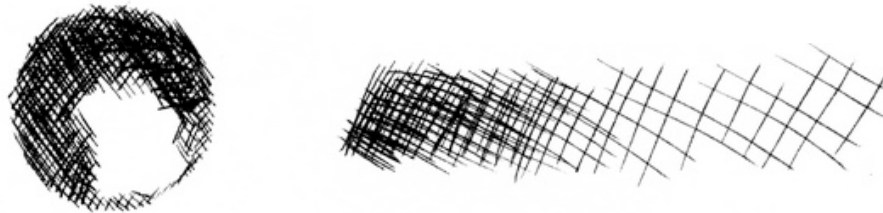
**Basic Shading:** putting your marks really close together, like colouring.



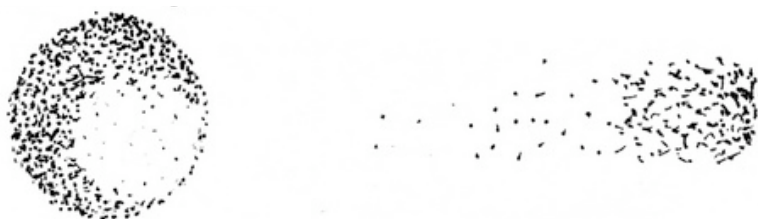
**Hatching:** drawing lines in the same direction, evenly spaced and of equal weight/width.



**Cross-Hatching:** just like hatching, except you also add lines going in the opposite direction.



**Stippling:** using dots instead of lines



## AFTER YOUR VISIT

**Texture** is the element of art that refers to how an object “feels to the touch”, or it’s surface quality. **Actual** textures can be felt, such as the bark of a tree, whereas **simulated** textures show how it would feel, such as a photo of tree bark, but cannot actually be felt. Stuart McCall chose to use black & white for his photographs of *Fantasy Gardens* to emphasize the textures of the overgrown gardens. Creating a **rubbing** is another way to highlight texture in an artwork, and to create a simulated texture from an actual texture.

### Garden Landscape

Students can experiment with texture, and create a garden landscape by using rubbings of different textures collaged together.

Materials:

- Crayons with paper removed, or graphite sticks
- White copy paper or newsprint – thinner paper is better for rubbings
- Scissors
- Glue sticks and/or white glue
- Natural textured materials – leaves, bark, stone, etc.
- Man-made textured materials – textured wallpaper pieces, corrugated cardboard, sandpaper, bubble wrap, coins, etc.

Discuss all the textures we find in nature, such as soft delicate flower petals, rough bark, smooth shiny leaves, crumbly dirt, prickly cactuses, etc. If possible, go for a walk outside to discover and describe textures in nature, and collect natural textured materials, such as leaves, bark, and stones, or bring art materials to do rubbings outside.

Demonstrate how to make a rubbing by holding the paper firmly in place while pressing firmly on the crayon or graphite on its long side and sliding over the paper’s surface. Crayons create colourful rubbings, whereas graphite sticks are great for higher levels of detail in the finished rubbings. Students can make rubbings of a variety of materials such as the ones listed above, or look around the classroom and school for textures such as slate tiles, metal gratings or grilles, the soles of their running shoes, etc. The rubbings should be large enough to use as collage materials, so students should try to fill up a page each of their favorite textures.

To create the garden landscape, choose different textures for different elements of the garden, and cut out shapes of tree trunks, leaves, bushes, grass, flowers, etc. from the rubbings, and collage onto a larger sheet of paper. For younger students, you can provide stencils of shapes, such as leaves or flower petals, or help them cut out these shapes.

# GLOSSARY

<b>Contemporary Art</b>	Artwork that is produced in this current time, generally considered to be artworks made from 1970 to the present. Contemporary art is a very broad term, including artworks made in almost any medium and incorporating many different themes and ideas.
<b>Contrast</b>	Refers to the use of opposites near or beside one another such as light and dark or smooth and rough.
<b>Landscape</b>	Artwork that deals with the representation of natural scenery.
<b>Line</b>	Line is one of the elements of visual art and design. It is a mark with length and direction(s).
<b>Portrait</b>	A work of art that represents a specific person, a group of people, or an animal. Portraits usually show what a person looks like as well as revealing something about the subject's personality.
<b>Shading</b>	Shading is showing the change from light to dark in a picture by gradually darkening areas that would be shadowed, and leaving other areas light. Shading is often used to produce the illusion of depth.
<b>Shading with Line</b>	Use a variety of lines to create shading, otherwise known as <b>hatching</b> or <b>cross-hatching</b> . Hatching is short lines placed close together to create the illusion of shadows, while cross-hatching is criss-crossing short lines close together.
<b>Sketch</b>	A drawing that is completed quickly. A sketch may be used for preliminary drawings for a larger project, or to capture a fleeting moment in time.
<b>Texture</b>	Element of Art that refers to the surface quality or "feel" of an object, whether actual or simulated. Actual textures can be felt, such as the bark on a tree, while simulated textures suggest the feeling, but cannot be felt, such as a photo or painting of tree bark. Some examples of words describing textures are smooth, rough, velvety, bumpy, wet, furry, slimy, or soft.
<b>Value</b>	The lightness or darkness of a colour, related to the amount of light a colour reflects.



# RESOURCES

## Websites

Stuart McCall's Website:

<http://www.stuartmccall.ca/>

Incredible Art Department – Self-Portrait Lesson Plans:

<http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/elem/selfport.htm#tech>

Using Digital Cameras in the classroom, and Photo Lesson Plans:

<http://www.wacona.com/digicam/digicam.html>

<http://terpconnect.umd.edu/~toh/image/DigitalCameraUses.htm>

Using Digital Cameras in the Primary Classroom:

[http://www.hardin.k12.ky.us/res\\_techn/TEC/digitalcamera/primary.htm](http://www.hardin.k12.ky.us/res_techn/TEC/digitalcamera/primary.htm)

## Books: Drawing

Brookes, Mona. *Drawing with Children*. Tarcher, 1996.

Dickins, Rosie , & McCafferty, Jan. *Drawing Faces*. Usborne, 2009.

Edwards, Betty. *New Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*. Penguin; 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 1999.

Luxbacher, Irene. *123 I Can Draw!* Kids Can Press, 2008.

## Books: Photography

Bidner, Jenni. *The Kid's Guide to Digital Photography*. Lark Books, 2004.

Ebert, Michael & Abend, Sandra. *Photography for Kids!*. Rockynook, 2011.

Friedman, Debra. *Picture This: Fun Photography and Crafts*. Kids Can Press, 2003.

## Books: Gardens

Matthews, Clare. *Great Gardens for Kids*. Octopus Publishing Group, 2005.

## UPCOMING EVENTS & PROGRAMS

### ***Spring Break Art Camps at the RAG***

**8-10 years old**

**March 12 - March 16      M-F, 9:30am – 3:30pm      \$180/5 sessions      #216511**

**6-8 years old**

**March 19 – March 23      M-F, 9:30am – 3:30pm      \$180/5 sessions      #216551**

Richmond's only gallery-based art camp provides a week filled with seeing, thinking about and making art! Inspired by the *Fantasy Gardens* exhibition, we'll explore the themes of nature and the man-made environment, and play with textures, tone, shade, and form through a variety of 2-d and 3-d art projects. Activities outside the studio are included. Pack a snack and lunch, and dress for mess and the outdoors.

**Register online at [www.richmond.ca/register](http://www.richmond.ca/register) or by phone 604-276-4300**

### ***Artists' Tour & Talk with Stuart McCall and Neil Wedman***

**Saturday February 4**

**1:00 – 2:00 pm , Free**

Come meet the artists of the *Fantasy Gardens* exhibition and stay for a guided tour and artists' talk.

### ***Panel Discussion: Richmond Develops***

**Saturday March 3**

**1:00 – 4:00 pm, Free**

Guest speakers discuss the process of urban developments, planning, and the history of Richmond's *Fantasy Gardens*.

### ***Family Sunday***

**February 26, March 25, April 22**

**1:00 – 4:00 pm , Free**

Families are invited to participate in various exhibition-related art projects and activities on the fourth Sunday of each month. It's free, thanks to the RBC Foundation.

### ***Sunday Art Group – Let's Make Stuff!***

**Sundays: February 12, March 11, April 15**

**1:00 – 4:00 pm , Free for Gallery Members or \$5 Drop-in**

*Let's Make Stuff!* offers a relaxed, social approach to learning and improving on one's artistic technique or to kick start that project you've been procrastinating on. We meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of every month. Adults only. Please RSVP to [ktycholis@richmond.ca](mailto:ktycholis@richmond.ca)

### ***Family Portrait Gallery – Become Part of a Gallery Exhibition!***

**January – March 2012**

In conjunction with the exhibition, *My Big Family*, the Richmond Art Gallery invites you to bring in a framed photograph or portrait of your family to be hung in Gallery 3. Names of participating families will be put into a draw for a family portrait to be taken by the artist, Hua Jin. For more information : <http://www.richmondartgallery.org/jin.php>