



Max Weber

CHRONOLOGY

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- 1881 Born on April 18 in Białystok in what was formerly the Russian Empire (today, Poland), to Morris Weber, a tailor, and Julia Weber. His parents were Jewish and this heritage informed much of his later work.
- 1891 Weber immigrates with his parents to New York City at the age of ten, where the family first settles in Williamsburg. As a Jewish immigrant, Weber's early years in New York were often characterized by "outsider" experiences. He also later notes the impact of the metropolis on his formative years, recalling his keen interest in the aesthetic details of the Manhattan skyline, which he would often observe while riding the ferry beneath the Brooklyn Bridge with his father.
- 1891–97 Attends primary school and Boy's High School in Brooklyn.
- 1898 A talented student who learned English quickly, Weber enrolls at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. There, he studies under artist Arthur Wesley Dow. At Pratt, Weber's studies range from Far Eastern art to theories of art and design. Captivated by his studies and experiences in the city, Weber later calls these years as "a veritable melting pot in the history of art."
- 1901–03 Teaches construction drawing and manual training in public schools in Lynchburg, Virginia.
- 1903–05 Moves to Duluth, Minnesota to teach in the Art and Manual Training Department of the State Normal School (which later became the University of Minnesota, Duluth).
- 1904 Has two works accepted to the Minnesota State Fair's annual exhibition. Decades later, Weber recalls "I shall never forget how thrilled I was at the announcement that my two pictures were accepted for exhibition," crediting the show with helping to establish his confidence in the prospect of becoming a professional artist.
- 1905 Weber moves to Paris, where he first studies at the traditional atelier Académie Julian. Frustrated by the academic emphasis on figure drawing, Weber drops out of formal artistic training and, alongside American artist Patrick Henry Bruce, petitions Matisse to establish his own school that could nurture early abstractionist principles.
- 1906 Weber exhibits at the Salon d'Automne at 27, rue des Fleurus, which was on view between October 6 to November 15. There, he is particularly influenced by the ten works by Cézanne that were on view. Cézanne dies several weeks later, on October 22, however, ending any aspirations Weber had of studying or working with the artist. Also in 1906, Weber travels to Spain where he is particularly inspired by El Greco and Diego Velasquez; Weber paints at the Académie Colarossi and the Académie de la Grand Chaumière in Paris.
- 1907 Travels to Italy, Belgium, and Holland. Weber exhibits again at the Salon d'Automne between October 1 to October 22. A year after Cézanne's passing, the exhibition honors his life's work. Weber attends with his friend, Henri Rousseau; as with the year prior, Weber is entranced by the over fifty oils and watercolors by the late artist and expresses his desire to emulate Cézanne's artistic achievements.



Tom Richards, Max Weber examining a sculpture, April 22, 1956. Max Weber papers, 1902–2008. Archives of American Art Smithsonian Institution

- 1908 Beginning January 1, following Weber's urging, Matisse leads classes that meet weekly in an abandoned monastery, the Couvent des Oiseaux, where Matisse had kept a studio for two years. Ten students enroll, including Weber and Bruce, as well as Americans Leo and Sarah Stein, who were family with Gertrude Stein. Classes offer an education on wide-ranging subjects, including African sculpture, archaic Greek art, and Cézanne's experiments in perspective. Weber departs Paris for London and then New York on December 21, 1908.
- 1909 Weber returns to New York City, bringing his experience and knowledge of the European avant-garde with him. Again, he finds himself isolated and stifled by the powerful influence of the academy. He has his first one-man exhibition at the Haas Gallery in New York.
- 1910–15 Weber experiments with sculpture, wherein he seeks to apply Cubist and Futurist principles to the aesthetic qualities of African and Precolumbian sculpture.
- 1910 Weber is included in a group exhibition at Stieglitz's 291 Gallery, titled "Younger American Painters;" the show focuses on students of Matisse. The same year, Weber contributes an essay to Stieglitz's *Camera Work*, titled "The Fourth Dimension from a Plastic Point of View." Increasingly, his works demonstrate an attention to color, a departure from his earlier paintings.
- 1911 Stieglitz organizes a solo exhibition for Weber at the 291 Gallery.
- 1913 Weber chooses not to exhibit at the Armory Show in New York, but is included in an exhibition at the Grafton Group in London. This was the result of lobbying by photographer Alvin Langdon Coburn, who had shown Roger Fry, the exhibition's organizer, reproductions of Weber's work; Fry was so impressed that he invites Weber to exhibit five canvases. Weber's first solo museum exhibition is also in 1913, at the Newark Museum of Art in New Jersey. This is the first such exhibition in the U.S. to highlight the work of an American Modernist.

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The Blue Trellis, 1922, oil on canvas, 20 x 25 inches

- 1914–18 Alongside self-taught photographer Clarence H. White, Weber co-founds the Clarence H. White School for Photography in New York. There, he teaches art appreciation.
- 1914 While lecturing at the school, Weber publishes his first volume of poetry, titled *Cubist Poetry*. His pedagogy style is deeply influenced by his instruction under Dow, which underscored a global comparative approach to the trajectory of art history.
- 1915 Weber holds exhibitions at the Montross and Ehrich galleries in New York, and the Jones Gallery in Baltimore. Critic Henry McBride praises Weber's championing of modernism. Beginning in 1915, Weber's thematic focus shifts from an emphasis on individual figures and experimentation in human form to studies of the modern city, particularly public monuments.
- 1916–18 Experiments with lithography for the first time.
- 1916 Publishes *Essays on Art*, an explicitly political collection of texts that connect his interpretations of Cubism to his allegiance to anarchism. Marries Frances Abrams on June 27.
- 1917 Weber's mother dies.
- 1918 Weber begins to return to figurative works. He attributes this shift to two events: the end of the First World War and the death of his father that same year. He also begins to increasingly focus on subjects pertaining to Judaism.
- 1919–21 Teaches at the Art Students League in New York. While an instructor, a young Mark Rothko enrolls in his classes. The two artists share a common history; both were of Russian Jewish origin and had immigrated to the U.S. at the age of ten. This training and relationship has a lasting impact on Rothko's artistic practice.
- 1920–21 Moves to Garden City, Long Island.
- 1923 Weber's son, Maynard Jay, is born. Weber has a one-man show at the Montross Gallery.
- 1924 Weber has exhibitions at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune in Paris, and J.B. Neumann's *New Art Circle* gallery in New York.
- 1926 Weber publishes his second volume of poetry, *Primitives: Poems and Woodcuts*. He illustrates the work with eleven woodcuts and also designs the binding.
- 1926–27 Returns to teaching at the Art Students League in New York.
- 1927 Weber's daughter, Joy Sarah, is born. He has a solo show at J.B. Neumann's *Art Circle Gallery*.
- 1928 Weber has an exhibition of lithographs at the Downtown Gallery. He is awarded the Potter Palmer Gold Medal by the Art Institute of Chicago.
- 1929 Weber moves with his family to Great Neck, Long Island. He is included in the *Nineteen Living Americans* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.
- 1930 The Museum of Modern Art in New York holds a retrospective of Weber's work. This is MoMA's first exhibition of an American artist. He is also given a solo exhibition at J.B. Neumann's *New Art Circle Gallery*.
- 1931 Weber is a guest teacher at the University of Minnesota, Duluth.
- 1935 Weber has a one-man show at J.B. Neumann's *New Art Circle Gallery*.
- 1937 Weber is appointed the National Chairman of the American Artists' Congress. He has a solo show at J.B. Neumann's *New Art Circle Gallery*.
- 1938–40 He is an Honorary National Chairman of the American Artists' Congress.
- 1941 Weber is awarded the Temple Gold Medal from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, the W.A. Clark Prize and Corcoran Bronze Medal from the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., and the Adea S. Garrett Prize from the Art Institute of Chicago. He has a one-man show at the Associated American Artists gallery, New York.

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- 1942 Weber has a solo exhibition at the Baltimore Museum of Art. First exhibits at the Paul Rosenberg Gallery in New York.
- 1943 He has a solo exhibition at the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- 1946 He wins First Prize at the La Tausca Art Competition and an award from the Pepsi-Cola Exhibition.
- 1948 In a survey conducted by *Look* magazine of art experts, Weber is ranked as the second greatest living American artist, just behind John Marin.
- 1949 He has a large solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.
- 1950 He serves on the International Committee for Henri Rousseau Retrospective Exhibition at the *25th Biennale di Venezia*. He is included in the *Abstract Art in America* exhibition at the MoMA as well as the *Painting in the United States, 1721–1950* exhibition in Pomona, California.
- 1951 Weber serves as a guest teacher in the Humanities Department at the University of Minnesota. The Tel Aviv Museum in Israel hosts a Seventieth Birthday Celebration for him. He exhibits at the Bienal Museu de Arte in Sao Paulo, Brazil and reads a paper at the MoMA on his experiences studying under Matisse.
- 1952 Weber teaches an art workshop at Bowling Green State University, Ohio.
- 1955 Weber is elected a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, New York.
- 1956 He has a solo exhibition at the Jewish Museum in New York. Publishes *Woodcuts and Linoleum Blocks*. Weber is awarded the Lippincott Prize from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.
- 1957 Weber is awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters from Brandeis University.
- 1958 He holds a retrospective at the Downtown Gallery, New York.
- 1959 He has a solo exhibition at the Newark Museum of Art. Is named a Life Fellow by the International Institute of Arts and Letters in New York; a Doctor of Fine Arts in Zurich, Switzerland; a Doctor of Fine Arts from the Pratt Institute. He is given a retrospective at the Pratt Institute and the Newark Museum
- 1961 Weber dies in Great Neck, New York on October 4, where he was a resident since 1929.

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The Pitcher, 1911, watercolor on paper, 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches

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Cover: *Group of Nudes*, 1911, oil on board, 12¼ x 10 inches