

MODERN AUSTRALIAN WOMEN WORKS FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION

ARTWORK LABELS

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Modern Australian Women: Works from a Private Collection

The turn of the twentieth century was a crucial time for women artists in Australia. By 1900, women were a visible and active presence at the country's major art schools, including at the National Gallery School in Melbourne, where female students far outnumbered their male peers. Works by women artists were hung at major exhibitions, women slowly began to enter the managing ranks of art societies, and travel to Europe to pursue further study and professional opportunities was commonplace. While prejudice about women's capacity as artists remained widespread, more women gained recognition and respect as 'professional artists' in this period than ever before.

Modern Australian Women: Works from a Private Collection explores the lives and work of more than fifty artists who worked in Australia and abroad between 1880 and 1960. Almost all of these women were professional working artists, often supporting themselves and their families via the sale of art through public exhibitions, commercial galleries and private commissions. The works on display provide insight into women's professional and economic strategies, as well as their role in introducing Post-impressionism and modernism into Australian art. These works were acquired over a period of forty years and reflect the singular vision and connoisseurship of their passionate collector.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women artists were regarded by critics as naturally suited to flower painting, which was considered a minor genre in the traditional hierarchy of painting genres. While this characterisation was limiting, women like Violet McInnes and A. M. E. Bale used it to their advantage. Small canvases and floral subjects suited the homes and tastes of middle-class buyers, so producing a large number of works and selling them at a modest price was a shrewd economic strategy.

In the 1920s and 1930s, some women artists used floral studies as a vehicle for radical experimentation. Margaret Preston and Grace Cossington Smith used everyday domestic objects like flowers and tableware to develop their modernist aesthetics, incorporating graphic, geometric and decorative elements into traditionally 'minor' subjects. These artists were at the forefront of Post-impressionism and modernism in Australia.

Portraiture was the other commercial staple for women artists and provided a reliable source of income to artists such as Janet Cumberae Stewart, Stella Bowen and Florence Rodway. Working predominantly in pastel, Cumberae Stewart and Dora Wilson depicted the female nude in works that were praised by critics for their tastefulness. These works convey a subtle sexuality while carefully negotiating expectations of what was considered 'appropriate' for a female artist.

Female artists played a crucial role in the development of modern art in Australia during the 1920s and 1930s. Most came from middle-class families and, having the means to travel, studied in London and Paris where they absorbed modernist design principles. Many were drawn to printmaking as a medium that suited their decorative aesthetic; the most famous of these was Margaret Preston, whose bold and roughly carved woodcuts heralded a new direction for the relief print. Similarly, Thea Proctor's prints had a strong emphasis on design and both she and Preston championed modernist relief prints.

Ethel Spowers, Eveline Syme and Dorrit Black each travelled to London to study at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art with Claude Flight, who promoted the colour linocut as a modernist medium. His students learned to use three or four different colour blocks to build up dynamic images that expressed the energy of a new age with a strong sense of rhythm and movement. Syme wrote, 'Here was something new and different, I had seen nothing more vital and essentially "modern" in the best sense of the word'. Upon their return to Australia, these artists helped to promote the colour linocut and used the technique to create images of distinctively Australian subjects.

The charm of Europe, and in particular France, has always attracted Australian artists, and the early twentieth century saw an increase in female artists travelling overseas to exhibit their work and to study. For many, such as Dorrit Black, Stella Bowen, Bessie Davidson, Dora Meeson and Kathleen O'Connor, the experience of living abroad marked the first time they had felt liberated from the established rules of Australia, and they became fully immersed in their new environments.

Between 1908 and 1932, nine female students were awarded the illustrious National Gallery of Victoria Travelling Scholarship, with recipients including Constance Jenkins and Constance Winifred Honey. The grant was first awarded in 1887 and assisted the winner to complete art studies abroad. One of the provisions of the scholarship was that the NGV acquire work created by the recipient while they were overseas. This introduced a number of previously unrepresented female artists into the NGV Collection.

Female artists also looked to the Australian outback and countryside for inspiration. For example, Violet Teague travelled to the Hermannsburg Mission in the Northern Territory, and Hilda Rix Nicholas conducted extensive driving excursions across rural New South Wales.

Grace Cossington Smith

Australia 1892–1984, England and Germany 1912–14,
England and Italy 1949–51

Bottlebrushes

1935 Sydney

oil on pulpboard

Private Collection, Melbourne

Grace Cossington Smith was a leading Sydney modernist in the late 1920s and early 1930s and a talented colourist celebrated for her iconic urban images and radiant interiors. With Roy de Maistre and Roland Wakelin, she was one of the first Australian artists to paint in Post-impressionist and French modernist styles. Flowers became an important subject for Cossington Smith as she considered the transience of life following the death of her mother in 1931. Using her distinctive brushwork and sense of structure, she often painted native Australian flowers, such as bottlebrushes, gum blossoms and wattle.

Sybil Craig

England 1901 – Australia 1989, Australia from 1902

Flowers in a vase

1930s or 1940s Melbourne
oil on canvas on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Sybil Craig enrolled at the National Gallery School in 1924 after studying privately with John Shirlow. She was a foundation member of the New Melbourne Art Club and, during the 1940s, exhibited with the Melbourne Society of Women Painters and Sculptors, the Victorian Artists' Society, and the Twenty Melbourne Painters. In 1945, Craig became an official war artist and was commissioned by the Australian War Memorial to record work at the Commonwealth Explosives Factory at Maribyrnong. This early still life is stylistically more traditional than her later works, in particular her prints, which demonstrated a clear interest in modernist abstraction.

Ethel Carrick

England 1872 – Australia 1952, France 1905–13,
1918–40, 1946–52, Australia 1913–16, 1940–46

Mimosa

early 1920s France

oil on canvas on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Ethel Carrick is one of Australia's best-known women painters. She developed her vibrant Post-impressionist style while living in Paris with her husband, artist E. Phillips Fox, in the 1910s. Following Fox's death in Melbourne in 1915, Carrick returned to Paris and also travelled extensively around North Africa, Europe and the South Pacific. *Mimosa* was likely painted on one of Carrick's many painting trips to the south of France in the 1920s, where the flowering mimosa tree proliferated after being introduced to the area by British visitors in the late nineteenth century. Mimosa blossoms became a symbol of spring for tourists wintering along the Côte d'Azur.

Margaret Preston

Australia 1875–1963, Germany and France 1904–07,
France, England and Ireland 1912–19

The window

c. 1916 London
oil on cardboard

Private Collection, Melbourne

The window was painted during Margaret Preston's six-year stay in London in the 1910s, a period of dynamic change and debate within the English art world. While exhibiting regularly at the New English Art Club and the Royal Academy, Preston embraced the principles of British decorative art and Japanese woodcuts in still-life compositions like this one, notable for their flattened perspective, tonal colour harmonies, contrasting black and white and decorative elements. *The window* was painted at Preston's Battersea studio and foreshadows the structural geometric modernism she fully developed in the 1920s and 1930s.

Vida Lahey

Australia 1882–1968, England and France 1915–20,
1927–29

Banksia

1931 Brisbane
oil on cardboard

Private Collection, Melbourne

A. M. E. Bale

Australia 1875–1955

Tiger lilies

1930s Melbourne

oil on canvas

Private Collection, Melbourne

Stella Bowen

Australia 1893 – England 1947, England and
France 1914–47

Still life

c. 1934 London
oil on cardboard

Private Collection, Melbourne

Violet McInnes

Australia 1892–1971

Large flower composition

1951 Melbourne

oil on canvas

Private Collection, Melbourne

Agnes Goodsir

Australia 1864 – France 1939, France 1900–06, 1918–39,
England 1906–18

Flowers, vase, fan and beads

1929 Paris

oil on canvas

Private Collection, Melbourne

Born and educated near Bendigo, Agnes Goodsir spent most of her adult life in Paris, where she completed her training and joined the avant-garde artistic community of the Left Bank. Primarily renowned as a portraitist, she exhibited at the New Salon, the Salon des Indépendants, and the Société Nationale des Beaux Arts in Paris, and at the Royal Academy and the Royal Institute in London. Goodsir died in Paris in 1939. Her paintings were bequeathed to her partner and muse Rachel Dunn, who sent about forty works to Agnes's family in Australia and others to Australian galleries, assuring Goodsir's legacy.

Alma Figuerola

Australia c. 1895–1970

Still life – flowers and pink bowl

c. 1940 Melbourne

oil on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Jean Isherwood

Australia 1911–2006

Banksia still life

1945 Sydney

oil on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Freda Robertshaw

Australia 1916–97

Spring flowers

1940s Sydney

oil on canvas on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Freda Robertshaw graduated from the commercial art course at East Sydney Technical College in 1937, having studied drawing, life drawing, oil painting, watercolour and lettering. She then apprenticed herself to her former life-drawing teacher, Charles Meere, and trained in his Neoclassical style. Robertshaw abandoned figurative painting after leaving Meere's studio and returned to the genres in which she originally specialised – landscape and flower painting. This still life bears the marks of her interest in Surrealism.

Nora Heysen

Australia 1911–2003, England and Italy 1934–37

Frangipani

1955 Papua New Guinea

oil on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Nora Heysen was the fourth child of celebrated Australian artist Hans Heysen and the only one to pursue an artistic career. After studying in Europe, she established herself as a distinguished portraitist and painter of still life. Her powerfully composed works, with their precise, defined forms and strong colours, show the impact of European masters of the early Renaissance. While she did not identify as a modernist, her works demonstrate a clear familiarity with the progress of mid-century art. In 1938 Heysen became the first woman to win the prestigious Archibald Prize for portraiture and in 1943 was appointed Australia's official war artist.

Kathleen O'Connor

New Zealand 1876 – Australia 1968, arrived Australia 1891, France and England 1906–26, 1928-48, 1951–55

Still life

1936 France

oil on fibre board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Kathleen O'Connor received her initial art training in Perth before travelling to Europe in 1906 to expand her knowledge and experience. She spent most of the first half of the twentieth century in London and Paris, where she was influenced by the theories of Post-impressionism and the art of the Dutch painter Isaac Israels and French painter Édouard Vuillard. In the 1930s O'Connor experimented with the expressive and energetic application of paint evident in this still-life composition, in which a bowl of peaches is almost obscured by energetic brush strokes and a subtle blending of tones.

Dora Meeson

Australia 1869 – England 1955, England from c. 1901

On a Chelsea balcony

1912 London

oil on canvas

Private Collection, Melbourne

In the first decades of the twentieth century, Dora Meeson and her husband, artist George Coates, were part of the Australian expatriate artist community that lived and worked in London's bohemian district of Chelsea. Their neighbours included George Lambert, Thea Proctor, Tom Roberts and Arthur Streeton. While Coates worked in a dimly lit studio to achieve his preferred low tones, Meeson was drawn to working en plein air to best express light and colour. This work, which Meeson brought from London to Melbourne to exhibit at the Athenaeum's Art Gallery in 1913, shows her skilful use of light and a bold colour palette.

Constance Stokes

Australia 1906–91

Head of a young girl

early 1960s Melbourne

oil on composition board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Constance Stokes was educated at the National Gallery School and then, through the Gallery's prestigious Travelling Scholarship, at London's Royal Academy schools. In London and Paris she was introduced to the Italian Old Masters and to Cubism, both of which influenced her practice over the next twenty years. In the 1940s and 1950s Stokes balanced her artistic career with motherhood, before dedicating herself to painting with a new verve after the death of her husband in 1962. *Head of a young girl* demonstrates her move towards a more vibrant, Fauvist-inspired use of colour and form later in her career.

Florence Rodway

Australia 1881–1971, England 1903–06

Pepita

c.1910 Sydney
pastel on paper

Private Collection, Melbourne

Florence Rodway was born in Hobart and was one of the first Australian artists to win a scholarship to London's Royal Academy schools. Unfortunately, the city proved too expensive and in 1906 she prematurely returned to Australia, where she developed a strong reputation for her pastel portraiture and miniatures. In the years around 1910 she produced up to twenty portraits a year, including one in 1912 of Dame Nellie Melba, who reportedly purchased *Pepita* for her own collection. It is possible the work was an uncommissioned portrait of the singer. Melba lent the painting to Rodway's 1914 exhibition at the Athenaeum's Art Gallery in Melbourne.

Janet Cumbrae Stewart

Australia 1883–1960, England and Europe 1922–39

Portrait of a young girl in a hat

1919 Melbourne

pastel

Private Collection, Melbourne

Bessie Davidson

Australia 1879 – France 1965, France 1904–06, Australia 1906–10, France from 1910

Jeune fille au miroir

1914 Paris

oil on canvas

Private Collection, Melbourne

In 1910, South Australian-born artist Bessie Davidson settled permanently in France, where she produced a number of decorative portraits depicting female models in Parisian interiors. Davidson was a single, expatriate woman living alone, and her portraits of domestic space record the autonomous, urban lifestyle made possible for women at the time, in part by the modern apartment building. In these spaces, women enjoyed newfound privacy and the freedom to set their own professional, social and leisure routines. In works like *Jeune fille au miroir*, Davidson's Montparnasse studio apartment is positioned as a space of burgeoning female modernity, where women's interior lives and independence are privileged.

Dora Wilson

England 1883 – Australia 1946, arrived Australia 1884,
England and Europe 1927–29

Cloth of gold

c. 1920 Melbourne
pastel

Private Collection, Melbourne

Dora Wilson was a versatile painter best known for her street scenes, portraits and nudes. She trained at the National Gallery School in the early 1900s with Vida Lahey, Charles Wheeler and Jessie Traill, with whom she later shared a studio on Collins Street, Melbourne. Wilson exhibited frequently, and her work sold well. By the early 1920s it commanded prices similar to those of the work of Arthur Streeton. Wilson particularly enjoyed painting the human form and her nude studies were generally praised by critics for their graceful poses and delicate treatment of skin.

Stella Bowen

Australia 1893 – England 1947, England and France 1914–47

Raymond Postgate

1934 London

oil on cardboard

Private Collection, Melbourne

Stella Bowen travelled from Adelaide to London in 1914 to pursue an artistic career and soon entered the city's bohemian artistic circles. After separating from her partner, the English writer Ford Madox Ford, in the late 1920s she sought out portrait commissions as a means to support herself and her daughter. Bowen developed a method for quickly producing oil sketches on cardboard, which allowed portraits to be completed within a couple of days, and this work is an example of the technique. The spontaneous, effortless style of the portraits was popular with sitters but at odds with Bowen's preference for tight, formal compositions on panels.

Jean Bellette

Australia 1908 – Spain 1991, England and Europe
1936–39, Spain from 1957

Classical figures in a landscape

1948 Sydney

oil on canvas on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Jean Bellette was born in Hobart in 1908 and is recognised for her depictions of Classical subjects. She studied at Hobart Technical School before attending the Sydney Art School (now the Julian Ashton Art School) in Sydney, where she was taught by Thea Proctor and met fellow artist Paul Haefliger, whom she married in 1935. The couple travelled to London the following year, where Bellette studied at the Westminster Art School, London. *Classical figures in a landscape* was completed following significant critical recognition in the early 1940s, when Bellette was awarded the Sir John Sulman Prize for genre painting in 1942 and again in 1944.

Clara Southern

Australia 1860–1940

Wattle, Warrandyte Bridge

c. 1910 Warrandyte, Victoria

oil on canvas on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Clara Southern trained at the National Gallery School and was one of Australia's leading Impressionists. In 1905, she settled on a property overlooking the Yarra River in Warrandyte, Victoria. Over the ensuing decades, she was at the centre of the area's small community of landscape artists. Southern's lyrical depictions of the Warrandyte landscape reflect her enduring love of the region and its flora, which she captured in soft, intimate and atmospheric works. Southern's Australian landscapes attracted acclaim from her peers, and she was the first woman committee member of the Australian Art Association and a councillor of the Victorian Artists' Society.

Clara Southern

Australia 1860–1940

The river bend

1910s Warrandyte, Victoria
oil on canvas on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Violet Teague

Australia 1872–1951, Europe and England 1890–96

Central Australian sunset

1933 Hermannsburg, Northern Territory
oil on canvas on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

After studying in Brussels and England, Violet Teague returned to Melbourne, where she attended the National Gallery School. Known for her printmaking and portraiture, Teague is recognised as producing the first Japanese-style coloured woodblock prints in Australia, the earliest published with Geraldine Rede in 1905. Teague travelled to the Hermannsburg Lutheran Mission with her sister Una Teague in 1933. They were accompanied by fellow artist Albert Namatjira on some of their excursions. When they returned to Melbourne they organised a fundraising exhibition to raise money for a water pipeline to the mission.

Freda Robertshaw

Australia 1916–97

The rolling hills

1940s Sydney

oil on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Jo M. Sweatman

Australia 1872–1956

Haystack under the trees

1910s Melbourne

oil on canvas on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Dora Wilson

England 1883 – Australia 1946, arrived Australia 1884,
England and Europe 1927–29

Old gum tree Lorne

c. 1930 Lorne, Victoria
oil on canvas on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Ethel Stephens

Australia 1864–1944, lived in Europe 1920–23

Little harvesters

1896 New South Wales
oil on wood panel

Private Collection, Melbourne

Jane Price

England 1860 – Australia 1948, arrived Australia 1880

Children playing in a landscape

c. 1888 Melbourne

oil on canvas

Private Collection, Melbourne

Jane Price was born and educated in England, and travelled to Australia for the first time in 1880. She was employed as a governess while furthering her artistic training, first in Sydney then in Melbourne. From 1888, she shared a studio in Grosvenor Chambers on Collins Street, Melbourne, with fellow artists Clara Southern and Jane Sutherland. She was an advocate for painting en plein air and worked with the artists of the Heidelberg School at Eaglemont and Heidelberg, including Frederick McCubbin and Tom Roberts. Price's role in the development of Australian Impressionism is clearly visible in this work.

Ellis Rowan

Australia 1848–1922

Barringtonia

c. 1891 Thursday Island
watercolour/gouache

Private Collection, Melbourne

Ellis Rowan was an artist, explorer, naturalist and self-proclaimed 'flower hunter' who taught herself botanical illustration. Rowan travelled throughout Australia, Asia and North America from the 1870s until the 1920s documenting wildflowers, birds and insects in their natural settings. In the late 1880s, she embarked on an ambitious expedition to document and illustrate the complete flora of Queensland. *Barringtonia* was likely produced on Thursday Island, where Rowan encountered flowers that were, in her words, 'worthy to form a gift for our queen'.

Ethel Carrick

England 1872 – Australia 1952, France 1905–13, 1918–40,
1946–52, Australia 1913–16, 1940–46

Ponte Vecchio

c. 1907 Florence
oil on canvas

Private Collection, Melbourne

Hilda Rix Nicholas

Australia 1884–1961, France and England 1907–18,
France 1924–26

Moroccan scene, Tangiers

c. 1912 Tangiers, Morocco
pastel on paper

Private Collection, Melbourne

Hilda Rix Nicholas made two trips to Morocco, first in 1912 and then in 1913–14.

These trips to North Africa, with its different light and exotic surroundings, had a major influence on Rix Nicholas's work. As her painting style moved towards Post-impressionism, her approach to form and her use of colour became more liberated. Rix Nicholas spent most of her time in Tangiers painting in the open-air market, where she completed several small on-the-spot paintings. These Moroccan paintings and related drawings by Rix Nicholas are among the earliest modernist works by an Australian artist.

Dorrit Black

Australia 1891–1951, England and France 1927–29

Taormina

between 1927–29 Sicily
watercolour

Private Collection, Melbourne

Dora Meeson

Australia 1869 – England 1955, England from c. 1901

Hastings summer

1935 Hastings, England
oil on canvas

Private Collection, Melbourne

Alison Rehfisch

Australia 1900–75, London, Spain, France and Germany
1933–39

Sailing boats, Brittany

1938 Brittany
oil on canvas

Private Collection, Melbourne

Alison Rehfisch, a significant, but until recently little-known, Sydney modernist studied with the influential Italian-Australian art teacher Antonio Dattilo-Rubbo. She shared studios with Dorrit Black and Thea Proctor before travelling to London in 1933. Attending the Grosvenor School of Modern Art under Iain Macnab reinforced Rehfisch's devotion to modernist ideals of colour, form and design. Her stylised compositions were shown at the Royal Institute of Oil Painters in London and the Société Nationale des Beaux Arts in Paris. She travelled extensively through Spain, Germany and France in the mid 1930s. This work was painted during a summer spent in Brittany, which Rehfisch considered 'an artist's paradise'.

Alison Rehfisch

Australia 1900–75, London, Spain, France and Germany
1933–39

Alpine village

c. 1936 Berchtesgaden, Germany
oil on canvas on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Constance Honey

England 1892–1944, Australia c. 1900–12, England
from 1912

London shopfront

late 1910s or early 1920s London
oil on wood

Private Collection, Melbourne

Dora Wilson

England 1883 – Australia 1946, arrived Australia 1884,
England and Europe 1927–29

Amalfi

between 1927–29 Amalfi
oil on board

Proposed gift, Private Collection, Melbourne

Dorrit Black

Australia 1891–1951, England and France 1927–29

A Dorset farmyard

1944 Adelaide

oil on canvas

Private Collection, Melbourne

Dorrit Black painted *A Dorset farmyard* in Adelaide in 1944 from sketches she had made ten years earlier at Chideock, a small coastal farming village in West Dorset. She visited the village with a group of artists during her second trip to England in 1935. The painting depicts a herd of cattle against the soft organic curves of grassy fields and traditional farm buildings, but the treatment of the subject is far from traditional. In her unconventional use of perspective, geometry and outlining, we see Black introducing modernist elements of Post-impressionism and Cubism.

Bessie Gibson

Australia 1868–1961, France 1906–39, England 1939–47

Seascape France

between 1908–39 France
oil on canvas on card

Private Collection, Melbourne

Hilda Rix Nicholas

Australia 1884–1961, France and England 1907–18,
France 1924–26

The picnic

early 1920s New South Wales
oil on canvas

Private Collection, Melbourne

During the 1920s, Hilda Rix Nicholas's paintings of Australian life received acclaim both at home and abroad. In 1918, following periods in France, Morocco and England, Rix Nicholas acquired a studio in Mosman, Sydney, and embarked on extended trips throughout rural New South Wales. Her strong and vibrant pastoral scenes, characterised by their vivid use of colour and confident, dynamic handling of paint, often saw Rix Nicholas labelled by critics as a 'masculine' painter. In *The picnic*, likely painted during this period, she represents the Australian landscape as a peaceful idyll for female leisure and relaxation.

Isabel Hunter Tweddle

Australia 1915–1945

Victoria Market

c. 1933 Melbourne

oil on canvas

Private Collection, Melbourne

Dora Wilson

England 1883 – Australia 1946, arrived Australia 1884,
England and Europe 1927–29

Paris end of Collins Street

late 1930s or early 1940s Melbourne
oil on canvas

Private Collection, Melbourne

Vida Lahey

Australia 1882–1968, England and France 1915–20,
1927–29

Salamanca Quayside, Hobart

mid 1920s Hobart

oil on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Vida Lahey trained at Melbourne's National Gallery School, and later in Paris, after three years of volunteer war work in London. She travelled to Tasmania in 1922 and stayed there for almost two years. She found the Tasmanian landscape restorative after the emotional turmoil of the First World War, which claimed the life of her brother, and the period was highly productive for her painting. Lahey's work from this period, and from later trips to Tasmania, show the influence of the French Impressionists. She became increasingly interested in exploring the effect of light and colour in this period, as seen in atmospheric works like this one.

Vida Lahey

Australia 1882–1968, England and France 1915–20,
1927–29

The Carter's resting place

1930s Brisbane
oil on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Esther Paterson

Australia 1892–1971

St Kilda Beach, Middle Park

c. 1925 St Kilda

oil on canvas on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Clarice Beckett

Australia 1887–1935

End of the garden

c. 1929 Melbourne

oil on canvas on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Clarice Beckett is now acknowledged as one of Australia's leading female artists of the early twentieth century but received very little recognition or critical support during her lifetime. She studied at the National Gallery School before becoming a pupil of Max Meldrum in 1918. Beckett exhibited regularly with Meldrum and other tonal realists, including Percy Leason, Colin Colahan and Alexander Colquhoun. Following Meldrum's principles, Beckett painted atmospheric images of Melbourne's city streets, the bayside suburbs of Sandringham and Beaumaris, and Naringal in the Western District of Victoria.

Bessie Davidson

Australia 1879 – France 1965, France 1904–06, Australia
1906–10, France from 1910

Bouquet

c. 1945 France
oil on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Bessie Davidson

Australia 1879 – France 1965, France 1904–06, Australia
1906–10, France from 1910

Grenoble in summer

1943 Grenoble
oil on board

Private Collection, Melbourne

Ida Rentoul Outhwaite

Australia 1888–1960

Long long thoughts

1915–25 Melbourne

pen and ink and watercolour

Private Collection, Melbourne

Joy Hester

Australia 1920–60

Seated nude

1956 Melbourne
charcoal and pastel

Private Collection, Melbourne

Joy Hester was the only female artist in the group now known as Angry Penguins, an Australian literary and artistic movement which included artists such as Arthur Boyd, Sidney Nolan, John Perceval and Albert Tucker. Hester's drawings are intensely personal statements about joy and pain, based on her experience and observations of the people around her. This drawing of a nude was made in 1956, when Hester had just set up her first proper studio in Upwey, Victoria, where she was living with the artist Guy Grey-Smith. Her spontaneous, bold style was inspired by expressionist and 'primitive' art, which she admired because it was direct and unimpeded by academic convention.

Thea Proctor

Australia 1879–1966, lived in England 1903–12, 1914–21

Untitled

1920s Sydney

watercolour on silk

Thea Proctor played a major role in promoting modernism in art, design and everyday life in Australia during the interwar period. In her own practice, Proctor produced fan-shaped paintings in watercolour on silk, as well as drawings and prints. She had taken up fan painting in London in the early 1900s, inspired by Charles Conder's work in this medium. This idyllic interior scene of two women in long robes reclining on a lounge by a large window achieves a highly decorative effect through its simplified forms, bright colours and bold patterns.

Private Collection, Melbourne

Ethel Spowers

Australia 1890–1947, lived in England and
France 1921–24

Wet afternoon

1930 Melbourne
colour linocut, ed. of 50

Private Collection, Melbourne

Ethel Spowers

Australia 1890–1947, lived in England and
France 1921–24

The lonely farm

1933 Melbourne
colour linocut, ed. 5/50

Private Collection, Melbourne

Ethel Spowers

Australia 1890–1947, lived in England and
France 1921–24

The green bridge

1926 Melbourne
colour linocut

Private Collection, Melbourne

Thea Proctor

Australia 1879–1966, lived in England 1903–12, 1914–21

Bonnets, shawls and gay parasols

c. 1938 Sydney

woodcut, artist's proof

Private Collection, Melbourne

Thea Proctor

Australia 1879–1966, lived in England 1903–12, 1914–21

Women with fans

c. 1930 Sydney

woodcut

Private Collection, Melbourne

Thea Proctor

Australia 1879–1966, lived in England 1903–12, 1914–21

The swing

1925 Sydney

hand-coloured woodcut, no. 9 from an unnumbered edition

Private Collection, Melbourne

Thea Proctor

Australia 1879–1966, lived in England 1903–12, 1914–21

The rose

1927 Sydney

hand-coloured woodcut, no. 26 from an unnumbered edition

Private Collection, Melbourne

This composition first appeared as a watercolour that was reproduced on the cover of the 1927 issue of *The Home* magazine. It was subsequently turned into a handcoloured woodcut by the artist. *The rose* was first exhibited in Proctor's 1936 exhibition at Macquarie Galleries in Sydney and was praised in a *Sydney Morning Herald* review for achieving 'one of the most difficult things in art – beautiful curves'. The portrait on the right is Proctor's cousin Hera Roberts, who frequently modelled for the artist. The other woman is believed to be Myra Worrell, who worked as a maid for Margaret Preston.

Eveline Syme

Australia 1888–1961, England 1907–10, 1929–31

Outskirts of Siena

1930–31 Siena

colour linocut on Japanese paper, ed. 9/25

Private Collection, Melbourne

Eveline Syme

Australia 1888–1961, England 1907–10, 1929–31

The Lily Tower, Siena

1930 Siena

colour linocut on Japanese paper, ed. 1/50

Private Collection, Melbourne

Eveline Syme

Australia 1888–1961, England 1907–10, 1929–31

Mixed flowers

1933 Melbourne

colour linocut on Japanese paper, ed. 1/25

Private Collection, Melbourne

Eveline Syme

Australia 1888–1961, England 1907–10, 1929–31

Bridges at Chelsea

1929 London

colour linocut on Japanese paper, ed. 13/50

Private Collection, Melbourne

Eveline Syme

Australia 1888–1961, England 1907–10, 1929–31

Collins Street Melbourne

1927 Melbourne

woodcut, ed. 9/50

Private Collection, Melbourne

Jessie Macintosh

Australia 1892–1958

Unloading

1930s Melbourne

hand-coloured linocut

Private Collection, Melbourne

Jessie Macintosh

Australia 1892–1958

Pooch

1930s Melbourne
colour linocut

Private Collection, Melbourne

Margaret Preston

Australia 1875–1963, lived in Europe 1904–07, 1912–19

Mosman bridge

c.1927 Sydney

hand-coloured woodcut

Private Collection, Melbourne

After Margaret Preston travelled to Paris in 1912, she changed her traditional, naturalistic style and developed a distinctive decorative modernism influenced by the work of Paul Gauguin, as well as Japanese art. By the early 1920s, Preston was a passionate 'convert to modern art', as she wrote in *The Home* magazine, and was committed to creating distinctly Australian images in both painting and print. The woodcut medium suited her exploration of simplified form and flat colours in botanical motifs, still lifes and landscapes. Rather than printing from multiple colour blocks, she usually printed the image in black bold outlines and then hand-coloured each impression.

Margaret Preston

Australia 1875–1963, lived in Europe 1904–07, 1912–19

Hibiscus

1925 Sydney

hand-coloured woodcut, proof

Private Collection, Melbourne

Margaret Preston

Australia 1875–1963, lived in Europe 1904–07, 1912–19

Flowers in a jug

1929 Sydney

hand-coloured woodcut

Private Collection, Melbourne

Margaret Preston

Australia 1875–1963, lived in Europe 1904–07, 1912–19

Banksias

1932 Sydney

woodcut

Private Collection, Melbourne

Dorrit Black

Australia 1891–1951, England and France 1927–29

The windswept farm

1937 Adelaide

colour linocut, ed. 11 of 50

Private Collection, Melbourne

Dorrit Black studied with Claude Flight at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art in London in 1927 and later with the Cubist painters André Lhote and Albert Gleizes in Paris. When she returned to Australia, she applied the Cubist principles she had learnt in France to quintessentially Australian subjects. In 1932, Black founded the Modern Art Centre in Sydney, the first school and exhibition space devoted to modern art in Australia, where she promoted the medium of linocut. This print was made in Adelaide, where she lived from 1935.

Private Collection, Melbourne

Helen Ogilvie

Australia 1902–93

The red vase

1930s Melbourne

colour linocut, ed. 12/50

Private Collection, Melbourne

Helen Ogilvie

Australia 1902–93

Chooks in the straw

1932 Melbourne

colour linocut, ed. 3/50

Private Collection, Melbourne

Helen Ogilvie

Australia 1902–93

The black rooster

1935 Melbourne

wood engraving, ed. 12/50

Private Collection, Melbourne

Christian Waller

Australia 1894–1954

Morgan La Fey

c. 1927 Melbourne

colour linocut, ed. of 35

Private Collection, Melbourne

Christian Waller had an exceptional sense of design and a poetic imagination that found expression in romantic, mythological and allegorical subjects. Morgan La Fey, a sorceress in the Arthurian legend and a symbol of female strength is seen here surrounded by the attributes of her magical powers. Waller's image shows the artist's gift for composition in the arrangement of flat areas of colour, a skill she would subsequently develop in her stained-glass designs when she went on to become the first professional female stained-glass artist in Australia.

Christian Waller

Australia 1894–1954

The magician of the beautiful

1932 Melbourne

linocut

Private Collection, Melbourne

Lesbia Thorpe

Australia born 1919

Terraced houses Royal Parade

1940s Sydney

linocut, ed. 12/12

Private Collection, Melbourne

Marguerite Mahood

Australia 1901–89

Feline design

1930s Melbourne

colour linocut

Private Collection, Melbourne

Marguerite Mahood

Australia 1901–89

Strelitzias

late 1920s Melbourne
colour linocut

Proposed gift, Private Collection, Melbourne

Marguerite Mahood

Australia 1901–89

Sitting bear

1970 Melbourne

colour linocut ed. 2/10

Private Collection, Melbourne

Marguerite Mahood

Australia 1901–89

Watchfulness

1930s Melbourne

colour linocut

Private Collection, Melbourne

Marguerite Mahood studied drawing at the National Gallery School with Frederick McCubbin in the early 1920s. She became a professional artist, producing drawings, watercolours, linocuts and paintings, as well as numerous illustrations for books and magazines. In 1926 she became one of the first women in Australia to broadcast her own radio program, a popular weekly program about art and design. She exhibited at the Victorian Artists' Society, the Arts and Crafts Society and the Melbourne Society of Women Painters and was included in William Moore's *The Story of Australian Art* (1934), the first national survey of the field.

Ethel Stephens

Australia 1864–1944, lived in Europe
1920–23

Nasturtiums

1931 Sydney
colour linocut

Private Collection, Melbourne

Eileen Mayo

English 1906–94, lived in Australia 1952–62, New Zealand 1962–94

The ice cream cart

1930s London

colour linocut ed. 19/30

Private Collection, Melbourne

Lily Allport

Australia 1860–1949, lived in Europe
1888–1922, 1927–31

Lake Como, entrance to Villa d'Este

1928, Italy
hand-coloured linocut

Private Collection, Melbourne

Mabel Pye

Australia 1894–1982

Shadow pattern

1936 Melbourne

colour linocut, ed. of 20

Private Collection, Melbourne

Ailsa Lee Brown

Australia 1898–1943

Succulents and cactus

1928 Sydney

linocut

Private Collection, Melbourne

Klytie Pate

Australia 1912–2010

Lamp

c. 1950 Melbourne
earthenware

Private Collection, Melbourne

Klytie Pate

Australia 1912–2010

Bowl with lid

1940s Melbourne
earthenware

Private Collection, Melbourne

Klytie Pate

Australia 1912–2010

Plaque

1940s or 1950s Melbourne
earthenware

Private Collection, Melbourne

Although she is primarily known for her pioneering work as a studio potter, Klytie Pate trained as a sculptor, first privately with Ola Cohn, then at the National Gallery School and Melbourne Technical College during the 1930s. She became renowned for her experimental glazes and pierced and carved pots. As a child Pate lived with her aunt and uncle, the artists Christian and Napier Waller, where she developed a love of theosophy and mythology, an interest which underpins much of her work. Pate and Alan Lowe were the first ceramicists to have their work acquired by the National Gallery of Victoria.

Grace Seccombe

England 1880 – Australia 1956, arrived Australia 1902

Kingfisher

1935–45 Sydney

earthenware

Private Collection, Melbourne

Grace Seccombe

England 1880 – Australia 1956, arrived Australia 1902

Pair of Budgerigars

1935 Sydney

earthenware

Private Collection, Melbourne

Grace Seccombe

England 1880 – Australia 1956, arrived Australia 1902

Billy blue gum

1944–45 Sydney

earthenware

Private Collection, Melbourne

Grace Seccombe

England 1880 – Australia 1956, arrived Australia 1902

Dish

c. 1935 Sydney

earthenware

Private Collection, Melbourne

Grace Seccombe

England 1880 – Australia 1956, arrived Australia 1902

Book ends

1933 Sydney
earthenware

Private Collection, Melbourne

Grace Seccombe was born in Wolstanton, Staffordshire, in the centre of the 'potteries district' and studied at the Wedgwood Institute in Burslem before working at a local pottery. She immigrated to Australia with her family in 1902 and enrolled at Sydney Technical College in 1905. Seccombe joined the Sydney Society of Arts and Crafts in 1930 and exhibited annually with them until her death in 1956. Her 1931 exhibition featured figures of Australian fauna, including small, brightly painted and hand-modelled native birds, such as kookaburras and lyrebirds. Seccombe's hand-modelled figures, which she often made as bookends, became a signature of her work.

Theodora Cowan

Australia 1868–1949, Italy 1889–95, England 1901–13

Lamp

c. 1935 Sydney
earthenware

Private Collection, Melbourne

Una Deerbon

Australia 1882–1972, England, France and the United States 1913–15

Vase

late 1930s or early 1940s (Melbourne)
earthenware

Private Collection, Melbourne

Una Deerbon studied painting at the Sydney Art School before travelling extensively across England, France and the United States. She began making and teaching pottery in Brisbane in the 1920s and moved to Sydney in the early 1930s, where she started exhibiting with the Arts and Crafts Society of New South Wales. In 1933, following the death of her husband, Deerbon moved to Melbourne where she established the Melbourne School of Pottery (also known as the Deerbon School of Pottery) in Collins Street, advertising herself as late of the Slade School, London and the Michigan Art School, Chicago.

Una Deerbon

Australia 1882–1972, England, France and the
United States 1913–15

Jug

late 1930s or early 1940s (Melbourne)
earthenware

Private Collection, Melbourne

Una Deerbon

Australia 1882–1972, England, France and the
United States 1913–15

Vase with gumnut relief

1937 Melbourne
earthenware

Private Collection, Melbourne

Frances Derham

Australia 1894–1987

Aboriginal hunter

1930 Melbourne

linocut

Private Collection, Melbourne

Marie Tuck

Australia 1866–1947, France 1906–14

Central Adelaide Market

1915–25 Adelaide

oil on canvas

Private Collection, Melbourne

Jessie Traill

Australia 1881–1967, Switzerland and England 1893 –
c. 1900, England and France 1906–09, 1915–19,
1925–27, 1937–47, 1949–51, 1955–58

Between showers, Carcassonne

1927 Melbourne

etching and aquatint ed. 2/25

Private Collection, Melbourne