

Awakening

To my amazement [Lhote's] teaching was only the confirmation of the WANT I had been feeling for so long without knowing exactly what the want was. I feel rather dazed, but very happy, bewilderingly happy.

Grace Crowley, 1927

Many Australian women artists studied in the most progressive schools in London and Paris, frequently transferring from one school to another. For those like Crowley, who were unsure of the form of instruction they were searching for or where to find it, when artistic change came, it was profound and lasting.

Crowley recalled experiencing modern art in Paris that made her 'sit up and think' and found the lessons in Cubism at André Lhote's Académie on rue d'Odessa a revelation. The Académie was progressive, attracting hundreds of art students from around the world, including many Australasian students, whose work can be seen in this space: Dorrit Black, Mary Cockburn Mercer, Grace Crowley, Anne Dangar, Helen Stewart and Everline Syme.

The new methodologies they were learning followed a strict compositional formula and often resulted in creative breakthrough, with students producing art that 'looked modern'. Syme wrote in thanks to Lhote, 'I assure you that you have given me ideas about the essential nature of painting that no other teacher has ever given me and that will help me enormously when I return home'. Dangar recalled that her time in Lhote's Paris studio and summer school in 1927 and 1928 were the 'happiest of her life'. A vestige of the cosmopolitan camaraderie is the drawing (to the left) of a fellow Lhote student, the American Jane Blaney – a keepsake created for Dorrit Black, who later visited Blaney in Europe and again in New York in 1935.

The impact of Europe on Dangar was transformative and she returned permanently to France in 1930. Fulfilling a calling to a life producing village pottery and teaching in the art commune of Moly-Sabata in the village of Sablons, she set out to investigate the modernist aims of another significant figure in international Cubism, Albert Gleizes.

Free from the constraints of home, and with time to immerse themselves in their work, many artists came back to Australia artistically revitalised. Maintaining international professional networks, they were active in the global transmission of modernism in Australia through their teaching, exhibiting and advocacy.

Agnes Goodsir

born Portland, Victoria 1864

died Paris 1939

Girl with cigarette

c.1925, Paris

oil on canvas

Bequest of Mrs Amy E. Bayne 1945

Bendigo Art Gallery

In this striking portrait, Agnes Goodsir presents her partner and muse, Rachel Dunn (known as Cherry), as the epitome of 1920s Parisian style. Draped in a paisley shawl and velvet hat, with a cigarette in hand, Cherry exudes a sense of self-possession and modern independence. While the painting adheres to the conventions of realism, it is coded with Sapphic symbolism. Beneath its decorative surface, *Girl with Cigarette* reveals the artist's deep emotional connection to her subject and to the shared life they built within the bohemian, queer and avant-garde communities of the Left Bank in Paris.

Although immersed in Paris's radical milieu, Goodsir remained independent of contemporary art movements. She resisted the extremes of abstraction and the enduring popularity of Impressionism, which she believed focused on 'the surface of its subject without delving into the meaning beneath'. Her realist style appealed to French patrons and conservative Australian critics, who praised her for being 'content to express herself in her own way, without undue regard to the seething whirlpool of so-called Art Movements'. Notably, the same critic acknowledged in Goodsir's work 'a strange emotional charm difficult to analyse'. Blending tradition with innovation, Goodsir encoded her liberation within the quiet intimacy of domestic scenes.

Agnes Goodsir born
Portland, Victoria 1864 died
Paris 1939

Type of the Latin Quarter c.1926,
Paris oil on canvas

Collection of David and Patricia Lorimer

Stella Bowen

born Adelaide 1893

died London 1947

Mary Widney

1927, Paris

oil on wood panel

Purchased 2004

National Gallery of Australia

Hilda Rix Nicholas born
Ballarat, Victoria 1884 died Delegate,
New South Wales 1961

Portrait c.1912, France
charcoal and pastel on paper

Purchased 1919
Art Gallery of New South Wales

Hilda Rix Nicholas

born Ballarat, Victoria 1884 died
Delegate, New South Wales 1961

Une Australienne (An Australian)

1926, Paris

oil on canvas

Purchased 2014

National Gallery of Australia

Grace Crowley

born Cobbadah, New South Wales 1890

died Sydney 1979

1929, Paris of Lucie Beynis

oil on canvas on hardboard

Purchased 1965

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Portrait of Lucie Beynis was painted at the close of Grace Crowley's European adventure in 1929. Having left Sydney with fellow artist Anne Dangar four years earlier, she studied under the French cubists André Lhote and Albert Gleizes, taking their classes in Paris and at summer schools in the village of Mirmande.

This portrait was painted at Lhote's academy in Montparnasse, direct from the model, over a period of four days. It reflects Lhote's version of Cubism, where the human figure is retained and held within a rhythmic field of geometric planes and shafts of muted colour. In the same year this work was completed, two of Crowley's paintings were hung in the Salon des Indépendants, leading to a coveted offer of a solo exhibition. However, Crowley's family appealed to her for assistance in the care of her ailing mother, and she was compelled to return home. Crowley went on to make a pivotal contribution to the development of abstract art in Sydney.

Grace Crowley

born Cobbadah, New South Wales 1890

died Sydney 1979

Miss Jane Blaney 1928,

Mirmande, Drôme, France

pencil on cardboard

South Australian Government Grant 1979

Art Gallery of South Australia

Eveline Syme

born Surrey, England 1888

died Melbourne 1961

The kitchen sink c.1930,

London or Melbourne pastel

on paper

Cruthers Collection of Women's Art

The University of Western Australia

Dorrit Black

born Adelaide 1891

died Adelaide 1951

Still life

c.1928, Paris

oil on canvas

Gift of Mr and Mrs G.H. Michell 1992

Art Gallery of South Australia

Grace Crowley

born Cobbadah, New South Wales 1890

died Sydney 1979

Figure study: French sailor standing,
one leg raised on box 1928, Paris

pencil on paper

Bequest of the artist 1980 Art
Gallery of New South Wales

Grace Crowley

born Cobbadah, New South Wales 1890

died Sydney 1979

Les baigneuses (The bathers)

1928, Paris oil on canvas on hardboard

Gift of the artist 1979

National Gallery of Australia

Grace Crowley born Cobbadah,
New South Wales 1890 died Sydney
1979

Three women in a landscape c.1928,
Paris oil on canvas

Purchased 1993 Art Gallery of
South Australia

Grace Crowley

born Cobbadah, New South Wales 1890

died Sydney 1979

Portrait study

1928, Paris

oil on canvas on composition board

Bequest of Grace Crowley 1979

National Gallery of Australia

Mary Cockburn Mercer

born Hobkirk, Scotland 1882

died Aubagne, France 1963

Ballet

c.1939, Melbourne

oil on canvas

Gift of Robin Sharwood in honour of Dame
Elisabeth Murdoch's 100th birthday through
the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts
Program 2009 National Gallery of Victoria

Grace Crowley

born Cobbadah, New South Wales 1890

died Sydney 1979

Olga

c.1928, Paris

oil on canvas

Bequest of Grace Crowley 1979

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Anne Dangar

born Kempsey, New South Wales 1885

died Moly-Sabata, France 1951

Albert Gleizes, designer born

Paris 1881 died

Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, France 1953

Aladin (Aladdin)

1938–48, Anjaleras Pottery, Cliousclat, Drôme,

France

earthenware, glaze

Gift of the Art Gallery of South Australia

Foundation 2012

Art Gallery of South Australia

Grace Crowley

born Cobbadah, New South Wales 1890

died Sydney 1979

Miss Gwen Ridley 1930, Glen Riddle,
Barraba, New South Wales oil on canvas on
board

Purchased 1995 with the assistance of the
South Australian Government Grant Art
Gallery of South Australia

Helen Stewart

born Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand 1900

died Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand 1983

Portrait of a woman in red 1930s,

Sydney

oil on canvas

Purchased 2006 with Ellen Eames Collection funds

Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

This striking portrait is one of Helen Stewart's paintings of 'ultra-fashionably frocked' women, exhibited in Sydney in 1934 and 1935. Stewart wrote on her return to Sydney in 1932 that 'the outstanding theme of modern art is the reality of feeling as against the pictorial reality of academic art'.

Stewart trained in Aotearoa New Zealand prior to travelling to Europe in the 1920s and studying in London and Paris. Moving to Sydney in the late 1920s, she took lessons with Thea Proctor before returning to Europe in 1931. She attended the Grosvenor School of Modern Art in London before studying with Cubist artists André Lhote and Vaclav Vytlacil in Paris, where she had her 'first unforgettable view of Picasso and Matisse'. In *Portrait of a woman in red* Stewart has observed Lhote's formal structured Cubism, as well as the decorative focus on bright colour and bold design of Matisse's paintings of women from the 1920s.

Helen Stewart

born Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand 1900

died Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand 1983

Workers in the snow

1931-32, London

oil on canvas

Private collection

Grace Crowley born Cobbadah,
New South Wales 1890 died Sydney
1979

Sailors and models
1928-29, Paris oil on canvas

Gift of Grace Buckley in memory of
Grace Crowley 1980 National
Gallery of Australia

Anne Dangar

born Kempsey, New South Wales 1885

died Moly-Sabata, France 1951

Jug 1931–33, Sablons, Isère,

France earthenware, glaze

Gift of Joan Beer, Frank Choate, Elizabeth H. Finnegan OAM, Theo S. Maras AM OLJ, David McKee, Pam McKee, Diana McLaurin, Tom Pearce and John Phillips through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation Collectors Club 2013 Art Gallery of South Australia

This humble jug, which symbolises the invisible bonds shared by artists across time and huge distances, was likely gifted by the maker to her artist friend, Dorrit Black, who venerated the piece in her *Still life*, c.1928, on display nearby.

In February 1930 Anne Dangar departed from Australia, having accepted an invitation from the Cubist artist Albert Gleizes to join his artist commune, Moly-Sabata, in southeastern France. During her time there, Dangar worked as a potter. She created mostly functional forms decorated with abstract elements, which at times fuse regional and Celtic folk designs with Cubism. The *Jug's* modesty encapsulates Dangar's belief that, 'A little honey pot with its two handles and a lid can possess all the fundamental necessities of a huge cubist composition'. Today, Dangar is well regarded in French Cubist circles.

Dangar and Black had been friends and flatmates while at the Sydney Art School, later studying together in France, in 1928. When Dangar permanently moved to France, she remained connected with Black, sending letters to Australia describing the ideas circulating in Europe. Dangar, for her part, commended Black's establishment of the Modern Art Centre in Sydney, and Black promoted and sold Dangar's and Albert Gleizes's work. Their association was renewed during Black's visit to Moly-Sabata and Mirmande in 1934.

With uncanny synchronicity in 1951 Dangar died in France within nine days of Dorrit Black's sudden death from a car crash in Adelaide.

Jean Appleton

born Sydney 1911 died Moss Vale, New
South Wales 2003

Still life

1937, London

oil on canvas

Private collection

Jean Appleton's *Still life* was painted during a period of study at the progressive Westminster School in London between 1936 and 1939. Embracing the abstract extreme of her Cubist instruction, Appleton has simplified the forms of a wine glass and bottle in a geometric composition of textured planes and harmoniously opposed shapes. With its fragmented text and striped patterning, the painting draws from Pablo Picasso's and Georges Braque's synthetic Cubism and their use of newspaper print and collage.

On her return to Sydney, Appleton painted in a figurative style more closely aligned to Post-Impressionism and became known for her still lifes, interior and landscapes. In a career that extended to the 1990s, she was also influential as a teacher at the Julian Ashton Art School and East Sydney Technical College. *Still life* is one of a handful of known works that demonstrate her more radical exploration of abstraction.

Dorrit Black

born Adelaide 1891

died Adelaide 1951

Still life with jug and ladle c.1935,
Adelaide oil on canvas on composition
board

Gift of Joan Beer, Frank Choate, Elizabeth H.
Finnegan OAM, Theo S. Maras AM OLJ, David
McKee, Pam McKee, Diana McLaurin, Tom Pearce
and John Phillips through the Art Gallery of South
Australia Foundation Collectors Club 2013 Art
Gallery of South Australia

Dorrit Black

born Adelaide 1891

died Adelaide 1951

Mirmande 1928, Mirmande,
Drôme, France oil on canvas

Elder Bequest Fund 1940 Art
Gallery of South Australia

Grace Crowley born Cobbadah,
New South Wales 1890 died Sydney
1979

Mirmande
1928, Mirmande, Drôme, France
oil on canvas

Bequest Grace Crowley 1981
Art Gallery of South Australia

Anne Dangar

born Kempsey, New South Wales 1885

died Moly-Sabata, France 1951

Mirmande, la Drôme 1928,

Mirmande, Drôme, France oil on

canvas on board

Private collection

Mirmande

Mirmande is so beautiful ... Those great dimensions of space in the dark mountains. The ramparts & walls of the houses on the north side slowly putting the movement into rotation, & then quicker, quicker, quicker the movement leads one up, up, up to the old church & you find yourself lost in the great dome of light & sky!

Anne Dangar

This reunited trilogy is a rare memento of three friends painting while studying Cubism together in the south of France. Over the summer of 1928, Dorrit Black, Grace Crowley and Anne Dangar and twenty other international students attended André Lhote's school in the medieval hilltop village of Mirmande to study landscape painting.

The lessons addressed the constructive geometries of Paul Cézanne and the harmonies of fifteenth-century Italian art and aimed for pictorial unity through the application of a mathematical formula. This approach subjugated individual expression; however, in this suite of paintings, personal differences can be identified in their experimental approaches to the same task.

Using the hilltop belfry as a reference point, we can establish that Crowley was furthest to the left and adopted the highest viewpoint of the medieval township. Her approach preferences solidity and a three-dimensional feeling.

Positioned to the right of Crowley, Dangar represents the 1920s shift in French painting towards an Arcadian naturalism. The shepherdess and her flock foreshadow the artist's own humble spiritual quest as a potter and teacher.

Black's view is taken closer to the village and further to the right of the belfry. Hers is the most geometrically reductive; the township is compressed into a floating parallelogram.

This enjoyable and energising summertime interlude was a culmination of their studies in Europe, with the informal atmosphere providing the conditions to reflect and crystallise their ambitions. Within eighteen months, each of their artistic lives was transformed and their paths into modernism clear. The magnitude of this French moment shares correspondences with the preceding Australian art-historical chapters near Melbourne at Heidelberg or Sirius Cove, Sydney.

Dorrit Black

born Adelaide 1891

died Adelaide 1951

Sicilian mountain 1928,
Taormina, Sicily, Italy oil on
canvas

Private collection

Mary Cockburn Mercer

born Hobkirk, Scotland 1882 died

Aubagne, France 1963

Landscape 1925,

Provence, France oil on

canvas

Purchased 2022 with funds provided by the Australian Masterpiece Fund 3, including the following major donors: Antoinette Albert, Atelier, Boyarsky Family Trust, Stephen Buzacott & Kemsley Brennan, Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM & the late Harold Campbell-Pretty, Sue & Sam Chisholm AM, Professor Maria Craig, Rowena Danziger AM in memory of Ken Coles AM, Davies Family Foundation, Peter & Robyn Flick, Kiera Grant, The Greatorex Fund, Lindy & Robert Henderson, Jonathan & Karen Human, Alexandra Joel & Philip Mason, Carole Lamerton & John Courtney, Robyn Martin-Weber, Lawrence & Sylvia Myers, Vicki Olsson, Guy & Marian Paynter, Elizabeth & Philip Ramsden, Joyce Rowe, Penelope Seidler AM, Denyse Spice, Max & Nola Tegel, Philippa Warner, The WeirAnderson Foundation, Ray Wilson OAM, Women's Art Group and Rob & Jane Woods Art Gallery of New South Wales

Anne Dangar

born Kempsey, New South Wales 1885

died Moly-Sabata, France 1951

Albert Gleizes, designer born Paris 1881

died Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, France 1953

Icare (Icarus) 1939, Anjaleras Pottery, Cliousclat,
Drôme, France earthenware with glaze and slip
decoration

Mollie Douglas Bequest Fund 2017

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Anne Dangar

born Kempsey, New South Wales 1885

died Moly-Sabata, France 1951

Albert Gleizes, designer born Paris 1881

died Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, France 1953

La Vierge et l'Enfant en majesté entourés de six anges

(Virgin and Child in majesty surrounded by six angels)

after Cimabue 1936–37, Anjaleras Pottery, Clionsclat,

Drôme, France earthenware with glaze and slip

decoration,

Mollie Douglas Bequest Fund 2017

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Anne Dangar

born Kempsey, New South Wales 1885

died Moly-Sabata, France 1951

Plate with cubist designs c.1936–38,

Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France

earthenware with glaze and slip decoration

Mollie Douglas Bequest Fund 2017

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Anne Dangar

born Kempsey, New South Wales 1885

died Moly-Sabata, France 1951

Plate with cubist designs 1931-33,

Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France

earthenware with glaze and slip decoration

Mollie Douglas Bequest Fund 2017

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Anne Dangar

born Kempsey, New South Wales 1885

died Moly-Sabata, France 1951

Soup tureen with cubist designs 1936-37,

Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France

earthenware with glaze and slip decoration

Mollie Douglas Bequest Fund 2017

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Anne Dangar

born Kempsey, New South Wales 1885

died Moly-Sabata, France 1951

Soup tureen with geometric designs 1936-38,

Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France

earthenware with glaze and slip decoration

Mollie Douglas Bequest Fund 2017

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Anne Dangar

born Kempsey, New South Wales 1885

died Moly-Sabata, France 1951

Jar with gargoyle design with lid 1934,

Cliousclat, Drôme, France earthenware with
glaze and slip decoration

Donated by the Albert Gleizes Foundation 2017

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Ethel Spowers

born Melbourne 1890

died Melbourne 1947

Val de Grace, Paris 1923,

Paris

colour woodcut on paper

Gift of Mrs Eric Quirk 1975 Art

Gallery of New South Wales

Ethel Spowers

born Melbourne 1890

died Melbourne 1947

Swings 1932,

Melbourne colour

linocut on paper

Purchased 1976

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Eveline Syme

born Surrey, England 1888

died Melbourne 1961

Skating

1929, London

colour linocut

Purchased 1977

Art Gallery of New South Wales

In the late 1920s, Eveline Syme joined her Australian friend Ethel Spowers at London's Grosvenor School of Modern Art to study colour linocut printmaking under the influential English artist Claude Flight. Projecting a cosmopolitan modernity in her images of travel, leisure and city life, Syme applied the compositional devices found in Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints – asymmetry, compressed pictorial space and cropping, and an emphasis on subjects from everyday life – to her own work.

Syme made *Skating*, 1929, shortly after arriving at the Grosvenor School, where she found herself in the depths of a cold winter: ice had formed over lakes and waterways and skaters were a common sight. The print shows her adoption of Flight's principles of active, sweeping forms to capture the energy of her subject. This simple scene of companionable, if unsteady, athletes is printed in two colours, the bodies and movements of the skaters on the ice simplified into rhythmic and harmonious arcs based on geometric design principles.

Eileen Mayo

born Norwich, England 1906 died Christchurch,
Aotearoa New Zealand 1994

Skaters

1925, London

wood engraving on paper

Purchased 2012

Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū

Eveline Syme born
Surrey, England 1888 died
Melbourne 1961

Outskirts of Siena
1930–31, Melbourne colour
linocut on paper

South Australian Government Grant 1978
Art Gallery of South Australia

Eveline Syme

born Surrey, England 1888

died Melbourne 1961

Sydney tram line 1936,

Melbourne colour linocut

on paper

Purchased 1977

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Ethel Spowers
born Melbourne 1890
died Melbourne 1947

Wet afternoon
1929–30, Melbourne
colour linocut on paper

Purchased 1968
Art Gallery of New South Wales

Ethel Spowers

born Melbourne 1890

died Melbourne 1947

The gust of wind 1931,

London

colour linocut

Purchased 1976

Art Gallery of Ballarat

Ethel Spowers was born into a well-to-do Melbourne family and studied art in that city, where she soon earned a reputation for children's illustrations in ink and watercolour. In the early 1920s she furthered her studies in Paris, which led to relief prints inspired by Japanese prints.

Later that decade, Spowers and her friend Eveline Syme discovered the influential book *Lino-cuts, a handbook of linoleum-cut colour printing* (1927) by the English artist Claude Flight. The pair immediately determined to travel to London to study under its charismatic author at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art. Spowers's studies at the Grosvenor School transformed her aesthetic into a dynamic modernism, in which the energy of contemporary life was expressed in active, sweeping forms and followed Flight's exhortation to seek the 'universal rhythm in each individual moment'. In this print the protagonists are subject to the whims of the weather, depicted in the dynamic arc of disorderly papers cast in all directions by a rogue gust of wind.

Ethel Spowers

born Melbourne 1890

died Melbourne 1947

The plough

1928, London

colour linocut on paper

Purchased with funds provided by the David George
Wilson Bequest for Australian Art 2023 Art Gallery
of New South Wales

Ethel Spowers

born Melbourne 1890

died Melbourne 1947

Harvest 1932,

Melbourne colour

linocut on paper

South Australian Government Grant 1988

Art Gallery of South Australia

Dorrit Black

born Adelaide 1891

died Adelaide 1951

The eruption

c.1929–30, Paris

colour linocut on paper

Dora Chapman Bequest Fund 1999

Art Gallery of South Australia

We drove across one afternoon to Mascali just at the moment that the lava was entering the town ... there seemed to be a malevolent purpose about its slow, pushing, rustling, irresistible approach.

Travelling in Sicily in late 1928, Dorrit Black witnessed Mount Etna's largest eruption in nearly 300 years. The eruption captures her sense of awe and terror as she observed the near obliteration of the town of Mascali by a lava flow. Cropping Etna's summit, Black conveys the looming proximity of the natural disaster. The mountain's red molten interior – 'revealing itself through cracks' – animates the scene and illuminates the onlookers. A departure from her typically vibrant and light-filled prints, *The eruption* foreshadows Black's emotionally charged late landscapes.

Black's observation of this elemental force of nature coincided with her awakening to the expressive possibilities of the colour linocut. Just a year earlier, at the end of 1927, she had studied with Claude Flight at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art in London. Flight would become a lifelong friend, and her early linocuts adhere closely to his instruction: bold, geometric forms, flat areas of colour and multiple perspectives combined to capture the sounds and movement of the modern age. In *Music*, 1927–28, and *The acrobats*, c.1928–29, Black wholeheartedly embraces her teacher's contention that 'abstract ideas work better in linocuts than definitive views'.

Dorrit Black

born Adelaide 1891

died Adelaide 1951

The castle, Taormina

c.1928–29, Paris colour linocut on
paper

Bequest of Shirley Cameron Wilson 2003

Art Gallery of South Australia

Dorrit Black

born Adelaide 1891

died Adelaide 1951

On the rocks 1935,

England colour linocut

on paper

Gift of Ann Vanstone through the Art Gallery

of South Australia Foundation and the

Maurice A. Clarke Bequest Fund 2010 Art

Gallery of South Australia

Dorrit Black

born Adelaide 1891

died Adelaide 1951

Music

1927-28, London or Paris

colour linocut on paper

Elder Bequest Fund 1976 Art

Gallery of South Australia

Dorrit Black

born Adelaide 1891

died Adelaide 1951

Acrobats c.1928–29,

London colour linocut

on paper

Purchased 1967

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Linocut printmaking

Australian women artists were at the forefront of the international linocut movement, which emerged from London in the 1920s. Linocut, which involves the transfer of a design onto linoleum – the soft synthetic material commonly used as a floor covering – is a relief printmaking process in which areas that will not be seen on the printed page are cut away. Taught by its main exponent, Claude Flight, at the Grosvenor School of Art in London (between 1926 and 1930), Dorrit Black, Evelyn Syme and Ethel Spowers were among its most committed practitioners and played a pivotal role in promoting the new technique in Australia. Their creations expanded the imagery beyond Flight's interest in movement and speed to include depictions of children, landscape and still life.

Through their enduring friendships with Flight, Black, Syme and Spowers nurtured a transnational dialogue, remaining vital contributors to international linocut exhibitions in London and further afield, including in China in 1931, Melbourne in 1932, and Ottawa in 1935–36. They also organised exhibitions of British linocuts in Australia. The annual linocut exhibitions in London were popular with the public and led to the works of Black, Spowers and the British-born, but later Australian-based, Eileen Mayo being collected variously by the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Museum and the National Gallery of Victoria.

Eileen Mayo

born Norwich, England 1906 died Christchurch,
Aotearoa New Zealand 1994

Turkish bath

1930, London

colour linocut on paper

Gift of Rex Nan Kivell 1953

Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū

Eileen Mayo's first attempt in the linocut medium, *Turkish bath*, 1930, demonstrates a high level of skill in this early stage of her career. She chose a subject close to her – she visited a bathhouse weekly. Masterfully conveying complex information in the reduced geometrical forms of the linocut, Mayo uses distinctive, closely drawn parallel lines – the technique of hatching – to indicate the volume of the women's bodies, achieving a surprising sense of sensuality and depth in the composition. The modernity of the scene is communicated through Mayo's attention to pattern and print. She combines a dizzying set of marks, skilfully balancing the demands of legibility with surface detail.

Mayo was introduced to the medium of linocut by Claude Flight while engaged as a life-drawing model at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art in London. She was already experienced in the techniques of wood engraving and lithography and in subsequent years became a competent illustrator, printmaker and designer, focusing on representations of flora and fauna, in England, and later in Australia (1952–62) and Aotearoa New Zealand (1962–82).

Eileen Mayo

born Norwich, England 1906 died Christchurch,
Aotearoa New Zealand 1994

The plunge 1928,

London colour

linocut on paper

Purchased 1978

National Gallery of Australia

Thea Proctor

born Armidale, New South Wales 1879

died Sydney 1966

Not titled (The song) c.1909,

London watercolour on paper

Purchased 1985

National Gallery of Australia

Thea Proctor

born Armidale, New South Wales 1879

died Sydney 1966

The bathers

c.1918, London

pencil, watercolour and opaque white on paper

Thea Proctor Memorial Fund 1972

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Kathleen O'Connor

born Hokitika, Aotearoa New Zealand 1876

died Perth 1968

Still life with lamp

c.1928, Paris oil and tempera

on board

Wesfarmers Collection of Australian Art, Perth

Kathleen O'Connor

born Hokitika, Aotearoa New Zealand 1876

died Perth 1968

L'heure du thé (Tea time)

c.1928, Paris mixed media on
cardboard

Purchased 1949

Art Gallery of Western Australia

By the early 1920s, Kathleen O'Connor had been making plein-air impressionist paintings in Paris for over a decade. She then began to create still lifes, working inside her bedsit on the city's Left Bank. Obscuring the backgrounds with hanging fabrics and tilting the tabletop forward to flatten the picture plane, she focused her attention on colour, rhythm, pattern and geometry.

Around the same time, O'Connor began designing fabrics and window displays for fashion houses and department stores. This increasingly popular practice among modern artists was notably led in Paris by Sonia Delaunay, who translated her abstract paintings into commercial textiles. In O'Connor's *L'heure du thé* (*Tea time*), the productive convergence of her own artistic and decorative worlds can be perceived. O'Connor exhibited regularly in Paris, often at the Salon d'Automne, and mounted her first solo show in the city in 1937. Due to financial difficulties and ailing health, she reluctantly returned to Western Australia in 1955.

Kathleen O'Connor born Hokitika,
Aotearoa New Zealand 1876 died Perth
1968

Flowers and oriental carpet
(Algeria) c.1928, Paris mixed
media on cardboard

Gift of Lady Lee-Steere 1949 Art
Gallery of Western Australia

Thea Proctor

born Armidale, New South Wales 1879

died Sydney 1966

The hat shop

1919, London

colour lithograph on paper

Thea Proctor Memorial Fund in memory of

Mervyn Horton 1983

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Thea Proctor

born Armidale, New South Wales 1879

died Sydney 1966

1960, London the jupes culottes

gouache on paper

South Australian Government Grant 1914

Art Gallery of South Australia

Thea Proctor

born Armidale, New South Wales 1879

died Sydney 1966

The toilet

c.1918, London

lithograph on paper

Purchased 1974

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Barbara Tribe

born Sydney 1913 died
Cornwall, England 2000

Lovers I

1936–37, London (cast 1981)

bronze

Gift of the artist 1982

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Ola Cohn born
Bendigo, Victoria 1892 died
Cowes, Victoria 1964

Adam and Eve
1929, London
bronze

Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund 1946
Art Gallery of South Australia

Ola Cohn born
Bendigo, Victoria 1892 died
Cowes, Victoria 1964

Mother and child 1928,
London bronze

Purchased 1937
Bendigo Art Gallery

Barbara Tribe born

Sydney 1913 died

Cornwall, England 2000

Lovers II 1936–37,

London (cast 1988) bronze

Gift of Barbara Tribe Foundation 2008

National Gallery of Australia

Daphne Mayo born
Sydney 1895 died
Brisbane 1982

Sketch (of a boy) 1921,
London (cast 1961) bronze

Commissioned 1961 from a cast gifted by
Queensland Wattle Day League 1923
Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art

Dora Ohlfesen born
Ballarat, Victoria 1869 died
Rome 1948

Portrait of Eve Balfour 1919,
Rome bronze

Donated through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program by Michael Cain and Ian
Adrian 2023 Art Gallery of New South Wales

Daphne Mayo

born Sydney 1895

died Brisbane 1982

A student's head

1921, London (cast 1928)

bronze

Elder Bequest Fund 1981 Art

Gallery of South Australia

This life-sized portrait bust was sculpted by Daphne Mayo in 1921 while studying at London's Royal Academy. The subject – a fellow female student – turns her head over one shoulder; her cropped hair, strong features and exaggerated posture suggest a self-assured modern woman. Awarded the Royal Academy's silver medal in 1922 for 'a bust from life', the work reveals the classical strength and expressive force that would define Mayo's public commissions.

Mayo had initially won the Wattle Day Travelling Art Scholarship in 1914, but her departure was delayed by the First World War. She finally left Australia in 1919 to study sculpture in London, receiving the Academy's gold medal for sculpture in 1923, followed by two years of travel in France and Italy. She returned to Australia in 1925 and built a prominent career producing major public works and helping to shape the direction of Australian modernist sculpture.