



*Studying the Moderns -  
Australian artists in France and  
England 1890 – 1940*

*Andrea Hope*  
[australianarthistory.com](http://australianarthistory.com)

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# *Studying the Moderns – Australian artists in France and England 1890 – 1940.*

Andrea Hope 2024

## **Introduction**

*"The Australian artist within the limits to which [they] usually confine themselves, reveals a sense of colour, an eye for affect, and an appreciation of the brightly beautiful that would of themselves redeem any work from being altogether commonplace. The reason why the greatest things are seldom attempted is to be found, partially at any rate, in the attitude of the Australian public. The local market for expensive and elaborate productions of an artistic kind is strictly limited. The man or woman who is confident of ability to produce the very finest work gravitates naturally to the arts centres of the old world. Everything invites [them] to try [their] fortune where rivalry is keenest, where instruction is of the best, where appreciative patrons are most numerous, where prizes are richest and most plentiful."*

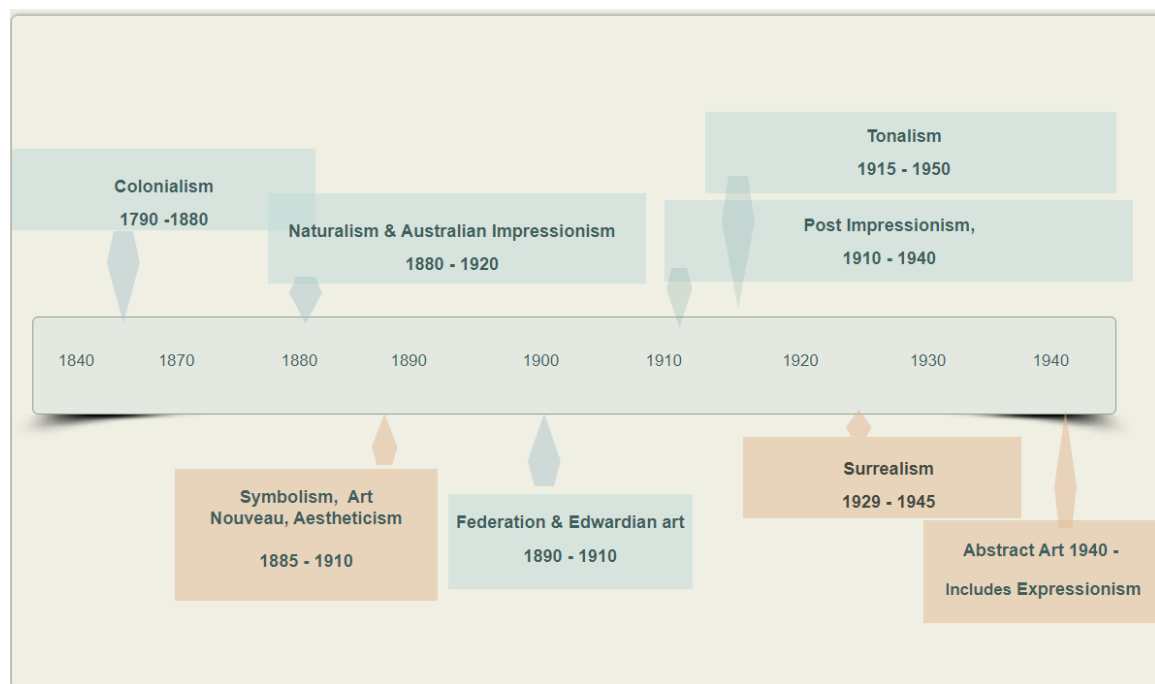
Western Australian, October, 1905

From the late 1800s many Australian artists travelled to Europe and England to study art – some for short periods and others settling there for most of their lives.

They were exposed to numerous traditional, contemporary and emerging artistic styles, and most chose their own way, not necessarily conforming to what they saw and experienced, but rather adapting composition, colours and techniques to the development of their own

work. For example, artists like Tom Roberts returned from England in the mid 1880s with a nationalistic approach to painting light filled paintings outdoors, John Peter Russell influenced Henri Matisse with his use colour on the coast of France, and printmakers such as Dorrit Black returned to Australia, incorporating the modern styles of cubism and futurism into their teaching. They painted landscapes, seascapes, city and country life, figures, portraits and interiors. It was a time when Australian artists sought to find their own voice, without the restrictions they may have faced in submitting works to a conservative Australian audience.

## Art Styles in Australia 1890 - 1940



## Studying art in Australia in the late 1800s

In the late 1800s and early 1900s the key art schools in Australia were the National Gallery School in Victoria, the Julian Ashton School in Sydney, the Brisbane Technical College, South Australian School of Art and the Perth Technical College.



National Gallery School, Melbourne, c.1901-1906. Jessie Traill (top right), Janet Cumbræ Stewart (top, fourth from right), Constance Jenkins (bottom right), Norah Gurdon, (bottom, second from right), Janet Cumbræ Stewart



H.P. Gill in the lecture room of the School of Design, Adelaide, 1905

Generally training in these schools was traditional, naturalistic and representational, based on 19th Century conventions of academic training in Europe. However, there was a growing interest in painting '*en plein air*' (outdoors) with the subject matter reflecting the developing interest in nationalism as Australia moved towards Federation.

Julian Ashton was one teacher who was a strong advocate of plein air painting, i.e. painting outdoors. He was to open his own school, Academy Julian, in Sydney – drawing on the Académie Julian in Paris where he'd studied briefly in 1874.

However, Bernard Hall, who was the longest-serving director of the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) and the head of the Gallery Art School from 1892 until his death in 1935, wielded enormous influence over local taste-making and the building of national art collections (largely through the [Felton bequest](#)). Hall had been trained in Britain and then Germany, and was committed to the classical academic tradition and 'instituted an austere regime of painting'<sup>i</sup>. Nonetheless, he initiated a shift away from sentimental paintings towards decorative figure compositions and a sense of 'art for art's sake', with a more textured and broader handling of paint, but he had no interest in supporting modernist painting techniques. His approach limited options for development for students at this major art school.

Hall's early students included Hugh Ramsay, George Bell, Max Meldrum, Violet Teague and Rose MacPherson (Margaret Preston), all of whom were to later travel overseas.

## Exposure to British and European art in the late 1800s

Artists in Australia became increasingly aware of broader international developments art through several avenues which included: local artists travelling overseas; training by international teachers; exhibitions which included artwork by overseas artists; books; magazines and newspapers; and reproductions of artwork collected and sent from overseas.

Artists such as Julian Ashton, Alfred Daplyn, Arthur Loureiro, Emma Minnie Boyd, Tom Roberts, Elizabeth Parsons, David Davies, John Longstaff, Emanuel Phillips Fox, and Tudor St. George Tucker all travelled overseas for short periods around 1880 - 90. Their destination was predominantly London and Cornwall and their focus had primarily been on **Realism** and **Naturalism**, which influenced **Australian Impressionism** and then **Federation art** in particular.

They brought back with them new approaches to painting which informed and educated a new generation of artists, but their experience predated **Modernism**.



Florence Fuller, *Weary*, 1888



Tom Roberts, *A Quiet Day on the Darebin Creek*, 1885



Arthur Loureiro, *The Forest at Fontainebleau*, 1882

**The National Gallery Travelling Scholarship**, which first awarded in 1887, was designed to enable the most talented students at the Gallery's School to complete their art training abroad. The Scholarship was to be awarded 'to the best work exhibited by students at the National Gallery art classes' although in 1898 the terms of the award expanded to allow students from outside to be considered, although only under 'certain conditions'.

Although the terms of the award dictated that at least one original canvas and two Old Master copies from each recipient which would be added to the Melbourne collection, it did provide them with a stipend of £150 per year, for three years, to travel and study in the 'principal art centres of Europe'<sup>iii</sup>.

It was first awarded to John Longstaff in 1887, with Constance Lillian Jenkins being the first woman to receive it, in 1908. Figure study was the preferred subject matter, although this wasn't stated explicitly in the rules. The scholarship didn't encourage artists to develop new forms of artistic expression, but it did provide them with access to overseas developments.

George Lambert was the first artist to be awarded the **NSW Society of Artists' Travelling Scholarship** in 1900.

Numerous **Immigrant teachers** travelled to Australia throughout the 1800s. One such important teacher was Italian artist Girolamo Nerli. Nerli studied in Florence and was an advocate of painting outdoors. After travelling to Melbourne in 1885, and then later Sydney, he influenced Australian Impression with his free brushwork and often sketcherly approach. He later travelled to New Zealand where he taught Frances Hodgkins, who in turn was to teach Australian artists in France in the early 1900s.

Hodgkins also exhibited her modernist art in both Sydney and Melbourne, where her work was critically acclaimed.

French sisters **Berthe Mouchette and Marie Lion** came to Australia in 1881 and provided private classes in art in Melbourne and later Adelaide (with their students including Margaret Preston, who later taught Bessie Davidson in Adelaide, before they travelled together to Paris). The sisters had exhibited at the Paris Salon and were amongst the first teachers to enable women to study life drawing with nude models.

**Antonio Dattilo-Rubbo** conducted an art school in Sydney for some forty-three years from 1897, having arrived in Sydney from Italy the previous year. He quickly established himself and taught many of the leading Australian modernists, including Norah Simpson, Grace Cossington-Smith, Tempe Manning, Donald Friend, Alice Danciger, Mary Webb, Frank Hinder, James Cant and Gerald and Margo Lewers.

South African born **Florence Fuller** arrived in Perth in 1904, after working for some years in Europe and exhibiting at the Paris Salon and Royal Academy of London. She was to have a strong influence on artists such as Kathleen O'Connor, who was encouraged to travel overseas herself in 1906. O'Connor was later to write;



*"The dream of life in Paris, the restaurant life, the café life, which to me is almost the most fascinating of all there is to see. Cafés dancing with lights, glasses glittering with reflections, and with all the music of many voices, the babble of many tongues. From the French one learns much, [their] very excellent custom of eating out of doors, or drinking out of doors, which gives to life the semblance of at least gaiety ... in Paris one feels part of the whole"<sup>iii</sup>.*

Several **major exhibitions** featuring overseas artists were held towards the end of the century, for example *The Anglo-Australian Society of Artists* held exhibitions in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide in 1880s and 1890s and the *Melbourne Centennial International Exhibition* from 1888-89.

In the Introduction to the first *Anglo-Australian Society of Artists* exhibition it was stated that;

*"The Council of selection and invitation secured over 200 works from leading artists of the Royal Academy the Royal Society of painters in water colours, the Royal Institute of painters in watercolours, the Royal Society of British artists, the Royal Scottish Academy, the Royal Hibernian Academy, and the new English Arts Club."*



Melbourne Centennial International Exhibition 1888-9

However, unsurprisingly, the exhibitions prior to the 1900s contained many traditional artworks, including portraits, landscapes and seascapes.



Ethel Carrick, *The Quay, Milsons Point*, 1908



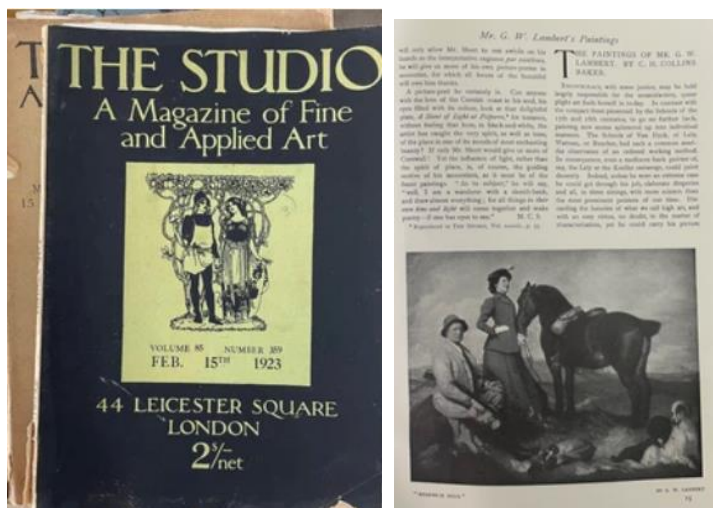
Ethel Carrick, *St Marks Venice*, 1907

Possibly the first exhibition in Melbourne which reflected the French Impressionists and Post Impressionists was held by **Ethel Carrick** when she first visited Australia in 1908, after having recently married Australian artist Emanuel Phillips Fox. The exhibition was held in **Bernard's Gallery** in Collins St and received a positive review in *Art and Architecture*;

*"The canvases shown by Mrs Fox palpitated with bright colour schemes, but the supreme skill of the artist was found in her subtle handling of outdoor groups of people in frequented parts of a populous city ... there was nothing studied in the grouping of the crowd of figures which appeared in the scene, and life and movement were splendidly suggested"<sup>iv</sup>.*

**Publications** from overseas, and then within Australia, played an important part of art education.

The English art journal ***The Studio*** was a useful source of information for Australian artists from the late 1890s. The magazine included articles on art and exhibitions in England, as well as in France, and numerous colour and black and white prints. Occasionally it featured information about Australian artists working in England, such as George Lambert. In 1903, it provided advice on the best ateliers (studios) in Paris for women to receive training in art.



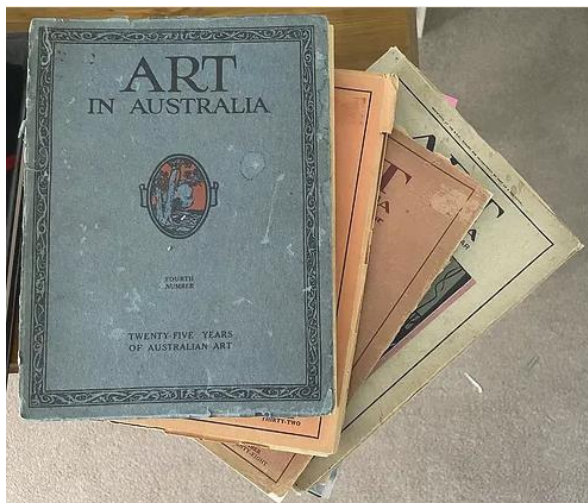
***Connoisseur*** was another popular magazine and ***The Illustrated British News***, ***The Graphic***, ***British Australasian*** and ***The London Times*** would have also been read widely. These publications included articles and information about artists and exhibitions.

From about 1910, a number of publications about modern art began to become available to an Australian audience. For example, in London Roger Fry published articles in *Vision and Design* (1920) and produced eight books from the mid 1920s, notably *Transformations* (1927) and *Cézanne* (1928). The treatise *Du Cubisme* by Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger had been translated into English in 1913.

Gleizes was later to teach Grace Cowley, Dorrit Black and Anne Dangar in Paris. Andre Lohte, who was also sought out as a teacher by many Australian students, produced a number of articles which were translated into English.

In 1907 the Adelaide Register published an article on Emile Zola's early struggles, the Sydney Morning Herald published a book review of C Lewis Hinds's *The Post Impressionists* in 1911, and in 1913 the Sydney Mail included reproductions of modern art from Europe in an article entitled 'The revolutionary spirit in art'. The Bulletin also published articles on modern art, for example, *Post Impressionism and the Racinistes*, as early as 1911.

However, Thea Proctor stated that until around the late 1910s the reproductions of work in publications had usually been in black and white<sup>vi</sup>.



The Australian magazine *Art in Australia* was published several times per year between 1916 and 1942 and included articles about local and overseas artists and events. It also included numerous colour and black and white reproductions.

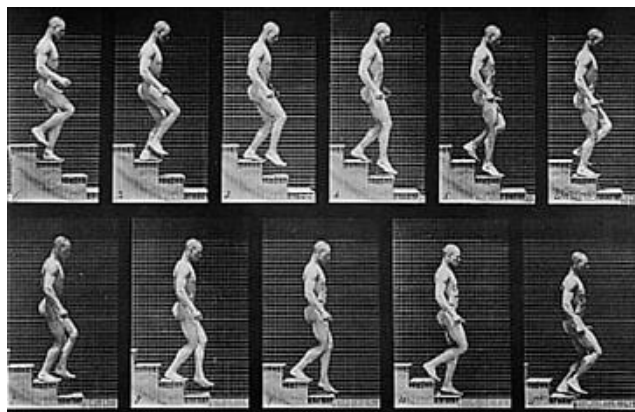
Artist Roland Wakelin wrote several articles for *Art in Australia*, including one titled *The Modern Art Movement in Australia*, in 1928.

He wrote;

*"It was about the year 1913 that the first glimmerings of what is now called "modern art" came to us in Sydney—I remember seeing in a Sunday paper a cubist "Nude Descending a Staircase." It was puzzling, but I wanted to know more about these pictures. The names of Cezanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh were then unknown here. We art students knew a little of the French Impressionists, Manet, Monet, Degas and Rodin, but more of the English Impressionism of Whistler".<sup>vii</sup>*



Marcel Duchamp, *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*, 1912



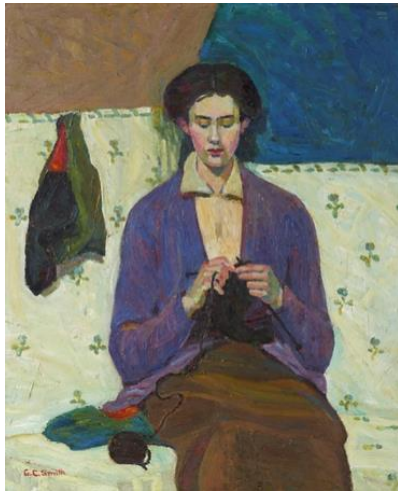
Eadweard Muybridge, *Man descending stairs*, from *Animal Locomotion*, 1887

(Duchamp had seen photographs by Eadweard Muybridge, which influenced this early Futurist artwork.)

## **The beginnings of Modernism in Australia – *Colour in Art* exhibition 1919**

Wakelin's comments in the magazine article reflect the general level of understanding by the Australian public about developments art in Europe in the early 20th Century.

He and fellow students of Antonio Dattilo-Rubbo in Sydney, such as Roy De Maistre, Grace Cossington Smith, Norah Simpson and Tempe Manning were among the first artists to delve into Modernism in Australia in the 1910s.



Grace Cossington Smith, *The Sock Knitter*, c1915



Antonio Dattilo-Rubbo, *Norah Simpson*, 1915

Italian born Antonio Dattilo-Rubbo had arrived in Sydney in 1897 after graduating with a Professor of Drawing diploma from the Naples Royal Academy. He found numerous teaching roles, and in 1898 opened his own studio school where he offered life classes. In 1906 Dattilo-Rubbo travelled to Paris, London and Italy, which ignited his passion for modern art. He brought back numerous reproductions, discussing them with his students at his school, and at the Royal Art Society, where he taught from 1907-1934.

He was focused on improving methods of teaching and endorsing opportunities for Australian artists, including advocating for a NSW travelling art scholarship and for Australia to be represented in the Venice Biennale.

Dattilo-Rubbo championed modern art with lectures and in the press. In 1910 he wrote to the Bulletin defending the Impressionists and urged the critic, a friend of his, to *“Come to my studio, dear friend, top of Rowe Street, and I shall put before your critical eyes many reproductions of these damnable Impressionists!”*<sup>viii</sup>

However, his own work was much less affected by modernism, and he was best known for his genre paintings (realistic depictions of ordinary people in everyday situations), which frequently depicted destitute old men<sup>ix</sup>. Nonetheless, while he emphasised both the importance of draughtsmanship and craftsmanship in his pupils, he encouraged the exploration of new ideas in art.

In 1914 Dattilo-Rubbo had given a lecture on colour harmony, putting forward the scientific and artistic theories of colour and light behind the Impressionist approach<sup>x</sup>.

Grace Cossington Smith recalled, *'We had very interesting lunch hours, because he always read something interesting to us about the contemporary painters of that time, Cézanne, Gauguin, van Gogh and others ...'*<sup>xi</sup>.

Cossington Smith was interested in the way in which the Post Impressionists had used colour. At a lunchtime reading at his studio in 1916, Datillo-Rubbo shared a letter written by van Gogh to his brother Theo. The letter referred to the Dutch artist's plans to paint his work *Bedroom in Arles* 1888, elaborating on its intended mood and colour scheme;

*"This time it's simply my bedroom, but the colour has to do the job here, and through its being simplified by giving a grander style to things, to be suggestive here of rest or of sleep in general. In short, looking at the painting should rest the mind, or rather, the imagination.*

*The walls are of a pale violet.*

*The floor — is of red tiles.*

*The bedstead and the chairs are fresh butter yellow.*

*The sheet and the pillows very bright lemon green.*

*The blanket scarlet red.*

*The window green.*

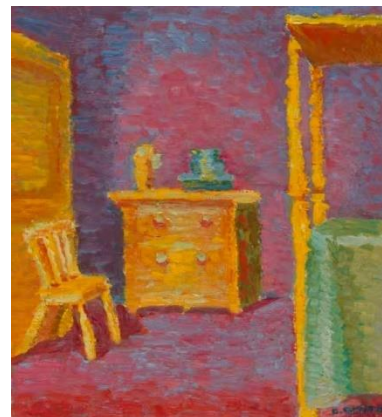
*The dressing table orange, the basin blue.*

*The doors lilac.*

*And that's all — nothing in this bedroom, with its shutters closed"*<sup>xii</sup>.



Vincent Van Gogh, *Bedroom in Arles*, 1888



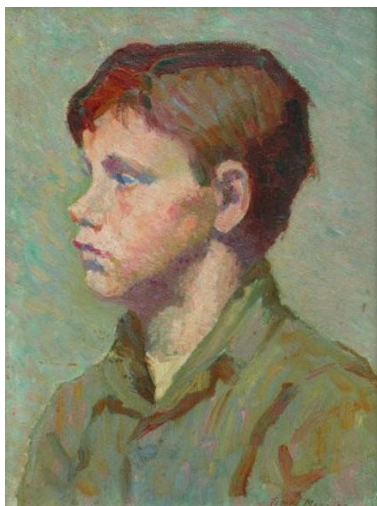
Grace Cossington Smith, *Van Gogh's room*, c.1916

In response to the colour notations in this letter, Cossington Smith painted *Van Gogh's Room*, c 1916, writing in pencil on its bottom margin; *'the wall – violet / floor red / bed cover yellow green / furniture orange'*<sup>xiii</sup>.

Cossington Smith had lived in England from 1912 to 1914, where she had drawing lessons at the Winchester School of Art, and she also travelled to Germany. At that time the most lasting art influence was her memory of paintings by Watteau, an 18<sup>th</sup> Century artist, in Berlin. She later claimed that she learnt the methods of Van Gogh, Cézanne, Gauguin and Seurat from Dattilo-Rubbo<sup>xiv</sup>.

**Tempe Manning** also spent time in England, and at the age of only 16, had tuition with Jean Paul Laurens at the Academie Julian in Paris, where she refined her drawing skills. She became familiar with Post Impressionism, and the touches of green and lilac in and flicks of crimson in *Portrait of a Boy*, c1916 echo the work of her friend, Grace Cossington Smith. She also returned to Australia in 1914, studying at Dattilo-Rubbo's studio. Manning was to have her self portrait exhibited in the 1939 Archibald prize.

In 1913, Norah Simpson, another former pupil Dattilo-Rubbo's, had returned from Europe with photos, reproductions and samples of her own Post Impressionist inspired work, which were discussed at his Royal Art Society classes.



Tempe Manning, *Portrait of a Boy*, c1916    Norah Simpson, *Studio portrait, Chelsea*, 1915

Roland Wakelin later recalled;

*"I remember Rubbo showing us some of Simpson's own painting which fascinated me, mainly I think at that time, because of the new developments in colour technique. Simpson's picture Studio portrait, Chelsea, 1915, may not appear revolutionary to painters of this*

*generation, but at that time such a painting was liable to give old gentlemen apoplexy”<sup>xv</sup>.*

According to Lloyd Rees, one of these books on the work of Paul Cezanne was ultimately to influence Wakelin more than any of the others<sup>xvi</sup>.

Rees also recorded that after his arrival in Sydney in the 1910’s perhaps his own most important artistic influence was being an observer of the collaboration between Roland Wakeland and Roy De Mestre in seeking to establish Post Impressionist principles in Australia<sup>xvii</sup>. Both artists were two of only a handful of artists who were interested in developing modernist techniques prior to travelling overseas.

An interest in colour and other contemporary art theories led Roland Wakelin and Roy de Maistre to pave the way for abstraction in Australian art through their ground-breaking *Colour in art* exhibition in Sydney in 1919.



Roy de Maistre, Colour Harmonising Chart

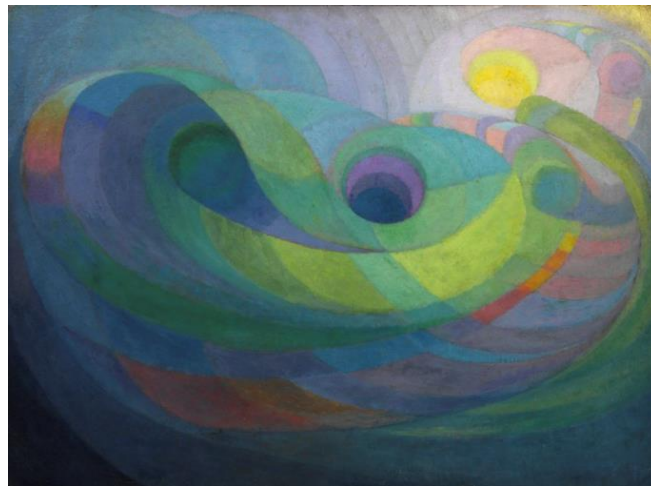
Initially studying viola at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, de Maistre enrolled in classes with Datillo-Rubbo at the Royal Art Society in the early 1910s. During his brief service in Australia during the First World War, he became interested in the treatment by colour-therapy treatment given to shell-shocked soldiers, and together with the Conservatorium’s Adrien Verbrugghen, he began to create theories about relationships between colour, music and painting.

De Maistre was also interested in the spiritual nature of art – many artists from Hilma aft Klint to Piet Mondrian explored Theosophy and other spiritual



movements – forming a fascination with the visionary and mystic and an interest in portraying “an inner world”. Wassily Kandinsky had written about his ideas concerning colour and music and their synthesis through art in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, which had been translated into English in 1917.

De Maistre was also interested in Synchronism, an art theory developed by American artists Morgan Russell and Stanton Macdonald-Wright, who believed that colour and tone could be arranged in the same way that a composer arranges notes and chords.



Roy De Maistre, *Rhythmic composition in yellow green minor*, 1919

According to art historian Heather Johnson, De Maistre and Wakelin had read both W.H. Wright’s *Modern Painting its Tendency and Meaning*, written in 1915, and A.J. Eddy’s *Cubists and Post Impressionists* from 1914<sup>xviii</sup>. De Maistre, who also had an interest in interior design, was influenced by colour-poet Beatrice Irwin’s *New Science of Colour*, originally published in 1916.

De Maistre’s 1919 paintings, based on his theories on the relationship between music and colour, were more abstracted, with Wakelin’s cubist works retaining representational elements.



Roland Wakelin, *Syncromy in Orange Major*, 1919

New Zealand born Roland Wakelin had settled in Sydney in 1912. He enrolled in classes at the Royal Art Society of New South Wales in 1913, and studied life-drawing at night under Dattilo-Rubbo. He was an innovative painter, who at this time was interested in use of high-keyed colour, simplified geometric shapes and flatly coloured forms.

The 1919 *Colour in Art* exhibition, which included seven paintings, three designs of colour organisation in interior decoration, as well as a colour keyboard, discs and scales, was highly controversial. The conservative audience struggled to come to terms with the abstract ideas of de Maistre and Wakelin. De Maistre decided that his ideas would not be accepted in Australia, and set aside his colour music theories for some years. He travelled overseas in 1923 after being awarded a travelling scholarship. Wakelin also moved away from colour-music exploration during the 1920s after travelling overseas.

In a 1961 interview with Hazel De Berg, Thea Proctor recorded that when she returned to Sydney in 1921 she and George Lambert were “*shocked at the lack of adventureness in the younger painters*” at the time, who, other than Cossington Smith, Wakelin and de Maistre, were still focused on doing “*imitations of other people’s landscapes*”<sup>xix</sup> (such as Streeton and Gruner). It was at this time that she and Lambert established the Contemporary Group - inviting experimental younger people who did promising work to exhibit. The group folded as more artists travelled overseas.

## An artist’s life overseas

*How did Australian artists make the most of the opportunities overseas?*

While some artists made the journey on their own, other chose to be with family or friends – there are many instances of artists sharing the same accommodation and travelling together.

As had been common for centuries, they copied works in art museums. Many travelled through several countries to visit museums which held work by artists they admired, or just to observe the different light and lifestyles, and some joined artist colonies or summer schools. They mixed socially with local and international (and other expatriate) artists, often living in close proximity to cultural hubs, such as Montmartre and Montparnasse in Paris and Chelsea in London.

Aside from taking formal lessons at academies and schools, artists worked closely with private teachers, respected artists and friends at a range of ateliers (studios). They joined art societies and clubs and exhibited with local artists.

Artists also applied to exhibit with formal and established galleries and Salons, and developed relationships with local art dealers.

Many artists won prestigious awards, both in England and France.

Australian artists developed and explored new styles of art - not only painting, but also printmaking, sculpture, pottery, fabric and costume and set design. While some remained relatively true to traditional styles or Impressionism, others embraced modernism, from Cubism through to Abstract art. Regardless of what directions they took, all the artists who spent any time overseas would have been influenced to some degree by what they saw and who they met. In particular a greater use of colour and design can be seen reflected in works from this period.

However, there was a large cohort of Australian painters, including Tom Roberts, Han Heysen and Septimus Power, who, particularly up until well after the end of World War I, remained largely focused on portraying Australia's post Federation national identity through nostalgic paintings of rural homesteads, gum trees and intimate views of the middle class enjoying afternoon tea on the verandah.

*“The favoured view was of homestead paddocks with milking cows casting long shadows in early morning or twilight, as they grazed in cool temperate pasture”<sup>xx</sup>.*

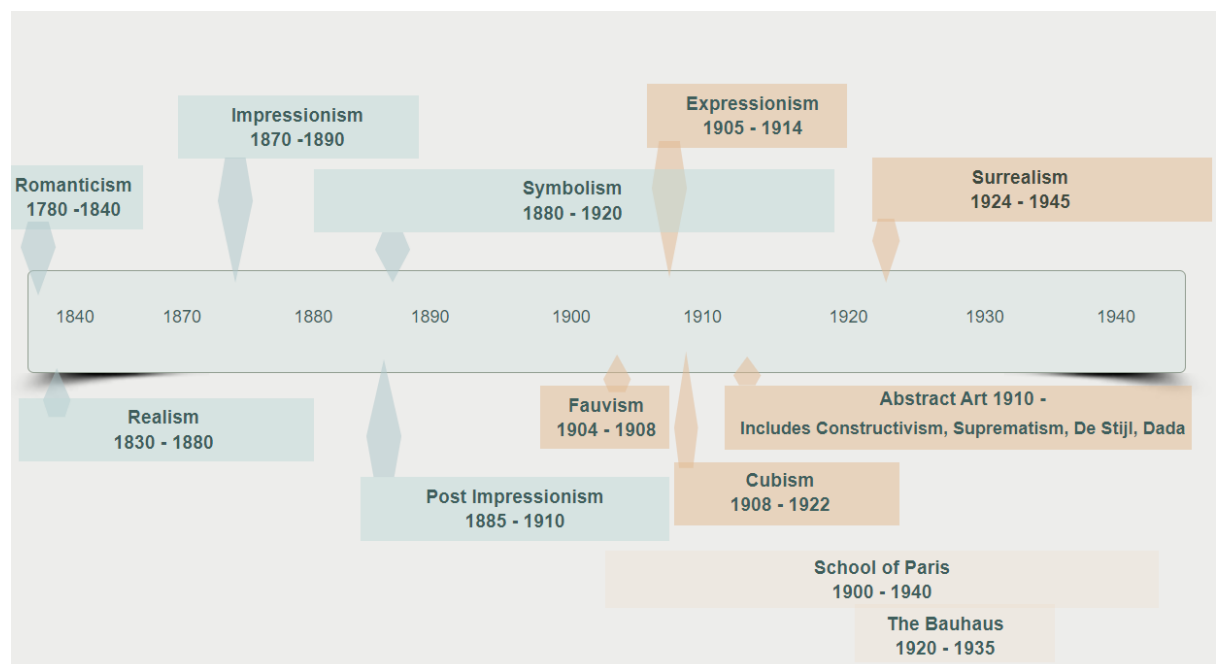
While some artists remained overseas for most of their lives, or continued travelling internationally, others returned to Australia to progress their careers, and influence a new generation of artists.

While overseas during the period from 1890 to 1940, Australians were exposed to significant change affecting France and Britain – two world wars, the depression of the late 1920s and early 30s, vast modernisation of very day life (motor cars, electricity etc), the ‘roaring twenties’ and increasing interest in

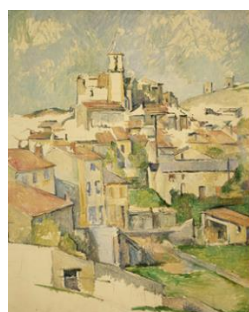
women’s rights, including the suffragette movement in England. These changes were to influence artists’ decisions about their involvement in these significant events, and whether they chose to remain or return to Australia. Numerous Australian artists were involved (either officially or unofficially) in capturing scenes from both World Wars.

## The development of Modern art in France and the UK

### Art Styles in France 1890 - 1940



**Impressionism**, with its focus on light and capturing momentary effects, had been the emerging style attracting artists in France from the early 1870s.



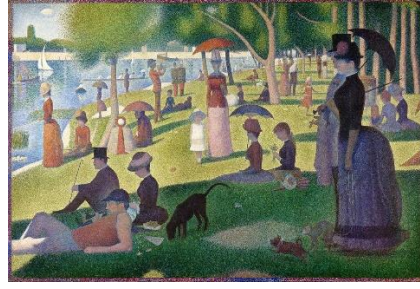
Paul Cézanne, *Gardanne*, 1885–86



Vincent Van Gogh, *The Yellow House (The Street)*, 1888



Paul Gauguin, *Vision of the Sermon (Jacob Wrestling with the Angel)*, 1888



George Seurat, *Sunday on the Grand Jatte*, 1884

**Post Impressionism**, which is largely identified with the work of Paul Cezanne, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Seurat and Paul Gauguin, saw experimentation in composition and colour, with Cezanne and Seurat in particular being interested in science and its application to how our eyes perceive images. It emerged from the mid 1880s.

Both Impression and Post Impressionism persisted as important influences well in the 1900s.

From the late 1800s artists were also experimenting with **Symbolism**, **Expressionism**, **Fauvism** and **Cubism** - all **Modernist** forms of art. From the early 1910s there was an interest in **Surrealism** and move towards **Abstraction**. The opening up of new avenues for exhibiting work from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century meant that artists no longer needed to rely on the academic Paris Salon or Royal Academy to show their works, so felt freer to explore new techniques and subject matter.



Jeanne Jacquemin, *Daydream*, 1894  
Symbolism

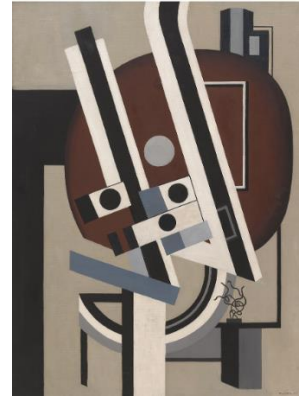


Ernst Kirchner, *Potsdamer Platz*, 1914  
German Expressionism



Henri Matisse, *Open Window, Collioure*, 1905

Fauvism



Fernand Léger, *Composition (Definitive State)*, 1927

Cubism



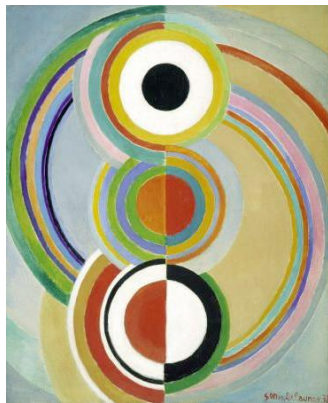
Albert Gleizes, *Man on a Balcony*, 1912

Cubism



Joan Miró, *Still Life II*, 1922-1923

Surrealism



Sonia Delauney, *Rhythm*, 1938

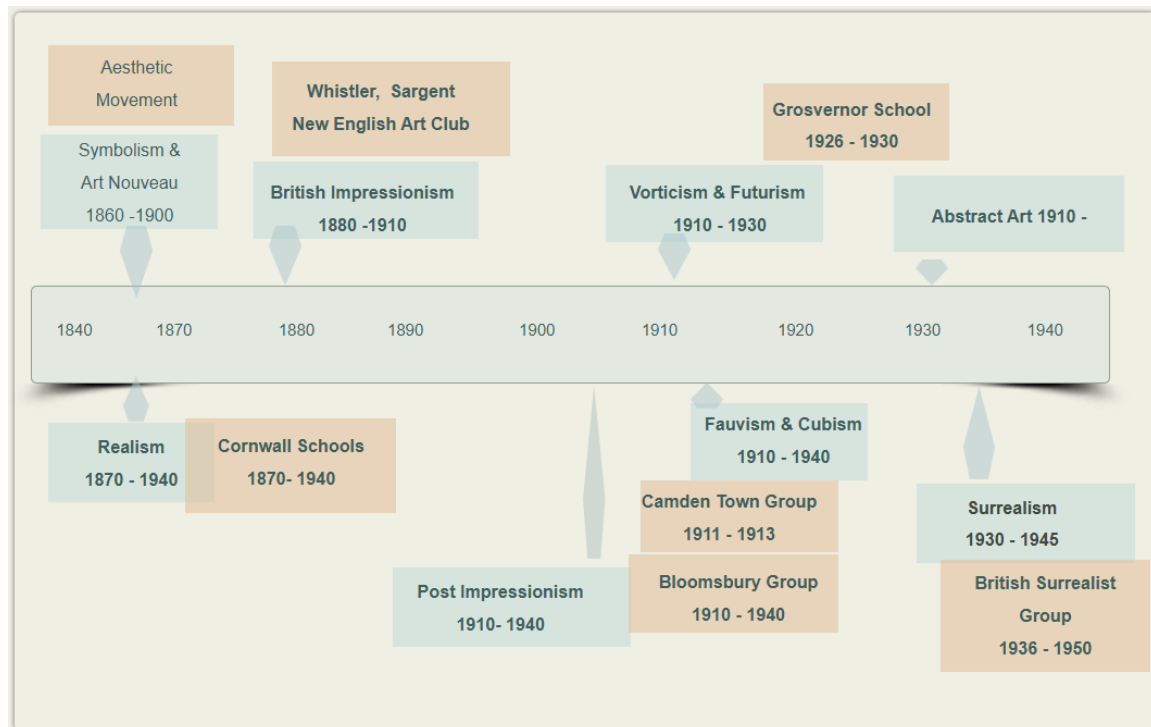
Abstraction



Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition IX*, 1936

Abstraction

## Art Styles in England 1890 – 1940



## England and Modernism

Despite their close proximity, artistic developments in France and England had differed through the 1800s and into the early 1900s.

British art had been fairly isolated from the radical developments that had been taking place in Paris, perhaps due in part to the political upheaval, and therefore relative isolation, of France, although Impressionists artists such as Monet, Pissarro and Sisley took refuge in England as a result the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, the fall of the Second Empire and the Paris Commune. However, in the 1870s French Impressionism was still in its infancy. English artists were also painting *en plein air*, but tended to favour rural scenes, rather than scenes of the middle class frequently painted by the French Impressionists.

The turn of the century was a time of cultural change in England, following the death of Queen Victoria in 1901. For a short period up until World War One (WWI), known as the Edwardian age, there was a relaxing of the strict repression of Victorian society. King Edward VII created an atmosphere enabling greater social change and interest in modern art, without the restrictions of the previous monarch's moralistic approach.

During the first two decades of the 20th century a number of new groups, or movements, were created. They were often short-lived, generally for no more than two or three years. Artists were often associated with one or more such associations simultaneously. Some published dynamic manifestos, others simply assembled as exhibition groups.

One group, the **Camden Town group**, which was founded in 1911, would create avant-garde movements such as **Vorticism** in 1914 (which was similar in style to Italian **Futurism**).

Robert Upstone, curator of Modern British Art at the Tate wrote;

*“With their pulsating colour harmonies and urban subject matter, the Group were consciously identified as modern but they occupied a comfortable — and perhaps quintessentially British — middle ground between tradition and the truly avant-garde”<sup>xxi</sup>.*

In 1905, French art dealer **Durand-Ruel** showcased an exhibition of 315 Impressionist paintings, mostly from his private collection, at the *Grafton Galleries* in London. The artists included Manet, Boudin, Pissarro, Renoir, and Monet. While there were only 13 direct sales, it generated some interest in Impressionism. (Durand-Ruel was a strong supporter of Impressionism in France – but it was in England that he’d met Monet and Pissarro. In 1870, during the Franco-Prussian War, Durand-Ruel left Paris and went to London. When he returned to Paris he met Degas, Sisley, Renoir and started buying and selling their works as well.)



Paul Durand-Ruel in his gallery in 1910

However, England didn't generally begin to embrace Modernism until British artist and art critic Roger Fry, together with Clive Bell, organised the first **Post-Impressionist** exhibition at the Grafton Galleries in 1910.

In 1906, Fry had been employed as curator of European painting at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and after encountering two paintings by Paul Cézanne at the International Society Exhibition in London in 1906, he



began to shift his focus to what he would term “Post-Impressionist” French painting.

He began to publish articles on the works of Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, Henri Matisse, and Vincent van Gogh, whom he saw as merging the structural elements of the classical artists with the colour explorations of the Impressionists.



Edouard Manet, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, 1882

The 1910 exhibition was officially titled *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*. It was a major commercial success, attracting over 25,000 visitors over the two months it was on display. In total there were 155 works on show, by 26 artists.

The term Post Impressionism was coined by Fry in the catalogue for the exhibition;

*“...the Post-Impressionists consider the Impressionists too naturalistic... The Post-Impressionists ... were not concerned with recording impressions of colour or light. They were interested in the discoveries of the Impressionists only so far as these discoveries helped them to express emotions which the objects themselves evoked; their attitude towards nature was far more independent, not to say rebellious”<sup>xxii</sup>.*

Aside from the impact on British artists, the exhibition was also to have a significant influence on Australian artists in London at the time.

**Thea Proctor**, who had moved to London in 1903 and also seen the 1905 Durand-Ruel Impressionist exhibition, stated;

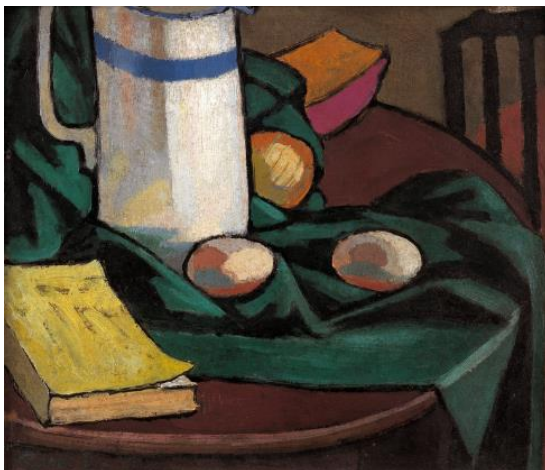
*“We had the Post-Impressionists’ exhibition ... another thrilling experience ... it was rather a shock, because I had been trained to draw the figure realistically, and of course, with the*

*Gauguin, the form was very simplified ...But the colour was thrilling, the Van Gogh's and all the other painters ... one's tastes changes".<sup>xxiii</sup>*

Fry frequently lectured on and wrote about modern art. He believed that understanding an artwork required focus on its visual elements, such as colour and form, rather than solely on the visual reality of an image. Another of Fry's espoused principles was that art should be '*decorative*', which related to the aesthetics of art and ideas and a formalist approach to composition.

**Margaret Preston** (then known as Rose McPherson), who had travelled to London with fellow artist Gladys Reynell in 1912 when Fry held a second Post Impressionist exhibition, was to adopt a more decorative and formalistic style. In 1913 she wrote;

*"Decorative art - it is the only thing worth aiming for in this our century - it is really the key note of everything. I'm trying all I know to reduce my still life to decorations and find it fearfully difficult"<sup>xxiv</sup>.*



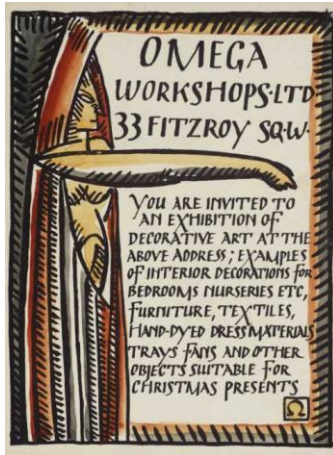
Roger Fry, *Still life - jug and eggs*, 1911



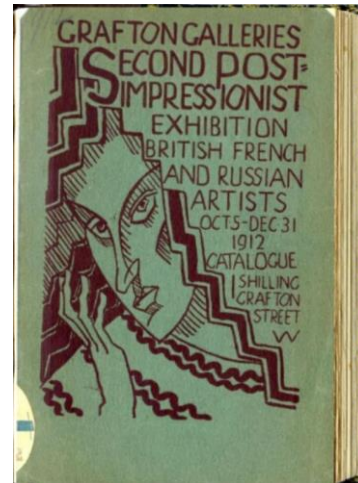
Margaret Preston, *Native flowers*, c 1927

Decorative was synonymous with design, and Preston realised that "*once design enters every form or shape realised on the canvas alters the nature and character of the original stimulus*"<sup>xxv</sup>.

(In 1917, during a later trip to London, Preston and Reynell studied the principals of Modernist design at Roger Fry's **Omega workshops** where furniture, fabrics and household accessories were designed and made by artists for sale - the artists designed the objects and did some decorative work such as painting furniture, with the manufacture of the products generally being undertaken by firms of professionals.)



An invitation for the opening exhibition at the Omega Workshops in 1913, possibly designed by Duncan Grant



A second Post Impressionist exhibition was held in 1912. This exhibition included works by members of the **Bloomsbury group** - a circle of artists, writers and intellectuals (including Fry) originating in the Bloomsbury home of Virginia Woolf and her sister Vanessa Bell.



Family and friends of Vanessa Bell in the garden of her home, Charleston farmhouse, in Sussex.

The Bloomsbury artists were strongly influenced by and responsive to the European movements of their day, especially Post-Impressionism, Cubism, and paintings from Africa and Asia. Their previously conservative artistic styles changed dramatically after they viewed works by Picasso, Matisse, and Cézanne during a 1909 visit to Paris. Fry, Bell and Duncan Grant were amongst the first artists in Britain to make purely abstract paintings.

LIST OF ARTISTS	
ADENEY, BERNARD ;	b. 1878
VON ANREP, BORIS,	b.
ASSELIN, MAURICE ;	b. Orleans, 1882
BELL, MRS. ;	b. London, 1879
BONNARD, PIERRE ;	b. 1867
BRAQUE, GEORGE ;	b. Argenteuil, 1882
CAMIS, MAX ;	b. Levallois-Perret, 1890
CÉZANNE, PAUL ;	b. Aix-en-Provence, 1839 ; d. 1906
CHABAUD, AUGUSTE ;	b. Nimes (Gard), 1882
CHOURLIANTS	
DERAIN, ANDRE ;	b. Chatou (Seine-et-Oise), 1880
VAN DONGEN, KEES ;	b. Delphaven, near Rotterdam, 1877
DOUCET, HENRI ;	b. Pleumartin (Vienne), 1883
ETCHELLS, FREDERICK ;	b. Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1886
ETCHELLS, MISS JESSIE ;	b. Manchester, 1892
FLANDRIN, JULES	
FRIESZ, OTHON ;	b. 1879
FRY, ROGER ;	b. London, 1866
GILL, ERIC ; b.	
GIRIEUD, PIERRE	
GORE, F. SPENCER	
GRANT, DUNCAN ;	b. Rothiemurchos, 1885
HASSEMBERG, MME. RENA ;	b. Warsaw, 1881
HERBIN, AUGUSTE ;	b. Le Cateau-Cambrésis, 1882
JOUKOFF, Mlle. VERA	
65	I



Roger Fry, *Studland Bay, Dorset*, 1911

According to the Tate Gallery, the 1912 exhibition is still the most comprehensive survey of Post Impressionist art that has been displayed in England<sup>xxvi</sup>. For many young British artists this was their first encounter with Post Impressionism, and led to them experimenting with colour and abstraction.

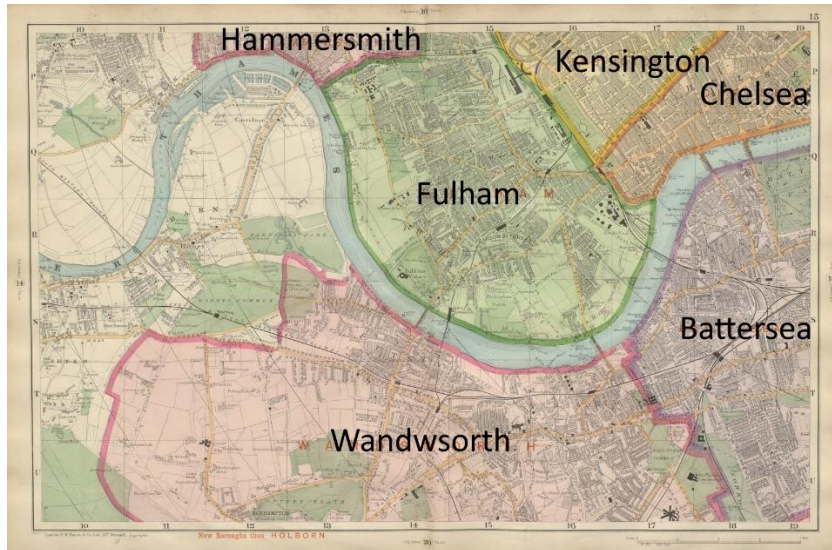
## Key English Influencers

Key artists working in England in the early 20th Century with whom Australian artists would become familiar included; *James McNeill Whistler, John Singer Sargent, Augustus John, Walter Sickert, Paul Nash, Frank Brangwyn, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Stanley Spencer, Tristram Hillier, Gwen John, Spencer Gore, William Orpen, Walter Sickert, Graham Sutherland, Edward Burra, Glyn Philpot, Stanhope Forbes, Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, Claude Flight, , Edward Burra, Dod Procter, Percy Wyndham Lewis, and Laura Knight, Frederick Brown, Christopher Wood, Iain Macnab, Wilson Steer and Henry Tonks.*

## Life and Study in England

Not surprisingly, because of its ties with colonial Australia, England was often the first choice for artists travelling overseas around the turn of the century.

Perhaps the most popular area for Australians living in London was Chelsea, which like Bloomsbury and St John's Wood, was known for its creative and somewhat bohemian lifestyle, and its proximity to artistic and educational institutions, such as the Royal College of Art. Artists were also attracted to Chelsea because of its history, site on the Thames, and its reputation as an artist's and writer's community<sup>xxvii</sup>.



London c1900



1890s postcard of the Thames Embankment

Artists **Dora Meeson** and her husband **George Coates** established themselves in Chelsea in 1906 where they became members of an extensive circle of Australian expatriate artists, including Tom Roberts, George Lambert, Fred Leist, Bess Norris, Ruby Lindsay and Will Dyson. The couple provided strong support for their fellow artists, with their studios being venues for social and political functions. Meeson was a suffragette, and as women were excluded from the Chelsea Club and other male only networks, she went to great lengths to develop her own extensive networks, and championed the rights of women to be included in artistic activities.



Dora Meeson, *On a Chelsea Balcony*, 1912

Sculptor Margaret Baskerville described Chelsea as “*the great students’ district, corresponding to the Latin Quarter of Paris*”<sup>xxviii</sup>.

## Academies and Schools

### The Royal Academy

London offered formal study at the very traditional and academic **Royal Academy** (RA), which was founded in 1768, and the **Slade School**, which opened in the 1870s.

Until the late 1800s, almost every important artist in Britain was associated with **Royal Academy**, either as an elected member, or by displaying work at its annual exhibitions.

Australian artists such as Portia Geach, Nicholas Chevalier, Tom Roberts, John Longstaff, Rupert Bunny, Arthur Streeton, E Phillips Fox, Margaret Preston, Agnes Goodsir, Daisy Ross, Jessie Traill, A.H. Fullwood and William Dobell were educated, and/or exhibited and subsequently gained a reputation through the RA<sup>xxix</sup>.

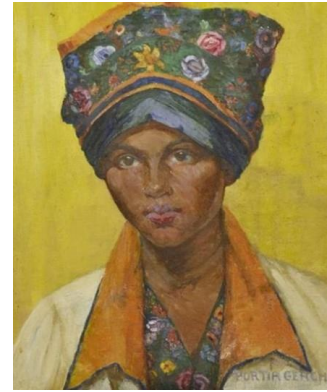
In 1896 **Portia Geach** was first Australian to win a tuition scholarship to the Royal Academy School. She studied there for four years until 1900, with her teachers including Lawrence Alma-Tadema and John Singer Sargent. Geach also studied stained glass at the **London School of Arts and Crafts**, and reputedly studied with Whistler at **Académie Carmen** and at the **Académie Julian** in Paris<sup>xxx</sup>



Portia Geach, *Spanish Dancer*



Portia Geach, *Beach Idyll*, 1900



Portia Geach, *Portrait of a Woman*

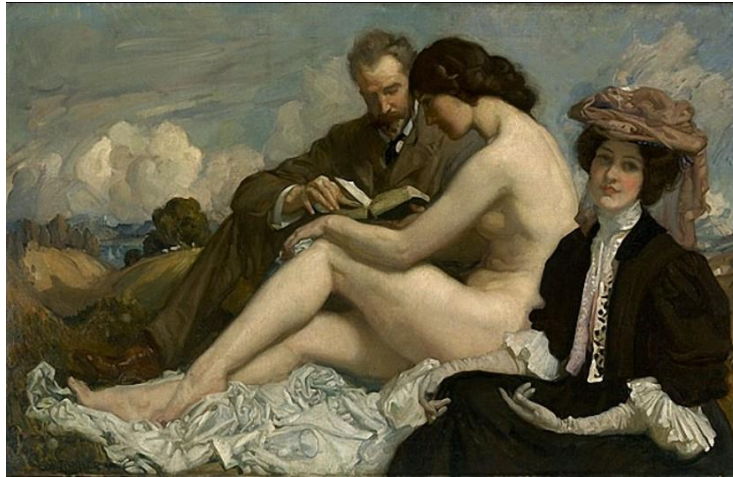
Some of her early works show the influence of the soft tints and languid ladies of the *fin de siècle* (end of the century) aestheticism, also practiced by Thea Proctor and Charles Conder around this time, including fan paintings, which were then very popular in London and Paris.

Geach was highly active in Australia after her return in 1901, with portraits and figure painting being her main areas of interest, although she continued to travel and exhibit overseas. Following her death in 1959, her sister Florence established the Portia Geach Memorial Award, which is considered the most significant prize for celebrating the creativity of female portrait artists in Australia.

**George Lambert** was awarded an *Associate of the Royal Academy* - the only Australian painter to receive such an honour.

After being awarded the Society of Artists Travelling Scholarship in 1900, Lambert had sailed to Europe. He studied at Colarossi's and at the Atelier Delécluze in Paris for a year before moving to London.

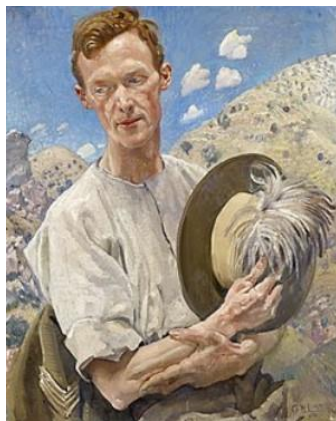
After settling in London in 1902, he exhibited at both the **New English Art Club**, the **Chelsea Arts Club** and the **International Society**, as was elected as an associate of the **Royal Academy** in 1922 and was a founder of the **Modern Society of Portrait Painters**. He was also an associate of the **Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts** Paris, and a council-member of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers.



George Lambert, *The Sonnet*, 1907

Lambert was not a modernist - he particularly admired the seventeenth century artists Rubens, Vandyke and Velasquez, as well as contemporaries J. M. Whistler and John Singer Sargent, whom he felt had preserved the qualities of old masters. He was particularly known for his portraiture and rural landscapes.

While in London he drew illustrations for the *Strand* and *Pall Mall* magazines, as well as to contributing to the *Bulletin* in Australia. He also supplemented his income by work as a riding instructor and as a teacher at the London School of Art in 1909 (succeeding Frank Brangwyn who had retired from teaching).



George Lambert, *A Sergeant of the Light Horse*, 1920



George Lambert, *Mrs Murdoch*, 1927 (Archibald prize winner)

He also served as an official Australian war artist during the First World War. In December 1917 he was appointed an official war artist for the Australian Infantry Forces and commissioned to execute 25 sketches and to paint *The Charge of the Light Horse at Beersheba on 31 October 1917*.





George Lambert, *The Charge of the Australian Light Horse at Beersheba*, 1917

He returned to Australia in 1921, popular with artists who wanted him to exhibit with them, dealers who wanted his works and clients who wanted commissioned portraits. In 1927 he was awarded the **Archibald Prize**.



Daphne Mayo [second right] working in the Royal Academy Sculpture School studio, c1920



Daphne Mayo, *Return of the Prodigal Son*, 1923. (Mayo's then fiancé, Lloyd Rees, modelled for her.)

Arriving in London in 1919, sculptor **Daphne Mayo** attended the Royal College of Art briefly and worked as an assistant to the sculptor John Angel, before entering the Sculpture School of the Royal Academy of Arts in 1920. She was awarded *Royal Academy of Arts medal (gold)* in 1923 for her sculpture, *Return of the Prodigal Son*. Part of her prize was a scholarship to study in Italy for a year. However, after only a short time in Italy, in 1924 she returned to Brisbane following the death of her brother, where she was awarded numerous commissions.

Mayo travelled to the UK, Europe, the US and Canada in 1938-39 to observe modern developments in sculpture, setting up a studio in Chelsea in London. She departed for Sydney just two days before the outbreak of war.

By the early 20th century, as the art world was adapting to new movements, the Royal Academy was ceasing to be at the centre of British art, although the Academy's annual summer exhibition remained an important event.

Writing to Tom Roberts in 1946, Arthur Streeton describes the Royal Academy as having, “*an inartistic atmosphere*” and claims he “*hasn't the least desire to go again*”<sup>xxxix</sup>.

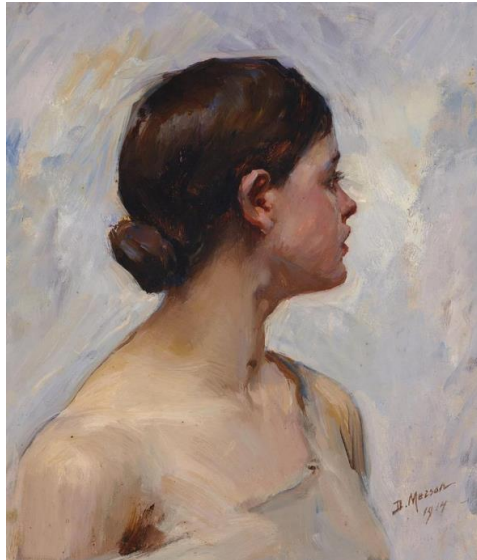


Arthur Streeton, *Corfe Castle*, 1909

## The Slade

The **Slade** offered female students an education on equal terms as men, making it attractive to Australian artists, although the fees made study there prohibitive, with many artists choosing to attend classes in France instead. A number of British artists studied at the Slade before training in Paris (where it was not only much cheaper but also generally less academic).

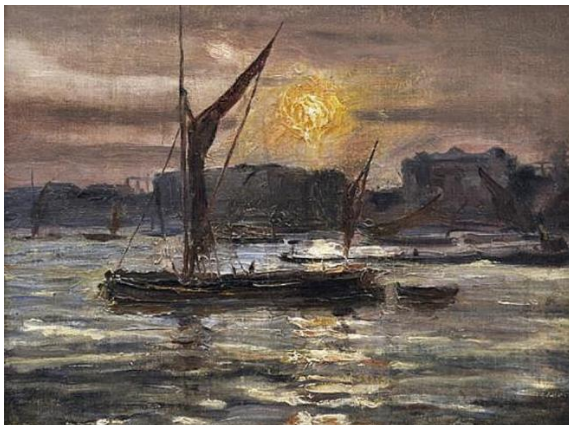
**Dora Meeson** studied at the Slade from 1892-93 and exhibited at the Royal Academy. She had also studied at the Académie Julian in Paris with her future husband **George Coates** before they moved to London, and had her work exhibited at the Paris Salon.



Dora Meeson, *Portrait of Woman in Profile*, 1914

Meeson's style was initially influenced by Impressionism. She readily admitted her enthusiasm for Monet's 'brilliant light and colour' and wrote:

*"Neither did he (George Coates) understand my struggle to express light and colour, but always wanted me to lower my work in tone, whereas I would urge him to lighten his. But we went our separate ways quite harmoniously. The crampedness of painting and living in a studio drove me out to study the river and the multitudinous forms of water, and to try to give it weight and movement and glorious, ever-changing colour, while George concentrated more and more on figure painting".<sup>xxxii</sup>*



Dora Meeson, *Barges on the Thames*



Dora Meeson, *The Thames, Pool of London*

As Meeson and Coates lived not far from Whistler's home in London, Meeson's Thames views show his influence - she deliberately painted scenes of labour on the embankments, and scenes of shipping on the river itself. Meeson insisted on

going out on a boat on dangerously stormy days and painting during wild wind storms.

Some of her paintings show the impasto (thick painting) and rich colours of the Post Impressionists, demonstrating how Meeson experimented and developed her style during her career.

She later became a noted maritime painter and in 1919 she became the first Australian woman member of the Royal Institute of Oil Painters. Meeson was also a founding member of the **Society of Mural Decorators and Painters in Tempera**.



*Dora Meeson, Members of the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps:  
At Work in the Cookhouse, Royal Air Force Camp, Charlton Park, 1919*

Meeson also worked as a policewoman on night-duty in an ammunition factory during the war and painted a number of war-related subjects.

**George Coates** travelled to Europe in 1897 on a National Gallery Travelling Scholarship, studying in Paris at the Académie Julian. After moving to England in 1900 he became known principally as a portrait painter, as well as a war artist. Essentially, he remained faithful to his representative approach.



George Coates, *A Russian Lady*, c1920



George Coates, *Australian official war artists, 1916–1918* – (standing l-r: John Longstaff, Charles Bryant, George Lambert, A. Henry Fullwood, James Quinn, Septimus Power, Arthur Streeton, seated back l-r: Will Dyson, Fred Leist, front: George Bell)

Tasmanian born **Derwent Lees** left Melbourne to enrol in the Slade in 1905, studying under Frederick Brown and Henry Tonks.

Teacher (and ex-surgeon) **Henry Tonks** was one of the most influential teachers at the Slade from 1892 until WWI, and then again after the war.

His overriding concern was for accuracy in drawing and capturing the correct structure of the body.

Using his anatomical knowledge and referring his students to drawings by old masters, he taught them to draw life models at the size they were seen measured at arm's length (sight size), which enabled them continually to correct the drawing for themselves against the physical object.



Henry Tonks, *Study for 'An Advanced Dressing Station in France'*, c1915

**Frederick Brown**, who was also a founding member of the New English Art Club, taught at both the Slade and the Westminster School. Brown encouraged an emphasis on drawing and the expression of individuality. Like Tonks, he encouraged students to study form analytically rather than using an imitative

approach to drawing. The Realism style of **Jules Bastien-Lepage**, who had been an early influence, is apparent in his work. He attracted a strong teaching staff, establishing the principle that all teachers should be practising artists.



Frederick Brown, *Waiting for the Boat, Chelsea Embankment*

Another influential teacher at the Slade and founding member of the New English Art Club was **Wilson Steer**. In 1882 he travelled to France for three years, studying painting at the Académie Julian and the École des Beaux Arts. Here he was influenced by the French Impressionists, in particular by the way they captured the fleeting effects of light and colour using rapid strokes of colour. However, after returning to England, he adapted the techniques of Impressionism to suit the changeable effects of English weather, as had been portrayed by artists such as W. H. M. Turner and John Constable. Steer became leader of the so-called '**English Impressionist**' school, and taught at the Slade for 30 years.



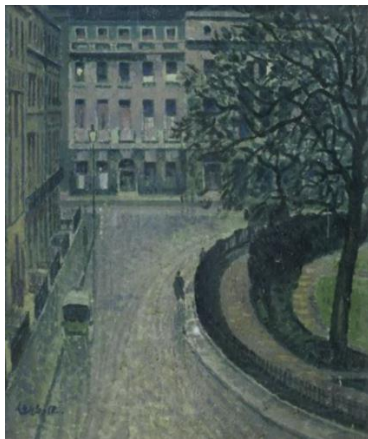
Philip Wilson Steer, *Boulogne Sands, 1888-91*



Philip Wilson Steer, *The Church at Montreuil, 1907*

In the 1920s and 1930s Australian artists such as **Arthur d'Auvergne Boxall** and **William Dobell** studied with Steer, with Dobell winning first prize for figure painting there in 1930.

Australian **Derwent Lees** was regarded as an outstanding student at the Slade, with 15 of his 19 drawings winning prizes in 1907, and in 1908 he received First Prize in Life Drawing. He was immediately appointed to the staff as drawing master and remained at the Slade until 1918, during which time he taught a generation of English modernists including Bloomsbury group members Roger Fry, Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, and Paul Nash. Lees was considered a progressive teacher and held in high regard. He exhibited with the New English Art Club from 1911 to 1917 and Vanessa Bell's Friday Club from 1911 to 1916, where his work was hung beside many of his former students<sup>xxxiii</sup>.



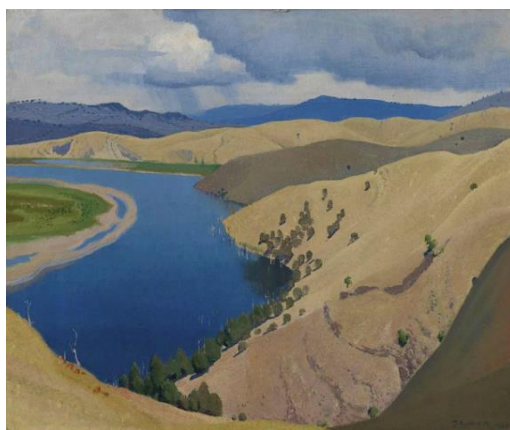
Derwent Lees, *Fitzroy Square from Sickert's Old Studio*



Derwent Lees, *Tour Madeloc in the Pyrenees, c. 1913*

In 1913, Lees, together with Charles Conder and Frank McComas (an Australian artist living in the US) had his work included in the Amory Show (also known as the **International Exhibition of Modern Art**) in New York, which further enhanced his reputation.

Lees travelled widely in Europe and his paintings of landscapes and figures were made using pure strong colours. Unfortunately, in 1918 Lees was committed to an asylum in Surrey suffering from schizophrenia, and he remained there until his death in 1931.



Elioth Gruner, *Rolling Hills near Yass, 1929*



Elioth Gruner, *St Tropez, 1924*

The techniques and colours in some of his landscapes are evoked in the paintings of **Elioth Gruner** after his travels through Europe from 1923. Although Gruner responded to the works of Paul Gauguin and Paul Cézanne that he had seen in London and Paris, his use of colour and technique are also similar to many of Lee's works. Gruner made a living from sales and commissions while overseas, which included time spent walking and painting in France and Italy, with trips to Paris, Rome, Naples and Capri and an extended stay in St Tropez in 1924<sup>xxxiv</sup>.

After his return to Australia in 1925 Gruner maintained the style he'd adopted while overseas, painting flattened forms of the landscape, often from a higher perspective. He began to spend significant amounts of time in the Canberra region, often staying with pastoralists and painting landscapes such as *On the Murrumbidgee* 1929 and *Weetangera, Canberra* 1937, both of which won the Wynne Prize.

English born **Ethel Carrick** studied at the Slade in the early 1900s, before spending time at Newlyn in Cornwall, where she met Emanuel Phillips Fox, whom she later married.

## The Grosvenor School of Art

The **Grosvenor School of Art**, which opened in London in 1925, is an important part of Australian art history, as it offered printmaking classes in linoblock, linocut, lithography and etching, as well as tuition in life drawing, painting and composition. As the school had no entrance exams or fixed terms, students could attend for any period of time.

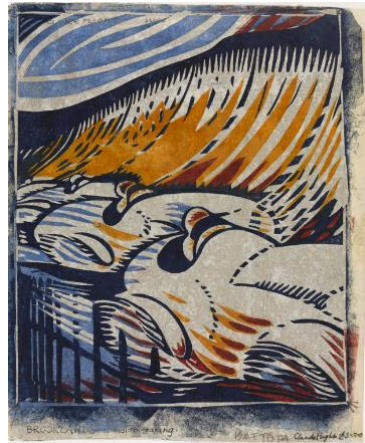
According to its prospectus, the school aimed to "*encourage students to express their own individual ideas rather than be forced to accept worn-out academic theories*"<sup>xxxv</sup>.

A key teacher at the school was **Claude Flight**, who had been influenced by Italian Futurist writer Marinetti. Marinetti had stated in his Futurist manifesto that "*the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed*"<sup>xxxvi</sup>. The early 1900s was a period when there were major advances in modes of travel, including motor cars and aeroplanes.





Natalia Goncharova, *Cyclist*, 1913 (Italian Futurist)

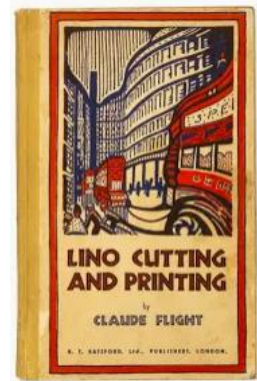


Claude Flight, *Brooklands*, c 1929

Flight is probably best remembered for his work as a pioneer of the linoleum cut – making his first prints in 1919. He saw in the linocut the potential for a truly democratic art form - the necessary materials and tools were inexpensive, and printing could be done by hand.



Flight's print workshop



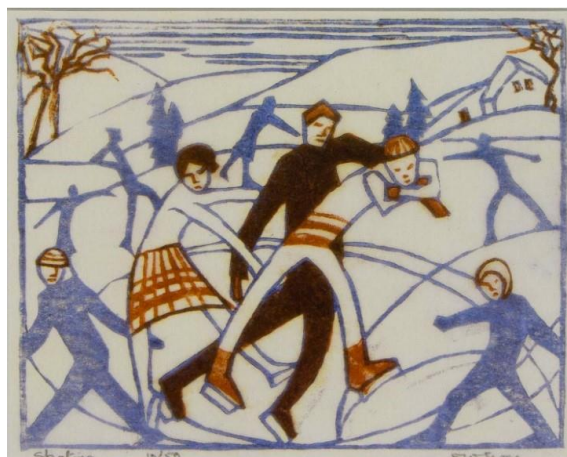
His hope was that these prints would become a part of everyday culture, available at reasonable prices to even the working class.

Like fellow teacher Iain Macnab, Flight was also interested in patterns and movement, and the importance of composition. He used the mathematical theories of The Rule of Thirds, The Golden Ratio (1:1.618) and Dynamic Symmetry to identify focal points within the structure of a painting or print.

Particularly under Flight's tuition, a number of Australian artists such as **Dorrit Black**, **Ethel Spowers** and **Eveline Symes** perfected the art of linocuts, often adopting a style drawn from the avant-garde art movements of British Vorticism, Italian Futurism and Art Deco. They combined abstraction and dynamism with geometric elements to create the sense of rapid movement. These artists went on to become leading printmakers in Australia from the 1930s.



Ethel Spowers, *The Gust of Wind*, c 1931



Eveline Syme, *Skating*, c1930

**Dorrit Black** had attended Julian Ashton's Sydney Art School in 1915, and at that time her work showed the influences of both teachers Ashton and Gruner. During the 1920s she was increasingly focused on 'modernising' her practice and in 1927 travelled to Europe in order to acquire "*a definite understanding of the aims and methods of the modern movement and in particular - the cubists*"<sup>xxxvii</sup>. Initially staying in London, she spent three months studying with Flight before moving to Paris.

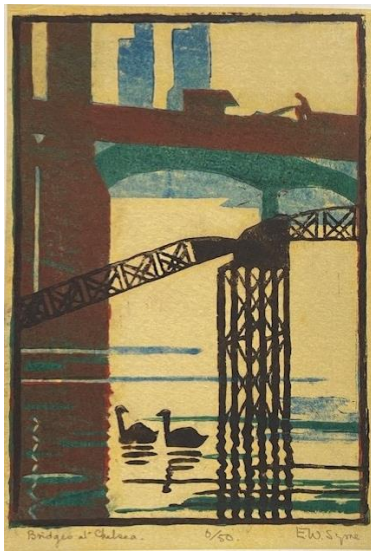


Dorrit Black, *The Pot Plant*, 1934

**Eveline Syme**, who had been studying at art schools in Paris in the early 1920s, had discovered Claude Flight's textbook, *Lino-Cuts* (London, 1927), in Melbourne in 1928. This inspired her to enrol in his classes at the Grosvenor School in 1929, together with her friend, Ethel Spowers<sup>xxxviii</sup>. She wrote;

*"Here was something new and different, linocut no longer regarded as a base form of woodcut, but evolved into a distinct branch of 20th century art. I had seen nothing more vital and essentially "modern" in the best sense of the word than the reproductions in this book ... Soon*

after my arrival in England I became one of the pupils at the Grosvenor school".<sup>xxxix</sup>



Eveline Syme, *Bridges at Chelsea*, 1929



Eveline Syme, *San Demonic, Sienna*, 1931

Eveline Syme's first linocut after working with Flight was *Bridges at Chelsea*, 1929, where she had used mathematical formulas to create focal points.

In 1932 she wrote that "One can learn all the intricacies of any form of art at the Grosvenor School of modern art".<sup>xl</sup>

After returning to Melbourne later in 1929 with an exhibition of contemporary wood-engravings from the Redfern Gallery, London, Syme became a cautious advocate of modern art.



Ethel Spowers



Eveline Syme



Dorrit Black

The founder of the **Grosvenor** school was **Iain Macnab**, a progressive teacher who offered books of tickets for his classes. He focused on composition, colour schemes and ways of treating and symbolising forms. Macnab's aim was;

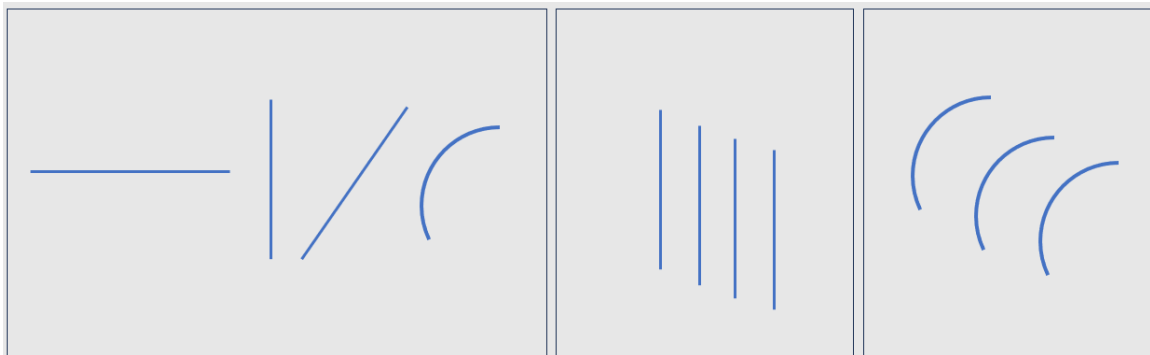
*"Not so much to train students to paint what they saw as to teach them to isolate from nature the elements that are truly pictorial, and*

then to develop their own personalities. His ambition was to first make artists"<sup>xli</sup>.

He shared Flight's focus on vitality and was also interested in "looking for repetition of lines and patterns and stressing them"<sup>xlii</sup>. Macnab said;

*"If we draw three lines, **horizontal, vertical and oblique**, of these, the first two will appear static, although the oblique line will give a certain indication of movement; but if we **curve this oblique line** so that it becomes roughly about a quarter of a circle we find that we have increased its apparent movement, largely owing to the tendency of the eye to run along a curved line. If we repeat parallel lines, we make simple **harmony**. If we repeat parallel lines in an ordered sequence we create a **rhythm**"<sup>xliii</sup>.*

This view informed the design of linocuts at the school.

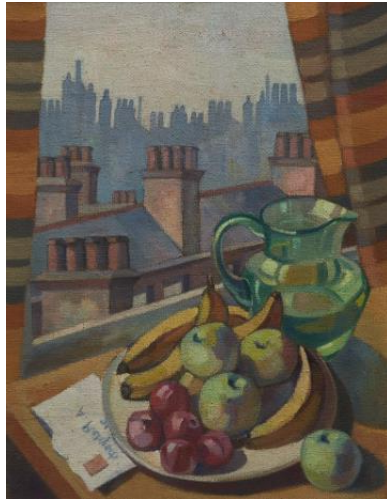


Iain Macnab, *Bridge Over a Gentle River*



Iain Macnab, *Mediterranean Village, North Africa*

Having worked closely with Dorrit Black, Rah Fizelle, Thea Proctor and Adelaide Perry in Sydney, **Alison Rehfisch** left for Europe in 1933, studying under Iain Macnab, with her highly stylised compositions reflecting his teaching. She also drew on the work of El Greco, Paul Chagall, and Georges Braque for their colour, design and simplicity.



Alison Rehfisch, *Bloomsbury Window*, c1938

She hated 'frills . . . in life and painting, too'. In 1934 she participated in the **Six Colonial Artists** exhibition at the Cooling galleries in London. She also showed with the **Society of Women Artists**, the **Royal Institute of Oil Painters** and the **British Empire Society** in England, and with the **Société Nationale des Beaux Arts** in Paris. Rehfisch spent months studying the Spanish masters at Seville, Spain, and at Malaga, on the Mediterranean, where she lived in an old Moorish castle converted into a studio<sup>xliv</sup>.

Other Australian students who studied with Macnab in the 1930s included Peter Purves Smith, George Bell and Nutter Buzacott.

**Peter Purves Smith** studied at Grosvenor School in 1935, and his works from this time show Macnab's geometric influence.



Peter Purves Smith, *French Countryside*, c1936



Peter Purves Smith, *Vineyard in the South of Franc*, 1939

His work also owed much to the Surrealists, after having seen the **International Surrealist Exhibition** in London in mid 1936.



Peter Purves Smith, *Burke and Wills, The Perish*, 1937



Peter Purves Smith, *French Cafe*, 1936



*In June 1936, 392 Surrealist paintings and sculptures by 71 artists, including Breton, Dalí, Duchamp, Giacometti, Klee, Magritte, Miró, Paul Nash, Picasso, Man Ray and Sutherland were shown in London.*

From 1938 to 1940 **Purves Smith** painted in both London and Paris, before joining the British Army. Back in Australia after the war, he studied with George Bell in Melbourne, together with his friend, artist William Drysdale.

Unfortunately, Purves Smith died from complications from major lung surgery in 1948 in Melbourne, although he influenced many of his contemporaries with his modernist style during his short artistic career.

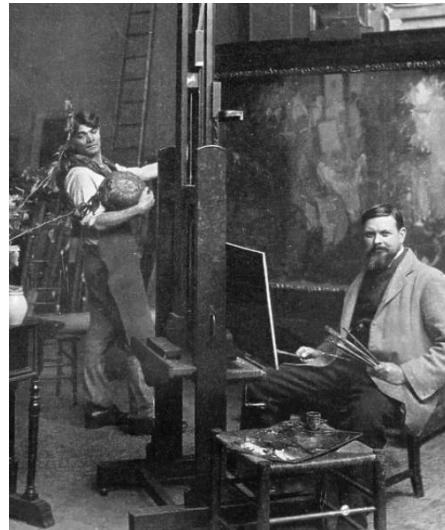
## The London School of Art

The **London School of Art** was known as 'Brangwyn's' after one of its founders, **Frank Brangwyn**. The School was soon regarded as a success, prompting *The Studio* to report in 1906 that it '*had already made for itself a position amongst the leading institutions of its kind in London*<sup>xlv</sup>'. Two years later it had developed a reputation that extended beyond England and Europe, with a London correspondent for the Sydney Morning Herald reporting in 1908 that the School provided '*the best tuition to be had in this part of the world*<sup>xlvi</sup>'.

Brangwyn was a Welsh artist, painter, printmaker, illustrator and designer who worked across a broad range of artistic fields. He had been influenced by European Realists, the Arts and Crafts movement, Whistler and the Pre-Raphaelites and later Symbolism and Art Nouveau<sup>xlvii</sup>.



Frank Brangwyn, *Sunflowers*



Frank Brangwyn in his studio

He had worked for designer William Morris from 1882 to 1884, where he learnt the principles of design and decorative arts and at the age of just 17, Brangwyn exhibited his first painting at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, later becoming a full member.



Kathleen O'Connor, *Still Life, Paris, Study in Whites*, 1936

**Kathleen O'Connor** was one Australian student who studied with Brangwyn. She recalled,

*“He usually took up the brush & made an illustration to show his way of doing things. One girl I remember was trying to paint white tulips in water colours & he said don’t bother about the lights, just paint the shadows, in the shapes and low and behold the flower was there”* <sup>xlvi</sup>.

She also later reflected that the most valuable education had come from her exposure to the great artists, and was how natural it was for artists to walk from one gallery to another to see all the latest exhibitions.

During WWI, Brangwyn produced official war posters and made prints to raise money for the war effort, also serving as the President of the Royal Society of British Artists. During his lifetime Brangwyn produced over 500 etchings, 340 wood engravings, 160 lithographs and 130 bookplates.

*Because of his interest in design, Brangwyn used inks as he used paint, liberally filling the deeply scored lines.*



Frank Brangwyn, *Santa Maria*, 1907



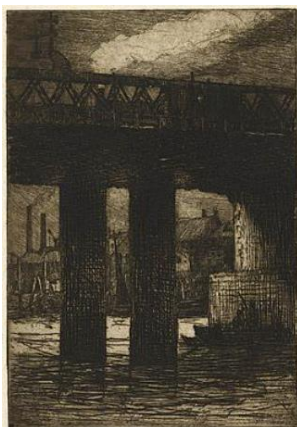
Printmaker **Jessie Traill** was strongly influenced by Brangwyn. She studied at the school for several years from 1907, during which time she dramatically changed her approach. Brangwyn worked with Traill directly in the production of her early plates, guiding her through the development and printing of individual prints<sup>xlix</sup>. He taught her the formal principles and technical methods that underpinned his decorative concept of printmaking.



*Printmaking at Brangwyn's*

Jessie Traill, *The Roadside Flanders*, 1907 etching, drypoint and fowl biting, printed in brown ink with plate-tone, from one plate. Inscr. lwr left 'F. B. Printed by Brangwen, J. Traill's plate'

Inspired by Whistler's etchings of Venetian façades and boat yard interiors, *The Charing Cross Bridge, London* etching shows Traill's interest in combining the lessons of Brangwyn with her regard for Whistler.



Jessie Traill, *Charing Cross Bridge, London*. 1907      Jessie Traill, *Melbourne from Richmond paddock*, 1911

Traill interrupted her career to work as a voluntary nurse in France during WWI, later raising funds for and revisiting war-torn Europe.

When she returned to Australia her prints demonstrated complex arrangements of light and shade as well as aggressive mark making. These characteristics led to a tonal aesthetic and created a '*pleasing decorative rhythm*'<sup>i</sup> in her work. Throughout the rest of her career two themes would dominate her work – the Australian landscape, and the growth of the new nation as manifest in grand-scale construction projects.

In addition to being one of the most important printmakers in Australia in the 20th century, Traill helped popularise the medium. She mentored the next generation of artists in printmaking, including Arthur Boyd, Fred Williams and Franz Kempf.

In 1910, the London School of Art was amalgamated with the New Art School in Logan Place, run by poster artist John Hassall, where it reopened as the **London and New Art School**<sup>ii</sup>.

## St John's Wood Art School

**St John's Wood Art School** (subsequently the Anglo-French Art Centre) established the pattern of inviting famed artists of the day to criticise the students' work in a relaxed atmosphere, and to present prizes.



Thea Proctor, *Ballet Dancers*, c1903 - 1921



Thea Proctor, *In Hyde Park*, c1910

**Thea Proctor** studied there briefly in 1903, before taking private lessons with Australian artist George Lambert, who would become a close friend and mentor. While in London, Proctor's artistic circle included William Orpen, Augustus John, Wilson Steer and expatriate Australians Charles Conder, Arthur Streeton and Tom Roberts<sup>lii</sup>.



May Moore, *Portrait of Thea Proctor*, 1912

Additional influences included the drawings of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, the sleek figures of contemporary fashion (such as those featured in the pages of the newly launched *Australian Vogue* magazine), Japanese prints, a love of the Chelsea Art Club balls, and Ballets Russes, which she saw in 1911 and which foreshadowed a lifelong interest in ballet and theatre<sup>liii</sup>. Like Charles Conder, and other artists such as Brangwyn, she also became attracted to painting fans.



Charles Conder, *The New Moon Fan*, 1896



Thea Proctor, *The Diabolo Fan*

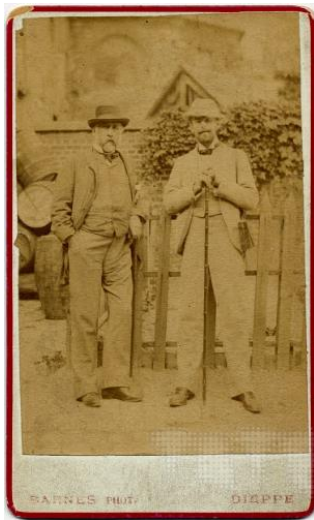
In 1907 her painting, *A portrait*, was included in the summer exhibition at the **Royal Academy** and in 1911 she participated in a major joint exhibition with six others at the **Goupil Gallery**.

After returning to Australia after an 18 year period living in London, Proctor taught at Julian Ashton's art school. She continued to paint figures in both contemporary and fancy dress, as well as in theatrical costume and ballet dress. Proctor also became interested in linocut and woodcut printing and exhibited her first woodcuts in a joint exhibition with Margaret Preston in 1925. She designed numerous prints for the covers of magazines, in particular, *Home*, as well as undertaking a number of portrait commissions. Like Preston, she heavily promoted Modernism in Australia.

## Westminster School of Art

**Norah Simpson** studied at the **Westminster School of Art** with Walter Sickert in 1912, where she gained an insight into French Impressionist theories and practises.

With ties to painters such as James McNeill Whistler and Edgar Degas, **Walter Sickert** had strengthened the artistic connections between Britain and France and gained a reputation as one of the most influential figures in twentieth-century British art.



Walter Sickert and Edgar Degas  
in Dieppe



Edgar Degas, *Four Dancers*, c1899

In 1883, he had travelled to Paris where he met Edgar Degas, whose use of pictorial space and emphasis on drawing had a powerful effect on Sickert's work. Degas encouraged Sickert to tackle a wide range of subject matter, portraying urban scenes in Paris and Dieppe, including forms of entertainment such as music-halls and the circus. From here Sickert developed his personal version of Impressionism.



Walter Sickert, *Wellington House Academy*, 1914



Norah Simpson, *Claudette*, Paris, 1920

Simpson later visited Paris, where she closely studied Impressionist paintings, and through introductions to dealers and collectors, viewed works by Cézanne, Gauguin, van Gogh, Matisse and Picasso.

She left for Australia in 1913, where she played a major role in introducing Dattilo-Rubbo's students to Modernism, but by 1915 she had returned to London, before moving to Glasgow in 1919 and on to France in 1920. Following the birth of her son, she gave up painting and devoted most of her time to politics.

**Stella Bowen** had been a student of Margaret Preston in Adelaide, before moving to London in 1914, where she studied with Sickert at the Westminster School of Art, who taught her "*an awareness of the accidental and spontaneous*"<sup>liv</sup>.

Relocating to Paris in 1923, she lived in the same building as Bessie Davidson (whom she described as 'the Old Australian Impressionist'<sup>lv</sup>). Bowen had a relationship with writer Ford Maddox Ford, and it was through him that she met a number of important writers, musicians and painters. She painted portraits of writers such as Aldous Huxley, T. S. Eliot, Edith Sitwell and Gertrude Stein, visiting Pablo Picasso's home to complete the Stein painting.

In 1929, following her separation from Maddox Ford, she decided to focus on commissioned portraits, including "conversation pieces" of whole families, with her style reflecting subdued tonal qualities. She also painted a number of views of London, often from unconventional angles. Bowen was appointed an official war artist in 1943.



Stella Bowen, *Embankment Gardens*, c1943

She had hoped to return to Australia after the war to exhibit her work but was unable to do so because of her lack of funds, the rejection of her application for repatriation, and finally ill health. Bowen died in England in 1947.

**Grace Cossington Smith** also had drawing lessons at the Westminster School of Art from 1912-14, as well as spending some time in Stettin, Germany, where she took some outdoor sketching classes.



Jean Appleton, *Painting IX*, 1937

In 1935, **Jean Appleton**, a friend of Cossington Smith, studied under Mark Gertler (who had close links with the Bloomsbury Group) and Bernard Meninsky at the Westminster School, which she described as “*quite the most alive and exciting school at that time*”<sup>lvi</sup>. Her contemporaries included Donald Friend, William Dobell, Arthur Murch, and Eric Wilson. While in London she completed a number of Cubist works including, *Still Life* and *Painting IX* (both in 1937), as well as taking lessons in sculpture. Before returning to Australia in 1938 she visited the Centenary Cézanne Exhibition, galleries in Luxembourg, and travelled to Italy (Her later awards included the Portia Peach Award in 1965.)

## Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts

When the **Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts** first opened in 1898 it offered day and evening instruction across a wide range of subjects from Architecture, Furniture Design, Life Drawing and Stained Glass work to Dressmaking, Pottery and Typography.



Margaret Preston,  
*Beaker*, 1917



Gladys Reynell, *Teapot*, 1922

In 1916 Preston and Reynell made several visits to Ireland where they took students for painting lessons. They also travelled through the English countryside before enrolling at the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts. Preston enrolled as a student of pottery, at the same time developing her interest in fabric printing and dyeing, basket weaving and printmaking - for which she was to become best known after returning to Sydney in 1919. During her time in England, Preston exhibited at the **Royal Academy**, the **New English Art Club** and the **Society of Women Artists**. It was during this time that they contributed to Fry's Omega workshops.

Gladys Reynell also studied at the Camberwell School, and in 1918 Reynell and Preston began teaching crafts to soldiers at Seale Hayne Neurological Hospital, Devon with the aim of rehabilitating shell-shocked soldiers<sup>lvii</sup>.



Although primarily a potter, Reynell was also a printmaker and painter. While overseas she exhibited with the **Salon des Artistes Français** in Paris, at the **Royal Academy** and the **Walker Gallery** in Liverpool.



Gladys Reynell, *Cotswold Farmyard*, 1916



Gladys Reynell, *Feeding Calves*, c1934-38

After returning home shortly after the war, she established her own pottery studio at Reynella in South Australia, becoming one of Australia's earliest studio potters and the first person in South Australia to take part in all stages of the production of ceramics<sup>lviii</sup>. She was known for her modernist decorative style.

Pottery as a Modern form of art was emerging at this time, and practitioners were referred to as *studio*, *modern*, or *artist* potters because they had a core belief in making pots by hand in the studio<sup>lix</sup>.

## Polytechnic Colleges

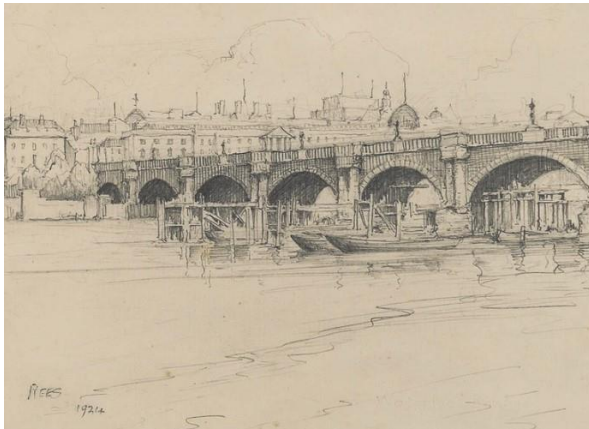
**Lloyd Rees** travelled to Europe in 1923 and 1924, spending some time at the Chelsea Polytechnic College, although he commented that it was “*merely drawing from the model*”<sup>lx</sup>. In his autobiography, *Peaks & Valleys*, he talks about his time spent with other artists in London, observing;

*“Gruner taught me a lot about painting. One night we were walking home to his rooms in Chelsea and there was a very grey sky above. Stopping in the street he looked up at it and said, there’s a lot of red in that sky. I was too inexperienced a painter to know that the quality of grey would have needed some red in it”<sup>lxi</sup>.*

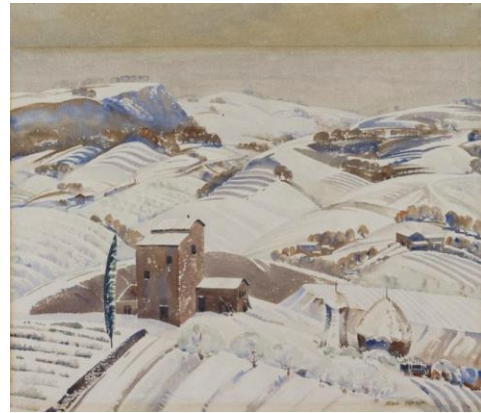
Like his friend, artist Roland Wakelin, Rees was able to make some money in London undertaking some commercial work, although Wakelin was more successful. Rees commented “*He was such a good colourist that he could sell the rough outs for his posters without having to do all the detail on them*”<sup>lxii</sup>.



However, Rees himself became a highly regarded artist throughout his lifetime, in drawing, painting and printmaking, returning to Europe several times during his career.



Lloyd Rees, *Waterloo Bridge, London*, 1924



Rah Fizelle, *Snow in Umbria*, 1930

In 1927 **Rah Fizelle**, another contemporary of Rees, studied in London at the **Polytechnic School of Art in Regent Street**, and the **Westminster School of Art** under Bernard Meninsky. He travelled extensively to Spain, Majorca, France, Austria and Italy, exhibiting at the Salon de la Société des Artistes Français in Paris and the Royal Academy of Arts in London.

From 1928 to 1930, while in Italy, Fizelle's landscape paintings became simplified, stylised and geometric, possibly influenced by his affinity with realism in British art, as well as viewing the compositional geometry of Piero della Francesca, and Giotto's convergent perspective while in Italy.

When he returned to Sydney Fizelle was connected with artists such as Grace Crowley, Roland Wakelin, Grace Cossington Smith, Ralph Balson and Dorrit Black.

In 1932 Crowley and Fizelle established their own independent school, which was the most *avant-garde* teaching institution of the time, where they taught the compositional principles of dynamic symmetry and the Golden Mean, which had been key tenants of the cubist teaching of French artists **Albert Gleizes** and **André Lhote** in France.

As Crowley later recalled; "*We were united in one belief, the constructive approach to painting, and this insistence on abstract elements in building a design was the keynote of teaching with both Lhote and Gleizes*"<sup>lxiii</sup>.

## Artists' Clubs and Exhibitions

Artists' clubs functioned as a meeting space for artists to engage in a stimulating artistic environment and gain introductions to leading figures in the art world. The club environment in London had a significant impact on male Australian artists as it offered opportunities for them to become integrated into the English art world and to assist in establishing reputations.

### The New English Art Club

The **New English Art Club** (NEAC) was founded in 1885 by young English artists returning from studying art in Paris, such as Whistler (who quickly left the group), Sargent, Sickert and Stanhope Forbes. Initially it had been known for exhibiting new and innovative British art, with its first exhibition in 1886 including *en plein air* works by artists who had been studying in Paris, but by 1910 it had become a more conservative body. By 1913 the *Times* could describe the NEAC as “one of the strongest conservative forces in the country”<sup>lxiv</sup>.

Australian artists who exhibited at the Club included Streeton, Preston, Lees, Lambert, Fullwood, and Proctor.

### The London Group

The **London Group** was an exhibiting group which was formed in 1913 as a reaction to the Royal Academy's dominance of the British art world, and the restrictions the Academy placed on what artists were taught and how they exhibited. The original members set out to radicalise the art scene by providing artists access to affordable exhibition venues. The group embraced the whole spectrum of modern art in Britain at the time.

### The London Savage Club

The **London Savage Club** attracted many Australian expatriates. It had been formed in 1857 and members were drawn from the fields of art, literature, law, music, science, and drama. (In 1894 the Melbourne Savage Club, which modelled on the London Savage Club, opened.)

### The Camden Town Group

The **Camden Town Group** was established in 1911, shortly after Fry's first Post Impressionist exhibition. This group's choice of everyday subjects, their bold, anti-naturalistic colouring and interest in progressively simplifying forms,

presented a type of painting that was new and different. The Group was seen to occupy a comfortable middle ground between tradition and the truly avant-garde. Australian born artist **Henry Taylor Lamb** was a founder member of the Group in 1911, and then of the London Group in 1913.

## The Chelsea Art Club

In 1890 a group of artists formed the **Chelsea Art Club**. Key members included Whistler, Sargent, Orpen and Augustus John.

Numerous Australian artists joined the Chelsea Arts Club, such as Arthur Streeton, Tom Roberts, Fred Leist, John Longstaff, James Quinn, Coates, Will Dyson, Henry Fullwood, George Lambert and Will Ashton.

The Chelsea Arts Club served as a venue for artists to entertain and host visitors from “home”.



Frederick William Leist, *Chelsea club Ball*, 1914, Programme

In late 1902, Streeton wrote;

*“I belong to the Chelsea Arts Club now, & meet the artists – MacKenna says it’s about the most artistic club (speaking in the real sense) in England. ... They all seem to be here – McKenna, Longstaff, Mahony, Fullwood, Norman, Minns, Fox, Plataganet, Tudor St. George Tucker, Quinn, Coates, Bunny, Alston, K, Sonny Pole, other minor lights and your old friend and admirer Smike – within 100 yards of here – there must be 30 different studios”<sup>lxv</sup>.*



Arthur Streeton, *Frosty Noon*, 1901



Tom Roberts, *Thames Barges*, c1909



John Longstaff, *Untitled (Coastal View & Cliffside)*



James Quinn, *Wimbledon Park*



Will Dyson, *Going over the old ground with B..., Pozieres*, 1917



George Coates, *Will Dyson*, c1917



Henry A Fullwood, *Whistler's House, the Vale, Chelsea*



Will Ashton, *Barges on the River*



George Lambert, *Portrait group (The mother)*, 1907

Although he had built a strong reputation in Australia, **Arthur Streeton** didn't initially have the same success in England, and he made his money by selling his paintings back in Australia. However, in 1909 after travelling to Venice he began to exhibit regularly in London and Paris. He was elected as a member of the **Royal Society of British Artists** and **Royal Institute of Oil Painters** in 1910.

**Tom Roberts** had been contracted to paint the '*Opening of the First Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia by H.R.H. The Duke of Cornwall and York, May 9,*

1901' in 1901 and for the next two years he continued working on the 'Big Picture', before leaving Melbourne to return to London to finalise a number of portraits needed to complete it. Unfortunately, the two-year highly detailed commission seemed to have drained him of much of his inspiration and energy, and with the onset of eye trouble, he entered what has been described as his 'black period'.



Tom Roberts, *A Norfolk Barn*, 1908

Encouraged by Streeton, Roberts became particularly active in London's Australian expatriate artistic community and later became Vice-President of the **Chelsea Arts Club**.

His work '*A Norfolk Barn*', 1909, was exhibited at the **Royal Institute of Oil Painters** and in 1910, two of his works were exhibited at the **Royal Academy**, to which he had gained membership several years earlier.

However, Robert's style didn't evolve in the same way as it had from his earlier trip to England in the 1880s. With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, he enlisted with Streeton and other artist colleagues from the Club, becoming an orderly at the 3rd London General Hospital in Wandsworth. However, unlike Streeton, he didn't become a war artist.

With women excluded (or having limited rights) from most clubs, from the late 1800s a number of women only clubs were formed. Australian women were drawn to the Ladies' Empire, Imperial, Austral and the Lyceum Club.

## The Lyceum Club

The **Lyceum Club** for women opened in Piccadilly in 1904. Its aim was to "*focus the women in art, literature, science, medicine, music, public service, journalism, drama and other important directions*"<sup>lxvi</sup> and included gallery space for exhibitions. At the time it was a part of the feminism and suffragette movement, placing an emphasis on professional networking and international connections. Dora Meeson presented a lecture on *Ancient and Modern Art* there in 1921. (Not long after the London club opened, Australia also opened a number of Lyceum Clubs, with similar values and aims.)

## The Women's International Arts Club

The **Women's International Arts Club** exhibited at the gallery on numerous occasions and in 1930, Australian artists were invited to exhibit with this group.

## The Grafton Galleries

The Grafton Galleries (Grafton Gallery), where Roger Fry's two famous exhibitions of Post Impressionist works were held in 1910 and 1912, was also where the French art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel had shown the first major exhibition of Impressionist paintings in Britain in 1905. It was a popular gallery for group exhibitions.

In 1898 there had been a major exhibition of Australian art at the gallery – the [Exhibition of Australian Art in London](#). It featured 371 artworks created in Australia by 114 artists. Interestingly, although the exhibition featured many painting from the Heidelberg region, the drawings and watercolours of the exhibition's women artists, especially their Australian floral subjects, comprised almost half of the sales.

Other private galleries in London included the Baillie, Carfax, Chenil and Goupil.

## British Colonial Art Exhibition

The following article about the **British Colonial Art Exhibition** held in London in June 1902, indicates the number and diversity of Australians painting in Britain and France at the time. A 'special correspondent' reported in the South Australian Advertiser that;

*"The best pictures are by Australian and Canadian artists who have studied in Paris, and their styles are rather distinctively French than typically colonial. There are 156 paintings .... The Victorian contingent is most strongly represented, and the works of Rupert Bunny, Arthur Streeton, Hugh Ramsey, and Ambrose McC. Patterson make the most powerful appeal to the eye. George Coates has a portrait of his fiancée, Miss Dora Meeson, and she a somewhat Rembrandtesque portrait of a girl in red and black. E. Phillips Fox contributes one portrait, a girl in a white evening dress. Mr. B. E. Minns snows considerable humour in his "Old Reminiscences," a group of characteristic Chelsea pensioners. His other contribution is a long panel of Sydney Harbour which is also pictured by Mr. J. Hamilton Hammon. Percy Spence, who has a show of his own on in the Woodbury Gallery, sends a profile portrait of the late Sir Andrew Clarke, and A. H. Fullwood a landscape of Auckland Harbour on the occasion of the Ophir's arrival. The young Queenslander, R. J. Randall, and Miss Florence Fuller are perhaps most*

*Australian in feeling, and H. S. Hopwood's "Lighting Up" deserves a special word, South Australia is well represented by Miss Madge Cockburn's study of a young girl's head (the subtle modelling of which I heard praised by one of the English critics) and a bowl of yellow roses. Mrs. Arnold's portrait of her husband, Miss Ada Egan's "Roses," Mrs. Maude Wholshaw's and Miss J. L. Wilson's red gum blossoms, Mr. James Ashton's picture of a rolling surf, and Mr. J. W. Ashton's "Evening," Mr. R. Hayley Lever's "Winter Evening on the Seine." "Sunny Afternoon, Charenton," and "Making for the Fishing Grounds," are vigorous, and show the influence of his French training; Mr. E. W. Christmas has five pictures, which are among the most typically Australian in atmosphere and colouring"<sup>lxvii</sup>.*

## Artists Colonies in Cornwall

**Both Newlyn and St Ives** were popular artist colonies on the coast of Cornwall – many artists who painted there had travelled to Europe, exhibited in Paris and London and were members of the New English Art Club, so the area was a hub for the exchange of ideas and influences<sup>lxviii</sup>.

A significant early influence was French naturalist painter **Jules Bastien-Lepage**, who painted people and places in natural conditions. Although he spent most of his short career in France, Bastien-Lepage first visited London in 1879 when two of his portraits were included in the Royal Academy exhibition, and returned several times until 1882.



Jules Bastien-Lepage, *Marchande de fleurs à Londres*, 1882

He believed in 'truth to nature'. "*There is only one to be admired ... that is Nature... There is only one art and that is to reproduce Nature*"<sup>lxix</sup>. This philosophy was supported by the Newlyn colony, especially in its early years, and the coast of England proved to be a popular location to achieve this.



Stanhope Forbes, *Fish Sale on a Cornish Beach*, 1885



Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, *Blackberry Gathering*, c 1912

Elizabeth and Stanhope Forbes were key figures in the Newlyn School. Stanhope began his schooling in London, and then after studying in France, returned to England and spent his almost 70-year career in Newlyn. His 1885 *Fish Sale on a Cornish Beach* submission to the Royal Academy exhibition was his first major painting created in Newlyn and shows the influence of Bastien-Lepage.

Australian audiences had been introduced to the work of the Newlyn and St Ives artists through the *Anglo Australian Society of Artists* exhibitions held in the late 1880s and 1990s in Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney. Following these exhibitions Australian artists were drawn to the colonies of Newlyn and St Ives to experience artistic freedom and train and work alongside artists who were highly regarded in Art Academy circles<sup>lxx</sup>.

**George Bell** became associated with the Forbes and other artists, including Australian Will Ashton, during a visit to St Ives in 1907. Prior to this he'd travelled to France where he studied at the Académie Julian, Colarossi's and La Grande Chaumière. Bell left St Ives in 1908 to work in a studio in London and became a member of the *Modern Society of Portrait Painters*, painting portraits and interiors, in the tonalist realist manner he had been exploring during the previous few years. It was during this time that he saw the 1910 Post Impressionist exhibition. Bell's work was hung in the **Royal Academy** and he was a member of the **Chelsea Arts Club**.





George Bell, *Low Tide*, c1906



George Bell in his studio

He served as an official war artist at the end of the war, returning to Australia in 1920 where he started teaching in Melbourne, later opening an art school and forming the Contemporary Group of Melbourne.



George Bell, *Antoinette*

However, he returned to Europe for 16 months in 1934-35 after questioning his basic approach to painting. He studied drawing with **Iain Macnab**, became involved in the **New English Art Club**, and explored the writings and theories of Clive Bell and Roger Fry. On his return to Melbourne he became as a spokesperson for 'modern art' based on his studies in London.

**Emanuel Phillips Fox** first arrived in St Ives in 1890 after initially spending time in France. He was a founding member of the St Ives Art Club, which admitted women as well as men. (The club was initially proposed by Australian expat artist Louis Monro Grier.) In 1892 a *Table Talk* item recorded that Phillips Fox had;

*“Joined that famous new school of artists at St Ives whose object is to study art to nature, to reproduce on the canvas landscape and figures as nearly as possible as they seem, and not in the conventional style acquired from the recipe of school instructors”<sup>lxxi</sup>.*



Emmanuel Phillips Fox, *St Ives, Cornwall*, 1904



Emmanuel Phillips Fox, *Art Students*, 1895

This was an important time in his career, as the influences from this period were to inform his teaching style when he returned to Australia in 1892, and, together with Tudor St George Tucker, established a Melbourne School of Art. In 1894, when Australian Impressionism was at a high point, they conducted a summer outdoor school at Charterisville, near Eaglemont in Victoria, where they taught plein air painting.

Phillips Fox was awarded the **Gilby Bequest** in 1900 to paint Captain Cook's landing at Botany Bay. A condition of the bequest was that the work be produced in England, and Fox chose to revisit St Ives in 1901 to complete his work, *The landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay 1770*.

By 1903 he was exhibiting at the Royal Academy. In 1904 he completed *St Ives, Cornwall*, capturing the atmospheric qualities of the early morning and late evening views, that were strong elements in the works of many artists at St Ives.

It was during this second visit to St Ives that he met art English born artist **Ethel Carrick**. They were married in 1905.



David Davies, *St Ives*



David Davies, *Cornish village at sunset, c 1905*

**David Davies** was another painter associated with Australian Impressionism, working in Templestowe in Victoria from 1893. Prior to this, from 1890, he had spent several years in France and England, including at St Ives. He wrote, "*I could not keep my eyes off the sea and for a whole year painted nothing but seascapes*"<sup>lxxii</sup>.

In 1897 he returned overseas, living in and around Cornwall and Dieppe in France until his death in 1939.

Other Australians who spent time in Cornwall included Will Ashton, May Vale, Emma Minnie Boyd, Vida Lahey, William Osborne, Evelyn Chapman, Ethel Stephens, Richard Hayley Lever, Arthur Burgess, Charles Bryant, George Lambert and Charles Conder.

## France and Modernism

Paris around the turn on the century saw the construction of the Eiffel Tower, the Paris Métro, and the completion of the Paris Opera. Three lavish "universal expositions" in 1878, 1889 and 1900 brought millions of visitors to Paris to sample the latest innovations in commerce, art, and technology.



Montparnasse, c1900

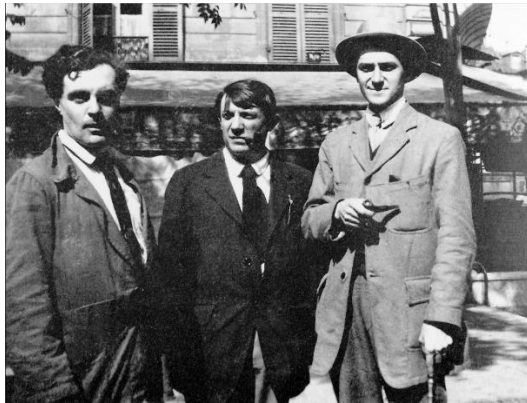
The city was a thriving centre of artistic activity that provided unparalleled conditions for the exchange of creative ideas during the first half of the 20th Century. Writers, philosophers and artists flocked to the neighbourhoods of Montmartre and later Montparnasse.

Paris was at the cutting edge of Modernism up until the second world war, with artists travelling from other European and overseas countries to form what became loosely known as the **École de Paris** - or the School of Paris.

Well known artists working in Paris around 1900 included (to name just a few) *Claude Monet, Pierre Auguste Renoir, Berthe Morisot, Edgar Degas, Paul Cézanne, Mary Cassatt, Georges Seurat, Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Henri de Toulouse - Latrec, Paul Signac, Susan Valadon, Henri Matisse, André Derain, Maurice de Vlaminck, Raoul Dufy, Émilie Charmy, Georges Braque, Pablo Picasso, Albert Gleizes, Jean Metzinger, Sonia Delauney, Robert Delaunay, Fernand Léger, Juan Gris, Marie Laurencin, Marie Vorobieff, Pierre Bonnard, Marc Chagall, Romaine Brooks and Amedeo Modigliani, James McNeil Whistler and John Singer Sargent*. These artists, in particular, were keen to develop new ways of looking at the world, and Australian artists would have seen their work at ateliers and galleries.

However, not all artists and art institutions saw themselves as part of the avant-garde. In both France and England academic conservatism continued to attract a large body of artists focused on traditional subjects and techniques. Many modern artists also drew inspiration from classically trained artists such as Velazquez, Rubens and Ingres.

After the horrors of World War I, there was also a revival of classical artistic techniques and subject matter (known as **Return to Order**). Many artists, some of whom had previously worked in avant-garde styles, sought to return to painting representational figures and calm, balanced compositions. For example, Pablo Picasso, who had been a leading figure in Cubism, began to paint large neo-classical works such *Woman in White*, 1923.



Amedeo Modigliani, Pablo Picasso and André Salmon, 1916, in front of the Café de La Rotonde



Pablo Picasso, *Woman in White*, 1923

## Life and Study in France

Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century a large number of European artists such as Renoir, Dufy, Valadon, Picasso, Dali, Mondrian, Monet, Picasso, Van Gogh, Matisse, Toulouse-Lautrec and Modigliani lived in the **Montmartre** section of Paris. The area was abuzz with cafes, cabarets and artist studios. However, after the outbreak of WWI many of the artists moved to the **Montparnasse** quarter on the left bank. The group of artists living there included Leger, Picasso, Cocteau, Chagall, Miro, Modigliani, Max Ernst, the Duchamps and many others.



Will Ashton, *Boulevard Montparnasse, Paris*



Cafe Dome, Montparnasse, c1928

As a large community of English speaking artists lived in this area it attracted a number of Australian artists who studied at the same ateliers (studios), frequented the same clubs and painted in the same artist colonies during the summer. However, unless artists had private means, living in Paris was difficult, where the cost of living was quite high. It was not unusual for artists to share accommodation and studios.



Bessie Davidson in her Montparnasse studio, 1913

## The Salons

By 1900 the official Paris Salon had ceased to exist and had been replaced by three major annual salons; [The Salon des Artistes Français](#) (known as the 'Old Salon'); the [Société Nationale de Beaux-Arts](#) (known as the Nationale or 'New Salon') and the [Salon des Indépendants](#). The New Salon showed the work of established artists, while the Salon des Indépendants accepted more radical art, without relying on a selection panel.

Successful private dealer galleries such as Durand-Ruel's and Georges Petit's promoted the Impressionists, with other dealers such as Julien 'Pere' Tanguy, Ambroise Vollard, Berte Weill and Bernheim-Jeune promoted new and upcoming artists.

## Art Schools

Partly because of the fee structure at art schools in France, which was often on a 'by session' basis, and partly because of the different styles of teaching, often in private ateliers, students tended to move between schools, and may have taken classes with several teachers at the same time.

Australian artists gravitated to the **Colarossi, Académie de la Grande Chaumiere, Académie Julian, Cormon's, and Atelier Delécluze**. These academies in particular were opened women and there were also more opportunities for women to exhibit their work than in London.

## Key influencers on Australian artists in France

Aside from viewing the works of European artists working in France at the time, teachers who were to have a primary influence on Australian artists in France included Jean-Paul Laurens, Albert Gleizes, André Lhote, René-Xavier Prinet, Lucien Simon, New Zealander Frances Hodgkins, James Abbott Whistler and Fernand Cormon. Australian artist John Peter Russell made a major impression on the artists who visited him at the Breton isle of Belle Île. Diego Velázquez from the 1600s also appears consistently in the literature as influencing artists interested in the Academic tradition.

## The Ecole des Beaux-Arts

The prestigious **Ecole des Beaux-Arts** was the leading educational institution of academic art in France. However, entry was made extremely difficult for foreigners, who had to sit a particularly difficult entrance examination in French.

Students were also granted the right to compete for the prestigious **Prix de Rome**, an annual scholarship awarded to promising young painters, sculptors or printmakers, which enabled them to study art for three to five years in Rome.

Between 1864 and 1904, more than 2,000 students received at least some of their art education through **Gérôme's** atelier at the **École des Beaux-Arts**. Places

in Gérôme's atelier were limited, keenly sought after and highly competitive. Only the very best students were admitted and aspirants considered it an honour to be selected.



Gerome's Studio



Studio at Ecole des Beaux-Arts

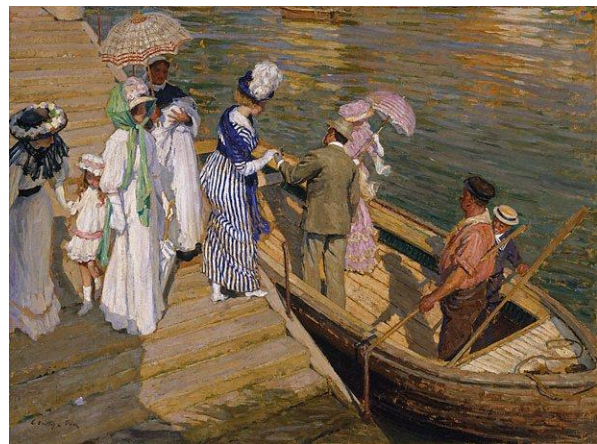
**Emanuel Phillips Fox** studied at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in 1887, where he received rigorous academic training. That summer he painted in plein air artists' communities at Étapes and Brittany and visited Giverny, developing an interest in Impressionist painting.

In 1906, during his second trip to France, Phillips Fox began exhibiting at the **Société Nationale de Beaux-Arts** in Paris, becoming a member of the **International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers**, an associate of the **Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts** in 1907 and its *sociétaire* in 1910.

He became known for his use of colour and light, combining an Impressionist style with academic training. He was interested in painting both portraits and landscapes but mainly painted elegant female figures and family groups.



Studio in Montparnasse



Emanuel Phillips Fox, *The Ferry*, c 1910



Couple Phillips Fox and Carrick lived in a prestigious block of purpose-built studios in Montparnasse, designed by art nouveau artist **Eugène Grasset** for successful artists and sculptors. The studios were equipped only with a cold tap, bare boards and a pot bellied stove, however, above them were comfortable apartments with fireplaces and a modern kitchen with piped hot water<sup>lxxiii</sup>.

While living in Paris Phillips Fox and Carrick travelled to Venice and northern Africa. Orientalist subjects were fashionable in Paris, and as Morocco was under French colonial rule, it prompted numerous artists including Carrick, Phillips Fox, Rix Nicholas, Davidson, Preston, and others to travel there to paint.



Ethel Carrick, *St Marks Venice*, 1907



Emanuel Phillips Fox, *The Grand Canal Venice*, c1906

Initially working in an Impressionist style, **Ethel Carrick** painted highly expressive colourful Post Impressionist works, capturing the movement and vibrancy of everyday life.

Carrick had become a member of the **Union Internationale des Beaux-Arts et des Lettres** in France and in 1911 she became *sociétaire* of the **Salon d'Automne**. She was also an associate of the **Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts** and prior to 1913 was the vice-president of the **International Union of Women Painters**.

Phillips Fox and Carrick sailed for Melbourne during 1913, with the outbreak of war looming. In 1915 Phillips Fox died of cancer, with Carrick continuing to promote his work in Australia before returning overseas, later settling semi-permanently in Sydney in the 1940s.

In 1928 she won the diploma of honour at the **International Exhibition of Bordeaux**.

**Max Meldrum** also travelled to France at the turn of the century, after winning the 1899 National Gallery travelling scholarship. He initially studied at **Académie**

**Colarossi** and at the Académie Julian under leading French academic history painter Jean-Paul Laurens, however, his primary interest was in artists such as Velazquez, Rembrandt and Corot and he withdrew from both ateliers.



Max Meldrum, *Picherit's Farm*, c1910

It was in Brittany that Meldrum developed his ideas on **tone** when painting laneways, avenues, embankments and the fields of the village of Pace.

*"I wanted to know the meaning of depictive art, and I went into a study of the art of the past, in order to find out its tradition and progress. I discovered that the whole tradition of depictive art was based on an ever-increasing knowledge of what we see. The study of the old masters gave me the courage to go and look at nature and study it at first hand"<sup>lxxiv</sup>.*

Returning to Melbourne in 1912 Meldrum began teaching, and developed a theory of painting he called the "*Scientific Order of Impressions*". Meldrum placed the utmost importance on the exact recording of tonal (not colour) relationships, arguing that tone alone would produce the sensation of planes, hold the subject matter within the picture plane, and create a unified sensation of light, atmosphere, space and distance<sup>lxxv</sup>.

In 1924, a number of Meldrum's students travelled to Europe, painting at various places on their way across Italy, Spain, France and England. The group included artists Justus Jorgensen, Lillian Smith, John Farmer, Polly Hurry, Colin Colahan and Archie Colquhoun. (Smith was a medical student, who also studied art for a short period of time.) Meldrum joined the group while they were painting in Cassis, a small French village near the Mediterranean coast. Some members of the group, including couple Justus Jorgensen and Lillian Smith, remained overseas for several years. Jorgensen was later to open an artists' community, Montsalvat, in Eltham in Melbourne, in 1934.

In London, **Rupert Bunny** had been introduced to the **Jean-Paul Laurens** while he had studied at St Johns Wood Art School, and in 1886 he enrolled at Laurens's atelier in Paris, where he studied until 1888. Between 1893 and 1907 he was also a frequent visitor to Étaples.



Rupert Bunny, *Descent from the Cross*, 1898

During the 1890's Bunny painted large-scale mythological and biblical subjects and pastoral scenes with his painting, *The Descent from the Cross*, 1898, being shown at the **Salon de la Société des Artistes Français**.

He also exhibited with British societies and galleries including the **Royal Academy**, the **Royal Society of British Artists**, the **Institute of Painters in Oil-Colours**, the **Fine Art Society**, and **Grafton galleries**.

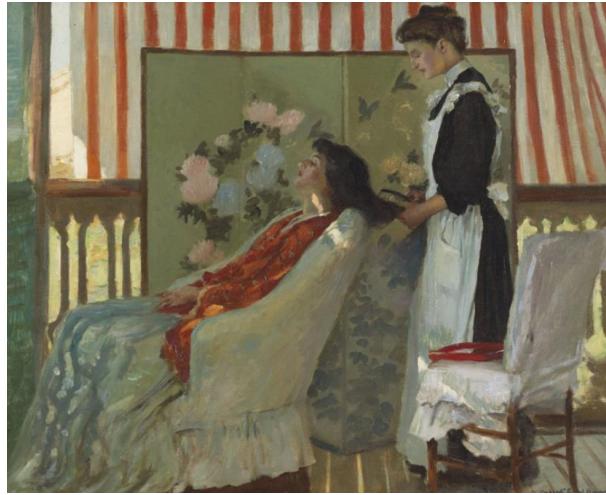
His works from this time reflect not only his academic training but also the imagined emotion of the French Symbolist painters, whose work was popular in Paris at this time.

Bunny married a French artist, **Jeanne Morel**, in 1902, whom he painted on numerous occasions.

Morel had received training in **Fine Arts at the Orphanage of Arts** and in 1884, when she was only 13, made her public debut at the Société des Artistes and subsequently exhibited at the **Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts**, working in oils, monotypes and embroideries. According to Susanna de Vries<sup>lxxvi</sup>, Morel, a fellow student of Bunny, taught him Impressionist techniques.



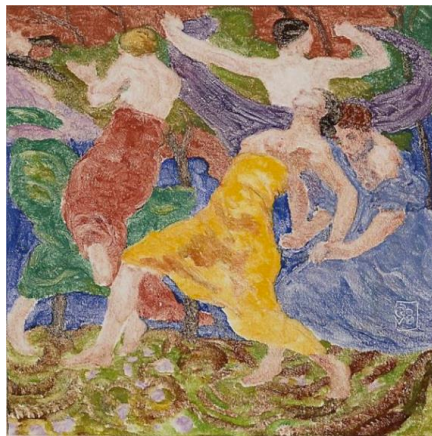
Rupert Bunny, *Portrait of Jeanne Morel*, c1902



Rupert Bunny, *Hair Drying*, 1902

It was from around the time of their marriage that Bunny demonstrated a more wide-ranging interest in representing modern life. Bunny's depictions of Jeanne and her friends typified the elegance and glamour of the belle époque. For a short period he offered classes in Paris at the **Atelier Blanche**, where his students included Marie Tuck, Bessie Davidson and Kathleen O'Conner.

From the 1920s his stylistic influences ranged from classical Greek art, through Puvis de Chavannes, Art Nouveau and Fauvism, to Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Bunny also returned to painting landscapes, especially lyrical views of the south of France<sup>lxxvii</sup>.



Rupert Bunny, *Fresque*, 1921



Rupert Bunny, *Blue Day, Bandol*, 1929

Bunny lived mainly in France until 1933, returning to Australia at the age of 68, shortly after the death of Morel in 1932.

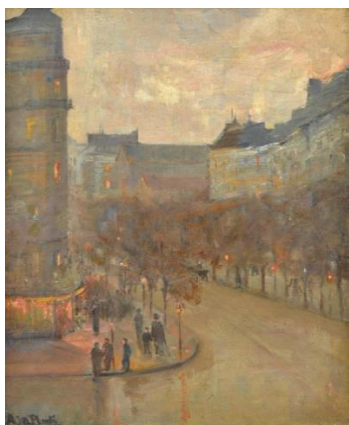
## The Académie Julian

The **Académie Julian** was regarded as a stepping stone to the prestigious **Ecole des Beaux-Arts**, with students being prepared for the entrance exams to the Ecole.



Académie Julian

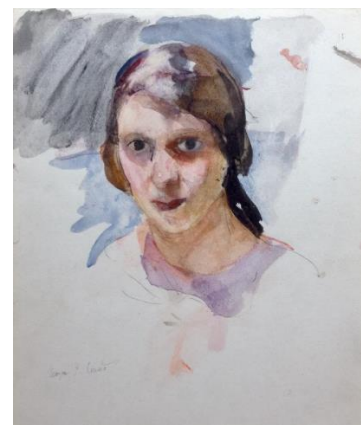
Opened in 1867, it initially consisted of a small room in Montmartre, where it offered students studies of live models, followed by two sessions of weekly “corrections” with reputed artists. At the heart of Académie Julian’s ethos was the *Atelier Libre* (free workshop) movement, which provided a space for artists to work from life models without the constraints of academic norms<sup>lxxviii</sup>. This movement, born out of the atelier’s progressive spirit, encouraged self-expression.



Ida May Plante, *The Boulevard, Montparnasse*, c1904



Evelyn Chapman, *European Street Scene*, 1916



George Coates, *Portrait of Dora Meeson*

In 1880, the director opened a course exclusively for women, initially with no more than 40 students. However, in 1885 the school had 400 female students, reaching 600 four years later. Within two decades there were nine new ateliers scattered around Paris, five of which were for male students and four for females<sup>lxxix</sup>.

The Académie held its own art competitions, and its students were also encouraged to submit works to the Paris Salon.



Jean-Paul Laurens, *The Last moments of Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico*, 1882

A leading teacher at the academy was history painter, **Jean-Paul Laurens**, who also taught at the **École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts** in Paris. Laurens had been influenced by the Academic Classicism of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, and taught the importance of simplicity, proportion, and restrained emotion. He was interested in large-scale mythological and biblical subjects.

Numerous Australian artists studied at the Académie Julian, including; *Ida May Plante, Septimus Power, Evelyn Chapman, Emanuel Phillips Fox, David Davies, James Quinn, Christina Asquith Baker, Ambrose Paterson and Hans Heysen.*



Hans Heysen, *The Bridge over the River Seine, Paris, 1901*

**Agnes Goodsir** travelled to France in 1900 where she enrolled at the Académie Delécluze, the Académie Colarossi and the Académie Julian. Her works were featured in several salons in Paris, gaining her significant attention and resulting in a steady flow of commissions. Her self portrait, painted shortly after she arrived in Paris, reflects the dark tones used by Jean-Paul Laurens, and she was twice placed 1st in Composition.

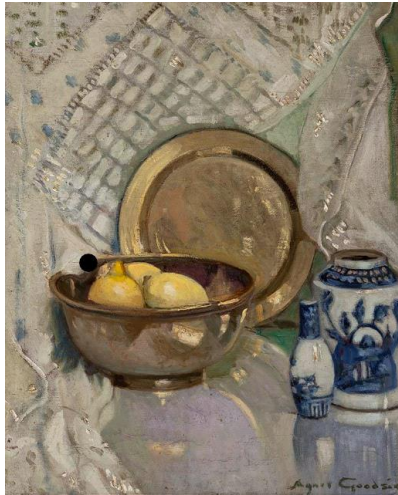


Agnes Goodsir, *Self Portrait, 1900*



Agnes Goodsir, *Portrait of Sunday Baillieu Quinn, 1929* (later known as Sunday Reed)

Goodsir moved to London (where she also exhibited at the Royal Academy) prior to the onset of WWI. Resettling in Paris in 1921, she made her home on the Left Bank of Paris, frequently travelling to London.



Agnes Goodsir, *Still Life: Study of Lemons*, c1930



Agnes Goodsir, *The Letter*, 1926

In 1926, Goodsir, who was one of only a few Australians who were made a member of France's Société Nationale des Beaux Arts, quickly carved a reputation for her still-life painting and portraits, and her sitters included, Benito Mussolini, Bertrand Russell, Banjo Patterson, Dame Nellie Melba and Sunday Reed.

In 1926 she completed *The Letter*, the same year she was invited to become a member of the Société. It is believed the figure in this painting is of her companion Rachel Dunn.

By the late 1920's her palette had softened, and by the 1930s she was painting still life compositions as her health deteriorated.

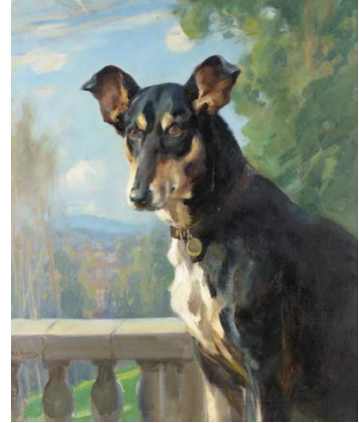
**Septimus Power** studied at the Académie from 1905-07, where he further developed his love of painting animals, especially horses. He later moved to London, where he indulged his passion for animal painting with commissions from wealthy English patrons, regularly exhibiting at the **Royal Academy**. In 1915 the Australian government invited him to become an official war artist<sup>lxxx</sup>. The artist Max Middleton described his style;

*"It was based on three points. First, his diligent study of human and animal anatomy and his keen eye for the tones and colours of nature. Secondly, his ability to combine human and animal figures with the landscape and create striking compositions. And, perhaps, the most important of all, his talent for creating a feeling of movement and drama"*<sup>lxxxi</sup>.





Septimus Power, *End of the Day*, 1921



Septimus Power, *Portrait of Tallulah, a Smooth Collie*

In 1927 the Commonwealth selected Power to depict the opening of Parliament in the new Commonwealth building in Canberra.

**Evelyn Chapman** initially trained in Sydney under Dattilo-Rubbo, together with fellow students Grace Cossington Smith and Norah Simpson. She moved to Europe with her family in 1911 and attended the Académie Julian in Paris, where she received classical training in life drawing.



Evelyn Chapman, *Girl with a Red Hat*, c1918

When war broke out in 1914, the family moved to London and Chapman spent time in the artists' colony at St Ives in Cornwall. She began painting vivid works in tempera and oil, demonstrating her assimilation of Post Impressionist techniques.



Evelyn Chapman, 1918



Evelyn Chapman,  
*Stone Houses, St Ives,*  
1915



Evelyn Chapman, *Old Trench, French  
Battlefield,* 1919

In early 1919, together with her father who was a member of the New Zealand War Graves Commission, Chapman visited the area near Villers-Bretonneux in France, where many Australian and New Zealand soldiers had lost their lives. She became the first Australian female artist to depict the devastated battlefields, towns and churches of the western front. Chapman remained overseas, only returning to Australia for a visit in 1960.

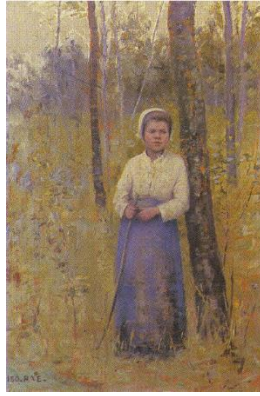
## The Académie Colarossi

**The Académie Colarossi**, which had been established in the 1880s, was one of the first professional art schools in Montparnasse. It was also one of the first art schools to admit both genders and in mixed classes, and it therefore became very popular with students from across the globe.



Académie Colarossi

The teachers included **James Abbott Whistler** and the sculptor **Auguste Rodin** and among the many students were **Paul Gauguin**, **Alberto Giacometti** and **Amedeo Modigliani**. Australians Ambrose Patterson, George Lambert, Hugh Ramsay and Agnes Goodsir attended there around the turn of the century and Bessie Davis and Margaret Preston from 1904. Jessie Traill enrolled for a term and in 1909 her etchings were hung at the **Salon de la Société des Artistes Français**.



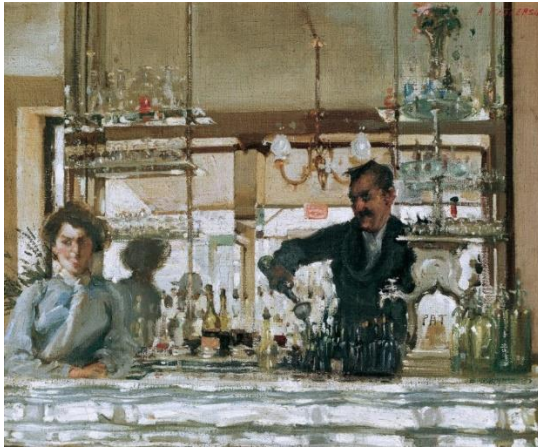
Iso Rae, *In the Woods*,  
1892

One of the artists to move to France before the turn of the century was **Iso Rae**, who travelled with her sister and mother in 1887. Initially living in Paris, and studying at Colarossi's, she probably also studied at the private school run by the American painter, Henry Mosler. She exhibited widely – at the **Salon des Artistes Français** and the **Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts**, and with the **Royal Society of British Artists** and the **Society of Oil Painters** in London, where she achieved considerable success<sup>lxxxii</sup>.

**Ambrose Patterson** first travelled to Europe from 1898 – 1899, and again from 1901 – 1910. He studied at Colarossi's with Lucien Simon, André Lhote and Maxime Maufra at Whistler's **Academy Carmen**, the **Ecole des Beaux-Arts**, the **Atelier Delécluze** and with French history painter Jean-Paul Laurens.

His early paintings from Paris reflect his academic realist training but he quickly developed an interest in Impressionism<sup>lxxxiii</sup>. In his later works Patterson experimented with Cubism and elements of Abstraction.

Patterson was related to Nellie Melba by marriage, and through her influence and patronage, he continued his studies with John Singer Sargent. He exhibited regularly at the **Salon d'Automne**, where he was elected a sociétaire in 1904. He also exhibited at the **Société Nationale de Beaux-Arts** and the **Salon des Independants**. Patterson had five works included at 1905 Paris Salon which featured the works Henri Matisse and other Fauvists<sup>lxxxiv</sup>.



Ambrose Patterson, *Le Bar, St. Jacques, Paris, c1904*



Ambrose Patterson, *Good Friday Procession, Madrid, 1906*

Patterson was also successful in England – exhibiting at the **Royal Academy** in 1904, and at the **Baillie Gallery** with Frank Brangwyn.

He taught in Paris and Brittany and travelled and worked in Ireland, Spain and Italy. After leaving France in 1910 Patterson returned to Australia for a short time before migrating to the US, eventually teaching and lecturing at the University of Washington Art School. He became internationally recognised as both a painter and printmaker.

While living in Paris, Patterson had shared a studio with **Hugh Ramsay**. Primarily a portraitist, Ramsay had arrived in London in 1900, visiting Scotland and seeing the works of Whistler at the National Gallery of Scotland, and then later Sargent, whose work influenced him greatly.



Hugh Ramsay's studio at Boulevard St Jacques, Paris



Hugh Ramsay, *A student of the Latin Quarter, 1901*

Ramsay lived in Paris for 15 months from 1901. He not only studied at Colarossi's but also paid frequent visits to the Louvre where he was influenced by the old masters such as Velasquez (known as the master of tonal values), Rembrandt and Ribera.



John Singer Sargent, *Lady Helen Vincent, Viscountess d'Abernon*, 1904



James McNeill Whistler, *Symphony in White, No. 1 The White Girl*, 1861-2



Diego Velázquez, *The Waterseller of Seville*, c1620

Ramsay wrote to Professor Baldwin Spencer;

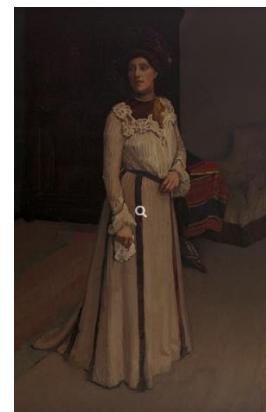
*"I am quite settled down now in Paris to hard work, and what a grand place it is to work in. You simply get drawn into the swim. I am working at Colarossi's Atelier, taking Mr Longstaff's advice. Start in the morning here at 8 and work until 12, and then again at night from 7 till 10...I've had some good criticisms at Colarossi's which included some slatings that I thoroughly deserved, and which have done me a lot of good."*<sup>lxxxv</sup>



Hugh Ramsay, *Jeanne*, 1901



Hugh Ramsay, *Still life - books, mask and lamp*, 1902



Hugh Ramsay, *A lady of Cleveland, U.S.A.*, 1902

His second year in Paris brought phenomenal success when four of his paintings were included in the **Société Nationale de Beaux-Arts** – *Jeanne*; *A Lady of*

Cleveland, U.S.A.; René Puaux and *Still Life - Books, Mask and Lamp*. This was an unprecedented honour for an Australian artist. The paintings were displayed favourably alongside work by artists such as Sargent, Sickert and Whistler. As he wrote to his father on 28 March 1902;

*“I’ve had 4 pictures accepted by the Salon. Just fancy 4 when one would have made me feel lucky & quite content ... It’s a rather extraordinary thing, so I’m told, as they seldom accept more than 2 even from experienced and recognised men, let alone a young fellow like myself, practically exhibiting for the first time...”*<sup>lxxxvi</sup>

Through Patterson, Ramsay came to know Dame Nellie Melba and she asked him to undertake her portrait, but due to ill health he was unable to complete the commission.

Unfortunately, Ramsay was to die at the age of 28 from tuberculosis, just four years after returning home to Australia in 1902.

In 1910, highly successful New Zealand artist **Frances Hodgkins** became the first woman tutor of any nationality at Colarossi’s, teaching watercolour. Hodgkins often travelled to Australia, and in 1908 she had shared first prize in the Australian section of women's art at the **Franco-British Exhibition** with Thea Proctor, before returning to Europe to train and teach.



Frances Hodgkins at her easel



Frances Hodgkins, *The Window Seat*, 1908 (Franco-British Exhibition)

At Colarossi’s she had a “clear understanding of what she was seeking to achieve in her work, ... her paintings from this period gradually move from being purely representational to her own individual form of impressionism”<sup>lxxxvii</sup>.

Until about 1928 her subject matter was primarily women and children, street and harbour scenes. Colour remained all-important and with her muted subtle harmonies Hodgkins became one of the most remarkable colourists of her time. Her work later became more abstract, with simplified forms and surfaces enriched with patterning<sup>lxxxviii</sup>.



Frances Hodgkins, *Still Life*, c1925



Frances Hodgkins, *Atelier*, c1927

In 1911 she opened the **Frances Hodgkins School of Watercolour Painting** in Paris and also taught at the French seaside town of Concarneau.



Frances Hodgkins sketching at Concarneau, Brittany, August 1910



Vida Lahey, *Bruges*, c1914

In 1914, Hodgkins moved to St Ives in Cornwall where she held summer classes, teaching artists such as **Vida Lahey**, who was also to become known as a great colourist. Hodgkins taught in both France and England between 1921 and 1927.

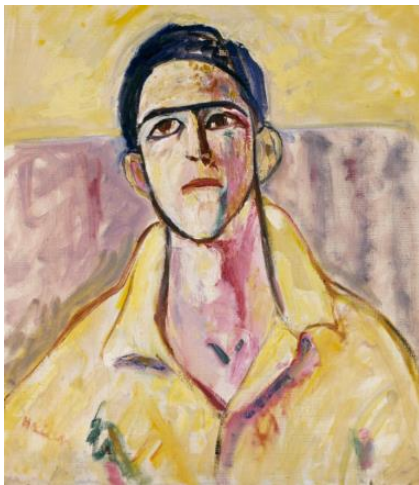


Kathleen O'Connor, *Still Life with Lamp*, c.1921-1928



Ambrose Hallen, *Beside the Red Cliff, Collioure*, 1927

Amongst many others, her students included Australians **Ambrose Hallen** and Bessie Gibson in around 1910. At the age of 19, Hallen had moved France, where he became familiar with artists such as Amedeo Modigliani, Henri Matisse and John Peter Russell, who clearly also had an influence on his style. Hallen lived in France for 30 years returning to Melbourne in the 1930s, where he taught painting.



Ambrose Hallen, *Laurie Thomas*, 1939



Amedeo Modigliani, *Suzanne Valadon*

**Bessie Gibson**, who settled in Montparnasse in Paris in 1906, also trained under Claudio Castelucho (who also taught Kathleen O'Connor) at Académie de la Grande Chaumière, and studied miniature painting with Mademoiselle Debillemont-Chardon.





Bessie Gibson, *Pont Neuf*

From 1913 Gibson exhibited almost annually at either the **Société des Artistes Français** or the **Salon d'Automnes** until 1939. She won an honourable mention from the former in 1924 and a bronze medal at the **International Exposition for Miniatures** in 1937<sup>lxxxix</sup>.

In 1939, just prior to the war, Gibson moved to England, not returning to Brisbane permanently until 1947.

Another important Australian figure studying at Académie Colarossi was **Edith Fry**. Fry was a strong supporter of Australian artists overseas. She had studied art in Sydney and subsequently went to Paris for further study, including a stint at Colarossi's. In 1924 she organised the *Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture by Australian Artists in Europe* at the **Faculty of Arts Gallery**, London.

Following the success of her 1924 exhibition, Fry founded the **Australian Artists in Europe** group, which included approximately fifty Australian (and a few New Zealand) expatriate artists who had established their career in London or Paris, including Roy De Maistre, Ethel Carrick, Janet Cumbrae Stewart, George Coates, Fred Leist and Dora Meeson<sup>xc</sup>.

Fry was also a founder of the **Panton Arts Club** in 1924, which held exhibitions and literary events in London, and edited the *Panton Magazine*.

She regularly wrote newspaper articles, informing an Australian audience of the successes and activities of Australian artists overseas. She contributed occasional articles to magazines such as *Studio*, *Connoisseur*, *Drawing and Design* and *Art in Australia*<sup>xc</sup>.

Fry was consistently critical of the Australian government policy that imposed excessive duties on paintings imported into Australia, even by its own artists. She argued that expatriates were discouraged from returning and exhibiting, and artists living in Australia tended towards self-complacency because the duties did not impact them.

*“It is a most lamentable consequence of the tax on pictures that the work now being produced by the group of Australian artists in Paris will probably never be seen by the public in their native land. No artist can face with equanimity the prospect of paying out 25 per cent on the entire value of an exhibition before one picture is sold. Although the five years' limit of absence allowed by the law has been extended to seven, even this term is ridiculously inadequate, as more than ten years are required for work to make its mark in London or Paris, and become a source of profit to the artist as well as of educative interest to students and artists at home. Before the war Mr Rupert Bunny, among others, often expressed a desire to revisit Australia, but even in those days the artist living abroad was sufficiently prohibited by the expense of the voyage and the heavy cost of framing and freight. To the immediate monetary risk must be added that of losing touch with a growing clientele in Europe, and the fear that work which had held its own in the most critical city of the old world might yet be too "new," might not be readily enough understood in Australia for sales to be certain.”<sup>xcii</sup>*

At the time of her death in 1950 Fry was editor of the *British Annual of Literature*.

## The Académie de la Grande Chaumiere

The **Académie de la Grande Chaumiere**, which opened in 1904, had close links with Colarossi's. It offered training in both painting and sculpture and was considerably flexible.

In 1923 the Australasian newspaper reported that;

*“Paris is a happy hunting ground for artists from all over the world ... Very fascinating, indeed, must be the quick sketching classes, at the Grand Chaumiere, where students of every nationality meet together every afternoon from two o'clock until half-past 7. The 'sittings' go on without intermission, one model after another posing for periods varying from two hours to five minutes. Many of the models are professional dancers or well-known chorus girls, famed for their exquisite posing at the ateliers. The classes are always crowded, and are run on an excellent system. By which every student buys a book of tickets [each ticket admitting to 1 sitting], and these tickets can be used just when and how the students like, a great advantage for visiting artists who may not be able to attend on consecutive days.”<sup>xciii</sup>*

Two key teachers at the school were artists **René-Xavier Prinet** and **Lucien Simon**.



René-Xavier Prinet and students



René-Xavier Prinet, *Le Peintre sur le motif en bord de mer* (The Artist working in the open air by the sea)

Originally a history and religious painter, **Prinet** became known for painting scenes of middle-class society - his tone becoming lighter as he moved to a more luminous style of painting. He frequently painted scenes of people at leisure, including parties, café scenes, quiet interiors, resting nudes, and bathers at the sea.



Lucien Simon, *Carnival in Venice*



**Simon** specialised in traditional provincial scenes, particularly of Brittany, using a warm and colourful palette. He was also an outstanding portraitist. By 1900, Simon's reputation was firmly established and he had won a gold medal at the Exposition Universelle.

He was one of the founding teachers at Académie de la Grande Chaumière in 1902. Simon also taught at the Académie Colarossi around the same time, as well as taking private students. He later taught at Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts from

1923 and elected to its Académie des Beaux-Arts in 1929, a position he held for 13 years.

During their first trip to Europe in 1904 both **Margaret Preston** and **Bessie Davidson** enrolled at the Grand Chaumiere, where they received instruction from Simon and Prinet, and within a year both artists had works accepted for the **Salon des Artistes Français**.

On their arrival in Europe they had been was exposed to German Secessionist painting in Munich, where Preston studied briefly at the **Munich Government Art School for Women**, reporting “*half of German art is mad and vicious, and a good deal is dull. I am glad to say that my work stands with the best of them*”<sup>xciv</sup>.

In Paris in 1905 she saw an exhibition of works by Matisse and the Fauves, and also works by Cézanne, Gauguin, Matisse, Picasso, Kandinsky, Delaunay, Derain, Vlaminck and Rouault. It was also at this time that she met Rupert Bunny.

Her academic tonal realist painting, *Nature morte (oignons)*, was exhibited in the 1905 **Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts**, and *Le chiffonnier (the ragman)* and *Nature morte (fleurs)* were exhibited at the **Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts** in 1906.

While her own work during this period remained conservative, she realised the potential of using pure colour and clear design. Returning to Adelaide she was interested in *the addition of design in colour to realism*. More flamboyant, painterly images resulted, which a local reviewer judged “*unequaled in Australia in the department of still life*”<sup>xcv</sup>.

It was the trip Preston made to England and France from 1912 until 1918 that was to have a greater impact on her style. In Paris, Japanese and Chinese art at the Musée Guimet taught her “*slowly that there is more than one vision in art*”<sup>xcvi</sup>.

From around this time her work also shows the influence of Art Deco design and the decorative cubism of Fernand Léger.



Margaret Preston, *Still life and flowers*, 1916-19

**Bessie Davidson** spent much of her life in Paris, living in Montparnasse from 1910 until her death in 1965. She studied at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière with Prinnet and Simon, both of whom were to become important friends and mentors. Davidson was also interested in the work of Vincent Van Gogh, Pierre Bonnard, Edouard Vuillard and Paul Cézanne<sup>xcvii</sup>.



Bessie Davidson's paint box with French coastal landscape, c1930s

She saw herself as belonging to the '*modern French Impressionist school*'<sup>xcviii</sup>. However, she was to later develop a more prominent sense of form and compositional structure allied to Paul Cézanne and Post Impressionism. Her biographer, Penelope Little, describes this 'Cézannesque' style, as characterising "*her most confident and productive years*"<sup>xcix</sup>.

Davidson developed an enviable artistic reputation and was able to support herself through sales of her work.



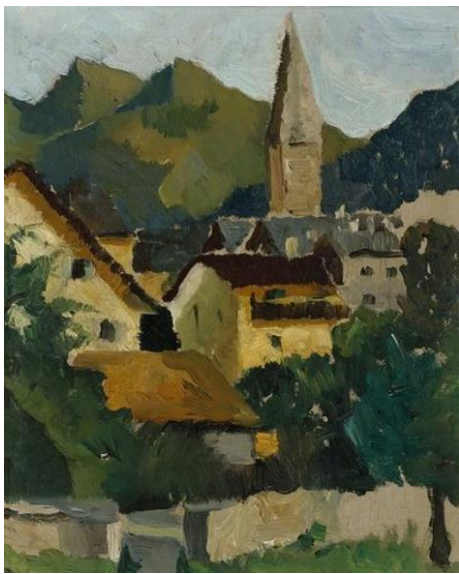
Bessie Davidson, *Jeune Femme Et Levrier*



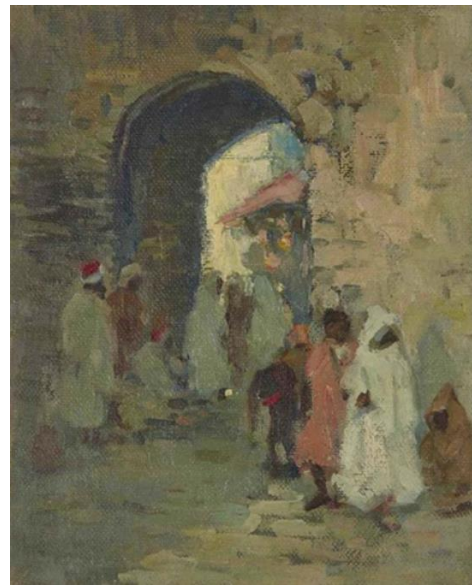
Bessie Davidson, *La Robe, Jaune*, 1931

In 1905, just year after her arrival in France, Davidson was exhibiting at the **Salon de la Société des Artistes Français**, and the year after that at the **Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts**.

In 1922 Davidson was the first Australian woman to be elected to the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, and she became a founding Vice-President of the **Femmes Artistes Modernes** in 1930, exhibiting at the **L'Exposition du Groupe Feminin** at the Petit Palais in 1938. She was also a founding member of the **Salon des Tuileries** and the **Société Nationale des Indépendants**.



Bessie Davidson, *Salzberg*



Bessie Davidson, *One of the Three Gates, Tangiers, Morocco*

In 1931 Davidson was made a **Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur**, the highest honour to be conferred by the French government for her contributions to French art and life (1931)<sup>c</sup>. In addition to her success in art, it's thought she contributed to the French resistance movement and she had also worked as a nurse during WWI.

Artists **Eveline Syme**, **Ethel Spowers** and **Ethel Stephens** studied at la Grande Chaumiere in 1922, with Syme later studying at the Academie Andre Lote in Montparnasse.

## Cormon's Atelier

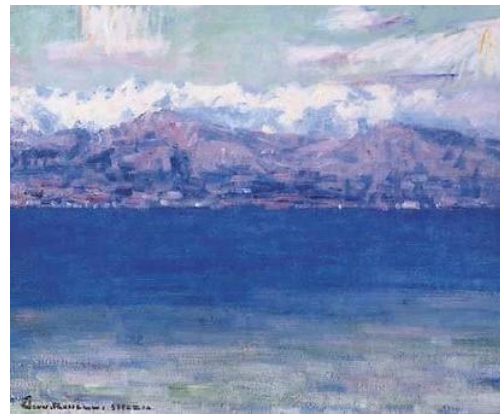
Academic artist **Fernand Cormon**, a painter of Oriental and Stone Age subjects and an occasional portraitist, ran a small atelier libre in Montmartre. Cormon had the reputation of being more broad-minded than most academic artists. The

students worked from the nude and the draped model and Cormon would come once a week to give advice and instruction.

Henry de Toulouse-Lautrec had been a head student and Emile Bernard and Vincent Van Gogh also studied there. **John Peter Russell** was at the studio from the mid 1880s, which is where he formed his friendship with Van Gogh. He also became friends with sculptor Auguste Rodin (later marrying Rodin's favourite model, Marianna Mattiocco), Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Louis Anquetin, Emile Bernard and Armand Guillaumin.



John Peter Russell, *Van Gogh*, 1886



John Peter Russell, *Le mer a Lar Spezia*, 1896

**Russell** had moved to Europe in the late 1870s, initially studying at the Slade in London, and painting in Cornwall, before moving to Paris. However, his most defining artistic period was his time at the Breton isle of Belle Île, which he visited several times between 1883 and 1886 before settling there in 1888. Russell was attracted to its wild landscape and movement of the water of the Atlantic Ocean.

It was in 1886 that he met Monet, who was perched on windswept clifftop painting a seascape. Monet's Impressionist style was important to Russell, who wrote to Tom Roberts;

*"As understood here [in Paris] it consists not of hasty sketches but in finished work in which the painting of colour and intention is kept. Monet for instance will put 10 or 12 sittings on a canvas"*<sup>ci</sup>.



John Peter Russell, *Antibes*, c1890-92

Russell had met Tom Roberts on a walking tour of Spain in 1883, and they had regularly corresponded from that time<sup>cii</sup>. In 1890 Russell crossed France in a horse-drawn cart, staying in Antibes near Nice on the coast during the winter, and working outdoors to capture the southern light. He explained to Roberts in a letter that year:

*"[I] have been chasing after broken colour... you see I now put the colours on as pure as I can without stirring them up on the palette, so that they are without the protective influence of the body white..."<sup>ciii</sup>*

His Impressionist style, and interest in pure colour, was a major influence on the young Henri Matisse, whom he met and tutored on Belle-Ile in the late 1890s. Matisse reportedly stated "*Russell was my teacher, and Russell explained colour theory to me*"<sup>civ</sup>.

After his wife's death in 1908, Russell left Belle-Ile. He returned to Australia in the early 1920s, painting several views of Sydney Harbour before his death in 1930. Thea Proctor, his niece, campaigned to have his work recognised as part of the art of Australia<sup>cv</sup>. Russell was a major influence on numerous significant European and Australian artists.

**John Longstaff** visited Belle-Ile and painted with Russell in 1889 and Ambrose Hallen stayed in 1905, when he first arrived in France.

On Russell's advice, Longstaff had also entered Cormon's Atelier, in late 1887. Longstaff had recently won the National Gallery of Victoria art school's first travelling scholarship with his painting, *Breaking the News*, a figure composition depicting the tragic aftermath of a mining accident.

Longstaff spent the summer of 1889 at Russell's chateau at Belle-Ile and temporarily lightened his palette and loosened his technique, before spending three months in Spain studying the art of Velasquez, whose dark tonalities



remained a major influence on his portraiture. Longstaff exhibited at the **Salon des Artistes Français** where a portrait of his wife and first child received a *Mention Honorable* in 1891. His large-scale work, *The Sirens*, which was painted under the terms of his scholarship, was exhibited at the 1892 Paris Salon, as well as at the Royal Academy in 1894, prior to Longstaff's return to Australia in 1895.



John Longstaff, *Farm, Belle Ile, c 1889*

In Melbourne in 1900, Longstaff was commissioned by J. F. Archibald, founder and editor of **The Bulletin**, to paint a portrait of poet and short story writer Henry Lawson. This painting prompted Archibald to establish the **Archibald Prize**, and Longstaff went on to win the prize five times, including with his Henry Lawson painting.

Longstaff returned to England in 1901 to undertake a commission from the National Gallery of Victoria to depict the explorers Burke and Wills, although it was not completed until 1907. He had almost immediate success as a portraitist, with his subjects including King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. Longstaff was appointed an official war artist and painted several portraits of officers in the military. He was also a regular exhibitor at the **Royal Academy** and the **Royal Society of Portrait Painters**<sup>cvi</sup>.



John Longstaff, *The Young Mother*, 1891



John Longstaff, *Lady in Grey*, 1890

However, after his permanent return to Australia in 1920, his work settled into what art historian Leigh Astbury calls a “*basically academic and conservative*” pattern<sup>cvi</sup>.

After his involvement with the Australian Impressionists, in 1890 **Charles Conder** left Australia for Europe, moving between France and England for the remainder of his life. In Paris he set up a studio in Montmartre and studied both at the **Académie Julian** and **Atelier Cormon**, mixing with leading artists and writers of the day, including Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, McNeill Whistler, Walter Sickert and Alfred Sisley.



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Portrait of Conder*, 1893



Charles Conder, *The Moulin Rouge*, 1890

He experimented with many styles, including art nouveau. Toulouse-Lautrec painted his portrait and featured him in at least two of his Moulin Rouge works.

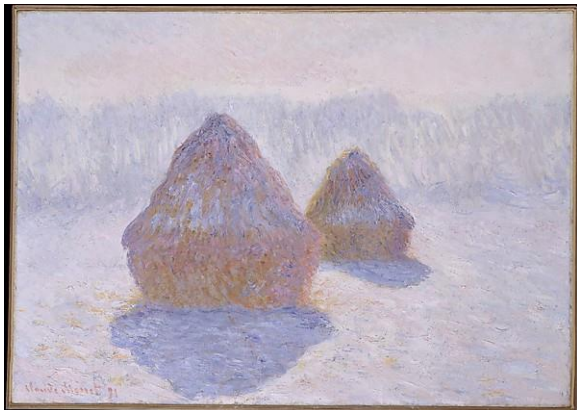


Eugène Boudin, *On the Beach, Trouville, 1887*



Charles Conder, *The Sands Newquay, 1906*

Conder often painted scenes of bathers and the cliffs around Dieppe on the coast of Normandy, and along the Siene, using transparent colours reminiscent of Eugène Boudin and inspired by Claude Monet's exhibition of haystack paintings. Conder was also known for his fan designs, creating beautiful watercolour on silk works.



Claude Monet, *Haystacks (Effect of Snow and Sun), 1891*



Charles Conder, *Hayfield, Giverny, France, 1894*

Unfortunately, Conder died in London in 1909, still in his early 40s.

## Atelier Delécluze

The Atelier Delécluze was regarded as one of the more reactionary, cutting-edge ateliers during its short life from the late 1880s until the mid 1920s.

**Hilda Rix Nicholas** was one highly successful artist who first studied there, as well as at the Académie Colarossi, where she would have come into contact with artists such as Matisse, with whom she shared models.



Hilda Rix Nicholas

In 1908 she began lessons with **Richard Miller**, one of the most successful American painters in France and a highly regarded teacher. Miller's preferred subject matter was the introspective young woman in a luxurious interior or secluded garden, and while his works were characterised by the loose brush stroke and pure colours of Impressionism, his figures were carefully drawn and grounded in academic practise<sup>cvi</sup>. His influence is clearly shown in Rix Nicholas' work. Miller's status as a painter flourished after 1910 through his association in Giverny with other American painters.



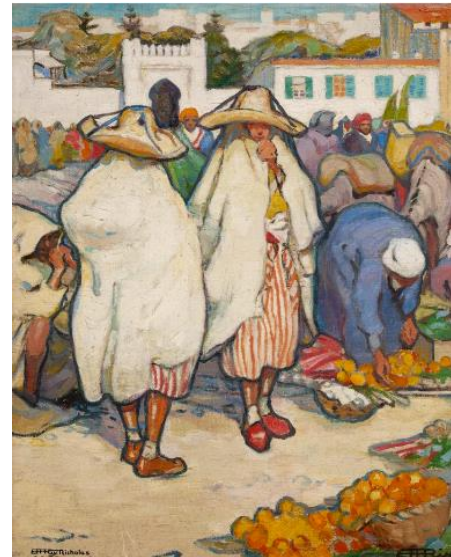
Richard Miller, *Tea Time*

Rix Nicholas also credits her lessons at **Académie de la Grande Chaumiere** with painter and printmaker Theophile Steinlen's croquis (quick sketch) classes as having a lasting influence on her own drawing. She described Steinlen as a;

*"brilliant draughtsman (who) gave correction of quick studies. The models posing for five minutes then a change of position. This was invaluable as one learned to catch the essentials in a few quick strokes of the pencil"*<sup>cix</sup>.



Hilda Rix Nicholas, *Retour de la Chasse (Return of the Hunter)*, 1911



Hilda Rix Nicholas, *Grande Marché, Tangier*, 1912

Early success came when her oil, *Retour de la Chasse*, was hung on the line (at eye level) at the **Salon des Artistes Français** in 1911. In 1913 she exhibited 35 works painted in Spain and Morocco at **La Société des Peintres Orientalistes Français**, and a further 11 works there in 1914, after a second visit to Morocco. Her work was purchased by the couturier **Leon Worth** and the **Gallery Luxembourg** bought her oil, *Le Grand Marché* of 1912.



Hilda Rix Nicholas, *The Studio, Paris*



Hilda Rix Nicholas, *Portrait*, c1912

Rix Nicholas had one studio in Paris and another at the artists' colony at Etaples.

In the 1920s, she divided her time between Australia and France, holding frequent exhibitions, and selling her work to the major galleries. She worked in bold colours and high values, with many of her best works being grand-scale portraits of French people, Australians or Moroccans.

From 1926 to 1928 Rix Nicholas' exhibition of *Paintings and Drawings of Australian Life and Landscape* toured provincial English galleries and her idealised images of the Australian 'country, its beauty and types of virile manhood', stimulated migration to Australia<sup>cx</sup>. As her first husband had died during the war, she considered herself a war widow artist and she also drew and painted portraits of returned Australian soldiers.

Rix Nicholas returned to Australia in 1926, continuing to paint the people and landscapes near Delegate in NSW.

Other artists who spent time at the Atelier Delécluze included Agnes Goodsir, Hugh Ramsey, Ambrose Patterson, Bessie Gibson and George Lambert.

## Cubist Art Ateliers

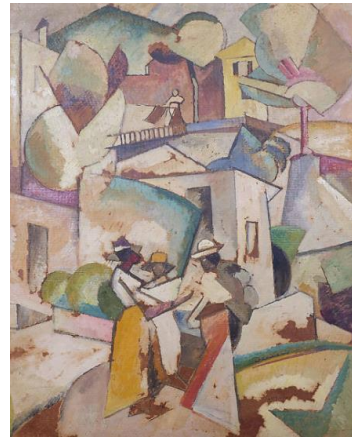
Several French artists taught Cubism to Australian artists, including **Albert Gleizes**, **André Lhote** and **Fernand Léger**, but they approached the principles of Cubism differently, although each was concerned with applying geometry and mathematics to composition.

## Albert Gleizes

**Albert Gleizes** was an early Cubist artist, and in collaboration with Jean Metzinger, wrote *Du cubisme*, published in 1912. His way of looking at composition was a key influence on Cubists such as Picasso and Braque.



Albert Gleizes, *Composition for Jazz*, 1915



Albert Gleizes, *Street Scene in Bermuda*, 1917

Gleizes saw art as fundamentally two dimensional – that this, paint laid down on a flat surface. Like other Cubists, he didn't want to create the illusion of three-dimensional space (through the use of techniques such as perspective, shadows etc), rather focusing on a painting being a self-sufficient entity in and of itself and not having to have a recognisable subject. Like a number of other artists of the time, he also considered the relationship of art to spiritualism.

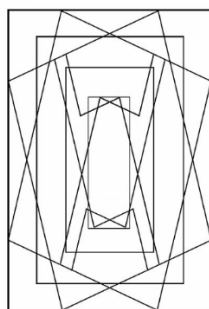


Fig. I

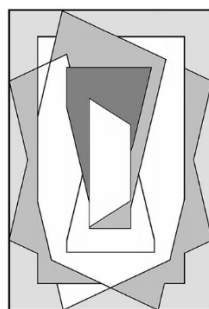


Fig. II

Albert Gleizes, Rotation and translation



Albert Gleizes, *Les Baigneuses (The Bathers)*, *Moderne de la Ville de Paris*, golden rectangle and Fibonacci spiral, 1912

Gleizes had been convinced of the inevitability of abstract art which he termed 'pure painting'. He believed that the "manipulation of shapes in the abstract was the ideal starting point ... those shapes only later being made to denote figures or objects or landscapes"<sup>cx1</sup>.



Henri Matisse, *Joy of Life*, 1905 - 06



Paul Cezanne, *Bathers*, 1894 - 1905

Gleizes had also discovered the effectiveness of the expressive use of colour, often applied in broad areas denoting flatness, from artists such as Cézanne, Gauguin and Matisse. Cézanne had been extremely interested in the science of optics and how the eye captures information, and in his later works, he was fragmenting and simplifying subject matter, often using geometric forms.

Gleizes was interested in balance, proportion and harmony, while at the same time creating sense of rhythm and movement through 'rotation'. He based his theories on the mathematical [Fibonacci sequence](#).

### André Lhote

**André Lhote** was also one of the original cubists and had exhibited in the 1911 **Salon des Indépendants** and in the 1912 **Salon de la Section d'Or**. His work remained essentially representational, inspired by Cézanne's later style, while also incorporating cubist techniques. His teaching emphasised composition, the simplification of forms into basic geometry and the use of colour to integrate forms<sup>cxiii</sup>. Lhote also drew inspiration from the classical tradition of old masters, particularly Renaissance art.



Andre Lhote, *July 14th in Avignon*, 1930



Andre Lhote, *Le Port de Bordeaux*, 1915



Lhote founded his art school in Paris in 1922, where he taught until his death in 1962. He advised his students:

*“You must be classic. Put yourselves before the model in a workmanlike spirit. See nothing in the nude, but the straight lines, the angles, the curves the tones cold and warm, the large, small, and medium sized dimensions, etc<sup>cxiii</sup> .... The more reduced your means will be, the more pure your interpretation will be”<sup>cxiv</sup>.*



*The staff and students of the Académie Lhote, Paris c.1927. Anne Dangar is directly below Lhote's elbow, with Grace Crowley in the first row below to her right. Dorrit Black joined them there in 1928.*

Aged 17, while on a visit to Italy to finish her schooling, Australian artist **Mary Cockburn Mercer** ran away to Paris, where she lived a Bohemian life in Montparnasse, mixing with Pablo Picasso and School of Paris artists Marc Chagall, Marie Laurencin, Jules Pascin and Kees van Dongen. Mercer studied cubist composition with Lhote in France during the 1920s and worked as his assistant and translator. This would have made her a crucial figure in his school, which attracted many non-French-speaking artists wanting to study modern art<sup>cxv</sup>.

She returned Melbourne in 1938, renting an apartment in Bourke Street, where she held art classes. Mercer exhibited her work with the Contemporary Art Society, where her 'decadent' nudes, which shocked audiences with their frank sexuality, were often hung behind the doors of the gallery.



Mary Cockburn Mercer, *Ballet*, c1939

**Dorrit Black** studied with André Lhote and later with Albert Gleizes at Moly-Sabata, Sablons. She was significant in bringing a form of Cubism to Sydney in late 1929, where she established the Modern Art Centre (MAC). It became a small but important centre of modernism, where she presented the most advanced ideas of modern art at that time in Sydney through her classes and exhibitions.

**Anne Dangar**, who was both a painter and ceramicist, had also travelled to France in early 1926 with **Grace Crowley**. Initially they went to Aix-en-Provence where Cézanne had lived and worked.

They then travelled to Paris where they had private lessons with **Ecole des Beaux-Arts** painter Louis Roger, and Dangar also took pottery classes with Henri Bernier in Viroflay, before they discovered the work of Lhote. Together with Dorrit Black, they attended the Académie Lhote in Montparnasse in 1927-28 and joined Lhote's 1928 summer school in landscape painting at Mirmande, la Drôme.

Crowley's work was transformed by Lhote's teaching as she applied his methods of simplifying forms into geometric shapes and using the proportions of the golden mean in her composition.



Grace Crowley, *Sailors and Models*, 1928

Her painting, *Sailors and models* c. 1928 was the result of an ambitious exercise set by Lhote. Crowley recalled that each morning for two weeks Lhote would pose models from which the students would make life drawings. These individual studies were then used as the basis for a multi-figure painting. Crowley's painting was constructed according to the geometry of the golden mean and each figure carefully placed along an internal axis, with the head of the standing sailor at the apex of a triangle.

Lhote's emphasis on pictorial construction was a revelation for Crowley;

*"For the first time I heard about dynamic symmetry and the section d'or – that it was necessary to make a PLAN for a painting of many figures as an architect does for a building and THEN construct your personages upon it".<sup>cxvi</sup>*

In early 1929 Grace Crowley had two paintings exhibited alongside Lhote, Lipshitz, Leger and other cubists at the **Salon des Artistes Français**. She was mentioned in several reviews with one American critic deeming her work equal to Lhote's.

By this time, Dangar was back in Australia, but returned shortly after to work with Gleizes at his artist community at Moly-Sabata, Sablons.

Little known **Mildred Lovatt**, an art instructor at Hobart Technical College, took leave of absence in 1929 to travel overseas. She enrolled at the **Westminster School of Art**, London, because *"it has the reputation of being the most up to date"*<sup>cxvii</sup> and then at the Académie Lhote in Paris, where she studied life drawing and made copious notes about Lhote's cubist theories. She visited many galleries in both London, Belgium, Italy and Paris, finding works by Gauguin *"bonza"* and Marie Laurencin *"delightful"*<sup>cxviii</sup>.

During the period from 1930-40 Lovett was recognised as “one of a very select group of teachers in Australia ... who had any sympathy or understanding for Cubism”. Her art department “was recognized as one of the most enlightened in Australia”.<sup>cxix</sup> Her students in Hobart and later in Sydney included Grace Crowley, Anne Dangar, Jean Bellette, Joseph Connor, Edith Holmes, Amie Kingston and Dorothy Stoner.

### The Académie Moderne

In 1924, together with **Purist** artist **Amédée Ozenfant**, **Fernand Léger** founded the **Académie Moderne** as a free art school. Both artists advocated an artistic fusion of classicism and modernity in their version of Cubism.

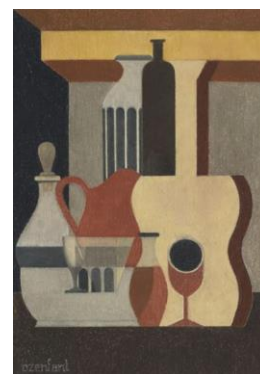
Léger’s style varied considerably from decade to decade as he experimented with different forms of representation and abstraction. He also worked in a variety of media and was involved in film, theatre and dance sets. Léger’s early influences had been Jean-Léon Gérôme and Paul Cezanne, changing the way in which he sought to depict three-dimensional forms on a two-dimensional surface, while still creating a sense of solidarity and monumentality.

Léger had exhibited with the **Salon Cubists**, a group of painters, sculptors, and critics who produced more colourful, legible, and publicly acceptable Cubist paintings, when compared to the works of artists such as Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso.

Léger spent the immediate postwar years developing the mechanical style he had begun to explore on the front lines of warfare as a means of suggesting the dynamic pace of a technologically driven modern age (as the Futurists had).



Fernand Léger, *Three Women*, 1921-22

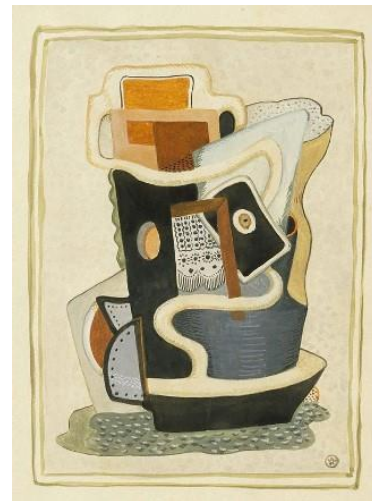


Amédée Ozenfant, *Guitare et architecture*, c1925

Like his colleague, **Amédée Ozenfant** was interested in a more simplified approach to Cubism. His works were executed with geometric clarity and mathematical accuracy, but closely resembled architectural blueprints of building details. He also applied his paint using smooth unbroken brushwork. Both artists wrote prolifically about modern art.



John Power, *Composition*, c1931



John Power, *Cubist Composition with nautical elements*

Another Australian artist known for preparing his paintings based on the golden ratio and geometric proportion of Classicism was **John Power**. After serving in the Royal Army Medical Corps as a physician, Power moved to Paris in 1920 where he entered the **Atelier Araújo**. He also studied with cubist Fernand Léger at the **Academie Moderne**. Power also came in contact with other pioneer artists associated with Cubism, De Stijl and Surrealism, including Picasso. Most prolific in the 1920s and 30s, Power was also a dedicated theorist, publishing *Eléments de la Construction Picturale* in 1932<sup>cxx</sup>.

## Artist colonies and communities

Particularly during summer, artists were attracted to artists' colonies and communities, mainly on the coast where it was cooler. They travelled to such areas as Sablons, situated on the River Rhône, Mirmande, Etaples, Brittany and Giverny.

### Giverny

Between 1885 and 1915 the village of **Giverny**, where Monet lived, attracted more than 350 artists – mostly Americans, although Phillips Fox visited for a short period around 1890.



Emanuel Phillips Fox, *Wheat Stacks*, c1920

## Concarneau

It was in **Concarneau**, in Brittany, that Bessie Davidson met Frances Hodgkins. Not far from Pont-Aven, Concarneau was a popular location for artists. They were attracted by the region's traditional and rural qualities, which were in sharp contrast to the rapid industrialisation then taking place in the cities of Europe.



Frances Hodgkins, *Tunny Boats in The Harbour, Concarneau* C.1910



Bessie Gibson, *Reflections*, c1910 -1912

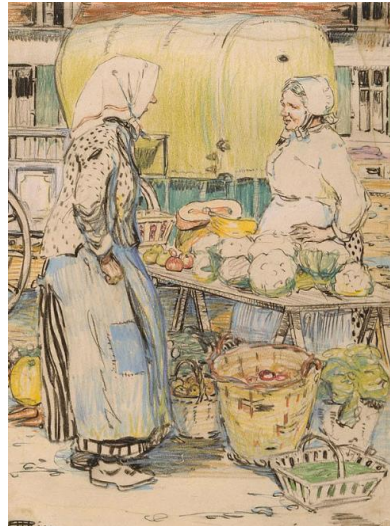
**Kathleen O'Connor** visited there with **Bessie Gibson** to study watercolour painting with Hodgkins in 1911. While there they also visited the studio of American marine painter Charles Fromuth, and O'Connor began to take painting lessons with him, meeting another American, Alexander Harrison, who had earlier taught Phillips Fox. She began exhibiting from this time at the **Salon A'utomne**.

## Étaples

Until the outbreak of WWI there were numerous Australians living and working in **Étaples**, including Iso and Alison Rae, Rupert Bunny, Marie Tuck, Arthur Baker Clack, Rix Nicholas, Conder, Philips Fox, Grace Joel, Eleanor Harrison, Alice Muskett and Winifred Honey. Ethel Carrick and Frances Hodgkins also spent time there.



Marie Tuck, *Etaples, France*, 1907



Hilda Rix Nicholas, *Fruit Market, Étaples*, c1910

The coastal port of Étaples, situated between Calais and Rouen, was known for its artistic views and cheap shopping and was a paradise for painters. (Only a hundred kilometres from England, the port was also perfect for a European base for the British army during the war.)



Rupert Bunny, *Boat Building, Étaples*, 1902

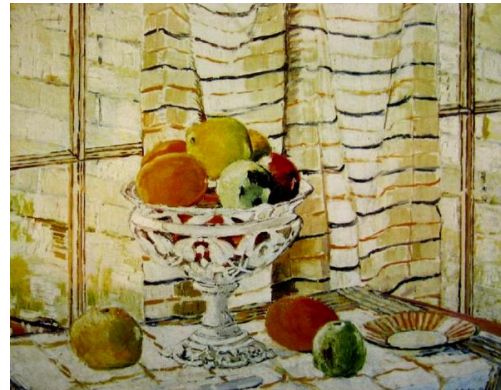
It had become an artist colony from around 1880, where French, Australian, New Zealand, American, Irish, and British painters congregated, often for short periods of time. **The Society of Friends of the Arts of Étapes** was established in 1892.

One of the artists, American Blanche McManus, wrote that *“the colony has been formed by buying up, or renting, the fishermen’s cottages at nominal prices and turning them into studios”*. One of her colleagues, British Jane Quigley, added that *“the artistic sense finds pleasure in its winding cobbled streets and mellow old houses and in the dark-complexioned southern looking people. There is constant work for the sketch book, especially on Monday, when the boats go off for several days, the whole family helping the men and boys to start”*.<sup>cxxi</sup>

In 1906 **Arthur Baker Clack** had travelled to Paris, where he was a pupil of Rupert Bunny and Jean-Paul Laurens, eventually focusing on landscape and still life painting. Baker Clack embraced Post Impressionism, finding inspiration from artists such as Cézanne and Seurat. His style demonstrates his skill with colour, paired with boldness and directness, which creates rich, toned and forceful work.



*Arthur Baker Clack, Studio in Etapes*



*Arthur Baker Clack, Still Life, Fruit*

Baker Clack exhibited both in London at the **Royal Academy**, and in Paris, subsequently becoming a sociétaire and jury member for the **Salon d'Automne** and a member of the **Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts**.





Arthur Baker Clack, *Sailing Yachts in a Mediterranean Sea*, c1920s



Arthur Baker Clack, *Boatyard*

After joining the art colony at Étapes in 1910, he chose to live in the region during and after WWI, although his home was bombed and he was forced to shelter on the beach at Paris Plage, near Etaples, until armistice was declared.

**Iso Rae** first visited Étapes in 1889, moving there permanently in 1892. Her painting *Pierrot*, painted in that year, was acquired by the Musée Quentovic in Étapes, making it possibly the first work by an Australian artist to be purchased by a French museum<sup>cxxii</sup>.



Iso Rae, *Rue de la Gare*, Nov 1918



Iso Rae, *Low Tide, Etaples*

She remained in Étapes for the duration of WWI, recording the war through approximately 200 pastel drawings (a number of which are now held at the Australian War Memorial). Rae stayed with her sister in Étapes until 1932. Two years later, alarmed by Hitler's rise to power in Germany, they moved to England, where Rae died, as a new war began, in 1940.



Iso Rae with British Soldiers



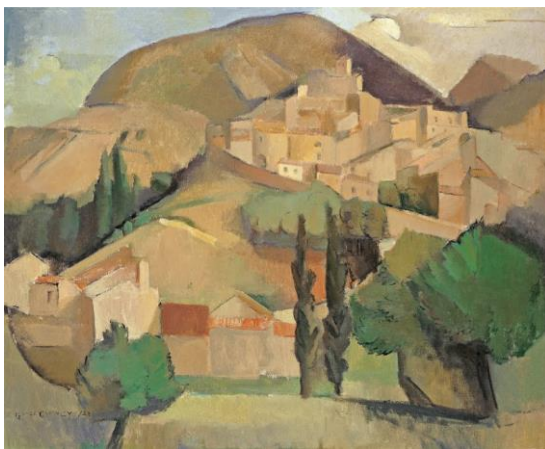
Janet Cumberae-Stewart, *Portrait of Jessie C. A. Traill* 1920

There were also numerous war artists commissioned by the Australian Government to capture scenes from the immense concentrations of Commonwealth reinforcement camps and hospitals at Étaples during WWI, including Will Dyson, Fred Leist and Streeton.

In nearby Rouen artist **Jessie Traill** worked at a military hospital. She was another female artist recording the war in France.

**George Bell** also worked in France and Belgium from late 1918 to 1919 as a war artist. His commission ended in December 1919 and he returned to Melbourne in 1920, where he continued to complete occasional commissions for the Australian War Memorial.

## Mirmande



Grace Crowley, *Mirmande*, 1928



Dorrit Black, *Mirmande*, 1928

From 1926 André Lhote encouraged his students to spend the summer at **Mirmande** in the south-east France in order to work together on studies of the countryside, setting up what he referred to as *The Fields Academy*. It attracted artists from numerous countries, contributing to an international reputation of a village that had previously almost been completely abandoned. Grace Crowley, Anne Dangar and Dorrit Black attended a summer school there in 1928.

## Moly-Sabata, Sablons

In Paris, **Dorrit Black** had studied with André Lhote and later with Albert Gleizes at **Moly-Sabata, Sablons**, south of Lyon, alongside the Rhône River. Moly-Sabata was established as a self-subsistence cooperative where artists were expected to earn their living by practicing various crafts.



Anne Dangar making pochoirs at Moly-Sabata, c 1931

**Anne Dangar** had returned to Australia around the end of 1928, but after reading *La peinture et ses lois*, a treatise published in 1924 by Gleizes, she felt challenged by his ideas and asked Crowley and Black to make contact with him in Paris. In early 1930 Dangar returned to France and joined his artists' colony of Moly-Sabata.



Anne Dangar, *Plate with Spirals*



Anne Dangar, *The Guitarist*, c1947

She was to spend much of the rest of her life there. Gleizes's demand that artists should return to the land – *le retour à la terre* – and work with the Earth's elemental materials – water, fire, earth and air – appealed to Dangar and she began to make pottery<sup>cxixiii</sup>. Dangar became respected as a teacher of drawing and design, and successfully exhibited her work in France, including the **Musée National d'Art Moderne**, Paris – also sending shipments of her pots to Australia.

## Conclusion

Prior to 1920, there was little art in Australia that could be called Modern. Ethel Carrick's small exhibition in 1908, paintings by Norah Simpson and Grace Cossington Smith, and the Colour in Art exhibitions were some of the few examples that showed Post Impressionist or Modernist tendencies.

Australian artists who travelled to Europe from the late 1800s were excited by the opportunities they found, and most moved around over time, travelling to several countries, visiting numerous galleries, attending different schools (often simultaneously) and becoming part of different artist or cultural communities.

They were exposed to the academic tradition, Impressionism, Post Impressionism and the more avant garde styles that were emerging around the turn of the century such as Futurism, Fauvism, Cubism and Abstraction. Various forms of Cubism, in particular, appeared to resonate with numerous Australian artists.

They were also exposed to new techniques in making art, such as different forms of printmaking, which led to a significant interest in printmaking as artists such as Dorrit Black and Margaret Preston returned to Australia.

Artists colonies, such as those in Cornwall and the coast of France, provided artists with the opportunity to work with, and learn from, their peers. The coastal towns also encouraged artists to focus on light and shade, and paint the every day life of ordinary people.

Through clubs, exhibitions, ateliers, and cafes, artists had direct relationships with key artists at the time, such as Matisse, Picasso, van Gogh, Modigliani, Toulouse-Lautrec and Monet.

Artists such as Dora Meeson took leadership roles, becoming key members of artist organisations. Others, such as John Peter Russell, Bessie Davidson and Anne Dangar, became long term members of their local community, contributing to the artistic development of others.

The skills of many artists were acknowledged through the awarding of honours, and the placement of their art in significant exhibitions. While some artists, such

as Bessie Davidson, were able to make a living from their artwork overseas, others relied on financial support through scholarships or from family. Unfortunately, import tariffs imposed in Australia at the time made it difficult for artists to make money by sending their work back to Australia.

Numerous artists contributed to the war effort, either serving directly on the front, or as nurses or in other support roles, and they captured their experiences through paintings, drawings and prints.

Several artists remained overseas for much of their life, returning only briefly to Australia. Many of those who returned set up schools or became teachers, or formed artist organisation where they could promote what had captured their imagination from their travels.

It was largely from this group that Modernism began to emerge, and take hold, in Australia from the late 1920s.

*Andrea Hope*

2024

<https://www.australianarthistory.com/>

## List of Australian artists in the UK and France

The list of Australian artists in the UK and France in the early part of the 20th Century is quite extensive, and includes;

*Iso Rae, Agnes Goodsir, Marie Tuck, Bessie Gibson, Dora Meeson, Alice Muskett, Ethel Carrick, Ada May Plante, Margaret Preston, Kathleen O'Conner, Bessie Davidson, Stella Bowen, Jessie Traill, Gladys Reynell, Vida Lahey, Mary Cockburn Mercer, Janet Cumbrae Stewart, Hilda Rex Nicholas, Ann Dangar, Evelyn Chapman, Grace Cowley, Dorrit Black, Stella Bowen, Madge Freeman, Constance Stokes, Moya Drying, Betty Quelhurst, Margaret Olley, Tom Roberts, Frederick McCubbin, Arthur Streeton, Emanuel Phillips Fox, Ethel Spowers, Eveline Syme, Max Meldrum, Thea Proctor, George Lambert, Violet Teague, Charles Conder, Rupert Bunny, George Bell, Horace Brodzky, Ivan Brooks, Charles Bryant, Arthur Burgess, Robert Campbell, Hilda Cholmondeley, Isaac Cohen, Norah Heysen, Archibald Colquhoun, Joseph Connor, Antonio Dattilo Rubbo, Mary Degen, William Dobell, Douglas Dundas, John Eldershaw, Albert Hanson, Clewin Harcourt, Weaver Hawkins, Hans Heysen, George Hyde-Pownall, Derwent Lees, Richard Hayley Lever, Kenneth MacQueen, James Quinin, James Quinn, Portia Geach, Hugh Ramsay, Lloyd Rees, Norah Simpson, Helen Stewart, Bess Tait, Dorathea Toovey, Roland Wakelin, John Watkins, Leslie Wilkie, Blamire Young, Bertha Merfield, Edith Alsop, Rah Fizelle, Daphne Mayo, Charles Wheeler, Will Ashton, Fred Leist, George Coates, Will Dyson, Ruby Lindsay, Florence Rodway, Norman Carter. B E Minns, Ambrose Patterson, Peter Purves Smith, James Cant, Charles David Bryant, Kathleen Sauerbier, Ambrose Hallen, Lilian Albert, Daisy Walder, Ethel Stephens, Gladys Reynell, Arthur Baker Clack, Grace Joel, Eleanor Harrison, Alice Muskett, Winifred Honey, Elioth Gruner, Beth Norris, Nutter Buzacott, Jean Appleton, Bertram McKennal, John Longstaff, Francis Mahony, A H Fullwood, Tudor St. George Tucker, Henry Taylor Lamb, Archibald Douglas (Archie) Colquhoun, Amalie Sarah Feild, Percy Spence, Mildred Lovett, Curzona Allport, Rah Fizelle, Max Meldrum, Miles Evergood, Maud Sherwood, Edith Fry, Edmund Wyly Grier, Louis Grier, David Davies, Janet Sophia Davies, Edith Hope, Daisy Rossi, Elma Roach, Helen Stewart, John Power, Eric Wilson, Jean Appleton, Polly Hurry, John Farmer, Justus Jorgensen, Jean Bellette, Violet Teague, Dora Wilson, Alison Rehfish, Gerald Francis Lewers. Margo Plate, Lily Allport, Theodora Cowan, Una Deerbon, Penleigh Boyd, Merric Boyd, Anne Alison Greene, Moyra Dyring, Sam Atyeo, John D Moore, Arthur d'Auvergne Boxall*

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