

1 September 2020

Adam Art Gallery presents unique version of Frances Hodgkins survey show

Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington’s Adam Art Gallery Te Pātaka Toi is giving Wellingtonians an opportunity to see a significant survey of work by Frances Hodgkins (1869–1947), one of the country’s most important expatriate artists of the twentieth century.

The presentation is the final leg of the major exhibition *Frances Hodgkins: European Journeys*, a retrospective developed and toured by Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. For its last outing, the exhibition has been reshaped to provide a unique experience for local audiences.

The Adam’s Director, Christina Barton, has worked closely with Auckland Art Gallery senior curator Mary Kisler to refine the selection of paintings and present them in the Adam’s distinctive spaces.



The exhibition also includes six works by Hodgkins lent by local collectors, several of which have not previously been on public view.

The show is supplemented by *19 Gallery*, a miniature gallery built to resemble a 1934 original and populated by the work of 19 contemporary New Zealand artists, and a newly commissioned 20-metre-long wall painting by artist Imogen Taylor and architect Sue Hillery.

The exhibition

Frances Hodgkins: European Journeys is the culmination of a significant international project to bring together works from New Zealand and around the world to explore the artist’s place in twentieth-century art. It draws from important public and private collections in the United

Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, presenting the most comprehensive picture of this trailblazing New Zealand artist to date.

Curated by Mary Kisler, the exhibition traces Hodgkins's creative and peripatetic life through France, Morocco and Spain to her final days in England, examining the influence of location on her development as a modernist painter and the notion of travel and journeying as sources of artistic inspiration.

The Adam Art Gallery presentation includes 65 works produced between 1901 and 1946: from early watercolour travel sketches of the French Riviera, Morocco and Venice, through to Hodgkins's first contact with modernism in Paris, and oil paintings from her later life in the UK.

Special to Wellington

Five paintings exclusive to the Adam presentation have been lent by local private collectors. In addition, there is the latest acquisition to the Victoria University of Wellington Art Collection, the 1931 oil painting *The White Chateau*, donated by Elsie and J.C. Beaglehole.

The Beaglehole family have had a long association with the University over three generations. J.C. Beaglehole was also responsible for purchasing *Kimmeridge Foreshore* in London in 1956, the earliest work by Hodgkins to be acquired for the collection and also in the exhibition.

"We are delighted to receive this important gift," says Christina Barton. "It's a very fine example of Hodgkins's oil paintings at that stage in her career. It's beginning to demonstrate the fluid style she developed in her later works that gave her an entree to the British modern scene and saw her championed by artists of a much younger generation."

Frances Hodgkins

Born in Dunedin, Frances Hodgkins left for Europe in 1901 as a 32-year old single woman who wanted to expand her horizons and encounter the art of the 'moderns'. Facing financial hardship, critical setbacks, homesickness and ill-health, she nevertheless forged a place for herself in the art scene of her times. By the late 1920s, she had become a leading figure within British modernism, exhibiting with important artists such as Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore.

19 Gallery

This miniature gallery featuring small-scale works by 19 contemporary New Zealand artists was made in 2019 to accompany the exhibition and first featured in a display case at Auckland Art Gallery. It is closely modelled on *34 Gallery*, a project developed in 1934 featuring 34 works by UK-based artists, two of which were by Hodgkins.

Sculptors, painters, textile and ceramic artists were invited by Mary Kisler and Auckland Art Gallery principal conservator Sarah Hillary to respond to Hodgkins's work for this new version.

Double Portrait by Imogen Taylor and Sue Hillery

Imogen Taylor's and Sue Hillery's wall painting repurposes the forms and colours of Hodgkins's paintings, using components from two compositions, *Double Portrait (Friends)* (1922) and *Wings over Water* (1931–2).

"We were particularly interested in *Double Portrait* [not in the exhibition] because it depicts Hannah Ritchie and Jane Saunders, an openly lesbian couple incredibly supportive of Hodgkins throughout her life. This is the third in a series of wall paintings my partner Sue and I have made in response to Hodgkins's work. The series not only serves as a homage to

the artist but also allows us an opportunity to develop our own collaborative painterly language for envisioning queer perspectives,” says Taylor, who was the 2019 Frances Hodgkins Fellow at the University of Otago.

With Taylor’s and Hillery’s painting, says Adam curator Stephen Cleland, “We’ve added another work to the line-up of contemporary artists invited to respond to Hodgkins’s work. But we’ve gone in the opposite direction to the miniature *19 Gallery*, allowing this artist and architect duo free rein to fill our foyer with their composition.”

Image: Frances Hodgkins, *Red Jug*, 1931, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1982.

Frances Hodgkins: European Journeys
19 Gallery
Imogen Taylor and Sue Hillery: Double Portrait
Adam Art Gallery Te Pātaka Toi
Gate 3, Kelburn Parade
Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington
Tuesday–Sunday, 11 am–5 pm
5 September–13 December 2020

For more information, contact Stephen Cleland, Curator, stephen.cleland@vuw.ac.nz or 04 463 5229.

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