

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Flute players c.1933

pencil

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

gift of Angus Wilson and Odo Cross, 1939

1933 was to prove one of the most productive years in Hodgkins' career. She had a contract with the Lefevre Gallery, and being assured of an income, she undertook an ambitious project of working on Ibiza, in Spain's Balearic Islands. Here Hodgkins continues her double portrait theme, flute-playing being a traditional hobby of young people in the region. The drawing is on a wove machine-made paper produced in the Auvergne by Canson & Montgolfier, one of the oldest papermaking families in France.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Untitled

pencil on paper
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Wings over water 1931–32

pencil on paper
Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

Although clearly the drawing for the Tate painting in the exhibition, *Wings over water* is a highly skilled, finished work in its own right. Patterning and detail, later omitted in the painting, are delightfully inscribed in the drawing with different grades of pencil used for outlining, shading and smudging. Hodgkins was greatly attracted to the parrot owned by her landlady, and he also featured in a further painting with the same name (sometimes called *Wings on Water*) at the Leeds City Art Gallery.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Still life in landscape, Bodinnick, Cornwall 1931–32

charcoal and pencil on paper

Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

Hodgkins often carried out drawings and watercolour sketches in front of the subject and then reworked them in oil in the studio. This drawing has close associations with the painting *Green jug and jade sea*, with its potted cyclamen on a table and view over a courtyard to the sea. In the drawing, the artist has used the different tonalities and densities of pencil and charcoal to create a sense of texture and space.

Frances HODGKINS

(1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Decorative motif c.1934–35

oil on canvas

Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

Lilies were a particular favourite in a much wider range of her still life works, but they also feature in her still life/self portraits. She delighted in glass bird Christmas decorations, which featured in at least two other of her paintings. After her death, friends helped clear Hodgkins' studio, and among the detritus were 'pathetic scraps of pink ribbon, feathers, lots of old rubbish and a high heeled shoe which appears in some of her pictures'. Although at the time Catherine West found the objects sad and tawdry, in Hodgkins' self-portrait/still lifes they are transformed into witty and personal signifiers of self.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Still life in a landscape c.1929

oil on canvas
Parliamentary Collection, Wellington

By dabbing with a loaded brush, Hodgkins has created an active surface texture very similar to other works made when she was staying near Haywards Heath in the summer of 1929. Although the final treatment of the vase differs, the composition of the flowers is remarkably similar to Auckland's pencil drawing, (also in the exhibition), which was still in Hodgkins' studio at the time of her death.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

The white chateau c.1930

oil on canvas
Collection of Helen and Tim Beaglehole, Wellington

When June Opie interviewed artists and friends of Hodgkins in 1969, Henry Moore noted:

I remember very well going to her studio...I found that she had a twinkle in her eye and a sense of humour and both a critical appreciation and attitude to other artists and painters. That she knew very clearly what her own direction was. I like her work very much...for those times the freshness, the very individual sense of colour, when you could tell a Frances Hodgkins from a long distance purely by colour alone...

Hodgkins once described working on an indoor still life; 'I bought 2 white lilies to give it the white note – it just gives it that 'kick' as a composition'.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Kimmeridge foreshore c.1938–41

oil on canvas

Victoria University of Wellington Staff Club Collection

Although its mood is Neo-Romantic, the detritus strewn at intervals across the surface of *Kimmeridge foreshore* are more abstract in form. The tumble of broken land is overlaid with thin glazes of green and blue paint, recollections of the lush grass that dominates the Dorset shoreline in summer-time. With the outbreak of war, the coast became off-limits to visitors. First exhibited in 1941, this painting serves as a landscape of the mind, its soft colours and simplified forms a *vanitas* reflecting presence and loss.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

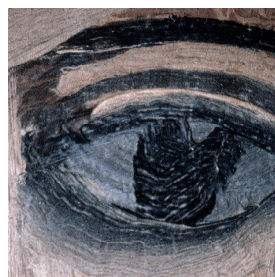
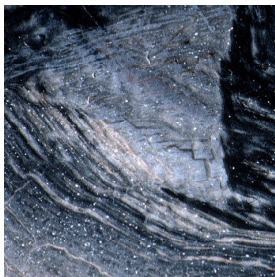
New Zealand, Great Britain

Double portrait c.1922–25

oil on canvas

The Hocken Collections, Uare Taoka o Hakena, University of Otago, Dunedin

At various stages of her career Hodgkins taught students to supplement her income. However, in the late 1920s a contract first with St Georges Gallery, and later Lefevre Galleries, allowed her some financial security. Hannah Ritchie and Jane Saunders were originally her pupils but went on to become close and supportive friends. This portrait remained unfinished for several years before Hodgkins was finally satisfied with the results. It demonstrates the way she focused on the surface of her oil paintings, using thick opaque paints and often modifying them with fillers and pigments, rather than trying to create an illusion of depth using transparent colours



Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Ibiza harbour c.1933

oil on canvas
Collection of Dunedin Public Art Gallery

I must say in this clear ivory light every common object looks important and significant...things appear in stark simplicity minus all detail ...of course later on this intense sunlight will convert colour and form into absolute negation, but at the moment there is complete loveliness.

On leaving Ibiza, Hodgkins informed her dealer in London that she was looking for 'a quiet corner where I can settle down and crystallise the afterglow of my Spanish memories – before they grow dim'. The resulting oil paintings illustrate the way memory served as an invaluable tool in abstracting the working drawings she had made *in situ*.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Still life with fruit dishes c.1936

oil on canvas laid on hardboard
Collection of Dunedin Public Art Gallery

A number of Hodgkins' Mediterranean still lifes are animated by sculptural twists of fabric. In *Red jug* c.1931 and *Spanish still life and landscape* 1932-33, they wind energetically around what may be a residual chair back or trellis, whereas in this work the fabric is twisted and knotted to become one of the still life objects. These are arranged on a piece of blue fabric, which serves to give depth close to the picture plane but then rises vertically. As a framing device, it is very similar to that enclosing the artist's favourite items in Auckland's *Self-portrait, still life* c.1935.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Spanish still life and landscape c.1932–33

oil on cardboard

Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu

The abundance of fruit and vegetables in the French and Spanish markets gave Hodgkins continual pleasure, and she often took them back to her room so that she could arrange them as painting subjects. She wrote:

...melons seem to gush out of the ground & lie in heaped up piles of ripeness & grapes in riotous Bacchanalian profusion make you giddy as the wine they are destined for'.

The placement of the containers and fruit help to give a sense of depth to the work, and a virtuoso thick brush stroke of pale turquoise green that ends abruptly on the left of the canvas, defines the landscape in the back-ground.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Green jug and jade sea c.1937

oil on canvas

Collection of Martin and Catherine Spencer

In November 1931, Frances Hodgkins went to Cornwall, intending to stay for Christmas with her old friend Gertrude Hall, and her husband. Finding their house in Fowey too remote and windswept, Hodgkins moved to the small village of Bodinnick-by-Fowey across the water. *Green jug and jade sea* has many similarities to paintings and drawings carried out at this time, particularly the Te Papa drawing *Still life in landscape, Bodinnick, Cornwall*. The artist stayed in the village until mid-May and the brilliant apricot, blues and greens in this painting seem indicative of the warmer season.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Still life in front of a courtyard 1930

oil on canvas
Collection of Martin and Catherine Spencer

Frances Hodgkins stayed in Flatford from June to October 1930. The 'courtyard' in this work lies across the River Stour from Willy Lott's cottage at Flatford Mill, East Bergholt, in Suffolk, originally made famous by artist John Constable. While the cottage is instantly identifiable even today, Hodgkins seems to have inserted the larger urn of peonies into the space to add a rosy warmth to the cooler tones that predominate in the work. Achieving the colour harmonies she required was problematic for her when she was away from the Mediterranean, and she wrote to Lucy Wertheim, 'I am glad of the quiet & deep peace of this place but anywhere in England is unsympathetic & difficult for an artist – the sea of green everywhere—the red brick...'

Frances HODGKINS

(1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Still life in a landscape c.1930

oil on canvas

Collection of Martin and Catherine Spencer

This is one of several paintings of the view from Geoffrey Gorer's cottage at Bradford-on-Tone, Somerset. Although the orientation is reversed, a canvas of the same size has been used for *Berries and laurel* as well as two others in the series. Commercially prepared, they are made from a loose-weave linen with a single absorbent ground, and stretched onto an expandable wooden frame.



Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Shells 1934

watercolour
Collection of The Rutherford Trust, Wellington

Shells demonstrates the masterly relation of colour to form which won Hodgkins such high praise from critics and friends alike. By placing them close to the picture plane the shells seem monumental in scale, each rapid brushstroke defining their form yet also moving beyond their literal boundaries. The bold dabs of blue in the sky are so confident that one can almost imagine the artist saying 'So there!' with every stroke.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Pastorale (Mill stream) 1929–30

oil on canvas

Collection of Martin and Catherine Spencer

Hodgkins had an ongoing fascination for the movement of water over weirs and under bridges, possibly drawn to the juxtaposition of solid mass and the indeterminate, constantly moving water. Her work is notoriously difficult to date, and this painting is no exception. Although presently titled *Pastorale*, it bears little resemblance in painting style to the other work in the exhibition of the same name. Rather, the treatment of the hills and trees is very similar to *Lanteglos*, c.1931 (whereabouts unknown), near Fowey, and is thought to have been originally titled *Mill stream*.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Evening 1932–33

oil on canvas

Collection of Martin and Catherine Spencer

Probably painted in Ibiza, Hodgkins again uses a table as a structural device in *Evening*. Here it has the block-like simplicity of the local architecture, and we look over the group of vases and grapes to a broader landscape beyond. The rosy tones of the land seem to cast light back over the table, while an isolated white house stands in the distance, framed in the middle ground by grape leaves on a residual pergola. The autumn tones of the leaves are similar to one included in *Still life with fruit dishes* (Dunedin Public Art Gallery).

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

The green urn c.1931

oil on canvas
Private Collection, Auckland

The green urn c.1931 bears the same striated sky as *Red jug*. In many of Hodgkins' works, still life objects – vases, jars, urns, jugs – are judiciously placed to create diverse readings of their relationship to the landscape beyond. In both those paintings, they dominate the foreground so that we have to look through them to the countryside. Elizabeth Eastmond has drawn attention to the way in which Hodgkins liked to place motifs of abundance, such as fruit, eggs, or flowers alongside suggestions of a void, in this instance an empty, broken gourd.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Window piece c.1940

gouache
Private Collection, Auckland

Although Hodgkins broke down the relationship between internal and external space in many of her still life/landscape paintings, she continued at the same time to define a number of her works as a view through a window. This was also a favoured composition with English artist Stanley Spencer, although he never developed the abstracted and somewhat surreal effects that marked Hodgkins' late period. The artist challenges the way we read space, the vertical divisions in the work appearing to be both internal and external. The eye is first led out to the buildings in the background and then drawn back to the decorative stemmed dish of fruit in the foreground.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Mediterranean landscape 1921

chalk

Private Collection, Auckland

In 1921, Hodgkins spent time in the South of France around Tréboul, sketching in black chalk and water-colour. The strong black line and definite tone is typical of her works produced during this trip. Her focus on the stark, light-filled Mediterranean landscape initiates the beginning of a decade of experimentation in her work. *Mediterranean landscape* contrast strongly in mood to her English work, being topographical and strongly expressive of place. The way in which the hills fold into one another is reminiscent of Cézanne, whose work Hodgkins referred to in several of her letters. She also responded strongly to paintings by Matisse and Dufy, particularly in relation to their use of colour and simplified form.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Welsh emblem 1942

gouache

Private Collection, Auckland

Although the solemn title of this work appears to have little to do with the casual display of leeks seen on the left, it reminds the viewer that Hodgkins was often very witty in her compositions. When June Opie interviewed artists and friends of Hodgkins in 1969, Henry Moore noted:

I remember very well going to her studio...I found that she had a twinkle in her eye and a sense of humour and both a critical appreciation and attitude to other artists and painters. That she knew very clearly what her own direction was. I like her work very much...for those times the freshness, the very individual sense of colour, when you could tell a Frances Hodgkins from a long distance purely by colour alone...

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Private bathing 1935–36

gouache
Private Collection, Auckland

In 1942, A. McNeil Reid wrote to Hodgkins about this work:

I called it *Near Finisterre* [on Spain's northwest coast] and you called it *Private bathing*. In any case it was the one hung over the mantelpiece in your last show and the subject was the private estate of some Spanish gentleman where you were arrested for painting and finally released as being presumed mad...

The eye is drawn backwards and forwards in a rhythmical manner across the painting. Belying its title, *Private bathing* depicts a wintry sea in the distance, viewed over trees and an aqueduct or bridge in the middle distance.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Hill landscape 1935–36

gouache

Private Collection, Auckland

Hodgkins travelled in Spain between September 1935 and May 1936 in what was to be one of the most encouraging, liberating periods of her career. She wrote to her brother that her work had grown more simple and sincere. Her palette juxtaposes warm and cool tones, creating a mysterious, pulsating celebration of space

Up to nineteen layers of paint have been detected in parts of *Hill landscape*. The opaque nature of gouache made corrections easy, but using thick layers of paint on a flexible support like paper created its own problems and Hodgkins sometimes had to re-paint sections of her gouaches that started to flake.

image

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

The birdcage c.1929

oil on canvas

Fletcher Trust Collection, Auckland

Leitmotif is fortunate to be able to include four of the preparatory drawings for *Birdcage*. The painting belonged to Lucy Wertheim and was included in the Frances Hodgkins Centenary Exhibition in 1969. The work has similarities to a Japanese *ukiyo-e* print. There is no attempt to depict space apart from the surface of the table, and yet it is implied by the birdcage, which appears to float against the richly impasted blue-green background.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Pumpkins and pimenti c.1935

gouache
Fletcher Trust Collection, Auckland

In a letter to Duncan MacDonald in 1936, the artist wrote of her recent paintings:

You will see that I have put a large amount of Frances Hodgkins into them, even into the joyless marrows...I defy anyone to paint lovingly and buoyantly through a Spanish winter, or be enticed to imaginative heights.

In spite of the slightly bitter tone of her comments, Hodgkins' brushwork in *Pumpkins and pimenti* is tremendously assured. A surrealistic effect is created by the echo of the distant mountains, which she has brought forward into the space of the still life.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

August month (walls, roofs and flowers)

c.1939

gouache

Private Collection, Auckland

Elizabeth Eastmond suggests that the vivacious handling of paint in *August month* almost certainly dates it to before the outbreak of war in 1939 when Hodgkins was staying with Jane Saunders in Northumberland. Writing from there to Dorothy Selby, she commented on how much she was enjoying her stay, especially as the housekeeper was cooking ‘delicious vegetable meals—all fresh from the garden—great dishes of raspberries & cream... I make the most of it – feeling it is a lull before a crash – to be cherished.’

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Cornish landscape 1931–32

watercolour
Private Collection, Auckland

After arriving in Bodinnick in the winter of 1931, Hodgkins wrote, 'It is too cold to work out of doors—Besides which the colour is so dark & sodden with damp – Bracken is bright red – black ships on the river...' Venturing out as the conditions improved, she captured in watercolour the textures of the soil and bare tree trunks, which overlooked her village and the river Fowey. She wrote once:

They are so beautiful these leafless trees... I hate the idea of spring with its foolish green leaves & sentimentality... The beech trees are brown with bud & in a week or two the wretched leaves will be out. They are to me infinitely more beautiful in their present state and I must hurry up & get some sketches before they turn.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Wings over water c.1931–32

oil on canvas

Tate, presented by Geoffrey, Peter and
Richard Gorer in memory of R e Alice Gorer, 1954

This painting depicts the view from the artist’s rooms in Bodinnick, Cornwall, during the winter of 1931–32. In an attempt to find a suitable location to live, Hodgkins described how she ‘searched round and found Bodinnick up a creek, over several ferries & quite unforgettable after dark – and here I am...’

Originally exhibited as *In Cornwall*, the painting was considerably re-worked before it was acquired by R e Gorer later that year. Initially more decorative like the *Te Papa* drawing of the same name, flowers identified in an x-ray were later painted over, giving the work a more contemplative mood.



The inclusion of this work in the exhibition has been made possible by the generous support of John Gow, Gary Langsford and John & Geri Herbert.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Preparatory sketch for Birdcage c.1929

pencil on paper
Private Collection, Dunedin

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Figurine c.1929

pencil on paper
Private Collection, Dunedin

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Still life self-portrait c.1930

oil on canvas
Collection of the Ravenscar Trust, Christchurch

She looked like her own paintings... you'd see Frances walking about the streets and she was like one of her own paintings, sometimes, the most incredible colours put together. In her dress she looked like the 'with-it' people of today – all those mad colours put together... She used to have mad hats that you'd think your grandmother wore, you know with birds in them, that sort of thing.

(Douglas Glass talking to June Opie, 1969)

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

October c.1932

watercolour and pencil on paper

Private Collection, Auckland

In this autumn scene, the vase of browning leaves stand in front of gently undulating fields. Rows of vegetables in the middle ground are defined by clusters of green dabs of paint, similar in style to *Still life* c.1929 (Parliamentary Collection, Wellington), suggesting that this watercolour drawing was painted about the same time when Hodgkins was staying at Haywards Heath in Sussex.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Still life c.1929

watercolour

Private Collection, Auckland

In many of Frances Hodgkins' still life/landscape paintings, objects rest on a centrally placed table, leading out into the landscape or beyond the architectural frame of a wall. In *Still life*, however, the table enters the space diagonally from the left and still life objects are placed precariously close to its edge. The sense of verticality is further emphasised by the long, spindly legs of the plant pot stand. A spray of ivy rises up on the right, yet there is no sense of the space that it inhabits. A lone flower appears in this manner in a number of her works.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Bridesmaids 1930

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki
gift of Lucy Carrington Wertheim, 1948

Bridesmaids, along with *Two children*, was first exhibited at Lucy Wertheim's annual group exhibition in 1930. Hodgkins emphasises the importance of the garden architecture as a framing device for the young girls. The inter-relationship of figures and setting is underscored through the colour harmonies of greens, browns and flesh tones, which fold together the figures, clothing and vine covered trellis. Hodgkins has used emerald green, viridian, earth browns and organic reds and pinks to create her contrasting palette.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Portrait of Elsie Barling c.1931

pencil

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

gift of Gerald Selby, from the estate of Dorothy Selby, 1954

This portrait of Hodgkins' friend, Elsie Barling, was done when they were staying in a cottage in Sussex around 1931. According to Barling, she was descending the little winding staircase, and the artist asked to stay where she was for a moment while she drew her. The work was later given to a fellow guest, Dorothy Selby, with the inscription 'Of a friend to a friend by a friend'. Hodgkins had a great love of patterned fabrics, which must have been of considerable help when she worked for six months in Manchester as a fabric designer in 1925.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Spanish shrine 1933

oil on canvas

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

purchased 1954

A calm, contemplative work, *Spanish shrine* shows two peasant women carrying containers of water and fruit, standing either side of a religious statue, which may be a Madonna of the Well. The figures share a monumental iconic stillness; the statue in an attitude of prayer, and the women temporarily halted in their daily tasks. The painting was one of Hodgkins' best-known works in her lifetime, being described by Eric Newton as 'both a symbol and a description and the two are interwoven'. Like other paintings that Hodgkins worked on over a number of years, there are many, thick paint layers, in this instance including large particles of dry pigment.



Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

The root crop 1943

gouache

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

purchased with funds from the Winstone Bequest, 1954

Myfanwy Piper recalled how in the 1940s, Hodgkins was greatly attracted to a farmyard near where they lived which was full of discarded farm machinery. 'It was an incredible junky mess and Frances adored it.' John Piper added:

'It suited her because she was able to select among these objects the shapes that she liked and the colours. It was full of virtue and beauty in her eyes... powerful and extraordinary, they are about humanity and its fate'.

The hayricks and ladders in front of the simple farm buildings create a strong vertical and diagonal framework for the mounds of vegetables, while in the upper left a series of rapid curves suggest some overhanging foliage.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Eggs and ferns c.1931

watercolour

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

purchased with funds from the Winstone Bequest, 1954

Hodgkins' friend Dorothy Selby purchased this watercolour from the 1937 Lefevre Gallery exhibition, several years after it was painted. Hodgkins was delighted; 'I hope they have sent you Ferns and eggs by now and that you have become good and lasting friends with them.' Eggs appear in numerous works, here resting on a folded piece of paper, and elsewhere in shallow bowls. Sometimes Hodgkins re-used some of her papers by wiping out images she was not happy with and drawing on the other side. *Eggs and ferns* and *Phoenician pottery and gourds c.1933* are examples of this practice.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Phoenician pottery and gourds c.1933

watercolour

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

purchased with funds from the Winstone Bequest, 1954

In a letter to her dealer, Arthur Howell, Hodgkins described the lift of spirits that the Mediterranean environment gave her:

Really it is so lovely up on this misty mountain where the air is like wine – and the wine like champagne... Faces figures landscapes panoramas and the Basses Alpes waiting to be painted but I have not lifted eyes higher than the red earth & the broken earthen ware pots strewn about making such ripping shapes turning in the pure clear light – you may hear them clink as you un-roll the Water Colours I am sending along to you...

Although Chrome yellow, a lead-containing pigment, adds a lively colour note in this work, it would darken if exposed to a sulphurous atmosphere such as Rotorua.

Frances HODGKINS

(1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Purbeck farm 1942

gouache

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

purchased 1955

Close friend Geoffrey Gorer, a well-known writer and social anthropologist, felt that the originality of Hodgkins' work lay in her sensitivity to colour and her calligraphic manner of painting. In *Purbeck farm*, the thickly applied gouache becomes as much decorative as descriptive. To animate the matte paint finish Hodgkins modified the dry gouache by drawing over it with graphite, which gives a certain sheen to the surface.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Ibiza – study for oil 1932–33

watercolour

Auckland Art Gallery Toi Tamaki

purchased 1956

In the Ibizan sketches the geometric forms and simplicity of Spanish architecture are a central focus. This study is one of Frances Hodgkins' last 'pure' watercolours, although the manner in which the paint has been applied is more akin to a gouache technique. The paper used here was hand-made by J Green & Son, a paper mill in England – the same as for the watercolour *Phoenician pottery and gourds*. Hodgkins' friend and former student, Hannah Ritchie, later added the signature to replace the original, which she had cut out and attached to a much-needed traveller's cheque which required Hodgkins' full name.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Arrangement of jugs 1938

lithograph
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki
gift of Miss H Ritchie, 1956

Arrangement of jugs is Frances Hodgkins' only surviving print. Commissioned by Contemporary Lithographs Ltd, the 1938 series included artists such as Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and John Piper. The latter gave Hodgkins technical assistance, in what was a new medium for her, and the result was so successful that Piper judged it the best of the group. The objects are simplified; their forms outlined as silhouettes, and they appear to float in space, freed from the confines of the table.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Ornaments 1942

gouache
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki
purchased 1956

Staying in Wales in 1942, Hodgkins wrote to her friend Eardley Knollys that she had 'made pictures of the funny Chimney ornaments, which do lend themselves to decoration – I love them – tender silly unarranged things.' She unites stray objects into a rhythmically patterned whole, reminiscent of her *Self-portrait still life* c.1935. The deep, subtle colouring and calligraphic flourishes create a mysterious Neo-Romantic mood reminiscent of the work of John Piper.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

The Spanish well, Purbeck 1945

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki
bequest of P D Hodgkins, 1959

Her last oil painting, Hodgkins worked on *Spanish well, Purbeck* over a number of months. The work refers to the blackout, yet the darkness is filled with traces of colour and the memory of light. As the conflict of war came to an end, the artist felt an uplifting of spirits, writing:

My Muse has returned to me – I found her waiting for me on the doorstep faithful wench, which goes to show how futile it is to travel over mountains in search of material when it lies at your own pavement, for the seeing.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Girls with a jug c.1935–40

watercolour
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki
purchased 1961

In this work, the two girls almost merge with the large water or oil jug, a twisted pedestal wittily supporting a tilted dish of eggs between them. Both wear crucifixes around their necks, giving the work the kind of devotional mood also seen in Spanish shrine. Her great friend and admirer, Jane Saunders, loved the way Hodgkins created paintings:

Something happens to everything that you make into a picture. Whatever you see...you must do something to it before you can create a picture. It goes into your mind and comes out again transformed. [Frances] could transmute everything into an interesting object.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Lancashire family c.1927

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki
purchased 1963

Hodgkins' early oil painting technique was very similar to her approach in watercolour, with washes of transparent colour and calligraphic brushstrokes. A change to a much thicker and more opaque oil paint, layered and impasted, emerged in the late 1920s with works such as *Lancashire Family*. The artist had been particularly drawn to the working women of Manchester, whose habit of wearing shawls over their heads is reminiscent of the Mediterranean peasant tradition seen in *Spanish shrine*. Like the latter work, the woman becomes both mother and icon, the gesture of her cupped hand being particularly suggestive.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Self-portrait, still life c.1935

oil on cardboard

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

purchased 1963

In later life, Hodgkins invariably felt uncomfortable about being photographed, partly perhaps because she was an older woman competing in a young Modernist market. She never painted a traditional self-portrait, but instead created highly individual, semi-abstracted groups of favourite objects – scarves, shoes, belts, jewellery and flowers, which provide what today seems like a Post-modern metaphor for the self. This strategy of self-representation was very unusual for this period. Although the majority of Hodgkins' oil paintings are on canvas, a few like this one are on cardboard, providing a smoother surface on which to work.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Two children c.1930

oil on canvas

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

gift of Lucy Carrington Wertheim, 1969

Many of her friends noted how Hodgkins loved children, keeping sweets in her studio to give to them when they visited. In this sensitive portrait, she has captured the rather tender relationship between the two girls. The older, more confident girl holds her younger companion's right hand, while her other arm passes protectively behind her back. Broad bands of tone have been used to model the figures, a style which Hodgkins developed in the 1920s.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Bradford-on-Tone, Geoffrey Gorer's cottage 1940

gouache
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki
purchased 1970

On more than one occasion during the Second World War, Gorer's cottage became a refuge for Hodgkins. Although a number of writers have noted the liveliness of this work, the trees are treated differently to her usual practice, and possibly reflect the anxiety she felt when bombers flew overhead. Gorer described works she had been painting before she died in 1947 as absolutely bursting with life.

The pigments in the work include black, which she mixed dry into commercial paint although she rarely used black on its own.



Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Vase with handles—notes for colour

c.1929

pencil

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

purchased 1971

In her letters, Hodgkins noted that often she didn't want to part with her drawings as they were essential stages in creating her finished oil paintings. This is one of the preparatory drawings for the oil painting,

Birdcage c.1929. In raking light, the impressions of another drawing (also in the Gallery collection) can be made out on the surface, indicating that the paper was part of a drawing pad.



Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Jug with a lid

pencil
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki
purchased 1971

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Chinese vase—notes for colour

pencil

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

purchased 1971

The artist greatly admired the range of drawing methods used by Chinese artists and the manner in which they abstracted nature. Possibly a preparatory drawing for the watercolour *October*, the rapid, intense manner of Hodgkins' sketching technique is indicated by the deep impressions left by the pressure of the pencil. In later life, close friend Geoffrey Gorer was particularly taken with the way that Hodgkins' meticulous drawings of objects and landscapes would then be 'assembled' in her studio to create a finished painting.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Untitled (landscape) 1935

pencil
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki
purchased 1971

For much of her adult life Hodgkins was constantly on the move, often packing up and re-establishing herself in three or four locations in a single year. This included moving from the lush surroundings of England to the more barren and sculptural land forms of Spain and France. What remains remarkable about her landscapes, therefore, is the timeless quality that she brings to them, even though her manner of depicting their individual elements, and their relationship to still life objects, kept on evolving throughout her career.

Frances HODGKINS

(1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Cassis c.1921

chalk

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

purchased 1972

In the late twenties, Hodgkins' drawings were often posted ahead from Europe to England when she needed to fill her quota for her dealer, Arthur Howell. Chalk and conté are easily smudged, and in 1931 she warned his secretary in a letter sent from Martigues; 'I have just posted 4 pencil drawings – figure subjects – which I beg you please to unpack very carefully as they are not fixed ...'

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Red jug c.1931

oil on canvas

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

purchased 1982

When she could, Hodgkins spent the winters in France and Spain, during which time she experimented with the still life/landscape idiom. The colour and decorative motif from which this work gets its name contrasts with another jug whose more cubist form is flattened by a series of tonal layers. The twisting, pale blue cloth rising up animates their forms and drapes over what may be the residual form of the back of a chair.

Hodgkins allowed the paint to dry between coats and as a result, the unrelated impasto of earlier workings remains visible in certain lights.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Berries and laurel c.1930

oil on canvas

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

purchased with funds from the William James Jobson Trust, 1982

In reviewing one of her exhibitions, Eric Newton noted:

She can... make certain colours 'sing' as they have never done before – in particular a certain milky purplish-pink, a most unpromising colour: she can make greys and browns look positively rapturous: she can juggle with colour orchestrally.

The secret of Hodgkins' unique colouration appears to be the combination of disparate hues facilitated by combining powder colours with tube paints.

Contrasting pigments – viridian (green), carbon black, lead white, organic red and yellow—are the basis of the musty pink found around the border of *Berries and laurel*.



Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Ibiza c.1932–33

oil on canvas

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

purchased 1982

Painted on her return to England in 1933, this work depicts the view from Dalt Vila, a hill top town looking across the Ibiza harbour to the mountains beyond. The artist has used a dry brush with opaque colour to 'scumble' paint over the surface. This results in partial coverage and a sense of visual texture. The frame was made by James Bourlet & Sons Ltd. Based on a 17th century French design which remained popular throughout the following centuries, a number of Hodgkins' paintings were originally framed in this manner.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Pastorale c.1929–30

oil on canvas

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

purchased 1982

By the 1930s, Hodgkins' technique in oil was increasingly consistent and involved a thick application in a painterly fashion. *Pastorale* is typical of this period in which a palette knife or brush-end is used to scrape back calligraphic outlines and patterns, a technique known as *sgraffito*. The tooling also reveals underlying contrasting colours and the paint is applied wet-on-wet in a manner closely linked to the artist's use of water-colour.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Village scene c.1929

black chalk
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki
gift of the Friends of the Auckland Art Gallery, 1988

The conical roof of the oast house near the centre of this drawing helps to pinpoint its location as Sussex. In the summer of 1929, the artist rented a little cottage near Haywards Heath, describing the view as ‘one great panorama of the Downs—nothing but space & air’. She was charmed by the way local buildings nestled into the rising and falling land, as well as the diverse moods of the place, especially at sunset.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)

New Zealand, Great Britain

Vase of flowers c.1929

pencil

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

Private Collection

The composition of the flowers in this work is very similar to *Still life in a landscape* c.1929. The notes for colour list ‘deep pink; blue bowl; green leaves; yellow stamens; black spots, black stand’ on the upper right, and ‘yellow cloth, blue pattern’ on the lower left. This tablecloth appears in a finished drawing, *Still life* c.1929 (Tate Gallery, London), and *A country window* c.1929 (oil on canvas, Private Collection) which supports a similar dating for both Auckland’s sketch and the oil mentioned above. Although a working drawing, Hodgkins has included a single flower on the left in the permanent act of falling to the table.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Jug

pencil
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Untitled (vases in an alcove)

pencil
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki
on loan from a Private Collection

In many of Frances Hodgkins' works still life objects are liberated from the confines of interiors, moving out into space, or else clustered in front of a nominal window. This drawing is unusual in that the group of vases are enclosed in a clearly defined alcove. This space tapers to a tiny window in the background, but there is no intimation of the landscape beyond. Many of the drawings in Auckland's collection were acquired from her friend and executor John Piper, who inherited the works remaining in her studio after Hodgkins died.

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Three islands, Ibiza 1932-33

watercolour
Private Collection, Auckland

This watercolour was among a group of works painted in England and Ibiza in the preceding two years, and was first exhibited at the Lefevre Galleries in London in 1932. Very loosely sketched, it makes an interesting companion for *Ibiza—study for oil*, also in the exhibition. Although the work is dominated by the house on the left, which is reversed in the finished painting, the title draws attention to the small islands dotted across the harbour.

Art materials from the early 20th century. Auckland Art Gallery Research Collection or generously loaned to the exhibition by: The French Art Shop, Camilla Baskcomb, Pigment Art Services

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Still life in landscape (Pottery group)

c.1931

watercolour and pencil on paper
Private Collection
Auckland

Under the title *Pottery*, this watercolour along with the oil painting *Red Jug*, was exhibited in February 1932 at the Leicester Gallery, and undoubtedly draws on the same Mediterranean landscape. The ruffled cloth in the foreground mirrors the hills behind, and the translucent washes of colour create a sense of unity between the objects and their setting.

The artist plays with form and space, the two convolvulus flowers existing on the same plane as those that decorate the two-handled vase. The Seven and Five Society, to which she belonged, popularised the combined still life/landscape, which became a kind of signature genre for Hodgkins at this time.

Ibiza - Religious procession
in St Antonio Abad Village c.1935

Ibiza c.1933

Corfe Castle 1940's

Church in Ibiza c.1933

...Maud Nickalls has sent me a most handsome supply of new paints which has always had the effect of making me rapturously greedy and happy...

Letter from Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, September 1908, Bedale, Yorkshire.

Frances Hodgkins at her studio in the village of Corfe Castle, Dorset, England, 1945. Felix H Man Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, F-332-35mm-D.

Frances Hodgkins in the Village of Corfe Castle 1945. Felix H Man Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, 35mm-00337-C.

Then comes the green grocer with her two pretty daughters always beaming from behind a barricade of pumpkins, melons, pomegranates, figs and green stuff. This is my favourite stall and I have made many studies of it. Then there is a corner given up to pottery & earthenware of many colours & shapes. These are a great temptation to my purse, but I have learned to deny myself, partly because of the expense, partly because they are so brittle & wont travel.

Letter to Isabel Field, 6 November 1901 Hotel du Forum,
Arles, S. Rhone

If what is called a self-portrait depends upon the fact that it is called 'self-portrait', an act of naming should allow or entitle me to call just about anything a self-portrait, not only any drawing ('portrait' or not) but anything that happens to me; anything by which I can be affected or let myself be affected.

Jacques Derrida; *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins* (with thanks to Jetta Cornish)

Frances Hodgkins in the Village of Corfe
Castle 1945. Felix H Man Collection,
Alexander Turnbull Library,
35mm-00337-C.

...Corfe castle, poking its silver-grey
ruined walls into the thinning mist.

John Piper, introduction to his essay on Frances Hodgkins in
Horizon

Frances HODGKINS (1869–1947)
New Zealand, Great Britain

Refugee Children c 1916

oil and tempera on board
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki
on loan from the Thanksgiving Foundation

This painting of Belgium refugee children at St Ives. demonstrates Hodgkins' early experimentation with the oil and tempera marking her transition from being primarily a watercolourist. She has applied the paint in transparent washes in a manner similar to watercolour technique. Her early oils were handled in the same way, but by the early twenties, an interest in creating surface textures using opaque paints took priority. *Double Portrait* c.1922-25 is a good example of this later treatment.

