

FRANCES HODGKINS

[1869-1947 New Zealand]

Mr and Mrs Moffat Lindner and Hope

1916

Tempera on linen on hardboard

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Purchased 1955 with funds from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society.

Frances Hodgkins became close friends with the Lindner family; they were generous benefactors, providing her with hospitality and financial support when she lived in St Ives. The bond that Hodgkins felt, particularly with Moffat Lindner, is clearly articulated in a letter to her mother:

‘I am working hard – immersed in portraits for the Nat: Portrait Soc: in Feb: to which I am asked to send, & hope for the same good luck as at the International – but you never can tell – what you think dam good they may think quite the opposite. Mr. Lindner & his little girl Hope are posing for me against his great Studio window – open, with the wind tossing her brown hair, the sea beyond. They wear such jolly tweed clothes, he snuff coat, check waistcoat & orange tie with black spots - & jolly pink face & white curls – same colouring as Father – you may remember he always reminds me of him, a young edition – very dapper. Hope in grey tweed, berry red buttons & blue Tam, white stockings. This is a 4ft. x3ft. canvas in oil – and so far it shapes well...’

While the painting referred to in this correspondence, is a different and earlier version of the work hung here, similar elements and qualities were clearly expressed in both pictures. *Mr and Mrs Moffat Lindner and Hope* was originally owned by the Lindners and was included in the 1916 National Portrait exhibition in London which Hodgkins alludes to in her letter.

Peter Moffat Lindner (1852-1949) was an accomplished and successful landscape and marine painter in the English Impressionist tradition. Frances Hodgkins first met him in Caudebec in 1901.

Letter: Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 10 Jan 1916.

FRANCES HODGKINS

[1869-1947 New Zealand]

Portrait of Myfanwy Evans c. 1940

Chalk on paper

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Purchased 1970 with funds from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society.

Myfanwy Evans was a respected British art critic and opera librettist. She became a close acquaintance of Hodgkins who was always impressed by her perceptive writing. Among Evans' notable achievements was the writing of *Frances Hodgkins* for the Penguin Modern Painters Series, published in 1948.

Married to the well known and highly regarded English artist John Piper (1903-1992), this drawing was bought via the sitter's husband, who was in Auckland in 1970.

FRANCES HODGKINS

[1869-1947 New Zealand]

Miss Stafford 1900

Watercolour on paper on strawboard

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Bequeathed 2001 by Georgie Millicent Austin.

The Stafford family were friends, fellow-artists and neighbours of Hodgkins' sister Isabel and her husband, the lawyer and politician Will Field. In 1899 Will, Isabel and their four children moved into a new house in Wellington's fashionable Terrace, overlooking Lambton Quay. Frances Hodgkins and her mother Rachel stayed with the Fields during the Christmas holidays of 1899-1900. During her visit, Hodgkins painted pictures of some of Wellington's society women - Lady Ranfurly's daughter and Lady Constance Knox, in addition to Miss Florence Stafford, Isabel's glamorous young neighbour.

FRANCES HODGKINS

[1869-1947 New Zealand]

**Untitled Portrait of a Maori
Woman** 1900

Watercolour on paper

Private Collection, Masterton.

Frances Hodgkins produced many paintings of Maori subjects, particularly between 1898 and 1900, of women and girls, many of whom were living at Moeraki or Puketeraki, north of Dunedin. While most are character and genre studies, some, such as this work, are closer to a portrait, depicting something of both the likeness and personality of the sitter. Painted using a wet on wet watercolour technique, Hodgkins has isolated her subject on a plain background, thus drawing attention to the woman's face and pose. Linda Gill has noted the 'appealing informality and liveliness' in the artist's treatment of her Maori subjects, as well as a 'keen observation of skin tone and features', all of which is apparent in this work.

The woman depicted in *Untitled Portrait of a Maori Woman* bears a close resemblance to Mere Te Kaehe Karetai, who is the named subject in several photographs by William Mathew Hodgkins in his photographic portfolios, held in the Hocken Collections. In these photographs she wears a short jacket with long sleeves, similar to the one she is wearing here, and sits with her head tilted in a similar pose.

FRANCES HODGKINS

[1869-1947 New Zealand]

Double Portrait 1922

Oil on canvas

Hocken Collections Uare Taoka o Hakna, University
of Otago

The sitters depicted in this work are Hannah Richie and Jane Saunders – pupils and friends who assisted Frances Hodgkins during her financially troubled years of 1925-1926. The painting shows Hodgkins' knowledge of Matisse and Dufy in the use of intensely rich colour, pattern and form. The sitters' faces, according to Hodgkins, were the last elements to be completed to make it 'a fine thing.' The eyes in particular have a mask-like quality reminiscent of both Modigliani and Picasso.

Hodgkins wrote to Ritchie telling her of the work's near completion and added that she was hoping to 'wrangle an invitation to the big N.Z. South Seas Exhtn.' You would imagine, she wrote, that 'I should be one of the first to be invited my Father being the Father of Art in NZ & Dunedin my "home town". It would change the outlook for me if I could send a group of early popular work & sell it out there –'

Despite her best hopes, Hodgkins's works were not included in this exhibition.

Letter: Frances Hodgkins to Hannah Ritchie, London 14 March 1925.

FRANCES HODGKINS

[1869-1947 New Zealand]

The Farmer's Daughter (Portrait of Annie Coggan) 1929-1930

Oil on canvas, laid onto board

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Purchased 2010 with funds from the Dunedin City Council, the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society and the Richdale Trust.

The subject of this portrait is Annie Coggan, who lived on a farm near a cottage called 'The Croft', in Somerset, which the Gorer family made available to Frances Hodgkins from the time they met in the late 1920's. Annie Coggan had been asked to 'keep an eye' on Hodgkins and the 'The Croft' by Geoffrey Gorer when he was absent. Sometimes referred to as the 'Gorer's housekeeper' she was both a caring neighbour and an unpaid, friendly supplier of provisions, which Hodgkins appreciated and mentioned in her letters.

The Farmer's Daughter (Portrait of Annie Coggan) clearly illustrates Hodgkins' unique ability to fuse a dynamic range of colours with a daring sense of composition and brushwork. This stylized, yet warm-hearted portrait also represents a growing level of sophistication in the artist's articulation of modernist painting influences. This includes a hint of English Romantic Surrealism, noticeable in this particular interpretation of the sitter. The deliberate interplay between figure and ground, the subject and her environment, adds another level of interpretation to the work, both individualizing Coggan and universalizing her as a young woman of nature.

Hodgkins produced two versions of *The Farmer's Daughter (Portrait of Annie Coggan)*, which is not unusual for this artist. While sharing some similarities in composition, proportion and overall presentation, the other slightly later version (acquired by Lucy Wertheim, Hodgkins' friend and gallerist), is a cooler, more analytical interpretation. The colours are less vibrant and the sitter, whose face is turned, is less integrated with the landscape background, creating a greater sense of emotional distance from the viewer and representing a more deliberately formalist treatment of the subject.

FRANCES HODGKINS

[1869-1947 New Zealand]

Boy with a Boat c. 1927

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Purchased 1970 with funds from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society.

Painted just before she left for Manchester and combining two perspectives – the boy himself, and the landscape behind him tipped up to fill the picture plane – this work seems to point towards the still life/landscapes that Frances developed in the 1930s.
