



COLIN McCAHON

[1919-1987 Aotearoa New Zealand]

Saddle Hill from Taieri Mouth 1937-1938

Pencil and gouache on paper

Hocken Collections Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago

COLIN McCAHON

[1919-1987 Aotearoa New Zealand]

From the North end of Tomahawk Beach 1935

Watercolour, pen and ink on paper

Hocken Collections Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago

Many of Ōtepoti Dunedin's beaches, gardens and landscapes became the subject of Colin McCahon's early paintings. Immersing himself in his immediate surroundings, McCahon's paintings looked to Tomahawk Beach, Woodhaugh Gardens, Saddle Hill, the Botanic Garden and the Otago Peninsula as subject matter, among others.

This interest in Tomahawk was shared with one of McCahon's lecturers at the Dunedin School of Art, Robert Nettleton Field; with his oil painting *Tomahawk* (1926) housed in the Dunedin Public Art Gallery collection. Referred to by McCahon as his most influential teacher⁴, R. N. Field was instrumental in the formation of the Six and Four Club in 1928. Initially consisting of six women and four men, this was a group of artists – teachers and students – who would meet to discuss art, exhibitions and everyday life. One attendee was Toss Woollaston, a highly celebrated New Zealand landscape painter whose work made a lasting impression on McCahon early in his career. When speaking of Woollaston's depictions of the Nelson landscape McCahon said:

“I had seen the paintings in a small shop on Broadway, Dunedin, watched over by the painter and by various other people whom I did not then know. But there were the paintings, wonderful and magnificent interpretations of a New Zealand landscape; clean, bright with New Zealand light, and full of air”.⁵

4. Peter Simpson, Colin McCahon – *There is only one direction*, (Auckland University Press: 2019), p.44

5. Colin McCahon, 'Beginnings', in *Landfall*, volume twenty number four (The Caxton Press: 1966), p.364