

# FRANCES HODGKINS

[1869-1947 New Zealand]

## **Summer** Circa 1912

watercolour and charcoal

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Purchased 1913 by public subscription.

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Frances Hodgkins valued this work highly – it was one of the more expensive in her Australian and New Zealand exhibitions at the time of its painting. But at £60 it did not sell in Melbourne, nor when reduced to was £42 in Sydney, so the price came down again and it purchased for the Dunedin Public Art Gallery at £35. Almost a century later, her assessment of its quality has proved correct. *Summer* has been enjoyed by successive generations of Dunedin gallery-goers who must be grateful that no Australian fell in love with it – or could afford to buy it. She painted it in France, yet it somehow exudes the heat and brilliance of the perfect New Zealand summer – perhaps even memories of apricot blossom in Central Otago. Frances's rapid brushstrokes whirl across the paper, brilliantly capturing scattered patches of intense sunlight that filter through the leaves and across the little group of figures: a woman and a girl lost in admiration of the delicious, plump baby-ness of the infant – at this moment the still centre of their world.

# FRANCES HODGKINS

[1869-1947 New Zealand]

## **Washerwomen, Brittany** Circa 1912?

watercolour and charcoal

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Bequeathed 1956 by Mr Percy Hodgkins, the artist's brother.

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Percy Hodgkins bought this painting, which Frances exhibited at Wellington's Academy of Fine Arts in 1917. Four years younger than Frances, Percy was sixteen when she was filling her sketch book with studies of 'Phemie' – the family's maid-of-all-work – milking the cow, feeding poultry and carrying laundry.

In this beautiful painting two Breton women seem literally to be submerged in the backbreaking task of pounding loads of washing at the river's edge. The substance of their kneeling forms with arms outstretched, the colours of their clothing and the shapes of their headdresses almost dissolve in the watercolour paint that Frances has applied to wetted paper – but with masterly control of her medium she preserves these women and their task for posterity.

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FRANCES HODGKINS [1869-1947 New Zealand]

## **The Market Place, France** 1903

watercolour and body colour

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Bequeathed 1956 by Mr Percy Hodgkins, the artist's brother.

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'Don't think that because my work looks easy that it is so – remember what Sheridan said when a friend complimented him on the easy style of his books – “Then all I can say [is] that easy reading is damned hard writing”. Those market scenes are the outcome of great mental strain, with nerves at a tension & eyes bewildered with an ever moving crowd, & ones senses all alert and linx [sic] eyed for effects & relations one thing to another.’<sup>1</sup>

Painting a quiet model seated indoors was one thing, but successful pictures – those that met her own standards and might attract buyers – needed to transport viewers into a different and more vibrant foreign world. And, for Frances, that meant being outside in the streets and squares where the business of the town took place. Frances's letters contain many references to the difficulties of painting out of doors, in small town marketplaces - where a lady artist at work excited local curiosity and comment and her concentration was continually interrupted. Nonetheless, she persevered and for this work she seems to have positioned herself behind the women selling their produce, barricaded from unwanted attention by trestle tables and masses of piled up vegetables. With rapid, fluid brushstrokes she skilfully suggests the colours and shapes of awnings, dresses, caps and aprons; the texture of a cane basket; the delightful bulky beauty of the produce – and the energy, noise and smells of a sunny market day. She is clearly delighted by the activity around her and in paintings like these gives no sense of the challenges she faced in transferring a glimpse of it all to paper.

This work was painted during Hodgkins' first visit to France in 1902-03. When her brother Percy married in 1904, she gave him this painting. He then gave it to the Dunedin Public Art Gallery in 1956.

1. Letter to Isabel Field, 30 September 1902, Gill, p 138.

# FRANCES HODGKINS

[1869-1947 New Zealand]

## **Through The Trees** 1932

watercolour

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Purchased 1971 with funds from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society.

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As with Pissarro's *Landscape through Trees*, *Tilty Wood*, which also has a wintry aspect, Hodgkins' delicate colour and exquisite mark making transport the viewer into a magical landscape tapestry. In her work, trees and water and distant hills are glimpsed beyond a foreground of stumps and fallen branches. This painting also shares a soft and smoky colour palette of pale green, mustard and pinks, which may be likened to her earlier use of these colours in the iconic *Summer*.

# FRANCES HODGKINS

[1869-1947 New Zealand]

## **Mill House, Ponterwyd** Circa 1935

gouache on paper on card

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Purchased 2005 with funds from the I M Richdale Trust through the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society.

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In August 1932 Frances Hodgkins had a delightful sketching holiday at Bridgnorth in Shropshire with congenial company – her old friends Hannah Ritchie, Jane Saunders and Dorothy Selby. In mid-August, after a disappointing few weeks in Norfolk, depressed by the endlessly flat landscape, she wrote to Dorothy, ‘leaving Tuesday morning for Bridgnorth my old love ... I am tingling with impatience to get settled – & at work’ ... Till Thursday then – at Bridgnorth.’<sup>1</sup> There she was able to relax, enjoy the countryside, and draw and paint. The holiday produced several of her most luminous watercolours, including *Pleasure Garden* (Christchurch Art Gallery) and *Pleasure Boat, Bridgnorth*, both shown at her first exhibition at Lefevre Galleries in October 1933. Patterns of paint dancing across the surface of the paper give *Mill House Ponterwyd* a similar bright ebullience. An excursion from Bridgnorth to Ponterwyd, a pretty village in the Cambrian mountains near Aberystwyth, may have contributed to this lyrical, almost rapturous mood, although there are no letters recording such a trip and the work was not exhibited until 1937.

1. Letter to Dorothy Selby, c. 14 August 1932, Gill, p 454.

FRANCES HODGKINS

[1869-1947 New Zealand]

**Women In A French Market** Circa 1903

watercolour

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Purchased 1971 with funds from the Dunedin Public  
Art Gallery Society.

# HENRI LE SIDANER

[1862-1939 French]

## **La Table, Harmonie Verte** 1927

oil on canvas

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Purchased 1947 with funds from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society, through the National Art Collections Fund, London.

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As with a number of his contemporaries, Henri Le Sidaner's painting style went through various incarnations as he experimented with the permutations of Symbolism, Divisionism, Impressionism and Neo-Impressionism. While, *La Table, Harmonie Verte* is a testament to Le Sidaner's unique ability to fuse these early influences, it is more in keeping with the ideals of the French genre painting movement Intimism. Like his more celebrated peers, Pierre Bonnard and Edouard Vuillard, Le Sidaner creates a harmonious interior scene by building up layers of paint through a series of repetitive short dabs and limiting his colour palette within a tightly defined spectrum. At its heart *La Table, Harmonie Verte*, is an expression of pure *joie de vivre*; an evocation of the simple pleasures of life to be admired, remembered, and most importantly, lived.

# EDWARD LE BAS

[1904-1966 English]

## **Lamp and Flowers**

oil on hardboard

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Given 1966 by the Contemporary Art Society, London.

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Born in London, Edward Le Bas gravitated towards the arts from an early age, working in the studio of the painter and engraver Hermann Paul in Paris and studying at the Royal College of Art in the early nineteen twenties. It was not until 1936 however, that Le Bas had his first solo exhibition at the Lefevre Gallery, a highly respected art dealership where Frances Hodgkins had a number of large solo shows in the thirties.

*Lamp and Flowers* is an exquisitely ornate jewel-like painting of a bourgeois interior. While undated, it shares many of the painterly and tonal qualities of the more substantial work *Interior*, of 1951, which is part of a small cluster of pictures by the artist held in the collection of Tate London. The marble-top side board visible in *Lamp and Flowers*, also appears in *Interior*.

This connection may mean that *Lamp and Flowers* was painted in the artist's Chelsea studio in the early fifties, a haven of finery, antiques and art, and a world away from the austerity of a post war Europe.

# LUCIEN PISSARRO

[1863-1944 French]

## Landscape through Trees, Tilty Wood 1915

oil on canvas

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Purchased 2010 with funds from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

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Born in Paris, Lucien Pissarro was the eldest son of the esteemed French Impressionist Camille Pissarro (1830 - 1903). In these circumstances, it is not surprising to find that his father played a prominent role in his son's formation as an artist. Lucien went on to establish his name, not only as a Neo-Impressionist painter, but as a printmaker and typographical designer. Included in exhibitions organized by the Société des Artistes Indépendants in Paris, Pissarro moved to England in 1893, where he became a naturalised citizen in 1916. He associated with such progressive groups as the New English Art Club and was a founder of the Camden Town Group. In 1919 he formed the short-lived Monarro Group, which aimed to show art inspired by the Impressionist painters Claude Monet and Camille Pissarro.

*Landscape through Trees, Tilty Wood*, is part of a series of significant landscapes painted in and around Essex between 1910 – 1915. The artist noted in a letter to his wife Esther in 1915:

“Today I had a good séance this morning at my temps gris in the wood – This afternoon the sun being shining I thought I better go to the wood again, to have a go at my Duton Hill but as soon as I had all my things up threatening clouds accumulated from the west and the sun disappeared even a few drops began to fall so I thought I better pack as quickly as possible and try to have a go at my grey effect in the study – as soon as I was ready to start a gorgeous (sp) sun began to shine!”<sup>1</sup>

*Landscape through Trees, Tilty Wood*, is a charming landscape, in which Pissarro combines his rich understanding of design with compositional balance, and a discerning ability to use bold colour combinations. The painting captures his unique skill of being able to blend a sense of local colour, light and the feeling of *en plein-air*, using the ideas and techniques of modern representation.

1. Letter, P F Oxford: Lucien to Esther Pissarro Wednesday (after 27 February) 1915, A Catalogue of the Oil Paintings of Lucien Pissarro, compiled by Anne Thorold (Athelney Books, London, 1983), p. 112.

PAUL SIGNAC

[1863-1935 French]

**Port de Saint Tropez** Circa 1892

watercolour over pencil

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Given 1982 by Mary, Dora and Esmond de Beer  
through the National Art Collections Fund, London.

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Paul Signac was one of the principle painters of the Post-Impressionist movement and became its major theorist. *Port de Saint Tropez*, the earliest painting in this exhibition, perfectly illustrates his vigorous draftsmanship and vibrant colour palette. These characteristics made him one of the most significant and popular painters from this school of painting.

## FRANCES HODGKINS

[1869-1947 New Zealand]

### **Tunny Boats, Concarneau** Circa 1911?

watercolour

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Bequeathed 1956 by Mr Percy Hodgkins, the artist's brother.

## RHONA HASZARD

[1901-1931 New Zealand]

### **St Briac, Brittany** 1926

gouache on card

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Given 2006 by Mr D Macdonald.

FRANCES HODGKINS

[1869-1947 New Zealand]

**Village Street** Circa 1903

watercolour on paper

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Bequeathed 1980 by Mrs Diana Gertrude McClymont.

# ALFRED SISLEY

[1839-1899 English]

## **Bords de Rivière** 1897

colour lithograph

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Given 1973 by Mrs W Griesbach.

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Alfred Sisley was born in France to English parents. Throughout his life he painted Impressionist landscapes. This work belongs to the latter part of his career when he experimented with printmaking. Like other Impressionists Sisley imbued his landscapes with a freshness and sense of joyousness. He had a particular feeling for river landscapes, and concentrated on bringing the effects of light in his depiction of sky and of water. Like a number of his contemporaries, he also placed great importance on painting outdoors in the landscape.

# EUGÈNE BOUDIN

[1824-1898 French]

## **Crinolines**

watercolour and pencil

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Given 1982 by Mary, Dora and Esmond de Beer through the National Art Collections Fund, London.

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*Crinolines*, which was probably sketched around 1865, is characteristic of Boudin's interest in painting and drawing *en plein air*, to capture the fleeting effects of light and atmosphere. In 1874, works by Boudin were included in the First Impressionist exhibition of 27 artists, including Cezanne, Degas, Sisley, Renoir and Monet. Although Boudin was not an Impressionist painter, his inclusion in that exhibition, illustrates his importance to the development of this movement.