

FORM AND FEELING: ARTISTS' STUDIES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY EXHIBITION RESOURCE

21 DECEMBER 2024 - 4 MAY 2025

THE ART GALLERY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

AGWA

FORM AND FEELING: ARTISTS' STUDIES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

Curated by Karl Sagrabb, Associate
Curator Historical Art

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This Learning Resource* was developed by The Art Gallery of Western Australia's (AGWA) Head of Learning and Creativity Research, Lilly Blue, designed by Creative Learning specialist Jess Gatt in consultation with AGWA's Associate Curator Karl Sagrabb.

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AGWA

Image on Front Page: **Frank Auerbach**, *Looking towards Mornington Crescent Station, Night* (detail), 1972-73, oil on hardboard

The Art Gallery of Western Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians
of the lands on which we work, the Whadjuk Noongar people.

KEDELA WER KALYAKOORL NGALAK WADJAK BOODJAK YAAK. Today and
always, we stand on the traditional land of the Whadjuk Noongar people.

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THE ART GALLERY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Situated in the heart of Perth's Cultural Centre, on Whadjuk Noongar boodja, The Art Gallery of Western Australia houses the State Art Collection with works by renowned local and international artists.

The Gallery was founded in 1895 and occupies a precinct of three heritage buildings on the south-eastern corner of the Perth Cultural Centre including the former Perth Police Courts. The main Gallery opened in 1979.

The Gallery includes one of the world's finest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collections, the pre-eminent collection of Western Australian art and design, as well as Australian and International art and design.

Willy Lenksi, *Figure cutout as insert for composition study 'Life may be seen as a gesture'*, 1987, pencil and masking tape on vellum tracing paper



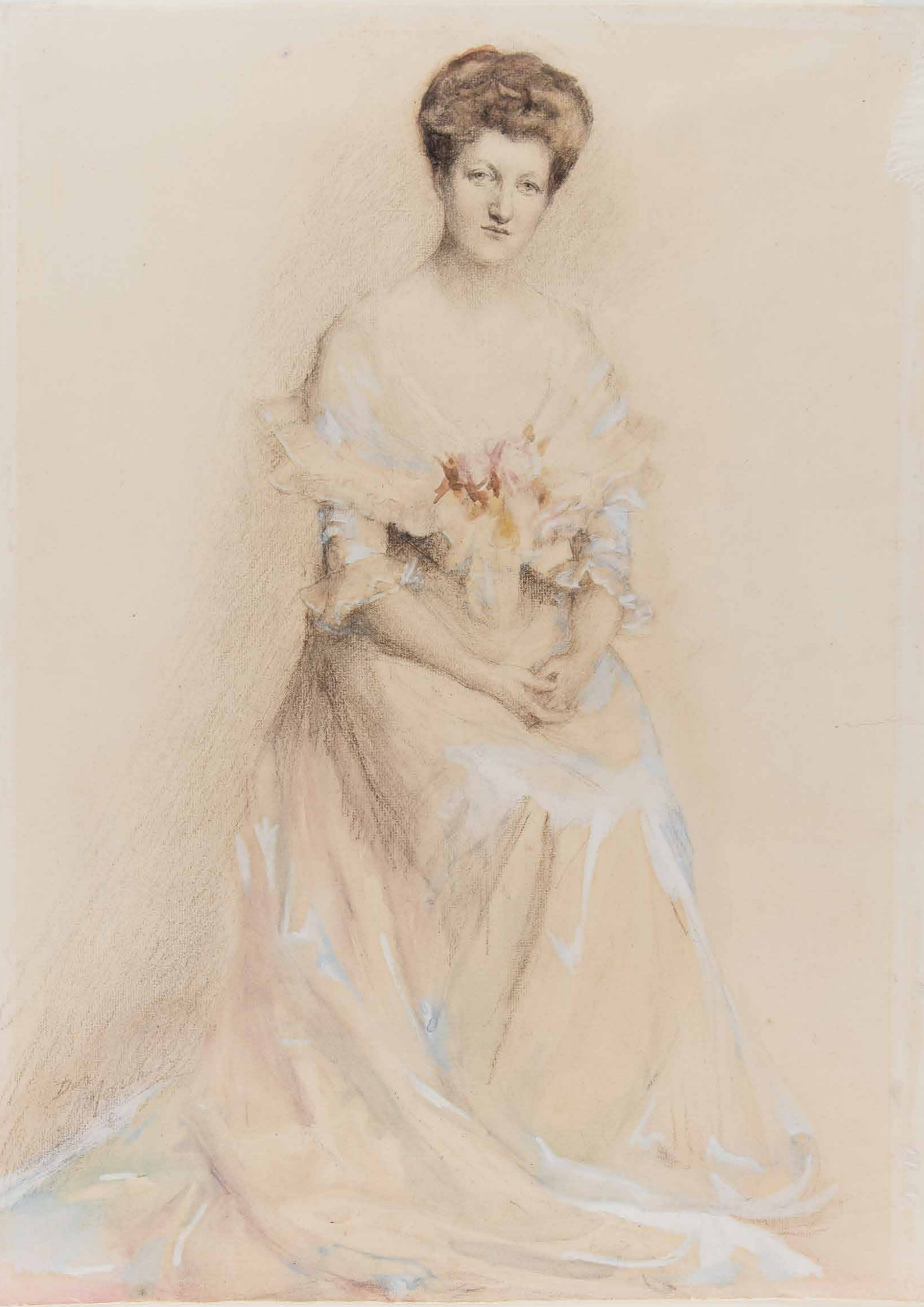
AGWA LEARNING

Through **more-than-learning*, the AGWA Learning team recognises that genuine creativity, emotional intelligence and critical thinking are becoming increasingly required skills in a fast-changing world. The arts offer an opportunity to interrupt convention and create rich environments that are inclusive, critical, and experimental. We intentionally work with a lifelong learning philosophy to enhance notions of formal education and are dedicated to co-creating opportunities for audiences to engage with artists, ideas, artworks, and hands-on studio practice. The Learning Team incorporates values of generosity, transparency, attention, and care into our resources, public programs, and exhibition outputs. We are engaged in ongoing research partnerships, community consultation, and the development of new pedagogies that prioritise critical inquiry, slow practices, and the co-construction of knowledge and ideas.

**More-than-learning* is a theory coined by Head of Learning and Creativity Research, Lilly Blue, designed to enhance conventional curriculum aligned approaches to Gallery Education. Through *more-than-learning* we recognise the value of non-didactic, uncertain, entangled, and emotional experiences with the arts contributing to the development of crucial life skills.

George Coates, *Lady in cloak*, c 1889-c 1930, crayon and pencil





THE RESOURCE

This Exhibition Resource complements *Form and feeling: artists' studies of the twentieth century*. It has been developed by AGWA Learning to offer ALL audiences to access to a deeper engagement with the exhibition, artists and their work.

For members of the **General Public** this resource provides an insight into the exhibition, an understanding of the artists' concepts and practices, as well as connections to the wider world. The resource has been designed to evoke emotional responses and elicit open-ended discourse.

For **Teachers and Educators**, this resource supports learning alongside the exhibition and should be used in conjunction with the Early Learning, Primary and Secondary MAKING and RESPONDING resources available to download on the AGWA website. The MAKING and RESPONDING resources offer curriculum linked activities, questions, and research ideas to help guide students' further engagement in the gallery or classroom.

This resource supports AGWA's ongoing commitment to ensuring art is accessible to all.

Dora Meeson, *Portrait of Mrs A L Jenkins*, 1889-c 1953,
brown conte crayon, coloured washes and Chinese white

ABOUT

FORM AND FEELING: ARTISTS' STUDIES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

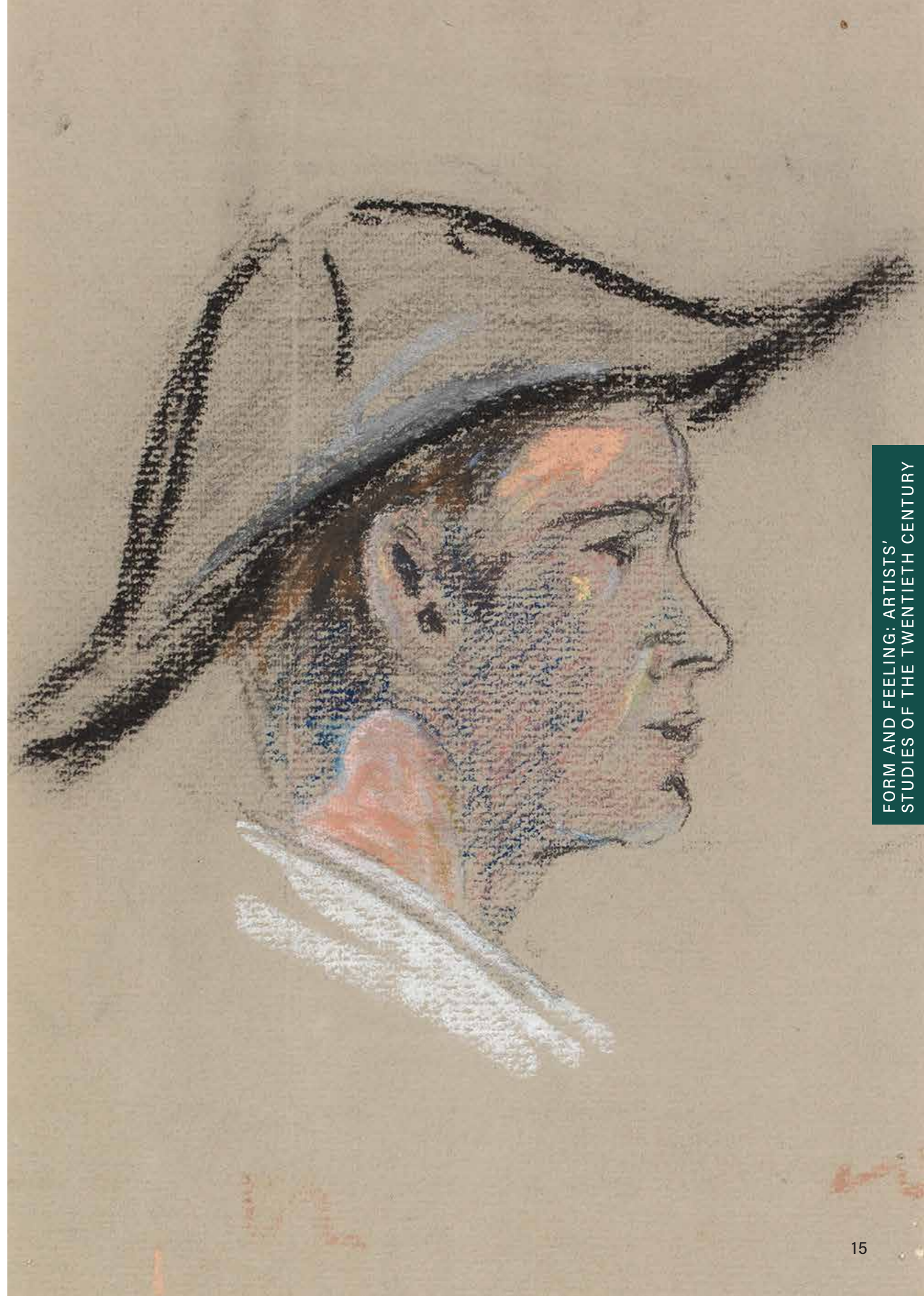
This exhibition examines a facet of British and Australian art history, in which institutional training in Britain informed the emergence of a group of radical Modern artists, who in turn influenced many who would become key figures in Australian art. Focused on the practice of drawing, it brings together significant paintings from the State Art Collection and their preparatory studies to explore technique and process: the transition from preliminary sketch to finished painting.

Key to the exhibition is the influence of the Slade School of Art, London, and British Post-Impressionist painters more generally. For the artists who emerged from this paradigm, drawing itself became the site of creativity and means of expression. Largely studio-based, they sought to capture vibrancy and movement in their figurative paintings, over and above the visual effect of light and colour sought by *plein-air* painters.

Moving away from academic approaches to painting, artists such as Spencer, Dobell and Auerbach placed an emphasis on capturing visual information (form) and emotive experience (feeling) through sketching, which was then translated into a final painting. Drysdale, Hinder and Lenski can be seen to be more calculating and mechanical, with approaches to framing, repetition and layering of compositions informed by theories of cubism and developing technological tools such as the hand-held camera. Artists' preparatory drawings are illuminating: they provide insight into an artist's practice and process, as well as the context in which they developed. This exhibition explores the commonalities and contradictions between these artists, their sketches and their paintings.

Form and Feeling also brings to the fore an element of Australian public institutional history and the politics of collecting, highlighting the focus on collecting Modern British art throughout the twentieth century, and the influence of those artists upon the Australian art scene. This was a trend of Australian public galleries throughout these years but reached a high point following WWII. AGWA's own holdings of Modern British art reflects an attempt to catch up to what other Australian institutions were doing. Much of AGWA's acquisition of these artists came in the 1970s and 1980s, after the concentrated activity of other Australian institutions had slowed down.

George Pitt Morison, not titled [study for the head of Captain C H Fremantle
for 'The Foundation of Perth'] 1929, pastel on grey paper



CURATORIAL THINKING

CURATOR: KARL SAGRABB

AGWA holds the preparatory sketches for a number of significant paintings in The State Art Collection. This exhibition emerged out of a desire to see those two forms united; the preliminary drawings in conversation with the 'finished product' or final painting. By doing so, we also sought to display numerous sketches that have never been exhibited before.

These paintings and their preliminary drawings represent a wide variety of approaches to image making, and one of the curatorial aims of the exhibition is to stage these different ways of working by artists for comparison by audiences. Key to our curatorial thinking is to engage audiences in the process of these artists, demonstrating the ways they worked through ideas and developed concepts visually.

The primary framework for the exhibition is the centrality of drawing to artistic practice historically. Drawing has been fundamental to the training provided by art schools, both in Australia and England, for hundreds of years, and this training in draughtsmanship is becoming less prevalent in contemporary schools. This exhibition positions itself in relation to an experiential mode of encountering contemporary art, encouraging audiences instead to think visually about how an artistic idea is progressed from initial concept to finished form. This may be in an artist's adherence to line and contour when drawing, in the search for ideal forms of beauty, employed by more academic painters. Or in the tight and controlled sketches of Stanley Spencer, which were Spencer's primary sites of creativity, that he then mapped very carefully into a final painting using a grid. Alternatively, it may be the expressionistic and spontaneous notation of Frank Auerbach's sketches, which sought to encapsulate a "feeling" that informed his heavily layered paintings.

Secondarily, the prevalence and influence of teaching institutions such as the Slade School of Art emerged as a key connective tissue between the artists involved. The Slade School of Art was where a cohort of British Post-Impressionist painters received their training. These artists are featured in this exhibition, are well represented in The State Art Collection, and were keenly influential over other artists and teachers in the Australian art scene. Spencer studied there, as did William Dobell, and Frank Auerbach's teacher. Russell Drysdale understood himself as rejecting a style that was too much 'of the Slade,' while George Bell was highly influenced by exhibitions of the British Post-Impressionist painters from the Slade, an influence he would bring back to Australia and teach in his school in Melbourne, kicking off debates about Modern art in Australia.

This network of connections highlighted a politics of collecting – the institutional history of Australian public galleries and the collecting of Modern British art – that is also teased out in this exhibition.

Russell Drysdale, *not titled [study for 'The gatekeeper's wife]*, c 1965, pen





THE ARTISTS

STANLEY SPENCER

Born Cookham, England 1891
Died Cookham, England 1959

Stanley Spencer studied at the Slade School of Art in 1908, the leading art school in London during this period, and was a contemporary of such British Modernist artists as Paul Nash, Ben Nicholson and Dora Carrington. His work was included in the Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition (1912) at Grafton Galleries, London, organised by Roger Fry. His training at the Slade under Henry Tonks and Philip Wilson Steer emphasised draughtsmanship, and Spencer excelled as a student, also demonstrating a love of Old Master paintings.ⁱ Spencer's originality as an artist was in his fusion of Old Masters and contemporaneous art.ⁱⁱ

Spencer achieved this fusion through his use of Biblical imagery set in his home village of Cookham. Spencer's works of the 1930s combined neo-Romantic and Surrealist representational styles, particularly distortions of scale. Meticulous drawing was central to Spencer's practice, forming the locus of his creativity, and the resulting paintings were confirmation of that early process.ⁱⁱⁱ Spencer applied colour in a flat sparing technique, yet his works are highly sensual.^{iv} In his work, Spencer identified the Spiritual in physical intimacy; as well as locating the Divine in quotidian settings.

Key to Spencer's practice are elements of personal significance, what he described as the "me-myselfness" in the subject. Spencer identified totally with Cookham village. He spent most of his life there, except for a period he viewed as "exile" in a small London flat, owing to the fact that he transferred ownership of his house to Patricia Peece and was subsequently kicked out.^v Spencer embarked on his *Christ in the Wilderness* series, identifying with Christ in his exile. He wrote, "I did... forty little squares and then filled in as many as I could with how Christ may have spent each day, the great adventure all by himself with leaves and trees and mud and rabbits and rocks, just as I was having among two chairs, a bed, a fireplace and a table."^{vi}

Stanley Spencer, *Christ in the Wilderness: The hen*, 1954, oil on canvas



THE ARTISTS

WILLIAM DOBELL

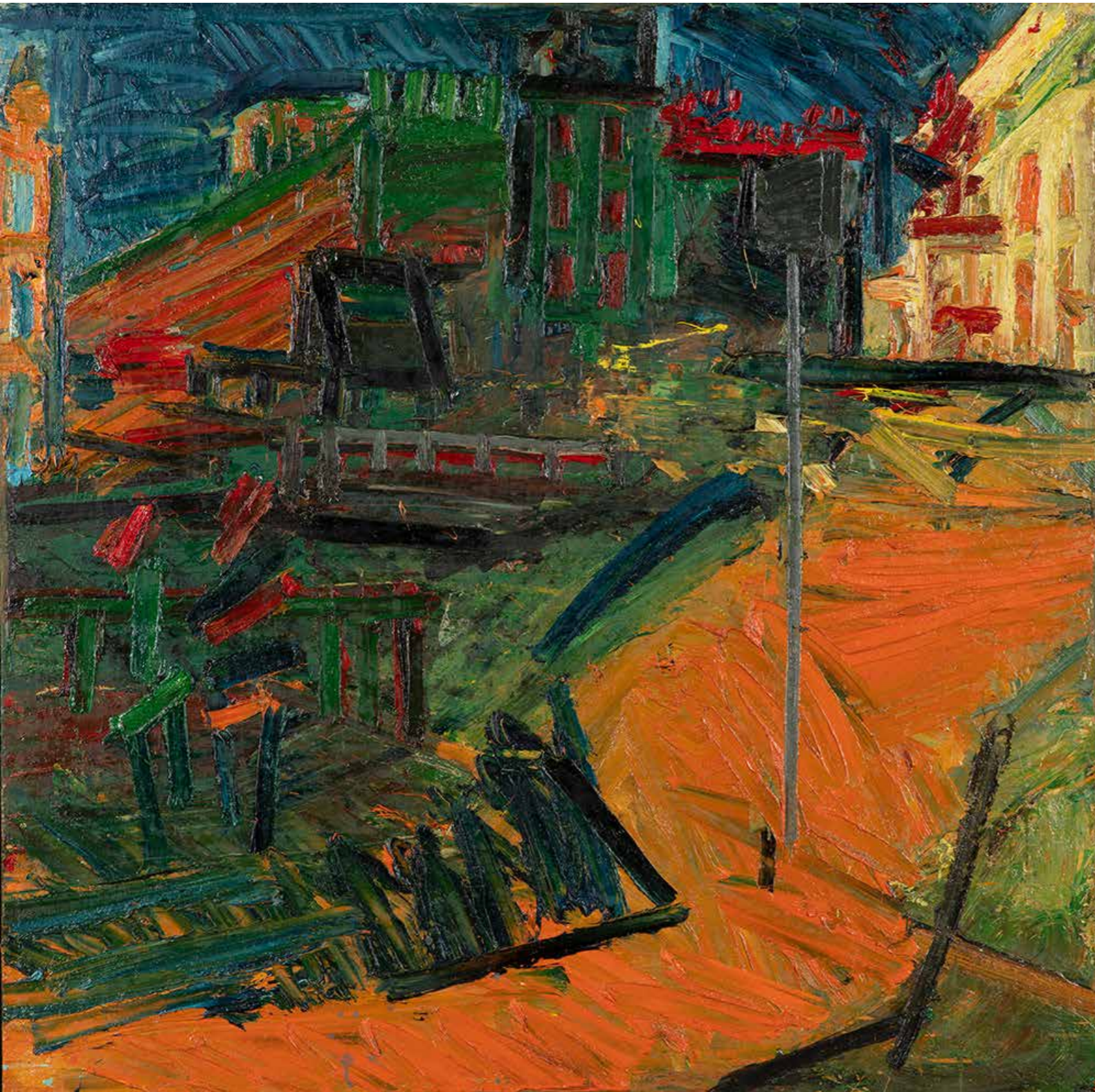
Born Newcastle, New South Wales 1899
Died Wangi Wangi, New South Wales 1970

William Dobell studied at the Julian Ashton Art School in Sydney from 1924 and from 1929 he also studied at the Slade School of Art, London, under Henry Tonks and Philip Wilson Steer, an education that insisted on good drawing skills and study of the human form.^{vii} When in London, Dobell produced quick sketches of glimpses of life in Pimlico, in the comic style of William Hogarth, that he sought to work into larger finished oil paintings. In London and Europe he was exposed to European Old Masters, such as Rembrandt, Renoir, Turner, Constable, and Ingres, and Dobell viewed himself as an academic painter following this long tradition.

His work features the techniques characteristic of the European oil painting tradition, of expressive brushwork, glazing and scumbling. Despite aligning with himself with this heritage, in Dobell's work can be seen the marks of twentieth-century modernism, in the strong colours, excess of light brushstrokes and bodily distortions.^{viii}

Dobell became known for his portraits, winning the Archibald Prize for Portraiture three times. The first was in 1943, when he won with a stylised and exaggerated portrait of Joshua Smith, a fellow artist. This win caused controversy in the Australian art world and his work was derided as a caricature, causing Dobell to retreat to Wangi Wangi away from the Sydney art scene.

William Dobell, *Rock fisherman (Portrait of Harry Stevenson)*, 1953, oil on hardboard



THE ARTISTS

FRANK AUERBACH

Born Berlin, Germany 1931
Died London, England 2024

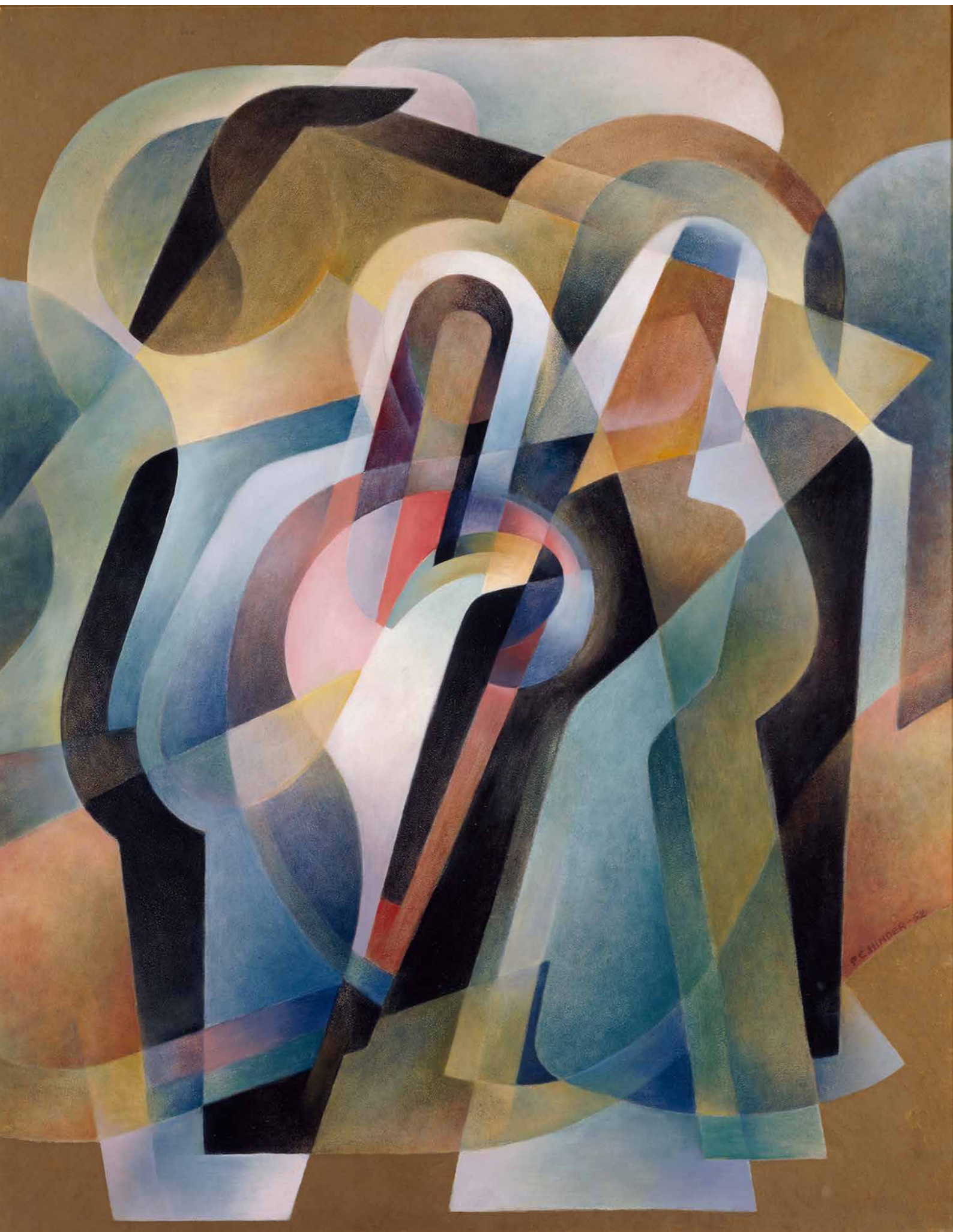
Frank Auerbach was born to Jewish parents in Berlin and was sent to England at the age of eight.^x He studied at St Martin's School of Art and the Royal College of Art but his primary influence and education was at the Borough Polytechnic.

Auerbach's practice emerged out of a shifting artistic and political milieu in the early twentieth century. Auerbach's teacher at the Borough Polytechnic, David Bomberg, was taught in the same cohort as Stanley Spencer and other notable British Modernist painters. Bomberg was taught in an academic tradition that emphasised draughtsmanship. Surprisingly, out of this academic grounding emerged a very Modern tradition of British painting and Bomberg instilled this sense of modernity in his own students.^x Uniting characteristics of artists under Bomberg were a combination of the figurative with the abstract, and a tendency towards Expressionism and heavy impasto.^{xi} These characteristics defined British painting in the 1960s, bringing Auerbach and artists such as Francis Bacon to global prominence.^{xii}

Auerbach's landscape paintings such as *Looking towards Mornington Crescent Station, Night* usually take as a starting point a number of drawings made by the artist in situ, with the final composition being arrived at in the studio. Auerbach's sketches represent an attempt to capture a fleeting emotive state inspired by the site of Mornington Crescent Station, a site that Auerbach visited and painted frequently after his walks around Camden Town, London.

Bomberg taught his students to paint "*the spirit in the mass*," and this can be seen in Auerbach's work. Auerbach's paintings seek to evoke a sense of mass in movement, and are the result of a long cyclical process of painting and erasure.^{xiii} *The spirit in the mass* can be seen very literally in the final painted work, with thick impasto built of many layers of painting, scraping away paint when it is still fresh, and re-starting the painting to create a highly vibrant and living work.

Frank Auerbach, *Looking towards Mornington Crescent Station, Night*, 1972-73, oil on hardboard



THE ARTISTS

FRANK HINDER

Born Sydney, New South Wales 1906

Died Sydney, New South Wales 1992

Frank Hinder learned to draw from his father before attending the Royal Art Society of New South Wales, learning from Antonio Dattilo-Rubbo, in 1924. Rubbo directed his students to draw, not copy, which made an impression on Hinder.^{xiv} Rubbo held a much more progressive teaching approach than other contemporaneous teachers such as Julian Ashton or Bernard Hall, who taught an entrenched academic method imported from Britain.^{xv}

Hinder toured Europe as a drummer with the Young Australia League brass band in 1925, during which time he encountered modern art and its theories from a young age.^{xvi} Hinder studied at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1927, where training in drawing, composition and broke down subjects into geometric elements. Here, Hinder viewed the painting *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte - 1884* (1884-86) by Georges Seurat, which was a major influence on his practice.

Hinder subsequently studied at the New York School of Fine and Applied Art, under Howard Giles and Emil Bisttram. Here he learned about "dynamic symmetry", which he further developed at the Master Institute at the Nicholas Roerich Museum, along with the formal language of Cubism. Hinder developed a belief that art should serve to advance civilisation and express the unity of existence, a belief he folded into his artistic practice through the theory of dynamic symmetry that described principles of geometric proportion implying growth, as opposed to static geometry. This theory linked the external world to mathematical patterns.^{xvii} During WWII, Hinder worked with the Australian Camouflage unit, using the experience to evoke speed and mechanical energy in his work, much like the European Futurists.

Hinder was a founding member of the Contemporary Art Society in Sydney, where he painted with artists such as Grace Crowley, Ralph Balson and Rah Fizelle, where he brought his interest in Cubist and Constructivist principles, as well as theosophy and anthroposophy. His work *Flight into Egypt* (1952) won the Blake Prize for Religious Art.

Frank Hinder, *Flight into Egypt*, 1952, oil and tempera on hardboard



THE ARTISTS

RUSSELL DRYSDALE

Born Sussex, England 1912
Died Bouddi, New South Wales 1981

Russell Drysdale was keenly influenced by Post-Impressionist painting and the School of Paris on his visit to Europe in 1932. He studied at the Bell-Shore school under George Bell and Arnold Shore in Melbourne, 1935-1938, and with Iain McNab at the Grosvenor School, London, as well as at La Grande Chaumière, Paris.

From his time in Europe, and studying with Bell, Drysdale developed interest in Surrealism, including that of Henry Moore, as well as the metaphysical work of Giorgio de Chirico.^{xviii} Images derived from memory and reverie, experience modified and intensified by imagination, became fundamental to Drysdale's work. Despite his embrace of Surrealist practices, Drysdale's works also reflect a highly classical approach, in particular a love of deep recession in his pictures, and highly balanced and proportioned landscapes, creating a sense of order in his pictures. He learned from Bell the necessity of drawing as an essential exploratory activity, engaging with the problems of design, composition and form.^{xix} The creative power of the artists' imagination, and painting from drawing rather than imitating from life, was instilled in Drysdale.

Drysdale spent significant time in his formative years working at his uncle's sugar plantation and as overseer at his father's pastoral property Boxwood Park.^{xx} This experience informed Drysdale's painting, displaying keen interest in Australian rural life in his pictures; this was indicative of a new era in Australian regional art.^{xxi} In 1944 the Sydney Morning Herald commissioned Drysdale to record the devastation of drought in New South Wales, an undertaking that left a lasting impression on Drysdale's art. He toured through Central and Western Australia between 1957 and 1965, painting such works as *The gatekeeper's wife* (1965). These works marked a departure for Drysdale's practice, moving away from thin shadowy figures overwhelmed by an empty landscape; instead we see the figures in this work monumentally filling the foreground.^{xxii} Drysdale gained international status for the "Australian" nature of his work which came to define the way European-Australia viewed itself following WWII.

Russell Drysdale, *The gatekeeper's wife*, 1965, oil on canvas

THE ARTISTS

WILLY LENSKI

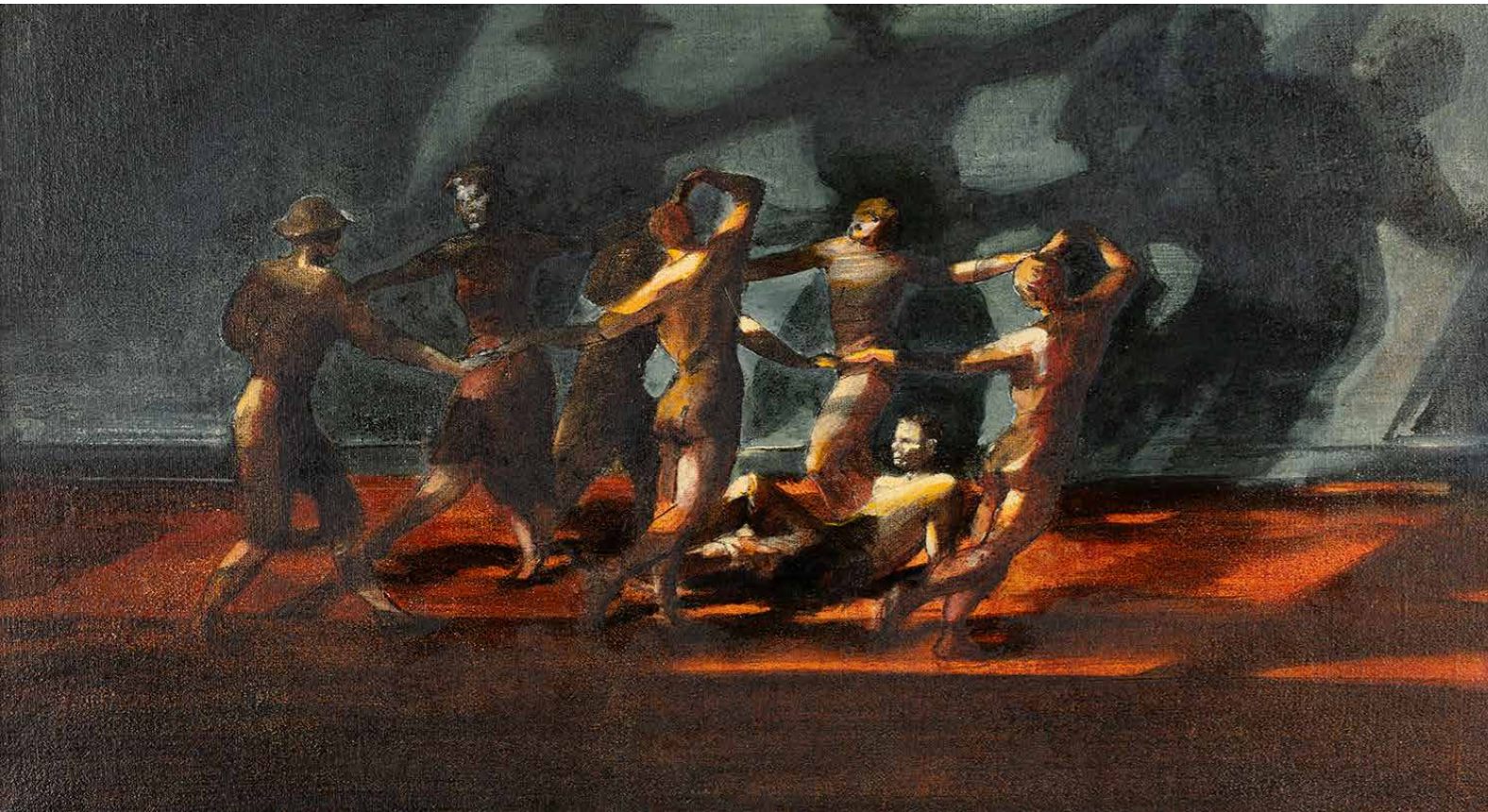
Born Catskill, New York, United States of America 1952

Died Margaretville, New York, United States of America 2014

William, or Willy, Lenski was a figurative painter influenced by early American painting and contemporary conceptual art. Lenski was known for his symbolic paintings, and the motifs he utilised in his painting also reflect his interest in film and camera effects.

Lenski was central to the Romantic revival movement that burgeoned in New York in the late 1980s.^{xxiii} The significance of subject matter and composition by intuition, an emotive and sensorial approach, demonstrates the Romanticism of the works in this movement.^{xxiv} Lenski's work uses imagery as metaphor and revives the role of allegory in painting; his motifs are stylistically European, evoking the mood of medieval Europe.^{xxv}

Lenski's painting demonstrated an unusual technique of combining Xerox and drawing. He utilised Xerox machines to recreate the imagery he held in his mind, initially sketching for a painting and photographing models or landscapes. Lenski would print these images and would assemble them as a collage on paper, then scan this image with the Xerox machine. Following this, Lenski photographed the resulting image and projected it onto canvas, where he would fill in the image with brush and oil paint.^{xxvi}



Willy Lenski, *Life may be seen as a gesture*, 1987, oil and synthetic polymer paint on jute



THE ARTISTS

KATHLEEN O'CONNOR

Born Hokitika, New Zealand 1876
Died Perth, Western Australia 1968

Kathleen O'Connor received private tuition from a young age, including from artist Florence Fuller, but struggled to find appropriate artistic tuition until Perth Art School began classes in painting and drawing in 1896. Finding that Perth offered restricted opportunities for art and inspiration, O'Connor left in 1906 and set up in Paris.

She was highly influenced by her proximity to theories of Impressionism, as well as artists such as Marc Chagall and Amedeo Modigliani. O'Connor studied with Ruper Bunny at his teaching atelier in 1909; she accompanied Bunny and fellow students Emanuel Phillips and Ethel Carrick Fox on sketching expeditions to the Luxembourg Gardens.^{xxvii} O'Connor learned mostly through proximity, attending night classes, galleries and lectures.^{xxviii} However, despite the apparent influence of Impressionism, O'Connor preferred to cite the Dutch painter Isaac Israels and the French *Nabis* artist Edouard Vuillard as key sources of inspiration.

O'Connor exhibited at the Salon d'Automne, Galerie J. Allard and the Societe des Artistes Independents. She primarily painted still life pictures and portraits, and was noted for her studies of people in Luxembourg Gardens. Notably, O'Connor rarely approached the subjects of her Gardens pictures directly, the figures are viewed from the side or behind, perhaps reflecting O'Connor's perception of herself as a perennial outsider.^{xxix}

Kathleen O'Connor, *Conversation in Luxembourg Gardens*, c 1911, oil and charcoal on card



THE ARTISTS

GEORGE BELL

Born Melbourne, Victoria 1878
Died Melbourne, Victoria 1966

George Bell was a highly instrumental figure in the development of Modern art in Melbourne. As a practicing artist, Bell made the conscious decision in the late 1920s to turn away from his traditional approach to painting and embrace Modern art. He believed his previous approach merely amounted to copying, imitating nature, whereas Modern art offered stimulation, the opportunity for experimentation and invention.^{xxx}

Bell's significance is primarily as a teacher and public champion of Modern art. Bell established the Contemporary Art Society in 1939, in opposition to the newly formed Royal Academy of Art, sponsored by Robert Menzies, that championed academic and traditional values, and he taught at the Bell-Shore school with Arnold Shore, teaching such figures as Russell Drysdale. Bell taught an emphasis on draughtsmanship and composition, as a basis from which to experiment and invent in paint. He conveyed an understanding of formal design and structural principles to his students.

George Bell, *not titled [nude study II]*, c 1898-c 1966, pen



THE ARTISTS

DORA MEESON

Born Melbourne, Victoria 1869

Died London, England 1955

Dora Meeson studied at the Christchurch School of Art and subsequently at the National Gallery School, Melbourne.^{xxxi} Meeson studied intermittently at the Slade School of Art, in 1896-98, studying under Henry Tonks, and then at the Académie Julian in 1898-99, and she exhibited at the Salon of the Académie des Beaux-Arts. Despite attending the more progressive art schools of the era and an interest in the avant-garde art of Paris, Meeson did not engage with Post-Impressionist developments in Modern art and her work remained adhered to a representational approach.

Meeson married the Australian artist George Coates, and while living in London they both worked as illustrators for the Encyclopaedia Britannica as well as Dr Henry Smith's *Historian's History of the World*. When living in Chelsea, in London, Coates and Meeson rented a studio at Trafalgar studios and became a part of a community that included Australian artists Tom Roberts and Goerge Lambert. In Chelsea, Meeson joined the Artists' Suffrage League, for which she designed political posters, illustrated booklets and painted the Commonwealth of Australia's Suffrage Banner.

Meeson was a founding member of the Society of Mural Decorators and Painters in Tempera. In 1919 she became the first Australian woman to be a member of the Royal Institute of Oil Painters. She exhibited her paintings in Australia in 1913 and 1928, had a major touring exhibition with George Coates in 1921, and was awarded an Honourable Mention at the 1923 Paris Salon.

Dora Meeson, *Portrait of Mrs A L Jenkins*, c 1889-c 1953, brown conte crayon, coloured washes and Chinese white



THE ARTISTS

GEORGE COATES

Born Melbourne, Victoria 1869

Died London, England 1930

Georges Coates studied at the North Melbourne School of Design before attending night classes at the National Gallery School, where he learned under Frederick McCubbin, becoming one of the school's most skilled draughtsman. Coates himself hosted drawing classes in his studio in Swanston Street, where he taught such students and Max Meldrum, Norman Lindsay and George Bell.

Coates studied painting under Bernard Hall in 1885-96, before travelling to London and then Paris. Here, Coates studied at the Académie Julian before moving to London with his fiancé, Dora Meeson. He exhibited at the Salon in Paris in 1898 and the Royal Academy but only received recognition 1910, with an honourable mention at the Old Salon, prominence at the 1912 Royal Academy exhibition, was elected an associate of the New Salon at the Royal Academy in 1913, and made a full member of the Royal Academy in 1927.^{xxxii} While never an official war artist, he was commissioned frequently for portraits by the Australian War Memorial.

George Coates, *Head study*, c 1889-c 1930, sanguine crayon

THE ARTISTS

GEORGE LAMBERT

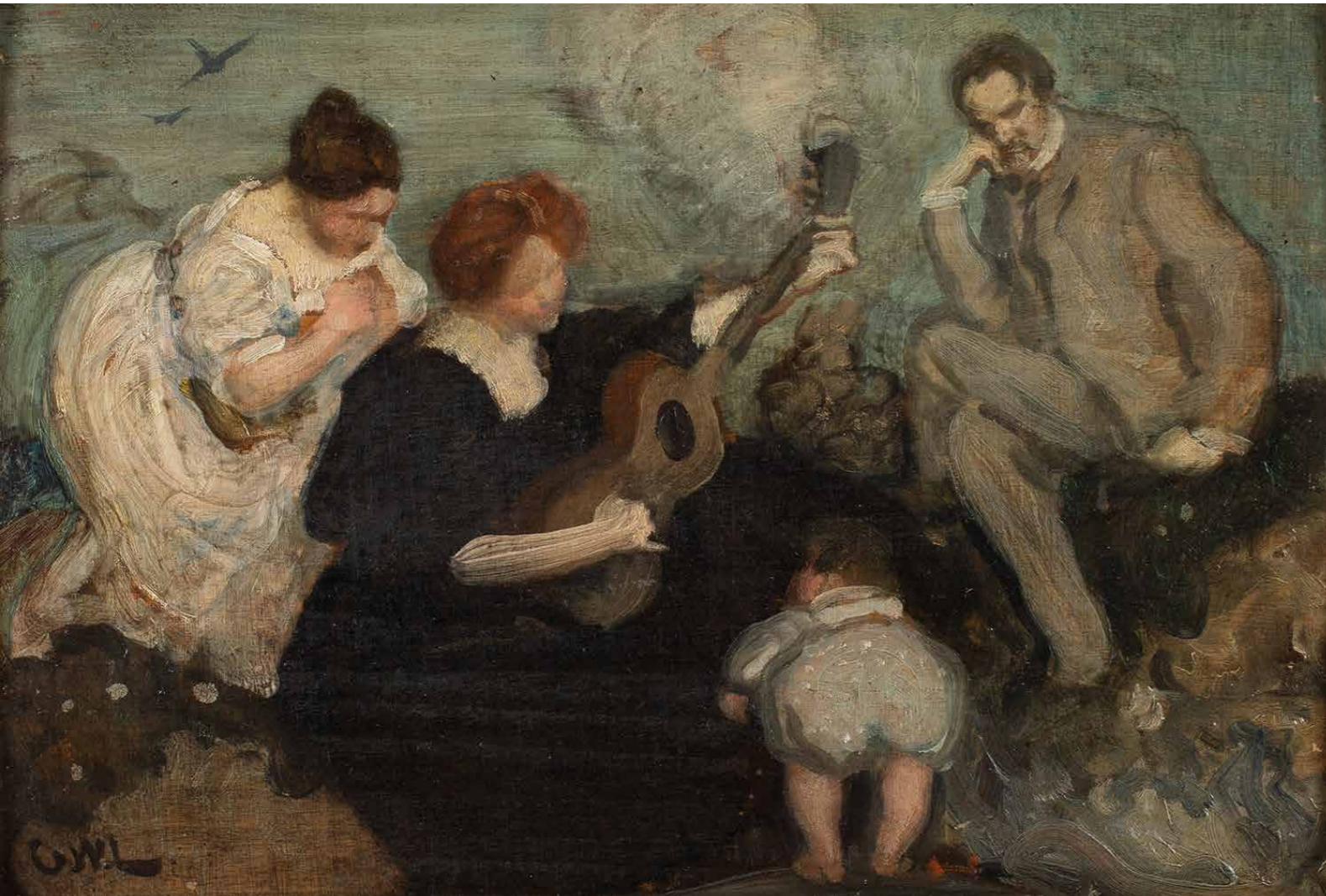
Born St Petersburg, Russia 1873

Died Cobbity, New South Wales 1930

George Lambert was a flamboyant artist, described by some as a Dandy, known for his portraiture, particularly belonging to the category of Edwardian salon portraiture.^{xxxiii}

Lambert came into prominence as a society portrait painter in Chelsea, London and spent time socialising with other expatriate artists such as Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton and George Coates. His paintings were typically large works of his family and friends, with a sober colour palette, generic landscape in the background, often silhouetting his models in front of a pale blue and white sky, and featuring a finely wrought treatment of flesh and fabric. Lambert also worked on cigar box lids made from cedar wood, in such works as *Derwent Wood and Family* (1905), which were a cheaper alternative to canvas for artists short of money.

Lambert became a dominant figure in Sydney's art scene upon his return to Australia in 1921. Australian painting had been principally focused upon landscape during Lambert's time and he sought to capture essential qualities of a place through representations of its society and people. Lambert was not himself Modern in his artistic approach but was a great supporter of artistic innovation within a formalist framework.



George Lambert, *Derwent Wood and Family*, 1905, oil on cedar panel

THE ARTISTS

GEORGE PITT MORISON

Born Melbourne, Victoria 1861
Died Melbourne, Victoria 1946

George Pitt Morison studied at the National Gallery School, Melbourne and in Paris. In 1890, he enrolled at the Académie Julian in Paris, where he studied under Jules Lefebvre and spent much of his free time sketching and painting in the French countryside. When in Australia, he worked in a photographic studio in Melbourne and at weekends joined the Heidelberg School painters. In 1894 he moved to Western Australia where he worked as manager of a photographic studio, gold prospector and draughtsman. In 1906 he joined the Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia, eventually becoming curator in 1922, and he served as in the role for 27 years.

Morison painted *The Foundation of Perth* for the centenary celebrations in 1929 and designed the centenary stamp, and it reflects a nationalistic and naturalistic approach to art that was a key part of the traditional artistic establishment in Australia.^{xxxiv} *The Foundation of Perth* (1929) and associated studies demonstrate an academic approach to painting that formed one side of a fierce artistic and cultural debate in Australia, particularly in the 1930s, that was rapidly left behind in the first half of the twentieth century.



George Pitt Morison, *The Foundation of Perth*, 1929, oil on canvas

THE ARTISTS



TOM ROBERTS

Born Dorchester, England 1856
Died Melbourne, Victoria 1931

Tom Roberts studied at the Royal Academy Schools in England, one of the first Australian artists to be accepted into the Royal Academy. In 1889, Roberts held *The 9 by 5* exhibition in Melbourne, also featuring Frederick McCubbin, Arthur Streeton and Charles Conder among others. The exhibition displayed rapid impressions of city life and the Australian landscape, painted on cigar box lids.

Considered the leader of the Heidelberg School, Roberts and his companions are attributed with creating the first distinctively Australian school of painting, through their use of Impressionist techniques and painting *en plein air*. Roberts advocated for a 'national' art, producing works that featured the light, scale and atmosphere of the bush and rural life. This nationalistic and naturalistic approach to art became quickly absorbed and was considered the kind of establishment artistic practice that Modernist advocates such as George Bell fought against.

Roberts was also a popular portraitist in Melbourne and Sydney. In Roberts' portraits, his figures are modelled with an academic emphasis on form and clarity of contour, rather than the impressionistic focus on the harshness of Australian light characteristic of his landscapes.

THE ARTISTS

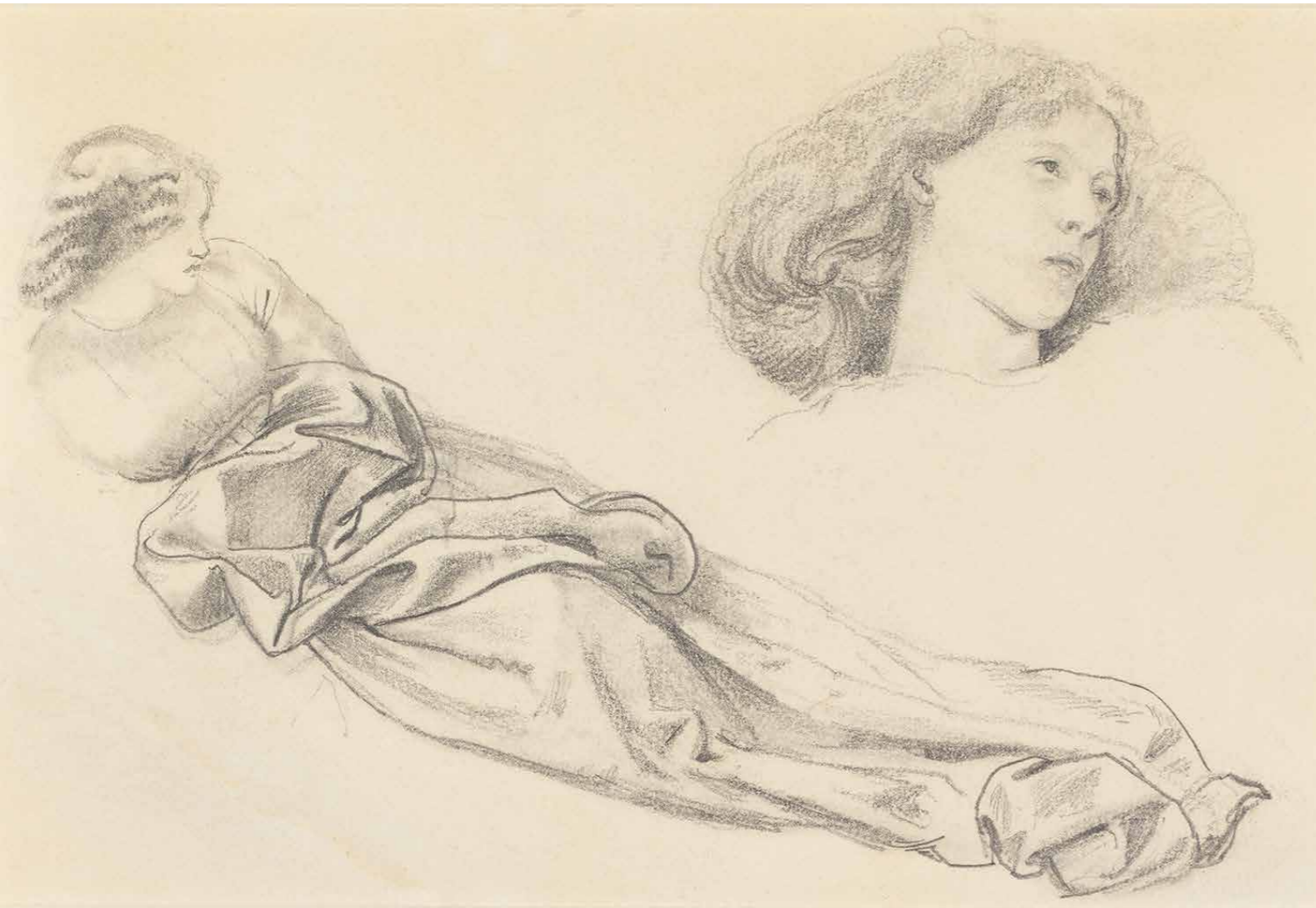
EDWARD BURNE-JONES

Born Birmingham, England 1833

Died London, England 1898

Edward Burne-Jones was an English painter associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood as well as the Aesthetic Movement in *Fin de Siècle* Europe. With William Morris, Burne-Jones was a co-founder of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co, the pre-cursor to Morris & Co. in the decorative arts. Alongside Morris, Burne-Jones worked as a designer on a variety of decorative arts, including tapestry and stained-glass windows, a practice that was revived during the nineteenth century.

Burne-Jones was highly influenced by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, founder of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and he rejected the industrialism of the Victorian age, taking inspiration instead from medieval art, religion and myths, especially Arthurian legend.^{xxxv} At the influence of Rossetti, Burne-Jones decided on a career as an artist, yet having had no formal training he sought to complete his artistic tools through rigorous study and application, becoming an exemplary draughtsman. This can be seen particularly in Burne-Jones' treatment of fabric and drapery in his drawings, a traditional focus of academic sketching, and in part informed by the designs of stained-glass.



Edward Burne-Jones, *Study of reclining draped female figure*, c 1853-c 1898, pencil



THE ARTISTS

HENRY LAMB

Born Adelaide, Australia 1883

Died Salisbury, England 1960

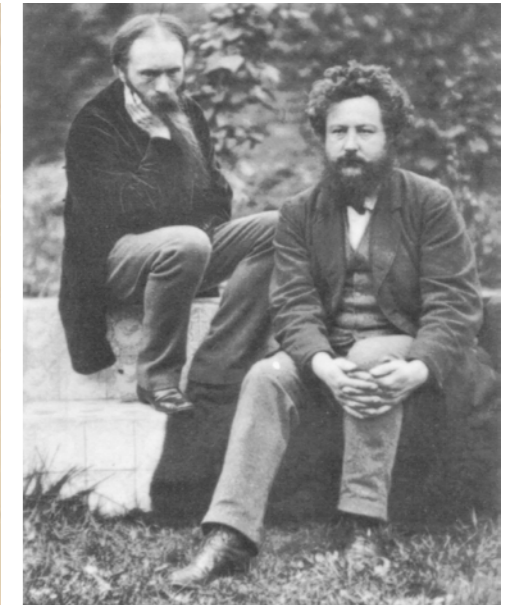
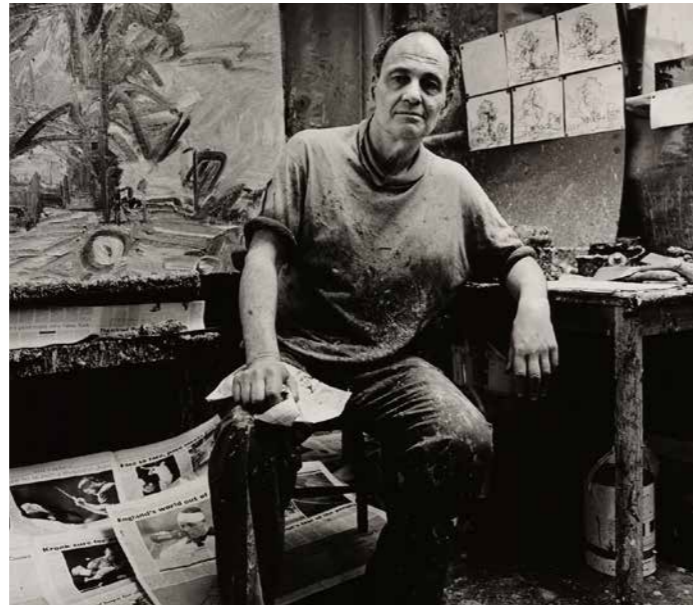
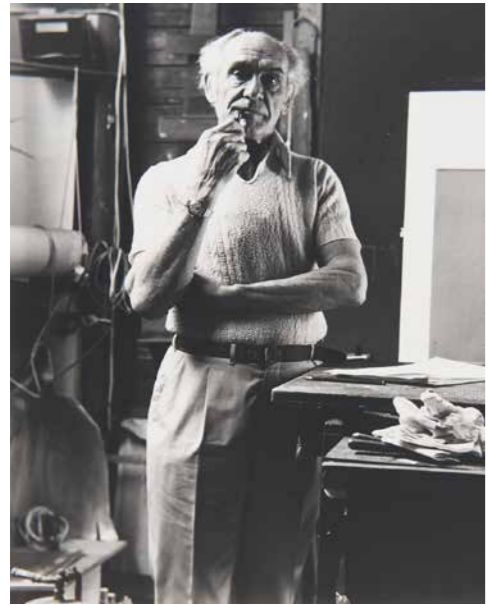
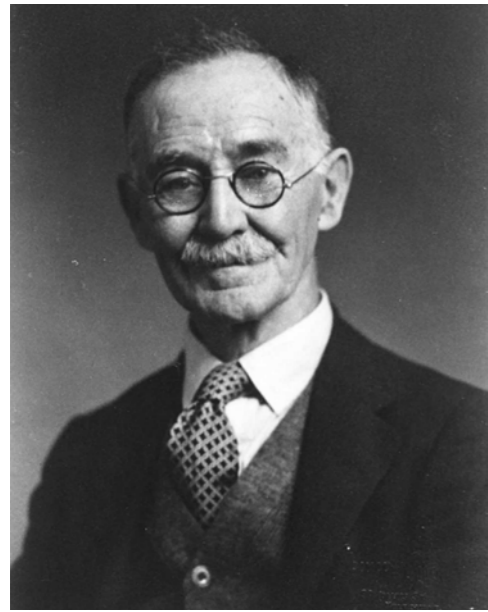
Henry Lamb was an Australian-born painter, who spent his career in England. Lamb grew up in Manchester and studied at the Chelsea Art School in 1905 run by Augustus John and William Orpen. After studying in Paris, Lamb became associated with Walter Sickert and his circle. He was a founder of the Camden Town and London Groups, and is noted for his portraits.

Lamb left a medical career behind in Manchester to pursue a career as an artist, and he encountered Spencer in 1913, at the time that he was acquiring a reputation as a portrait painter similar to Augustus John. Lamb was particularly struck by Spencer's "visionary" qualities, and purchased Spencer's Slade School's 1912 prizewinning painting *Apple Gatherers*. From this meeting Lamb took on a guiding role in Spencer's artistic development, lending him books and introducing Spencer to the proto-Renaissance Italian painters.

Lamb introduced Spencer to his most significant patrons, Mary and Louis Behrend, and in the years after WWI were united in their quest for clarity in detail, colour and light in their painting.^{xxxvi} This portrait of Spencer by Lamb demonstrates Lamb's success in this quest: with fresh translucency of white colours and the skin tone in the work appearing most similar to watercolour painting than of oils, and may also reflect his own study of fresco and tempera techniques.^{xxxvii}

This work of 1921 is one of Lamb's earliest portraits of Spencer, whom he painted on several occasions. The work is a likeness of Spencer that has been taken quickly, demonstrating Spencer's immaturity and also his eccentric perception and inner vision – for which some described Spencer as a "modern William Blake."^{xxxviii} The 1984 touring retrospective of Henry Lamb staged by the Manchester City Art Gallery described in the catalogue this portrait as "among his best work."^{xxxix}

Henry Lamb, *Portrait of Stanley Spencer*, 1921, oil on panel



Top, left to right; Unknown photographer, *George Pitt Morison*, n.d. Reproduction from artist files, The Art Gallery of Western Australia; Albert Tucker, [*Frank and Margel Hinder*], c 1939-c 1945; Hal Missingham, *Bill Dobell*, 1964; Hal Missingham, *Russell Drysdale*, 1971; Unknown photographer, *Kathleen O'Connor, Paris*, c 1928. Reproduction from artist files, The Art Gallery of Western Australia

Bottom, left to right; Richard Beck, *Frank Hinder b.1906, painter, printmaker, stage designer and teacher*, 1977; Nicholas Sinclair, *Frank Auerbach*, 1998, The National Portrait Gallery, London; George Russell Drysdale, (*Self portrait, Selbourne Road*), circa 1939, National Art Archive, Art Gallery of New South Wales; Elliott & Fry Photographers, *Tom Roberts*, 1903, Image courtesy of the State Library of Victoria; Frederick Hollyer, *Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris*, 1874

KEY THEMES

Every mark made is a conversation between thought and feeling—a journey from intention to expression.

Form and feeling delves into the intimate connection between artistic process and emotional expression. By showcasing a range of preparatory sketches alongside completed works, it highlights how artists translate raw ideas into finished pieces. Visitors are invited to engage with these early studies, witnessing how experimentation and refinement shape the final artwork.

The exhibition also explores how artists convey emotion through form, colour, and texture. Through contrasting works—from spontaneous sketches to meticulously detailed paintings—it reveals how different mediums and techniques evoke varied emotional responses.

By examining the development of ideas from concept to completion, this exhibition encourages audiences to appreciate the complexity of artistic practice and the depth of emotional storytelling embedded within each work.

01

CENTRALITY OF DRAWING
AND INSTITUTIONAL
INFLUENCE: THE
ACADEMIC-MODERN SHIFT



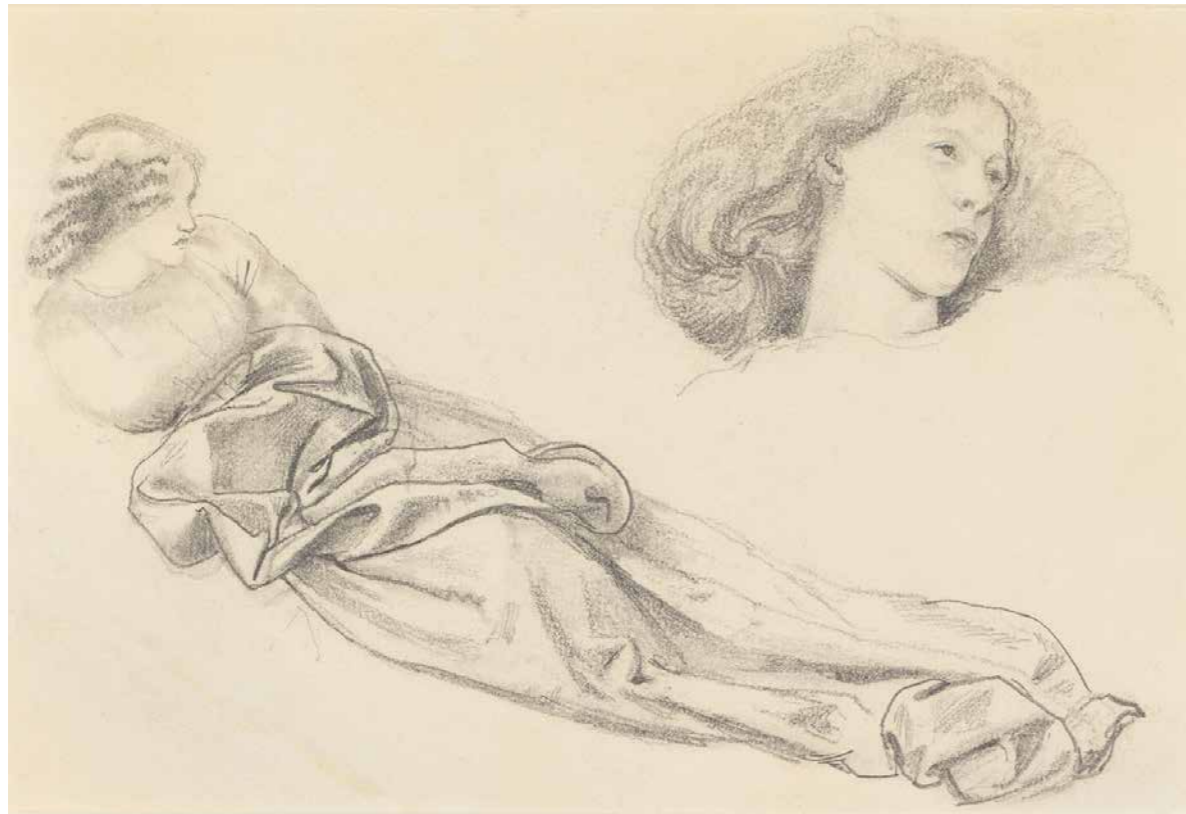
CENTRALITY OF DRAWING AND INSTITUTIONAL INFLUENCE: THE ACADEMIC-MODERN SHIFT

Drawing has been central to European, British and settler-Australian artistic practice historically, albeit subordinate to other creative forms such as painting and sculpture. Draughtsmanship formed a fundamental component to the training provided by art schools, both in Australia and England, for hundreds of years, and this training in sketching is becoming less prevalent in contemporary art schools.

George Pitt Morison, *Life study, Académie Julian, Paris 1893, 1893*, charcoal and white chalk on grey paper

G. Pitt Morison
Académie Julian
Paris 1893

Drawing is the foundation upon which every masterpiece is built—a silent language connecting thought to form.



above; Edward Burne-Jones, *Study of reclining draped female figure*, c 1853-c 1898, pencil
right; Edward Burne-Jones, *Study of two full-length draped female figures*, c 1853-c 1898, pencil and black chalk





At the turn of the twentieth century, academic settings such as The Royal Academy of Art, London, or the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris, were the sites of training for many British and Australian artists. The academic approach to painting involved working from the discipline of drawing, with drawing functioning primarily as a study tool, the composition built through numerous sketches in pencil and oil. These academies taught a keen emphasis on draughtsmanship, and an emphasis of line and contour was passed on from teacher to student. This emphasis can be seen in the studies by artists such as Edward Burne-Jones, George Coates, Dora Meeson, Tom Roberts, and George Pitt Morison.

George Coates, *Lady in cloak*, c 1889-c 1930, crayon and pencil

Drawing is the backbone of artistic creation—a timeless discipline that transforms observation into expression, shaping generations of artists from foundational sketches to masterful works



Tom Roberts, *Portrait drawing*, c 1895-c 1900, charcoal on paper

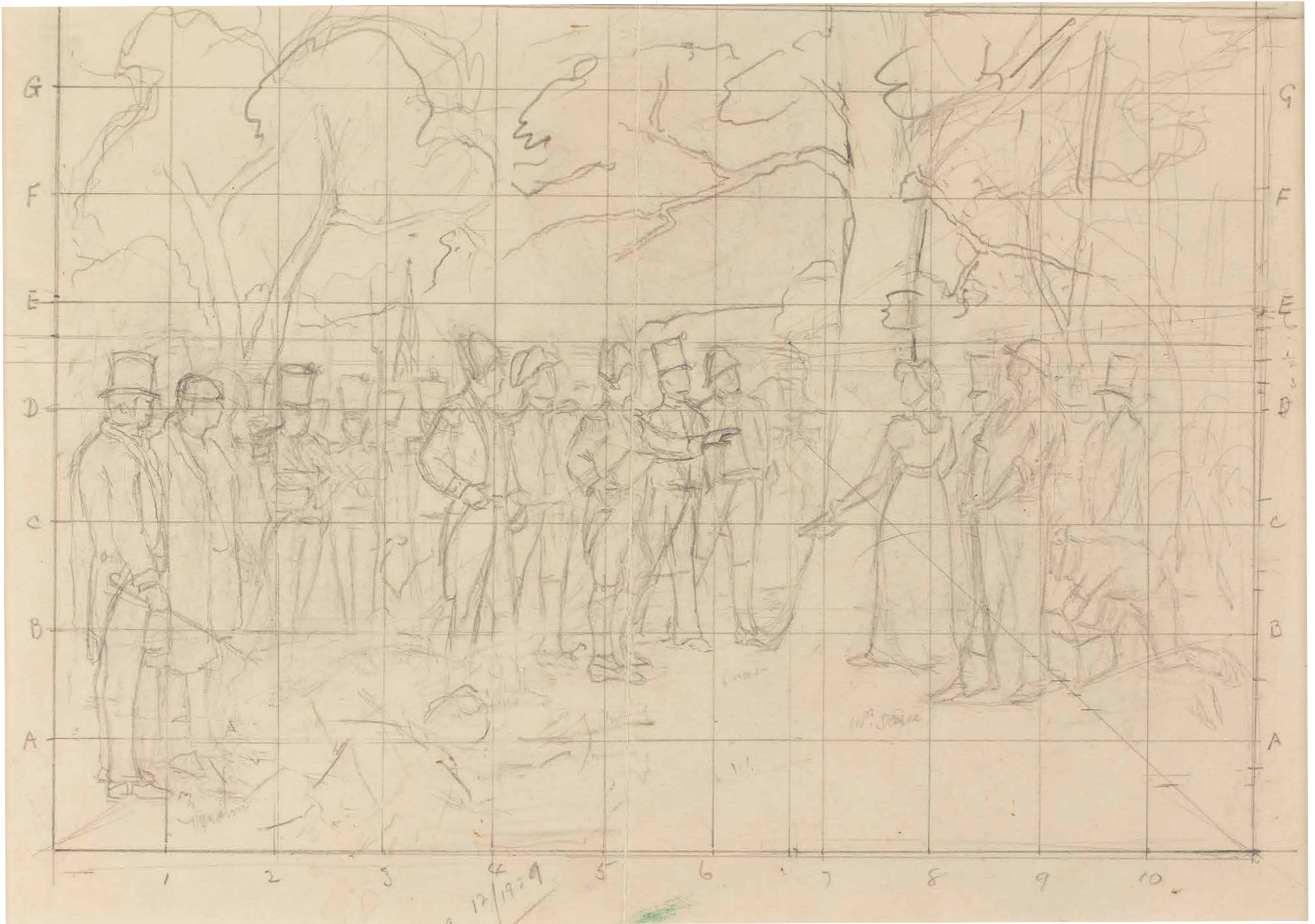
"Life drawing" was common practice, as was drawing from busts of classical sculpture and studying from works of so called 'Old Masters,' such as Titian, Michael Angelo, Raphael, and later referents such as Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres. In these schools, this training was based on the precept that such an education would instil an intellectual dignity in these artists, providing an aesthetic and moral quality to their work. The studies created by artists were often used to inform component parts of a much larger project, or to inform the structure of composition. Such studies show a working of figures to be included in larger genre paintings, such as History Paintings, in which artists staged grand events from history or mythology. As artists were likely unable to hire a host of models to pose in a configuration, artists would make studies of smaller components within the composition to assemble into the finished painting later.

This can be seen in the studies and final painting for *The Foundation of Perth*, by George Pitt Morison, a painting done in 1929 to commemorate the centenary of the foundation of the City of Perth. Like all History Paintings, this work presents an imagining of the artist, and not a historical document. In an illuminating anecdote: the central jarrah tree of the composition, felled in the story of the ceremony, is found to have been a sheoak. The work is somewhat of an exception in Pitt Morison's practice, who was more known for his naturalistic and Impressionistic style, developed with the painters from the Heidelberg School, and preferred subject of the landscape. Pitt Morison's oeuvre is in keeping with the developments of Modern art, Impressionism, and en plein air painting of the late nineteenth century, yet *The Foundation of Perth* reflects a very traditional type of genre painting and a very academic method of working.



Traditional art education emphasised life drawing, studies of classical sculptures, and works by Old Masters like Titian, Michelangelo, and Raphael to instil intellectual and moral depth in artists. These studies often served as preparatory work for larger compositions, such as History Paintings, where artists combined smaller figure studies into grand historical or mythological scenes.

George Pitt Morison, *The Foundation of Perth*, 1929, oil on canvas



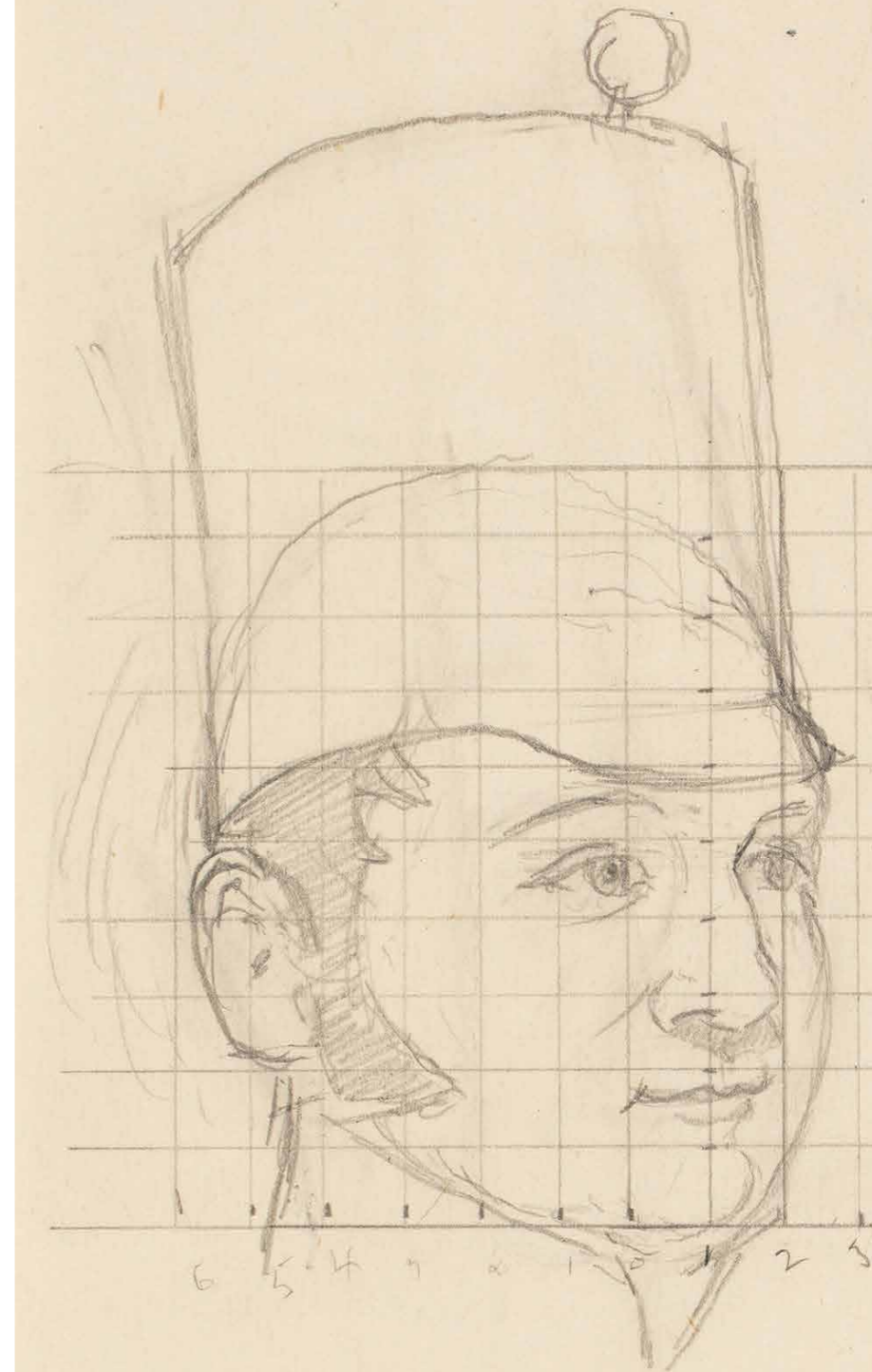
George Pitt Morison, Squared study for 'The Foundation of Perth', 1929, pencil

As Modernity and Modern Art developed throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, art schools emerged that presented an alternative vision and practice to the major academies. These included the Académie Julian in Paris, where such students as Australians Dora Meeson and George Coates attended, and The Slade School of Art. Yet even these more progressive institutions placed significant focus on draughtsmanship, with life drawing and a strong focus on contour remaining central to their instruction.

The Slade School of Art is an institution with particular significance to the exhibition, along with the influence of British Post-Impressionist painters on the development of Modern art in England and Australia. Stanley Spencer and William Dobell attended the Slade, as did Frank Auerbach's teacher: David Bomberg. Russell Drysdale viewed himself as distinct from the Slade's "style", yet was taught by George Bell, who was keenly influenced by artists of the Slade generation.

In the early years of the 1910s, under the auspices of teachers Fred Brown and Henry Tonks, artists were taught at the Slade with a strict emphasis on draughtsmanship. This pedagogical approach is a remnant of the academy; preliminary drawings as a tool of academic study, compared to the immediacy of Impressionistic painting, the *du jour* style of the time. Out of this academic grounding emerged a very Modern cohort of British painters; yet a cohort grounded in the primacy of drawing. For figures like Bomberg, who would become Auerbach's teacher, in order to produce a simplified and abstracted vision of the world, an artist must first master it in detail. The transition from detailed study to abstraction and reduction, condensing and strengthening visual rhythms, was a key element of Bomberg's teachings, which was informed by his own training at the Slade.

This period in English art was one of dramatic change, stimulated in part by Roger Fry's two Post-Impressionist exhibitions, in 1910 and 1912, and the display of Italian Futurist works at the Sackville Gallery, London, in 1912. Figures like Spencer and Bomberg were highly influenced by the exhibition curated by Roger Fry 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists' (London: Grafton Galleries, 1910). These artists were keenly influenced by Cezanne, Van Gogh, and Gauguin, in their search for a mode of painting that evoked expressiveness and life.



George Pitt Morison, *not titled [study for the head of a soldier for 'The Foundation of Perth']*, 1929, pencil

02

THE OLD AND THE NEW:
THE INFLUENCE OF THE
ITALIAN RENAISSANCE
AND MECHANICAL
/ TECHNOLOGICAL
DEVELOPMENTS



Stanley Spencer, *Christ in the Wilderness: The foxes have holes*, 1939, oil on canvas

THE OLD AND THE NEW: THE INFLUENCE OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE AND MECHANICAL / TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Many of the artists in *Form and Feeling* represent a very Modern approach to image making; yet emerging from a traditional artistic education with an emphasis on draughtsmanship, some of these artists share a love for Old Master paintings, particularly those of the Italian proto-Renaissance and Renaissance.

For example, Spencer was enamoured by the fresco painters of the trecento, artists such as Giotto and Fra Angelico. Spencer believed that such painters shared in his childlike wonder at the world and an acceptance as natural and quotidian the divine and miraculous. Spencer was drawn to the notion of a specifically designed chapel as a house for an artist's work, drawing from examples such as Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, and the early fourteenth-century frescoes of Giotto that tell the story of the life and death of Christ. Spencer thought of himself as a muralist, linked to these early fresco painters of pre-Renaissance Italy. He identified with the notion of art specifically for buildings and paintings that could then be accessible to a whole community. This desire is reflected in Spencer's ambitions for 'Church House,' a space that Spencer envisaged as a home for all his artworks, with an emphasis on spiritual and physical love, featuring secular ideals and Christian themes. A key feature of this space was to be the *Christ in the Wilderness* series of paintings.

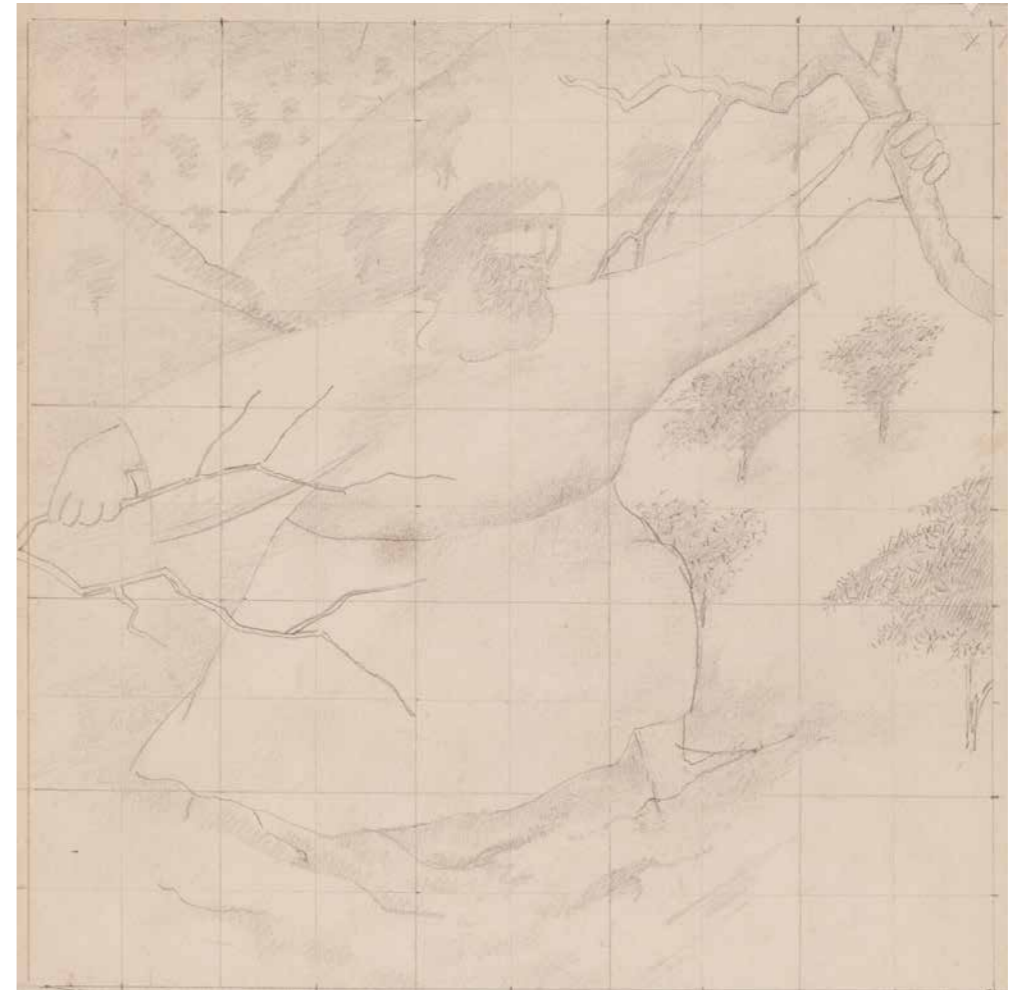
This series was to be of 40 paintings, one for each day of Lent, and for each day one painting was to be placed on the mantelpiece in Church House. Sadly, neither Church House nor the completed series of *Christ in the Wilderness* came to fruition, and only 8 paintings were completed.



left; Stanley Spencer, *Christ in the Wilderness: The foxes have holes*, 1939, oil on canvas
above; Stanley Spencer, *Christ in the Wilderness: The foxes have holes*, c 1938-c 1939, pencil



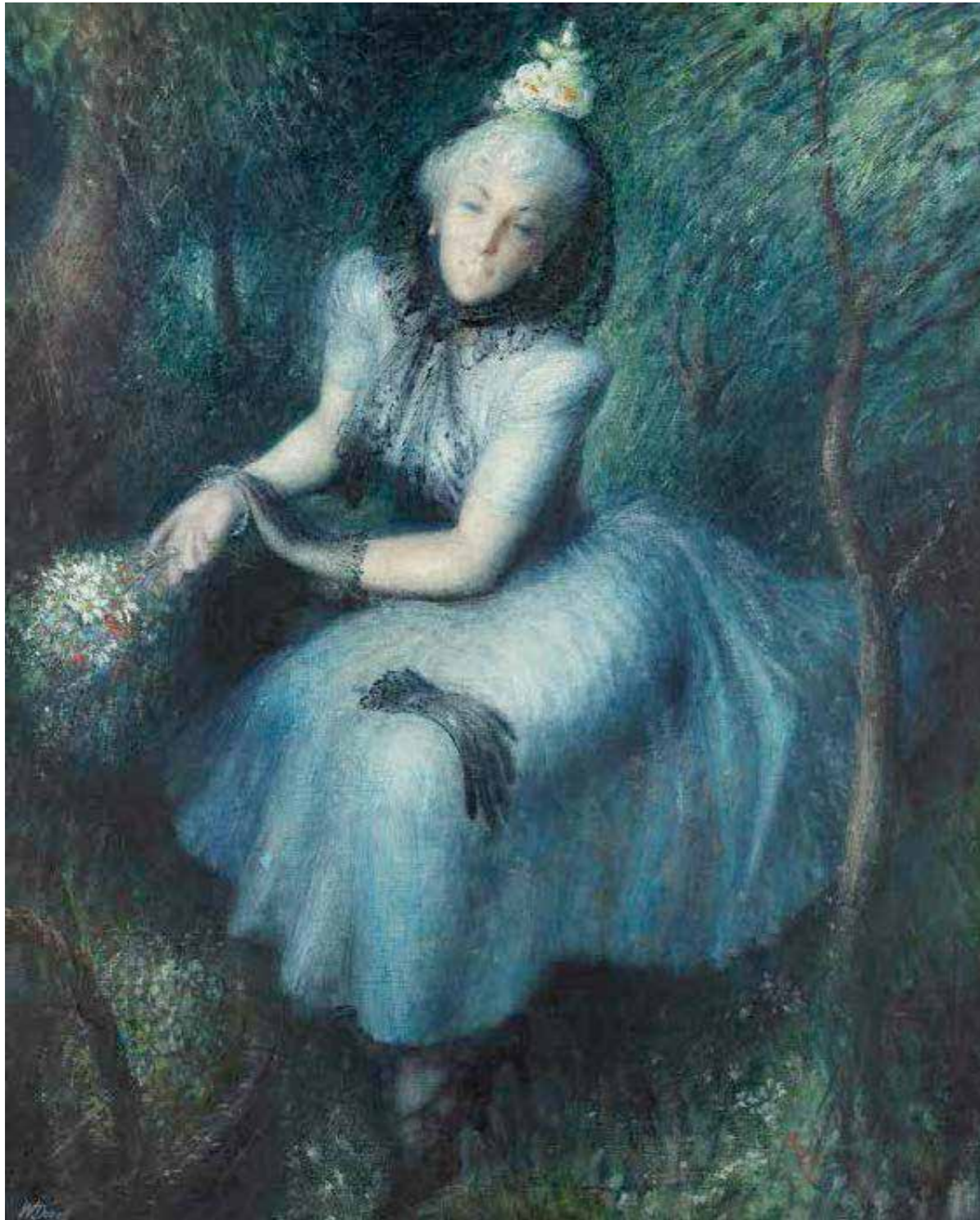
left; Stanley Spencer, *Christ in the Wilderness: Consider the lilies*, 1939, oil on canvas
above; Stanley Spencer, *Christ in the Wilderness: Consider the lilies*, c 1938-c 1939, pencil



left; Stanley Spencer, *Christ in the Wilderness: Driven by the spirit into the wilderness*, 1939, oil on canvas
above; Stanley Spencer, *Christ in the Wilderness: Driven by the spirit into the wilderness*, c 1938, pencil

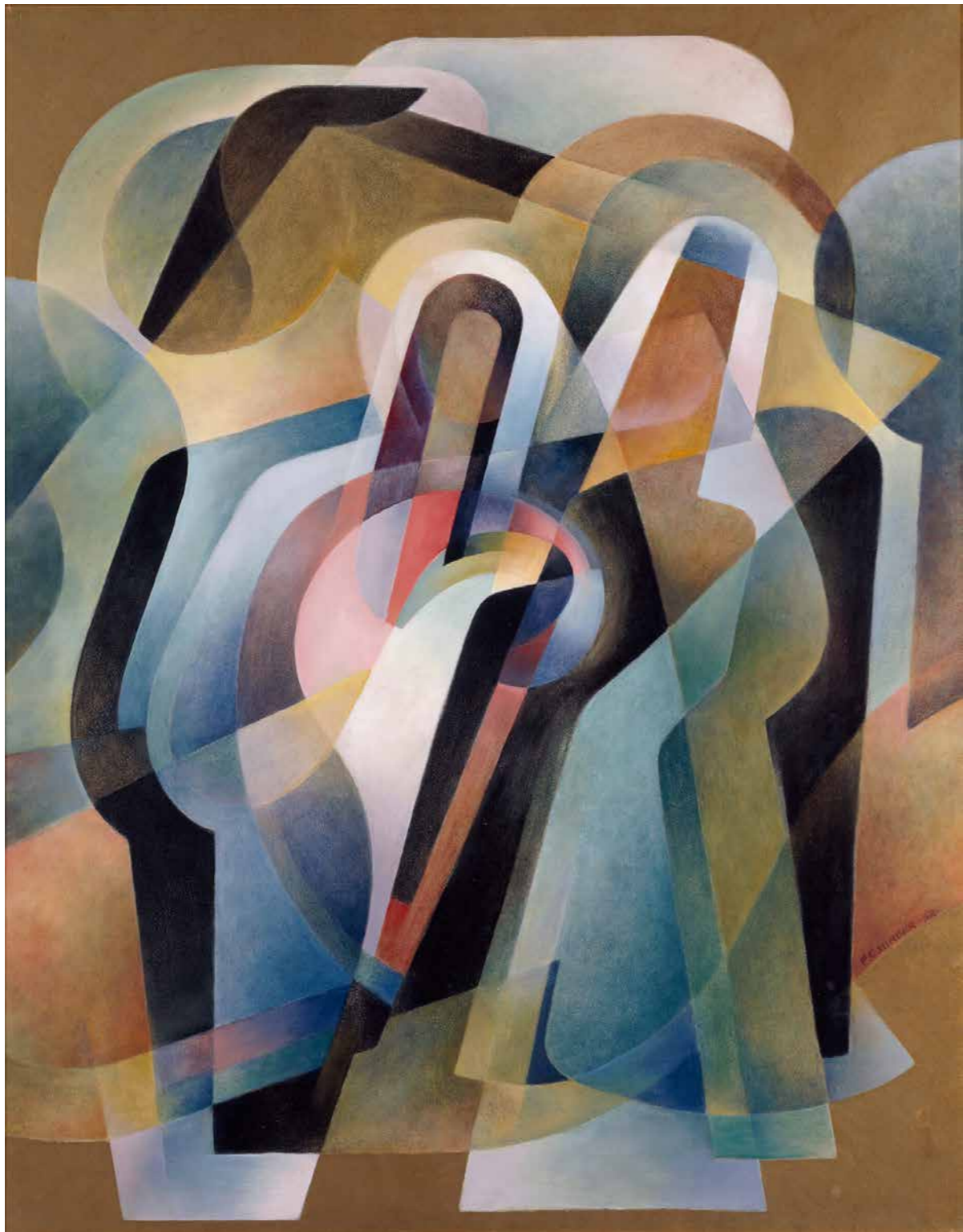


left; Stanley Spencer, *Christ in the Wilderness: The hen*, 1954, oil on canvas
above; Stanley Spencer, *Christ in the Wilderness: The hen*, c 1939-c 1954, pencil



When in London, Dobell made great study of works by Rembrandt, Renoir, Turner, Constable, and Ingres. He viewed himself as an academic painter in a long tradition. His close friend, Eric Wilson, read Bernard Berenson's *The Italian Painters of the Renaissance* and influenced Dobell in the direction of Mannerist forms, in the elongation and exaggeration of proportions, and a formality and assurance derived from Italian Mannerist portraits.

William Dobell, *Portrait of Elaine Haxton*, 1941, oil on canvas



Everything had to work together and you had to use your imagination ... You could do it free-hand to start with, but then you were encouraged to use set squares and compasses and relate things in a geometrical manner

Frank Hinder

Frank Hinder studied at the Master Institute at the Nicholas Roerich Museum, a centre for art, science and spirituality where Hinder developed a belief that art should serve both to advance civilisation and express a unity of existence. Here he was introduced to the formal language of Cubism and Jay Hambidge's theory of dynamic symmetry, as well as the works of early-Renaissance artists such as Piero della Francesca, whose techniques influenced Hinder's subsequent medium of choice: egg tempera, worked over pencil, in quattrocento colours.

Frank Hinder, *Flight into Egypt*, 1952, oil and tempera on hardboard

Russell Drysdale was keenly influenced by the powerful imagery of European Surrealism, including the Surrealist element of Henry Moore's work, and the metaphysical architectural imagery of Italian Surrealist painter Giorgio di Chirico. Drysdale's teacher, George Bell, taught in the tradition of Raphael, emphasising life drawing and the study of composition. Drysdale was rigorous about squaring up his drawings and framing sketches such that apparently random elements would be balanced and proportioned. His work features deep and rapid recession in perspective, a highly classical element from paintings of the Renaissance, and despite the Modernity of Drysdale's style, his landscapes seek order, measure and balance. Drysdale consciously sought to give his figures the nobility of form of classical sculpture.



Russell Drysdale, *The gatekeeper's wife*, 1965, oil on canvas



Russell Drysdale



top left; Frank Auerbach, *Study for 'Looking towards Mornington Crescent Station, Night'*, c 1972-c 1973, pencil on cartridge paper

top right; Frank Auerbach, *Study for 'Looking towards Mornington Crescent Station, Night'*, c 1972-c 1973, pencil and coloured crayon on cartridge paper

bottom left; Frank Auerbach, *Study for 'Looking towards Mornington Crescent Station, Night'*, c 1972-c 1973, pencil and coloured crayon on cartridge paper

bottom right; Frank Auerbach, *Study for 'Looking towards Mornington Crescent Station, Night'*, c 1972-c 1973, pencil on cartridge paper

I paint the places and the people I know well, in order to find their unique image. I find it all very difficult.

Frank Auerbach, 1958

Frank Auerbach revered the past and is determined to paint as if there was no breach between it and the present. Auerbach rarely left his local environment in North London, except to look at old-master paintings at the National Gallery. Auerbach's teacher, David Bomberg, imparted the art historical influence of Giotto, Michelangelo, da Vinci and Raphael among others, and it was the clarity and strength of their artistic vision that Bomberg sought to convey to his students.

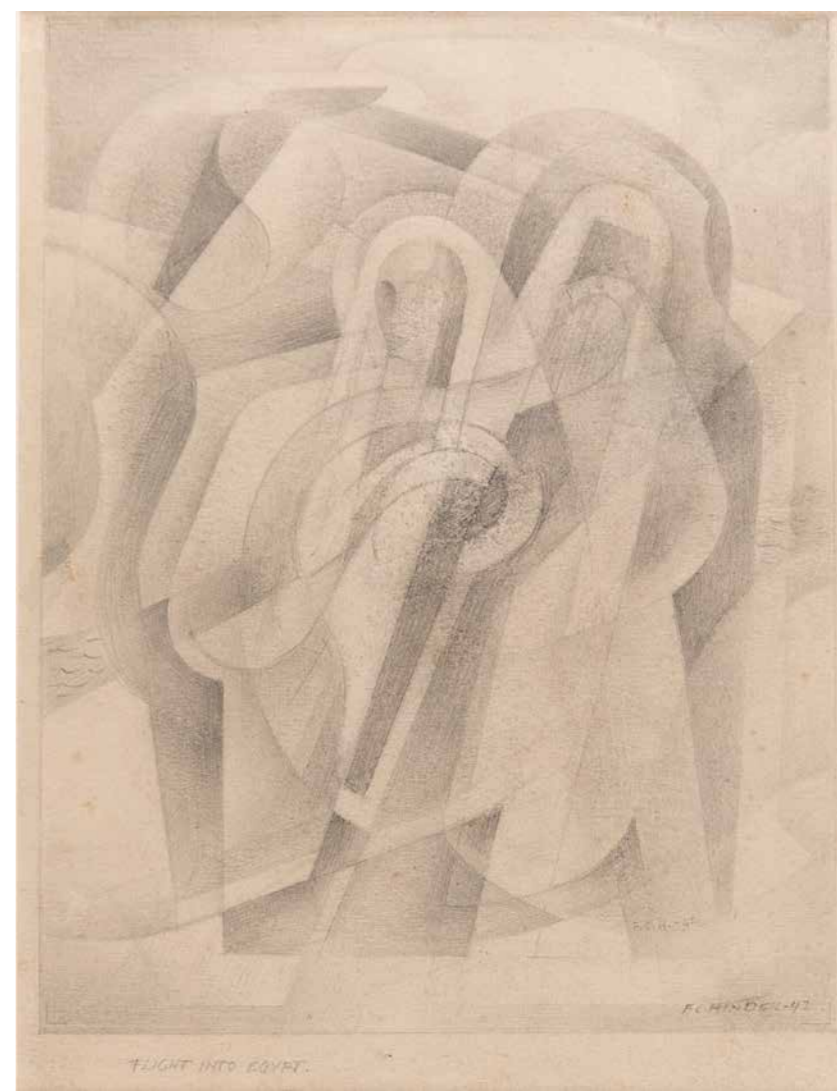
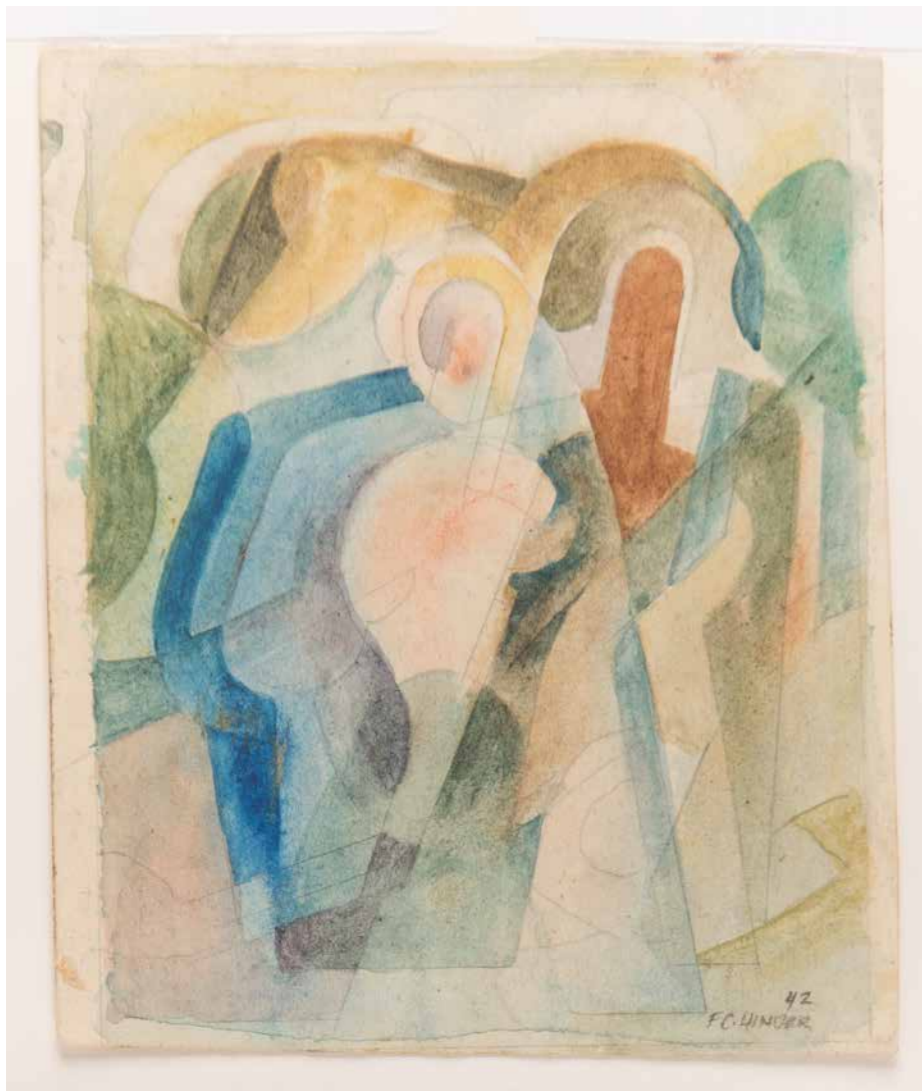
In contrast to the classical influence of the Renaissance, artists in this show also demonstrate the use of developing mathematical concepts and technological tools in their composition. The twentieth century saw rapid technological change and developments in theoretical mathematics, where some artists would come to find a kind of transcendentalism, on the basis of a belief in the spiritual nature of geometry.

In contrast to the free and expressive modes of image making utilised by other artists in this show, these artists employed a much more calculating and mechanical approach. For instance, while also informed by techniques of the Italian Renaissance, in the 1930s Frank Hinder was keenly influenced by the formal language of cubism and theory of "dynamic symmetry", which posited that principles of geometric proportion could imply movement and growth.

Through the geometric and organic ordering of space in an artwork, these theories of geometry linked the external world to mathematical pattern, and sought to make science visible – exploring the structural effect of colour and the dynamic illusion of movement. By layering his forms over one another and also layering paper, using "onion skin" paper for the pencil and coloured pencil *Flight into Egypt* so as to trace from the pencil work, Hinder creates a collage of forms, using a highly organised and structured form of composition to create movement. The graphite and coloured pencil study reveals why Hinder would have wanted to make a copy of the composition.

On the bottom sheet, Hinder has drawn – possibly traced – the design of the composition in pencil; over the top he has laid a second piece of onion skin and uses the visible pencil outline to experiment with colouring and shading. The viewer sees the two sheets of onion skin combined. Using a transparent top sheet would have allowed Hinder to 'colour in' the lower pencil outline as many times as he chose. It is a unique insight into Hinder's creative input in what has, in essence, derived from a very structured law of organisation. We are able to chart his process of thinking and rethinking the colour, before arriving at his ultimate vision.





left; Frank Hinder, *not titled (study for 'Flight into Egypt')*, c 1951, pencil and watercolour wash
centre; Frank Hinder, *not titled (study for 'Flight into Egypt')*, c 1951, pencil and watercolour wash
right; Frank Hinder, *Flight into Egypt*, c 1951, pencil

Fashioning the book [of Xeroxes] was a good experience for me. In the future I'll probably do one for each group of paintings. It's an alternative to cramming notebooks with bits of paper and it makes museological sense; with the exception of the three original drawings, the rest of the ... work on ... five paintings was executed with the Xerox machine. So I guess we could consider this book a close-to-ideal map of the reification of the image in the painting.

Willy Lenski, 1988



Willy Lenski, *Cutout study with 3 figures for 'Life may be seen as a gesture', 1987,*
Xerox with opaque white, sepia and masking tape

Russell Drysdale and Willy Lenski were influenced by developments in photographic technology. Drysdale adopted the use of a hand-held Rolleiflex camera on his journeys around Australia, in particular in the 1950s and 1960s.

This use of the camera informed his compositions, with his figures often staged as if lining up for a photograph. Drysdale was interested in the way that people presented themselves to the camera's lens, and he frequently used the camera as an aide memoir if he needed more than his memory to recreate an image. Many of Drysdale's paintings have a uniquely low viewpoint, which is a direct result of his use of the Rolleiflex camera.

This type of camera was typically held at the chest and focused by looking down through the viewfinder. Similarly, Willy Lenski utilised the developing photographic technology of his time, the Xerox machine. With the Xerox, Lenski was able layer his drawings, creating a rich collage-style study that would inform his final painting.

03

INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY:
THE POLITICS OF
COLLECTING



Stanley Spencer, *Christ in the Wilderness: The foxes have holes*, 1939, oil on canvas

INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY: THE POLITICS OF COLLECTING

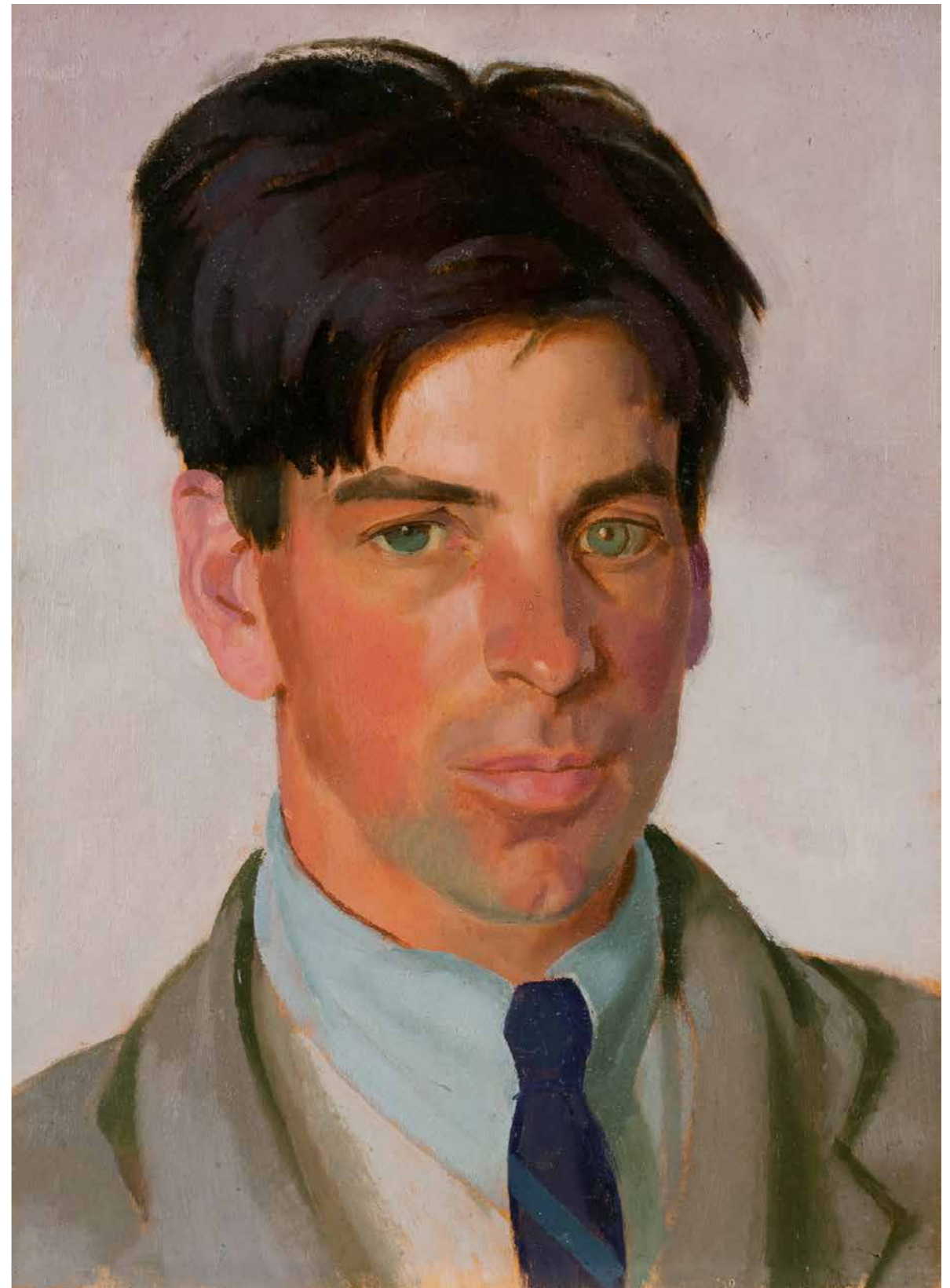
The influence of the Slade School of Art among these artists speaks to a tradition of Australian public institutions and the politics of collecting practices in the twentieth century. The majority of artists in this exhibition are men, and most if not all have a connection to England in their biography and artistic education. The predominance of male artists in this exhibition reflects the inherent bias in institutions and the way they approached developing their collections in the twentieth century. In addition, the collecting of preliminary drawings by an artist is sketchy and sporadic, and not approached methodically. Often, drawings come to institutions courtesy of the artist, who may provide the sketches with the painting when a gallery buys it. This means that when institutions did direct their focus to collecting art by women, rarely were any sketches also acquired.

Australian public galleries, including the Art Gallery of Western Australia, have substantial collections of British art, in particular Modern British art. This reflects a perception, particularly at an institutional level, of the 'Britishness' of Australian society, a feeling that was reinforced by the involvement of Australia and New Zealand in the First and Second World Wars.

The 1930s were a key moment in the appreciation in Australia of Modern British art, a result of increasingly ambitious loan exhibitions from the UK that gave Australian audiences the opportunity to see the contemporary art being made in England. These exhibitions included artists like Henry Lamb (represented in this exhibition) and Walter Sickert, as well as more radical artists such as Paul Nash, and Ben Nicholson— all of whom are represented in The State Art Collection.

A key exhibition was *The Loan Collection of Contemporary British Art*, including artists such as Stanley Spencer, which stimulated a major debate in Australia about Modern Art, concluding with the conservative support by Robert Menzies for the creation of an Australian Academy of Art, dedicated to traditional and academic values.^{xi} In response, a group of artists, led by George Bell, created the Contemporary Art Society in Melbourne in 1938.

This group was modelled on a British group of the same name, which was known for selecting Modern Art to reside in the Tate. With Arnold Shore, Bell and Shore opened the Bell-Shore school in 1932 as a centre of Modern art in Melbourne. Bell taught and influenced key figures in Australian Modern art, including Drysdale, and informed critical debates about the future of art in Australia in the twentieth century. The exhibition was supported by the Herald and managing director Sir Keith Murdoch, and was immensely popular, gaining standing from the fact that it would go on display at the Tate once back in England. Critics, however, saw the Modern painters in the exhibition as a radical sub-group within the overarching category of British art. Paintings by artists such as Stanley Spencer were criticised for their lack of spatial value, the exaggerated proportions of the figures, distorted perspective and primacy of colour.



Henry Lamb, *Portrait of Stanley Spencer*, 1921, oil on panel

Australian galleries, including the Art Gallery of Western Australia, hold significant collections of Modern British art, reflecting strong historical ties to Britain, especially post-World Wars. The 1930s saw a rise in appreciation for Modern British art through major UK loan exhibitions featuring artists like Henry Lamb, Walter Sickert, and Stanley Spencer.

Debates over Modern Art led to Robert Menzies supporting the traditional Australian Academy of Art, while George Bell and Arnold Shore founded the Contemporary Art Society in 1938 to promote Modernism. Though popular, Modern British works faced criticism for their bold use of colour, distorted forms, and unconventional perspectives.

The National Gallery of Victoria led the way in Australia in the collecting of Modern British art in the 1930s; yet following these significant exhibitions of British art, a period of substantial resistance to new ideas in art and a deep conservatism set in. This was rocked by the Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art exhibition in Melbourne, 1939, another project supported by the Herald and Sir Keith Murdoch. This exhibition shook the Melbourne art world and Australian audiences were able to see works by Picasso, Matisse and other members of the French avant-garde for the first time.

Yet the British-Australian art interchange (although it is a pretty uni-directional relationship) dried up with the outbreak of WWI: the Australian Government's restrictions on currency transfers halted much purchasing of British art by Australian institutions. Meanwhile, contemporary art in London flourished, with high patronage for exhibitions depicting the war effort. The War Artists' Advisory Committee (WAAC) directed policy during the war about the place of art in a modern state, and was headed by Kenneth Clark. Under the WAAC, the travelling Exhibition of British War Pictures came to Australia in 1943 and in 1948, under the auspices of the Ministry of Information. The British Government gifted 65 war pictures to fourteen Australian public galleries, including AGWA.

The decade following this gift saw the peak of institutional buying of Modern British art by Australian galleries. In the late 1940s, after a suite of shows of British contemporary art generated by the British council for the commonwealth, as a means to foster cultural connections in the wake of the dismantling of the Empire, the Contemporary Art Society, headed by George Bell, became increasingly active in assisting Australian and New Zealand collections to acquire British art. A key part of the interest in this brand of British contemporary art was in its "Englishness." With the recognition of the influence of French and American painting on the ultra-contemporary painters in the late fifties, this fascination with British painting on the part of Australian institutions ebbed.

The decade after WWII saw a peak in collecting British art by Australian public institutions, when a sense of shared experience and shared culture continued to bond Britain and Australia together; and following this, in the 1960s onwards there was a decrease in interest in Modern British art, when Australia's cultural and political points of reference distinctly shifted. Interestingly, much of AGWA's collection of Modern British art was acquired in the in 1970s.

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xi (Aspinall, 2020)
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xxi (Russell Drysdale | Art Gallery of NSW, n.d.)
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xxiv (Tucker, 1982)
xxv (Martin, 1989, p. 9)
xxvi (M. Lenski, personal communication, 2024)
xxvii (A PRIVATE COLLECTION OF WORKS BY KATHLEEN O'CONNOR LOTS 35 – 41 | Deutscher and Hackett, n.d.)
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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

London Group

An exhibiting group of artists, committed to advancing the cause of contemporary art and defined in opposition to the Royal Academy's conservatism. This group took over from the Camden Town group of painters in the early twentieth century, as well as featuring Bloomsbury and Vorticist movements. The group included such figures as David Bomberg and Frank Auerbach over its lifespan; it lost its prominence as a leading advocate for Modern British art in the 1930s but still exists today.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/l/london-group>

Camden Town group

Artists of the Camden Town Group painted representational scenes of city life, as well as landscapes, in post-impressionist styles. The group is named after the part of north London where Walter Sickert had lived in the 1890s. Sickert's series of Camden Town nudes and his paintings of alienated couples in interiors are particularly notable components of Camden Town art.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/camden-town-group>

Bloomsbury Group

Bloomsbury is the name commonly used to identify a circle of intellectuals and artists who lived in Bloomsbury, near central London, in the period 1904–40. Key figures were Vanessa Bell, Roger Fry, and Duncan Grant, as well as writers Virginia Woolf, Lytton Stachey and critic Clive Bell. This group is significant for bringing Modern French art to London and the development of Modernist art theory, influencing post-impressionism in England and introducing abstraction.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/b/bloomsbury>

Landscape

One of the major genres, or subjects, of Western art, Landscape as a subject matter in its own right only emerged in the seventeenth century. Previously, landscapes only featured as the background of portraits or History paintings. The appreciation of nature for its own sake and its subsequent prominence as an artistic subject emerged in the seventeenth century, alongside scientific and philosophical developments that explored and classified the natural world. The French academy classified genres of art in seventeenth century, placing landscape fourth out of five. Landscape painting became immensely popular in the nineteenth century, with an understanding of the natural world as a pure manifestation of God's designs, as well increasing industrialisation leading to alienation of people from their natural surroundings.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/l/landscape>

Genres

Genres are types of subjects for painting. Five specifically approved subjects were given a hierarchy of importance in the seventeenth century from History, Portrait, Genre (scenes of everyday life), Landscape and Still Life by the French Royal Academy. This hierarchy of genres was based on the notion that humans were the measure of all things, the pinnacle of God's designs. Landscape and Still Life were the lowest genres as they did not feature human subjects. History was highest because it is concerned with the noblest events of human history and religion.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/g/genres>

The Academy

Established during the Renaissance and widespread by the seventeenth century, academies were artist-run organisations whose aim was to improve the professional standing of artists as well as to provide teaching. These Academies organised exhibitions of members' work, providing a marketplace for artists for the first time and removing the limitations of direct patronage from Royal, private, or Religious sources. The most notable of these exhibitions became the Salon, at the Academy in Paris.

The most powerful academy was the French Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture in the Louvre, Paris. Following the French Revolution, the name was changed to Académie des Beaux-Arts. These academies became highly conservative over their time, and from the nineteenth century innovative artists often positioned themselves in opposition to the Academy.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/academy>

History Painting

The term 'history painting' was introduced by the French Royal Academy in the seventeenth century. It was seen as the most important type (or 'genre'), of painting above portraiture, the depiction of scenes from daily life (called genre painting), landscape and still life painting. (See the glossary page for genres to find out more).

Although initially used to describe paintings with subjects drawn from ancient Greek and Roman (classical) history, classical mythology, and the Bible; towards the end of the eighteenth century history painting included modern historical subjects such as battle scenes painted by artists. The style considered appropriate to use for history painting was classical and idealised – known as the 'grand style' – and the result was known overall as High Art. During the first half of the nineteenth century history painting was one of the few ways that the British public could experience its overseas Empire. In this context, history painting became a form of documentation, albeit reliant on an artist's imagination and narratives.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/h/history-painting>

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Impressionism

Impressionism developed in France in the nineteenth century and is based on the practice of painting out of doors and spontaneously 'on the spot' rather than in a studio from sketches. Main impressionist subjects were landscapes and scenes of everyday life.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/i/impressionism>

En plein air

The French term plein air means out of doors and refers to the practice of painting entire finished pictures out of doors

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/plein-air>

Post-Impressionism

Post-impressionism is a term which describes the changes in impressionism from about 1886, the date of last Impressionist group show in Paris. The term is usually confined to the four major figures who developed and extended impressionism in distinctly different directions – Paul Cezanne, Paul Gauguin, Georges Seurat and Vincent van Gogh. Post-impressionism as a term was first used by British artist and art critic Roger Fry in 1910 when he organized the 1910 exhibition Manet and the Post-Impressionists.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/post-impressionism>

Modernism

Modernism refers to a global movement in society and culture that from the early decades of the twentieth century sought a new alignment with the experience and values of modern industrial life. Building on late nineteenth-century precedents, artists around the world used new imagery, materials and techniques to create artworks that they felt better reflected the realities and hopes of modern societies.

The terms modernism and modern art are generally used to describe the succession of art movements that critics and historians have identified since the realism of Gustav Courbet and culminating in abstract art and its developments in the 1960s.

Although many different styles are encompassed by the term, there are certain underlying principles that define modernist art: A rejection of history and conservative values (such as realistic depiction of subjects); innovation and experimentation with form (the shapes, colours and lines that make up the work) with a tendency to abstraction; and an emphasis on materials, techniques and processes. Modernism has also been driven by various social and political agendas. These were often utopian, and modernism was in general associated with ideal visions of human life and society and a belief in progress.

By the 1960s modernism had become a dominant idea of art, and a particularly narrow theory of modernist painting had been formulated by the highly influential American critic Clement Greenberg. A reaction then took place which was quickly identified as postmodernism.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/m/modernism>

Abstract Art

Abstract art is art that does not attempt to represent an accurate depiction of a visual reality but instead uses shapes, colours, forms and gestural marks to achieve its effect.

The term can be applied to art that is based on an object, figure or landscape, where forms have been simplified or schematised.

It is also applied to art that uses forms, such as geometric shapes or gestural marks, which have no source at all in an external visual reality. Some artists of this 'pure' abstraction have preferred terms such as concrete art or non-objective art, but in practice the word abstract is used across the board and the distinction between the two is not always obvious.

Abstract art is often seen as carrying a moral dimension, in that it can be seen to stand for virtues such as order, purity, simplicity and spirituality. Since the early 1900s, abstract art has formed a central stream of modern art.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/abstract-art>

IMAGE CREDITS

Frank Auerbach *Looking towards Mornington Crescent Station, Night* (1972-1973)
oil on hardboard 127 x 126.5 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1974
© Frank Auerbach 1974
Photo: Bo Wong

Willy Lenski *Figure cutout as insert for composition study 'Life may be seen as a gesture'* (1987)
pencil and masking tape on vellum tracing paper 20.5 x 22.5 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of the Artist, 1988
© Willy Lenski 1988
Photo: Christophe Canato

George Coates *Lady in cloak* (c 1889-c 1930)
crayon and pencil 44.5 x 26.8 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of Dora Meeson, 1934
Photo: Christophe Canato

Dora Meeson *Portrait of Mrs A L Jenkins* (c 1889-c 1953)
brown conte crayon, coloured washes and Chinese white 61.9 x 47.8cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of Vaughan Jenkins, 1953
Photo: Christophe Canato

George Pitt Morison *not titled [study for the head of Captain C H Fremantle for 'The Foundation of Perth']* (1929)
pastel on grey paper 23.5 x 16 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of Miss Margaret Pitt Morison, 1978
Photo: Bo Wong

Russell Drysdale *not titled [study for 'The gatekeeper's wife']* (c 1965)
pen 38.8 x 25.3 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 2010
© The Estate of Russell Drysdale

William Dobell *Rock fisherman (Portrait of Harry Stevenson)* (1953)
oil on hardboard 151 x 100.3 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1955
Photo: Christophe Canato

Frank Hinder *Flight into Egypt* (1952)
oil and tempera on hardboard 96.5 x 75.5 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of the Friends of the Art Gallery, 1953
© The Estate of Frank Hinder 1983

Russell Drysdale *The gatekeeper's wife* (1965)
oil on canvas 100.3 x 125.7 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1965
© The Estate of Russell Drysdale

Willy Lenski *Life may be seen as a gesture* (1987)
oil and synthetic polymer paint on jute 50.9 x 92.2 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1988
© Willy Lenski 1988
Photo: Bo Wong

Kathleen O'Connor *Conversation in Luxembourg Gardens* (c 1911)
oil and charcoal on card 19 x 23.5 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1966
© Kathleen O'Connor Advisory Committee
Photo: Bo Wong

George Bell *not titled [nude study I]* (c 1898-c 1966)
pencil 38.4 x 28.2 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of anonymous donor under the Commonwealth Government's Cultural Gifts Program, The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation, 2010
© The Estate of George Bell 2010

George Coates *Head study* (c 1889-c 1930)
conte crayon 39.5 x 25.1 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of Dora Meeson, 1934
Photo: Christophe Canato

George Lambert *Derwent Wood and Family* (1905)
oil on cedar panel 24.1 x 32.5 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1978
Photo: Bo Wong

George Pitt Morison *The Foundation of Perth* (1929)
oil on canvas 96.5 x 137.8 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of George Pitt Morison, 1929

Tom Roberts *Portrait drawing* (c 1895-c 1900)
charcoal on paper 22.5 x 25.5 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1971

Edward Burne-Jones *Study of reclining draped female figure* (c 1853-c 1898)
pencil 20.5 x 25.5 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1906
Photo: Bo Wong

Henry Lamb *Portrait of Stanley Spencer* (1921)
oil on panel 33.9 x 24.5 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1975
Photo: Bo Wong

George Pitt Morison *Life study, Académie Julian, Paris 1893* (1893)
charcoal and white chalk on grey paper 60.6 x 40.2 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1905
Photo: Bo Wong

Edward Burne-Jones *Study of two full-length draped female figures* (c 1853-c 1898)
pencil and black chalk 29.6 x 19.6 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1906
Photo: Bo Wong

George Pitt Morison *Squared study for 'The Foundation of Perth'* (1929)
Pencil 27.9 x 37.9 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of Miss Margaret Pitt Morison, 1978
Photo: Bo Wong

George Pitt Morison *not titled [study for figure of the axe-man for 'The Foundation of Perth']* (1929)
pencil 28.1 x 18.7 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of Miss Margaret Pitt Morison, 1978
Photo: Bo Wong

IMAGE CREDITS

George Pitt Morison *not titled [study for the head of Mrs Dance for 'The Foundation of Perth']* (c 1928-c 1929)
pencil
22.2 x 16.9 cm (irregular)
550 x 400 (mount STD Small 4 Ply)
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of Miss Margaret Pitt Morison, 1978
Photo: Bo Wong

George Pitt Morison *not titled [study for an officer for 'The Foundation of Perth']* (c 1928-c 1929)
pencil
19.1 x 14.2 cm (irregular)
550 x 400 (mount STD Small 4 Ply)
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of Miss Margaret Pitt Morison, 1978
Photo: Bo Wong

George Pitt Morison *not titled [study for the head of a soldier for 'The Foundation of Perth']* (1929)
pencil 19.2 x 14.3 cm (irregular)
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of Miss Margaret Pitt Morison, 1978
Photo: Bo Wong

Stanley Spencer *Christ in the Wilderness: The foxes have holes* (1939)
oil on canvas 54.8 x 54.6 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1983
© Estate of Stanley Spencer. All rights reserved 2024 / Bridgeman Images
Photo: Christophe Canato

Stanley Spencer *Christ in the Wilderness: The foxes have holes* (c 1938-c 1939)
pencil 26.4 x 26.3 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1983
© Estate of Stanley Spencer. All rights reserved 2024 / Bridgeman Images
Photo: Christophe Canato

Stanley Spencer *Christ in the Wilderness: Consider the lilies* (1939)
oil on canvas 56.5 x 56.5 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1983
© Estate of Stanley Spencer. All rights reserved 2024 / Bridgeman Images
Photo: Christophe Canato

Stanley Spencer *Christ in the Wilderness: Consider the lilies* (c 1938-c 1939)
pencil 26.3 x 26.2 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1983
© Estate of Stanley Spencer. All rights reserved 2024 / Bridgeman Images
Photo: Bo Wong

Stanley Spencer *Christ in the Wilderness: Driven by the spirit into the wilderness* (1942)
oil on canvas 56.5 x 56.5 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1983
© Estate of Stanley Spencer. All rights reserved 2024 / Bridgeman Images
Photo: Christophe Canato

Stanley Spencer *Christ in the Wilderness: Driven by the spirit into the wilderness* (c 1938-c 1942)
pencil 27 x 26.1 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1983
© Estate of Stanley Spencer. All rights reserved 2024 / Bridgeman Images
Photo: Christophe Canato

Stanley Spencer *Christ in the Wilderness: The hen* (1954)
oil on canvas 58 x 58 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1983
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Photo: Christophe Canato

Stanley Spencer *Christ in the Wilderness: The hen* (c 1939 -c 1954)
pencil 26.5 x 26.5 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1983
© Estate of Stanley Spencer. All rights reserved 2024 / Bridgeman Images
Photo: Bo Wong

William Dobell *Portrait of Elaine Haxton* (1941)
oil on canvas 107.3 x 89.1 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased through the Great Australian Paintings Appeal, 1980
Photo: Bo Wong

Russell Drysdale *not titled [studies for 'The gatekeeper's wife']* (c 1964)
pen and brown ink 25.3 x 37.7 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of the artist, 1965
© The Estate of Russell Drysdale
Photo: Rebecca Mansell Photography

Frank Auerbach *Study for 'Looking Towards Mornington Crescent Station, Night'* (c 1972-c 1973)
pencil on cartridge paper 22.7 x 22.7 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of Frank Auerbach, 1974
© Estate of Frank Auerbach
Photo: Bo Wong

Frank Auerbach *Study for 'Looking Towards Mornington Crescent Station, Night'* (c 1972-c 1973)
pencil and coloured crayon on cartridge paper 22.6 x 23.2 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of Frank Auerbach, 1974
© Estate of Frank Auerbach
Photo: Bo Wong

Frank Auerbach *Study for 'Looking Towards Mornington Crescent Station, Night'* (c 1972-c 1973)
pencil and coloured crayon on cartridge paper 22.5 x 22.5 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of Frank Auerbach, 1974
© Estate of Frank Auerbach
Photo: Bo Wong

IMAGE CREDITS

Frank Auerbach *Study for 'Looking Towards Mornington Crescent Station, Night'* (c 1972-c 1973)
pencil on cartridge paper 22.6 x 23.2 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of Frank Auerbach, 1974
© Estate of Frank Auerbach
Photo: Bo Wong

Frank Hinder *Flight into Egypt* (c 1951)
pencil and coloured pencil 26.3 x 20.6 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of Frank Hinder, 1983
© The Estate of Frank Hinder 1983
Photo: Christophe Canato

Frank Hinder *not titled [study for 'Flight into Egypt']* (c 1951)
pencil and watercolour wash 12.1 x 10.2 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of Frank Hinder, 1983
© The Estate of Frank Hinder 1983
Photo: Christophe Canato

Frank Hinder *not titled [study for 'Flight into Egypt']* (c 1951)
pencil and watercolour wash 14.2 x 11.5 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of Frank Hinder, 1983
© The Estate of Frank Hinder 1983
Photo: Christophe Canato

Frank Hinder *Flight into Egypt* (c 1951)
pencil 26.9 x 21.6 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of Frank Hinder, 1983
© The Estate of Frank Hinder 1983
Photo: Christophe Canato

Willy Lenski *Cutout study with 3 figures for 'Life may be seen as a gesture'* (1987)
Xerox with opaque white, sepia and masking tape
21.6 x 23.5 cms
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Gift of the Artist, 1988
© Willy Lenski 1988
Photo: Christophe Canato

Stanley Spencer *Christ in the Wilderness: The foxes have holes* (1939)
oil on canvas 54.8 x 54.6 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1983
© Estate of Stanley Spencer. All rights reserved 2024
/ Bridgeman Images
Photo: Christophe Canato

William Dobell *not titled [study for 'Rock fisherman (Portrait of Harry Stevenson)']* (c 1953)
gouache 55 x 40 cm
The State Art Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1954
Photo: Bo Wong

