

ANNE ALISON-GREENE

BESSIE GIBSON

VIDA LAHEY

DAPHNE MAYO

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QUEENSLAND
WOMEN ARTISTS

As 1975 draws to a close it brings with it many reflections and appraisals of the effectiveness of the year long event, International Women's Year. Whilst many will argue about the usefulness and effectiveness or not of drawing the world's attention to the abilities of women, their roles in the future and their achievements of the past; many will regard it as being political, anti-establishment and a waste of time and money.

The earlier exhibition which the Queensland Art Gallery mounted "Portraits of Women", high-lighted our beautiful women, stressing their charm, their moods and their everyday lives and surroundings. We were hearted by the favourable comments about this delightful exhibition and as a final tribute to women for this year at least, we have singled out five remarkable women artists well known to the Queensland public. We stress their talents and their ability to make satisfying and significant statements with the artists' media and sensitive eyes.

It is not our responsibility to beat drums loudly nor to make long verbal or academic statements about the artist's intention but to give the artist (whether living or dead) a platform where upon they can make their own statement. They show us the world through their eyes and their own particular moods, colour relationships and brush techniques and we must surely question and compare the woman's artistic and creative temperament with that of men. It would not pay us to argue about male supremacy at the easel and the frustrated female attempts to find time to take up the brush, but in the work of women committed to painting something very warm and comforting does come through.

Australians can be rightly proud of its women artists particularly those who sought new horizons and expression in the Modern Art movement - women like Grace Cossington Smith, Grace Crowley, Dorrit Black and Thea Proctor.

The five women artists we present in this cameo exhibition hold a significant place in the art history of Australia, but more particularly Queensland.

BESSIE GIBSON

Born in Ipswich, Queensland, 1882. Studied at the Technical College, Brisbane under Godfrey Rivers. In 1905 went to Paris and studied under Edwin Scott and for a short time under Frances Hodgkins. In 1939 war conditions forced her to abandon her studio and go to England. From there she returned to Brisbane after an absence of forty-two years. She exhibited regularly at the Salon des Artistes Francais gaining Honourable Mention in 1926, on her pictures being bought by the State. She also won gold and bronze medals and diploma at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts at Ivry-sur-Seine. Miss Gibson had several one man shows in Brisbane and one in Sydney after her return in 1947.

She is also a well known miniaturist, and handles both oil and watercolour in her portraits and landscapes with equal breadth and sensitiveness. Died in 1961. Represented in the Victorian and Queensland art galleries.

ANNE ALISON GREENE

Born in Wynnum, Brisbane in 1878. First studied art at the Technical College under Godfrey Rivers and the late J.L. Watts. Pursuing her studies at South Kensington Art School, London, she won the medal awarded there for a study in still life. Her stay in London was not prolonged. Her outlook being strongly influenced by the Impressionist School, she was drawn to its home, Paris. There she joined the studio of Edwin Scott and was later appointed massiere of that studio. Later she established a studio of her own in Rue Campagne Premiere (the same street where Bessie Gibson lived) and began exhibiting at the Salon. In 1924 she was elected Assoire of the Societe des Beaux-Arts and Societaire in 1928. In each succeeding year until 1939 her pictures were exhibited at the Salon and won appreciative notices in the Paris press.

At Southampton Miss Green also maintained a studio where she sometimes enjoyed a brief holiday. She was there at the outbreak of the Second World War and was dissuaded from returning to Paris by the authorities. She continued her work in Southampton and submitted one painting to the Royal Academy. This, a portrait, was accepted and hung on the line.

In 1946 it was found that her health urgently necessitated a return to home. Her brother travelled by air to assist in settling her affairs in Paris and Southampton. She returned to Brisbane bringing a number of pictures with her. It had been Miss Greene's intention to hold a show in Paris, this however was prevented by the intervention of the war and ill health..

Three paintings which were brought to Australia by Miss Greene were purchased by the Queensland Art Gallery from the Finney's Gallery exhibition of 1950. Anne Alison Greene died in 1954 in her early 70's after a long illness.

VIDA LAHEY

Born at Pimpama, her first art lessons were at the Technical College Brisbane but more serious study was undertaken at Melbourne National Gallery Art School under Bernard Hall and Frederick McCubbin. Walter Withers also instructed her in watercolour.

In 1915 she went to London to study but became absorbed in the war effort after which she found herself in Paris studing at Colarossi's.

A year of travel study followed including a few weeks in Frances Hodgkins sketching class in Cornwall. Returning to Australia in 1920 she first exhibited in Brisbane then in the southern capitals.

In 1927 another visit to Europe became possible and eighteen months were spent in travel study. Returning to Brisbane Miss Lahey's energies were directed towards teaching and painting as well as raising donations for the Queensland Art Fund. Both she and Daphne Mayo were driving forces in raising £10,000 for the Darnell Bequest which would have lapsed had not that sum been raised by public subscription.

In the 1940's she devoted a great deal of time to Art Education for she had seen the work of Professor Cizek in London and the child art classes in art museums in America and Canada. Through her efforts the children's art classes were commenced at the Queensland Art Gallery and although Vida Lahey resigned from her position in 1952 the classes are still being run today.

Miss Lahey continued to hold one man exhibitions from 1952 to 1963 mainly at Moreton Galleries. A foundation member of the Australian Academy of Art, a member of the Royal Queensland Art Society she received a Society of Artists Medal in 1945 and M.B.E. in 1958. She died in 1968.

DAPHNE MAYO

Brisbane born Sculptor who studied at the Technical College Brisbane. Won the Wattle League Scholarship to study in England at the Royal Academy Schools in the early twenties as her departure was delayed by the First World War. She was the first woman admitted to the School of Sculpture for some years but despite this she achieved considerable success in the next three years being awarded the Landseer Scholarship and two silver and one bronze medals with bursaries. In 1923 Miss Mayo was awarded a Travelling Scholarship to Rome, the first to be awarded to a woman.

On her return to Australia she was commissioned to carve the tympanum over the portico of the Brisbane City Hall, to work on the Memorial in Anzac Square, and also a War Memorial in Australia's oldest public school, King's School Paramatta. Her work also includes a pair of bronze doors at the Mitchell Library a sculptured mural at St. Michael's School, Lane Cove Sydney, Sir William Glasgow statue near Ann Street and the Miner statue at the Gympie Olympic Pool.

Miss Mayo founded the Art Fund and was organizing Secretary of the Darnell Appeal. Was for six years a member of the Art Advisory Committee and a Trustee of the Godfrey Rivers Trust. A former Trustee of the Queensland Art Gallery, a life member of the R.Q.A.S. she was awarded the medal of the Society of Artists and the M.B.E. for services rendered to art.

Represented in the principal art galleries of Australia and the Darnell Collection, University of Queensland.

MARGARET OLLEY

Although born in Lismore N.S.W. in 1923, Queensland has been the State with which Miss Olley is more frequently associated. She studied at East Sydney Technical College under Frank Medworth, where she gained her diploma. Her first exhibition was in Sydney opened by Russell Drysdale in 1949 and the next year she went to Paris to study at the Grand Chaumiere.

She travelled through France, Spain, Portugal and Italy after which she exhibited in 1952 at the Galerie Paul Morihien in Paris and the Redfern Gallery, London.

Her return to Australia in 1953 was heralded with many successful exhibitions and major art prizes. (Three in one year 1962-3) During that period she won the Finney Centenary Art Prize with her entry "Susan with Flowers" which incorporated an aboriginal girl, the Helena Rubenstein portrait prize in Perth with a portrait of Pam Bell, and the Redcliffe Art Prize - the prize money totalling £700.

Most art lovers will be familiar with the portrait of Margaret Olley by Sir William Dobell which won the Archibald Prize in 1948 and is now a valued treasure in the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

The many still life themes painted by Margaret Olley are rarely laboured or forced, they seem so very intimate and full of rich homely colour and her recent exhibition in Brisbane showed a new vitality and luminosity which was not previously seen in her former work.

BESSIE GIBSON

1. The Model (miniature) 'Study of a Nude', oil 15.8 x 8.9 cm
2. Portrait of a Lady (miniature after Clouet), oil 12.2 x 9.3 cm
3. The Green Bow (miniature) oil 11 cm diameter
4. Grand Canal, Venice, oil on wood, 16.8 x 45.7 cm
5. Market Place, Cherbourg, oil on wood 37.7 x 46.3 cm
6. Interior with Flowers, oil on canvas, 72.4 x 60 cm
7. Portrait of Mrs. Somerset, oil on canvas, 100.3 x 81 cm
8. Portrait Study, oil on canvas, 72.7 x 59.7 cm
9. Mother and Child, oil, 62.2 x 76.2 cm
10. Portrait with Green Jug, oil, 72 x 58.5 cm
11. St. Gervais, oil, 34.7 x 26 cm
12. Portrait of a Woman Knitting, watercolour, 53 x 44.2 cm
13. Portrait of a Girl, watercolour, 23 x 12 cm

ANNE ALISON GREENE

1. L'Eglise St. Germaine des Pres, Paris, oil on canvas,
65.4 x 74 cm
2. Portrait Study, oil on canvas, 55 x 46 cm
3. The Anchorage, Cherbourg, oil on three ply, 37.2 x 46.2 cm
4. L'Eglise Sainte Etienne du Mont, Paris, oil, 73 x 60 cm
5. Still Life with Apples and Pears, oil, 36 x 43.5 cm
6. Portrait Study, oil on canvas, 60 x 51 cm Kindly lent by Misses E and
H, Alison Greene.
7. Still Life with White Tulips, oil on canvas, 51 x 60 cm
Kindly lent by Misses E and H, Alison Greene.

VIDA LAHEY, M.B.E.

1. Basket of Flowers, oil, 45.1 x 35.6 cm
2. Beach Umbrellas, oil, 22.2 x 34 cm
3. Landscape, oil, 51.4 x 31.1 cm
4. Landscape, Oil, 20.3 x 20.3 cm
5. Calendulas, watercolour, 57.7 x 68.6 cm
6. Mexican Sunflowers, watercolour, 51.1 x 59 cm
7. Monday Morning, oil on canvas, 152 x 123 cm
(on loan to Australian Women Artists' Exhibition)

DAPHNE MAYO, M.B.E.

- | | Height |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. Portrait bust of R. Godfrey Rivers, Bronze | 38.6 cm |
| 2. Portrait bust of Dr. Lloyd Rees, Bronze | 28.5 cm |
| 3. Portrait bust of Dr. J.V. Duhig, Bronze | 68.9 cm |
| 4. The Young Boy, Bronze | 76.2 cm |
| 5. The Olympian, Bronze | 94 cm |
| 6. Blackie, Bronze | 14 cm |
| 7. Prof. T. Jones 1954, Bronze Medallion | diameter - 14.4 cm |
| 8. Susannah, Plaster Cast | 33 cm |
| 9. The Fat Man, Bronze, | 29 cm |
- Numbers 5,6,7,8,9 have been kindly loaned by the artist,
Miss Daphne Mayo.

MARGARET OLLEY

1. Era Landscape, oil on canvas, 61 x 76.2 cm
(by kind permission of the artist)
2. North Sydney, oil on canvas, 56 x 77 cm
(by kind permission of the artist)
3. Alamandas I, oil on canvas, 75.5 x 92.4 cm
4. Lemons and Oranges, oil, 76.2 x 101.6 cm
5. Untitled - (Flowerpiece), oil on masonite, 72.8 x 59.4 cm
6. Jardin du Luxembourg, Paris 1950, pen and wash, 40.6 x 52.7 cm
7. Chateau Fontcrevais, Cassis, watercolour and ink, 39.7 x 52.3 cm
8. Kohl Rabi and Artichokes, oil on board, 92 x 122 cm
(by kind permission of the artist and the assistance of the Philip Bacon Galleries)

QLD Art Gallery



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