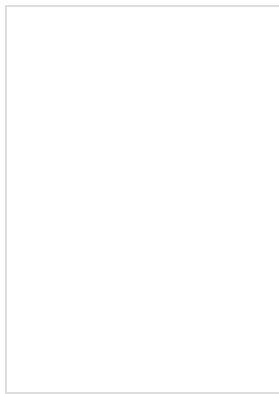




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New Zealand Prints 1900-1950: An Unseen Heritage



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The vibrant school of printmaking which emerged and flourished in New Zealand between 1900 and 1950 forms the subject of this thesis. It examines the attitudes of the printmakers, many of whom regarded the print as the most democratic of art forms and one that should reflect the realities of everyday life. Their subject matter, contemporary city scenes, people at work and leisure, local landscapes, Maori and indigenous flora and fauna, is analysed and revealed as anticipating by over a decade that of regionalist painters. They are also identified as the first New Zealand artists to draw attention to social and environmental issues. Trained under the British South Kensington art education system, New Zealand printmakers placed great importance on craftsmanship. Although some worked in a realist style others experimented with abstraction and surrealism, placing them among the forefront of New Zealand artists receptive to modern art. Expatriate New Zealand printmakers played significant roles in three major printmaking movements abroad, the Artists' International Alliance, Atelier 17 and the Claude Flight Linocut Movement. The thesis redresses the failure of existing histories of New Zealand art to recognise the existence of a major twentieth-century art movement. It identifies the main factors contributing to the low status of printmaking in New Zealand. Commercial artists rather than those with a fine arts background led the Quoin Club, which initiated a New Zealand school of printmaking in 1916; Gordon Tovey's overthrow of the South Kensington system in 1945 devalued the craftsmanship so important to printmakers; and the rise of modernism, which gave priority to formal values and abstraction, further exacerbated institutional indifference to the print. The adoption of Maori imagery by printmakers resulted in recent art historians retrospectively accusing them of cultural appropriation. Even the few printmakers who attained some recognition were criticised for their involvement in textile and bookplate design and book-illustration. Key artists discussed in the thesis include James Boswell, Stephen Champ, Frederick Coventry, Rona Dyer, Arnold Goodwin, Thomas Gulliver, Trevor Lloyd, Stewart Maclennan, Gilbert Meadows, John L. Moore, E. Mervyn Taylor, Arthur Thompson, Herbert Tornquist, Frank Weitzel, Hilda Wiseman, George Woods, John Buckland Wright and Adele Younghusband. Details of the approximately 3,000 prints created during this period are recorded in a database, and summarised in the Printmakers' Survey included in Volume

Two. In addition reproductions of 156 prints are illustrated and documented; while a further 43 prints are reproduced within the text of Volume One.

Subjects

New Zealand Printmakers; New Zealand print making history; woodcut; wood engraving; linocut; engraving; lithography; etching; bookplates; art education; art history; surrealism

abstraction

Atelier 17

Colour Linocut Movement

Quoin Club

democratic print

regionalism

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