

SHE-OAK AND SUNLIGHT AUSTRALIAN IMPRESSIONISM

ARTWORK LABELS

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The idea of place is central to this exhibition, which explores how artists' responses to different landscapes shaped the evolution of Impressionism in Australia. It is important to recognise that the visions of recently arrived artists were imposed over the culture, experiences and stories of First Nations peoples, whose deep connections to Country were disregarded.

She-Oak and Sunlight: Australian Impressionism

She-Oak and Sunlight: Australian Impressionism examines the multiple facets of Impressionism in Australia, from artists painting en plein air at Eaglemont and the groundbreaking *9 by 5 Impression Exhibition*, to those working in Europe at the turn of the century, inspired by James McNeill Whistler and Claude Monet. The exhibition includes major works drawn from public and private collections around Australia, including the NGV Collection.

New insight into this movement can be gained by examining the friendships, professional relationships and career-shaping moments of its most celebrated artists, including Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton, Charles Conder, Frederick McCubbin, Clara Southern, E. Phillips Fox, Jane Sutherland, John Russell, Ethel Carrick and many others. Important works by lesser-known artists including Ina Gregory and May Vale are also brought to light.

She-Oak and Sunlight: Australian Impressionism is guest curated by Dr Anne Gray AM with the NGV Australian Art department. The NGV is grateful to the National Gallery of Australia, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Art Gallery of South Australia and the many other lenders for their generosity and breadth of loans to this exhibition.

Australian precursors

‘Roberts and I had an immense reverence for the work [Buvelot] did ... most of us owe it to him that slowly we were able to see ... the exquisite beauty of our lovely skies – the glorious colour and form of our gum trees ... the beauty and warmth of our native land.’

FREDERICK McCUBBIN, *AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL REMINISCENCES*

Between the 1860s and 1880s, artists who had trained and worked in Europe brought their experience of international art to Australia, including ideas about sketching outdoors. These artists made an important contribution to the development of Impressionism in Australia.

Louis Buvelot studied in Switzerland and Paris before arriving in Australia in 1865. Through his work and teaching, with a focus on ‘light and tone’ and the poetry of quiet places, he influenced the development of plein air (open air) painting in Australia. Scottish-born John Mather was another pioneer of this approach, capturing the vibrant contrasts of land and sea. Portuguese artist Artur Loureiro combined the new practice of painting outdoors with a Romantic reverence for nature.

The emergence of new technology also impacted upon Impressionism’s development, internationally and in Australia, with photography introducing new types of composition, and capacity to capture the changing pace of modern life.

John Mather

Scotland 1848 – Australia 1916, Australia from 1878

Picnic Point, near Brighton

1886

Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Brighton, Melbourne

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of Ballarat, Victoria. Gift of James Oddie 1886

(1886.8)

John Mather was a painter, prolific etcher and teacher. He studied at the Royal Institute of Fine Arts, Glasgow, before migrating to Australia in 1878. Mather worked en plein air in Australia, often accompanied by Arthur Streeton and John Ford Paterson. Remembering their expeditions, Streeton wrote: 'We three painters met at the Flinders Street Station Melbourne ... They were my seniors by about fifteen years, and it was kind of them to invite me to join in their painting trip to the ocean shore at Kilcunda ... Mather was most industrious'. Mather's aptitude for faithfully reproducing the effects of natural light and colour foreshadowed the central concerns of Australian Impressionism.

Louis Buvelot

Switzerland 1814 – Australia 1888, Brazil 1835–52,
Australia from 1865

Winter morning near Heidelberg

1866

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1869

(p.300.4-1)

At the Artisans' School of Design in Collingwood, Tom Roberts and Frederick McCubbin attended classes run by Louis Buvelot, who taught anatomical, figure and landscape drawing. Buvelot's approach to landscape impressed his students, with McCubbin later remarking that: 'Roberts and I had an immense reverence for the work he did ... most of us owe it to him that slowly we were able to see the paintable qualities of that which lay immediately around us – the exquisite beauty of our lovely skies – the glorious colour and form of our gum trees ... but it took time'.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19,
1921–23

Louis Buvelot

1886

produced in Melbourne

etching, aquatint, plate-tone and spit-etching printed in
brown ink on buff paper

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. The Joseph Brown Collection.

Presented through the National Gallery of Victoria Foundation by Dr Joseph
Brown AO OBE, Honorary Life Benefactor 2004

(2004.264)

Louis Buvelot studied painting in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1830, and then in Paris in 1834. Following his studies, he travelled widely, and eventually settled in Melbourne in 1865. There, Buvelot operated a portrait-photography studio but was quickly recognised instead as an exceptional landscape painter. Although he never taught at the National Gallery School, Buvelot was a pre-eminent artist of the period and had an immense influence on the school's students, including Frederick McCubbin and Tom Roberts.

Artur Loureiro

Portugal 1853–1932, Australia 1884–1904

Brolles (Forest of Fontainebleau, France)

1882

produced in Forest of Fontainebleau, France
oil on canvas

The University of Melbourne Art Collection, Melbourne. Gift of Dr Samuel Arthur Ewing, 1938

Portuguese artist Artur Loureiro lived in France and London before coming to Melbourne in 1884. *Brolles (Forest of Fontainebleau, France)*, 1882, shows the freshness of the plein air work being painted by artists of the Barbizon school in France, who approached landscape subjects with a new sense of realism. Its enclosed forest setting and out-of-doors feeling has strong similarities with some of the Box Hill paintings of Roberts and McCubbin.

Bernard Otto Holtermann,

commissioned

Germany 1838 – Australia 1885, Australia from 1858

Charles Bayliss photographer

England 1850 – Australia 1897, Australia from 1854

Panorama of Sydney Harbour and suburbs

1875

Gadigal Country

produced in Sydney

albumen silver photograph

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1990

PH115-1990

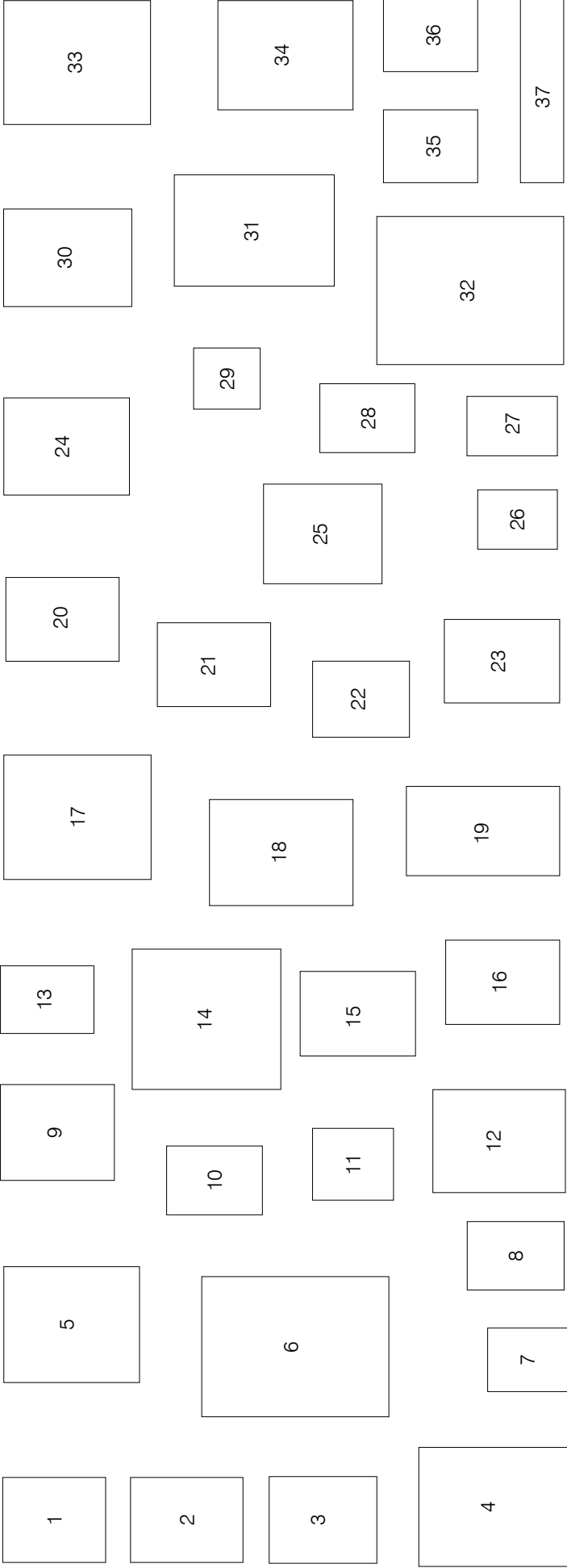
In 1872, German-born Bernard Otto Holtermann found fame and wealth when his company discovered a large nugget of reef gold. In gratitude for his good fortune, he commissioned this and other related panoramas. His assistant, Charles Bayliss, a photographer whom Holtermann had met while prospecting, photographed this panorama from a specially constructed tower at Holtermann's home in Lavender Bay. Arthur Streeton owned a copy of Holtermann's *Panorama*, which may have influenced him in creating his long panel paintings of Sydney Harbour.

Friends and rivals: portraits of the Australian Impressionists

The friendships of the artists known as the Australian Impressionists, principally those between Tom Roberts, Frederick McCubbin, Arthur Streeton and Charles Conder, were formed in youth and continued throughout their lives. These artists had many experiences in common, but by no means all. They also had other friends. On occasion they were rivals.

At times, this group of artists has been referred to as the Heidelberg School, but they are more accurately described as a group of friends and associates, painting together at various times and in various places. While artists such as Tom Roberts, Frederick McCubbin, Jane Sutherland and Louis Abrahams, met while studying at the National Gallery School, others, such as Tom Roberts and John Russell, were introduced while travelling in Europe. Some spent their summers painting on Sydney waterfronts, while others remained in Victoria, continuing their education at Charterisville, in Eaglemont. There were occasional disagreements between various pairs; however, the encouragement they gave one another was critical in their artistic development.

Although they did not practise as a unified movement, these artists were connected by a sense of creative innovation, the desire to record their environment in new ways, and capture the fleeting moments of modern Australian life.



1.

John Russell

Australia 1858–1930, Europe 1881–1921, Australia from 1921,
New Zealand 1922–23

Self-portrait in a red fez

1883

produced in Sydney
watercolour on paper

Private collection

John Peter Russell was born in 1858 at Darlinghurst, Sydney. He travelled to England in 1876 where he qualified as an engineer before going on to attend the Slade School of Fine Art, London. In 1885 Russell visited the plein-air painting centres of Cornwall and then entered the Paris atelier of French painter Fernand Cormon, where he studied for eighteen months. His Paris associates included Bertram Mackennal, George Walton and progressive French artists such as Emile Bernard, Toulouse Lautrec, Vincent van Gogh and Auguste Rodin. While in Europe, Russell maintained correspondence with several Australian artist contemporaries including Tom Roberts, with whom he shared regular updates on developments in French Impressionism.

2.

May Moore

New Zealand 1881 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1910

Mina Moore

New Zealand 1882 – Australia 1957, Australia from 1913

Ethel Carrick

c. 1913–16

produced in Melbourne

toned gelatin-silver photograph

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

Gift of Mrs W H Schneider, 1976

(918Ph32)

England-born Ethel Carrick studied at the Slade School of Fine Art, London. She was influenced by the French Impressionists and developed an interest in painting en plein air. In 1908, together with her husband, E. Phillips Fox, Carrick moved to Paris, the hub of artistic and intellectual avant-garde life, where the couple remained until 1913. There, Carrick was actively engaged and exhibited widely, including at the Salon d'Automne. At the outbreak of the First World War, Carrick and Fox moved to Melbourne; Fox died shortly after their arrival. While she continued to travel widely, Carrick was based in Australia for the remainder of her life, where she was supported by the Theosophical Society.

3.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Head Study (catalogue no. 86)

c. 1889

oil on wood panel

Kerry Stokes Collection, Perth

4.

E. Phillips Fox

Australia 1865–1915, France 1887–92, England and
France 1901–13

Ina Gregory

c. 1895

produced in Melbourne

conte crayon, charcoal on paper

National Portrait Gallery, Canberra.

Purchased 2012

(2012.24)

Ina Gregory specialised in landscapes and garden views, which she exhibited with the Victorian Artists' Society. Throughout her life, she fostered relationships with artist contemporaries, most notably Jane Price, with whom she shared a similar approach to painting and, later, to philosophy and spirituality. From the 1920s, Gregory and Price became increasingly interested in spiritualism; alongside Gregory's sister Ada, the two artists were founding members of the Melbourne branch of the Theosophical Society. Born in East Melbourne, Gregory attended the National Gallery School in the late 1880s, and subsequently joined the summer school run by E. Phillips Fox and Tudor St George Tucker at Charterisville.

5.

E. Phillips Fox

Australia 1865–1915, France 1887–92, England and France 1901–13

Self-portrait

c. 1912

produced in Paris

oil on canvas on board

Private collection, courtesy of Smith & Singer, Fine Art

Born in Fitzroy, Melbourne, Emanuel Phillips Fox studied at the National Gallery School between 1878 and 1886, with fellow students Frederick McCubbin, Rupert Bunny, John Longstaff and Tudor St George Tucker. In 1887 he departed for Paris, where he studied at the Académie Julian. He also studied with the American Impressionist T. Alexander Harrison and painted at the popular plein-air sites at Étaples and in Brittany. Fox returned to Melbourne in 1892, and opened the Melbourne School of Art with Tucker the following year. There, they held a summer school at Charterisville in Eaglemont at which students were introduced to Impressionist principles. In 1905, he married artist Ethel Carrick, and after travelling together in Europe, the couple settled in Paris, where they lived until 1913.

7.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Mrs Tom Roberts (Lillie Williamson)

c. 1906

produced in London

oil on canvas mounted on hardboard

State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth. Purchased with funds from the Hackett Bequest Fund 1949

Elizabeth (Lillie) Williamson was a skilled carver and gilder who produced frames for several artists, including for Tom Roberts, whom she married in 1896. While the couple were living in London, Williamson received a number of important commissions and her frames were hung at the Royal Academy of Art. Williamson attended school in Launceston before moving to Melbourne, where she studied at the National Gallery School in the early 1880s. In 1886, Williamson travelled to England, France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy. She exhibited with the Victorian Artists' Society between 1888 and 1892 and commenced making frames in the 1890s.

8.

Ramón Casas

Spain 1866–1932, France 1890–94

Tom Roberts

1883

produced in Granada, Andalusia, Spain
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

Marie Therese McVeigh Bequest 2005

(2005.584)

Tom Roberts was born in 1856 in Dorchester, England, and emigrated to Australia with his mother and siblings in 1869. In 1874, aged eighteen, he enrolled at the National Gallery of Victoria Art School while working as a photographer's assistant. Roberts returned to England in 1881 where he was based for four years, studying at the Royal Academy Schools and travelling in Europe. He arrived back in Australia in 1885 and in the summer of 1885–86, having recently experienced the direct outdoor painting techniques of European artists, established the first artists' camp at Box Hill with Frederick McCubbin and Louis Abrahams. His friends dubbed him 'Bulldog' for his tenacity.

9.

Nicholas Caire

Channel Islands 1837 – Australia 1918, Australia from 1858

Nicholas John Caire

1910–18

produced in Melbourne

gelatin silver photograph

Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria,
Melbourne Gift; Estate of Edna Bennett,
via Don and Ann Pikethly, 2013

(H2014.184/49)

Nicholas Caire migrated to Australia from the Channel Islands in 1858, establishing his first photographic studio in Adelaide in 1867. After moving to Melbourne in 1876, he was quickly recognised as one of the city's leading commercial portrait photographers, working out of a studio in the Royal Arcade in Collins Street. The introduction of commercially produced dry-plates in the 1880s, which allowed for easier transportation of negatives into remote areas, assisted Caire to focus predominately on his passion for exploring the Victorian bush. He produced hundreds of landscape photographs, which were distributed throughout Australia and internationally, and were widely viewed by artists of the period.

6.

Grace Joel

New Zealand 1865 – England 1924, Australia 1886–94, New Zealand 1894–99, England, France and the Netherlands 1899–1906, New Zealand 1906 – c. 1908, England from c. 1908

Portrait of G. P. Nerli

mid 1890s

produced in Dunedin

oil on canvas on plywood

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney,
Bequest of Miss Joel 1925

(8568)

Girolamo Nerli studied at the Accademia di Belle Arte in Florence from about 1879 under academic masters including Antonio Ciseri. Nerli was also influenced by the Macchiaioli group, pioneers of open-air painting in Italy, so-called because of the *macchie*, or spots, of bright colour that characterise their work. Nerli arrived in Melbourne with fellow Italian painter Ugo Catani in 1885, having sailed from Marseilles via Madagascar, Mauritius and Bourbon. Catani and Nerli shared a city studio with Artur Loureiro until Nerli moved to Sydney, where he met Charles Conder and painted with Julian Ashton's circle.

10.

H. Walter Barnett

Australia 1862 – France 1934, England 1889–1920, France from 1920

Tom Roberts

c. 1903

produced in London

gelatin silver photograph

State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

Purchased 1944

(H12976)

11.

Artur Loureiro

Portugal 1853–1932, Australia 1884–1904

King Barak, last of the Yarra tribe

1900

produced in Melbourne

oil on board

National Museum of Australia, Canberra

William Barak was born Beruk on Wurundjeri Country near present-day Croydon, Victoria, around 1824. He lived at Coranderrk Aboriginal Station, a farming community near Healesville, from 1863 until 1903, becoming an influential spokesman for the rights of his people and an important source of knowledge on Wurundjeri cultural lore.

Barak left an authoritative record of his culture in a corpus of around fifty drawings. The central preoccupation of Barak's work is the business of ceremony – his drawings embody a powerful cultural memory for the artist, providing a precious record for his Wurundjeri descendants as well as for Australians of European origin.

12.

George W. Lambert

Russia 1873 – Australia 1930, Germany and England 1875–86, Australia from 1887, France and England 1900–21

Arthur Streeton

c. 1906

produced in London

pencil on buff wove paper

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

Purchased through the Edward Stinson

Bequest Fund in 1999

(90.1999)

13.

Elizabeth Mahony

Australia 1865–1924

Tom Roberts, Sydney

c. 1920s

produced in Sydney

gelatin silver photograph

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

Purchased 1984

(94.1984)

14.

Violet Teague

Australia 1872–1951, Europe and England 1890–96

Self-portrait

1899

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas

Private collection

Violet Teague, known for her printmaking and portraiture, is recognised as producing the first Japanese-style coloured woodblock prints in Australia, the earliest published with Geraldine Rede in 1905. After studying in Belgium and England, Violet Teague returned to Melbourne where she attended the National Gallery School between 1897 and 1900, and the Melbourne Art School at Charterisville, where she may have tutored. At the age of sixty, Teague travelled to the Hermannsburg Lutheran Mission with her sister Una Teague and their friend artist Jessie Traill, where they were accompanied by fellow artist Albert Namatjira on some of their excursions.

15.

John Sommers, snr.

Scotland c. 1846 – Australia 1930,
Australia from c. 1870

Frederick McCubbin at the age of twenty-one

c. 1876

produced in Melbourne

pencil and charcoal on brown paper

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

Gift of Mr Hugh McCubbin, 1962

(924-5)

16.

J. W. Lindt

Germany 1845 – Australia 1926, Australia from 1862

Self-portrait

1919

produced in Victoria

carbon print

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Gift of
Mrs Valerie Judges 1981

(PH15-1981)

J. W. Lindt was known as 'the Great Lindt' due to his commanding stature and strong personality. Born in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1845, he arrived in Australia in 1862, working first as a piano-tuner in Grafton, New South Wales, before finding employment in a photographic studio. In 1869 he took over the studio and became known for his wet-plate portraits and photographs of the Clarence River district. Lindt moved to Melbourne in 1876, opening a studio in Collins Street. His love of the bush and belief in its power to restore health and vitality informed his delicately observed images of eucalypts and other native plants.

17.

Frederick McCubbin

Australia 1855–1917

Self-portrait

c. 1913

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas on composition board

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

Felton Bequest 1941

(1120-4)

18.

E. Phillips Fox

Australia 1865–1915, France 1887–92, England and
France 1901–13

Not titled (Portrait of Mary Nanson) alternative title: (Portrait of Mary Meyer)

late 1890s

produced in Melbourne

charcoal on thin smooth buff laid paper

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

Bequest of Mary Meyer in memory of her
husband Dr Felix Meyer 1975

(75.667.46)

19.

William Rothenstein

England 1872–1945, Paris 1889–93

Charles Conder

1891–92

probably produced in Paris

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria. Melbourne.

Purchased, 1966

(1579-5)

Charles Conder arrived alone in Australia from England in 1884, aged sixteen. After training as a surveyor, he attended Sydney's Art Society School, taking drawing classes taught by Julian Ashton and studying painting under A. J. Daplyn. In 1887, Conder was befriended by Tom Roberts, and invited to paint at Coogee over Easter in 1888. Shortly thereafter, he left Sydney to join Roberts in Melbourne. The following year, Conder frequented the artist camp in Eaglemont with Arthur Streeton and Roberts. Conder's nickname was 'K', an intentionally ambiguous play on the first letter of his surname. In 1890, Conder left for Europe, moving between France and England for the remainder of his life. Despite his short time in Australia, Conder became a key figure in Australian Impressionism.

20.

Mortimer Menpes

Australia 1855 – England 1938, England from 1875

Self-portrait

1916–17

produced in Pangbourne, England

drypoint on paper

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

A.R. Ragless Bequest Fund 1997

(978G65)

Mortimer Menpes studied at the School of Design in Adelaide before moving to England at the age of twenty. He commenced studies at the School of Art in London in 1878, and in the early 1880s he befriended James McNeill Whistler, a leading proponent of the Aesthetic or 'art for art's sake' movement. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, Menpes travelled extensively, visiting Japan, India, Burma, Morocco, Egypt, Mexico and Italy, journeys that provided inspiration for his work and exhibitions he held upon his return to London. He was widely known for his sketches of Japan and was also a popular portrait painter of London society.

21.

E. Phillips Fox

Australia 1865–1915, France 1887–92, England and
France 1901–13

Portrait of Helen Peters

c. 1895

produced in Melbourne

charcoal

Geelong Art Gallery, Victoria.

Gift of Mrs S. Gerson 1965

(1965.3)

Helen Peters, also known as 'Annie', was born and lived her life in Geelong. She enrolled as a student at the School of Art and Design at Geelong Technical School, before studying at the National Gallery School under Bernard Hall. She also studied at the Melbourne Art School at Charterisville under Tudor St George Tucker and E. Phillips Fox, where this portrait was drawn. An active member of the Melbourne art scene, Peters exhibited across Victoria and New South Wales, as well as at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, in 1911.

22.

John Mather

Scotland 1848 – Australia 1916, Australia from 1878

The artist (Louis Abrahams) at his easel

1887

produced in Melbourne

oil on cardboard on hardboard

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

Purchased with the assistance of

Antoinette Albert 2013 100 works for

100 years

(2013.4849)

23.

William Orpen

Ireland 1878 – England 1931,
England from 1897

Charles Conder

1900

produced in London
pencil

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.
Gift of Howard Hinton, 1931

(296)

24.

Grace Joel

New Zealand 1865 – England 1924, Australia 1886–94, New Zealand 1894–99, England, France and the Netherlands 1899–1906, New Zealand 1906 – c. 1908, England from c. 1908

Arthur Streeton

c. 1900–1905

produced in London

oil on canvas, later mounted on hardboard

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

Bequest of Miss Joel 1925

(5722)

25.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Smikey Streeton, age 24

1891

produced in Sydney

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

Purchased, 1945

(7442)

Born at Duneed, near Geelong, Victoria, in 1867, Arthur Streeton showed an early aptitude for art. From 1882 to 1887 he attended night classes at the National Gallery of Victoria School of Design where he studied under Oswald R. Campbell and Frederick McCubbin. After Tom Roberts met the young artist working on the beach at Beaumaris in the summer of 1886–87, Roberts and McCubbin invited Streeton to join their Box Hill camp. His nickname 'Smikey' was inspired by a character in Charles Dickens's novel *Nicholas Nickleby*, owing to his slight physique.

26.

H. Walter Barnett

Australia 1862 – France 1934,
England 1889–1920, France from 1920

Charles Conder

c. 1900

produced in London
platinum photograph

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.
Purchased 1993

(93.60.1)

27.

Barcroft Capel Boake

Ireland 1838 – Australia 1921,
Australia from c. 1858

John Russell, Sydney

c. 1883

produced in Sydney

albumen photograph, carte de visite

National Art Archive, Art Gallery of
New South Wales, Sydney

(ARC3.775.2)

28.

Alice Mills

Australia 1870–1929

Untitled (Portrait of Arthur Streeton)

platinotype gelatin silver photograph

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

Purchased 1983

(188.1983)

29.

Tudor St George Tucker

England 1862–1906, Australia 1881–87, 1892–99

Self-portrait

1896

produced in Melbourne

oil on cedar panel

Collection of AJ Huntley, Melbourne

Tudor St George Tucker arrived in Melbourne in 1881 and commenced studies at the National Gallery School in 1883 under George Folingsby. He participated in plein-air painting excursions with Frederick McCubbin and others before leaving for Europe in 1887. With E. Phillips Fox, he studied at the Académie Julian in Paris and during this time painted at plein-air artists' colonies including Étaples. Tucker returned to Melbourne in 1892, and opened the Melbourne School of Art with Phillips Fox at Charterisville, in 1893. The school taught French academic artistic practice, and introduced students to Impressionist principles. Students included Violet Teague, Mary Meyer and Ina Gregory.

30.

George W. Lambert

Russia 1873 – Australia 1930, Germany and England 1875–86, Australia from 1887, France and England 1900–21

A. Henry Fullwood (Uncle Remus)

1919

produced in Sydney

pencil on paper

National Portrait Gallery, Canberra.

Gift of Denis Savill 2017 Donated through

the Australian Government's Cultural

Gifts Program

(2017.56)

In 1892 Henry Fullwood was among the group, including Arthur Streeton and Tom Roberts, who stayed at Curlew Camp, the artists' camp established at Sirius Cove, Mosman Bay. Fullwood was best known for his watercolour sketches, and joined with other Impressionist artists on outdoor painting excursions. Born in Birmingham, England, in 1863, Fullwood studied at the Birmingham School of Landscape Art before migrating to Sydney in 1883. There he worked as a lithographic draughtsman and designer for a printing and publishing company and in 1884 was employed as an artist for the *Picturesque Atlas of Australia*.

31.

Frederick McCubbin

Australia 1855–1917

Self portrait

1886

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas on hardboard

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

Purchased 1951

(8559)

While working for his family's baking business, and with his mother's encouragement, Frederick McCubbin enrolled at the Artisans' School of Design, Carlton, in 1869, aged fourteen. In 1872, McCubbin entered the School of Design at the recently opened National Gallery School and, in 1877, he enrolled in the School of Painting where he studied under Eugène von Guérard, with Tom Roberts as a fellow student. When Roberts returned from overseas in 1885, he and McCubbin led plein-air painting expeditions to Box Hill, Mentone and later in the Heidelberg area. McCubbin was nicknamed 'the Proff' for his wide reading and philosophising.

32.

Francis Derwent Wood

England 1871–1926

Tom Roberts

produced in London

patinated plaster head

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

Gift of Tom Roberts 1929

(702)

33.

John Longstaff

Australia 1861–1941, France and England 1887–95, England 1901–20

Julian Ashton

1898

produced in Sydney

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

Gift of Julian Ashton 1940

(7058)

Julian Ashton arrived in Melbourne from England in 1878, before moving to Sydney in 1883. An artist and art teacher, Ashton was a trustee of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales between 1889 and 1899, and, in 1890, was responsible for the purchase of Arthur Streeton's *Still glides the stream and shall forever glide*, the first painting by Streeton to enter a public collection. This purchase encouraged other Melbourne-based artists to relocate to Sydney. Ashton was instrumental in organising the *Exhibition of Australian Art in London* in 1898, featuring 371 works by 114 Australian artists. It was the first major exhibition of Australian art to be held internationally.

34.

David Davies

Australia 1864 – England 1939, France and England 1890–93, 1897–1939

The Colonel (portrait of Walter Withers)

1896

produced in Melbourne
pastel on paper sheet

National Portrait Gallery, Canberra.
Purchased 2009

(2009.35)

Born in Warwickshire, England, in 1854, Walter Withers studied at the Royal Academy Schools prior to arriving in Australia in 1883. After working as a jackaroo for eighteen months he enrolled at the National Gallery of Victoria's art school. Withers returned to England in 1887 and travelled throughout Europe, attending the Académie Julian in Paris where he met artists E. Phillips Fox, Tudor St George Tucker and John Longstaff. Arriving back in Australia in 1888, Withers joined Arthur Streeton, Charles Conder and Tom Roberts at Eaglemont in the following year. There, his attempts at organising the group earned him the nickname 'Colonel'.

35.

H. Walter Barnett

Australia 1862 – France 1934, England 1897–1920, France from 1920

Arthur Streeton

c. 1900

produced in London

platinum photograph on original studio backing

National Portrait Gallery, Canberra.

Purchased 2001

(2001.169)

36.

Alice Mills

Australia 1870–1929

Tom Roberts

1920

produced in Melbourne
gelatin silver photograph

National Portrait Gallery, Canberra.
Gift of Gerard Vaughan 2001. Donated
through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program

(2001.11)

37.

George Sutherland

Scotland 1829 – Australia 1885, Australia from 1864

Jane Sutherland in *Sutherland family album*

c. 1880

produced in Melbourne

pencil sketch

State Library of Victoria, Melbourne

Jane Sutherland maintained a close circle of artistic associates throughout her life. She was born in New York, United States, to Scottish-born Jane Smith and George Sutherland, a carver and emigrated with her family to Sydney in 1864, before moving to Melbourne in 1870. With the support of her family, Sutherland commenced study at the National Gallery School in the following year, beginning in the School of Design under Thomas Clark. A successful student, she won the Robert Wallen prize at the Annual Exhibition of Paintings by the Students of the National Gallery School in 1883. In 1888, Tom Roberts took a studio in the Grosvenor Chambers, Melbourne, and Sutherland, Clara Southern and Jane Price also worked there.

International inspiration and ‘Marvellous Melbourne’

A period of European study was instrumental in the creative development of several artists associated with Impressionism in Australia. In encountering the work of European Impressionists, they drew inspiration from the same subjects, and expanded their technical abilities and creative frames of reference. Tom Roberts lived in London from 1881 to 1885, studying at the Royal Academy Schools, and travelling more widely in Europe, sometimes accompanied by other artists. His experiences overseas, and his enthusiasm for what he saw, had a profound influence on his own work and on the development of Impressionism in Australia.

Back in Melbourne, the 1880s saw a major economic boom, which led to an increased sense of national identity, and a flourishing of art and culture. Between 1881 and 1891, Melbourne’s population almost doubled, and the economy was boosted by trade. Inspired by the city’s energy and optimism during his visit in 1885, the English journalist, George Sala, christened it ‘Marvellous Melbourne’.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931,
Australia from 1869, England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

A Moorish doorway

1883

produced in Granada, Spain
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. The Joseph Brown Collection.
Presented through the National Gallery of Victoria Foundation by Dr Joseph
Brown AO OBE, Honorary Life Benefactor 2004 (2004.213)

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931,
Australia from 1869, England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Basking – a corner in the Alhambra

1883

produced in Granada, Andalusia, Spain
oil on panel

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.
Purchased 2001

(2001.124)

During the summer of 1883, Roberts joined John Russell, Russell's brother and William Maloney in their travels through Spain. The four Australians visited the Alhambra on 12 September 1883, and Roberts obtained a permit to paint in the grounds. At the Alhambra, Roberts chose a modest motif: a small religious building, now called the Oratory of the Partal, which overlooks the valley and the garden palace of the sultans. The dappled light is rendered through oleander leaves, falling onto ancient stones. Towards the end of the trip they met two young Spanish art students, Ramón Casas and Laureano Barrau, who encouraged Roberts to try painting a 'direct sketch' in front of the subject. Casas painted Roberts's portrait to demonstrate the technique.

John Russell

Australia 1858–1930, Europe 1881–1921, Australia from 1921, New Zealand 1922–23

Dr Will Maloney

c. 1887

produced in Paris, France

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1943

(1242-4)

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931,
Australia from 1869, England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Woman on a balcony

1884

probably produced in France or Italy
oil on academy board

Tom Roberts collection, Melbourne

Edouard Manet

France 1832–83, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands
1853–56

The ship's deck

1860

oil on canvas on wood panel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Felton Bequest 1926

(2046-3)

In *The ship's deck*, Manet focused on a section of the ship, silhouetting it against the sky and creating an almost abstract composition. In *Coming South* Roberts did likewise, demonstrating his familiarity with works by the 'modern masters' in Britain and Europe. *Coming South*, however, is more representational and narrative than Manet's *Ship's deck*.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Coming South

1886

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Colonel Aubrey H. L. Gibson
in memory of John and Anne Gibson, settlers (1887), 1967 (1738-5)

Depicting his fellow cabin-class passengers whiling away time at sea on the voyage to Australia, Roberts based *Coming South* on sketches that he made on board the SS Lusitania en route to Melbourne in early 1885. Although dated 1886, Roberts almost certainly completed the painting in 1885, first exhibiting it in December of that year, and again in January 1886. One of Roberts's fellow passengers on the Lusitania was J. F. Archibald of the *Bulletin* magazine (and subsequently, the Archibald Prize).

Charles Nettleton

England 1826 – Australia 1902, Australia from 1854

Bourke Street Melbourne, looking west from Swanston Street, showing south side of street

c. 1880

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country
albumen silver photograph

State Library of Victoria, Melbourne

(H4492)

Charles Nettleton

England 1826 – Australia 1902,
Australia from 1854

Bourke Street, Melbourne

1870s

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country
produced in Melbourne
albumen silver photograph

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1992

(PH59-1992)

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Allegro con brio, Bourke Street west

c. 1885–86, reworked 1890

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas mounted on composition board

National Gallery of Australia and National Library of Australia,
Canberra Purchased 1946

(TEMP.324)

Roberts's light touch conveys an apparently instantaneous impression with a high-key palette (consisting predominantly of light tones) capturing the glare of the Australian noon light and the scorching northerly wind. He had worked in a photographer's studio, and the influence of photography is evident here in the cropping of the buildings on either side. *Allegro con brio* was Beethoven's marking for the first movement of his *Eroica* symphony, a work that Roberts and his friends interpreted as asserting the value of art over commerce and politics. The musical title also references Whistler and his use of musical titles for his works.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

The Chinese cook shop

c. 1887

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Melbourne

etching, printed in brown ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

Felton Bequest 1932

(4656-3)

The Chinese population of Melbourne grew rapidly in the 1880s, following the wave of immigration associated with the Victorian gold rush of the 1850s and 1860s. *The Chinese cook shop* was first exhibited in Melbourne in October 1887 at the Australian Artists' Association exhibition. In 1921 the work was exhibited in Sydney under a different title – *The Opium Den* – playing into one of the period's many pervasive Orientalist stereotypes. This small etching was possibly influenced by the work of Whistler.

James McNeill Whistler

United States 1834 – England 1903, France 1855–59,
England from 1859

The mustard seller (La Marchande de moutarde)

plate from *Douze Eaux-fortes d'après nature* (*Twelve etchings after nature or The French set*) 1858; printed after 1888 Paris
etching and plate tone

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest 1939

(719-4)

The work of James McNeill Whistler was influential on the development of Impressionism in Australia. In *The mustard seller*, Whistler depicts working-class women – a girl and an old woman – framed by multiple doorways against a dark interior. In a somewhat similar fashion in his adjacent etching *The Chinese cook shop*, Roberts depicts figures in a dark interior framed by a doorway.

Ugo Catani

Italy 1860–1944, Australia 1885–94, England 1895 – c. 1923

Collins Street, rainy weather

c. 1886

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas

State Library of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased through the Tristan Buesst Fund 1979
(H35210)

Ugo Catani came to Australia in 1885 alongside fellow Italian Girolamo Nerli, both of whom had studied at the Florence Academy of Art. In Melbourne, Catani shared a studio with Nerli, Walter Withers and Artur Loureiro and, together with Tom Roberts and others, he rallied against the conservative Victorian Academy to establish the Australian Artists' Association. Streeton later depicted a similar scene to this work in his 9 by 5 painting, *Princess & 'Burke & Wills'*, 1889.

Artists' camps: Darebin and Gardiner's Creek, Box Hill and Mentone

Wurundjeri Country and Boon Wurrung Country

'Nature under our Australian sky seems to me like a shy reserved person, ready to repel you but you have only to wait and watch her varying moods and you will find all the beauty you can desire.'

FREDERICK McCUBBIN, *THE AGE*, MELBOURNE, 10 FEBRUARY 1894

In 1885, Tom Roberts, Frederick McCubbin and Louis Abrahams established an artists' camp on a patch of wild bush at Box Hill. While the site was on Melbourne's outskirts, it was by then readily accessible by train. Jane Sutherland made day trips to the camp. Strict Victorian codes of propriety prevented women from remaining at the camps overnight.

Painting outdoors and focusing on small segments of the bush, Roberts and McCubbin created works with no obvious horizon line that were radically different from the wide panoramic viewpoints of earlier Australian landscape painters, who were mostly European born.

In the summer of 1886–87, McCubbin, Roberts and Abrahams rented a cottage in the beachside suburb of Mentone. They painted outdoors, producing the first works in which Australian recreation at the beach was represented authoritatively in oil paint. Beach gatherings, with a breezy outdoor feeling, had also been popular with French Impressionist artists.

...continued overleaf

At Ricketts Point, the three artists came across nineteen-year-old Arthur Streeton sketching, and invited him to paint with them at Mentone and at Box Hill.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

A quiet day on Darebin Creek

1885

Wurundjeri Country

produced on Darebin Creek

oil on wood panel

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 1969

(69.4)

Tom Roberts returned to Australia from studies and travel in England and Europe in 1885. In the same year he painted this view of Darebin Creek on the outskirts of Melbourne. While overseas, Roberts had absorbed the plein-air approach to painting. Roberts depicts two of his artist friends in this work: in the painting's lower right, Louis Abrahams is shown seated on a stool with his back to the viewer, and, in the upper centre, John Llewellyn Jones stands by the fence looking for a subject to depict.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Winter morning after rain, Gardiner's Creek

1885

Wurundjeri Country

produced at Gardiner's Creek

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. M. J. M. Carter AO Collection,
through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation to mark the
130th anniversary of the Gallery 2011

(2011P14)

Nicholas Caire

Channel Islands 1837 – Australia 1918, Australia from 1858

Bush hut, Morley's Flat, Fernshaw

1876–80s

Wurundjeri Country

produced at Morley's Flat, Fernshaw

albumen silver photograph

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1984

(PH6-1984)

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

The artists' camp

1886

Wurundjeri Country
produced in Box Hill
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest 1943

(1224-4)

‘You remember the evenings we sat at the Camp, the last light of the sun on the ti-tree in the creek – the smell of the chop – & the gum twigs – the mopoke. A happy time.’

TOM ROBERTS, LETTER TO FREDERICK McCUBBIN, 31 DEC. 1914

The artists' camp shows McCubbin seated and Louis Abrahams standing. It demonstrates how ‘modern artists’ went out into the countryside to paint directly from nature, rather than working within a city studio. A canvas stretcher and a folded artist’s umbrella, which was used to diffuse light when painting outdoors, are markers of their profession.

Frederick McCubbin

Australia 1855–1917

‘At the falling of the year’

1886

Wurundjeri Country
produced in Box Hill
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased with
the assistance of Terry and Christine Campbell 2008

(2008.111)

Frederick McCubbin

Australia 1855–1917

Gathering mistletoe

1886

Wurundjeri Country
produced in Box Hill
oil on canvas

Private collection

Frederick McCubbin

Australia 1855–1917

Lost

1886

Wurundjeri Country
produced in Box Hill
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest 1940

(1077-4)

McCubbin is said to have been inspired to paint *Lost* by the case of Clara Crosbie: a young girl who was miraculously found alive in dense bush after having gone missing for three weeks in May 1885. During 1885 and 1886, McCubbin and Tom Roberts pitched their tents at Box Hill, among tall blue-gum saplings, ti-tree and wild grasses. They depicted treescapes in which the sky is absent, viewing the eucalypts in close focus and using soft colours and low tonalities to capture the distinctive texture of slender saplings, grasses and twigs. These techniques, all of which are visible in this work, emphasise the density of the bush, in which it is easy to become lost.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

A summer morning tiff

1886

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Box Hill

oil on canvas mounted on board

Art Gallery of Ballarat, Victoria. Martha K. Pinkerton Bequest Fund 1943

(1943.1)

In this fictional narrative about two lovers, Roberts conveys a sense of the intense heat and dry texture of the landscape during an early summer morning, the figures surrounded with diffuse light. A robin perches on the branch of a tree, providing a touch of red to the scene, and perhaps suggesting that warmth will return to the relationship. The model for the young woman was Harriet (Polly), one of Frederick McCubbin's sisters.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Turning the soil (Sketch for Charcoal Burners)

c. 1886

Wurundjeri Country
produced in Box Hill
oil on panel

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.
South Australian Government Grant 1982

(829P21)

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Charcoal Burners

1886

Wurundjeri Country
produced in Box Hill
oil on canvas

Art Gallery of Ballarat, Victoria. Bequest of J.R. Hartley 1961

(1961.2)

Jane Sutherland

United States of Scottish parents 1853 – Australia 1928,
Australia from 1864

Obstruction, Box Hill

1887

Wurundjeri Country
produced in Box Hill
oil on canvas

Art Gallery of Ballarat, Victoria. L. J. Wilson Bequest Fund 1976

(1976.68)

Jane Sutherland was a leading artist in Melbourne during the late nineteenth century, studying at the National Gallery School alongside McCubbin and Roberts. Sutherland shared a studio with Clara Southern at Grosvenor Chambers, where the pair painted and taught art. She sought out her own subject matter without attempting to follow the example of others. *Obstruction, Box Hill* shows a girl barred by a cow on the other side of a fence, uncertain whether to advance or retreat. It has been suggested that the subject of this painting could be a metaphor for the barriers encountered by women artists at the time.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

‘Evening, when the quiet east flushes faintly at the sun’s last look’

c. 1887

Wurundjeri Country
produced in Box Hill
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. W. H. Short Bequest 1944

(1375-4)

Working at Box Hill, Roberts captured a panoramic view, with warm light embracing the landscape at the end of the day. Many years later, Arthur Streeton commented on Roberts’s sensitivity to the quiet stillness of dusk: ‘Before 1886 we were all rather attracted by the conventional aspect of the brilliant colour of the western sky at sunset. Roberts was the first to point out the exquisite and delicate variation in colour and tone of the eastern sky at sunset’. The work’s poetic title and Symbolist overtones reflect Roberts’s interest in English Romantic poetry.

Louis Abrahams

England 1852 – Australia 1903, Australia from 1860

**A sketchbook including figure studies,
portraits, académies, caricatures,
animals, putti, and landscape**

1880s

produced in Melbourne

pencil

Collection of Debbie Brady, Melbourne

Louis Abrahams studied at the National Gallery School, where he formed close friendships with Tom Roberts and Frederick McCubbin, who nicknamed him 'The Don'. He worked with them at the painting camps at Box Hill, Mentone and Eaglemont. McCubbin later recalled these times, writing to Roberts in 1910: 'Do you remember looking at the Tea trees at Sandringham that evening long ago when you first came back from England. The Don, you and I, and you showed us its glorious colour. I have never forgotten'.

Frederick McCubbin

Australia 1855–1917

Sketchbook

1880s

produced in Melbourne

pencil and gouache, chalk, ink wash, 18 pages, stitched binding

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

Gift of Hugh McCubbin 1960

(687C-5)

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Slumbering sea, Mentone

1887

Boon Wurrung Country
produced in Beaumaris, Victoria
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria. Melbourne. Purchased with the assistance
of a special grant from the Government of Victoria, 1979

(A12-1980)

Slumbering sea, Mentone and *The shore (Moyes Bay, Beaumaris)*, painted at a similar time and place, show the closeness of Roberts and McCubbin in the 1880s, but also their differences. Painted from a location immediately below the cottage they rented from farmer Moysey, Roberts looks east along the cliffs of Beaumaris and Mentone, towards a glimpse of the Dandenong Ranges, while McCubbin focuses south onto the open sea of Port Phillip Bay. Across the eroded bank in Roberts's painting, the remains of coastal shell middens, once made by the Boon Wurrung peoples, are exposed.

Frederick McCubbin

Australia 1855–1917

The shore (Moyes Bay, Beaumaris)

1887

Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Beaumaris, Victoria

oil on canvas

State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth.

Purchased with funds from the Great Australian Paintings Appeal
with funds presented by the Swan Brewery Company Ltd.1978

(1978/00P9)

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–22

The sunny south

c. 1887

Boon Wurrung Country
produced in Beaumaris, Victoria
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest 1940

(1078-4)

This work documents not only an idyllic scene of recreation, but also the burgeoning friendship of four central figures of Australian Impressionism. Roberts's models were Arthur Streeton, on the left of the composition, with a slim build and pale skin; Frederick McCubbin standing centre, sturdier; and Louis Abrahams, seated right. McCubbin, arms raised behind his head, takes up a conventional life-class pose that also suggests a pleasurable real-life loosening stretch after stillness.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

A holiday at Mentone

1888

Boon Wurrung Country
produced in Melbourne
oil on canvas

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. South Australian Government
Grant with the assistance of Bond Corporation Holdings Limited through
the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation to mark the Gallery's
Centenary 1981

(815P14)

In this characteristically Impressionist celebration of light and leisure, Conder presents fashionable Melburnians promenading during a day trip to the sea, expressing his delight in the intense blue sea and sky, the brilliant white sand, and people relaxing in the fresh sea air. He would have seen Roberts's *Winter morning after rain, Gardiner's Creek*, 1885, while working at Grosvenor Chambers, and depicts a similarly Whistlerian Japonese high bridge to that in Roberts's painting.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Rickett's Point

1890

Boon Wurrung Country
produced in Beaumaris, Victoria
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1951

(2909-4)

Sydney and Richmond, New South Wales

Gadigal Country

‘Conder’s taste was unerring with regard to colour harmony and fanciful, if somewhat artificial, sense of design.’

**JULIAN ASHTON, ‘SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF CHARLES CONDER’,
ART AND AUSTRALIA, 1917**

English-born Charles Conder arrived in Sydney on 13 June 1884, where he found a lively artistic community. He attended the Art Society of New South Wales’s Saturday afternoon classes under A. J. Daplyn (an advocate of plein-air painting), and participated in the meetings of Julian Ashton’s Sydney Sketch Club with artists including A. Henry Fullwood and Girolamo Nerli.

In November–December 1887, Conder met Tom Roberts, who was visiting Sydney, and in 1888, the two painted together outdoors at the popular Coogee Bay.

In Sydney, Roberts continued his friendship with portrait photographer H. Walter Barnett, whom he had first met in 1877 when both worked at Stewart & Co. photographic studios, Melbourne. Barnett purchased Roberts’s *Holiday sketch at Coogee*, 1888. While in Sydney, Roberts may also have encountered the landscape and panorama photographer Charles Bayliss.

Painting alongside Ashton, Fullwood and others in July–August 1888, Conder spent a fortnight at Griffith’s Farm,

...continued overleaf

Richmond. He moved to Melbourne in October 1888, to join Roberts and friends.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Bronte Beach

1888

Dharug Country

produced in Bronte, Sydney

oil on paper on cardboard

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased from Gallery admission
charges 1982

(82.1670)

In this depiction of one of Sydney's popular beaches, Conder achieves a sensuous image with a pearly translucence. The high viewpoint and horizon line, flattened perspective and carefully placed figures recall the Japanese art that was much admired at this time. However, the hazy sky and sun-bleached expanse of sand evoke a specifically Australian scene. The painting also has a Whistlerian sense of space, with some areas left 'empty'. Conder may have learnt about Whistler's work from magazines, or from Roberts and Julian Ashton.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Tea-time

1888

Dharug Country

produced in Richmond, New South Wales

oil on wood panel

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Elder Bequest Fund 1941

(0.1179)

Arthur Streeton was the first owner of this picture (which originally had a different title), in which he observed the impact of Girolamo Nerli's technique on Conder's painting. Late in life, Streeton wrote to Louis McCubbin: 'The Conder picture on a panel, "Feeding the Chickens" (Griffiths farm) Hawkesbury Rv. — [was] painted under his first influence Nerli, after [Conder had painted] "Departure of the Orient" Sydney Gallery'.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Bronte, Queen's Birthday

1888

Dharug Country

produced in Bronte, Sydney

oil on wood panel

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Purchased 2017 with funds provided
by the Australian Masterpiece Fund, including the following major donors:

Barbara Gole (in memory of), Antoinette Albert, Andrew Cameron AM
& Cathy Cameron, Rowena Danziger AM & Ken Coles AM, Kiera Grant,
Alexandra Joel & Philip Mason, Carole Lamerton & John Courtney,
Alf Moufarrige AO, Elizabeth Ramsden, Susan Rothwell, Denis Savill,
Penelope Seidler AM, Denyse Spice, Georgie Taylor, Max and Nola Tegel,
Ruth Vincent

(3.2017)

Girolamo Nerli

Italy 1860–1926, Australia 1885–93, 1898–1904, New Zealand 1893–98, England 1904–23

A wet evening

1888

Gadigal Country
produced in Sydney
oil on canvas

New England Regional Art Museum, Armidale. Gift of Howard Hinton 1935 (1935.14)

Italian painter Girolamo Nerli came to Australia with fellow Italian Ugo Catani, with whom he had studied at the Florence Academy of Art. He arrived in Sydney in 1886, where he became closely associated with Julian Ashton and his circle. His distinctive wet-on-wet paint application is evident here, mirroring the slick appearance of the rainy streets.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Holiday sketch at Coogee

1888

Gadigal Country

produced in Coogee, Sydney

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Purchased 1954

(9078)

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Coogee Bay

1888

Gadigal Country

produced in Coogee, Sydney

oil on cardboard

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with the assistance
of a special grant from the Government of Victoria 1979

(A41-1980)

In 1887, Roberts first met Charles Conder and they formed a firm friendship. The following year, Conder suggested they paint en plein air at the popular Coogee Bay. The two artists selected a vista from the northern headland that took in a sweeping view of the sheltered beach. Conder adopts a softer colour palette than that used by Roberts, producing a more decorative and whimsical work, which captures a fleeting moment between a woman and child. Roberts's painting is truer topographically than Conder's, and has a still, timeless quality. He depicts a single woman observing the scene, and a tall sapling emphasising the cliff's scale.

Charles Bayliss

England 1850 – Australia 1897, Australia from 1854

Coogee Bay

c. 1879–88

Gadigal Country

produced in Coogee, Sydney

albumen silver photograph

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1984

(PH232-1984)

Little is known about the landscape and panorama photographer Charles Bayliss, but it is likely that Roberts and Conder knew him. Bayliss photographed Coogee Bay around the same time that Roberts and Conder depicted it. Certainly, the young artist George W. Lambert knew Bayliss – they were neighbours, and Lambert would escape next door to the photographer's house to talk about art. It is also likely that Bayliss would have met fellow photographer H. Walter Barnett, as the two were working in Sydney at the same time.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout Europe 1890–1905

Springtime

1888

Dharug Country

produced in Richmond, New South Wales

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1941

(1117-4)

Conder's enduring interest in blossoms as an artistic subject is visible here, as it is in many other works including *The coming of Spring*, 1888; *Herrick's blossoms*, 1888; and *Fruit trees in blossom, Algiers*, 1892. Blossoms bloom gloriously for a short time, and have come to signify the transience of beauty, acting as a visual reminder that our lives, too, are fleeting. Suffering from recurring bouts of illness, Conder was acutely aware of the transience of life and the impermanence of youth and love. Julian Ashton suggested that Conder's Richmond paintings were some of his best New South Wales works.

Julian Ashton

England 1851 – Australia 1942, Australia from 1878

A corner of the paddock

1888

Dharug Country

produced in Richmond, New South Wales

watercolour over pencil

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with the assistance of a special grant from the Government of Victoria, 1979

(A10-1980)

Julian Ashton, who studied in London and Paris, was the most influential teacher in Sydney in the 1880s. He encouraged his students to engage in illustrative work, and placed an emphasis on narrative representation, directing artists to 'paint the Australia of today'. He also advised artists to work outdoors and to record the climate and scenery of everyday life, choosing a landscape 'which charms the eye'. Richmond was a popular location for Sydney-based plein-air painters such as Ashton. He was adept at using watercolour to convey the clear light and open spaces of the Australian landscape.

A. Henry Fullwood

England 1863 – Australia 1930, Australia from 1881, United States 1900–01, England 1901–20

The swing

1892

Dharug Country

produced in Richmond, New South Wales

oil on canvas

Collection of Denis Savill and Anne Clarke

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

The selector's hut (Whelan on the log)

1890

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Eaglemont

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 1961

(61.15)

This image can be read as the story of a hardy pioneer who has been busy clearing his patch of land, trying to 'civilise' the bush, while living in the makeshift hut behind him. The model for the selector was Jack Whelan, the tenant farmer at Eaglemont estate (and not a pioneer). Streeton's image is more heroic than Conder's version of the subject, *Under a southern sun*, 1890. It captures the intense light, heat, dryness and glare of an Australian summer and a sky charged with suggestions of a hot wind that stirs the leaves. Magpies whirl in the sky. The artists' friend Louis Abrahams originally owned this painting.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Under a southern sun (Timber splitter's camp)

1890

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Eaglemont

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Bequest of Mary Meyer in memory
of her late husband Dr Felix Meyer 1975

(75.667.11)

Conder and Streeton were close friends at Eaglemont, sometimes depicting similar themes. This work and Streeton's *The selector's hut* portray related subjects: a slender eucalypt, a settler and a log. With its softer light, Conder's work is more lyrical than Streeton's depiction. He decoratively arranged the scene, placing the bushman and log towards the back of the composition, with a line of flapping washing and a child providing an air of informal domesticity. The Charterisville artist Mary Meyer and her husband, Felix, originally owned this painting.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

A quiet stream, Heidelberg

c. 1889–90

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Eaglemont

oil on canvas

Private collection, courtesy of Lauraine Diggins Fine Art, Melbourne

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

While daylight lingers

1890

Wurundjeri Country
produced in Eaglemont
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Bequest of Mrs Mary Helen Keep, 1944 (1391-4)

Jane Price

England 1860 – Australia 1948, Australia from 1880

Children playing in a landscape

1890

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Eaglemont

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Andrée Harkness through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020

(2020.575)

Jane Price painted her spirited *Children playing in a landscape* in a typical plein-air manner, incorporating a high horizon and luminous palette. English-born and trained, Price arrived in Melbourne in 1882. While training as an artist, Price supported herself as a governess, initially with the artists Alexander and Beatrice Colquhoun and later with Annie and Frederick McCubbin, who encouraged her artistic endeavours. Although she was devoted to her art, without a supportive family behind her, her time for making art was limited by the need to eke out a living in other ways, including painting studies of Australian wildflowers, which were reproduced as postcards.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Near Heidelberg

1890

Wurundjeri Country
produced in Eaglemont
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1943

(1223-4)

Eaglemont and surrounds

Wurundjeri Country

‘The enjoyment of “The last summer at Eaglemont” was to me more intense than anything I have up to the present felt ... Its suggestion is a large harmony. Musical, rosy.’

ARTHUR STREETON, LETTER TO TOM ROBERTS, 20 SEPTEMBER 1890

Towards the end of 1888, Streeton went to Heidelberg to visit the site of Louis Buvelot’s *Summer afternoon, Templestowe*, 1866. On his return to the railway station, he was offered the use of an old weatherboard farmhouse on the Mount Eagle estate (now part of the Melbourne suburb of Eaglemont).

Streeton spent his first night there in December 1888, sleeping on the floor with his boots and coat for a pillow. Conder and Roberts joined him early in 1889 and the artists spent two idyllic summers there. In *The Argus* on 16 October 1934 Streeton recalled: ‘Our beds were made of cornsacks nailed to two saplings, and supported by upright pieces to raise them from the floor. Our seats were old boxes, our dining table was a box with boards placed across it. Our [food was] ... cooked together in a large pail. Our illumination was tallow candles’.

The three artists were sometimes joined by others, including Jane Sutherland and Jane Price, who made regular day trips.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Early summer – gorse in bloom

1888

Wurundjeri Country
produced in Box Hill
oil on canvas

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Gift of Mrs Andrew Tennant through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 1982

(827P16)

Streeton painted this work at Box Hill, probably in October 1888, when the yellow blossoms are at the end of their life. He shows the golden gorse disappearing over the distant hillside and a snatch of half-dead gorse in the foreground. The strong, saturated Australian light is rendered in a high-key palette (consisting predominantly of light tones), and the use of negative space gives a sense of openness.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Butterflies and blossoms

1889, dated 1890

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Heidelberg

oil on composition board

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Purchased with the assistance of a special grant from the Government of Victoria 1979

(A33-1980)

Streeton's interest in blossoms would appear to have been influenced by Charles Conder, a subject to which Conder returned many times. Spring blossoms and butterflies are also a common motif of Japanese art. Butterflies are closely associated with metamorphosis and transformation, as is blossom, which represents the temporary nature of life. Both butterflies and blossoms also signify the coming of spring and the renewal of life, and act as a reminder to stop and enjoy the flowers.

Jane Price

England 1860 – Australia 1948, Australia from 1880

Landscape

1890

Wurundjeri Country

probably produced in Eaglemont

oil on canvas

Private collection courtesy of Smith & Singer Fine Art

Jane Price

England 1860 – Australia 1948, Australia from 1880

Plough land in summer

c. 1900

Wurundjeri Country

probably produced in Eaglemont

oil on canvas

Private collection courtesy of Smith & Singer Fine Art

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Spring

1890

Wurundjeri Country
produced in Eaglemont
oil on canvas on plywood

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Margery Pierce, 1978

A14-1978

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Golden summer, Eaglemont

1889

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Eaglemont and Melbourne

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 1995

(95.604)

Golden summer, Eaglemont is an Australian idyll painted during a summer of drought. Streeton consciously created an epic work, large in scale and poetic in its approach to the landscape. Streeton depicts a shepherd with his sheep moving slowly homeward at the end of the day, conveying the intense light, heat and dryness of an Australian summer. Adopting what would become his characteristic 'blue and gold' palette, Streeton based this image on a small outdoor landscape. He painted the foreground broadly, using shadows to lead the eye into the pictorial space, up to the gum trees silhouetted against the sky.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867 –1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

‘Still glides the stream, and shall for ever glide’

1890

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Eaglemont

oil on canvas, later mounted on hardboard

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Purchased 1890

(859)

Streeton is said to have painted this idealised view of the Yarra River below Eaglemont from a vantage point at the foot of the Charterisville garden, on a ridge looking down on the river. Cattle drink in the stream, magpies glide in the sky and the moon is rising. Appearing on the work's horizon, the small, white vertical line depicts the Beaconsfield Tower on Doncaster Hill, with the Dandenong Ranges visible beyond. The title of the work comes from Wordsworth's sonnet 'Conclusion' from his poem cycle 'The River Duddon', which was a Romantic reflection upon enduring beauty of art compared with the transience of human life.

Jane Sutherland

United States of Scottish parents 1853 – Australia 1928,
Australia from 1864

Girl at a fence (Girl in a paddock)

1890

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Eaglemont

oil on canvas

Private collection

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout Europe
1890–1905

Mirage

c. 1889

produced in Melbourne
watercolour

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Purchased 1976

(A29-1976)

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

The coming of spring

1888

Dharug Country

produced in Richmond, New South Wales

watercolour on paper

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 1982

(82.599)

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Hot wind

1889

produced in Melbourne
oil on board

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Acquired with the assistance of
the Sarah and Baillieu Myer Family Foundation 2006

(2006.386)

Conder painted *Hot wind* during the great Victorian drought of 1888–89. It evokes the intense light and searing heat of an Australian summer, and demonstrates Conder's awareness of contemporary Symbolist art in Europe. Drought is symbolised by the figure of the femme fatale, blowing smoke from a burning brazier across parched desert plains and towards a distant town. The femme fatale (fatal woman) was a widely represented archetype at the turn of the century – an embodiment of conservative anxieties surrounding the changing role of women and the dangers of sexuality. Conder heightened the eerie effect by creating a sense of emptiness in the foreground, with a serpent slithering towards the recumbent spirit.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout Europe
1890–1905

Sketch received by Maggie Conder from Charles Conder after her departure from Melbourne in 1890

c. 1890

pen and ink

Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.
Presented by Mrs M. Riley & Mrs H. Zouch, 1934.

Charles Conder designer

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

**Victorian Artists' Society Winter
exhibition catalogue**

May 1889

produced in Melbourne

State Library of Victoria, Melbourne

Charles Conder cover designer

England 1868 –1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Victorian Artists' Society Winter exhibition catalogue

March 1890

produced in Melbourne

National Art Archive/Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

(ARC60.5.15)

Charles Conder designer

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout Europe
1890–1905

Fergusson and Mitchell printer

Printing block for the front cover of the *9 by 5 Impression
Exhibition* catalogue

1889

produced in Melbourne

zinc plate on wood

State Library of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of John Wiley through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts Program 2016

(H2016.337)

Charles Conder designer

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout Europe
1890–1905

Fergusson and Mitchell printer

9 by 5 Impression Exhibition catalogue cover
1889

produced in Melbourne

photo-lithograph and letterpress on hand-made paper

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 2006 (2006.217)

9 by 5 Impression Exhibition

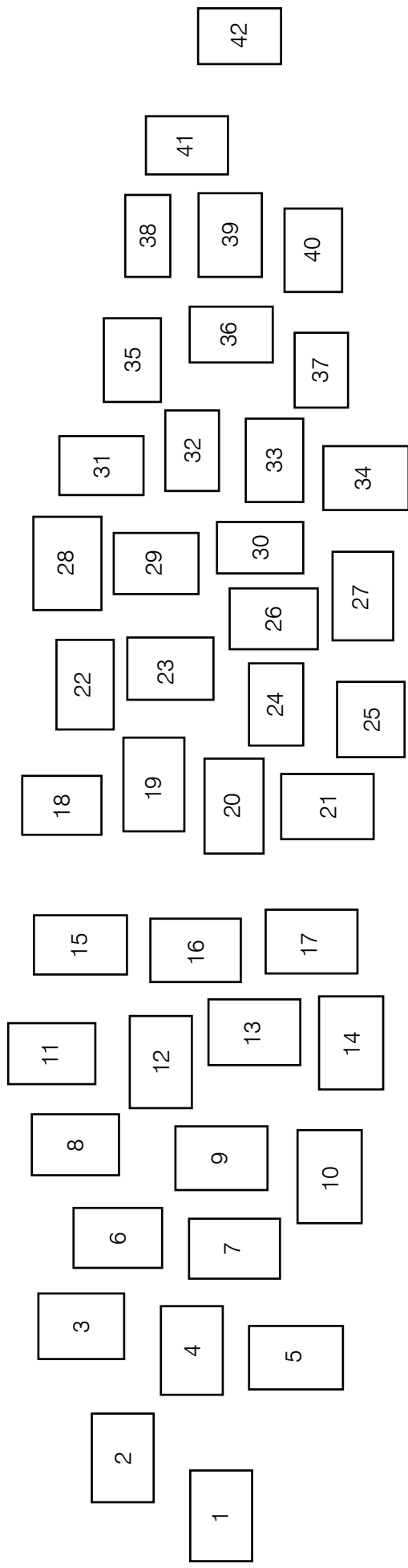
The *9 by 5 Impression Exhibition* opened on 17 August 1889 at Buxton's Art Gallery, Swanston Street, Melbourne. Tom Roberts was the chief instigator. He, Charles Conder and Arthur Streeton contributed the majority of the paintings.

The artists sought to convey momentary impressions of colour, light and the transient moods of nature. They explained their interests in the catalogue: 'An effect is only momentary; so an impressionist tries to find his place. Two half hours are never alike ... So in these works, it has been the object of the artist to render faithfully, and thus obtain first records of effects widely differing, and often of very fleeting character'.

They claimed that their rapid 'impressions' were complete, independent pictures, and sought to free themselves from traditional attitudes about what could be considered a 'finished' work of art.

The exhibition's title referred to the dimensions of the wooden panels on which several of the works were painted – nine by five inches (23 x 12.5 cm). Many of these were cedar cigar-box lids.

The decor was described as 'Japanese', and some reviewers of the exhibition also noted that the small panels were in the manner of James McNeill Whistler's poetic landscapes. Music was supplied by an American organ belonging to Tom Roberts, brought in from his studio nearby.



Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19,
1921–23

Fog, Thames Embankment (catalogue no. 1)

1884

produced in London

oil on paperboard

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Purchased with funds provided
by the Gleeson O'Keefe Foundation, 2008

(1.2008)

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19,
1921–23

The Thames and Cleopatra's needle

c.1884

produced in London

oil on cardboard

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 2016

(2016.252)

1.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Impressionists' camp (catalogue no. 47)

1889

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Eaglemont

oil on paper mounted on cardboard

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

Gift of Mr and Mrs Fred Williams and family 1979

(79.1270)

2.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

View of Port Philip Bay (Early evening)

1889

Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Melbourne

oil on paper laid down on cardboard

The University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane. The Stuartholme-
Behan Collection of Australian Art. The University of Queensland
holds the collection on loan from Sacred Heart Education Ministry
which acknowledges the kind support of the Behan Family and the
University of Queensland

(Behan 15)

Possibly *Late afternoon* (catalogue no. 140)

3.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Going home (catalogue no. 14)

c. 1889

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Melbourne

oil on cedar cigar-box lid

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 1976

(76.567)

4.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Across to the Dandenongs (catalogue no. 97)

1889

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Eaglemont

oil on cedar cigar-box lid

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1962 (1207-5)

5.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Riddles Creek (catalogue no. 55)

1889

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Melbourne

oil on wood panel on paper on two layers of cardboard

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 1972

(72.8)

6.

Tom Roberts

England 1856–Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

La favorita (catalogue no. 171)

1889

produced in Melbourne
oil on cedar panel

Lorraine Diggins Fine Art, Melbourne

7.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

A dream of Handel's Largo (catalogue no. 117)

1889

produced in Melbourne
oil on wood panel

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. M. J. M. Carter AO Collection,
through the Art of South Australia Foundation 2012

(20124P11)

8.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Lover's walk (catalogue no. 28)

1889

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Melbourne

oil on cardboard

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased through
The John McCaughey Memorial Prize Trust, NGV Foundation Patrons,
Marie Theresa McVeigh Trust, K. M. Christensen and A. E. Bond Bequest,
NGV Supporters of Australian Art 2020

(2020.685)

9.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Twilight (catalogue no. 39)

1889

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Melbourne

oil on cardboard

Private collection, Sydney

Previously exhibited as *Albert St., East Melbourne*

10.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

The troubadour of Scott's (catalogue no. 22)

1889

produced in Melbourne
oil on cedar panel

Westpac Corporate Art Collection

11.

Frederick McCubbin

Australia 1855–1917

Petit dejeuner – Sketch for ‘After breakfast’

c. 1889

produced in Melbourne

oil on wood panel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1956 (3253-4)

12.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

A road to the ranges (catalogue no. 38)

1889

oil on cardboard

Wurundjeri Country

probably produced in Eaglemont

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Gift of Robert Albert AO 2013.

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program

(263.2013)

13.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Cream and black (catalogue no. 23)

1889

produced in Melbourne
oil on cedar panel

Tom Roberts collection, Melbourne

14.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Sandridge (catalogue no. 123)

1889

Boon Wurrung Country
produced in Eaglemont
oil on wood panel

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 1969

(69.47)

15.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Dusk (catalogue no. 51)

1889

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country
produced in Melbourne
oil on wood panel

Art Gallery of Ballarat Art, Victoria. Purchased 1975

(1975.30)

16.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Princess & 'Burke & Wills' (catalogue no. 144)

1889

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Melbourne

oil on wood

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased through the NGV Foundation with the assistance of The Hugh D. T. Williamson Foundation, Honorary Life Benefactor 2005

(2005.61)

17.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Dear Lady Disdain (catalogue no. 116)

1889

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas on composition board

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. The L. W. Thompson
Collection Bequest, 2005

(2005.5)

18.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Saplings

c. 1889

produced in Melbourne
oil on cedar cigar-box lid

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund 1927 (0.707)

19.

Tom Roberts

England 1856–Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Mentone (catalogue no. 175)

1888

Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Mentone

oil on cedar panel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1955

(3194-4)

20.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

The national game (catalogue no. 150)

1889

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Melbourne

oil on cardboard

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Purchased 1963

(OA11.1963)

21.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

The dying day (Twilight) (catalogue no. 27)

1889

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Melbourne

oil on cardboard

Private collection

22.

Tom Roberts

England 1856–Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Evening train to Hawthorn (catalogue no. 77)

c. 1889

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Melbourne

oil on cedar

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Edward Stinson Bequest Fund 1991 (158.1991)

23.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Sketch portrait (catalogue no. 43 or 107)

c. 1899

produced in Melbourne

oil on wood panel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1970

(A15-1970)

24.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

The mailman to Omeo (catalogue no. 96)

1889

Jaitmatang/Yaithmathang Country
oil on cedar-box lid

Private collection

25.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Her Majesty's Mail, O'Meara's Skipton Road (catalogue no. 102)

1889

Wathaurong Country
oil on wood panel

Janet Holmes à Court Collection

26.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

By the Treasury (catalogue no. 15)

1889

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Melbourne

oil on wood panel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased through the NGV Foundation
by The Hugh D.T. Williamson Foundation, Founder Benefactor 2002

(2002.304)

27.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Yellow and grey (catalogue no. 12)

1889

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Eaglemont

oil on wood

University of New England, Armidale, New South Wales. Gift of Sir James McGregor, 1948

28.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

The wreck

1889

produced in Melbourne
oil on wood panel

The Wesfarmers Collection, Perth

29.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Harper's Weekly (catalogue no. 139)

c. 1889

produced in Melbourne

oil in cedar panel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Purchased 1958

(66-5)

30.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

How we lost poor Flossie (catalogue no. 111)

1889

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country
produced in Eaglemont
oil on cedar panel

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Elder Bequest Fund 1941

(0.1176)

Given by Charles Conder to Frederick McCubbin

31.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

The road up a hill

c. 1889

oil on cardboard

Queensland Art Gallery | Museum of
Modern Art, Brisbane. Purchased 1956

(1-0692)

Also known as *A glow from the West* (catalogue no. 36)

32.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Herrick's blossoms (catalogue no. 141)

c. 1888

Dharug Country

produced in Richmond, New South Wales

oil on cardboard

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 1969

(69.48)

33.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada,
the United States and England 1922–23

Hoddle St., 10 pm (catalogue no. 132)

1889

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Melbourne

oil on cardboard

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 1974

(74.138)

34.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Orange, blue and white (Portrait of Keith) (catalogue no. 33)

c. 1889

oil on cardboard

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. M.J.M. Carter AO Collection through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 2012, to mark the 123rd anniversary of the '9 by 5 Impression Exhibition', August 1889.

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program

(20124P14)

35.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada,
the United States and England 1922–23

The evening game (catalogue no. 145)

1889

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Melbourne

oil on cardboard

Private collection

36.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

An Impressionist (Tom Roberts)

(catalogue no. 179)

c. 1889

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Eaglemont

oil on cedar panel

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Purchased with funds provided
by the Art Gallery Society of New South Wales 1997

(63.1997)

37.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Gray day in Spring, Venice (catalogue no. 91)

1884

produced in Venice, Italy

oil on wood panel

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

Purchased 1973

(1973.644)

38.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

The Dandenongs from Heidelberg (catalogue no. 148)

c. 1889

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Eaglemont

oil on wood panel

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. M.J.M. Carter AO Collection,
through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 2012.

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program

(20124P12)

39.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Pastoral in yellow and grey: colour impression of Templestowe (catalogue no. 129)

1889

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Templestowe

oil on cardboard

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 1972

(72.9)

40.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Windy and wet (catalogue no. 35)

c. 1889

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country

produced in Melbourne

oil on cardboard

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

Purchased, 1955

(3195-4)

Lent to the exhibition by Frederick McCubbin 1889

41.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Andante (catalogue no. 13)

c. 1889

produced in Melbourne
oil on cedar panel

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

M J M Carter AO Collection through the

Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 2012,

to mark the 123rd anniversary of the '9 by 5 Impression Exhibition', August 1889.

Donated through the Australian

Government's Cultural Gifts Program

(20124P13)

Purchased from the exhibition by Jane Sutherland 1889

42.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

The Violin Lesson (catalogue no. 95)

c. 1889

produced in Melbourne

oil on cedar panel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with the assistance
of the K. M. Christensen Bequest and A. E. Bond Bequest and
The Warren Clark Bequest 2012

(2012.116)

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Honesty and artichokes (catalogue no. 78)

1889

produced in Melbourne

oil on cardboard

The Alec Cato collection. Wesley College, Melbourne

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Residence of J. Walker, Esq., Gembrook (catalogue no. 178)

1888

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country
produced in Gembrook, Victoria
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest 1942

(1132-4)

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

All on a Summer's Day (catalogue no. 54)

1888

oil on wood panel

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. M.J.M. Carter Collection,
to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Art Gallery of
South Australia Foundation 2006

(20067P59)

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Impression for 'Golden Summer'

(catalogue no. 31)

1888

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Eaglemont

oil on canvas mounted on paperboard

Benalla Art Gallery, Gift of Wooleen Pty. Ltd. 1980

(1980.34)

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Centennial choir at Sorrento (catalogue no. 151)

1889

Boon Wurrung Country
produced in Sorrento
oil on panel

Private collection courtesy of Smith & Singer Fine Art

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Going home (The grey and gold) (catalogue no. 158)

1888

Gadigal Country
produced in Sydney
oil on wood panel

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 1979

(79.1421)

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19,
1921–23

She-oak and sunlight (catalogue no. 19)

1889

Wurundjeri Country
produced in Eaglemont
oil on wood

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, Jean Margaret
Williams Bequest, K. M. Christensen and A. E. Bond Bequest,
Eleanor M. Borrow Bequest, The Thomas Rubie Purcell and
Olive Esma Purcell Trust, Warren Clark Bequest 2019

(2019.1159)

May Vale's decorated timber samples

May Vale was born in 1862 at Ballarat, Victoria, the second of twelve children of politician William Vale and Rachel Vale, nee Lennox. During her father's appointment to London in 1874–78, Vale attended the National Art Training School (informally known as the School of Art) in South Kensington. Back in Melbourne, she studied at the National Gallery School under George Folingsby and Frederick McCubbin, and later attended the Académie Julian in Paris.

In 1885, while she was still a student at the National Gallery School, Vale was commissioned to decorate a collection of eighty-four timber samples for the Victorian Industrial & Technological Museum under the supervision of the government botanist, Ferdinand von Mueller. They depict the flowers, foliage or seeds relating to each timber sample, the timbers having been chosen to promote Von Mueller's groundbreaking work on Victorian eucalyptus. The timbers were included in a display at the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition, London; the 1887 Jubilee International Exhibition, Adelaide; the 1888–89 Centennial International Exhibition, Melbourne; and the 1889 Exposition Universelle, Paris.

Unusually for the time, Vale's father encouraged her professional achievements. A staunch advocate of higher education for women, he supported all of his five daughters in their pursuit of careers. Vale's older sister, Grace, was one of the first female graduates in medicine from the University of Melbourne.

May Vale

Australia 1862–1945, England 1874–78, England and France 1890–92

Sweet bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*)

1885

produced in Melbourne

oil on timber sample

Museums Victoria, Melbourne

(ST 001156)

May Vale

Australia 1862–1945, England 1874–78, England and France 1890–92

Yellow mallee (*Eucalyptus Incrassata*)

1885

produced in Melbourne
oil on timber sample

Museums Victoria, Melbourne

(ST 001179)

May Vale

Australia 1862–1945, England 1874–78, England and France 1890–92

Blanket leaf tree (*Bedfordia arborescens*)

1885

produced in Melbourne

oil on timber sample

Museums Victoria, Melbourne

(ST 001125)

May Vale

Australia 1862–1945, England 1874–78, England and France 1890–92

Narrow-leaf geebung (*Paersonia linearis*)

1885

produced in Melbourne

oil on timber sample

Museums Victoria, Melbourne

(ST 001135)

May Vale

Australia 1862–1945, England 1874–78, England and France 1890–92

Qandong (*Santalum acuminatum*)

1885

produced in Melbourne
oil on timber sample

Museums Victoria, Melbourne

(ST 001128)

Grosvenor Chambers

The studios at Grosvenor Chambers at 9 Collins Street, Melbourne, were built expressly for artists. Roberts moved into his suite on the top (second) floor in April 1888. It included a small print room, which was occupied by Conder between October 1888 and February 1889, and then by Jane Price. The first floor was occupied by Kate Eeles, a couturier, and the ground floor by Jane Sutherland and Clara Southern. Percival Ball, a sculptor, worked in the basement.

Roberts decorated his studio in the Aesthetic manner, and with an Orientalist tendency, including art and artefacts from China and Japan as well as European designs inspired by an imagined vision of 'the East'. In June 1888, he instigated a series of conversaziones – social meetings for conversation about art and literature – that brought together fellow artists at Roberts's studio to discuss the latest art journals to arrive in Melbourne. He owned an American cabinet organ, which he and Streeton played while McCubbin sang fragments of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert.

From 1889, Roberts held 'studio days', at which he exhibited his own paintings, as well as those of friends.. In the first half of 1891, while Roberts was away in New South Wales, Streeton and John Mather took over Roberts's studio.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Blue eyes and brown

1887

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1960 (778-5)

The subject of this portrait is thirteen-year-old Ethel Chapman, the younger sister of the artist, Alice Chapman, a friend of Roberts and a member of the Australian Artists' Association. Influenced by the full-length portraits of Whistler, Roberts posed young Ethel on a fox pelt, sitting before a Japanese screen. The painting's other subject, a Scottish deerhound, looks fondly up at Ethel.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Mrs L. A. Abrahams

1888

produced in Melbourne
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1946

(1650-4)

Golda Abrahams, wife of the artist Louis Abrahams, is seated in an Aesthetic interior. The lacquered tray, fan, lantern and sprig of japonica in the small blue vase refer to the contemporary enthusiasm for Japanese artefacts, and Roberts's use of gum tips and wattle as floral decorations reflects the fashion for Australian foliage in the home. The wicker chair in which Golda is seated is similar to a chair in which Roberts sits in a photograph of the artist in his studio at Grosvenor Chambers – confirming that this portrait was painted there.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Louis Abrahams

1886

produced in Melbourne
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.
Acquired with the assistance of Alan Cowen
and Mavourneen Cowen, Kerry Stokes AC
and Christine Simpson-Stokes, and
Krystyna Campbell-Pretty in memory of
Harold Campbell-Pretty 2015

(2015.1122)

London-born Louis Abrahams moved to Melbourne in 1860, aged eight, where his father founded a successful tobacco and cigar company, Sniders and Abrahams. Abrahams studied at the National Gallery School from 1871 alongside Jane Sutherland, and, with Tom Roberts and Frederick McCubbin, established the first artists' camp at Box Hill in 1885. Abrahams had a particularly close friendship with McCubbin, with the two naming their first sons Frederick and Louis after one another. Abrahams suffered from depression, and tragically took his own life in 1903.

Elizabeth Williamson

Australia 1860–1928, England 1903–22

Picture frame design

c. 1906–09

produced in London

pencil

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Lisa Roberts, 1976

(P164-1976)

Elizabeth (Lillie) Williamson became well known for her carved and gilded frames while she and her husband, Tom Roberts, lived in London in the first two decades of the 1900s. Williamson was awarded several prizes for her carving, and Princess Louise, daughter of Queen Victoria, purchased a frame by Williamson with a carved design of bryony berries and leaves at an Arts and Crafts exhibition in about 1906. In 1909, Williamson was awarded a medal and certificate for a carved and gilded frame that she had exhibited in the Imperial International Exhibition at Shepherd's Bush, London.

Elizabeth Williamson

Australia 1860–1928, England 1903–22

Picture frame design

c. 1906–09

produced in London

pencil

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Lisa Roberts, 1976

(P177-1976)

Elizabeth Williamson

Australia 1860–1928, England 1903–22

Picture frame design

c. 1906–09

produced in London

pencil

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Lisa Roberts, 1976

(P178-1976)

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Tambourine

1891

produced in Melbourne

oil on tambourine

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. The Joseph Brown Collection.

Presented through the National Gallery of Victoria Foundation by

Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, Honorary Life Benefactor 2004

(2004.221)

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

The flight of summer

c. 1890

oil on wood panel

Private collection

In *The flight of summer*, Streeton combined a Japonesque image of a cherry branch with a Symbolist figure representing summer. In painting a cherry branch on a wooden panel, Streeton could have seen and been influenced by May Vale's paintings of flowers and foliage on timber samples, shown in the 1888–89 Centennial Exhibition, Melbourne.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

A summer morning's tiff

1886

produced in Melbourne

etching, printed in brown ink, from one copper plate

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Gift of John McPhee 2007.

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program

(2007.30)

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Lily Stirling

c. 1890

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased through The Art
Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of the Chase Manhattan
Overseas Corporation, Fellow 1980

(A13-1980)

Lily Stirling's father, a physician, was a friend of the artist. This commissioned portrait demonstrates the fashion at the time for dressing girls as miniature versions of their mothers. Lily looks confidently out at us, dressed in her smart winter outfit – a rabbit skin coat trimmed with fox fur, with a matching rabbit skin hat with broad satin ribbons. The portrait is an impressive arrangement in white, in the manner of Whistler's three Symphonies in white – no.1, no. 2 and no. 3.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Miss Minna Simpson

1886

produced in Melbourne
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 2014

(2014.1002)

Roberts painted this portrait soon after he returned from London, before he moved into the studio at Grosvenor Chambers. He uses a tonal palette much admired at the time by Édouard Manet and James McNeill Whistler in homage to Diego Velázquez. The dark background sets off Simpson's white apron, bonnet and lace, as well as the white cat, toys, dish and cream tablecloth. Simpson was the five-year-old niece of the artist's future wife, Lillie Williamson. There is a contrast between the child's placid expression and that of the scowling cat, held firmly in her grasp, whose paws reach out towards the bowl of milk.

Sydney and New South Wales: Roberts and Streeton

Gadigal Country and Dharug Country

‘Roberts & I go to Mossman’s Bay & pull through the lazy green water ... The little Bay seemed all asleep & so very peaceful ... Warm balmy air blue orchids & the purple glory of sarsaparilla.’

ARTHUR STREETON, LETTER TO THEODORE FINK, 1891

With Melbourne falling into economic depression, Roberts and Streeton moved from the city to Sydney in September 1891, optimistic about better prospects. Initially, Streeton remained in New South Wales for only four months, rejoining Roberts in Sydney in December 1892.

In Sydney they lived at Curlew Camp, an artists’ base established by entrepreneur Reuben Brasch at Sirius Cove. It was just around the point from the Mosman ferry, allowing easy access to the city, where Roberts and Streeton also worked in a shared studio.

During the 1890s Roberts became one of Sydney’s most fashionable portrait painters. His portraits included a series of twenty-three portraits, *Familiar Faces and Figures*, which depict prominent personalities from the arts and politics.

Streeton painted Sydney city life, demonstrating his fascination with modern subjects, such as busy street scenes and trains. He also adopted a painting format of long panels, in which he captured the sparkling beauty of Sydney Harbour and its light, energy and colour.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

The River

1896

Dharug Country

produced near Richmond and the Hawkesbury River

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with the assistance of a special grant from the Government of Victoria 1979

(A36-1980)

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Plink-a-plong

1893

produced in Sydney
oil on canvas

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

Purchased through the Elder Bequest Fund 1948

(O.1384)

The subject of this painting is believed to be Lena Brasch, sister of Reuben Brasch. Brasch was a regular visitor to Curlew Camp, established by her brother at Sirius Cove, and to Roberts's and Streeton's fortnightly 'Studio Thursdays' in the city. She was the subject of a number of Roberts's portraits. Brasch is shown here engaged in playing a stringless banjo, something of a silent prop. Roberts's use of restrained tonal harmonies, restricted palette and simple composition enable atmosphere and effect to dominate.

Tom Roberts

England 1856– Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Eileen

1892

produced in Sydney

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Purchased 1892

(998)

In this tender profile portrait of Eileen Tooker, Roberts suggests the subject's vulnerability through her averted gaze and covered face. Eileen's family life in Queensland was a difficult one, causing her to eventually leave her husband and two daughters. When this painting was first exhibited at the Art Society of New South Wales in 1892, critics noted Roberts was an exceptional painter of skin tints. He imbued the portrait with tactile values, conveying the texture of Eileen's veil and the cloth of her coat.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Mosman's Bay

1894

Borogegal Country
produced in Sydney
oil on canvas

New England Regional Art Museum, Armidale. Gift of Howard Hinton 1933 (1933.5)

With its elegantly dressed subjects promenading on the embankment, this is a scene of carefully constructed and highly visible bourgeois recreation. Mosman's Bay was a pretty, sheltered spot that was a popular destination for members of an urban pleasure-seeking society, as well as for artists who recorded its ambience and natural beauty. A regular ferry service helped promote a flow of day-trippers to the bay, who could enjoy the comforts of Lewis's Refreshment Rooms and perhaps hire a rowing boat.

Tom Roberts

England 1856–Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Ring o' roses

c. 1893–95

produced in Sydney

etching

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1943

(1246-4)

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

‘What thou amongst the leaves has never known’

Alternative title: *A bush idyll*

1896

produced in Sydney

oil on wood panel

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Gift of Dr Joseph Brown 1991

(159.1991)

Here, Streeton depicts a scene framed by Australian trees arching over dancing nymphs. They are the soul of the landscape, the spirits of the bush. His poetic title, ‘*What thou amongst the leaves hast never known*’, is a line from John Keats’s poem ‘Ode to a nightingale’, in which the speaker perceives the woods as a beautiful and tranquil place, devoid of human anxiety. In painting symbolic subjects such as this, Streeton may have been inspired by his University of Melbourne friends, the professor of music G. W. L. Marshall-Hall (the original owner of the work) and lecturer in English Frederick Delmer, who were both steeped in German Symbolism.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

The camp, Sirius Cove

1899

Borogegal Country

produced in Sydney

oil on canvas on paperboard

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Purchased 1940

(6928)

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Sirius Cove

c. 1890

Borogegal Country
produced in Sydney
oil on cedar panel

State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia,
Perth. Purchased 1975

(1975/0P23)

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Arthur H. Adams

c. 1898

produced in Sydney

oil on wood panel

The Stuartholme-Behan Collection of Australian Art. The University of Queensland holds the collection on loan from Sacred Heart Education Ministry which acknowledges the kind support of the Behan Family and the University of Queensland

(Behan 80)

Arthur Adams (1872–1936) was a New Zealand–born journalist, poet and novelist who moved to Sydney in 1898, where he obtained a position as literary secretary to the theatrical entrepreneur J. C. Williamson. Williamson successfully staged an adaptation of Adams's opera, *Tapu*, with music by Alfred Hill, which toured throughout Australia in 1904. He became editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and then editor of the *Bulletin*'s 'Red Page' from 1906 to 1909.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Professor G. W. L. Marshall-Hall

1899

oil on pine panel

Victorian Arts Centre, Melbourne. Australian Performing Arts Collection.
Purchased, 1980

G. W. L. Marshall-Hall (1862–1915) was an atheist, socialist, poet and passionate bohemian, as well as a Wagnerite composer. He arrived in Melbourne in 1891 to take up the University's new chair of music and established the Marshall-Hall Orchestra and the Melbourne University Conservatorium. On visits to Sydney he stayed with Streeton and Roberts at Curlew Camp. He was said to have been so delighted with the experience of visiting Streeton at Sirius Cove that he dedicated his *Overture to Giordano Bruno* to Streeton, describing the work in visual terms which relate to the times outdoors that he had spent with the artist.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Scheherazade

1895

produced in Sydney

oil on cedar panel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. The Joseph Brown Collectio.,
Presented through the National Gallery of Victoria Foundation by
Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, Honorary Life Benefactor, 2004

(2004.222)

In about 1895 Streeton painted a number of symbolic and mythical subjects. *Scheherazade* was the beautiful, and inventive Persian (Iranian) narrator of *One Thousand and One Nights*, who told stories each evening to hold the attention of the Caliph and stave off her execution the following morning. Haloed and scantily clad, Streeton's *Scheherazade* fuses depictions of women as sinner and saint.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

‘The purple noon’s transparent might’

c. 1896

Dharug Country

produced near Richmond and the Hawkesbury River
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1896 (33-2)

In the mid 1890s Streeton visited the upper reaches of the Hawkesbury River, between Richmond Bridge and Windsor, where he was inspired by an expansive view looking towards the Blue Mountains. There, he painted several large-scale works, including *‘The purple noon’s transparent might’* and *The river*. The title of this painting derives from a poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley that embraces the natural world: sun, sky, water and mountains. Streeton said he painted it in two days, in ‘artistic intoxication with thoughts of Shelley in my mind’. He later recalled his sense of discovering ‘the great hidden poetry’ of the Australian landscape in the ‘glory of river and plain spread before me’.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Ariadne

1895

oil on wood panel

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased with the assistance of the Members Acquisition Fund 2016 and 2017

(2015.1124)

Ariadne re-interprets the Greek legend in which Ariadne was abandoned by her lover Theseus. In Streeton's Antipodean version of this story of unrequited love, the white sail on the horizon represents Theseus's flight, while Ariadne remains forlorn and alone on an Australian beach.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

At Coogee

1895

Gadigal Country
produced in Sydney
oil on wood panel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1959

(313-5)

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Spirit of the drought

c. 1896

produced in Sydney

oil on wood panel

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Joseph Brown Fund 1983 (83.2857)

Spirit of the drought conveys the intense light and heat of an Australian summer. The bleached, arid terrain with spindly eucalypts is typical of Streeton's landscapes of the 1880s and 1890s. But here Streeton conjures the drama of the destructive power of nature through a spirit, the femme fatale, descending through parched land in pink drapery or flames, standing with whirling arms among the whitened trunks of dead trees. Decaying human and animal bones lie at her feet – the remnants of her merciless destruction. In his choice of subject, Streeton may have been inspired by Conder's *Hot wind*, 1889, a work he admired.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Oncoming storm

1895

oil on wood panel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with the assistance of a special grant from the Government of Victoria, 1979

(A35-1980)

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Sirius Cove

c. 1895

Borogegal Country
produced in Sydney
oil on wood panel

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 1973

(73.1)

Streeton was captivated by the jewel-like beauty of Sydney Harbour, a place of endless creative possibility. Here, Streeton produced a radical view of the harbour, seen at close range and cut off at the edges, a stylish blend of the spontaneity of Impressionism with the calligraphy and the long vertical format and brushwork of Japanese scroll painting. The verticality of the composition and the rapid brush strokes emphasise the fleeting impression of a grey day on the harbour. The long wooden panels that Streeton used in many of his Sydney works may have been provided by Reuben Brasch.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Fireman's funeral, George Street

1894

Gadigal Country
produced in Sydney
oil on canvas

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Purchased 1980

(43.1980)

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

The railway station, Redfern

1893

Gadigal Country

produced in Sydney

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Gift of Lady Denison 1942

(7209)

In this work Streeton depicted the old Redfern Station, then just south of the current Central Station, Sydney. Railways were markers of industrial modernity in the nineteenth century and favoured subjects of the French Impressionists, as were elevated street scenes showing people moving through busy cities. Streeton's composition may also have been inspired by the asymmetrical design and flattened picture plane of Japanese woodcuts, as well as Conder's city scene, *Departure of the Orient – Circular Quay*, 1888. In *Fireman's funeral, George Street* (adjacent) crowds gather outside the recently completed Sydney Town Hall, against the backdrop of the empty construction site where the Queen Victoria Building was soon to be built.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Circular Quay

1898

Gadigal Country

produced in Sydney

oil on cedar wood panel

The Wesfarmers Collection, Perth

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Circular Quay

1893

Gadigal Country
produced in Sydney
oil on wood panel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with the assistance of a special grant from the Government of Victoria 1979

(A34-1980)

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada,
the United States and England 1922–23

Letter to Marshall Hall

November 1892
pen and ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Presented by Mr. Russell Lamble (P74-1986)

Ernest Moffit, decorated

Australia 1871–99

Marshall Hall's Hymn to Sydney

1899

dedicated to Arthur Streeton

State Library of Victoria

Arthur Streeton designer

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the
United States and England 1922–23

**Cover of the fifteenth annual exhibition
of the Art Society of New South Wales
catalogue**

1894

produced in Sydney

National Art Archive | Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

(ARC60.5.13)

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada,
the United States and England 1922–23

Arthur Streeton letter to Tom Roberts

13 May 1891

produced in Richmond, Melbourne
pen and ink and pencil

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Purchased from public donations 2004

(2004.30.a-b)

Charterisville

From 1890 until 1893, Walter Withers rented the run-down homestead, Charterisville, where he had a studio, and sublet one-roomed cottages to other artists. Charterisville was situated on rising land above the Yarra in East Ivanhoe, and had a large, unkempt garden. In 1890, Leon Pole joined Withers there and remained for several years.

Between 1893 and 1901, E. Phillips Fox ran the Melbourne School of Art with fellow painter Tudor St George Tucker. They used colour boldly, adopting a 'broken brush' technique that employed a round brush, in the manner of the French Impressionists. In 1893 they took over the lease of Charterisville and conducted a summer school there, attended by Ina Gregory, Mary Meyer and Helen Peters. Violet Teague was also there, possibly as a tutor. Clara Southern spent most of her working life painting at Warrandyte, depicting bush scenes in soft, muted tones.

As the century drew to a close, the Symbolist movement prompted a new fascination with mythology, imagination and dreams, and under its influence landscape painting took on a more contemplative air. Artists such as Withers, Pole, Jane Sutherland, David Davies, Artur Loureiro and Clara Southern worked in outer Melbourne, painting wistful, mysterious landscapes.

Ina Gregory

Australia 1874–1964

Four art students, Charterisville

1890s

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Charterisville

oil on canvas on cardboard

Private collection

Georgina (Ina) Gregory studied at the National Gallery School in the 1880s and attended the Melbourne Art School at Charterisville. Her works indicate a preference for a unifying greenish tonality and she came to specialise in landscapes and garden views. Gregory collaborated with Violet Teague and Geraldine Rede on the illustrated book *Birds in the Sunny South*. Along with her sister Ada, Gregory lived in relative seclusion at the back of their family's home in St Kilda, where the sisters aspired to 'a life intellectual and emotional, lifted far above the materiality of an average existence'. Later, Gregory and her friend Jane Price were founding members of the Melbourne branch of the Theosophical Society.

E. Phillips Fox

Australia 1865–1915, France

1887–92, England and France 1901–13

Art students

1895

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Purchased 1943

(7319)

In 1887, after studying at the National Gallery School, E. Phillips Fox left to study in Paris, returning to Melbourne in 1892. With fellow painter Tudor St George Tucker, he ran the Melbourne School of Art from 1893 to 1901. The location of *Art students* is the Melbourne Art School in Bourke Street. Ina Gregory is believed to be the student on the far right. Such informality in a large figure painting was unusual at the time, as was the cropped vertical composition. The critic from the *Standard*, London, noted in 1898: 'The *Art students* ... is pleasantly Whistlerian'.

Mary Meyer

Australia 1878–1975

Self-portrait

c. 1898

produced in Melbourne

oil on board

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Bequest of Mary Meyer in memory of her husband Dr Felix Meyer, 1975

(75.667.22)

Mary Meyer was the second daughter of Edward Nanson, Professor of Mathematics at the University of Melbourne. She studied at the Melbourne School of Art from 1896 to 1900, taking classes taught by E. Phillips Fox and Tudor St George Tucker, and also attended the summer school at Charterisville. In the 1920s and 1930s, she shared a studio in Collins Street with Ada Plante and Isabel Hunter Tweddle. Meyer was an active member of Melbourne art circles and exhibited at the Lyceum Club.

Tudor St George Tucker

England 1862–1906, Australia 1881–87, 1892–99

Young girl in a garden

c. 1896

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas on board

Janet Holmes à Court Collection

English painter Tudor St George Tucker spent a large part of his life in Australia. After arriving in Melbourne in 1881, he studied at the National Gallery School from 1883 to 1887. He returned to Europe to continue his studies, and in 1887 he joined E. Phillips Fox at the Académie Julian and subsequently at the École des Beaux Arts, Paris. From 1893 to 1899, he and Phillips Fox ran the Melbourne School of Art in Melbourne and at Charterisville. There, they introduced students to a French approach to painting. In this study of a young girl holding a eucalyptus spray, Tucker focused on the effects of sunlight on the girl's hat and golden hair, and the white of her dress.

Ina Gregory

Australia 1874–1964

Lucy Sutton

1890s

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas on cardboard

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of the artist, 1947

(1999.176)

Jane Sutherland

United States of Scottish parents 1853 – Australia 1928,
Australia from 1864

A midsummer day

c. 1893

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Gift of Dr Margaret Sutherland, 1972 (A16-1972)

Jane Sutherland

United States of Scottish parents 1853 – Australia 1928,
Australia from 1864

Field naturalists

c. 1896

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Gift of Mrs E. H. Shackell 1962

(1062-5)

Reflecting her love of the Australian bush, Jane Sutherland was a member of the Field Naturalists of Victoria, formed in 1880 for the purpose of exploring natural history through excursions into the bush. Sutherland's interest in depicting women and children in the settled and domestic rural landscape was shared by Australian and international plein-air artists, including the French Impressionists. The critic for *Table Talk* observed at the time of its exhibition, 'three reckless young loiterers, ankle deep in mud and mire ... [are] wholly absorbed in exploring the contents of the swampy paddock'.

Clara Southern

Australia 1860–1940

An old bee farm

c. 1900

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Warrandyte

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Felton Bequest, 1942

(1129-4)

Clara Southern studied with Walter Withers and at the National Gallery School from 1883 to 1887. Withers's interest in the sombre tones of the bush had a lasting influence on Southern. Together with Jane Sutherland, she rented a studio at Grosvenor Chambers where the two painted and taught art. The pair also frequented the series of evening conversaziones held by Roberts. Southern loved the area surrounding Warrandyte where she lived and worked, frequently interpreting the bush in soft tonal colours. In her pastoral landscapes, women go about their tasks, with the colours of their clothes often reflecting that of the sky and the land, merging into their environment.

Walter Withers

England 1854 – Australia 1914, Australia from 1883,
Europe and England 1887–88

A bright winter's morning

1894

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Charterisville

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Bequest of Mrs Nina Sheppard, 1956

(3389-4)

Walter Withers attended art classes at the Royal Academy and the South Kensington art schools, London, before embarking for Australia, where he studied at the National Gallery School and became a friend of Roberts and Frederick McCubbin. Withers often portrayed quiet village life, viewed under the soft light of early morning or evening during winter. This work depicts old Heidelberg, painted from the rise above Salt Creek. There are dairy cattle on Rosanna Road. As the *Age* newspaper remarked, in 1894, '[*In a bright winter's morning*] he brings before us the evanescent charm of a passing hour and makes us feel the "spirit of the season" in the colour and lighting of the landscape'.

Clara Southern

Australia 1860–1940

Evensong

c. 1900–1914

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Warrandyte

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1962

(1402-5)

David Davies

Australia 1864 – England 1939, France and England 1890–93, 1897–1939

Moonrise

1894

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Templestowe

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased, 1895

(p.402.5-1)

In the 1890s, David Davies worked in outer Melbourne, painting unpeopled, aestheticised scenes such as *Moonrise*. In these dark, mysterious landscapes he captured the quiet face of nature and the melancholic soul of the bush. A contemporary reviewer for *The Age* observed in this work ‘the value of French influences, intelligently adopted and applied’, concluding that ‘in its simplicity of composition, the breadth and power of the execution, and in its delicacy of values, it is perhaps the most impressive and original work in the exhibition’.

E. Phillips Fox

Australia 1865–1915, France

1887–92, England and France 1901–13

Moonrise, Heidelberg

c. 1900

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Heidelberg

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1948

(1814-4)

Moonrise demonstrates Phillips Fox's understanding of the transitory effects of nature. His interest in nocturnes dated back to his stay in France and England in the 1880s, where he completed a number of moonlight scenes. Fox renders the subject here using the broken brushstroke typical of his work at this time. The dominance of green and blue tones is characteristic of the landscape in the area around Charterisville, viewed at eventide. Yet, the reflection of the trees and the moon in the pool of water have a decorative aspect, and his use of a restricted palette and stylised composition resemble aspects of James McNeill Whistler's work.

Artur Loureiro

Portugal 1853–1932, Australia 1884–1904

An Autumn morning

1893

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas on composition board

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. The Joseph Brown Collection.

Presented through the National Gallery of Victoria Foundation by

Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, Honorary Life Benefactor 2004

(2004.188)

This typically atmospheric landscape by Artur Loureiro was positively received at the time of its first exhibition. The critic for *The Age* wrote in 1893: '[*An Autumn morning* depicts] ... an early morning effect ... wreaths of light mist are lifting from the river, transparent splashes of shadow lie on the golden grass, and the magpies hop gaily about in the early morning sunshine ... [It] communicates something of the exhilaration of the early morning atmosphere'.

Leon Pole

Australia 1871 – Canada 1951, Canada from 1902

Ivanhoe

c. 1891

Wurundjeri Country
produced in Ivanhoe
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. K. M. Christensen and
A. E. Bond Bequest, 2006

(2006.347)

Helen Peters

Australia 1866–1923

Landscape

c. 1900

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Charterisville

oil on canvas

Geelong Gallery, Victoria

(1965.21)

Helen Peters was born in Geelong, and spent most of her life there. She attended the National Gallery School and the Charterisville summer school. This plein-air landscape is broadly painted with an emphasis on atmospheric effects. Her loose brushwork here is characteristically Impressionist, with the finished work retaining the quality of a sketch. Employed as a teacher for much of her life, from 1895 Peters exhibited widely with the Victorian Artists' Society and the Yarra Sculptors' Society. She was also an active member of the Melbourne Society of Women Painters and Sculptors.

E. Phillips Fox

Australia 1865–1915, France 1887–92, England and
France 1901–13

Studio, Charterisville

c. 1900

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Charterisville

oil on cedar panel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. The Joseph Brown Collection.

Presented through the National Gallery of Victoria Foundation by

Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, Honorary Life Benefactor 2004

(2004.172)

Violet Teague

Australia 1872–1951, Europe and England 1890–96

Charterisville landscape

c. 1900

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Charterisville

oil on wood panel

State Library of Victoria

H2020.35
(LT1594)

Violet Teague was noted for her portraits and printmaking. Following travels and studies in Europe, she joined the National Gallery School in 1897, also participating in the Melbourne Art School in the city and at Charterisville. She was one of the first Australian artists to demonstrate a sustained interest in Japanese woodblock printmaking. Teague published two illustrated books, *Birds in the Sunny South* (with Ina Gregory and Geraldine Rede) and *Night Fall in the Ti-Tree* (with Geraldine Rede). In 1935, together with her sister and fellow artists, Teague raised more than £2,000 to finance a pipeline to take fresh water to Hermannsburg near Alice Springs.

Ina Gregory

Australia 1874–1964

Charterisville

1890s

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Charterisville

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Krystyna
Campbell-Pretty AM and family through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program 2020

(2020.618)

Jane Price

England 1860 – Australia 1948, Australia from 1880

Bush scene

1900

probably produced in Macedon
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased
through the NGV Supporters of Australian Art, 2020

(2020.220)

Whistler and his influence

‘Harmonies in grey and yellow, arrangements in orange blue and white, and symphonies in rose, black and grey, after the manner of Mr James Whistler, the first of the English Impressionists.’

EDITH CASTILLA, *THE DAILY TELEGRAPH*, 17 AUGUST 1889

Whistler's carefully stage-managed exhibitions were a source of inspiration for the display, planning and marketing of the *9 by 5 Impression Exhibition*. The Australian artists followed Whistler's example, with many works painted in closely related tones and titled accordingly, unconventionally framed and massed together on display.

The National Gallery of Victoria had purchased the sixteen etchings of Whistler's *Thames Set* in 1892, and in 1898–99 the Art Gallery of New South Wales purchased seven of Whistler's etchings. Roberts, Streeton and Fox would have viewed at least some of these.

In 1905, about 750 of Whistler's works were shown in a memorial exhibition in London, two years after the artist's death. Living in London, with their memory of Whistler's work refreshed, some Australian artists began to paint works reflecting their revived interest. Like Whistler, they used a subdued palette to depict mists and fog on the Thames.

Australian-born Mortimer Menpes was taught etching by Whistler and became his disciple, printing many impressions of his etchings.

James McNeill Whistler

United States 1834 – England 1903, France 1855–59,
England from 1859

The Thames

1896, printed 1903 or 1904
produced in London
lithotint on chine collé

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Presented anonymously 1960

(683-5)

James McNeill Whistler

United States 1834 – England 1903, France 1855–59,
England from 1859

Nocturne: The river at Battersea

from the portfolio *Notes*

1878, published 1887

produced in London

printed by Thomas Way & Son, published by Thomas
Boussard, Valadon and Co, London lithotint with scraping,
printed in grey ink on blue chine collé on paper

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Bequest of Sir Samuel Way, 1916 (165G15)

Nocturne depicts evening on the river, with the chimneys and factories on the south bank of the Thames, viewed from Whistler's house in Chelsea. Space and light are conveyed by strokes that sweep across the image, evoking the wake of boats on the river. It was a scene that Whistler had drawn and painted so often that he had committed it to memory. Whistler's use of the term 'nocturne' to convey a sense of the beauty and tranquility of the Thames by night also has musical connotations. In its nineteenth-century musical form, the nocturne was usually a highly expressive, single-movement piece written for piano and played, as the title suggests, in the evening.

James McNeill Whistler

United States 1834 – England 1903, France 1855–59,
England from 1859

Old Battersea Bridge

1879

produced in London

lithograph

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1971

(P13-1971)

James McNeill Whistler

United States 1834 – England 1903, France 1855–59,
England from 1859

Eagle wharf

plate 11 from *Sixteen etchings of scenes on the Thames*
(or *The Thames set*)

1859

produced in London

etching

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1892

(p.188.3.11-1)

Whistler's *Eagle wharf* may have been an inspiration for Mortimer Menpes's *A distant view of the city*, produced around thirty years later. The works share a similar composition, with the boat diagonally jutting out in the foreground, and buildings along the other side of the water.

James McNeill Whistler

United States 1834 – England 1903, France 1855–59,
England from 1859

Old Hungerford Bridge

plate 6 from *Sixteen etchings of scenes on the Thames*
(or *The Thames set*)

1861; printed 1871 or 1879

produced in London

etching and drypoint

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1892

(p.188.3.6-1)

Old Hungerford Bridge shows workers on the bridge and paddle-steamers crowded with passengers at Hungerford Pier below. The Houses of Parliament are faintly visible on the far left. Whistler depicted the scene with obsessive attention to detail, skilfully differentiating surfaces by varying the shape and length of lines.

James McNeill Whistler

United States 1834 – England 1903, France 1855–59,
England from 1859

Chelsea

1878–79; printed 1879–89

produced in London

etching and drypoint printed in dark brown ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1919

(892-3)

This straightforward view of Battersea Bridge and Chelsea Old Church was a subject to which Whistler returned several times, most famously in his oil painting *Nocturne: blue and gold – Old Battersea Bridge*, 1872–75 (Tate, London), which has been compared with woodcuts by the Japanese printmaker Hiroshige. Menpes may have been influenced by Whistler's famous works, as well as by Japanese prints, in his view of a bridge at Nagasaki.

James McNeill Whistler

United States 1834 – England 1903, France 1855–59,
England from 1859

Thames warehouses

plate 13 from *Sixteen etchings of scenes on the Thames*
(or *The Thames set*)

1859; printed 1871 or 1879

produced in London

etching, drypoint and fowl biting

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1892

(p.188.3.13-1)

James McNeill Whistler

United States 1834 – England 1903, France 1855–59,
England from 1859

Old Westminster Bridge

plate 4 from *Sixteen etchings of scenes on the Thames*
(or *The Thames set*)

1859; printed 1871 or 1879

produced in London

etching, drypoint and plate tone

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1892

(188.3.4-1)

This etching presents a familiar view from an unconventional perspective. On the left is Old Westminster Bridge and the River Thames, with the Houses of Parliament and the tower clock, Big Ben, at the left. In the foreground is a group of men with work horses possibly pulling barges on the canals leading into the river. The narrow envelope-shaped plate emphasises the elegantly streamlined panoramic view. Streeton is likely to have seen Whistler's etchings in Melbourne before moving to Sydney in December 1892, and it is possible that Whistler's elongated plates may have inspired Streeton's long panel paintings of Sydney Harbour.

May Vale

Australia 1862–1945, England 1874–78, England and France 1890–92

New Battersea Bridge & Chelsea Reach from Cheyne Walk, Chelsea

1907

produced in London

watercolour on cardboard

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased NGV Foundation 2019 (2019.600)

In a letter to Tom Roberts dated 25 August 1905, Frederick McCubbin wrote that May Vale's heart 'is intent on Europe', and that he 'saw her off the other day'. Arriving in London, Vale visited Roberts, and shortly thereafter she took over Arthur Streeton's studio in Chelsea, London, while he was in Australia. From there, she painted views of the Thames in muted tones. Her work has echoes of watercolours and oils by Streeton, painted in the same vicinity, as well as those by Whistler.

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Chelsea

1905

produced in London

oil on canvas

State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth.

Purchased through the great Australian Paintings Appeal, 1983

(1983/OP14)

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Trafalgar Square

1904

produced in London

oil on cardboard

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. South Australian Government
Grant 1988

(8810P45)

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Battersea Bridge and Thames tide

c. 1905

produced in London

watercolour and pencil on paper

Private collection, New South Wales

Streeton's interest in atmospheric effects is evident in this scene of activity on the Thames, painted in Whistlerian shades of grey, greyish blue and brown. The shadows of chimneys and factories are visible on the south bank, and it is likely that the dim hints of buildings on the north bank represent Westminster Cathedral and the Houses of Parliament. Strokes sweeping across the water evoke the movement of boats on the river. It was a subject that Whistler had depicted many times and Streeton was no doubt influenced by this.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

The towpath, Putney

1904

produced in London

oil on board

Kerry Stokes Collection, Perth

After he arrived back in London in May 1903, Roberts painted several modest landscapes in a restricted palette with Whistlerian nuances, such as *The towpath, Putney*. Unlike Whistler, however, Roberts did not adopt a radical viewpoint for his compositions. He sought a subtle harmony of muted tones using complementary touches of grey to convey mood and atmosphere, and thereby evoke the Thames enveloped in mist.

Mortimer Menpes

Australia 1855 – England 1938, England from 1875

Upstream from the harbour, Nagasaki

c. 1897

produced in Pangbourne, England

drypoint on paper

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. V.B.F. Young Bequest Fund 2009 (20096G59)

Mortimer Menpes

Australia 1855 – England 1938, England from 1875

Whistler – no .1 (Wiser than the wise)

c. 1892–1902

produced in London

drypoint, plate tone on paper

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. David Murray Bequest Fund 1973 (731G1)

Australian-born Mortimer Menpes was a printmaker, author and illustrator. He studied at the Adelaide School of Design and in 1875 moved to London, where he met James McNeill Whistler and became his disciple. He modelled himself on 'the master', and printed a number of his etchings. Menpes was an astute businessman and a avid socialite, with great technical facility and seemingly inexhaustible energy. He travelled widely in Europe, India and Japan, where he found inspiration for many of his works. In 1904, he wrote: 'I worshiped Whistler in those days, and I worship him still'.

Mortimer Menpes

Australia 1855 – England 1938, England from 1875

A distant view of the city

1886–89

produced in London

etching, drypoint, plate tone, printed in brown ink on paper

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Gift of the artist 1889

(188912G8)

Mortimer Menpes

Australia 1855 – England 1938, England from 1875

Alone in a shoe shop

1887–88

produced in Japan or London

oil on wood panel (original frame)

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. South Australian Government Grant 1975

(752P3)

E. Phillips Fox

Australia 1865–1915, France 1887–92, England and France 1901–13

By the sands

c. 1909

probably produced in Trouville

oil on wood panel

Private collection, Melbourne

In 1865, Whistler had travelled to Trouville, where he painted with Gustave Courbet and experimented with a series of increasingly simplified seascapes that would exert considerable influence upon his followers. By 1904, Fox was living in Paris, and the following year he married the British artist Ethel Carrick. In the summer of 1909, they visited the French resort towns of Trouville and Deauville, where Fox painted and complained that it had been a 'wretched, sunless summer'. The high horizon and broad expanses of muted colour in this spare composition reflect Whistler's works. The horizontal brushstrokes and restrained palette reinforce the painting's innovative, flattened perspective.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Untitled (Beach scene)

1904

produced in Brighton
oil on cardboard

State Art Collection. Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth.
Gift of John Brackenreg 1959

(1959/00P2)

The conjunction of sea, sky and shore always appealed to Conder. In around 1904–05, he wrote to William Rothenstein from Brighton: 'I never saw anything so beautiful as the sea today. It is nearly always so here. But today it made me think of Whistler, it was so wonderful.'

James McNeill Whistler

United States 1834 – England 1903, France 1855–59,
England from 1859

Harmony in blue and pearl: The Sands, Dieppe

c. 1885

produced in Dieppe, France oil on panel

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased with the assistance of Allan J. Myers AC QC and Maria J. Myers AC, Andrew and Tracey Sisson, the American Friends of the NGA with the support of the Dr Lee MacCormick Edwards Charitable Foundation and the Neilson Foundation 2017 (2017.32)

Thinly painted and conveying a sense of space and movement through flat planes of colour, *Harmony in blue and pearl* is an atmospheric evocation of a view of the beach at Dieppe. In the 1860s, Whistler abandoned realism, and began to be influenced by Japanese prints, concentrating on the organisation of colour and line into a cohesive whole. A review in *The Times* of 14 November 1871 commented on Whistler's musical titles: 'They are illustrations of the theory that painting ... is so closely akin to music that the colours of the one may, and should be used, like the sounds of the other, as means and influences of vague emotions'.

French Impressionism and its influence

‘I only wish you could have seen some of his [Monet’s] landscapes; *they lived*.’

CHARLES CONDER, LETTER TO TOM ROBERTS, MAY 1891

John Russell met Claude Monet in the summer of 1886 during a visit to Belle Île, off the coast of Brittany, and invited him home to dinner. In return, Monet allowed Russell to watch him work, and the pair talked about art for ten days. This was a turning point for Russell, and he started to apply his paint with rapid strokes of pure, high-key colour.

E. Phillips Fox called on Russell in October 1887 and they discussed what Russell had learnt from Monet. The tranquil, luminous portraits of young local women that Fox and Tudor St George Tucker painted in the late 1880s and 1890s bear the marks of a revolutionary new approach to colour and light.

In 1905, British artist Ethel Carrick moved to France, where she developed her distinctive light-filled palette and loose brushwork. There, she and her husband, Fox, visited Étapes in northern France, and probably met with Fox’s former National Gallery School associate, Iso Rae.

Charles Conder, also working in Europe, admired Monet’s work and visited some of his favourite sites, such as Vétheuil and Giverny. In May 1891, Conder viewed fifteen of Monet’s haystack paintings on display at the Galerie Durand Ruel, Paris.

Iso Rae

Australia 1860 – England 1940, France 1887–1932,
England from 1932

Woman in garden

1898

produced in probably Étaples, France
oil on wood panel

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 1977

(77.510)

This work, along with *Young girl, Étaples*, exemplifies Iso Rae's aptitude for re-creating the effects of dappled sunlight. The composition bears a striking resemblance to a devotional subject by Jules Bastien-Lepage, *Joan of Arc*, 1879, inviting speculation as to whether Rae may have encountered this work in France before it was purchased by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 1889.

Florence Fuller

South Africa 1867 – Australia 1946, Australia from 1868, France 1894–1901, England and France 1901–04, India 1908–11

Woman in a garden in France

1895

produced in France

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth. Purchased through the Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation and The Great Australian Paintings Appeal, 1996

(1996/0242)

This classically posed figure in landscape, with subtly rendered effects of light, dates to a formative period in Florence Fuller's career, and bears testament to both her academic training, and her burgeoning interest in Impressionism. Fuller had studied art at the National Gallery School with Jane Sutherland (who may have inspired her interest in theosophy) and Robert Dowling, before continuing her studies in an all-female atelier of the Académie Julian, Paris, 1894–1901. In 1904, she moved to Perth and remained there for four productive years. Upon leaving Western Australia, she stayed at the theosophists' headquarters in Calcutta 1909–11. After a period in England, she returned to Australia in 1920, and lived in Sydney.

Florence Fuller

South Africa 1867 – Australia 1946, Australia from 1868,
France 1894–1901, England and France 1901–04, India
1908–11

A French peasant

1894–99

produced in France

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1972

(A27-1972)

Iso Rae

Australia 1860– England 1940, France 1887–1932, England from 1932

Young girl, Étaples

c. 1892

produced in Étaples, France

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and family, Professor Graham Peirson and Christine Peirson and the Norma Atwell Bequest 2020

(2020.705)

Iso (Isobel) Rae has captured a moment from everyday life in this image of a young girl in a traditional Breton cap, holding a flower in her hand, and depicted unusually on a monumental scale. The 'light-filled prismatic palette', which Rae adopted here, was used by many artists during the later nineteenth century, and the humble everyday subject was one favoured by followers of naturalist artists such as Jules Bastien-Lepage. Rae studied at the National Gallery School in Melbourne from 1878 to 1887 and travelled to France in the late 1880s. She studied in Paris, and in 1892 moved to Étaples, a fishing village on the northern coast of France, where she would live for the next forty years.

Tudor St George Tucker

England 1862–1906, Australia 1881–87, 1892–99

Springtime girl

1892

produced in Paris

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, K. M. Christensen and
A. E. Bond Bequest, 2010

(2010.312)

E. Phillips Fox

Australia 1865–1915, France 1887–92, England and
France 1901–13

Sunlight effect

c. 1889

produced in Paris

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

Gift of the artist's nephew, Len Fox in memory
of his mother, Irene Fox 1984

(84.1542)

In the late 1880s and early 1890s, before his marriage to Ethel Carrick, Fox painted tranquil images of sunlight featuring young peasant girls and religious novices. Free from narrative detail, these tender images are essentially ones of light and colour. Fox had attended Alexander Harrison's classes in Paris in 1888–89, where he had been encouraged to use a 'light-filled prismatic palette'. The artistic re-creation of prismatic light (incorporating the colours of the spectrum) was the goal of much painting in the later nineteenth century, integral to the new palette of Impressionists Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro and Georges Seurat.

Alfred Sisley

France 1839–1899, England 1857–61, France from 1862

The Loing and the slopes of Saint-Nicaise – February afternoon (*Le Loing et le coteau de Saint-Nicaise – après-midi de février*)

1890

produced in Moret-sur-Loing, France

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Felton Bequest 1938

(453-4)

John Russell

Australia 1858–1930, Europe 1881–1921, Australia from 1921, New Zealand 1922–23

Madame Sisley on the banks of the Loing at Moret

1887

produced in Moret-sur-Loing, France

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Purchased with assistance from the Margaret Hannah Olley Art Trust 1996

(768.1996)

John Russell was of the same generation of Australian artists as Tom Roberts, but he lived and worked in Europe for forty-five years, from 1876 to 1921, having direct contact with many significant international artists of his time. In 1887 Russell stayed in the picturesque medieval town of Moret-sur-Loing, to the south-east of Paris just beyond the Fontainebleau forest. There, Russell met with Impressionist artist Alfred Sisley, whose family lived in the town. Russell depicted Madame Sisley in his work. The white chalk cliff shown in the background of Sisley's painting is the same site depicted in Russell's painting.

John Russell

Australia 1858–1930, Europe 1881–1921, Australia from 1921, New Zealand 1922–23

The garden, Longpré-les-Corps-Saints 1887

produced in Longpré-les-Corps-Saints, Picardy, France oil
on canvas

Private collection

John Russell

Australia 1858–1930, Europe 1881–1921, Australia from 1921, New Zealand 1922–23

In the morning, Alpes Maritimes from Antibes

1890–91

produced in Antibes, France

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 1965

(65.25)

In this work, Russell has captured the sparkling surface of the blue-green sea, the sun on the dappled golden-green grass and the mauve-blue mountains. When the painting was exhibited at the English Art Club, the *Times*'s critic noted: 'There is sunshine, real genuine sunshine, in ... Russell's "Morning" ... [and] in Mr Monet's "Orange and Lemon trees" '. In July 1888, Russell wrote to Van Gogh: 'Saw ten of Mr Monet's pictures done at Antibes. Very fine in colour and light and a certain richness of envelop. But like nearly all the so-called Impressionist work the form is not enough studied'.

John Russell

Australia 1858–1930, Europe 1881–1921, Australia from 1921, New Zealand 1922–23

A clearing in the forest

1891

produced in Antibes, France

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. A. M. & A. R. Ragless
Bequest Funds 1968

(6812P17)

Claude Monet

France 1840–1926

Rough weather at Étretat (Gros temps à Étretat)

1883

produced in Étretat

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Felton Bequest 1913

(582-2)

‘Monet is undoubtedly a remarkable colourist and full of courage in attacking difficult problems. We should all do the same. It is the only way to get strong. Luckily here in Belle-Île I am forced to try all things.’

**JOHN RUSSELL, LETTER TO VINCENT VAN GOGH, BELLE-ÎLE-EN-MER,
SUNDAY 22 JULY 1888**

Russell’s meeting with Monet in 1886 on Belle-Île, a small island in the Bay of Biscay off the coast of Brittany, would have a transformative impact upon his approach to painting. The two artists painted together during that summer, and Russell subsequently moved to Belle-Île in 1888, where he lived for more than twenty years.

John Russell

Australia 1858–1930, Europe 1881–1921, Australia from 1921, New Zealand 1922–23

Rocks at Belle-Île (Rochers de Belle-Île)

c. 1900

produced in Belle-Île, France

oil on canvas

Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane. Purchased 1971

(1:1158)

John Russell

Australia 1858–1930, Europe 1881–1921, Australia from 1921, New Zealand 1922–23

Antibes (View from Hotel Jouve, Plage de la Sallis, looking towards the medieval walls and the Grimaldi castle, Antibes)

1892

produced in Antibes, France
oil on canvas

Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane. Gift of Lady Trout through the Queensland Art Gallery Foundation 1980

(1-1706)

John Russell

Australia 1858–1930, Europe 1881–1921, Australia from 1921, New Zealand 1922–23

Sea and sky (Mer et ciel)

1902

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with the assistance of a special grant from the Government of Victoria 1979

(A76-1980)

Ethel Carrick

England 1872 – Australia 1952, France 1905–13, 1918–40,
1946–52, Australia
1913–16, 1940–46

Flower market

1907

produced in Paris

oil on wood panel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne,
Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria
by the late Major B. R. F. MacNay, and Mrs D. MacNay,
Fellow 1994

(A9-1994)

Ethel Carrick

England 1872 – Australia 1952, France 1905–13, 1918–40,
1946–52, Australia
1913–16, 1940–46

Beach scene

c. 1909

probably produced in Trouville, France

oil on canvas mounted on cardboard

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 1976

(76.1061)

Scenes of contemporary recreation were a recurring focus for Carrick, with the artist often depicting fashionably dressed people promenading in gardens, or shopping at French markets. Here, Carrick's stylised portrayal of the red striped tents and brightly dressed beachgoers captures the playful essence of summer days spent at the seaside. The artist's distinctive luminous palette is pronounced in this painting. It was developed during her studies at the Slade School of Fine Art, London, when she looked to Camille Pissarro and Claude Monet for inspiration. The work has visual parallels with paintings produced by E. Phillips Fox, who was working on similar scenes of fashionable leisure around this time, and who also employed a strikingly lucent palette.

Ethel Carrick

England 1872 – Australia 1952, France 1905–13, 1918–40,
1946–52, Australia
1913–16, 1940–46

Ponte Vecchio

c. 1907

produced in Florence, Italy

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Andrée Harkness through
the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program 2020

(2020.571)

Ethel Carrick

England 1872 – Australia 1952, France 1905–13, 1918–40,
1946–52, Australia
1913–16, 1940–46

In the Luxembourg Gardens, Paris

c. 1907

produced in Paris

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1949

(2049-4)

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Fruit trees in blossom, Algiers

1892

produced in Algiers

oil on canvas

Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art,
Brisbane. Purchased 1963

(1:0916)

The subject of trees in blossom held personal significance for Conder, who painted the subject many times in Australia and Europe. In these delicate visions, he offered a personal interpretation of the mood of spring, fresh and sparkling. It was a subject that also had great appeal to Monet, who painted works such as *Spring (Fruit trees in bloom)*, 1873 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). The pastel shades of spring inspired Monet to depict nature almost purely in terms of colour.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Hayfield, Giverny, France

1894

produced in Giverny, France
oil on canvas

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Gifted to mark 50 years of
giving by M. J. M. Carter AO Collection, through the Art Gallery of
South Australia Foundation 2016. Donated through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts Program

(20165P40)

After viewing fifteen of Monet's haystack paintings, on display in May 1891 at the Galerie Durand-Ruel in Paris, Conder wrote to Roberts: '[H]e paints them in the funniest way. He paints a good deal still with pure colour, but you quite lose the paint at three or four yards ... [Monet] takes you among hayricks and sunsets in the most natural way and then lets you see it as you have been used – not in his but in your own way. I feel Monet in this way or not at all'.

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Landscape with figures

1894

produced in France

oil on canvas

Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane.

Purchased from the estate of Lady Trout with a special allocation from
the Queensland Government 1989

(1989.109)

A longer history

‘You got to know your father’s country: Yarra is my Father’s Country. Me no leave it.’

WILLIAM BARAK, c. 1824–1903

The stylistic innovation associated with Australian Impressionism has often led to the positioning of the movement as ‘Australia’s first school of art’. However, it exists within a far longer history. The thriving art traditions of Australia’s First Peoples, custodians of the longest continuing culture on Earth, have existed for 65,000 years.

The Australian Impressionists sought to forge a connection with a place in which they had only recently arrived. At the same time, First Peoples in south-eastern Australia – where the Australian Impressionists were working – continued to make art enriched by their innate connection to and knowledge of Country. Viewed side by side, their work is testament to the complex, challenging, and often tragic relationship between art and identity in Australia.

William Barak

Wurundjeri c. 1824–1903

Ceremony with rainbow serpent

c. 1880

produced in Coranderrk, Healesville, Victoria

Wurundjeri Country

pencil, gouache, earth pigments, charcoal on paper

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne/ Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of the Alcoa Foundation, Governor 1994 (O.1-1994)

William Barak left an authoritative record of his culture in a body of around fifty drawings, each an unmediated expression of his hand that reveals the strength of his cultural belief. This drawing, with its startling use of Reckitt's Blue paint, reveals Barak's sensitive pencil drawing, apparent in the details of the faces, fingers and lyrebird feather headdresses of the men and women. In parts of the work, Barak has left the pencil line unadorned, enabling the viewer an intimate glimpse of the artist's skill in sketching arms, legs, patterns, poses and faces in profile, prior to applying dark outlines.

William Barak

Wurundjeri c. 1824–1903

Ceremony

1898

produced in Coranderrk, Healesville, Victoria

Wurundjeri Country

pencil, wash, ground wash, charcoal solution, gouache
and earth pigments on paper

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1962

(1215B-5)

William Barak

Wurundjeri c. 1824–1903

Group hunting animals

1890s

produced in Coranderrk, Healesville, Victoria

Wurundjeri Country

watercolour over pencil and charcoal on paper

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Michael and Traudl Moon 1995 (1995.44)

William Barak

Wurundjeri c. 1824–1903

Untitled (Ceremony)

1900

produced in Coranderrk, Healesville, Victoria

Wurundjeri Country

earth pigments, watercolour and pencil on paper

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. The Warren Clark Bequest 2001

(2002.31)

William Barak

Wurundjeri c. 1824–1903

Figures in possum skin cloaks

1898

produced in Coranderrk, Healesville, Victoria

Wurundjeri Country

pencil, wash, charcoal solution, gouache and earth
pigments on paper

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1962

(1215A-5)

Australian narratives

In the 1880s and 1890s, Frederick McCubbin, Tom Roberts and Arthur Streeton sought to convey narratives of Australian life, as they experienced it. They produced popular, dramatic images on a grand scale, with each artist creating their images in a different way.

While McCubbin painted haunting and mysterious depictions of the bush, Roberts favoured scenes of action – workers in a shearing shed, or the sudden stillness of a ‘hold up’. Streeton explored the visual dynamism caused by an explosion, and its aftermath of human tragedy.

These artists’ visions of Australia differed from those of earlier settlers. McCubbin’s rendering of the texture of Australian vegetation was unlike colonial portrayals of the landscape, as was Roberts’s and Streeton’s treatment of the country’s intense summer heat. Drawing upon diverse artistic exemplars, from contemporary photography, to French nineteenth-century realist or naturalist painting, to the awe of the Sublime, they forged a distinct and powerful mode of narrative painting.

Walter Barnett directed

Australia 1862 – France 1934, England 1889–1920, France from 1920

Marius Sestier filmed

Melbourne Cup carnival

film footage

3 November 1896

produced in Melbourne

Wurundjeri/Boon Wurrung Country

The National Film and Sound Archive of Australia

French filmmaker Marius Sestier shot this film using a Lumière Cinématographe camera that he had been given by the Lumière Brothers to document life and culture around the world. This film was directed by Roberts's friend, H. Walter Barnett. Throughout the film Barnett encourages action and movement by directing the crowd to wave their hats. It is the first documentary film made in Australia, and observes the Melbourne Cup of 1896. Sestier's footage was first screened in Australia and then exhibited in France and other countries.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Bailed up

1895

produced in Inverell, New South Wales; reworked 1927

Kallista, Victoria

Kamilaroi Country

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Purchased 1933 (833)

Bailed up presents a re-enactment of the story of bushranger 'Captain Thunderbolt' (Frederick Ward) holding up the Inverell–Glen Innes mail coach. It is also captures powerfully the effects of Australian heat and light on a summer's day. The enclosed landscape and pervasive stillness both belie and emphasise the suspense of the narrative scene. Coach driver Bob Bates, who modelled for the painting, had reputedly been held up by Captain Thunderbolt in the 1860s, and told Roberts that it was, somewhat incongruously, a 'quiet affair'.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

Shearing the rams

1890

produced in Brocklesby Station, New South Wales and
Melbourne

Yorta Yorta Country

oil on canvas on composition board

National Gallery of Victoria Felton Bequest 1932

(4654-3)

This now iconic painting was based on several preliminary sketches that Roberts completed at Brocklesby Station, Corowa, New South Wales, in the late spring of 1888, and again in spring 1889 and 1890. However, it is much more than a literal representation of shearers at work. Roberts sought to express 'the subdued hum of hard fast working', with 'the whole lit warm with the reflection of Australian sunlight'. He arranged the figures in a tableau, conveying the tension in the shearers' bodies, and linking one figure to another, through the repeated arched bending forms, with slight variations. He did so in the manner of Eadweard Muybridge's photographic studies of motion, to create a sense of the human subjects in action.

Tom Roberts

England 1856 – Australia 1931, Australia from 1869,
England 1881–85, 1903–19, 1921–23

A break away!

1891

produced in Corowa, New South Wales and Melbourne
Yorta Yorta Country
oil on canvas

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Elder Bequest Fund 1899

(0.139)

A break away! is a carefully observed painting that combines elements of naturalist technique with an abstract compositional structure in the verticals of the trees; the horizontals of the skyline; and the diagonals of the fence, dust and sheep. A stockman futilely attempts to prevent drought-affected sheep, unable to resist the scent of water, from stampeding, while choking dust almost obscures the other rider and more sheep. Here, Roberts has created the sense of a film still of horses in motion, five years before his friend, H. Walter Barnett, and Marius Sestier, made the first Australian documentary film, *Melbourne Cup* (1896).

Frederick McCubbin

Australia 1855–1917

The pioneer

1904

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest 1906

(253-2)

For a few years after Federation, McCubbin continued to craft imaginative images examining the lives of early colonists, such as his large triptych *The pioneer*. This was to be the last of his historical narratives. In an altarpiece format, this tribute to Federation shows the struggles, resourcefulness and tragedy of a pioneer family. A vision of the future is implied in the prosperous city (Melbourne), just visible in the background.

Frederick McCubbin

Australia 1855–1917

A bush burial

1890

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas

Geelong Gallery, Victoria. Purchased by subscription 1900

(1900.11)

In *A bush burial*, McCubbin has conveyed the haunting mystery of the bush: the tall gums, the distinctive silvery blue-green of the wattle foliage and the dense tangle of bracken and undergrowth. In such settings, McCubbin depicted the struggles of the early colonisers. McCubbin painted these works in the 1890s, when Australia was hit by economic depression. At this time of widespread unemployment and homelessness, it was easy for people to identify with scenes of hardship.

Frederick McCubbin

Australia 1855–1917

Down on his luck

1889

produced in Melbourne

oil on canvas

State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth.

Purchased 1896

(1896/00P7)

The model for this painting was McCubbin's friend and fellow artist, Louis Abrahams. The work was positively reviewed at the time of its first exhibition, with the reviewer from *Table Talk* extolling in particular McCubbin's capacity to convey atmosphere and character: 'McCubbin in "Down on His Luck" ... raises expectation ... as to what he will yet accomplish. The scene represents a forest glade, with the evening shadows gradually stealing over the trees, and causing them, as they recede into the forest, to be enshrouded in faint grey mist. A human figure [is] seated on the ground, after the style of a bushman ... The face tells of hardships ... but [the] expression ... proclaims the absence of all self pity'.

J. W. Lindt

Germany 1845 – Australia 1926, Australia from 1862

Sundowners

1886

gelatin silver photograph

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased 1975

(PH73-1975)

Nicholas Caire

Channel Islands 1837 – Australia 1918, Australia from 1858

Down on his luck

1893

produced in Melbourne

gelatin silver photograph

State Library of Victoria, Melbourne. Transferred from the Victorian
Patents Office to the Melbourne Public Library 1908

(H96.160/2066)

Arthur Streeton

Australia 1867–1943, England 1897–1919, Canada, the United States and England 1922–23

Fire's on

1891

produced in Lapstone, Blue Mountains, New South Wales
Dharug Country

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Purchased 1893

(832)

Blasting had just been undertaken to construct a railway tunnel through the hillside, and Streeton's painting shows the tumbling rocks and tragic effect of the blast – a dead miner being carried out on a stretcher. The spectacle of diminutive figures in a violent landscape evokes the sublime combination of terror and awe, but this is a human-made rather than a natural disaster, and it is not wonder that the scene evokes, but sorrow at the human tragedy brought about in the cause of technological advancement.

The hazy blue sky and glaring light conveys scorching summer heat, while beneath the sky are jagged rocks with a tunnel that 'gapes like a great dragon's mouth'.

ARTHUR STREETON, LETTER TO FREDERICK McCUBBIN, OCT. 1891

Charles Conder

England 1868–1909, Australia 1884–90, throughout
Europe 1890–1905

Sketch of Littlehampton Beach

1890

produced in Littlehampton, West Sussex, England
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with the assistance
of a special grant from the Government of Victoria, 1979

(A46-1980)

Shortly after his arrival in Europe, Conder visited friends in the south of England, for whom he painted this beachside work. Like his Australian works at Bronte, it includes a spare foreground and carefully placed figures, but the cloudy, overcast sky and softer palette reflect this new English location. It also shows Conder's ability to capture momentary sensation, and the fleeting play of light on people, water and clouds. In its sparseness, and barely sketched-in figures, it has something in common with Whistler's seascapes, as well as Monet's.

Frederick McCubbin

Australia 1855–1917

The pool of London

1907

produced in London

oil on wood panel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with the assistance of a special grant from the Government of Victoria 1979

(A24-1980)

McCubbin made several sketches of the Thames during his short stay in London in 1907. He possibly painted this work after his visit to Paris in early August 1907, where he admired the works of Monet and Sisley in the Musée du Luxembourg. Adopting a low viewpoint and using horizontal dashes of contrasting colour, McCubbin captured the sparkling, reflective appearance of light on water and painted light-filled billowing clouds in an expansive sky. In the foreground, barges suggest the busy commercial activity in this part of industrial London. Monet also painted several views of the Thames, including *The pool of London*, 1871 (National Museum Wales, Cardiff).

Mary Meyer

Australia 1878–1975

Landscape, Charterisville

1890s

Wurundjeri Country

produced in Charterisville

oil on board

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Bequest of Mary Meyer in memory of her husband Dr Felix Meyer, 1975

(75.667.21)

Mary Meyer, a student of E. Phillips Fox and Tudor St George Tucker at Charterisville, painted throughout her life, specialising in small, Impressionist landscapes influenced by her time at the Eaglemont homestead. On her death, she bequeathed the University of Melbourne \$130,000 to endow postgraduate scholarships in the name of her husband, Dr Felix Meyer. She also bequeathed a number of works of art to the National Gallery of Australia, including this one. In 1965, she held a retrospective exhibition at the Lyceum Club, of which she was an original member.