

**SHIFTING BOUNDARIES:**

**THE ART OF**

**EILEEN MAYO**

---

A thesis

submitted in fulfilment

of the requirements for the Degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the

University of Canterbury

by

Margaret Jillian Cassidy

---

University of Canterbury

2000

N)  
7408  
· M473  
· C345  
2000  
Vol. 1

**Volume 1**

**Part I**

**CONTENTS**

<b>Abstract</b>	i
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	ii
<b>List of Illustrations</b>	iii
<b>Abbreviations</b>	iv
<b>Chronology</b>	vi
<b>Introduction</b>	1
<b>Chapter 1: Background, Character and Early Artistic Training</b>	18
<b>Chapter 2: The Artist as Illustrator and Author</b>	38
<b>Chapter 3: The Artist as Printmaker</b>	72
<b>Chapter 4: The Artist as Painter</b>	114
<b>Chapter 5: The Artist as Designer I</b>	145
<b>Chapter 6: The Artist as Designer II</b>	179
<b>Conclusion</b>	211

**Part II**

**DOCUMENTATION**

<b>Catalogue of Works</b>	220
<b>Bibliography</b>	288

## Volume II

<b>Reproductions</b>	1
List of Reproductions	2
Reproductions of work by Eileen Mayo	12

## ABSTRACT

The artist, Eileen Mayo, D.B.E., was born in Norwich, England in 1906. Educated at the Slade School of Art, University of London (1923 - 24) and at the Central School of Arts and Crafts (1925 - 1928), she established a career as an illustrator, painter and printmaker in London in the 1930s. Associated with Claude Flight and the Colour Linocut Movement, her works were exhibited at the Royal Academy and extensively elsewhere, and collected by the Victoria and Albert and the British Museums. Mayo was also active as a model and features in works by leading artists such as Dame Laura Knight and Dod Proctor, another influence on her work.

During the 1940s she wrote and illustrated books on natural history, a central theme in her work, as well as expanding her range as a printmaker into wood engraving and lithography. In the early 1950s she undertook a comprehensive study of tapestry design in France, rapidly distinguishing herself in this field.

Mayo emigrated to Australia in 1952, becoming established as a leading printmaker, poster and stamp designer. Resident in New Zealand from 1962 until her death in 1994, she continued to develop as a printmaker, stretching the possibilities of relief and silk screen techniques, although she achieved greater recognition as a stamp designer during this period.

Mayo's career is characterised by her seamless movement between the fine and applied arts, her Arts and Crafts-inspired belief in the right making of things and her uniformly high level of achievement across a wide range of media and genres. Although early works explore the theatrical world of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, her subject matter is overwhelmingly rooted in meticulous observation of the natural world. Her ability to find underlying patterns in nature links her work to the more conservative strains of British modernism.

Mayo was an artist who undertook commercial work in order to support herself. The full range of her output across the diverse media she employed includes illustrations, books, prints, paintings, tapestries, murals, bookplates, posters, tableware, dioramas, stamps and coins and was produced against a background of artistic practice within three countries in which she lived and worked. The artist's working notes and diaries and all known works are documented in a critical catalogue.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am especially grateful to my supervisors Dr. Pamela Gerrish Nunn and Associate Professor Ian Lochhead, for assisting and supporting the research and writing of this thesis. I am also indebted to Dr. Mark Stocker, Linda Tyler and Margaret Harrison for their special insights and involvement in this project.

Museum and art gallery staff, both in England and New Zealand, have been very helpful. I would like to thank the following: Adrian Glew (Tate Gallery Archive), Dr. Judith Collins (Tate Gallery), Stephen Coppel (Print Room, British Museum), Justine McCallum (Australian Museum, Sydney), Marian Minson (Alexander Turnbull Library), John Darby (Otago Museum), Margery Blackman (Otago Museum), and Dr. Robin Craw (Otago Museum).

I am much indebted to the following relations and friends of Eileen Mayo who have drawn on their recollections for me and who have given me valuable information and assistance: the late Margery Ball, Josephine Campey, John Gainsborough, Ngaire Hewson, Barry Cleavin and Denise Copland.

I would also like to thank those who have helped with the technical preparation of this thesis for submission, particularly Barbara Cottrell and Marilyn Hooper for their part in preparing the images for the catalogue, Margaret Adam for her assistance with proof-reading and Evelyn Knibb for her help and patience in dealing with the idiosyncrasies of my computer. I would also like to acknowledge the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions who introduced me to art history as a child and sustained and financially supported my interest in it over the years. Finally I would like to thank my sisters Pauline Evans and Catherine Gordon, as well as Margaret McKean-Taylor and Sylvia and Gordon Ducker, for their continuing encouragement and support throughout the long process of researching and writing this thesis.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

### Frontispiece

Dod Proctor, *Eileen Mayo*, c. 1928

Oil on canvas

Private Collection, on loan to Penlee House Gallery & Museum,  
Penzance

- Fig. 1 Moore, Henry. *Reclining Figure*, 1929
- Fig. 2 Rooke, Noel. Illustration to Bernard Shaw, *The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God*, London : Constable & Company Limited, 1932, p. 56
- Fig. 3 Lewis, Wyndham. *Praxitella*, 1920 - 21
- Fig. 4 Bell, Vanessa. Illustration to Virginia Woolfe, *Kew Gardens*, Folcroft, PA : The Folcroft Press, Inc., 1969, u.p.
- Fig. 5 Georges Braque. *Table, Glass and Pipe*, 1913
- Fig. 6 Juan Gris. *Bouelle et Compotier*, 1917
- Fig. 7 David Jones, *Ex Devina Pvlchritvdine*, 1956
- Fig. 8 Shahn, Ben. Poster design, *Ballets U.S.A.*, 1959
- Fig. 9 Proctor, Theo. Cover design, *The Home*, November 1928
- Fig. 10 Lempicka, Tamara. *The Flower Wreath*, c. 1932
- Fig. 11 Carrington, Dora. *The Mill, Tidmarsh, Berkshire*, 1918
- Fig. 12 Nash, Paul. *Harbour and Room*, 1932 - 36
- Fig. 13 Knight, Laura. *Baby in Long Clothes*, c. 1928
- Fig. 14 Proctor, Dod. *Study of a Baby : a Poem of Repose*, c. 1927
- Fig. 15 The Angiers Tapestries. Apolcalypse series, Scene 48, *The Ascension of the Lamb*
- Fig. 16 Mural. *The Tree of Invertebrates*, Australian Museum, 1959
- Fig. 17 Eileen Mayo. *Insect*, detail, *The Tree of Invertebrates*, 1959
- Fig. 18 Shahn Ben. Illustration to *Love and Joy about Letters*, London : Cory, Adams and MacKay, 1964, p. 7

## ABBREVIATIONS

AAG	Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland
AG	Aigantighe Gallery, Timaru
AGNSW	Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
AGO	Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto
ATL	Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington
BAG	Baillieu Allard's Gallery, London
BL	Barry Lett Gallery, Auckland
BXAG	Beaux-Arts Gallery, Paris
BFG	Bob Franklin Gallery, USA
BM	British Museum, London
BMAG	Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Birmingham
BMB	Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, USA
CAS	Contemporary Art Society, London
COCA	Centre of Contemporary Art, Christchurch
CAC	Clifton Art Club, Bristol
CC	Crafts Centre, London
CG	Claridge Gallery, London
DJ	David Jones, Sydney
DAM	Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt
DPAG	Dunedin Public Art Gallery
FBG	Farmers' Blaxland Gallery, Sydney
GG	Grubb Group, Quo Vadis Restaurant, Soho, London
HL	Heal's Mansard Gallery, London
HLUO	Hocken Library, University of Otago, Dunedin
HAG	Huddersfield Art Gallery, Huddersfield
JG	Jane Gladstone Gallery, Sydney
JMG	John Martin Gallery, Sydney
JN	Johnstone Gallery, Brisbane
KMH	Killara Memorial Hall, Sydney
LG	Leicester Galleries, London
LTM	London Transport Museum, London
MAC	Macquarrie Gallery, Sydney
MAG	Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North
MONZ	Museum of New Zealand, Wellington
NBG	New Burlington Galleries, London
NGA	National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
NGV	National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
NLA	National Library of Australia, Canberra
NV	New Vision Gallery, Auckland
OM	Otago Museum, Dunedin
PBG	Peter Baxandall Gallery, Sydney
RG	Redfern Gallery, London
RMAG	Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch



RS	Rosslyn Gallery, Dunedin
RM	Rotorua Museum of Art and History
RA	Royal Academy, London
RIG	Royal Institute Galleries, London
RSBA	Royal Society of British Artists, London
SA	Several Arts, Christchurch
SAC	Shanghai Art Club, China
STAC	St Augustine's Church, North Sydney
ST	Suter Gallery, Nelson
TAG	Timaru Arcade Gallery, Timaru
TGA	Tate Gallery Archive, London
TPL	Toledo Public Library, Toledo, Spain
UC	University Club, University of Canterbury, Christchurch
V&A	Victoria and Albert Museum, London
WG	Ward Gallery, London
WAG	Worthing Art Gallery
WMAG	Weston Museum and Art Gallery

c.	corner
ill.	illustrated
l.l.	lower left
l.r.	lower right
u.l.	upper left
u.p.	unpaginated
u.r.	upper right

## CHRONOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

### AGE

- 1906** Eileen Rosemary Mayo was born on the 11 September in Norwich, England. She was the first child of Violet Elsie Mayo (née Moss) and Hubert Giles Mayo, Housemaster and Head of Science Department, City of Norwich School. The family lived at the school with Hubert Mayo's parents.
- 3** **1909** Margery Alison Mayo, Eileen's sister, was born on the 18 February.
- 7** **1913** Hubert Mayo was appointed Headmaster of Ossett Grammar School near Wakefield, Yorkshire; Eileen started school here in the preparatory department. Josephine Audrey Mayo, Eileen's second sister, was born on 5 July.
- 12** **1918** Upon Hubert Mayo's appointment to the staff of Bristol Grammar School the family moved to Bristol. The headmaster J.E. Barton and his wife became close family friends. Eileen was enrolled at Clifton High School.
- 14** **1920** Hubert Mayo was appointed inaugural Headmaster of Oldershaw School in Wallasey, Cheshire; Eileen remained at Clifton High School as a boarder. Between 1 January and 10 October she kept a 'Nature Diary,' (TGA 916.43). In it she recorded observations of weather and wildlife, with illustrations of plants and animals at the bottom of most pages. This is the first documentation of her keen eye for the natural world; such recordings of her own observations of nature were to become her major resource for her art in the future.
- 15** **1921** On 26 December Hubert Mayo died after a sudden illness aged 41. Violet Mayo remained in Wallasey with her two younger daughters; Eileen returned to Clifton High School to complete school certificate. There she worked as Assistant Matron in lieu of fees and received support and friendship from the Bartons.
- 17** **1923** At 17, Eileen gained school certificate with seven credits and distinction in English – she was named best English scholar in the west of England. Encouraged by the Bartons and her art mistress to study painting, Eileen enrolled at the Slade School of Art, University of London, and was invited to live with her mother's sister Hilda Shearman and her family in Hammersmith.

---

<sup>1</sup> This Chronology takes at its starting point the excellent biographic notes provided by Margaret McKean-Taylor for *Eileen Mayo : Painter and Designer*, Wellington : National Library of New Zealand, 1992, pp. 17 - 29.

- 18**    **1924** Eileen continued her studies in drawing, anatomy, lettering and perspective at the Slade. Despite its reputation for being the best art school in the country, the Slade did not live up to her expectations. Her disappointment led her to discover her own resources and increasingly she began to work independently at the British Museum and the South Kensington museums.
- 19**    **1925** Eileen left the Slade and enrolled at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London, attending evening classes in wood engraving, (for illustration) calligraphy, drawing, lithography and historical costume design. She supported herself by working during the day as a free-lance designer.
- 20**    **1926** Violet Mayo and her two younger daughters emigrated to New Zealand where they had family contacts. Eileen stayed on in London to continue her art education. She was introduced to Laura Knight and began a long association with her as her model and protégé. Each summer from 1926 to 1930 she accompanied Laura and Harold Knight to Newlyn, Cornwall where she modelled for them as well as for Dod Proctor. She also posed for Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and Bernard Meninsky.
- 21**    **1927** This marked the beginning of several commissions for the Beaumont Press. The first was for a cover for Cyril Beaumont's publication *The First Score*, a history of the Beaumont Press. Laura Knight painted her famous *Dressing for the Ballet* using Eileen as her model. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy that year.
- 23**    **1929** To supplement her income Eileen took up modelling for the life-class at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art, London. There she met Claude Flight, a teacher at the school and responsible for the rise of the colour linocut in the late 1920s and 1930s.
- 24**    **1930** In response to an invitation by Claude Flight Eileen designed and exhibited her first linocut, *Turkish Bath*, which was exhibited in the *Second British Linocut Exhibition*, Redfern Gallery, London. Her print was purchased by the Victoria & Albert Museum for their Circulations Department. She received several commissions for illustrations to books. She studied modelling and sculpture with Eric Schilsky at the Westminster School of Art.
- 25**    **1931** For part of 1931 Eileen lived in Wiesbaden, Germany, working as a nanny/tutor. She saved sufficient money to travel to Berlin to visit the art galleries there. She continued to exhibit with the Claude Flight Group at the Redfern Gallery.
- 26**    **1932/33** Eileen received design commissions from *The Sphere*, as well as from the *Tatler*, *Radio Times*, Odham's Press, Shell Oil and Jonathan Cape. She also worked as a lithographer for some of the smaller private presses.
- 28**    **1934/35** Eileen travelled by cargo ship to Durban, South Africa, where she stayed with her cousin May Shearman. She made numerous drawings of the Zulu people, of fauna and flora which she developed into paintings and prints on her

return to England. She was commissioned by Douglas Cleverdon at Clover Hill Press, Bristol, to design eight coloured wood engravings for *The Bamboo Dancer and other African Tales*.

- 29    **1936** In July Eileen married Dr. Richard (Ralph) Gainsborough and lived with him in London.
- 30    **1937-40** The Gainsboroughs bought a farmhouse, The Goldings, at Mannings Heath near Horsham in West Sussex. Eileen travelled between London and the country whenever possible studying at Chelsea Polytechnic with Robert Medley, Henry Moore and Harold James. She studied lithography at Horsham School of Art with Vincent Lines.
- 35    **1941** With the outbreak of war Eileen, her husband and stepson moved to a house at Fletching in East Sussex. From there Ralph Gainsborough operated three medical practices which Eileen assisted in running. She received a commission from Waverly Book Company to produce a 'nature book.'
- 38    **1944** Eileen's *The Story of Living Things and their Evolution* – 300 pages of text and over 1,000 illustrations – was published by the Waverly Book Company. *Shells and how they Live* was published the same year by Pleiades Books.
- 39    **1945** Eileen wrote and illustrated two more books: *Little Animals of the Countryside* and *Larger Animals of the Countryside*. Both were published by Pleiades Books. She exhibited her work for the first time at the Royal Academy: a lithograph, *Squirrel*.
- 40    **1946** Her prints were included in a tour of loan works by the Arts Council of Great Britain. She illustrated *One Day at Beetle Rock*, written by Sally Carrighar and published by Pleiades Books.
- 41    **1947** Ralph Gainsborough retired from medicine to pursue his interest in art publications. A house at Chelsea was acquired as a London base. Eileen bought a lithographic press and used the top floor as a studio and living accomodation. The exhibition *Masterpieces of French Tapestry* at the Victoria & Albert Museum made a major impact on Eileen and she began an extensive study of the medium.
- 42    **1948** Eileen travelled to France where she undertook a study of the historic tapestries at Cluny and Angers. She exhibited her first painting, *Stage 17*, at the Royal Academy and also showed with the Senefelder Club.
- 43    **1949** Eileen returned to France for further studies where she attended life-drawing classes with Fernard Leger; she studied tapestry design at the Tabard Ateliers at Aubusson; she was taught the art of tapestry designing at St Céré by Jean Lurçat, the master of contemporary tapestry design. That year she designed her first cartoon for tapestry, *Royal Avenue, Chelsea*. In London Eileen exhibited at the Royal Academy and with the Royal Society of British Artists.

- 44 **1950** Eileen studied tapestry-weaving techniques in London with Tadek Beutlich at the Camberwell School of Art. She produced two more cartoons, *Women at Work* and *Echinoderms*. Her prints were included in the exhibition *150 years of Lithography* at the Victoria & Albert Museum from which the museum purchased a print and a stone for its permanent collection. She also exhibited at the Royal Academy and at the Leicester Galleries.
- 45 **1951** Eileen's *Animals of the Countryside* was published by Puffin Books and she illustrated *Best Cat Stories*, edited by Michael Joseph for Faber and Faber. *Echinoderms* was produced as a woven tapestry by the Dovecot Studios and exhibited in the Festival of Britain exhibition *English Tapestries* at the Birmingham City Gallery. She began teaching lithography and illustration at Sir John Cass College and drawing at St Martin's School of Art.
- 46 **1952** Eileen continued with her teaching and exhibited with the Society of Women Artists at the Royal Institute Gallery and with the Royal British Artists. Her marriage over, she left England in December for Sydney, Australia.
- 47 **1953** Eileen bought a house in Neutral Bay, Sydney, where her friends Carol and George Foote and her godchild, Belinda, lived. She exhibited her prints at the Macquarie Gallery, Sydney and worked in the Display Department at David Jones. She established important contacts with the directors and staff of the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the National Gallery of Victoria, the Australian Museum and the National Art School. Her work continued to be shown in Britain and *Echinoderms* was exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy.
- 48 **1954-56** After gaining a Trained Teacher's Certificate she began teaching illustration and design, part-time, at the National Art School of Sydney (East Sydney Technical Institute). In 1956 she designed posters for the Australian National Travel Association. *Woman with Cat* was selected for inclusion in the Olympic Games exhibition. She was awarded both the Albany Prize for prints and the Ku-ring-gai Prize for printmaking.
- 51 **1957** Eileen continued with part-time teaching while designing book-plates, posters and stamps. She also worked for Claude Alcorso of Silk and Textiles. Three of her posters were published in the 1955/57 edition of *Modern Publicity*.
- 52 **1958** Undertook full-time teaching as her main source of income.
- 53 **1959** Received a commission from the Australian Museum to contribute 55 paintings for a mural, *The Tree of Invertebrates*, to commemorate the centenary of the publication of Charles Darwin's book *The Origin of Species*. She won international recognition for her 'Mammal Series' issue of stamps.
- 54 **1960** Gained more international recognition, this time for her poster of the Great Barrier Reef which was chosen as one of the seven best international posters of 1959/60. She became a founding member of the Sydney Printmakers, and exhibited with them.

- 55** **1961** She relinquished her teaching at the National Art School in order to work on a mural commissioned by the Commonwealth Institute of Scientific Research Organisation, North Ryde, Sydney.
- 56** **1962** Eileen resumed teaching part-time. She won the Maude Vizard-Wholohan Prize for printmaking. She left Australia to join her mother and her sister Margery who were living in Waimate, New Zealand.
- 57** **1963** Australian stamp commissions continued. She was invited by the Australian Treasury to submit designs for decimal coinage.
- 58** **1964** Eileen was invited to represent Australia at the International Philatelic Exhibition, Paris. Her sister Margery's husband died suddenly.
- 59** **1965** Eileen received an invitation was received to exhibit at the International Print Biennale at Leipzig. She exhibited at the Aigintighe Art Gallery, Timaru and at the Logan Art Gallery and the Rosslyn Gallery, Dunedin. When her sister shifted to Christchurch to resume her career as a teacher, Eileen accompanied her.
- 60** **1966** Eileen began to establish herself as a printmaker in Christchurch. Some of her prints were purchased by Stuart McLennan, the Director of the National Art Gallery. Her work was exhibited in the International Print Biennale at Lugano. Covers for *Landfall* were commissioned by Charles Brasch. Four 'Barrier Reef' stamps were issued in Australia. She submitted designs for decimal coinage to the New Zealand Treasury.
- 61** **1967-72** In 1967 Eileen began teaching at the Ilam School of Art, University of Canterbury. She was awarded a QEII Arts Council fellowship to study contemporary printmaking in Australia. She exhibited widely both nationally and internationally – Lugano in 1968 and Tokyo in 1968 and 1969. Between 1969 and 1985 13 sets of her stamps were issued.
- 66** **1972-77** Between 1972 and 1975 Eileen lived in Dunedin. She worked part-time for the Otago Museum where she designed an underwater diorama, *Five Fathoms Deep*, for the new hall of Natural History. A retrospective exhibition of her work was shown at the Aigintighe Gallery, Timaru in 1972 and her prints were shown at the Otago Museum in 1973. In 1974 and 1975 she taught relief printing at the Kurow Summer School. On her return to Christchurch in 1975 Eileen fulfilled her ambition to make prints full-time, producing both relief and screen prints. In 1976 her painting *Life Dance of Sunflowers* won high praise and was selected as one of 25 works to tour nationally with the Benson and Hedges Award exhibition.
- 79** **1985** Eileen designed her last print, *White Cat with Poppies*. She also designed the 1985 New Zealand Christmas stamp issue.

- 84** **1991** A major archive of Eileen's work was established in the Tate Gallery Archive, London, from material gifted by the artist's stepson, John Gainsborough.
- 85** **1992** A major retrospective exhibition, *Eileen Mayo : Designer and Painter*, was mounted by the National Library of New Zealand and toured the country for the 18 months. A Mayo archive was established in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.
- 87** **1994** Eileen was created DBE in the New Year Honours. She died three days later at Lady King Hospital, Christchurch.

## INTRODUCTION

Dame Eileen Mayo was an artist who lived and worked in three different countries: she was born in Norwich, England in 1906; she emigrated to Sydney, Australia in 1952; to Waimate, New Zealand in 1962; and she died in Christchurch in 1994. Her method of working was extremely broad based – she saw no artificial distinctions between the fine arts and the applied arts and over a period of sixty years she built up a significant body of work. Because her achievements were multi-faceted and multi-national, so to speak, the norms of the usual artistic career which habitually make people the subject of art history cannot be applied to her – hers was a different kind of practice, but just as valid and interesting as ‘mainstream’ painters or sculptors.

A painter, illustrator, printmaker and designer who worked in the field of commercial art in order to support herself, Mayo saw no hierarchical difference between fine and applied arts. To her, every undertaking was as much an intellectual and artistic exercise, whether it was ‘ideal’ or commercial. Her attitude was free of any of the residue of the fine arts versus decorative arts debate of the Arts and Crafts Movement of the 1870s and 1880s. The blurring of the boundaries in Mayo’s attitude towards her work was the outcome of the training she had received at both the Slade School of Fine Arts, University of London, and the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London. Both institutions promoted the excellent and appropriate making of things in all aspects of their teaching. The Slade School combined academic traditions in art with sound craftsmanship and research; the Central School, founded by William Lethaby in 1896, was, for design and the crafts, what the Slade School and the Royal Academy were for



the fine arts. Mayo's position may be compared to that of the artists who had participated in the earlier commercial venture of the Omega Workshops founded in 1914. Did Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and other artists employed at the workshop regard their participation in the field of applied arts as being qualitatively different from their work as fine artists? Almost certainly not. Their aims were the same as those that Mayo brought to her commercial commissions: to bring their aesthetic to people's homes and to make money in doing so.

As a student in London in the 1920s and as a professional artist working in England until the early 1950s, Mayo lived through years of critical economic, social and political volatility in England which directly affected the development of her artistic career. World War One had been followed by a period of unprecedented inflation which led to a slump in 1921. When prices of goods tumbled as a result of this depression, industries were forced to close. With these closures came a sharp rise in unemployment. The first national Hunger March held in 1922 was a direct outcome of this. Not surprisingly, the Labour trade unions gained in force and popularity between 1920 and 1923 and in the latter year the first Labour Government in Britain was elected. When this short-lived government failed to alleviate the situation further instability ensued, culminating in the General Strike of 1926. A brief period of recovery followed but the economy collapsed again in 1929 following the Wall Street crash.

The post-war years of economic crises and political change were also marked by women's struggle for equality. They were particularly important years in the social history of women in England, especially middle-class women like Eileen Mayo. In 1919 the Sex Qualification (Removal) Act stated that women could no longer be excluded from exercising public function or barred from entering and pursuing a career in any civil profession on grounds of their sex or marriage.<sup>1</sup> Further concessions to equality were

---

<sup>1</sup> Cited in Noreen Branson, *Britain in the Nineteen Twenties*, London : Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1975, p. 209.

highlighted in the 1923 Matrimonial Causes Act which specified that women, like men, could sue for divorce on grounds of adultery alone, whereas previously they had had to prove cruelty and desertion, as well as adultery.<sup>2</sup> Sadly, Eileen Mayo would come to have recourse to this law after the collapse of her own marriage. This change in the Matrimonial Causes Act brought about a new attitude towards marriage and the role of women within it. This, in tandem with more reliable methods of birth control, gave women greater freedom and control over their lives than ever before. Mayo would be part of the generation to benefit from this. Women were also afforded greater freedom of manners and customs; it became acceptable for them to smoke in public and to mix more freely with men. The availability of a growing range of electrical home appliances also gave women greater leisure time in which to participate in the freedom to 'get away from it all' offered by the motor car,<sup>3</sup> though only a select few could afford to own one – Mayo certainly could not. More accessible was the new entertainment to be found in cinema and radio. But the most important change to affect women's status in British society was the granting of the vote in 1929 to all women over 21 years of age<sup>4</sup> (36 years after women in New Zealand gained the right to vote). Eileen Mayo was 23 years old by this time and therefore eligible to vote.

The 1930s were as turbulent economically, socially and politically as the 1920s had been. In 1931 the Labour Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, resigned from office and, along with some other Labour leaders, crossed the floor to join the Conservatives. The cycle of boom and bust which had dominated the post World War I years stabilised somewhat in the 1930s, and between 1934 and 1937 there was a gradual economic recovery. However, the confidence and stability of the pre-war years was never fully regained and even when the economic depression began to lift it was replaced by the

---

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Between 1919 and 1929 the number of private car owners increased by 59%. See Branson, pp. 221 - 228.

<sup>4</sup> Women over the age of 30 who were either householders, or married to a householder, had been enfranchised since 1918.

threat of war. During this decade women retreated from the so-called freedoms of the 1920s; their subconscious desire throughout the Thirties was for security – for a husband and a home.<sup>5</sup> Mayo, herself, married in 1936.

Mayo's career as an artist was shaped by social trends, economic activity and politics in England during these three decades. As a result of the greater freedom allowed women after World War I more of them than ever before were enrolled at art schools. In 1923, when Mayo enrolled at the Slade School of Fine Arts, she claimed that the school was bursting at the seams, female students far outnumbering males; that there were over 80 women crowded into the life-room compared to approximately 30 in the male drawing room.<sup>6</sup> Having chosen the Slade over the Royal Academy of Art on account of its reputation as the most progressive in England in areas of painting, drawing and printmaking, she found the lack of teaching in the overcrowded classrooms untenable and began to look elsewhere for training and tuition. She found this at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, where she attended evening classes in theatrical design, calligraphy, lithography and wood engraving for illustration. During this time she worked as a model to some of the best-known artists of the day, including Laura Knight, Dod Proctor, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant. She also worked as a freelance designer. This was made possible by the expansion in advertising after World War I. With the end of the war there was an enormous increase in the number of contracts and manufacturers needing to market their goods in order to remain competitive.<sup>7</sup> This they did through advertising. Dorothy Sayers' celebrated novel, *Murder Must Advertise*, set in an advertising firm, dates precisely from this period. Consequently, advertising or commercial design was an expanding area in which Mayo found commissions. As the economy shrank after the

---

<sup>5</sup> Noreen Branson and Margot Heinemann, *Britain in the Nineteen Thirties*, London : Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971, p. 234.

<sup>6</sup> Transcript of conversation between Mayo and Margaret McKean-Taylor, September 1990. Collection, Margaret McKean-Taylor, Ashurst.

<sup>7</sup> See Jill Seddon and Suzette Worden, (eds.), *Women Designing : Redefining Design in Britain between the Wars*, Brighton : University of Brighton, 1994, pp. 20 - 27.

Wall Street crash of 1929 so did the opportunities for freelance work. Mayo could, no doubt, have found full-time work in an advertising agency, as many of her contemporaries did during the 1920s and 1930s. That she chose not to is a mark not only of her independence but also of her commitment to being a professional artist. It was unfortunate indeed for her that disaster struck the economy at a time when she was just beginning to establish a reputation as a promising young printmaker, painter and illustrator.

Unwilling to have her professional aspirations compromised by the shrinking art opportunities in London, Mayo travelled to the spa city of Wiesbaden, Germany in 1931 to broaden her art education by studying art works in galleries and museums there. She supported herself by working as a nanny and tutor. From Wiesbaden she travelled to Berlin to visit more galleries. The worsening economic depression forced her to look to the 'new world' as an alternative place to settle and she left England for South Africa in 1934. Repelled by the apartheid regime, she returned to England in 1935 and in 1936 married Dr. Richard (Ralph) Gainsborough. Marriage gave her security in the uncertain climate of pre World War II Britain: a house in London (in which she used one of the main rooms on the ground floor as a studio) and a garden. She resumed her life as a full-time professional artist and, between 1937 and 1940, produced paintings, drawings and prints from material she had gathered during her year in Durban. However, the precariousness of the economy was reflected when, by 1937, the market for artists' prints radically reduced and many print galleries closed. Yet Mayo's creative output was in no way diminished by the lack of exhibition venues. Instead, the negative influence of the economy on the visual arts during the 1930s and early 1940s stimulated her to think laterally. During the war years she diversified temporarily from printmaking to writing and illustrating her own nature books for the children's educational market.

The changes in major social trends for women were as significant after World War II as they had been during the inter-war years. The promise of gender equality

made to them in the 1920s never really eventuated. The 'working mother' emerged in the 1940s but without the benefit of equal pay; the modern welfare state was a noble concept, but it was built on women's unpaid contributions in caring for others. There was an increase in the number of divorces as well as in one-parent families and illegitimate children.<sup>8</sup> The breakdown of society was blamed by conservative social critics on the failure of women in their role as wives and mothers. Mayo was, of course, caught up in these social changes. After her marriage, she had assumed responsibility for the running of the house and the care of her husband's young child, John, from a previous marriage. She was unwilling, however, to sacrifice her career as an artist in favour of the role of devoted wife and mother. Indeed, as an artist pursuing her career she was effectively a 'working mother,' although not the bread-winner. This created a dichotomy which she never resolved: she was committed to working as a professional artist; but her domestic duties interrupted that commitment. In 1952 she became another post-war divorce statistic.

Apart from an ongoing strand of mild Cubism and a brief dalliance with Surrealism in the late 1940s, Mayo remained unaffected by (but not ignorant of) formalism, modernism and abstractionism. This might not have been the case had she enjoyed the opportunity to develop as a painter as had been her original intention. Clive Bell's statement that "The representative element in art is always irrelevant"<sup>9</sup> would have found no currency with her: subject matter was always a major consideration in her work. Therefore, she had no desire to free herself from a taste for "... the literary, anecdotal and the illustrative..."<sup>10</sup> in favour of formal strength and expressiveness. Neither was she affected by the legacy of Fry's exhibitions of Post Impressionist art (1910 and 1912) which had had such a disturbing effect on teachers

---

<sup>8</sup> See Jane Lewis, *Women in Britain since 1945*, Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1992, pp. 1 - 10.

<sup>9</sup> Clive Bell, *Art*, London, Chatto and Windus, 1914, p. 20.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Harrison, *English Art and Modernism 1900 - 1939*, New Haven and London : Yale University Press, 1994, p. 53.

and students at the Slade during the second decade of the century. This had been successfully countered by Henry Tonks' insistence on 'Truth to Nature' achievable only through fluent draughtsmanship, of which Mayo was a recipient. Furthermore, Tonks continued the Slade tradition of studying great Italian painters as well as French. The outcome of the Slade legacy for Mayo, therefore, was a pictorial logic to her work based on the geometry of Piero della Francesca and the linear draughtsmanship of Ingres. Her early training at the Slade, however brief and unsatisfactory, ensured that her taste and orientation in art was always classical.

Too young to have experienced the modernism of the pre-war years, Mayo appears not to have been attracted to its ideology – apart from a mild version of Cubism already mentioned. When she began to paint professionally in 1929 her highly decorative and stylised work appeared largely untouched by Modernism. As stated above, her early training at the Slade had oriented her towards Piero della Francesca and Ingres; their modern counterparts were Dérain and Picasso, in their 1920s 'Classical Revival' phase. It should also be remembered that Modernism was by no means a universal option or obligation in England in the early decades of the century or, for that matter, at any other time. There were constant 'cross-overs' between academic art and modernism; the frontispiece to this thesis, *Eileen Mayo*, painted by Dod Proctor, c. 1928, exemplifies this point. The soft colours used by Proctor in this academically styled portrait recall Derain's muted tones of the 1920s, while the exaggerated thighs of the model hint at the modernist work of Henry Moore, for example, *Reclining Figure*, 1929 (Fig. 1). Mayo, like Proctor, straddled two traditions in her art, the modernist and the academic/historical.

Furthermore, during the 1920s when Mayo was developing as an artist, relatively little innovative art was produced. The majority of young radical artists who had espoused Modernism prior to World War I had served in the armed forces and many lost their lives. According to Charles Harrison, this had created a "hiatus" in the

art of the decade,<sup>11</sup> although the controversies surrounding the movement continued to be debated throughout the 1920s. While the traditional modernism of Bloomsbury continued in a muted form, The Seven & Five Society (1919 - 1935) was the only movement of any significance to emerge. Although its aim (and ambition) was to be 'modern,' it could hardly be regarded as avant-garde, until the very end of the decade. The society boasted members such as Jessica Dismorr, Claude Flight, Ivon Hitchens, Frances Hodgkins, Winifred Nicholson, Christopher Wood, but the most prominent, by far, were Ben Nicholson and Paul Nash. Nash – whose work Mayo admired – was essentially a romantic artist; his experiences as a war-artist had produced some wonderful paintings but at the expense of his stability and satisfaction. Through the 1920s he felt the need to anchor his art firmly in the English landscape, to register in his painting the changes made by time, light and seasons and to eliminate all references to the literary or romantic.<sup>12</sup> In comparison, Nicholson's work was more modernist than Nash's in its flattening of pictorial space and its move towards abstraction.

English art of the 1930s was more progressive and innovative than that of the 1920s. Unit One (1933 - 34), whose aim was to maintain 'a truly contemporary spirit' in art, was founded, avowing an emphasis on "... design and form, on structure rather than spontaneous and unconscious creation, and on composition rather than representation."<sup>13</sup> Even though the art of the group was based on nature, it was expressed in abstract terms. This is evident in the sculpture of Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth and in the paintings of Ben Nicholson and Paul Nash. All these artists moved towards a greater abstraction during the 1930s. The International Surrealist Exhibition of 1936 introduced English artists to new and exciting subjects drawn from the world of dreams, the unconscious and the psychology of Freud and Jung. English Surrealism developed alongside Constructivism and Abstractionism but

---

<sup>11</sup> See Charles Harrison, *English Art and Modernism 1900 - 1939*, pp. 145 - 167.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 169 - 172.

<sup>13</sup> See Branson, *Britain in the Nineteen Twenties*, pp. 261 - 262.

whereas the other two movements aimed to restore order and logic to perceived ideas, Surrealism strove to release the imagination from habitual ways of viewing objects. Mayo's art was unaffected by Constructivism and Abstractionism and did not incorporate Surrealist elements until the movement was popularised in the late 1940s. She was, however, by no means atypical in having little detectable and immediate interest in these movements.

It was as a printmaker rather than as a painter that Mayo made her reputation in London in the early 1930s. At this time she was aligned with the colour linocut movement which had risen to prominence in the late 1920s. This modern medium was promoted by Claude Flight (1881 - 1955), a teacher at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art in London. Flight had been associated with the Italian Futurists and saw the linocut as an appropriate medium for depicting London as a Futurist city.<sup>14</sup> The Paris exhibition of 1925 – *L'Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* – also had a strong impact on Flight and he promoted what later became known as the Art Deco style in his writing and teaching. From 1930 to 1934 Mayo exhibited in the annual exhibition of British Linocuts. The charm of her decorative style – a combination of a diluted form of Cubism and the vitality of the Art Deco style – and the strength of her compositions received instant recognition from critics (including Frank Rutter) and galleries alike. The Victoria & Albert Museum bought all her prints for their Circulations Department which made artists' prints available for loan to private borrowers.<sup>15</sup> Her prints were included in selling exhibitions which toured provincial galleries in England; China in 1931; Australia in 1932 and 1937; and Canada 1935 - 36. The National Gallery of Victoria bought several of Mayo's prints (along with those of

---

<sup>14</sup> The Futurist leader F.T. Marinetti had regarded London, with its motor cars, buses and the newly constructed Underground as a Futurist city. See Frances Carey and Antony Griffiths, (eds.), *Avant-Garde British Printmaking 1914 - 1960*, London : British Museum Publications, 1990, p. 73.

<sup>15</sup> See E 902, Archive, Print Room, Victoria and Albert Museum. Some of the prints have been either lost or destroyed.



other artists) from the 1937 exhibition. These were the first prints from the British Linocut Movement to enter a public collection in Australia.<sup>16</sup>

In the 1940s Mayo responded ideologically and temperamentally to Neo-Romanticism in British art. One of the main characteristics of the movement was the celebration of the mystery of Nature; reverence and regard for the natural world being the dominating concern of the Neo-Romantic imagination. As with Modernism, there was no single Neo-Romantic 'house-style.' Its most eminent practitioners combined the figurative with the abstract. They included Graham Sutherland, John Piper, Paul Nash and – from the younger generation – John Minton, Keith Vaughan and Prunella Clough. Common to all these artists and to Neo-Romantic writers was a passionate concern with the British countryside and heritage in response to the modernisation of Britain. In the wake of the devastation of World War II, there was a rush to build more suburbs and to provide more amenities. As these new projects encroached further into the countryside artists and writers laid special stress on rural England; no area of land was too small or too insignificant for artists to record visually or for poets to celebrate in words. Although Mayo was never consciously part of the movement, the Neo-Romantic interest in Nature appealed to her. Her intention was, however, quite different from theirs. Instead of recording areas of nature for posterity, she turned to subjects drawn from the natural world – with its promise of hope and renewal – for reassurance. These were the years during which she wrote most of her nature books. She drew extensively from her country environment – ducks, squirrels, cats, plants, and trees were carefully studied and recorded in drawings, many of which she later translated into prints and paintings.

Mayo was one of many émigré artists in Australia in the 1950s who made a contribution to the art in that country. Several of the migrant artists were teachers and

---

<sup>16</sup> Stephen Coppel, *Linocuts of the Machine Age*, Aldershot : Scolar Press, 1995, p. 67.

printmakers and established printmaking departments in various art schools and colleges in Adelaide and Melbourne. Melbourne, in particular, had a long tradition of printmaking in its art schools whereas Sydney was slower to champion the print. Even though the Sydney Printmakers group – of which Mayo was a founding member in 1960 – had done much to promote printmaking in the city, the medium was not taught at the National Art School at the East Sydney Technical College until 1964. Mayo's reputation as a printmaker preceded her arrival in Sydney in December 1952, several of her prints, as already mentioned, having been purchased by the National Gallery of Victoria in the 1930s. Mayo never taught printmaking in Sydney, yet became an important figure in printmaking circles there. Indeed, the unexpected nuances of the prints she exhibited, the inventiveness of her designs, the subtlety of her colours as well as her unerring technical skills, made her a driving force behind printmaking in Sydney. Her prowess as a printmaker was nationally acknowledged in 1954 when she won both the Albany Prize for printmaking and the Ku-ring-gai Prize for prints. In 1962, on the verge of her move to New Zealand, she was awarded the prestigious Maud Vizard-Wholohan Prize for printmaking.

Mayo's success as a printmaker in Sydney was matched by the distinguished international reputation she won for Australia in the field of design. Between 1956 and 1957 Mayo designed six posters for the New South Wales Government Tourist Bureau. Three of them were selected as being among the best in the world and published in the 1955/57 edition of the commercial design journal *Modern Publicity*; one was featured in the magazine's 1958/59 publication and another in the 1959/60 magazine. This was the first time in the history of Australian graphic art that the country had received international recognition. In 1960, Mayo produced another first, this time in postage stamp design. Her 1/- green platypus stamp was singled out by the London publication, *Stamp Collector's Annual*, as one of the ten best stamps issued internationally that year and was awarded first equal place with a Canadian design.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Artist's notes. Collection, author.

When Mayo left Australia for New Zealand in 1962 she left a country where printmaking was becoming a major art form. In fact, during the 1960s and 1970s printmaking in Australia “came into a spectacular prominence.”<sup>18</sup> Although printmaking also rose in popularity in New Zealand during this time it never enjoyed the degree of prominence that it did in Australia. This was in spite of the high calibre of artists who worked in the medium: Barry Cleavin, Kate Coolahan, John Drawbridge, Kees Hos, Vivian Lynn, Rachel Miller, Derek Mitchell, Stanley Palmer, Janet Bathgate, Marilyn Webb, Mervyn Williams and, of course, Eileen Mayo. Painting and sculpture remained the dominant departments in both the Elam School of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland and the School of Fine Arts of the University of Canterbury. At Canterbury, for example, the 1960s saw some of New Zealand’s leading painters and sculptors, among them Doris Lusk, Don Peebles and Tom Taylor, appointed to teaching positions in painting and sculpture. Until Barry Cleavin was appointed Head of Printmaking at Canterbury in 1978, the medium could boast no artist of comparable standing to the painting and sculpture lecturers.<sup>19</sup>

In common with all the printmakers referred to above, Mayo’s work was distinctive and of a high quality. The invitations she received to exhibit her prints – at the International Print Biennale at Leipzig in 1965, at Lugano in 1968 and at Tokyo in 1968 and 1969 as well as the printmaking prizes she won in Australia – demonstrate that her work was able to match anything done internationally. But, despite her reputation, the local critics dismissed her work as being of no consequence to the development of New Zealand art principally because it failed to emulate the development of abstract painting in this country which prevailed during 1960s and 1970s. These critics failed to recognise that, although she had inherited a different tradition, Mayo’s work was more than worthy of note.

---

<sup>18</sup> See Sasha Grishin, *Contemporary Australian Printmaking*, Roseville, East, N.S.W.: distributed by Craftsman House, 1994, p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> Jillian Cassidy, “Canterbury Women Printmakers,” *White Camellias*, Christchurch : Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 1993, p. 20.

As a graphic designer in New Zealand, however, Mayo's success was immediate. In 1965 she was invited by J.N.L. Searle, Chairman of the Coinage Design Advisory Committee, to submit designs for the new decimal currency. Although her coin designs were not chosen for minting, two were singled out for special praise by Lord Clark who described them as being "outstandingly good."<sup>20</sup> Between 1969 and 1985 thirteen sets of her stamp designs were issued by the New Zealand Post Office. Her skilful compositions of nature subjects, based on thorough research and developed into strong patterns, ensured her success in this field. Through this medium Mayo played an important part in educating the general public to the existence of good design in everyday objects.

Although the main body of Mayo's work consisted of prints, these were matched in their excellence by her designs, book illustrations, paintings and drawings. It would be a mistake, however, to claim too much for her; she was not an innovator – her work was not radically inventive – but neither was it formulaic. Her life-long habit was to take up ideas or trends she saw in the work of other artists and to develop these according to her own unique vision. There was nothing new in Mayo's practice; innumerable practitioners in the arts have turned to other artists for inspiration in the conceptualisation of their work. It would, however, be both reductive and patronising to label her work as derivative. While many of her paintings and prints were influenced by the images and/or strategies of various artists she admired the outcome was ultimately quite personal – a product of her cultural (and personal) context.

This thesis does not seek to portray Mayo as a major artist in England, Australia or New Zealand. Rather, it seeks to draw a profile of her as an artist of some stature; to show the nature of her career and to demonstrate the degree of excellence which she achieved in the wide range of media in which she worked. This thesis also

---

<sup>20</sup> Mint 247/9 Royal Mint Advisory Committee. Memorandum to members of the Decimal Currency Board, New Zealand, from A.J. Dowling, 21/4/66.

aims to disclose something of the personality of the reclusive and indeed, insecure and highly self-critical, Mayo. Her self-effacement caused her to minimise her achievements, possibly through a fear of criticism but, confident of her ability to execute work in any medium to the highest possible standard, she never hesitated to accept a commission. In keeping with her modest view of life, the majority of her work (with the exception of her murals and woven tapestry) was small in scale. Her draughtsmanship was always assured. Nature was her constant, its decorative patterning and colour paramount in her oeuvre.

Mayo did not push any boundaries either in art, or for women. While she did not regard herself as a feminist neither did she regard her sex as an impediment to achieving her artistic goals or, for that matter, anything else in her life. She certainly believed in equal rights for women and chose the Slade School of Fine Arts, London, precisely because of its renowned egalitarian approach to teaching women students. Having experienced strong role models in Laura Knight and Dod Proctor, she was quite content to be a woman artist and never compared her situation with that of her male counterparts. In fact, she appears to have regarded men and women as equals: she viewed Laura Knight and Duncan Grant with the same affection and regarded them both as equally companionable, valuing their opinions and corresponding with them over the years on a number of issues.<sup>21</sup> It is interesting too that her admiration of them could easily transcend stylistic tendencies. Knight had always been regarded as an academic painter, Grant as a pioneering modernist. The fact that Mayo could like, admire and respond to both artists suggests the limited usefulness of making rigid stylistic demarcations in British twentieth-century art, demarcations that she herself would have rejected.

While the trajectory of Mayo's career was determined by her circumstances, her situation was quite different from that of many other émigré artists to Australia in the

---

<sup>21</sup> TGA 916. 12 - 32.

late 1940s and early 1950s. Many of these were ‘displaced persons’ from the Netherlands and the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as well as the middle European countries.<sup>22</sup> Practitioners in a wide variety of media, these ‘new Australians’ fused their European heritage with Australian culture and experience. Aboriginal art, for example, became an important ingredient of Gert Selheim’s graphic art; Sali Herman and Danila Vassilieff chose to paint inner urban areas of Sydney and Melbourne while other artists, such as Klaus Friedeberger, adopted the natural landscape as their subject.<sup>23</sup> Unlike the European émigrés who were expected to assimilate as quickly as possible,<sup>24</sup> Mayo was not subject to the same pressure. Australia had been colonised by the British in 1788 and the taste for British art dominated public art collections from 1864 until the 1930s and 1940s when attention began to be paid to building up an Australian collection.<sup>25</sup>

From the late nineteenth century many young Australian artists, after studying at local art schools, had gone to Europe to study,<sup>26</sup> among them Marie Tuck, Margaret Preston, Gladys Reynell, Nora Heysen and Dorrit Black.<sup>27</sup> In the 1920s other young Australians travelled to Britain in search of modern art, among them Dorrit Black, Ethel Spowers and Evenline Syme. In London they had attended Claude Flight’s classes in colour linocut printing at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art. These young women shared their enthusiasm for Flight’s “modernistic prints” in letters to their local art societies in Sydney and Melbourne.<sup>28</sup> Mayo always regarded herself as a British artist

---

<sup>22</sup> R. Butler, (ed.), *The Europeans: Emigré Artists in Australia 1930 - 1960*, Canberra : National Gallery of Australia, 1997, pp. 7 - 8.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Anne Kirker and Peter Tomory, *British Painting 1800 - 1990 in Australian and New Zealand Public Collections*, Sydney : The Beagle Press, 1994, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> See Jane Hylton, *South Australian Women Artists*, Art Gallery Board of South Australia, Adelaide, pp. 8 - 29.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>28</sup> Stephen Coppel, *Linocuts of the Machine Age*, p. 65.

and her work was always British in style. In such a milieu her British-ness was welcomed and accepted.

New Zealand had much the same collecting policy as Australia. As Anne Kirker states “Early acquisitions at the former National Gallery of New Zealand were closely linked with the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts which purchased works as the basis for the National Collection.”<sup>29</sup> Despite this the British-ness of Mayo’s art was less acceptable in New Zealand than in Australia. Amends for her neglect in this country were, however, finally addressed in 1994 when she was created a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (DBE).

---

<sup>29</sup> Kirker and Tomory, *British Painting 1800 - 1990 ...*, p. 11.



Fig. 1

Henry Moore. *Reclining Nude*, 1929



## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND, CHARACTER AND EARLY ARTISTIC TRAINING

Eileen Rosemary Mayo, the eldest daughter of Violet Elsie Mayo (née Barnes-Moss) and Hubert Giles Mayo, was born in Norwich, England, into a highly educated middle-class family. At the time of her birth, Eileen's father was Housemaster and Head of Science at the City of Norwich School. Her paternal grandfather, Giles, had been a builder although he, too, possessed a love of learning. Building was not his chosen profession but rather the result of his circumstances. His mother's early widowhood brought his schooling to an abrupt end and, lacking academic qualifications, he was forced to take on unskilled local work. When Eileen's father Hubert was born in 1880, he became the youngest of six children, and Giles Mayo encouraged his son's scholastic development. He ensured, as far as he could, that his son had every opportunity to succeed academically. Accordingly, he was sent to the local school at Painswick, Gloucestershire, and then to Marling School, Stroud, a recently founded public school. Hubert eventually became Head Boy at Marling and gained an open mathematical scholarship to Queen's College, Cambridge, where he graduated Bachelor of Arts in 1902. His success at Cambridge was shown by the fact that he was placed among the senior optimes in the mathematical tripos. He subsequently gained a Master of Arts (Cambridge), Bachelor of Science (London), and Licentiate of the College of Preceptors.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> TGA 916. 32.

Eileen's mother, Violet Barnes-Moss, was educated at a private school in South London where she had excelled in French and History.<sup>31</sup> Her father, Albert Barnes-Moss, was an earnest scholar, fluent in Latin and Greek, and Eileen's maternal great-grandfather had been a non-conformist Baptist minister. Albert Barnes-Moss worked for the publishing firm of Routledge (later Routledge Kegan Paul) in London and later bought his own printing business. Although the Barnes-Mosses had a strong interest in the visual arts, there was no tradition of making art or craft in their family. Eileen's mother, Violet, however, was a competent embroiderer and worked on her embroidery throughout her life,<sup>32</sup> while Hilda, Violet's older sister, was an amateur painter.

As schoolgirls in the late 1880s and early 1890s, Violet and Hilda were taught art and embroidery as accomplishments, subjects in which the young sisters showed aptitude and skill. In late nineteenth-century England, an elementary knowledge of composition was considered necessary for domestic uses, such as embroidery, while an ability to 'take a likeness' from nature was believed to better fit women for society and to make them more attractive to prospective husbands.<sup>33</sup> Like many women of her generation, Hilda Barnes-Moss was unable for financial and family reasons to seek art training beyond the accomplishment level and subsequently earned her living as a seamstress. However, even as an amateur painter, she produced numerous conventional small landscapes in watercolour for local exhibition throughout her life as well as many rather naive 'spiritual portraits' of Sir Joshua Reynolds, with whom she believed the family was connected.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Author in conversation with Eileen Mayo's sisters, Margery Ball and Josephine Campey, 10 November 1995.

<sup>32</sup> At the age of 83 Violet Mayo was still creating embroideries for ecclesiastical purposes. Author in conversation with Josephine Campey, December, 1999.

<sup>33</sup> C. Yeldham, *Women Artists in Nineteenth-Century France and England*, New York : Garland, 1984, p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> Hilda was a spiritualist and in her capacity as a medium had traced her family's lineage back to Sir Joshua Reynolds.

In the young Eileen Mayo the talents of her parents seem to have coalesced: from her father she inherited a love of intellectual pursuits and of natural science, while her artistic talents appear to have been inherited from her mother's side of the family. What becomes clear in a survey of Eileen's childhood is that her early psychological and intellectual training predisposed her to a career as an artist. She was born prematurely, eight and a half months after her parents' marriage, on 21 December 1905. At the time Hubert Mayo was consolidating his career as a teacher and Violet Mayo was busily engaged in setting up house. Eileen believed that she was an unwanted child and an intrusion in her parents' early married life.<sup>35</sup>

Two and a half years later, a second daughter, Margery, was born to the Mayo family. A relaxed, happy and outgoing child, Margery quickly won the affection of the paternal grandparents who lived in the schoolhouse with the young family. It would appear that Eileen, introverted and timid by nature, was unable to cope with the attention shown to her gregarious and out-going sister, and so retreated into herself, resorting to a self-imposed isolation.<sup>36</sup> The tendency she developed to cut herself off from the family was exacerbated by the authoritarian and domineering Violet Mayo<sup>37</sup> who, according to Eileen's reminiscences, set up unrealistic codes of behaviour for her eldest child. This was probably as much the result of the young mother's inexperience, as of her Victorian upbringing and education. Violet Mayo was only 22 years old when Eileen was born, and without the benefit of the abundant literature on child development which informed later generations, she used her own childhood training as a template for bringing up her children.

---

<sup>35</sup> Both Eileen Mayo's sisters maintain that this was not the case.

<sup>36</sup> Margery Ball recalls that Eileen spent most of her leisure time in her room drawing. Author in conversation with Margery Ball, 10 November 1995.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.* Margery said that Violet Mayo was a strong character and could never be described as a "dear little woman." Eileen resented her mother's domineering attitude towards her all her life.

Born in 1883, Violet Mayo was the product of an education system in which the building of character by strict discipline was paramount. Most of the prominent women educators of the period believed in the supremacy of discipline, reinforced by inflexible rules. For example, Sara Burstall, Headmistress of Manchester High School for Girls, commenting on the matter of child behaviour, said that one of the ways in which discipline should be maintained was through a rigorous enforcement of rules.<sup>38</sup> Lucy H.M. Soulsby, Headmistress of the Oxford High School, argued that, "... the chief good of a school lies in the uniformity of routine, in the absence of special exemptions." This, she maintained, helped the child to understand "... the inexorable Laws of Nature which knows no favourites."<sup>39</sup> Such thinking was the result of reforms both intellectual and moral which had taken place in the education of girls in the late nineteenth century. Sara Burstall explained these reforms saying that, "[In] England ... we care about the character of the pupil, and the subject; the intellectual standard reached, is a secondary consideration."<sup>40</sup> Miss Dorothea Beale, Headmistress of Cheltenham Ladies' College and another character-builder of the period, spoke of the dual aim of education as being, "The perfection of the individual, and the good of the community."<sup>41</sup> The headmistresses of the period regarded "... the strengthening and development of character by a discipline combining subordination to rule with a considerable amount of self-government ..."<sup>42</sup> to be an indispensable behavioural ideal. Such conventional and restrictive ideals were based on the Victorian expectation that women would be

---

<sup>38</sup> Joyce Senders Pedersen, *The Reform of Girls' Secondary and Higher Education in Victorian England : a study of Elites and Educational Change*, New York; London : Garland, 1987, p. 247.

<sup>39</sup> Dorothea Beale, *Work and Play in Girls' Schools by three headmistresses*, Dorothea Beale, Lucy H.M. Soulsby, Jane Frances Dove, London : Longmans, Green, and Co., 1898, p. 386.

<sup>40</sup> Sara Burstall, *English High Schools for Girls : their aims, organisation and management*, London; New York : Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907, p. 61.

<sup>41</sup> Dorothea Beale, *Work and Play in Girls' Schools ...*, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> Emily Davies, cited in Joyce Senders Pederson, *The Reform of Girls' Secondary ...*, p. 247.

subordinate to their husbands and, to this end, girls were encouraged to "assume adult modes of behaviour at an early age."<sup>43</sup>

Given the restrictive concepts of feminine behaviour in vogue during Violet Mayo's school days, it is not surprising that Eileen should recall in later life that the main emphasis in her childhood training was on obeying the rules set down by her mother, no matter what. Josephine Campey, the artist's youngest sister, maintains that the philosophy of child rearing they experienced was the usual middle-class Christian upbringing; that the only punishments were for disobedience and lying.<sup>44</sup> Today, we would argue against this, insisting that children be encouraged to think creatively and, when mature enough, taught to differentiate between truth and fantasy. This was not the case, however, in England at the beginning of the twentieth century. Lacking the maturity and moral judgement required to meet Violet Mayo's high expectations of her, Eileen's earliest memories of her childhood were of constant failure and of equally constant censuring by her mother. A picture begins to emerge, therefore, of a child conditioned by her mother's well-intentioned training to be always anxious and always fearful of displeasing, characteristics she would retain throughout her life.

Eileen withdrew as much as she could from the rest of the family and avoided her mother.<sup>45</sup> This self-imposed isolation threw her back on her own resources and she had recourse to the facility that set her apart from her siblings – her ability to draw. She began a life-long preoccupation with a study of nature expressed through extensive note-taking and drawing. As a young adult, Eileen wrote in the *Birmingham Daily Mail*<sup>46</sup> of the important part that privacy and isolation played in forming her career as an artist.

---

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*, p. 9.

<sup>44</sup> Correspondence, Campey to author. u.d. Collection of author, Christchurch.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid*. Although Hubert Mayo accompanied his young family on week-end walks and picnics, they saw little of him as he was generally busy with his work, research and study.

<sup>46</sup> Eileen Mayo, "The Art of Living," *Birmingham Daily Mail*, 12 February 1931.

As a young practitioner in London, silence and isolation would be crucial factors in stabilising her ideas and supplying her with the necessary courage to express them.

Years ago I had no idea of succeeding as a painter, but, given the inspiration and the quiet of my room, I painted my first picture. The great writers and painters of this age are unanimous in agreeing that they owe their most inspired works to being alone. From my own experience I know it to be true, and it is our loss if we neglect privacy and all the opportunities for self-expression that it affords ....<sup>47</sup>

As drawing from natural objects was seen as an appropriate and traditional occupation for young women,<sup>48</sup> both Eileen's parents would, no doubt, have approved of their daughter's industry in this regard. As a physicist, her father would have wholeheartedly endorsed her study of natural science; and it would have pleased her mother to have seen Eileen pursuing a pastime that had been encouraged during Violet's own childhood. Eileen's continuous pre-occupation with drawing from nature during her childhood was, however, almost certainly a direct response to the ensuing tensions arising from the imposed boundaries she experienced during her early years. The strict Victorian standards of behaviour imposed on Eileen by her mother and her inability to measure up to them, engendered in her a dislike of herself which, unfortunately, persisted throughout her life.<sup>49</sup> The entangled factors of heredity and environment contributed, during the crucial years of childhood, to form her complex character – a character bent on pursuing and overcoming the most difficult challenges in every aspect of her life – and a personality which was a mixture of self-doubt and determination. The outcome of this, as far as her future art was concerned, was an anxious perfectionism and a predilection for making every task as difficult as possible in order to prove both

---

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> As early as 1845, drawing from nature had been advocated by Mrs Ellis in *The Daughters of England, their Position in Society, Character and Responsibilities*, London. She wrote, "Ample sufficient for their purposes, is the habit of drawing from natural objects with correctness and facility." p.108.

<sup>49</sup> Mayo's diaries make constant reference to self-loathing.

her personal integrity as well as her artistic worth both to herself and to those around her.

Whatever shortcomings existed in Eileen's childhood training, she was certainly born at a propitious time in the history of the education of women in Britain. Under the 1902 Education Act, radical changes were made in the organisation and administration of schools in the early decades of that century. The Education Act gave girls access to a full intellectual life.<sup>50</sup> "A girl, like a boy, may be fitted by education to earn a livelihood, ... or at any rate to be a more useful member of society."<sup>51</sup> As a consequence of the Commission's pronouncements, equality of curricula was established in grammar schools throughout the country. The prevailing belief was, however, still a traditional one: that most girls would be married by the time they were 28 years old and would have exchanged intellectual pursuits for domestic preoccupations. Nevertheless, most educationalists believed that a well-educated young woman was an investment for the nation; her education would better equip her to bring up her children satisfactorily and the country in turn would benefit from well-adjusted and emotionally stable citizens. It is clear from the writings of most educationalists in the first half of the 20th century that, as well as being useful citizens, girls had an extra function – to be home makers.<sup>52</sup> Even as late as 1948, John Newsom, the Chief Education Officer at Hertfordshire, wrote, "The vital educational objectives for women are to enable them to become accomplished homemakers, informed citizens and to use their leisure intelligently."<sup>53</sup> The prevalent male belief that women were destined for domesticity was highlighted by

---

<sup>50</sup> The Education Act of 1902 enabled local Education Authorities to maintain and assist secondary schools for both sexes, and in the ensuing eighteen years (years during which Eileen Mayo was educated) the number of girls receiving their education in recognised schools rose rapidly. Whereas in 1897 it was approximately 20,000; by 1920 the figure had grown to 185,000. John Newsom, *The Education of Girls*, London : Faber & Faber Ltd, 1948, p. 71.

<sup>51</sup> *Royal Commission on Secondary Education*, PP 1985, XLIII-XLIX (Bryce Commission Vols I-IX), Vol. I, pp. 136, 175.

<sup>52</sup> Felicity Hunt (ed.), *Lessons for life : the schooling of Girls and Women 1850 - 1950*, Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1987, p. 18.

<sup>53</sup> John Newsom, *The Education of Girls*, p. 131.

R.A. Butler in his preface to Newsom's book, in which he quotes Dr. Johnson's well-known dictum: "A man is better pleased when he has a good dinner upon his table than when his wife talks Greek."<sup>54</sup> The implication is that it is far better for a man's comfort and well-being to have an efficient homemaker for a wife than a competent scholar. Johnson obviously overlooked the possibility of a woman being both domestically capable and academically accomplished!

Crucial for the young Eileen Mayo was the fact that her father was an educator who placed a high premium on education for its own sake instead of endorsing the belief that the education of girls was simply a means of enabling them to earn their own living and to be useful citizens. The intellectual training of his daughters was obviously of paramount importance to him – their academic achievements stand as proof of this. Margery followed the academic interests of her father and became a teacher while the youngest daughter, Josephine, attended various art colleges before eventually becoming a cartographer.

Eileen's education began early in life. From the age of two, she was taken on nature rambles by her father and taught the correct botanical name of each plant he introduced her to.<sup>55</sup> From the age of thirteen, the keen interest in natural science that he generated in her motivated her to keep nature diaries in which she recorded observations of weather and wildlife, with careful drawings of plants and animals at the bottom of most pages.<sup>56</sup> Significantly, her early study of nature was a crucial factor in her later development as an artist. Her mature work shows the scientist's approach to analysing and categorising; it displays meticulous detail based on careful research – a development of skills initiated by Hubert Mayo.

---

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, p. 10. He did redeem himself by saying, "Even though our girls may be taught to be good cooks and mothers, we cannot with our present limited man-power resources risk leaving undeveloped the mind of any girl who can serve her homeland as well as Mr. Newsom would wish her to serve at home."

<sup>55</sup> Author in conversation with Eileen's sisters, Margery Ball and Josephine Campey, 10 November, 1995.

<sup>56</sup> TGA 916. 43.



In 1913 Hubert Mayo was appointed Headmaster of Ossett Grammar School near Wakefield, Yorkshire. It was there that Eileen began her schooling in the preparatory department. A further move for the family in 1918 was precipitated by her father's appointment to the staff of Bristol Grammar School and Eileen was enrolled at Clifton High School. When Hubert Mayo was appointed inaugural Headmaster of Oldershaw School in Wallasey, Cheshire, in 1920, Eileen remained at Clifton High School as a boarder.

As a student at Clifton High School from 1918 to 1923 Eileen's academic achievements were outstanding: she learnt Latin and French, as well as pursuing an introductory course in Classical Greek at a time when the usual practice in girls' grammar schools was to teach a second foreign language, to be examined at the School Certificate level, only to the most able students. As Newsom observes, "Only the more intellectually able pupils take a second foreign language while the less able are allowed to take domestic science."<sup>57</sup> She excelled in the Higher School Certificate examination,<sup>58</sup> gaining distinction in English, and was named top scholar in English Literature in the south-west region of England for 1923.<sup>59</sup>

Although drawing was among the subjects that Eileen Mayo studied and passed for the School Certificate examination, it was not recognised by the Board of Education as having academic parity with other subjects. While the Board insisted on the compulsory inclusion of practical subjects such as art and music, as well as domestic

---

<sup>57</sup> J. Newsom, *The Education of Girls*, p. 82.

<sup>58</sup> The School Certificate examination was introduced in 1917 to replace the university 'local examinations.' Every university examining board agreed to operate under a single set of regulations. Under these the sixteen-plus examination was divided into four groups. Each group consisted of a number of different subjects and to gain a certificate a candidate had to pass in at least five subjects from groups I (English, Scripture, Geography and History), II (Latin, Greek and modern languages) and III (mathematics and science). Group IV, which consisted of the practical and aesthetic subjects, could not count towards a certificate. Felicity Hunt (ed.), *Lessons for Life*, Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1987, p. 19.

<sup>59</sup> The reverse side of Eileen Mayo's School Certificate lists the subjects she studied: Group I Scripture, English, History, Geography; Group 2 Latin, French, Elementary Greek; Group III Elementary Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry; Group IV Drawing.

ones in the curriculum for girls' secondary schools, at the same time it cast doubt on the latter's academic status when it came to formal examinations. This was a point of annoyance and frustration for headmistresses who recognised that art and music were areas of strength in girls' schools; that the female accomplishments tradition had ensured that there was "... a place for aesthetic subjects in the curriculum and meant that girls' schools had built up both expertise and reputation in music and art."<sup>60</sup> This reflected the general belief that the purpose in educating girls was to prepare them for the School Certificate examination and paid work; to equip them for their eventual role as wives and mothers; to enable them to contribute through their children to the cultural well-being of the country. This attitude highlights the ambiguous position of British women in the early 1920s, in a country experiencing the aftermath of World War 1. On the one hand, it promised them greater equality in recognition of their contribution to the war effort while, on the other hand, a back-to-the-home mentality prevailed. But, at the same time, the huge loss of life in the trenches meant that marriage was no longer the 'universal option' it had been for women before the war. In fact, the Census of 1921 showed a major surplus of women which meant that at least one in three would have to be self-supporting.<sup>61</sup> The expectation, therefore, of many women in the 1920s in Britain was that they would need to find employment to support themselves. One positive outcome of the manpower shortage was that it created a growing pool of job opportunities for women in the service and light industries, as well as in clerical work and in teaching.<sup>62</sup>

It was expected by her parents and teachers that Eileen would pursue a career in teaching. The profession was well respected in Britain and was one to which many young women were attracted. This was due, in no small part, to the untiring efforts of

---

<sup>60</sup> Hunt, *Lessons for Life ...* , p. 12.

<sup>61</sup> In 1930 there was a demographic imbalance of 1.5 million more women than men. *ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>62</sup> Jane Lewis, *Women in England 1870 - 1950. Sexual divisions and social change*, Brighton : Wheatshear, 1984, p. 18.

various headmistresses in the early decades of the century who, determined to raise the academic status of girls' secondary schools, insisted that their students be provided with an undiluted academic education which would prepare young middle-class women for the higher professions, particularly teaching, and economic independence.

The sudden and unexpected death of Hubert Mayo in 1921 from meningitis, when Eileen was aged fifteen, brought about an unanticipated change in circumstances for the family. The subsequent drop in income that her father's death precipitated made it certain that Eileen would eventually have to earn her own living.<sup>63</sup> As one of Clifton High School's most able students, she was encouraged to aim at academic heights, in particular a university degree and a subsequent career as a teacher.<sup>64</sup> But neither her academic prowess, nor her need to eventually earn a living, was enough to make her choose a career in teaching, despite the security and status that the profession offered.

During her years at Clifton High School, Eileen greatly admired her art teacher, Miss Rentoul. Rentoul, a graduate of the Slade School of Fine Art, recognised her student's artistic potential and encouraged her to enrol there in October 1923. This decision was supported by J.E. Barton, Headmaster of Bristol Grammar School. The Mayo family had met the Bartons when Hubert was appointed to the staff of Bristol Grammar School. Barton and his wife remained close family friends of the Mayos and after Hubert's death he became Eileen's mentor.

The Slade represented an attractive and exciting choice for Eileen. The school was renowned for its enlightened approach, compared with that of the Royal Academy;

---

<sup>63</sup> Josephine Campey said that her father's early death changed all of their future expectations. Shortage of funds meant that Eileen did not complete the five year course at the Slade School of Art, that Margery had to support herself throughout her university years and that Josephine was able to attend various art colleges only on a casual basis. The author in conversation with Josephine Campey, 10 November, 1995.

<sup>64</sup> Interviews carried out with women who attended high schools or secondary schools abound with anecdotes of women teachers who dedicated themselves to encouraging a small number of students to go on to university, and of the pride that school took when a degree was conferred on a former pupil of the school.

it represented the traditional route to an artistic career through its rigorous training;<sup>65</sup> it had accepted women students from its foundation in 1871 and, in theory, welcomed female students; its up-to-date teaching methods gave the school a reputation for being the most progressive in England in the areas of painting, drawing and printmaking, but not in sculpture and design, areas in which the Royal College of Art was dominant.

Sir Edward Poynter, the first Slade Professor in London, had stressed the equality of women within the education process of the Slade from the outset. In his inaugural lecture, given on 2 October 1871, he emphasised that the Slade would accept women and offer them almost the same facilities as the male students.<sup>66</sup> Women could study from the Antique at once; from the nude in a special studio;<sup>67</sup> and they would be permitted to attend all lectures on anatomy and art history.

When Eileen Mayo enrolled at the Slade in 1923, the London school had had only four professors: Poynter, Alphonse Legros, Frederick Brown and Henry Tonks. As the aims and ideals of each had been similar, the school had avoided violent changes in policy and direction.<sup>68</sup> For example, Frederick Brown, appointed Slade Professor in January 1893, had been a pioneer in giving women full facilities for figure drawing and working from the nude when he was Principal of the Westminster School of Art, at a time when in other schools they were not even permitted to be present while the master marked their drawings.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> In this it differed from the Royal Academy schools whose aim was to produce teachers.

<sup>66</sup> Cited in Pamela Gerrish Nunn, *Victorian Women Artists*, London : Women's Press, 1987, p. 52.

<sup>67</sup> In its early years women students could not study from nude. Instead, they were given access to a draped model.

<sup>68</sup> Charles Aitken, "The Slade School of Fine Arts," *Apollo*, Winter, 1926, p. 2.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*

Henry Tonks, Slade Professor from 1918 to 1930, was appointed to the London Chair of Fine Arts after assisting Brown for several years, and seemingly was as enlightened about women as his predecessors had been. According to his biographer, Joseph Hone, Tonks had an intense interest in feminine aspirants towards art, and a considerable belief in women's power of achievement.<sup>70</sup> Reading between the lines of Hone's biography of Tonks, it is clear, however, that his attitude towards them would be understood as chauvinistic nowadays. Commenting on his experience at the Slade, Tonks said that girls were easier to teach and made more rapid progress than men, and while he believed that the women had a harder lot in life, this did not make him sympathetic towards feminism.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, he manifests a clearly misogynistic attitude in a letter he wrote to Aubrey Waterfield, commenting, "... [women] do what they are told, if they don't you will generally find that [they] are a bit cracked. If they become offensive it may be a sign of love. They improve rapidly from about 16 to 21, then the genius that you have discovered goes off, they begin to take marriage seriously."<sup>72</sup>

Tonks certainly put his beliefs into practice in his criticisms of women students' work. Anecdotes of his sarcastic wit and verbal cruelty pepper the reminiscences of Tonks' former female students: Eileen, recalling her own experience of Tonks at the Slade said, "Tonks was terrifying, but a good teacher. If he didn't like your work he would say, 'Do you like knitting?' Or, 'Why don't you go home and do your knitting?'"<sup>73</sup> As far as the women students at the Slade were concerned, Tonks' well-known saying, "There is no drawing without tears,"<sup>74</sup> extended quite practically beyond his steady preaching of the doctrine that drawing was far the rarest gift necessary to an

---

<sup>70</sup> Joseph Hone, *The Life of Henry Tonks*, London : Heinemann, 1939, p. 44.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 44 - 45.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>73</sup> Conversation between Eileen Mayo and Margaret McKean-Taylor, September, 1990. Collection, Margaret McKean-Taylor, Ashurst.

<sup>74</sup> Hone, *The Life of Henry Tonks*, p. 172.

artist.<sup>75</sup> Edna Waugh (1879 - 1979), (another Slade student and later Lady Clarke Hall) used to boast that Tonks had never succeeded in reducing her to tears, but not for lack of trying to do so.<sup>76</sup> While there are obvious difficulties involved in trying to sort out fact from fiction, comments made by former female students suggest that perhaps the Slade professors, particularly Tonks, were not as sympathetic towards women as the School's reputation would have initially led Eileen to believe.<sup>77</sup>

Apart from its reputed sympathy towards women, the Slade was attractive to her on account of its reputation for being the most progressive art school in England. Instead of students spending long periods of time working in the antique room prior to admission to the life class, as happened at the Royal College of Art, the Slade made study from the living model central to its teaching. The first College Calendar of 1871 stated that, "... in the Slade Schools, the study of the living model will be considered of the first and paramount importance, the study of the Antique being in second place, and used as a means of improving the style of the students from time to time."<sup>78</sup> Instead of a separate course for the antique, there was a general course, "... in which the students will be entirely under the direction of the Professor ...," including drawing from "... the Antique, the Nude Model and the Draped Model."<sup>79</sup> This was quite the opposite of the conservative approach to instruction operated at the Royal Academy Schools which pivoted on the Antique and where students worked from the figure only towards the end of the full eight-year course.<sup>80</sup> The Royal Academy did not admit women into its

---

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*, p. 73. She also recalls his comment to her after looking at some of her drawings: "So you are going to be a second Burne-Jones"; to which she replied promptly, "No, the first Edna Waugh."

<sup>77</sup> The Slade was not alone in this. Sylvia Pankhurst, for example, endured a similar unsympathetic attitude from Augustus Spencer at the South Kensington School. See Christopher Frayling and Claire Catterall (eds.), *The Royal College of Art : One Hundred & Fifty Years of Art and Design*, London : Barrie & Jenkins, 1998, p. 75.

<sup>78</sup> University College Calendar. Session 1871-2, p. 43, cited in Yeldham, *Women Artists*, ..., n. 195, p. 12.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, n. 196.

<sup>80</sup> Frederick Brown commented that at the Academy the student began with elementary design, which consisted of "fudging plant shapes into a geometrical framework." A student was then set to work in the Antique Room on large drawings in which the outline of the cast was measured off and filled in with finely

school until 1861, almost ninety-three years after its establishment, and it was not until 1893 that women finally gained access to life study.<sup>81</sup> It should be pointed out, however, that, despite Poynter's insistence in his inaugural lecture that women could study from the nude in a special studio, the Slade had not always allowed them full access to it; for the first years after its opening, separate classes were held for women to work from the draped living model, which was quite different from drawing from the nude.<sup>82</sup> The 1872-3 University College Calendar makes it clear that by this time male and female students were working together in the Antique School and from the Draped Model, "... except on the mornings of Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, when the Draped Model will sit for Ladies only, in order to suit those Ladies who may not wish to work in the mixed class."<sup>83</sup> The first statement of the existence of classes for women to study from the nude appears in the 1898-99 University College Calendar: "In the life classes for men and women a figure model poses every day and a draped model three times a week."<sup>84</sup> According to Eileen, the men's and women's life rooms were separate. "[There were] about eighty in the women's room [plus] donkeys jammed in. It was so difficult to be near the model."<sup>85</sup> This was despite the fact that, in 1923, fifteen models were employed full-time by the Slade to meet the needs of the life classes.<sup>86</sup> The entire teaching at the school was conducted in the life-room, and drawing and painting were both practised in constant reference to the model.<sup>87</sup>

---

graded shading and stippling in imitation of the surface texture and local colour of the original. See Andrew Forge, "The Slade : 1," *Motif*, 1960, Vol. 4, p. 33.

<sup>81</sup> Yeldham, *Women Artists ...*, p. 31.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid*, n. 197. Yeldham quotes from the University College Calendar in reference to a class for the draped living model: "This class is especially adapted for ladies who cannot, of course, work from the nude model."

<sup>83</sup> University College Calendar, Session 1872-3, p. 44.

<sup>84</sup> Session 1898-9, p. 91.

<sup>85</sup> Conversation between Mayo and Margaret McKean Taylor, September, 1990. Collection, Margaret McKean-Taylor.

<sup>86</sup> Author in conversation with Stephen Chaplain, Archivist, Slade School of Fine Art, University of London, 12 October 1992.

<sup>87</sup> Lynda Morris (ed.), *Henry Tonks and the "Art of Pure Drawing."* (Norwich) : (Norwich School of Art Gallery), c. 1985, p. 24.

A further attraction of the Slade for Eileen had been that it was renowned for its up-to-date teaching methods. A structural, thinking mode of drawing had been initiated by Poynter based on a searching study of the model.<sup>88</sup> This method continued to be taught and developed by subsequent professors. Tonks, for example, was a zealot as far as the teaching of drawing was concerned. His fanaticism in this regard was not a new phenomenon: at the Slade drawing was a philosophy<sup>89</sup> and supreme importance had been placed on it by all who held the Chair. Its practice, as explained by Tonks, was "... the art of representing the forms of objects upon a flat surface, as they appear from one point of view."<sup>90</sup> "What we are trying to do when we draw is to give the shape of things from one point of view (strictly two because we have two eyes) on a flat surface."<sup>91</sup> The Slade emphasised that drawing was research in which, "... the draughtsman made a constant effort to represent observations previously made from nature."<sup>92</sup> In his preaching of 'Truth to Nature' Tonks claimed that beauty was incidental – it was a side product of the pursuit of truth.<sup>93</sup>

A study of European Old Masters had always been encouraged at the Slade. Poynter had recommended that students turn to the Old Masters, "not by imitating the manner of any particular painter ... but by studying their methods of study."<sup>94</sup> This belief in the supremacy of the Old Masters was continued by Legros, a French painter and etcher, who was Slade professor from 1876 to 1892. Trained in France, he brought the teaching system at the Slade into direct contact with the main European tradition,<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> *ibid*, p. 34.

<sup>89</sup> Comment by David Bomberg. See Morris, *Henry Tonks ...*, p. 16.

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*, Point 1, second part Joint Report and Recommendations, "Elementary Propositions in Drawing and Painting," p. 33.

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, undated letter to Rodney Burn. Cited in Morris, *Henry Tonks ...*, p. 38.

<sup>92</sup> Morris, *Henry Tonks ...*, p. 33. Nature in this context refers to the human model.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid*, p. 8.

<sup>94</sup> Edward Poynter, *Lectures on Art*, Lecture VI, "Hints on the formation of style," 1879. Quoted in "The Slade : 1," *Motif*, Vol. 4, p. 35.

<sup>95</sup> Aitken, "The Slade School of Fine Arts," *Apollo*, p. 1.



initiating an easy familiarity with the Old Masters through his scholarly knowledge of their drawings.<sup>96</sup> Over the generations at the Slade, various old masters came under the spot-light.<sup>97</sup> At the time of Eileen's arrival there in 1923, the school was "back again under the dominating spirit of Piero della Francesca."<sup>98</sup> While Ingres was Tonks's favourite draughtsman,<sup>99</sup> his measurement of excellence was the Renaissance Old Masters, especially Piero della Francesca.<sup>100</sup> He believed implicitly in the methods of drawing as practised in Italy, more particularly in Florence and Umbria, from the Quattrocento onwards. To his students he advocated a practical craftsperson-like approach to the work of Piero and Paolo Uccello, stressing that, like them, Slade students needed a proper understanding of the laws of perspective and geometry in order to "read their own drawings and interpret the shapes of objects from them."<sup>101</sup>

The Slade combination of an academic tradition with craftsmanship is reflected throughout Eileen Mayo's oeuvre: her precise work, with its high degree of finish is characteristic of the Slade style and became one of the distinguishing features of her mature work. Her carefully structured compositions, based on an extensive use of the Golden Mean, recall the expressive geometry of Piero della Francesca.<sup>102</sup> A legacy from her days at the Slade, her art was always classically oriented, rooted in the art of Piero and the classical draughtsmanship of Ingres.

Just as significant for Eileen Mayo's artistic career as the Slade's drawing philosophy was the habit Tonks encouraged among his students of copying works at

---

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 4 - 5.

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*, p.5.

<sup>99</sup> Hone, *The Life of Henry Tonks*, xi.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> Aitken, "The Slade School of Fine Arts," *Apollo*, p. 5.

<sup>102</sup> When Mayo died she had a large number of books on Piero della Francesca in her library.

the National Gallery and of using the Print Room at the British Museum and the Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum as research tools. The habit of original research that he encouraged consolidated the practice she had begun in her childhood of methodical, meticulous study, and she established a life-long habit of using museum and gallery collections.

Although the imprint of the Slade always remained on Eileen Mayo's work, in her student days she found the place not to her liking. In part, this was due to her financial position which prevented her from joining in student leisure activities where she may have become part of a social group, while her natural timidity inhibited her from participating fully in classes. Used to being admired for her intelligence and succeeding in her every undertaking while a student at Clifton High School, at the Slade she found herself to be just one among many. Criticism of her work, especially from Tonks (who reminded her of her father), paralysed her.<sup>103</sup> She was also disappointed with the school on a professional level. According to Eileen, and contrary to what the literature would have us believe, very little instruction was offered, and she found this "intensely frustrating."<sup>104</sup> Her growing disenchantment with the Slade is charted in the 1923 and 1924 'Clocking-in-Book(s)' which carry the record of her attendances as a student.<sup>105</sup> Between 8 October 1923 and 13 February 1924 (including the optional Saturday classes) her signature appears either first, second or third on the daily lists in the clocking-in-book – a clear indication of her early enthusiasm and commitment to becoming a professional painter. However, the following year between 13 February and 28 June 1924, she is frequently absent, sometimes as often as three days of each week. Of much greater satisfaction to her were the numerous visits she made to the British Museum. "I used to go down to the British Museum by myself and found the Greek

---

<sup>103</sup> Mayo in conversation with author, May 1985.

<sup>104</sup> Conversation between Mayo and Margaret McKean-Taylor, October 1991. Collection, Margaret McKean-Taylor.

<sup>105</sup> The clocking-in-book was set out on one page A - W Ladies and on another Gentlemen A - W. Students were required to sign the book daily on their arrival at the Slade.

Vase room and really taught myself. This was the kind of thing I wanted to do."<sup>106</sup> The South Kensington museums, the London Zoo, Kew Gardens and Hampstead Heath were also of great interest to her. Her independent studies in the applied arts and the natural sciences, her disillusionment with the Slade and the need to support herself financially, motivated her to enrol in evening classes at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London in October 1924, while working as a free-lance designer on whatever commission came to hand during the day.<sup>107</sup>

The Central School had been founded by W.R. Lethaby who was its first Principal (1896 - 1911). His aim was to heighten the profile of design and the crafts by the excellence of the teaching of the institution. The Central offered Eileen the best practical tuition available: calligraphy and wood engraving in the Book Illustration class with Noel Rooke, who had been responsible for the rebirth of interest in wood engraving in letter press publication; drawing with John Farleigh. In comparison with her experience at the Slade she was delighted by the practical nature of the programme offered at the Central in which, "... you were taught to make your own quill – everything."<sup>108</sup> This, she regarded, as "real teaching."<sup>109</sup>

Initially Mayo had intended becoming a theatrical designer and attended evening classes at the Central School in theatre design and costume with Janetta Cochrane.<sup>110</sup> On realising that designing for the theatre would be an "unreliable way of earning a

---

<sup>106</sup> Taped conversation, Mayo and McKean-Taylor, October 1991. Collection, Margaret McKean-Taylor.

<sup>107</sup> None of Mayo's free-lance work from 1924 - 1928 has been traced. She hand-coloured prints for Cyril Beaumont, Beaumont Press, Charing Cross Road, London between 1925 and 1927 and began modelling for Laura Knight in 1925. She also modelled for Dod Proctor, Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and Bernard Meninsky. Working as a model appears to have been the main source of income during the years prior to receiving her first illustration commission in 1927.

<sup>108</sup> From transcript of taped conversation with Margaret McKean-Taylor, 25 March 1987. Collection, M. McKean-Taylor.

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Cape, Peter. *Prints and Printmakers in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1974, p. 124.

living, she decided to concentrate on book illustration"<sup>111</sup> where she was taught by Rooke. An important aspect of his classes was his insistence on the importance of using "... the wide far-reaching skill of research for reference materials."<sup>112</sup> This, of course, built on the practice she had begun while a student at the Slade of studying paintings at the National Gallery, artifacts at the British Museum and reference books at the National Art Library. Equally important for Eileen's subsequent development as a printmaker was the fact that Rooke did not look on wood engraving "as a short cut to book illustration."<sup>113</sup> To him each illustration was a single work of art – a print – in which good draughtsmanship was regarded as even more important than in drawing. It was Rooke's influence which led her to design her first wood engraving, *Skaters* (Cat. no. 23; Vol. II, p. 74). It was these factors, combined with the Central's long tradition of excellence in book illustration in which many women had become eminent (for example, Mary Berridge, Vivien Gribble, Margaret Pilkington and Millicent Jackson) which reinforced Mayo's choice of the Central and prepared her for her subsequent career as an illustrator, printmaker and designer.

---

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> See Joanna van Antwerp Selborne, *The Break with Tradition: Innovation in British Wood Engraved Book Illustration, and the Typographical Renaissance 1900-1940*, PhD Thesis, University of London (Courtauld Institute of Art), 1992, p. 20.

<sup>113</sup> Patricia Jaffe, *Women Engravers*, London : Virago, 1990, p.18.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE ARTIST AS ILLUSTRATOR AND AUTHOR

Eileen Mayo's first significant illustration commission came about in 1927 – a book cover for Cyril Beaumont's book *The First Score: An Account of the Foundation and Development of the Beaumont Press* (Cat. no. 15; Vol. II, p. 65). Beaumont, the owner of a second-hand bookshop at 74 Charing Cross Road, had founded the Beaumont Press, which operated from 1917 until the 1930s.<sup>114</sup> Mayo was introduced to him in 1926. This meeting was probably initiated by Laura Knight for whom Mayo modelled between 1925 and 1930.<sup>115</sup> Knight and Beaumont had a mutual interest in the *Ballets Russes*, Knight having access backstage to the dancers for sketching, and Beaumont writing and publishing several books on ballet. The popularity of the Diaghilev Ballet in London in the 1920s led Beaumont to commission artists to make drawings of typical scenes from the most popular ballets. He reproduced these on his handpress, in the basement of his shop, and then invited a variety of artists<sup>116</sup> to hand colour them in

---

<sup>114</sup> The 1920s and 1930s were the heyday of the private press movement. See Joanna van Antwerp Selborne, *The Break with Tradition: Innovation in British Wood Engraved Book Illustration, and the Typographical Renaissance 1900-1940*. Unpublished thesis, The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 1991, Vol. I, p. 21.

<sup>115</sup> Mayo was Knight's favourite model and her protégé. Each summer, between 1925 and 1930, she travelled to Cornwall, where she stayed with the Knights. Both Laura and Harold Knight painted several 'portraits' of her for example, *Dressing for the Ballet*, *The Golden Girl*, *Blue and Gold*, *The Brass Goddess*, all of which were exhibited at the Royal Academy, London. As already stated, Mayo also modelled for Harold Knight, Dod Proctor, Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell, Eric Schlisly and Bernard Meninsky. In a letter to her stepson, John Gainsborough, written in 1989, she said that Augustus John had also invited her to model for him but she refused, knowing full well that such an assignment with him required "other work."

<sup>116</sup> These included R. Schwabe, Adrian Allison and Ethelbert White.

water-colour and gouache. On discovering Mayo's ability and potential when she began to help him with the hand-colouring of later prints and books, he commissioned her to design the cover to his book.

When she [Eileen Mayo] had time she would sometimes help with the colouring of books and prints. But I soon found that she was an artist in her own right. She was very intelligent and grasped at once what was required and how to achieve a sought after effect.<sup>117</sup>

Book covers were often the first job of a beginner and were good for fledgling artists on three counts: firstly, they provided plenty of scope for experimentation, much more so than book illustration, where a drawing, to a greater or lesser extent, depended on a text; secondly, they provided a publisher with the opportunity to try out a young artist before commissioning him or her with illustration work; thirdly, they were a very visible way of showing off one's skills. A book-cover acted as an advertisement on the shop counter and in the shop window. It had, therefore, to be sharp and attractive in order to gain a potential buyer's attention. Mayo's first book cover had an attractive light touch<sup>118</sup> about it, its all-over repeat motif of lower-case Roman letters – white 'bp's on black against a pattern of yellow and white – designed to catch the browser's eye. The critic for the *Review* singled out the cover of *The First Score* as "... the most effective piece of design and colour in the book."<sup>119</sup> Mayo was just 20 when she received this commission. That Beaumont was prepared to engage such a young artist to design a book cover for what was one of his more significant publications to date is a measure of his belief in her.

---

<sup>117</sup> Cyril Beaumont, *Bookseller at the Ballet: Memoirs 1891 to 1929*, London : Beaumont Press, 1975, p. 341.

<sup>118</sup> This was in comparison with some of the more pretentious books produced by other private presses during this period.

<sup>119</sup> *Review*, February 1930.

Beaumont was interested in all aspects of dance and in 1928 he published *Rational Limbering*,<sup>120</sup> by Zelia Raye, Vice-President of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing. Obviously well pleased with the cover Mayo had designed for *The First Score*, he commissioned her to make 38 illustrations to accompany the text. *Rational Limbering* was an instruction manual primarily for teachers of dance, explaining ways of teaching active exercise to their students "without causing injury by damaging muscle fibres, ligaments and joints."<sup>121</sup> Raye's text emphasised her belief that limbering done properly "brings looseness, balance, carriage, elevation and a broad style which [she believed] was so essential in stage work [of the day]."<sup>122</sup> Each of the exercises described by Raye was accompanied by a diagram by Mayo (Cat. nos. 1- 1.4; Vol. II, pp. 12 - 15) showing how they should be performed. Although diagrams by their very nature leave little room for innovation, Mayo's early competence as an illustrator comes through in the simple shapes and bold linearity which combine to create a strong graphic effect, entirely appropriate to the subject.

In conjunction with his private press, Beaumont, a balletomane, had built up an extensive stock of out-of-print books on ballet in response to a growing interest in the *Ballets Russes*. This remarkable phenomenon, which integrated dance, drama, music and painting, was brought about by Serge Diaghilev who, between 1909 and 1929, revitalised ballet, orchestrating major revolutions in choreography, music and the visual arts. For the first time scenic and costume design were aligned with almost every major visual arts movement.<sup>123</sup> In 1928, Serge Lifar, one of Diaghilev's principal dancers in the *Ballets Russes*, was a name on everyone's lips.<sup>124</sup> He had attracted attention in the

---

<sup>120</sup> Zelia Raye, *Rational Limbering*, London : Beaumont Press, 1928.

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*, Wilfred Smith, B.A.M.S., C.L.S.M. Introductory page, u.p.

<sup>122</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> See Jillian Cassidy, "Eileen Mayo and the Ballets Russes," *Bulletin of New Zealand Art History*, Vol. 17, 1996, pp. 41 - 48.

<sup>124</sup> Lifar was born in Kiev in 1905 and in 1920 joined a dancing class conducted by Bronislava Nijinska. That same year Nijinska was called by Diaghilev to Paris to assist in the production of *The Sleeping Princess*. When, in 1923, Diaghilev wanted to enlarge his troupe, Nijinska brought him to Paris. According to the Russian composer, Nicolas Nabokov, Lifar, from his earliest days with the Diaghilev ballet, thought of himself

first place by the extraordinary height to which he could leap and that skill, combined with his feeling for line and an ability to mime well, quickly earned him the title of successor to Nijinsky.<sup>125</sup> According to Beaumont, Lifar had an unusual and striking personality: the spectator becoming aware of him from the moment he stepped on to the stage. Not surprisingly Beaumont saw in him an opportunity for a popular publication and commissioned Mayo to carry out the illustrations.

The rather large format book (330 x 280) Beaumont published consisted of a foreword by Boris Kochno,<sup>126</sup> a short appreciation of the dancer by Beaumont, and loose-leaf drawings by Mayo. Beaumont wanted the illustrations to be accurate representations of significant poses from Lifar's dances. To ensure the degree of accuracy he desired, Beaumont set up a number of appointments with the dancer to pose for Mayo. He stayed with her at His Majesty's Theatre during the drawing sessions, often helping Lifar sustain a pose by various unorthodox means of support such as "chairs, the waste-paper basket, and anything else to hand."<sup>127</sup> Beaumont, recalling their first appointment with Lifar, wrote:

When we arrived [at His Majesty's Theatre] we found not only Lifar, in high good humour and eager to pose, but also the omnipotent Diaghilev and the cynical Kochno. This was an unexpected audience, not calculated to help our enterprise. Eileen Mayo asked if she might remove her cloak, to which Diaghilev replied: "Please take everything off if you wish."<sup>128</sup>

This quip was a reference to Mayo's work as a model to Knight.

---

as a kind of Adonisian re-embodiment of Vaslav Nijinsky. See Nicolas Nabokov, *Old Friends and New Music*, Boston : Little, Brown and Co., 1951, p. 104.

<sup>125</sup> Beaumont, *Serge Lifar*, London : Beaumont Press, 1928, p. 11.

<sup>126</sup> Kochno was Diaghilev's secretary and production assistant for most of the 1920s. His foreword is little more than a patchwork of unrelated comments on Lifar and the difficulties of the classical ballet school.

<sup>127</sup> Beaumont, *The Diaghilev Ballet in London: A Personal Record*, London : Beaumont Press, 1940, p. 289.

<sup>128</sup> *ibid.*



Beaumont allowed Mayo no room to interpret or comment in her illustrations to his book: the commission was to record as accurately as possible each pose presented. The drawings read like a series of stills. There are three possible explanations for this: either she was following Beaumont's instructions literally and capturing the silhouette or shape of the dancer; or she lacked the necessary experience to capture Lifar's likeness other than by outline; or she was following the neoclassical trend in art and the *Ballets Russes* which was in vogue in the 1920s. If, indeed, Mayo was simply following Beaumont's wishes, then her clear, precise outlines ensured that nothing disrupted a reading of the poses and by presenting them as line drawings, she fulfilled his demand for exactness in representations of the dancer. In considering these illustrations it is important to state that Mayo always allowed the line to tell in her work, whatever the medium used, and in her later work line was her equivalent for reality. In 1928, however, she was not a mature artist and at that point in her career she simply did not know how to build up form, nor how to describe musculature accurately. This reflected her lack of training in life-drawing. Apart from one year's tuition in anatomy and figure-drawing at the Slade she had received no other formal education in this field. Between 1927 and 1934 she rectified this gap in her art education by attending life drawing classes with Bernard Meninsky at the Westminster School of Art, Henry Moore at Chelsea Polytechnic and much later with Fernand Léger at the Académie Montmartre, Paris in 1949. At the early stage of her career, however, she compensated for her deficiency in figure-drawing by describing Lifar by clear, taut outlines. She demonstrates the same uncertain approach in portraying the human figure in her early prints. For example, in *Skaters* (1927), (Cat. no. 23; Vol. II, p. 74) *Turkish Bath* (1930), (Cat. no. 26; Vol. II, p. 77) and *The Plunge* (1930), (Cat. no. 27; Vol. II, p. 78) *Woman at Dressing Table* (1930), (Cat. no. 30; Vol. II, p. 81) and *Apollo Musagètes* (1932), (Cat. no. 32; Vol. II, p. 83) her emphasis is on clear, defining outlines rather than on building up forms from the inside out to suggest a third dimension. In her drawings of Lifar she could, however, have been referring back to the linear clarity of fifth-century BC white-ground Greek vases. While a student at the Slade she made an independent study of Greek pots at the

British Museum where she would have seen such vases. Equally, Mayo's line drawings could have been deliberately neoclassical in style in keeping with the 'neoclassical' phase of the *Ballets Russes* which was ushered in by *Apollon Musagètes* in 1928, the same year that Mayo began her commission for the illustrations. Beaumont, if not Mayo herself, would have known of this development. Certainly, the relative austerity of the drawings devoid, for the most part, of Mayo's characteristic decorative effects, is in keeping with the austere score composed by Igor Stravinsky to accompany *Apollon Musagètes*. In her drawing of the blond Lifar in this role of Apollo (Cat. no. 2.7; Vol. II, p. 20) he wears the short tunic and shoes cross-gartered to the knees which Diaghilev had had styled from details taken from André Bauchant's paintings.<sup>129</sup> In contrast to her illustrations to Beaumont's publication, the figures in her later linocut *Apollon Musagètes* are dressed in tunics of regular pleats, also reminiscent of those worn by figures on fifth-century BC Athenian vases.

Mayo's association with the Beaumont Press continued in her illustrations to *A Japanese Garland*,<sup>130</sup> which consisted of ten short poems written by Edmund Blunden during a visit to Japan. An interest in Japan still persisted in Britain in the late 1920s and 1930s but it was, of course, nowhere as potent as it had been immediately after that country was opened up in the 1850s. Beaumont's aim was to produce beautiful books. Accordingly, books published by him were "issued in two forms: on hand-made paper and on Japan Vellum."<sup>131</sup> Mayo designed a particularly appropriate and delicate cover featuring bamboos, fireflies and lanterns in silver and grey (Cat. no. 3.1; Vol. II, p. 21).

---

<sup>129</sup> Diaghilev commissioned André Bauchant, a French Primitive artist in the tradition of Henri Rousseau, to design the set and costumes. When he failed to deliver, Diaghilev decided to take things into his own hands and appropriated details from Bauchant's paintings, which Prince Scherwashizde adapted for the stage. Later these were replaced by costumes designed by Gabrielle Chanel. See Boris Kochno, *Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes*, New York : Harper & Row, 1970, p. 266.

<sup>130</sup> Edmund Blunden, *A Japanese Garland*, London : Beaumont Press, 1930.

<sup>131</sup> Selborne, *The Break with Tradition ...*, p. 21.

The title page as well and six full-page coloured illustrations (Cat. nos. 3.2 - 3.5; Vol. II, pp. 22 - 25) were signed by the author, artist and publisher.<sup>132</sup>

Enthusiastic reviews described *A Japanese Garland* as "one of the most charming and successful the Beaumont Press has produced,"<sup>133</sup> describing Mayo's cover design "delightful" and her illustrations as "exquisitely appropriate decorations."<sup>134</sup> The illustrations are Japanese in style in the cropping of the images, and stress on the inconsequential. The style, combined with delicate applications of soft colour and strong accents of black and white, evoke a vision of Japanese prints which Mayo may well have seen in permanent displays at the Victoria and Albert Museum and at the British Museum. Apart from the appropriateness of image to text, Mayo's potential as an illustrator emerges in *A Japanese Garland* in a way which was denied her in the more straightforward publications, *Rational Limbering* and *Serge Lifar*.

While the illustrations to *A Japanese Garland* function as apt descriptions of the poems, despite their limited content they go beyond being a reflection of the poet's words. Instead of merely giving the words a visual form, the illustrations are a product of Mayo's own reflection on what she thought the poet imagined. This raises the question as to how Mayo came to interpret rather than reflect a text in the first place. Unfortunately, prospectuses for the illustration class at the Central School during the 1920s are no longer extant, making it impossible to ascertain the method taught by John Farleigh<sup>135</sup> and Noel Rooke. Rooke believed implicitly that wood engraving offered the best means of book illustration<sup>136</sup> and, from the time of his appointment as a teacher of

---

<sup>132</sup> According to Selborne, the signature of author, illustrator and publisher was an indication of the attention private presses paid to the artist's working methods and their relationship with author and publisher.

<sup>133</sup> *Poet in Japan*, an undated newspaper clipping. See TGA 916.

<sup>134</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> John Farleigh taught drawing in the illustration class at the Central.

<sup>136</sup> James Hamilton, *Wood Engraving & the Woodcut in Britain c. 1890 - 1990*, London : Barrie & Jenkins, 1994, p. 54.

Book Illustration at the Central in 1905, he gradually raised the status of wood engraving from a medium for the hacks of pictorial journalism to a "... chance of creating designs which could not be brought into existence in any other way."<sup>137</sup> He set great store on technical excellence in wood engraving and encouraged a creative approach to the medium, if the variety of approaches used by his students is anything to go by. There is no evidence, however, of a prevailing theory of book-illustration in their work. Perhaps the only gauge we have of the possible existence of a general principle of illustration at the Central are Farleigh's illustrations to Bernard Shaw's *The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God*.<sup>138</sup> In these he left little to the imagination. For example, the text pertaining to the Irishman trying to escape marriage to the black girl reads as follows:

He snatched up his spade with a yell of dismay and made a dash for the garden gate. But the black girl had taken the precaution to lock it; and before he could climb it they [the black girl and the old gentleman] overtook him and held him fast.<sup>139</sup>

Farleigh reflects this text exactly: the Irishman, spade in hand, leaps over the closed gate, his flight impeded by the restraining hands of the old man and the black girl (Fig. 2).

This suggests that the approach to teaching illustration at the Central stressed the literal and indeed the conventional. Rona Dyer, a Dunedin artist who enrolled at the school in 1949, when Gertrude Hermes had just succeeded John Farleigh as a teacher of wood engraving, confirms this. She recalled that the main emphasis was on the method of designing a wood engraving rather than on a theory of illustration.<sup>140</sup> As discussed above, from her early childhood Mayo had consistently sought to please, or at least to deflect criticism. Because this inhibited her spontaneity – though not her creativity – it

---

<sup>137</sup> "The Qualifications and Experience of Noel Rooke"; unpublished TS, Central School Archive, cited in Hamilton, p. 54.

<sup>138</sup> Bernard Shaw, *The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God*, London : Constable, 1932.

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>140</sup> Author in conversation with Rona Dyer, May 1997.

would have been out of character for her to have moved outside the accepted boundaries of illustration without a precedent. Indeed, her natural timidity would have prevented her from doing this. Neither would she have risked displeasing a publisher as she had a living to earn. Where then did her confidence to interpret a text rather than reflect it exactly originate? It might well have come from Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant for whom she modelled in their Fitzroy Street studio between c.1926 and 1929.<sup>141</sup> It is very likely that, as a young and enthusiastic artist, she discussed her commission to illustrate *A Japanese Garland* with these artists. Mayo would have been especially interested in learning what she could from Bell. No doubt she saw the third edition of Virginia Woolf's *Kew Gardens*, published in 1927, at the studio and would have regarded it as a show-case, as it were, of the older artist's approach to illustration. It would be wrong to say, however, that there were close stylistic links between Bell's and Mayo's illustrations for, while her decorative and representational style was superficially similar to that of Bloomsbury, it was less emotionally expressive. Bell's illustrations appear spontaneous and free when compared with Mayo's carefully constructed and meticulously drawn work. Yet Mayo was obviously receptive to Bell's view that "text and illustration are not equivalent; they need not even be closely related."<sup>142</sup> This corresponded to Roger Fry's theory, which Mayo's illustrations demonstrate, that it was impossible, and even inappropriate, for an illustrator to reinforce a writer's ideas by an identical graphic description.<sup>143</sup>

Less noteworthy, but still interesting as far as Mayo's development as an illustrator is concerned, is a further Beaumont Press publication, *Toys* (Cat. no. 5) dating from November 1930 and intended for the Christmas market.<sup>144</sup> These illustrations are

---

<sup>141</sup> See letter from Mayo to Bernard Meninsky TGA 8225.4.11.

<sup>142</sup> See Diane Filby Gillespie, *The Sisters' Arts, the writing and painting of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell*, New York : Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, 1988, p. 118.

<sup>143</sup> *ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>144</sup> C. Beaumont, *Toys*, London : Beaumont Press, 1930.

little more than a straightforward reflection of Beaumont's text. In concept and style they are entirely appropriate for a book for young children and in this respect they are quite different in intention from the more interpretative illustrations to *A Japanese Garland*. *Toys* may best be described as a light-hearted work – a rhyming alphabet of Ark, Balloon, Crane and Doll and the other inhabitants of a 1930s toy cupboard. The press loved it, describing the verses (by Beaumont) as "inconsequent and care-free"<sup>145</sup> and Mayo's illustrations as "demure and gay in their pinks and blues [and] absolutely delightful."<sup>146</sup> The critic for the *Liverpool Post & Mercury* commented that while "Mr Beaumont's verses are disarmingly simple and direct, he is fortunate in having the co-operation of Miss Eileen Mayo, whose drawings in line and wash are thoroughly charming."<sup>147</sup> In all there were 28 black and white illustrations in addition to eight full-page colour plates of letters of the alphabet (for example, A stands for Ark). The drawings are simple, consisting of black outlines and bright colour, with tone created by small amounts of stippling. Elsewhere, pale blue and pink are used in contrast to the more brightly coloured illustrations, creating an overall decorative effect. The title page of *Toys* was regarded by the *Southport Guardian* as a model for other illustrators to follow "... in its delicate application of 'decor' to typography."<sup>148</sup> The original illustrations to this book were exhibited in the Young Painters' Society, London,<sup>149</sup> where *Toys* (no. 200) was sold for ten guineas to the writer Evelyn Waugh.<sup>150</sup> That Mayo kept the letter from the gallery informing her of the purchase by Waugh until 1991, when it was placed in her archive at the Tate Gallery, was an indication of her

---

<sup>145</sup> *Book Review*, December 1930.

<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> *Liverpool Post and Mercury*, 3 December 1930.

<sup>148</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> The date of this exhibition was probably 1931, but, as the catalogue has been lost, an exact date cannot be given.

<sup>150</sup> See TGA 916.40.

pleasure in its sale to such a distinguished figure.<sup>151</sup> This purchase was, I think, a reflection of Waugh's youthful interest in Modernist art.<sup>152</sup> He had toyed with the idea of a career as an artist, enrolling at Heatherley's School of Fine Art in 1924, but found the experience disillusioning and left after only one term. His continuing artistic interests were reflected in his essay *The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, (1926) and in his first book *Rossetti: His Life and Works* (1928). Although in later life he hardened into a conservative collector of Victorian paintings, in the early 1930s his taste in art was eclectic. While greatly admiring the artistic activity, beliefs and practice of Rossetti, at this time he also embraced the work of the modernists, particularly that of Picasso. Although we cannot class Mayo's illustrations for *Toys* with what Waugh called the "pellucid excellencies of Picasso,"<sup>153</sup> it is not too difficult to understand why the clarity of design, simplification of form and decorative detailing in her drawings of objects from the toy cupboard would have appealed to Waugh's youthful taste.

By 1930 Mayo had established herself as a young illustrator of note, and, although still a novice in the field, favourable press reviews brought her to the attention of other publishers. In that year she was commissioned by High House Press of Shaftesbury to design four wood engravings to illustrate *The Poem of Amriolkais*, one of the Seven Arabian Poems, or Moallaka, which were suspended on the temple of Mecca. While Mayo was quite at home with the medium of wood engraving, having learned the techniques in Noel Rooke's book illustration class, the task of illustrating a poem of 75 verses with only four engravings was a challenge. Had she been a more confident illustrator at this stage of her career she could have solved her problem by simply

---

<sup>151</sup> Although Mayo would certainly not have been enamoured of the young Waugh's dissolute lifestyle in the early 1930s when he purchased her work, she was a great admirer of his later literature. She shared Waugh's interest in and attitude towards Catholicism, as well as his responses to church liturgy after Vatican II Council, 1962. At the time of her death she owned most of his novels, the most thumbed by far being *Brideshead Revisited*. Collection of author.

<sup>152</sup> It is doubtful that Waugh saw the actual book since, when it was published in November 1930, he was in Addis Ababa to attend the coronation of Negus Ras Tafari as Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, not returning to England until March 1931.

<sup>153</sup> Christopher Sykes, *Evelyn Waugh : A Biography*, London : Collins, 1977, p. 81.

following Bell's belief that an illustration need not even be closely related to the text at all! But such an approach would have been altogether too radical for Mayo. Instead, she chose to present her own variations on the poet's words. For example, when Fathima's child cries out to her, according to the poet, the woman, pinned beneath Amriolkais' embrace, (v.15) turns only half her body to attend to it.<sup>154</sup> But Mayo perceives the needs of the child more realistically than the poet. She omits Amriolkais altogether from the scene, even though the poem centres on the hero's power to seduce young mothers, and depicts the woman turning her whole body to comfort the crying child by cradling him in her arm (Cat. no. 4.2; Vol. II, p. 27). In this illustration Mayo is making her own marginal comment on the scene described by Amriolkais. Similarly, in the illustration to p. 6, (Cat. no. 4.1; Vol. II, p. 26). Onaiza, one of the central characters in the poem, is portrayed by Mayo as a naked, pensive woman, standing hip-high in a pool of water, holding a branch in one hand while trailing the other in the pond. According to the prologue of the poem,<sup>155</sup> however, Onaiza found herself in a compromised position, her clothes having been confiscated by Amriolkais. Again, Mayo's illustration is not a literal translation of the text. Rather, she suggests through the passive, languid pose the girl's stunned state of mind as she considers her predicament. Although all the illustrations to this book relate to the text by providing sensitive comments on it, they are in no way visual translations of the poet's words.

As far as the actual wood engravings are concerned, *The Times Literary Supplement* described them as "bold and original."<sup>156</sup> While they are certainly original, the boldness referred to by the press depended solely for effect on strong contrasts of black and white in almost equal areas intermingled with decorative patterning, rather than on the excellence of the drawings themselves. Like her depictions of Lifar, the

---

<sup>154</sup> "When the suckling behind her cried, she turned round to him with half her body; but half of it, pressed beneath my [Amriolkais'] embrace, was not turned to me." p. 15.

<sup>155</sup> pp. 7 - 10.

<sup>156</sup> *Times Literary Supplement*, 7 February 1931.



drawings of Onaiza and Fathima further demonstrate Mayo's uneasy relationship with the nude. She depicts them as negative shapes with narrow bands of textured relief at the edge of the torso, on the arms and around the breasts and stomach, to suggest form, a practice she continued in *Turkish Bath*, *The Plunge*, *Morning Tea* and *The Two Angelos*. In the illustrations, in particular, the highly patterned backgrounds serve to partially disguise the unconvincing portrayals of the women, and distract the viewer's eye from them. But, despite their limitations, the illustrations are excellent reflections of her technical ability as a wood engraver in that they clearly demonstrate her understanding of the hard-edged, angular possibility of the medium. The simple, stylised designs of almost equal areas of black and white, punctuated throughout by decorative patterning, are entirely appropriate to the medium.

As already mentioned, Rooke, while insisting on technical excellence in his book illustration classes, also encouraged a creative approach to the medium. Of course, experimental wood engraving was not just the prerogative of the Central School. Early in the twentieth century, young British artists had discovered its creative potential and had experimented widely with it. The innovations they developed, particularly in single prints, were inevitably carried over into book illustration, creating a new book art,<sup>157</sup> to which Mayo was heir. Of the older generation of artists, Eric Gill, who had himself been inspired by Rooke, was one of the first wood engravers<sup>158</sup> to use the medium and this at a time when there were "comparatively few books being published with wood engraved illustrations."<sup>159</sup> The artists at the Omega Workshops, also of Gill's generation, had spurned the Arts and Crafts Movement ethos and consequently never treated wood engraving seriously, using it occasionally for printing stationery and sometimes for book illustrations. By the late 1920s and 1930s there were as many

---

<sup>157</sup> Selborne, *The Break with Tradition ...*, p. 20.

<sup>158</sup> Gill, perhaps the best known wood engraver of the 1920s and 1930s, attended Rooke's classes on general book illustration at Clapham for a year dating from the 16 November 1907. See Selborne, p. 34.

<sup>159</sup> *ibid*, p. 33.

approaches to the medium as there were wood engravers, as can be seen in the work of Mayo's contemporaries. As Patricia Jaffé points out, the incidence of light is strong in the work of Gwen Raverat; Gertrude Hermes and Blair Hughes-Stanton excelled in their extraordinary variety of engraved lines; Lettice Sanford, who admired the work of Gill, favoured the white-line approach with finely textured and patterned backgrounds; Clare Leighton preferred intensely black forms silhouetted against an almost plain white background; while the finely engraved white lines of Agnes Miller Parker's works were silken in appearance.<sup>160</sup>

While *Rational Limbering*, *Serge Lifar*, *A Japanese Garland* and the *Poem of Amriolkais* could be regarded as early experiments which paved the way for Mayo's later and greater achievements, they are in fact much more than that – they are good early examples of her growing ability to enlarge the writer's words by appropriate and sensitive images. Consequently, they may be seen as a measure of the maturing process at work in Mayo the illustrator.

Outstanding for its maturity among her early illustrations is her preliminary design for the cover of the Christmas edition of *The Sphere* 1929,<sup>161</sup> (Cat. no. 20; Vol. II, p. 71) to accompany a short story, *Christmas in the Days of Good Prince Albert*.<sup>162</sup> While the general symmetry and rigidity of the design could perhaps communicate the emergence of a highly individual style, its strong formality and the degree of stylisation of the royal group displays the enormous graphic skills she was developing at this time. Instead of suggesting the personal qualities of Prince Albert, Queen Victoria and their third child, Princess Alice, enjoying their Christmas celebrations, the artist strips away all inessentials, leaving the viewer with an almost abstract portrait of them. The

---

<sup>160</sup> See Patricia Jaffé, *Women Engravers*, London : Virago, 1990.

<sup>161</sup> *The Sphere*, Christmas Number, 25 November 1929. TGA 916. 118.

<sup>162</sup> The name of the author for the 'article' (actually a quotation) is referred to as being "From the Commonplace Book of Laetitia Throstlethwaite."

unfocussed stares of Albert, Victoria and the child disconcert the viewer to such an extent that it no longer appears a 'portrait': Albert looks towards an object beyond the mother and child who focus on something, or someone, beyond the viewer's sight. The eyes have been stylised and abstracted by the outlining of over-sized irises and the over-large pupils are framed by heavy eyelids. They are further emphasised by deep crescents of shadows beneath the lower lids. Extensive patterning of clothing, hair and features also border on the abstract. Although monumental figures and large gestures were never part of Mayo's visual repertoire, she achieves monumentality on a small scale in this preliminary drawing, through simplified shapes and bold linearity. Interestingly, the heavy-lidded Victoria with her ultra-smooth hairstyle, heavy eyelids and small pursed mouth is a self-portrait of Mayo. The monarch even wears the Russian earrings seen in photographs of the artist taken by E. Hoppé in 1928.<sup>163</sup>

With characteristic thoroughness and seriousness Mayo would have investigated images of the monarch and her consort before embarking on her illustration commission for *The Sphere*. No doubt, she discovered Lytton Strachey's popular *The Illustrated Queen Victoria*,<sup>164</sup> which included a drawing by J.L. Williams of the royal couple and their children admiring a candle-lit Christmas tree, accompanied by the Duchess of Kent,<sup>165</sup> as well as an anonymous lithograph depicting the doors to the Queen's private apartments standing wide open to reveal the Queen and Prince Albert playing with three of their offspring.<sup>166</sup> Given her commission, these illustrations would have been of particular interest to her. Intelligent researcher that she was, she would probably also have read Strachey's publication *Eminent Victorians*, (1918).

---

<sup>163</sup> TGA 916 - 170. Hoppé was well known for his photographs of famous people and beautiful, glamorous women. No doubt, he approached Mayo to photograph her after seeing paintings of her by Laura Knight and Dod Proctor.

<sup>164</sup> Lytton Strachey, *The Illustrated Queen Victoria*, London : Bloomsbury Publishing Ltd, 1921.

<sup>165</sup> *ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>166</sup> *ibid.*, p. 51.

Mayo's radically simplified drawing shares something of the tradition of part affectionate, part serious images of Queen Victoria which began with William Nicholson's pioneering image of the monarch with her dog, 1897. Her drawing also calls to mind the hard angular style of Wyndham Lewis, in particular his post-Vorticist portrait of Iris Barry, *Praxitella*, (1920-21) (Fig. 3). But Mayo was not emulating the Vorticist idiom in her drawing. In fact, she remained largely independent of any 'isms' – modernism included. She was not a Modernist in the sense of Modernism being "... specifically a style of painting in which the artist deliberately breaks away from classical and traditional methods of expression."<sup>167</sup> Rather, like many artists of her generation, she hovered on its edges. The most influential modern artists whose work she would have been exposed to in the late 1920s and 1930s "... took both a Modern French and an Old Master and treated them with equal respect."<sup>168</sup> Matthew Smith, for example, admired both Matisse and Rubens, while Mark Gertler's enthusiasm was for Renoir, Cézanne, the Early Italians and Dürer.<sup>169</sup> To what extent did Mayo stress specific artistic traditions in her illustrations? While it is true that her work shares some of the decorative charm of Matisse and Bonnard, hers was a more classical orientation which had its roots in the art of Piero della Francesca and of Ingres, two artists whose work was characterised by universal or classic qualities. She never faced the modern movement squarely, and felt no obligation to do so. Her main route was not through painting but through the traditions of illustration and printmaking with their emphasis on detail, draughtsmanship and a tendency towards simplification of form. Mayo's combination of the figurative and the abstract in the Victoria and Albert drawing amounts to little more than a mild flirtation with modernism.

---

<sup>167</sup> Chilvers, Ian. *Oxford Dictionary of 20th Century Art*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 401.

<sup>168</sup> Susan Compton, (ed.), *British Art in the 20th Century, The Modern Movement*, London; Munich: Prestel-Verlag and the Royal Academy of Arts, 1986, p. 10.

<sup>169</sup> *ibid.*

In comparison, the second version of the royal group which was published on the cover of *The Sphere*, (Cat. no. 21; Vol. II, p. 72) is too bland to challenge the viewer in any way. It was obviously a severely edited version of the first and is in keeping with the royal bonhomie suggested in the accompanying Christmas article. Mayo depicts a sweet-faced Victoria wearing small pearl earrings and holding the Princess Alice on her knee, flanked by Albert and their two older children, the Princess Royal (Vicky) and Prince Albert, (Bertie) holding Christmas toys. Traditional Christmas colours of red and green predominate, with the exception of the grey background wall, Albert's rust-coloured trousers and Victoria's and Bertie's red-hair. Small accents of pale blue in Vicky's ribbons and her brother's ball are expertly used to complement the orange tones. Textures are exploited by Mayo for decorative effect; the richness of the heavy velvet of Victoria's dress, Albert's necktie and the background curtain contrast with the whiteness and fineness of the monarch's linen handkerchief. The gentle stylisation of the facial features and hair is extended to the clothing which falls in smooth regular tubes around the figures. Obviously this cover illustration was deemed successful as, from 1930 until her departure for South Africa in 1934, Mayo continued to receive commissions for illustrations from *The Sphere*.<sup>170</sup>

In 1937, Mayo was invited by Douglas Cleverdon at the Clover Hill Press, Bristol<sup>171</sup> to design eight colour wood engravings to illustrate his first publication *The Bamboo Dance and Other African Tales*. These folk-tales, edited by J.H. Driberg, had been gathered from unpublished material by himself, Miss Dora Earthy and other anthropologists. Mayo was an appropriate choice to illustrate this publication for many reasons: she had recently returned from South Africa where she had studied the people and made detailed drawings of fauna and flora; she had a sound reputation as an illustrator; the technique of wood engraving was essentially the same as that of lino-

---

<sup>170</sup> Artist's notes, collection of author. Mayo appears to have continued working for the illustrated press until 1949. See *Countrygoer* (Cat. no. 17 - 17.1; Vol. II, p. 67 - 68).

<sup>171</sup> The Clover Hill Press differed from the Beaumont Press in that it had been established by Douglas Cleverdon for the occasional printing of pleasurable books, usually illustrated by engravings.

cutting, an area in which she had already demonstrated a high degree of proficiency. Furthermore, Cleverdon knew Mayo's work at first hand; he had been personally responsible for the organisation of a print show at the Clifton Arts Club, in Bristol, Mayo's home town, in November 1932, in which she exhibited five prints: *The Plunge*, *Woman at Dressing Table*, *Cats in Trees*, *Apollo* (1931), (Cat. no. 29; Vol. II, p. 79) and *Ice Cream Cart* (1932), (Cat. no. 33; Vol. II, p. 84). The last named print, received by Cleverdon only a few days before the opening of the exhibition, features the original 'model' cart which stood outside the Clifton Arts Club. This suggests that she made it specifically for the show.

In addition to the title vignette, Cleverdon commissioned Mayo to produce eight illustrations, varying in size from quarter-page to full-page, each printed in four to six wood-blocks.<sup>172</sup> The paper was specially made for this edition "with the Clover Hill Press watermark, at Laverstoke and Mills..."<sup>173</sup> The edition was of necessity small since the printing was carried out by hand on an Albion Press on pure vellum by Douglas Cleverdon and his assistant in any spare moments they had from their bookselling.

There are obvious similarities between Mayo's illustrations for *The Bamboo Dance* and John Farleigh's designs for Bernard Shaw's *The Adventures of the Black Girl in her Search for God*. This is not surprising, since all good British illustrators would have known Shaw's book, the illustrations representing a watershed in the use of original wood engravings in printed books.<sup>174</sup> This had been signalled in 1931 by The Golden Cockerel's *Four Gospels* with engravings by Eric Gill. But, although this publication had

---

<sup>172</sup> The edition was to consist of 6 copies on pure vellum, bound in full morocco, each containing an original watercolour, a set of signed proofed engravings, an extra set of engravings on special paper. Five out of this edition of six were to go on sale at fifteen guineas. An additional 45 copies in hand-made paper, in quarter morocco, each containing an extra set of the engravings were to be published. Forty out of the edition of 45 were to go on sale at £2.10.0. See TGA 916. 94.

<sup>173</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> Mayo had a first edition of this book in her library at the time of her death. Collection of author.

been recognised as a masterpiece, it was not until the success of Farleigh's illustrations to Bernard Shaw's *Adventures of the Little Black Girl in Search of her God* that general publishers began to use wood engravings extensively for illustrating their books.

Farleigh's original illustrations to this book were shown in an exhibition of the Society of Woodengravers held at the Redfern Gallery, London between 24 November and 31 December 1932.<sup>175</sup> It is more than likely that Mayo saw this exhibition; she would have been interested in seeing the original engravings by her former teacher.

While Farleigh's and Mayo's wood engravings have much in common, his were certainly not the prototype for her illustrations. Hers are vital responses in a visual medium to a landscape and a people she had experienced at first-hand. Both illustrators used the white-line technique in their engravings of African tales but differed widely in their employment of it. Farleigh used it throughout his illustrations to highlight details, while Mayo used it much more sparingly. Because the chief protagonist in both publications was a black girl, she was left in relief on the block by the illustrators so that when inked and printed she appeared as a solid shape. Farleigh used stippling to describe the volumes of the body and white lines to outline the facial features, breasts, pubic area, toes and fingers. In the rest of the design he used the white-line technique extensively as a kind of short-hand to outline details of the clothing of the other figures, for example, folds of tunics, pockets, collars and inscriptions. Mayo used the technique minimally, in comparison, to differentiate between the various parts of the body, for example, a fore-arm from an upper-arm, the abdominal muscles from the breast. Most of her backgrounds are cut away so that the figures stand out like silhouettes against the white matrix of the paper. Solid areas are more important to her over-all design than Farleigh's are to his. Unlike Farleigh's illustrations, which are an almost identical representation of Shaw's text, Mayo's are not so closely related to specific incidents in

---

<sup>175</sup> Foreword, Thomas Balston, "The Art of the Wood Engraver: an exhibition of Illustrated Books and Prints," 30 September - 14 October 1953, the Library Lounge of The Times Bookshop, Wigmore Street, London W.I.

the narrative. Instead, they are discreet comments on it and, as such, they avoid competing with the writer for the reader's attention.

By 1937 she was an experienced artist with an extensive exhibition record and a reputation to match. She showed a growing ability to confirm and extend the printed word, and she had matured in her drawing of the human form. Her earlier works, including prints, where she was unable to go beyond an outline, are little more than experiments in figure drawing. However, in *The Bamboo Dance* she no longer wavers at the edge of the body, but uses uniform areas of relief to describe the form instead. While they are still line drawings in the sense that she allows the silhouette to define, at the same time they are far more competently drawn than the earlier figures. *The Bamboo Dance* also shows that Mayo's experience as an illustrator had strengthened her sense of design. This is evident in the original colour separations for *The Bamboo Dancer*, now in the Tate Gallery Archive.<sup>176</sup> Each colour block was designed as an entity (Cat. nos. 6.1 - 6.4, Vol. II, pp. 30 - 33). Viewed singly, however, these colour separations are ultimately semi-abstract designs, the various sections of which are subordinated to a carefully constructed composition.

With her marriage in 1936 Mayo no longer had a financial need to work. But, committed artist that she was, this did not stop her continuing to practise as an artist. As she wrote later in life, she only lived when she worked. "... while most people begin to live when they have finished their work, an artist *begins* to live when she works."<sup>177</sup> Indeed, the 1940s turned out to be amongst her most productive years. Initially the couple lived in London, but sometime after 1937 they bought a farmhouse near Horsham in West Sussex. Gainsborough was interested in all the arts and they travelled freely between London and the country, Mayo studying at the Chelsea Polytechnic with Robert Medley, Henry Moore and Harold James. She continued regularly with

---

<sup>176</sup> TGA 916. 47 - 90.

<sup>177</sup> Eileen Mayo's diary (EMD) July 6 1964.



design commissions for Shell Oil, Jonathan Cape, *Radio Times* and Oldham's Press. But, with the outbreak of war in 1939 and the subsequent wartime demands on the medical profession, the family moved to Stroods, Fletching, East Sussex, where they remained until 1947. From Fletching, Gainsborough operated three country practices and Mayo helped with the running of the surgeries. Never lacking in enterprise, however, she used whatever time she could salvage to write and illustrate her own books,<sup>178</sup> *The Story of Living Things* (1944); *Shells and How they Live* (1944); *Little Animals of the Countryside* (1945); *Larger Animals of the Countryside* (1945); *Nature's ABC* (1945); and later *Animals on the Farm* (1951). Authorship represented a new phase in her development and is a further manifestation of her intellectual and artistic versatility. It was a venture to which she was very well suited; not only was she an experienced and well-respected illustrator, but she also had first-hand experience in layout, printing processes and publishing practices through her part-time work with the Beaumont Press and as a lithographer at the Baynard Press between 1931 and 1934.

The first of the five books Mayo wrote and illustrated between 1941 and 1951 was *The Story of Living Things and their Evolution*, consisting of 300 pages of text and drawings, with a foreword by Sir Julian Huxley. Written as an introduction to biology for both adults and children, its coverage of topics was comprehensive. Divided into ten sections, the 'story' begins with life under the sea, followed by chapters on plants, arthropods, amphibians and reptiles, birds, mammals, animal behaviour, homes and families, societies and partnerships and concludes with a prophetic discussion of humankind as the carer and potential destroyer of the world.

The circumstances of this 1941 commission are unclear. Referring to it in later life, Mayo said "My publishers [the Waverley Book Company] simply said: 'I want a

---

<sup>178</sup> *The Story of Living Things and their Evolution*. London : The Waverley Book Company Ltd., 1944; *Shells and How They Live*, London : Pleiades Books, 1944; *Little Animals of the Countryside* and *Larger Animals of the Countryside*, London : Pleiades Books, 1945; *Nature's ABC*, London : Universal Text Books Ltd., 1945; *Animals on the Farm*, Penguin Books, 1951.

nature book,' so I just had to study it up."<sup>179</sup> In a sense, *The Story of Living Things* is autobiographical. Her interest in natural history dated from her early childhood when her keen eye for the natural world had been stimulated by her physicist father. Later, as already mentioned, she undertook an independent study of the natural world in the countryside around London and in the zoos, botanical gardens and museums. *The Story of Living Things* had much in common with British Neo-Romanticism of the 1940s. British Neo-Romantic artists looked back to certain aspects of nineteenth century Romanticism, particularly the 'visionary' landscape tradition of William Blake and Samuel Palmer, "and reinterpreted them in a more modern idiom."<sup>180</sup> The movement was embraced by graphic designers and painters alike. What these artists shared in common was the British landscape tradition which they treated in a distinctly national and romantic fashion "at a time when it was under threat from Nazi Germany."<sup>181</sup> Although for much of her later artistic career, the 'Neo-Romantic' label is the one that most appropriately describes Mayo's work, mainly on account of the reverence and regard for nature she exhibited in her work. What distinguished her, however, from the Neo-Romantics was the inherently didactic, illustrational and scientifically accurate nature of her art. In writing and illustrating *The Story of Living Things* she was not merely following the British Neo-Romantic trend in art but rather she was returning to her roots – to nature as her constant.<sup>182</sup> From 1941, when she began her research for her book, nature became her main subject and the love of natural science she demonstrated in her first publication was to remain her strongest stimulus and resource in all her future work.

---

<sup>179</sup> *The Sunday Herald*, (Sydney) 13 September 1953.

<sup>180</sup> Ian Chilvers. *Oxford Dictionary of 20th Century Art*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 436.

<sup>181</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> The human figure had been the main subject of the prints she exhibited in the annual British lino-cut exhibitions between 1929 and 1934. This was in keeping with the theme of the metropolis, as advocated by Flight. See Stephen Coppel, *Linocuts of the Machine Age*, London : Scolar Press, 1995, pp. 17 & 18.

It was no accident that Mayo chose the theme of evolution for her first book. The theory of evolution had been popularised in the early 1930s by *The Science of Life*,<sup>183</sup> a "précis of biological knowledge,"<sup>184</sup> written by Julian Huxley, H.G. Wells and G.P. Wells, to describe life and what was then known about it for the lay reader. It first appeared as a series of monthly publications and was part of a trend at this time to popularise various areas of knowledge, previously regarded as specialised and therefore beyond the grasp of the lay-person.<sup>185</sup> When published as a book it was divided into four volumes: 1. *The Living Body*; 2. *The Chief Patterns of Life*; 3. *The Incontrovertible Fact of Evolution*; 4. *Behaviour, Feeling and Thought*. The text was accompanied by numerous half-tone illustrations. As the authoritative text on evolution, *The Science of Life* would have been Mayo's chief resource for *The Story of Living Things*.

As already pointed out, both text and illustrations were based on a careful study of the chief biological authority of the day, Sir Julian Huxley. He commented on the accuracy and depth of Mayo's research in his foreword to her book, saying "... they [the illustrations] have the further merit of being based on a careful study of the facts of nature and of biological authorities, and, with her equally careful text, combine to give an excellent popular presentation of evolutionary biology."<sup>186</sup> Huxley goes on to commend the book as "providing the layman with a picture of life's unfolding and of the rich variety it has produced, more vivid than most professional biologists could achieve."<sup>187</sup> Where errors do occur, Huxley dismisses them by saying that in a book of such scope "... it is probably impossible for the writer to avoid the occasional minor error, or occasional general statements to which exceptions can be pointed out. However, in the

---

<sup>183</sup> H.G. Wells, Julian S. Huxley, G.P. Wells, *The Science of Life* (4 vols.), New York : Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1931.

<sup>184</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>185</sup> I am grateful to Dr Robin Craw, Otago Museum, Dunedin, for this insight. H.G. Wells had written a similar best-selling book on history for the layperson, *The Outline of History : being a plain History of Life and Mankind*, London : Cassell and Company Ltd, 1922.

<sup>186</sup> *ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>187</sup> *The Story of Living Things*, p. viv.

present work such errors seem to be few and trivial."<sup>188</sup> Huxley did not itemise these errors, some of which would appear to have been to do with colour. Her oversimplification of the diverse colours of the living organisms she depicted was criticised by Dr. John R. Baker in his review of the book for *The Sunday Times*.<sup>189</sup> Restricted to the use of only four colours, red, blue, yellow and black, all Mayo could realistically hope for was an approximation of the widely diverse colourings of the hundreds of organisms she portrayed. Other less scientifically informed reviewers were, of course, unaware of the errors in colour subtleties mentioned by Baker. *The Times Education Supplement*, for example, said that *The Story of Living Things* was so "expensively produced and so sumptuously coloured that one cannot help wondering how it has been accomplished in war conditions."<sup>190</sup>

The originality of Mayo's *The Story of Living Things*, as the *Bristol Observer* pointed out,<sup>191</sup> lay in the presentation of facts in coloured pictures and diagrams. It went on to say that, "Placed among the letterpress, the illustrations, each with its own explanation, function as a guide in themselves."<sup>192</sup> The illustrations are paramount in the overall conception and design of the book and, in this context, the concise, not too technical text, could be regarded almost as an appendage. But, of course, it is far more than that. As Huxley pointed out in his foreword, it is an "excellent representation of evolutionary biology." The text, however, written in accessible language, is equal in information to the illustrations which appear in colour on every page, their strong rhythms creating an over-all sense of design throughout. One particularly striking example appears across pages 128 and 129 (Cat. no. 7.5; Vol. II, p. 38) where the habits of humming birds, disposed across both pages, explain the text, while at the same time

---

<sup>188</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> 4 February 1945.

<sup>190</sup> 27 January 1945.

<sup>191</sup> *Bristol Observer*, 22 February 1945.

<sup>192</sup> *ibid.*

function as a decorative accent. Illustrations flow with and through the text, with colour cleverly employed to establish links between pages and to give an over-all shape to the designs. It is interesting to note the lingering influence of Bell's original and distinctive approach to illustration in *The Story of Living Things* where, in her drawings of seed dispersal (Cat. no. 7.4; Vol. II, p. 37) Mayo like Bell, often defied the conventional rules of illustration by allowing images to force their way into the text<sup>193</sup> (Fig. 4).

Mayo's illustrations are a faithful portrayal of nature, but in her own inimitable style. They are not botanical, or biological illustrations – mere copies of their originals – but stylised, decorative drawings. Both text and illustrations stress Mayo's awareness of the interconnectedness of nature. The concluding paragraph of the book clearly expresses this ecological awareness:

Man's sense of kinship with other living things becomes deeper as he learns more about them. The realisation that they are not given into his hand as tools or playthings, but that they are part of the same scheme of life as he himself, has awakened his sense of responsibility towards them. He is learning to what extent they may be wisely used, preserved and controlled. In doing this, men of all nations share their knowledge and resources, and use them for the common benefit. A world-wide community of interest is in itself another step in the course of evolution.<sup>194</sup>

Mayo wanted decision-making controls over all aspects of her book. This was not surprising given that in the production of *The Poem of Amriolkais* she had worked closely with the author and publisher at High House Press – a private press – in the design and layout of the book, a close collaboration which was acknowledged in the triple signature in each copy of the first edition.<sup>195</sup> As author and illustrator of *The Story of Living Things*, she had anticipated the same fruitful interaction with the Waverley Book Company and expected to design every aspect of the book, right down

---

<sup>193</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Kew Gardens*, Folcroft, PA : Folcroft Press, Inc., 1969, unpaginated.

<sup>194</sup> *The Story of Living Things*, p. 306.

<sup>195</sup> Mayo's personal copy of *The Poem of Amriolkais* is inscribed by the publisher : For Eileen, my collaborater in this task. Signed James E. Masters and dated 7 February 1931. Collection of author.

to the choice of typeface. The Waverley was not a private press, however, and the publisher took all responsibility out of her hands. Consequently, Mayo's total concept for her book was ignored and this resulted in a misunderstanding of her intention for the layout of the explanatory text to the illustrations. Instead of being in a letter press different from that used for the main text, they were left in her own hand. Uneven spacing of the letters and words, differences in the size of words and slightly crooked lines clearly indicate that Mayo's printed text was intended only as a guide. If her intention had been otherwise, the lettering and spacing would have been perfect.<sup>196</sup> This misunderstanding resulted in her destruction of all copies of the book given to her by the publisher. However, no design error no matter how great could eclipse the joy in detail, the recognition of the natural sources of pattern, the superb sense of design and, above all, the exhaustive research Mayo demonstrates in her major publication, *The Story of Living Things*.

Less comprehensive in its content than *The Story of Living Things, Shells and How they Live*<sup>197</sup> – a study of the shells of the world – was also published in 1944. Mayo became interested in shells on her visit to South Africa in 1934 and brought a selection of them back to England on her return in 1935, making numerous drawings/paintings of them (Cat. nos. 121 - 127; Vol. II, pp. 162 - 168).<sup>198</sup> A general interest in shells had been stimulated by an interest in the sea generally which developed in Britain in the early 1940s. Indirectly, it was brought about by the use of submarines during the war years which, in turn, sparked off an interest in underwater and sea-shore life.<sup>199</sup>

---

<sup>196</sup> The text accompanying some illustrations is quite unevenly spaced.

<sup>197</sup> London : Pleiades Books, 1944.

<sup>198</sup> Many of these shells were still in her possession at her death.

<sup>199</sup> I am indebted to Dr Robin Craw, Otago Museum, Dunedin, for this information.

*Shells and How They Live* consists of 32 large pages in which Mayo describes, in detail, the construction and habits of numerous creatures of the sea, both native and foreign. Adaptation and environment, methods of feeding, breeding and protection are all explained in a language which is clear and simple without being patronising. It is an instructive book, including supplementary material on the various uses of shells over the ages. Illustrations and decorations wreath the margins of the pages and intersect the columns. The coloured drawings are delicate and decorative, the black and white illustrations diagrammatic. Coherence of design is achieved throughout by a careful balance of illustration and text on each double page, ensuring that neither drawing nor printed word dominate (Cat. no. 8.5; Vol. II, p. 43).

The title page (Cat. no. 8.3; Vol. II, p. 41) and end papers (Cat. no. 8.4; Vol. II, p. 42) of *Shells and How They Live* are further examples of Mayo's design skills. On the title page she enclosed the title, name of the author and publisher within a framework of shells and seaweeds, the inner rim of which created a negative space in the shape of a shell. The outcome of this careful marriage is that the words amplify the meaning of the illustration while it in turn enriches the text; neither text nor image exist in isolation but combine and integrate to create a satisfying and unified whole. The rippled blue endpapers also impress by the excellence of their design. A sketch book for this project<sup>200</sup> shows how she moved drawings of shells around against the wavy background until she arrived at her final design.

*Shells and How They Live* was produced by the lithographic method, a medium far more suited to Mayo's style than the engraving process employed in *The Story of Living Things*. *Shells* was printed for Pleiades by the Baynard Press where Mayo worked between 1931 and 1934. That she was known and respected as an artist and printer at the Baynard ensured a happy working relationship between her and the

---

<sup>200</sup> E 902 - 1994, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

printers. Both understood and respected the language of printing, thus ensuring her input in the final layout and design of the publication.

Mayo's *The Story of Living Things* and *Shells and How They Live* owe their success as much to the text as to the illustrations, whereas her four later books depend on the drawings for their impact. These books, as their titles imply, were written for children: *Little Animals of the Countryside* (1945), (Cat. nos. 9.1 - 9.6; Vol. II, pp. 46 - 48) *Larger Animals of the Countryside* (1945), (Cat. nos. 10.1 - 10.3; Vol. II, pp. 49 - 51), *Animals on the Farm* (1951), (Cat. nos. 13.1 - 13.2; Vol. II, pp. 58 - 60) and *Nature's ABC* (1951), (Cat. nos. 12.1 - 12.2; Vol. II, pp. Vol. II, pp. 56 - 57). As intimated, none of these publications is as vivid in illustration, or as dense in information as her earlier works. Consequently, they are a less significant measure of her development as an author and illustrator than her more scientific books. All four, however, were highly acclaimed for their dramatic illustrations and lively descriptions "... with just the right amount of detail."<sup>201</sup> Every aspect of their production was designed and controlled by Mayo – covers, title pages, lettering and illustrations.

In the same vein as Mayo's countryside and farmyard illustrations are those she did to accompany Sally Carrighar's *One Day on Beetle Rock* (Cat nos. 11.1 - 11.4; Vol. II, pp. 52 - 55).<sup>202</sup> A book for older children, it sets out the events of a typical day among the wild creatures of a mountain in the High Sierras – the weasel, the coyote, the chickaree, the mule deer, the lizard, the bear and the Sierra grouse. The ten monochrome illustrations by Mayo match "the author's acute observation and deep knowledge of her subject and captures with certain charm the unselfconscious grace and pose of the personalities of Beetle Rock."<sup>203</sup> The original drawings were exhibited at the Batsford Gallery (1946) and the Royal Academy (1948).

---

<sup>201</sup> *Dublin Magazine*, 1950.

<sup>202</sup> Sally Carrighar, *One Day on Beetle Rock*, London : Pleiades Books, 1946.

<sup>203</sup> *The Studio*, February 1947.



Above all else, Mayo loved cats and they remained a constant theme in her paintings and prints throughout her life.<sup>204</sup> Her last and perhaps most sensitive illustrations she did in England are found in *Best Cat Stories* (1951).<sup>205</sup> The dust-jacket is particularly apt (Cat. no. 14.1; Vol. II, p. 61). It displays a large tabby cat lying on a flowering lawn, licking its paw, while the back of the jacket features the tabby toilet illustrated on p. 50 of the publication, with Mayo's distinctive script appearing on the front cover and spine of the book. The sinuously curving body of the cat, which fills the space so 'fittingly and beautifully' by lying obliquely across the given space is not, however, merely decorative. Not only is the cat integral to the design, but also to the main function of the dust-jacket, which was, of course, to attract the buyer's attention. The cat-lover, captivated by the feline charm Mayo depicts on the cover, is alerted to the delights promised within by the cat's ears which curl up into the title of the book, while the lower-left paw delicately points out the names of the editor and illustrator. As the title suggests, the book consisted of a selection of cat stories written by various well-known authors including T.S. Eliot, Paul Gallico and Sylvia Townsend Warner. Each story – 19 in all – was accompanied by an illustration. One of the most successful of these is the full-page illustration<sup>206</sup> to Paul Gallico's *When in Doubt – Wash* (Cat. no. 14.5; Vol. II, p. 62). In this example, Mayo filled the page with five separate but characteristic views of a large cat washing. Each pose is interesting for its different portrayal of delicate tabby patterns and finely contrasted textures – each a vehicle for the artist's pictorial inventiveness. There is no denying Mayo's intimate love for and knowledge of the nature and physiognomy of cats. In this (as in all her illustrations to this book) she captures something of their silent, solitary and inscrutable nature in the

---

<sup>204</sup> Her last print, *White Cat with Poppies*, (1984) (Cat. no. 106; Vol. II, p. 150) depicts one of her adopted felines, Snow Queen, with whom she shared some of the latter years of her life at Beckenham.

<sup>205</sup> *Best Cat Stories*, Michael Joseph (ed.), London : Faber and Faber, 1951.

<sup>206</sup> *ibid.*, p. 50.

self-absorption of each phase of the toilet, accurately describing the contorted musculature of each pose through the changing patterns of the tabby markings.

But, while Mayo's mind was moving increasingly on between 1945 and 1951 in the areas of printmaking and tapestry design, her career as an author/illustrator was coming to an end. This shift in artistic direction came about through her changed circumstances. With the ending of World War II, her husband retired from the medical profession to found an art publication, *Art News and Review*,<sup>207</sup> with the art critic Bernard Denvir. A house at 33 Royal Avenue, Chelsea was acquired as the London base for Gainsborough's publication. After 1952 and her subsequent emigration to Australia, where her main preoccupation was with design commissions and teaching, Mayo never took up writing or illustrating again.<sup>208</sup>

Mayo's illustrations and books provide an additional dimension to a reading of her as an artist. At their worst, or at her most inexperienced, they are a reflection of her struggle to come to terms with the problems involved in giving graphic form to an author's written expression. At their best they are a measure of her ability to enliven and enrich a text. Nowhere is this more apparent than in her scientific books where, as illustrator of her own text, she was no longer subordinate to the writer in any way. Instead, while her text informs the reader, her illustrations are independent of it and act as complete guides in themselves. In this she shows the extent to which she, at the height of her career as an illustrator, had absorbed Henri Matisse's view, via Vanessa Bell,<sup>209</sup> that "Writers have no need of painters to explain what they want to say. They should have enough resources of their own to express themselves."<sup>210</sup> As author, she more than adequately demonstrated these resources; as illustrator, she showed her

---

<sup>207</sup> This publication ran under Gainsborough's patronage from 1949 until his death in 1969, changing its name to *Art Review*, in 1961.

<sup>208</sup> In both Australia and New Zealand, however, she did numerous illustrations for school publications.

<sup>209</sup> Bell first met Matisse in 1914.

<sup>210</sup> Quoted in *The Sisters' Arts*, p. 118.

artistic self-assertion in the ways in which she established an interesting and balanced collaboration between highly accurate information and decorative drawings.



Fig. 2

John Farleigh. Illustration to Bernard Shaw, *The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God*, 1932, p. 56



Fig. 3

Wyndham Lewis, *Praxitella*, 1920 - 21

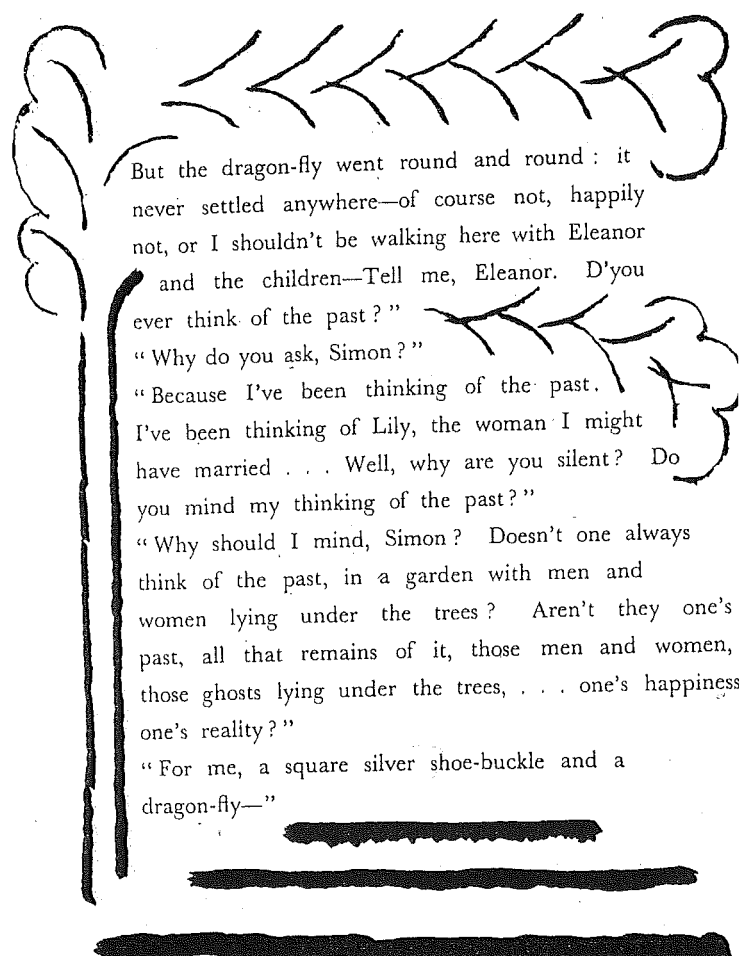


Fig. 4

Vanessa Bell. Illustration to Virginia Woolfe, *Kew Gardens*, 1927, u.p.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE ARTIST AS PRINTMAKER

#### ENGLAND

Eileen Mayo's career in printmaking is reputed to have begun in 1930 when she was thrown into prominence by her success in *The Second Exhibition of British Linocuts* held at the Redfern Gallery, London, from 23 July to 23 August 1930.<sup>211</sup> While it is true that this marked the beginning of a long career as an independent printmaker, initially it grew out of her earlier work as an illustrator when she was commissioned in 1929 by the High House Press of Shaftesbury, Dorset, to design four illustrations for *The Poem of Amriolkais*. Although the resultant wood engravings are minor works as far as Mayo's oeuvre is concerned, she subsequently reproduced two of them, *Deer in the Storm* (Cat. no. 24; Vol. II, p. 75) and *Prancing Horse* (Cat. no. 25; Vol. II, p. 76), as editions of single prints. They did not go unnoticed: *Deer in the Storm* was bought by the Circulations Department of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, in 1929 and by the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto in 1936.<sup>212</sup>

What is interesting about these small wood engravings is the degree of technical excellence they exhibit. Simplification being one of the characteristics of a wood

---

<sup>211</sup> These exhibitions were initiated by Rex Nan Kivell, the director of the Redfern Gallery. After hearing a lecture by Claude Flight on the new colour linocut techniques being taught at the Grosvenor School of Art, London, he invited him to exhibit his prints and those of his followers at the Redfern Gallery. The first exhibition was held in 1929.

<sup>212</sup> In 1936 104 prints, half of which were linocuts, were taken by the Redfern Gallery to Ottawa in Canada. According to Stephen Coppel, as a consequence of this show, the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto bought a small collection of prints from the Redfern Gallery in 1936. In all likelihood, Mayo's *Deer in the Storm* was among those purchased. See *Linocuts of the Machine Age*, London : Scolar Press, 1995, p. 20.

engraving, Mayo developed stylised designs of almost equal areas of black and white. Aware, also, of the decorative possibilities of black and white, she accordingly punctuated her designs throughout with varied and intricate patterning.<sup>213</sup>

The technical facility evident in Mayo's early wood engravings is also present in her first colour lino-cut *Turkish Bath* (1930), (Cat. no. 26; Vol. II, p. 77). Annual exhibitions of colour lino-cuts at the Redfern Gallery, Cork Street and the Ward Gallery, Baker Street,<sup>214</sup> London between 1929 and 1935 were initiated by Claude Flight, the founder of the colour lino-cut movement and an ardent promoter, teacher and writer on the medium.<sup>215</sup> In keeping with the spirit of the English Arts and Crafts tradition, Flight advocated the use of sharpened umbrella spokes as burins.<sup>216</sup> Printing was done by hand in oil-paint and printing ink which was transferred to the blocks by means of a gelatine roller. The actual transference of colour from the block to the paper took place by means of rubbing lightly upon the back of the paper with a homemade baren, a wooden disc wrapped in bamboo leaves.<sup>217</sup>

Because the techniques of lino-cutting and wood engraving are essentially the same, the transition of end-block to linoleum would not have been a problem for Mayo. What was new to her at this early stage of her printmaking career was over-printing in a number of different colours.<sup>218</sup> She would have been familiar with the technique used in

---

<sup>213</sup> In this she was more successful than some other highly regarded illustrators from the Central School, for example, Millicent Jackson, whose illustrations were more like drawings than wood engravings.

<sup>214</sup> The first three exhibitions were held at the Redfern Gallery but after a disagreement with Nan Kivell, Flight transferred the exhibitions to the Ward Gallery.

<sup>215</sup> Mayo met Flight, a teacher at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art, while working as a model in the life-class there in 1929. Flight knew of her interest in art and invited her to exhibit in *The Second Exhibition of British Linocuts*. Mayo had never made a linocut but, according to legend, Flight explained the technique to her over the telephone.

<sup>216</sup> Mayo would have used the engraving tools which she had purchased for the illustration class at the Central School.

<sup>217</sup> Claude Flight, Foreword, exhibition catalogue, *Second Exhibition of British Lino Cuts*, August, 1931.

<sup>218</sup> The experience she gained from these early colour lino-prints stood her in good stead when designing her later colour wood engravings for *The Bamboo Dance and Other African Tales*.



Japanese prints in permanent displays at the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum. The Japanese approach involved cutting a key block to circumscribe areas of colour. Flight's approach was radically different. He claimed that a key block was not essential – that two to four blocks of almost equal areas should be used.<sup>219</sup> Where a secondary colour was desired, Flight suggested superimposing one colour over another to gain the depth of tone or variation required.<sup>220</sup> Mayo followed Flight's instructions in *Turkish Bath* to the letter, cutting a key block as her guide and using four colours (including black). Working out the design over four linoleum blocks entailed taking into account the need for careful registration to ensure that the colours abutted each other exactly, as well as a consideration of possible over-printing to create secondary colours and special effects.

Even in this first linocut her design skills were apparent to all. *Turkish Bath*, the work of a young and relatively inexperienced artist, was praised in *Apollo* for its pattern and dynamic lines, the critic saying that it "achieved its end admirably without obvious geometry,"<sup>221</sup> while at the same time criticising Flight for his too obvious reliance on geometry. *The Observer* singled it out as the "most satisfactory print in the show," commenting on the "rhythmic flow of the lines of the body being cleverly opposed to the squares of the tiled floor."<sup>222</sup> Mayo's "amusing conceit, displaying ingenuity rather than feeling,"<sup>223</sup> was how the critic of *The Times* described it when exhibited in the annual exhibition of the Grubb Group in the Quo Vadis restaurant.<sup>224</sup>

---

<sup>219</sup> Flight, however, did suggest that the beginner would obtain the best results if she started with a key block in some dark colour, preferably in black printing ink; this key block was a line block which, when cut and printed, gave a print from which the novice could trace on to other blocks, the guiding lines of which would provide the boundaries of her cutting and which would also give the surfaces required for the colour blocks. Claude Flight, *Lino Cutting and Printing*, London : B.T. Batsford, Ltd., 1934, p. 17.

<sup>220</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>221</sup> *Apollo*, September 1930. See TGA 916. 18.

<sup>222</sup> *Observer*, 27 July 1930. See TGA 916. 18.

<sup>223</sup> *The Times*, 14 October 1940. See TGA 916.18.

<sup>224</sup> Quo Vadis was situated at 26 Dean Street, Soho, London.

As the title indicates, *The Second Exhibition of British Linocuts* was only the second time that such prints, regarded by the art establishment as something done by children in art classes in Britain's more progressive schools, were presented to the general public as serious art. It is interesting that their reception was so positive. In fact, the response from the public was remarkable. For example, when the inaugural exhibition of 1929 was sent on a two-year tour of the provinces, it attracted 12,000 visitors in Sunderland alone.<sup>225</sup>

*Turkish Bath* is evidence of Mayo's enthusiastic response to her first opportunity to exhibit with a group of professional printmakers. Indeed, she recognised it for the golden opportunity that it was: the exhibition was avant-garde and, therefore, without expectation; if her work proved unacceptable she would be protected from the scorn of the critics by the sheer number of artists exhibiting – 43 in all, 27 men and 16 women. As an unknown artist without an established reputation, she had nothing to lose. Consequently she took more risks at this early stage of her career than at any other time in her life and the vitality captured in her wood engravings of the late 1920s was surpassed by the liveliness and spirit of her first linocut.

*Turkish Bath* is an early show-case for Mayo's remarkable capacity for picture making: while disposing the women across and into the picture plane she nevertheless keeps them in sharp focus by uniting them through a series of varying patterns and dynamic lines, similar to those found in the Art Deco style of the 1920s and 1930s. In this, she was influenced by Flight. Although he had originally subscribed to the machine-age aesthetics of the Futurists, from whom he borrowed the motif of speed,<sup>226</sup> he had also absorbed the stylistic tendencies of Art Deco in his art as well as in his writings. While many of his followers chose to portray the "pulse and pace of

---

<sup>225</sup> Stephen Coppel, *Linocuts of the Machine Age*, London : Scolar Press, 1995, p. 20.

<sup>226</sup> *ibid.*, p. 17.

metropolitan life"<sup>227</sup> inherent in Futurism in their prints, others, including Mayo, were more attracted by the stylistically rectilinear and bold decorative colour of Art Deco which he had also espoused.<sup>228</sup> Art Deco with its zig-zagging patterns, "sleek geometrical or stylised forms and bright, sometimes garish colours,"<sup>229</sup> is clearly manifest in *Turkish Bath*. However, the print also displays other influences. A Japanese quality is seen in the spacing and cropping of the images, for example, the lower leg of the figure in the upper right-hand corner and the lower limbs of the woman in the foreground. This was probably due to the influence of her earlier illustrations to *A Japanese Garland* where she had used the cropping technique to great effect. The influence of Ingres is to be seen, not only in her choice of subject, but also in the disposition of the main figure in the composition across the front of the picture plane to create a sculpturesque effect. This figure also has much in common with Stanley Spencer's later, mannered, almost grotesque figures of his projected scheme for the Church House, for example, *The Dustman or The Lovers*, (1934). Equally, it could be a comment on the obesity which Mayo may have encountered on her weekly visit to a turkish bath in London and which she would have abhorred.<sup>230</sup>

Mayo continued to exhibit in the annual linocut exhibitions organised by Flight between 1930 and 1934, her decorative vignettes of everyday life earning her a reputation as a lively and creative young printmaker. All her prints were purchased by the Circulations Department, Victoria and Albert Museum.<sup>231</sup>

---

<sup>227</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 17 & 18.

<sup>228</sup> Art Deco tendencies are evident in most of Mayo's early linocut prints, for example, *The Plunge* (1930), (Cat. no. 27; Vol. II, p. 78); *Woman at a Dressing Table* (1931), (Cat. no. 30; Vol. II, p. 81); *Morning Tea* (1932), (Cat. no. 31; Vol. II, p. 82).

<sup>229</sup> Ian Chilvers, *Dictionary of 20th century art*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 31.

<sup>230</sup> So strong were Mayo's feelings in this regard that she often said that she would rather be dead than fat. Author in conversation with artist, c. 1989.

<sup>231</sup> E 902, Archive, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Her success was due in no small part to the fact that at this period in her life she was supported by Flight and the linocut group, the quality of her work assuring her of a place in their annual exhibitions. The security this provided, combined with regular exposure to the public and the praise of the critics, boosted her confidence.

Consequently, the spontaneity demonstrated in *Turkish Bath* persists in *The Plunge* (1930), (Cat. no. 27; Vol. II, p. 78), *Cats in Trees* (1931), (Cat. no. 28; Vol. II, p. 79), *Woman at Dressing Table* (1931), (Cat. no. 30; Vol. II, p. 81), *Morning Tea* (1932), (Cat. no. 31; Vol. II, p. 82), *Ice Cream Cart* (1932), (Cat. no. 33; Vol. II, p. 84), and *The Two Angelos* (1934), (Cat. no. 34; Vol. II, p. 85). But as her reputation increased, her willingness to experiment decreased. This was, of course, exacerbated by her need to earn a living from her art; a diminution of her reputation would mean fewer sales but the popularity of her precise and specifically detailed and patterned prints, ensured their continuing demand. Consequently, she could no longer afford to take risks. This conservatism begins to register in her prints after 1934.

In 1934/35 Mayo travelled to South Africa where she stayed in Durban with her cousin, May Shearman. Although she had visited Germany and Berlin in 1931, her trip to South Africa was her first introduction to an 'exotic' country. Mayo produced many drawings and paintings from this period. Her prints included *Watching the Dance* [1935], (Cat. no. 36; Vol. II, p. 87) and *Water Carrier* (1937), (Cat. no. 38; Vol. II, p. 88).<sup>232</sup>

Marriage had occasioned a complete change of pace in Mayo's working life. Although seemingly independent, she was not insensible to the attractions of the traditional domestic ideal. It represented an attractive alternative to earning her own living in order to survive which, as she knew from experience, was hard work. It also represented a retreat for her from the insecurities engendered by the growing threat of

---

<sup>232</sup> In 1937 she also made eight wood-engravings, illustrations for J.H. Driberg's *The Bamboo Dance and Other African Tales*. See TGA 916. 94. They were not, however, designed as single prints.

war in the second half of the 1930s. Neither should it be forgotten that society had conditioned her as it had others to regard marriage as the ultimate haven. This is apparent in a letter she wrote to her mother shortly after her marriage, saying "... I hope she [Josephine] will be able to be married soon and do the nicest job in the world for a woman, keep house."<sup>233</sup>

In her new role as wife and mother Mayo found that her time was now divided. Consequently she had less time to devote to her development as a printmaker. A move away from London to the country the following year could be seen as a negative spin-off for her in that it removed her from the stimulus of the art scene where her printmaking career had taken root. There were other factors, apart from her marriage, however, which contributed to her subsequent change in artistic direction in the late 1930s and early 1940s. As the effects of the Depression of the 1930s became more keenly felt, fewer and fewer people bought prints and in 1937 the Ward Gallery decided to discontinue its annual show of British linocuts altogether. Although Mayo worked at lithography with Vincent Lines,<sup>234</sup> a lithographer whose classes she attended at the Horsham School of Art, it became clear to her that printmaking could no longer be her main artistic focus; it was no longer the viable artistic option it had been in the early 1930s. In an attempt to diversify, she began studying at Chelsea Polytechnic with Robert Medley, Henry Moore and Harold James, necessitating that she travel between her home in West Sussex and London whenever she had the opportunity. With the outbreak of World War II, and the family's subsequent move to Fletching in 1940, Mayo abandoned printmaking temporarily. She was not without enterprise, however, and she turned to writing and illustrating books on natural history.

---

<sup>233</sup> Dated 13 November. Year not given, but as Mayo very soon changed her mind about the joys of keeping house, I presume that the letter was written in 1936, the year of her marriage. Collection, author, Christchurch.

<sup>234</sup> Mayo was not new to lithography. In the early 1930s she had worked as a lithographer at the Baynard Press, London.

The change from design commissions, to printmaking, to writing and illustrating nature books did not present a problem for Mayo. As stated at the outset of this thesis she saw no hierarchical differences among the various media in which she worked; to her each was a counterpart to the other – each provided impetus for the other.

During the course of her research for her publications she amassed a vast store of information on animals, fish, shells and plants which attuned her eye to the minutiae of the natural world. Consequently, when she relaunched her career as a printmaker in 1945, she used the many studies she had made of domestic animals, birds and flowers while living at Fletching as her subjects.

Her comeback as a printmaker was aided by the fashion in Britain during the 1940s for acquiring wood engravings to hang on the walls of modern homes, and single prints were designed to meet the demands of modern interior decoration. The strong contrast produced by a black image on white paper was well suited to the stark white walls of modern interiors. Under these circumstances, Mayo began making black and white wood engravings, and the prints she produced between 1945 and 1952 were all in keeping with popular demand at the time.

These later wood engravings are significant in assessing her development as a printmaker. Even a cursory comparison between *Prancing Horse, Deer in Storm* and *The Doves* (1948), (Cat. no. 47; Vol. II, p. 97) and *New Year* (1949), (Cat. no. 49; Vol. II, p. 99) shows the extent to which Mayo the printmaker had matured. The years of observing the particulars of nature with extraordinary intensity while writing and illustrating her own books on natural science sharpened the predilection for pattern-making which she had already demonstrated in her early wood engravings and linocuts. What is interesting at this point of her career is that two characteristics of the mature Mayo emerge in *The Doves* and *New Year*: the designer *par excellence* and the perfectionist. Although these prints are without a doubt the work of a bold and

accomplished draughtswoman, they show a tightening up of the composition in the way the forms relate to each other, to such an extent that nature appears to have been (and indeed was) manipulated by her into designs. Unlike her earlier, freer wood engravings of the late 1920s, she was no longer content with surface recording and decoration and, although the severely stylised forms are still clearly discernible as birds and flowers, they have been developed into interesting patterns by a rigorous schematisation of form. It is precisely this development in Mayo's work which sets the later wood engravings apart from her earlier prints in this medium. The later examples are flatter, the elements deliberately chosen because of their suitability for being shaped into patterns.

It was no coincidence that, in the 1940s, Mayo changed from figurative to nature subjects. She spent much of that decade living in the country, during which time she drew extensively from nature. She would also have been aware of the parallel trend in the 1940s towards Neo-Romanticism and her intimate vignettes of country life could easily be categorised by art historians as belonging to that movement. It was her life circumstances, however, rather than Neo-Romanticism which informed her wood engravings of the 1940s. Although she spent the years between 1941 and 1945 researching and representing natural history in her publications and her nature prints of this period relate directly to that experience, she was nevertheless, part of wider sphere of Neo-Romanticism.<sup>235</sup>

Mayo produced her first single sheet lithograph, *Squirrel* (1945), (Cat. no. 40; Vol. II, p. 90) in 1945.<sup>236</sup> She had earlier honed her skills as a lithographer while working at the Baynard Press<sup>237</sup> under Thomas Griffiths, in 1932. The philosophy of

---

<sup>235</sup> See *The Story of Living Things, Little Animals of the Countryside and Larger Animals of the Countryside*. See also Vol. II, pp. 34 - 38, 44 - 48 and 49 - 51.

<sup>236</sup> Mayo probably designed and printed *Squirrel* while working with Vincent Lines at the Horsham School of Art.

<sup>237</sup> It was this press that printed a number of Mayo's own books in the mid 1940s for the publisher Pleiades Books.

the firm was closely aligned with Mayo's own quest for perfection in her work. The founders of the Baynard had been inspired by William Morris and, consequently, tried to improve the standards of craft in all its work: from expensive limited editions on handmade paper to advertising pamphlets, posters, or box labels. This philosophy was in keeping with that which Mayo had been taught at the Central School of Arts and Crafts. The high standard demanded by the Baynard encouraged her to develop and perfect her lithographic technique. The degree of skill she attained was attested to in an undated letter which accompanied a reference written for the artist by Thomas Griffiths:

... I was also deeply interested in your recent lithographs, indeed the prints you showed me were really first class, both in drawing and printing. You have made great progress and I consider you now a first rate lithographer. You are a credit to me and I am so glad that you have kept up your lithography as you were one of my most promising pupils in those days at the Baynard Press ...<sup>238</sup>

Her "great progress" is evident in her early lithographs. *Musk Duck* (1945), (Cat. no. 42; Vol. II, p. 81) and *Sleepy Cat* (1946), (Cat. no. 43; Vol. II, p. 93) for example, were described by Bernard Denvir, the critic for the *Scotsman*, as "... soothing in their technical softness."<sup>239</sup> These prints demonstrate Mayo's flair for capturing the characteristics of domestic animals as well as the realism of the rendering of their fur and feathers.

In contrast to her earlier lithographs, the prints she made in the late 1940s and early 1950s – *Mending the Nets* [1949], (Cat. no. 50; Vol. II, p. 100) and *Roquebrune* (1952), (Cat. no. 51; Vol. II, p. 101) – are more ambitious in subject, scale and colour. Unusually for Mayo, the subject of both lithographs is landscape. This was probably because they were based on photographs. *Mending the Nets*, for example, was developed from photographs and studies the artist made of the area while on holiday in Audierne with her step-son in 1948.<sup>240</sup> *Roquebrune* was based on photographs taken by

<sup>238</sup> Correspondence, Thomas Griffiths to Mayo, u.d. Collection, author, Christchurch.

<sup>239</sup> *Scotsman*, 3 December 1949. See TGA 916. 18.

<sup>240</sup> Correspondence, John Gainsborough to author, 5 December, 2000.



Mayo during a later four-month study trip made to France in late 1949 - early 1950.<sup>241</sup> Both prints are larger in scale than the earlier lithographs, *Mending the Nets* being 150 x 505 and *Roquebrune* 405 x 200. The greater dimensions of the prints was probably dictated by the photographic images as much as by their subject: the wide expanse of foreshore and the billowing fishing nets at Menton, the stepped passages, arches and semi-tunnels of the medieval hill-town of Roquebrune, where she stayed for two months. *Mending the Nets* and *Roquebrune* were her first colour lithographs. While neither is particularly ambitious in terms of the number of colours used – *Roquebrune* uses three colours and *Mending the Nets* four – they nevertheless represent a step forward in her command of the medium.

## AUSTRALIA

Mayo's career as a printmaker suffered another setback with her migration to Sydney, Australia in December 1952. This radical step was a direct outcome of the dissolution of her marriage. Having rebuilt a reputation as a successful printmaker, and established her worth as a painter, designer, author and illustrator, there was no reason why she could not have continued to live and work as an artist in London. Her work was being shown at the Royal Academy and elsewhere; her publications had proved to be immensely popular. Mayo, however, could not countenance failure of any description. Blaming herself for the break-down of the marriage and suffering from depression and guilt born of self-doubt, she decided to cut all ties with England to make a new start in another country. Her choice of Australia was prompted by the fact that her sister, Josephine Campey, was already living in Sydney. Her English friend Carol Foote and her husband were also there and encouraged her to join them.<sup>242</sup>

---

<sup>241</sup> TGA 916. 153.

<sup>242</sup> Mayo first met Carol Foote in 1941. Foote's first husband had been drafted into the army and Carol, who was only 20 years old at the time, had been sent to stay with her parents who lived at Fletching in East Sussex, not far from where the Gainsboroughs lived.

In one sense Mayo's move to Australia as a mid-career artist cut her adrift in the art world but, in another it also opened up new possibilities to her. She quickly made the acquaintance of and established firm friendships with Hal Missingham, Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales and an occasional printmaker himself; Elizabeth Pope of the Australian Museum; Douglas and Dorothy Dundas of the National Art School; Sir Daryl Lindsay, Director of the National Gallery of Victoria and Dr Ursula Hoff, Assistant Keeper of Prints and Drawings there.

While her need to earn a living through design commissions and part-time teaching of drawing, lettering and design at the East Sydney Technical College severely eroded the time Mayo could devote to printmaking, she nevertheless produced a small body of prints – 12 editions in all – between 1953 and 1962: three lithographs and nine reliefs.<sup>243</sup>

Mayo was a frequent exhibitor in galleries in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide where her remarkable technical skills, as well as her international reputation, brought her instant recognition from the art establishment and critics alike. *Woman and Siamese Cat* (1953), (Cat. no. 54; Vol. II, p. 103) was selected for inclusion in the Olympic Games exhibition, Melbourne, 1956; it also won the Kuring-gai prize for prints that same year, while *Pumpkin* (1960), (Cat. no. 60; Vol. II, p. 107) won the Maude Vizard Wholohan prize (sponsored by the Royal South Australian Society of Arts and the Art Gallery of South Australia) at Adelaide in 1962.<sup>244</sup>

---

<sup>243</sup> I am not convinced that *Girl with Siamese Cat* and *Spring Morning* were actually designed and printed by Mayo in Australia. R.G. Appleyard in his article "Lithography by Eileen Mayo," *Bulletin of the National Gallery of South Australia*, 1954 Vol. 15, no. 3, wrote that the unavailability of lithographic presses in Sydney forced the artist to abandon the medium. This could mean that Mayo's two prints, although dated to 1953, belong to her English period. Otherwise, where would she have printed them? However, as the date given for these prints is always 1953 I am including them with her Australian prints.

<sup>244</sup> According to Sasha Grishin, printmaking prizes were introduced in Australia in order to promote the prestige value of prints. See *Contemporary Australian Printmaking : an Interpretative History*, Roseville, East, N.S.W., : Craftsman House, 1994, p. 42.

What Mayo's Australian prints lack is a consistent style and a development of themes and ideas. This suggests that she did not have a clear programme at this time as far as her printmaking was concerned, which is understandable given that her main focus was design commissions. These, combined with part-time teaching, meant that printmaking, through necessity rather than by choice, became the secondary rather than the primary artistic pursuit she wished it to be. Her Australian diaries make constant reference to her unhappiness with this situation but, financially, she needed to accept every commercial commission that came her way.

While her Australian images still retain the articulate self-expression of her English prints, British influences are clearly discernible in them. For example, while *Girl with Cat* [1956], (Cat. no. 59; Vol. II, p. 106) exhibits the characteristics of the artist's mature style in its taste for detailed ornament, stylistically it has much in common with the classical aesthetic of the 1920s. An interesting aspect of *Girl and Cat* is their depiction as flat shapes with fractured colour which, of course, owes much to the classicism which Pablo Picasso displayed in his work during this period. No doubt Mayo saw his work exhibited in London and, if *Girl and Cat* are anything to go by, she obviously noted the way in which he constructed figures from simple flat shapes and clear colours which combined a Modernist statement of the flat plane of the canvas with a more traditional classical representation of the figure, or object.

Both *Pumpkin* and *Spanish Table* (1961), (Cat. no. 61; Vol. II, p. 108) exhibit Cubist influences – but strictly Mayo's own version of it. While her representation of the objects on the table and in the surrounding room are naturalistic, she alters shapes within the picture frame from the way we conventionally perceive them and reproduces them as a series of abstract patterns. *Pumpkin*, for example, brings to mind Georges Braque's painting, *Table, Glass and Pipe*, (1913) (Fig. 5). Mayo achieves her end by printing overlapping objects in transparent ink. She abandons her usual optical pictorialism in both the table top and the chair by reducing them to unrelated colour

planes which have the effect of distorting their spatial reality. The composition and style of *Pumpkin* could also have been influenced by one of the minor Neo-Romantic artists, Robert MacBryde, whose still-life compositions owed something to Cubism and, in particular, the influence of Picasso. But, whatever its influences, *Pumpkin* was certainly the most remarkable print of Mayo's Australian period. It demonstrates the method of geometric construction that she began to develop at this time, whereby she built up a composition according to a system of rhythmic lines and arcs. She then accentuated these complex rhythms of intersecting arcs by the use of bold, bright colour and decorative patterning.

The influence of Braque is also evident in *Spanish Table*. Although Mayo does not go so far as to reduce the objects in the print to the simple forms of cylinders, spheres and cones, she does attempt to adopt, to a limited extent, his shifting point of view. This is seen in the sloping table and also in the way in which she attempts to show a markedly different angle in the placement of the table-cloth.<sup>245</sup> The composition of the print also calls to mind Juan Gris' *Bouteille et Compotier*, (1917) (Fig. 6).

Mayo uses the same compositional techniques in *Children with Umbrellas* (1962), (Cat. no. 64; Vol. II, p. 110) as in *Pumpkin*. The composition appears to grow out of a series of arcs locked together by the spokes of the umbrellas. This print refers back both in subject and in time to the British Lino-cut movement of the late 1920s and early 1930s. It also looks forward to her later print *Rain on the Hill*, (1975) (Cat. no. 83; Vol. II, p. 128). In subject and style, *Children with Umbrellas* refers to Ethel Spowers' (1890 - 1947) colour linocut *Wet Afternoon*, 1930. Spowers' prints were mostly inspired by urban themes in London which the artist encountered while studying with Flight at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art from late 1928 to early 1929. Mayo would have known *Wet Afternoon* at first hand as it was exhibited, along with her

---

<sup>245</sup> Mayo visited Spain in 1952 where she stayed in the small coastal town of Cadqués. She described in her notes the peron which appears on the table. See Cat. no. 52, p. 233, for Mayo's description.

*Turkish Bath*, in the Second Exhibition of British Linocuts held at the Redfern Gallery in 1930.<sup>246</sup> *Children with Umbrellas* also marks the beginning of Mayo's use of extraordinarily unorthodox, off-beat experiments to achieve the exact textured effect she wanted in her prints.<sup>247</sup> In this print, for example, she unsuccessfully experimented with making 'imitation wood' backing by taking a plaster mould from engraved lino, inking it up and printing from it.

The strength of *Woman with Siamese Cat* lies in the superb draughtsmanship and consummate skill Mayo displays as a lithographer. In what could loosely be termed a monochromatic work, she exploits the tonal potential of the medium by heavy applications of conté to some parts of the stone so that they appear as almost solid areas of colour as, for example, behind the head of the woman, while in other sections of the print the crayon barely grazes the surface of the lithographic stone. In this she goes far beyond her technical achievements in *Mending the Nets* and *Roquebrune*. The subject, *Woman with Siamese Cat*, was not new either – it also had a British antecedent. Mayo adapted it from her earlier illustration for *The Traveller from the West and the Traveller from the East* which was included in Michael Joseph's publication, *Best Cat Stories* (Cat. no. 14.17; Vol. II, p. 64). It is also a continuation of her early interest in the self-portrait. Like *Woman with Siamese Cat*, *Spring Morning* (1953), (Cat. no. 53) is a virtuoso display of Mayo's lithographic skills. Its design refers to her cover for *Best Cat Stories* (Cat. no. 14.1; Vol. II, p. 61). Why she dipped into the past for inspiration for these works, rather than drawing from her environment, as was her usual custom while living in England, is puzzling especially as her later highly successful and acclaimed posters for the Australian National Tourist Association (1956 - 1960)

---

<sup>246</sup> Mayo obviously admired *Wet Afternoon* as she had kept a copy of the image, which was produced as a card in 1983, by the Australian National Gallery until her death in 1994.

<sup>247</sup> According to Mayo's diary entries for 3 and 4 December 1961, she had already begun experimenting with using different materials to achieve texture in *Ferryboat* (1961), Cat. no. 3 Vol. II, p. 109). In this print she used sandpaper as an inking surface and was "rather thrilled" with the effect. She also mixed up casein glue with plaster of Paris and spread it "roughly on cardboard." Masonite and plywood backing were used as printing surfaces, the ply being exploited on account to its interesting grain. *Ferryboat* appears to have acted as a catalyst for her experimental prints. As I have found no trace of this print I am using *Children with Umbrellas* as the starting point for Mayo's use of applied texture.

depicted native flora and fauna, as did her equally successful designs for the later 'Mammal' stamp issue (1960).

Her last two Australian prints *Scherzo I* (1962), (Cat. no. 65) and *Scherzo II* (1962), (Cat. no. 66; Vol. II, p. 111) are less noteworthy. Although very popular<sup>248</sup> these two editions of prints were little more than exercises which the artist had set for her students at the East Sydney Technical College. Realising that sticking down metres of string on to heavy card to print over two linoleum blocks required more patience than she imagined her students possessed, she continued it for herself. *Scherzo II* is the second edition of *Scherzo I*, the only difference being that a third colour was not printed.

Mayo was not satisfied with her Australian prints, referring to them in her diary as being "almost totally uncreative."<sup>249</sup> And yet, she made an important contribution to the development of printmaking in that country both through her experience as a printmaker as well as in the field of design and technique. Australian printmakers had always been interested in a sound technical base. Migrant painter-printmakers such as teachers Udo Sellbach and Karen Schepers helped set up the printmaking department of the South Australian School of Art in Adelaide in 1956. Irishman Tate Adams arrived in Melbourne in 1955 and became head of printmaking at the Royal Institute of Technology, and in Sydney Lithuanians Henry Salkauskas, Vaclovas Rata and Eva Kubbos stimulated perceptible changes. Kubbos formed the core of a society "Sydney Printmakers" to which Mayo also belonged. Complementary to Mayo's technical skills was the print culture in Australia in the late 1950s and 1960s. Her Australian sojourn

---

<sup>248</sup> The first edition of *Scherzo I* was sold almost completely to the Southern Cross (now the Hilton) Hotel, Melbourne. Sasha Grishin in *Contemporary Australian Printmaking : an Interpretative History* refers to how the 1960s were a time of elegant interiors with modern furniture and original prints on the walls – "the favoured style of the highly publicized fashionable suits of the new hotels were cropping up throughout Australia. In a bold move, Janet Dawson, on her return to Australia in 1961 after studying in London and working in Paris, promoted the idea of using Australian original prints to decorate a major new hotel in Melbourne. With Shirley Venn, she convinced the designers of the Southern Cross Hotel not to decorate their rooms as they had intended ... but to use contemporary Australian prints." p. 17.

<sup>249</sup> EMD 10 April 1962.

(1952 - 1962) coincided with a revival of interest in printmaking there. During the 1950s some young Australian-born artists who had studied printmaking overseas began to return home to produce prints.<sup>250</sup> Art curators began to look seriously at their work and the more forward-looking among them bought their prints for their collections. Exhibitions of Australian prints aroused an interest in them among the general public. This was aided by, or went hand in hand with, the current fashion which had spread from overseas, for decorating walls with original prints.<sup>251</sup> All these factors contributed obliquely to the successful reception of Mayo's prints.

Also contributing to the favourable reception of her prints was her expatriate position in that country. As already mentioned, the taste for British art had dominated public art collections in Australia since 1864. In a milieu which had been largely receptive of British art for almost ninety years Mayo's images attracted the immediate attention and appreciation of the Australian art hierarchy and public alike. Later she felt that what had worked against her development as a printmaker in Australia was that she had lived in Sydney, rather than in Melbourne or Adelaide. Sydney had been slow to respond to the excitement generated by the potential of printmaking mediums or to the idea of a creative collective of printmakers in the way that Melbourne and Adelaide did.<sup>252</sup> In Melbourne Dr. Ursula Hoff's policy with regard to the acquisition of prints for the National Gallery of Victoria had been forward looking in comparison with other Australian galleries, the Art Gallery of New South Wales in particular. As well as building up a collection of contemporary international prints she had also collected the work of young Australian artists from the 1940s onwards. Mayo realised the superior position Melbourne held in the world of Australian printmaking when she travelled there from New Zealand in August 1967 on a QEII Arts Council fellowship. She was taken by Hoff to the Crossley Gallery where Tate Adams showed her not only the

---

<sup>250</sup> Sasha Grishin, *Contemporary Australian Printmaking*, p. 28.

<sup>251</sup> *ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>252</sup> *ibid.*, p. 110.

most avant-garde collection of contemporary Australian works but also a collection of contemporary Japanese prints. "They are beyond belief, perfect in every way, with a technique which is superhuman. ... If only I had had less [time] at Sydney ... The richness there [in Melbourne] is terrific."<sup>253</sup>

It is difficult to compare Mayo with any of her Australian contemporaries. Margaret Preston, (1875 - 1963) one of the benchmarks of Australian printmaking, belonged to the older generation of women printmakers in that country which included Thea Proctor, Vera Blackburn, Adelaide Perry, Dorrit Black, Eveline Syme and Ethel Spowers. Apart from the migrant painter-printmakers, Mayo had few contemporaries. Of the younger generation of printmakers, most were either lithographers or etchers whose work was abstract and/or expressionistic. Mayo came from an earlier and different tradition, the English craft tradition with its insistence on excellence of design and precision of technique. Hers was a scientific approach to printmaking based on meticulous designing and basic construction. While her Australian prints may lack the exuberance, spontaneity and expressiveness of her contemporaries, what set her apart and distinguished her as a prize-winner in the field of Australian printmaking in the 1950s and early 1960s was the combination of her experience and prowess as a designer and her outstanding technical skills.

## **NEW ZEALAND**

Mayo's printmaking career was marked by a series of self-imposed major disruptions. A second uprooting came in 1962, this time to Waimate, New Zealand, ostensibly to look after her mother who was by then 82 years of age. Margery Ball, Mayo's sister, maintained that Violet Mayo was a healthy, independent eighty-two year old who was more than capable of caring for herself.<sup>254</sup> The artist's diaries reveal, however, that during the ten years she had lived in Australia there had been a cooling-off in her

---

<sup>253</sup> EMD 25 August 1967.

<sup>254</sup> Author in conversation with Margery Ball, 10 November 1995.



friendship with Carol Foote. Her diaries make reference to Foote's repeated criticisms of Mayo's alleged self-centredness, selfishness and conservatism. She resorted to her usual behaviour when confronted with criticism: she retreated and with characteristic ruthlessness cut her ties with Australia.

From London to Sydney to the small country town of Waimate – each shift represented a down-grading for her, as it were, in the art world. Her original approach to design, pattern and colour in her British prints had established her early in her career as an artist of note; Australia recognised her international reputation and the prestigious prizes and awards she won there were an acknowledgment of this. But with the move to New Zealand she lost almost all the ground she had established as a printmaker.

One of the major problems facing Mayo's development as a printmaker and barring the recognition of her expertise was that, historically, printmaking was still a young discipline in New Zealand and, in comparison with painting, an unimportant one. Also working against her success was the fact that her subject matter was nature based, whereas the general move in the 1960s was towards abstraction. Consequently, her work was viewed at the time as very English and old fashioned. But Mayo never saw herself as anything other than a British artist and had no intention of changing her subject and style to concur with current trends in New Zealand art. Trained at the Slade School of Art and the Central School of Arts and Crafts she learned to work in a precise way in both institutions. As a result of her training she was extremely fastidious and obsessed with learning the technical skills of a craft. From the beginning of her career her concern was with the craft of each medium she undertook. She never shouldered the stylistic mantles of the modernists and her subject always related to her own personal experience. Consequently, the art establishment (particularly in Wellington and Auckland) would have regarded Mayo's imagery, with its emphasis on natural history subjects, as being of no consequence to the development of art in this in the 1960s. Compounding the problems she faced in establishing her credentials on the New Zealand

art scene was that there were no well-informed, professional art critics in this country – the population and the artistic base was too small to support them. Lacking any real understanding of the concepts of art history, critics appear to have dismissed her work as being of no consequence to the development of New Zealand art.<sup>255</sup> No New Zealand critic could, or ever did, however, criticise her technical assurance or her English insistence on good craftsmanship.

Disheartened by the lack of response on the part of the leading galleries and critics in this country, she wrote in her diary "I am not even an 'also ran' in exhibition criticisms."<sup>256</sup> But despite the lack of institutional acknowledgment, her commitment to printmaking never wavered and between 1964 and 1985 she produced forty-five editions of prints, of which *Mantis* (1968), (Cat. no. 72; Vol. II, p. 106) and *Mantis in the Sun* (1968), (Cat. no. 73; Vol. II, p. 107) were exhibited by invitation in the 1968 International Biennale of Prints at Tokyo and shown at the Royal Academy Summer exhibition, London in 1969.

After the crowds and heat of Sydney, Mayo had been initially attracted by the idea of living in the country. However, Waimate did not allow her the access to the large libraries, art galleries or museums that were essential for the commissions she was still obliged to undertake in order to survive financially and, after the unexpected death of her sister Margery's husband in 1964, she moved to Christchurch with her. After setting up a makeshift studio for herself in her new home, she resumed her printmaking career but, as always, on a part-time basis. Most of her time was spent on commissions and between 1965 and 1970 she taught design part-time at the School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury. Her appointment to that position came about through

---

<sup>255</sup> Her diary entry 19 November 1970 implies that she was critical of much New Zealand art: "The Group Show [Christchurch] depressed me: 'Of the making of pictures there is no end'. Why should I contribute to this plethora? It costs me my life's blood ... and I am not going in the prevailing direction anyway. I must be content to potter in my own little backwater and not take it too seriously."

<sup>256</sup> EMD 17 March 1972.

Professor John Simpson, Head of the School of Fine Arts, (1958-1990) whom she approached on arriving in Christchurch in 1964. English himself, he was well aware of her international reputation as a printmaker, painter and designer and in 1965 offered her part-time work. In 1967 she was appointed as locum tenens and between 1968 and 1970 she taught evening classes at the school.

Although there is no direct evidence that Mayo's years of teaching at Ilam had any influence on her development as a printmaker, working with Doris Lusk, Bill Sutton and Rudolf Gopas had other advantages for her. She quickly earned their respect as an artist and in 1966 she was invited to become a member of the progressive association of artists, The Group (1927-1977).<sup>257</sup> This gave her a venue for exhibiting her prints as well as providing an opportunity for her to build up a close coterie of artist friends who supported and respected her work.

Previously in her battle to survive financially, Mayo had worked at whatever commission presented itself, although her preferred medium was always printmaking. All this changed between 1968 and 1971 when Robert Muldoon, Finance Minister from 1967 to 1972, increased the benefit paid to superannuitants from \$611.00 to \$832.00 per annum.<sup>258</sup> Frugal by nature and up-bringing, this increase,<sup>259</sup> along with her savings, gave Mayo sufficient income to live on, enabling her to dispense with the numerous commercial commitments that had monopolised her professional career. In 1969, aged 63, her economic security established, she bought a printing press and began to fulfil her long-postponed ambition to make prints full-time. Although she continued to design stamps, she reduced her teaching at the School of Fine Arts to one evening each week.

---

<sup>257</sup> For further information on The Group, see Julie Catchpole, *The Group*, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Canterbury, 1984.

<sup>258</sup> Social Security in New Zealand Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry, *Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives*, H.53, 1972, pp. 507-508.

<sup>259</sup> At that time women were eligible to receive a pension at 60.

Mayo's approach to printmaking was really an expression of her personality; she was never content with simple answers to anything in life and regarded printmaking as an intellectual challenge. It was also to do with her age; as an older and experienced artist the quality and integrity of her work was very important to her. In this respect she wrote in her diary that "I have reached the stage where BEST POSSIBLE work is far more important than what I can get for it – the one is so much longer lasting than the other."<sup>260</sup> A perfectionist, Mayo could not and would not settle for the incomplete or superficial. Ignored in the main by the art establishment, she worked for her own satisfaction and development as a printmaker. Her stimulation came, not from having her work acknowledged by the critics (which was infrequent) but by constantly challenging her artistic ability by making each print as difficult as she possibly could. If she solved a problem to her satisfaction (which was rare)<sup>261</sup> it boosted her morale; if she deemed a finished print a failure (which was more usual), then it confirmed the worst doubts she had always felt about her lack of any artistic worth. In this regard the following is typical of comments which pepper the pages of her New Zealand diaries: "[I] have had to fight my very minor talent all my life. But at least I've fought!" But, however troubled an experience it may seem, this artistic self-flagellation produced some remarkable technical feats. In fact, her lack of status on the New Zealand art scene, gave her the freedom to develop as she wished – to be an experimental printmaker.

Most of Mayo's New Zealand prints are reliefs, consisting of at least six blocks. Such a large number of blocks provided her with the opportunity to build up layers of colour and texture by overprinting. *Moths on the Window* (1969), (Cat. no. 74; Vol. II, p. 119) printed from ten blocks, is but one of many examples of her experimental approach to printmaking. Working over a period of almost nine months, she

---

<sup>260</sup> EMD 24 May 1969.

<sup>261</sup> Mayo was too much of a perfectionist to ever acknowledge her work as satisfactory. Her diaries are full of despondent passages about her failures.

experimented with a wide variety of materials to create the veined delicacy of the wings, the hairiness of the antennae and the texture of the broken background surface. At first she experimented with crumpled cellophane Maggi soup packets stuck down on to cardboard to create the wings of the moths, but the resultant pattern was too strong. By replacing the soup packets with lace and leaves, she achieved the decorative effect she was looking for. The antennae of the central moth were printed from bracken fronds. The final dark blue block of the background was treated with caustic solution to take off the hard surface and then printed in watercolour instead of printing ink. To stop the watercolour running, she added cooked arrowroot and two to three capfuls of castor oil and detergent. When this failed to do its job, she added Dylon dyes, writing ink, poster colour, designer's colour and monstral blue powder pigment. She described the mixture as "a real witch's brew."<sup>262</sup> Nor did Mayo rely entirely on the press to print the blocks. Instead, she printed the textured wings over silver ink by hand in order to achieve the degree of delicacy she wanted. The colour used in the background was diluted and applied with a sponge to the legs, head and leaf veins.

Between 1969 and 1978 Mayo used a multifarious range of materials to create texture: Maggi cellophane soup packets, milk bottle tops, toothpaste and lanoline tubes in *Mantis*; mezzotint tools (roulettes) in *Gently Floating Forms* (1970), (Cat. no. 75; Vol. II, p. 109); PVA glue, talcum powder and tobacco seeds in *Sunflower* (1971), (Cat. no. 77; Vol. II, p. 122); dissolved plastic in *Hot Afternoon* (1978), (Cat. no. 88; Vol. II, p. 133). Her printing methods were as unorthodox and inventive as the materials she used to create texture. In *Homage to Pierre Finch Martineau Burrows 1842-1920* (1977), (Cat. no. 85; Vol. II, p. 130) for example, she experimented with washes of colour over printed areas to add richness to the bricks of the building. She then proceeded to apply a wash of water to the background and followed this by dabbing with a paper towel – dab-printing to suit her taste. The sky and pavement were also

---

<sup>262</sup> EMD 17 July 1968.

washed over, with colour graded out into the sky and stronger in the foreground. Finally, she 'warmed up' the building and pavement with washes of turpentine.

Predictably, when she began to experiment with screen-printing in 1964 she was not satisfied with using the traditional techniques of stencilling or gumming.<sup>263</sup> *Late Harvest* (1966), (Cat. no. 69; Vol. II, p. 114) one of her most successful screenprints, is a good example of her innovative approach to creating texture in this medium. Her aim in this work was to "go for beauty of colour, texture and tonal values and to keep the big shapes simple."<sup>264</sup> She realised, however, that without careful texturing the larger shapes of the autumn vegetables would dominate. To avoid this she smeared gum on the back of masonite and then dropped the silk of the screen on to it and dabbed it with her finger. To achieve the finer, more controlled texture, she used the broken end of a paint brush. Although this seems straightforward enough, it took Mayo three months of constant experimentation before she finally achieved the result she was after. In *Future Harvest* (1980), (Cat. no. 91; Vol. II, p. 136) which is more or less a similar theme to *Late Harvest*, she experimented with a new technique of scratching out part of the ink on the print while it was still wet.

Although the bulk of Mayo's New Zealand prints were based on natural themes, she was well aware of the trend towards abstraction which dominated New Zealand art in the 1960s and, as early as 1966, tried to launch into it. That year she visited an exhibition of Louise Henderson's paintings at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery<sup>265</sup> and was particularly impressed by the sense of space and movement in the works. She described the paintings in her diary as "All entirely abstract. This is my next step I

---

<sup>263</sup> Mayo became interested in silk-screen printing while living in Sydney and enrolled in a course of evening classes in the technique at the Sydney Technical Institute. EMD 9 March 1962.

<sup>264</sup> EMD 2 August 1966.

<sup>265</sup> For further information on Louise Henderson's pioneering career as an abstractionist see Christina Barton, *Louise Henderson, 1902 –*, Auckland, N.Z., : Auckland City Art Gallery, 1991.

think, to explore the space and movement of shapes and colours."<sup>266</sup> She also commented that in order to make abstract works one had to be spontaneous and "you have to have confidence for that."<sup>267</sup> Given the lack of interest the art establishment had shown Mayo, she was anything but confident. Always aware of the danger, however, of working to a formula and not exploring further, she began a foray into abstractionism two years later dallying with it in *The Travellers* (1968), (Cat. no. 71; Vol. II, p. 116). This work was based on planktonic forms with a suggestion of three-dimensionality brought about by using shapes cut out of cardboard and stuck down on to a linoleum base. When printed, the raised 'figures' were thrown into relief by the white line that surrounded them.<sup>268</sup> Unfortunately, the addition of sky and mountains made the work look more surreal than abstract.

An exhibition of Marilyn Webb's lino-engravings at the specialist print gallery "Graphics,"<sup>269</sup> in Christchurch in 1970 was particularly significant to Mayo's development at that time. Commenting on Webb's work in her diary she wrote, "... most exciting was the experiment with engraved vinyl, which gave some lovely effects. [It] helped me with my own embossing ideas – really achieving what I had decided to do with *Antarctic Base*."<sup>270</sup> It would appear that the technique of embossing was the lever that Mayo needed to catapult herself towards abstractionism. This step had been foreshadowed, however, by the abstract nature of her stamp design issued by the New

---

<sup>266</sup> EMD 30 April 1966.

<sup>267</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>268</sup> In relief printing an ink-covered roller is moved over the raised surfaces to be printed. Because some forms in *The Travellers* were in higher relief than others, the areas immediately surrounding them did not receive pressure during printing. The result was that an area of white paper appeared as a kind of 'halo' around the forms.

<sup>269</sup> "Graphics" was small specialist print gallery set up by Barry Cleavin in the front room of his house at 152 England Street, Linwood, Christchurch in 1970. The only other venues for exhibiting prints were the Woodware Gallery in Victoria Street and Several Arts at 809 Colombo Street. The Woodware Gallery was more of a craft shop selling hand-knitted garments, woodware and pottery. Younger artists such as Vivian Lynn and Susan Chaytor exhibited there, and Mayo's prints were sold there before the advent of the print gallery at Several Arts, a small craft-shop/gallery, set up by Ngaire Hewson, under Mayo's guidance and direction.

<sup>270</sup> EMD 26 November 1971.

Zealand Post Office in 1971 to commemorate the Antarctic Treaty 10th Anniversary.<sup>271</sup>

Mayo's first abstract prints were produced while she was living in Dunedin between 1972 and 1975: *Lunaria* (1972), (Cat. no. 78; Vol. II, p. 123) *Antarctic Base* (1972), (Cat. no. 79; Vol. II, p. 124) and *The Beginning and the End* (1973), (Cat. no. 80; Vol. II, p. 125). She had moved to Dunedin at the invitation of John Darby, the Assistant Director of the Otago Museum, to construct an underwater diorama, *Five Fathoms Deep*, for the new Marine Hall.<sup>272</sup> The prints Mayo produced during the first half of her sojourn in Dunedin mark a high-point of her printmaking career, a point to which she never returned with the exception of *Le Milieu Divin* (1979), (Cat. no. 89; Vol. II, p. 134). *Lunaria*, *Antarctic Base* and *The Beginning and the End* are abstract works with a limited palette and continue the more austere and rigorous style she was beginning to develop in *Gently Floating Forms* (1970), (Cat. no. 75; Vol. II, p. 120) and *Genesis* (1971), (Cat. no. 76; Vol. II, p. 121).<sup>273</sup>

The abstract style exhibited in Mayo's early Dunedin prints may also be regarded as a tangible manifestation of her psychological state between 1972 and 1973. The more confident and positive attitude which her move towards abstractionism implies was a direct outcome of being invited, in late middle-life, to design the diorama for the museum. Her 1972 and 1973 diary entries make constant reference to the challenges and stimulation provided by her creative work at the museum and her appreciation of her supportive and congenial colleagues. This was just the antidote she needed to restore her belief in her artistic worth which had been so seriously undermined by the apathetic attitude of the New Zealand art establishment outside Christchurch

---

<sup>271</sup> See Chapter Six for discussion of this stamp design.

<sup>272</sup> See (Cat. no. 186; Vol. II, p. 214).

<sup>273</sup> These two editions of prints were produced while Mayo was developing the designs for the Antarctic Treaty stamp issue and, consequently, bear the stamp of abstractionism.



towards her. Consequently, *Lunaria*, *Antarctic Base* and *The Beginning and the End* show a confident and ambitious Mayo at home with her new abstract style, moving away from her former dependence on colour and using embossing to create simple, vigorous and balanced designs. These works have a force and a freshness lacking in her earlier, more narrative and colourful New Zealand prints. Although some may argue that these prints do not match the charm of her earlier (or late) work, they nevertheless break new stylistic ground for the artist in that they signal a shift away from a stylised naturalism towards abstraction.

Another significant development in Mayo's printmaking career in New Zealand was the inclusion of lettering in her prints. It first appeared in *The Beginning and the End*, a tightly structured and prophetic work which looked forward to her most sophisticated print, *Le Milieu Divin*. She used lettering less successfully in *Pigeon in Winter* (1974), (Cat. no. 82; Vol. II, p. 127) shaping the letters of the Maori name for the bird (Kereru) and the area of Dunedin (Wakari) where she lived, into the shapes of hills. But there was no real integration of the lettering with the overall design of the print and the result was posterish. Similarly, in *Young Sunflower* (1979), (Cat. no. 90; Vol. II, p. 135) the lettering (*Helianthus annuus*) at the base of the sunflower appear as a caption rather than as an integral part of the design. *Summer's End* (1978), (Cat. no. 86; Vol. II, p. 131) although a year earlier than *Young Sunflower*, is more successful from a design perspective. In this print Mayo took an excerpt from a poem, *Ah! Sun-flower* from William Blake's *Songs of Experience*,<sup>274</sup> and used the text to comment on the meaning of the image of the sunflower. The successful integration of text and image in this work was due in some part to a jig-saw technique she developed at this time – in this particular print it consisted of twenty-five movable pieces. These were moved around by the artist and various combinations of text and image experimented with until she eventually came up with a satisfactory design.

---

<sup>274</sup> "Ah, Sun-flower, weary of time, who countest the steps of the sun, seeking after that sweet golden clime where the travellers' journey is done."

Significant to Mayo's thinking was Teilhard de Chardin's *Le Milieu Divin : An Essay on the Interior Life*.<sup>275</sup> The writings of this Jesuit scientist-priest provided the vital stimulus for her print, *Le Milieu Divin*. In this, her most austere work, she endeavoured to create a visual equivalent of Chardin's 'divine environment.' It is by far the most successful of her textual prints. In it the text has become the subject of the print rather than merely the title as was the case in *Wood Pigeon* and *Young Sunflower*. Again, she used the jig-saw technique to provide a certain degree of flexibility in establishing the relationship of the letters to each other, using them to actively shape the composition. The decorative element provided by the wavy, watery circle at the centre of the print is neither fussy nor meagre; it is essential to creating a complementary environment to the metaphysical milieu implied by the text.

The format and composition of *Le Milieu Divin* recalls David Jones's painted inscriptions from 1945 to 1958, in particular *Ex Devina Pvlchritvdine* [sic] 1956, (Fig. 7). This print is a prime example of Mayo's ability to take up an idea from another artist and to ultimately personalise it. It is logical to assume that, as an admirer of Jones's work, she saw some of his early painted inscriptions at first hand while she was living in London. She could not have seen *Ex Devina Pvlchritvdine*, however, as she left England for Sydney in 1952 and never returned. So how can we account for the remarkable similarities between Mayo's *Le Milieu Divin* and Jones's *Ex Devina Pvlchritvdine*? Mayo was a solitary artist – she rarely belonged to a group or to a society of artists.<sup>276</sup> She was, however, always an interested surveyor of art, regularly visiting and critiquing exhibitions, noting areas of interest or striking colour sequences and often sketching small areas of an exhibited work in the margin of her catalogue.<sup>277</sup> These visual and written observations picked up from various shows she visited were

---

<sup>275</sup> Teilhard de Chardin, *Le Milieu Divin : an Essay on the Interior Life*, London : Collins, 1965.

<sup>276</sup> The exceptions were the Society of Sydney Printmakers (1960 - 62) the New Zealand Print Council and *The Group* (1966 - 68).

<sup>277</sup> See ATL, B - 131, Solander Box D.

filed by her for future reference. Her critical eye was particularly attuned to picking up ideas which she could turn to good account at a later date. In fact, if the extent and number of the files of cuttings, articles and colour swatches, which she built up over her lifetime and which are now housed in her archive at the Alexander Turnbull Library are anything to go by, her whole career may be regarded as a constant gathering and replenishing of her visual vocabulary. Perhaps the similarity of format in *Le Milieu Divin* and *Ex Devina Pylchritvdine* was simply a coincidence, evolving out of drawings and jottings Mayo may have done and filed of Jones's earlier inscriptions. But I do not think that this was the case. The most likely source was her ex-husband, with whom she kept in contact by mail. In touch with the London art scene through his involvement with *Art News and Review* from 1949 until 1960, Gainsborough may have sent her a catalogue of one of Jones's exhibitions which included a reproduction of the inscription.<sup>278</sup>

Unfortunately, the stylistically severe *Le Milieu Divin* is the only example of the new direction Mayo embarked on in 1978. She planned a suite of prints based on quotations from the Old and New Testaments but by this stage of her life the arthritis in her hands was becoming increasingly severe. The fine precision required in cutting lino became too painful for her to continue with; the sheer physicality of the relief printing process exhausted her and she returned to screenprinting.

While the text from Genesis 8:22<sup>279</sup> in the screenprint *Sun and Earth* (1981), (Cat. no. 95; Vol. II, p. 140) provides a tenuous link with *Le Milieu Divin*, Mayo's predilection for telling a story dominates; she has resumed the illustrational approach adopted in *Summer's End* – that of using images to illustrate a text. The same is true of

---

<sup>278</sup> Gainsborough died in September 1969. If he did send Mayo a catalogue there must have been an exhibition of Jones's work in London between 1956, when the work was made, and 1969 the year of Gainsborough's death. There are no catalogues at the National Art Library, London, however, to confirm this.

<sup>279</sup> “While the earth remaineth seedtime and harvest cold and heat and summer and winter and night and day shall not cease.”

*The Tree* (1981), (Cat. no. 94; Vol. II, p. 139) which, like *Summer's End*, also illustrates a passage from Blake.<sup>280</sup> But what saves these two prints from sliding into mere illustration is Mayo's expertise in pulling the composition of each together through her outstanding ability to use colour and texture to unify. *Sun and Earth* is printed from nine screens – an extraordinary number by any printmaker's standards. The effect of the stippled earth between the roots of the tree, the texture of the mock wood and the patterns of crumpled tissue paper and PVA glue, anchor the eye to the tree. Aware of the possibility of a split in the design, Mayo carried the dark-brown up into the background and down into the roots to marry text with image. This also created an interesting shape. By overprinting brown on wet orange ink, she created a centre of textural interest, thus minimalising the dichotomy between text and image. The sticky orange ink lifted from the surface of the paper by the dark-brown screen created a transparent effect thereby all but eliminating the psychological and visual gap between tree and quotation.

Mayo dealt with the problem of unifying the text and image of *The Tree* quite differently. By dividing the text into four sections and placing it to either side of the branches in the upper corners of the design, as well as to either side of the trunk, she related the image and quotation more to each other than in *Sun and Earth*. Although she used colour as a unifying factor in this edition of prints, it was more as a problem-solving device than an integral part of the design. She used it less arbitrarily in the later work, where, instead of printing the text in a single colour – black for example, in *Sun and Earth* – she used analogous colours. The orange-pink text at the top echoes not only the colour of the sun, but also its reflection on the tree's bare branches; the quotation to either side of the trunk is green – light-green when printed as negative and dark green against a light background when the letters are positive. While this imparts a rather odd stripey look to the lower section of the print, at the same time it forces the

---

<sup>280</sup> “The tree that moves some to tears of joy is in the eyes of others only a green thing that stands in the way.”

text to assume a new role not present in *Sun and Earth* – it becomes a kind of contrapuntal element within the composition which lends a force and a structure to the work.

It is interesting that while Mayo had a disciplined and perfectionist approach to printmaking, she never subjected her work to lingering revisions. Her method was to severely critique a finished print and then move on to designing a new work. In each she moved towards a final solution which, once resolved, was discarded by her. A process of refinement, a paring back of ideas, however, always accompanied her final resolution. Aesthetically and technically each print paved the way through the application of the principles of simplification towards a more resolved work. In the earlier text and image prints, for example *Summer's End*, the lettering is used expressionistically to echo the calligraphic movement of the sunflower head and leaves. This decorative interweaving of the words with the head of the sunflower is discarded in *Sun and Earth* in favour of a simplified design in which image and text are given equal emphasis within the design. The design of *The Tree* is more sparse, more linear than *Sun and Earth*, with the forms of its skeleton echoed in the strips of text to either side of the trunk. In colour and relative simplicity *The Tree* signposts a development within this group of prints from illustration to a more unified composition of text and image

In contrast with the evocative text and image prints, *Alphabets* (1982), (Cat. no. 99; Vol. II, p. 144) and *Alphabets Two* (1982), (Cat. no. 100; Vol. II, p. 145) focus on the abstract. Having successfully solved the problem of achieving unity between text and image in her earlier word prints, she dispensed altogether with a text and took up the challenge of creating a composition out of an assortment of English and Greek letters. Colour superseded all other considerations in these prints. Mayo was always excited by colour, particularly pink and purple, and in *Alphabets* we see the juxtaposing of these favourites with other colours to create a pleasing tonal relationship. Although her diary entry for 27 January 1982 says that the main purpose of this print was that

"[I] have wanted to do an 'abstract' in order to use fuschia colours," *Alphabets* was, in fact, a new departure for her. While up to this point she had used colour mainly as a compositional and decorative device, it should be emphasised that what emerges in *Alphabets* and *Alphabets Two* is Mayo the imposer of order on colour. The handicap (if indeed it was a handicap) presented by the total absence of imagery at this late stage of her printmaking career<sup>281</sup> forced her to rethink her previous use of colour.

Mayo had first seen blocks of colour overprinted with letters in Ben Shahn's *Love and Joy about Letters*<sup>282</sup> which she had come across in the Canterbury Public Library, Christchurch, in 1969.<sup>283</sup> As the book was out of print by this date, she had slides made of the various illustrations to provide her with "... some inspiration in a small compass."<sup>284</sup> These slides of Shahn's strongly influenced *Alphabets* and *Alphabets Two*. This is evident, first of all, in her choice of colours which were, for her, unusually full strength. The format is also closely aligned with that of a poster Shahn designed for Jerome Robbins' "Ballets U.S.A." - U.S.I.S. Gallery, 41 Grosvenor Square, London from 15 September to 23 October 1959", in which he placed the letters over rectangles of colour (Fig. 8). In *Alphabets* we see yet again an example of Mayo's ability to use the idea of another artist to meet her own artistic vision. In her print 'fuschia colours' dominate, the bright pink enhanced by the use here and there of a strong, clear red influenced by Shahn's poster. By surrounding these intensely coloured accents with cooler colours, mauve, blues and greens, which were her personal preference, the work takes on a luminosity reminiscent of stained glass, an effect Mayo strove for, but did not achieve to the same extent, in *The Beginning and the End*. She captured the same glowing effect in *Alphabets Two*, where the pink of *Alphabets* has been replaced by

---

<sup>281</sup> Mayo made her last print *White Cat and Poppies* (Cat. no. 105; Vol. II, p. 150) in 1985.

<sup>282</sup> Ben Shahn, *Love and Joy about Letters*, London : Cory, Adams and MacKay, 1964, p. 60.

<sup>283</sup> Mayo would have known of Shahn's work and reputation while she was living in London. In the 1930s and 1940s his was a well-known and respected name in the art world.

<sup>284</sup> EMD 15 March 1969.

orange. There is also less white mixed in with the blue in the later work and this, combined with the clearer green and bright orange, gives an even greater brilliance to this second work.

Clearly discernible in many of Mayo's New Zealand prints is her interest in conservation. Long before ecology became a matter of international concern, she was aware of the potential problems in this field. The extensive research she did for her nature books, engendered in her not only a deep respect for nature but also an understanding of the interdependence of all living things. As early as 1944, in the conclusion to *The Story of Living Things*, she voiced her concerns regarding humankind's potential to vandalise the planet: " Man's hand has given him power over living things. It may be used to destroy or protect them."<sup>285</sup>

As a conservationist and animal lover Mayo had been upset by the stranding of 72 sperm whales on Murawai Beach, near Auckland in 1974, and the seeming neglect of their carcasses which lay there decomposing for a number of months. She had read John Caselberg's *The Whale's Song* and saw Ian Macdonald's accompanying photographs of the dead whales in *Art New Zealand*.<sup>286</sup> Of great concern to her also was the killing of large numbers of whales by the Japanese in the late 1970s. The controversy this raised sparked public outcries and protests led by Greenpeace. To register her protest Mayo designed *Humpback and Bottlenose* (1980), (Cat. no. 93; Vol. II, p. 138) and donated the proceeds from the sale of these prints to the Save the Whales campaign. The subject was a demanding one in that it required Mayo to show not only the movement of the whales, but also their displacement of the water. To suggest the transparency of water<sup>287</sup> she printed textured curves of blues and green over the two whales. By having

---

<sup>285</sup> p. 271.

<sup>286</sup> August/September/October 1977, pp. 30 - 37.

<sup>287</sup> In *Black Swans* (1983), (Cat. no. 103; Vol. II, p. 148) Mayo improved the degree of transparency by grading three shades of green and texturing each to suggest the movement of water.

the overprinted bands emanating from the upper right-hand and lower left corners of the composition, a directional flow of the water as well of the movement of the animals through it, was successfully suggested.

*Springing Fern* (1983), (Cat. no. 102; Vol. II, p. 147) is another expression of Mayo's conservationist concerns. Ten years earlier, she witnessed (and photographed) large areas of bushland on the Otago Peninsula being cleared for housing sites and was appalled by the apparent lack of concern at what she considered to be indiscriminate felling and burning-off of the land. *Springing Fern* was based on these earlier photographs. Her intention in this print was to stress the interdependence of plantlife, birds and insects. This echoes the concerns for the environment which she had expressed as early as 1944 in *The Story of Living Things*.<sup>288</sup>

The conservation of local landmarks was also of ongoing concern to Mayo. When, for example, an area of City Rise in Dunedin was taken over by property developers in 1972 and traditional small Victorian cottages with their distinctive cast-iron decoration were to be demolished in order to make way for up-market, contemporary town-houses, she designed *Town Belt* (1973), (Cat. no. 81; Vol. II, p. 126) to preserve their memory. In 1974 a clean-air law was introduced by the Christchurch City Council in an attempt to ban all open fires in the region. Each winter the burning of coal for domestic heating purposes resulted in a blanket of smog which settled over the city, becoming a major health problem for people with respiratory disorders. A by-product of the clean-air law was that the city's coalyards became redundant. Mayo had hated the London winters and her memory of London 'smog' predisposed her to give whole-hearted support to the Christchurch City Council's new law. When the coalyard in her immediate neighbourhood of Beckenham was to be razed she made *Rain, Coal and Wood* (1975), (Cat. no. 84; Vol. II, p. 129) as a visual record of this local landmark. *Homage to Pierre Finch Martineau Burrows 1842-1920*<sup>289</sup> (the Christchurch

---

<sup>288</sup> See p. 306.

<sup>289</sup> Burrows was the Government architect responsible for the design of this Post Office.



Post Office) is a further example of Mayo's wish to preserve the memory of Christchurch's heritage. When it was threatened with demolition in 1976 she decided to make a print of it.

In making prints to preserve the memory of various threatened buildings Mayo could be seen to be following a well established trend in New Zealand art. In 1966, for example, Rita Angus's had painted *Before Demolition* in protest at the imminent demise of houses in her immediate neighbourhood of Thorndon to make way for the construction of the new southern motorway.<sup>290</sup> As early as the nineteen-forties, Doris Lusk had painted façades of buildings, two of the most memorable being *State Hydro, Tuai*, 1948 and *The Pumping Station, Tuam Street*, 1958. Her intention was, however, quite different from that of Angus and Mayo. Lusk was not interested in painting buildings for the sake of conservation or protest; her buildings were an exploration of the relationship of objects to the landscape – man-made structures within the landscape was one of her enduring themes.<sup>291</sup> That she was more interested in ensuring that such structures merged with the landscape is evident in the *The Pumping Station* in the way in which she altered the proportions of the building to resemble a square in order that it synthesise with the block-like structure of the hills she painted behind it.<sup>292</sup> She decreased the gap between the windows to fit in with the altered proportions and sharpened the triangular shape of the roofs in order to ensure that the building and the landscape integrated and merged.<sup>293</sup> Mayo, in comparison, reproduced from photographs, as accurately as possible, a condemned building which she admired and recognised for its picture-making potential.

---

<sup>290</sup> Letter, John Money to Anne Kirker, 24 July 1981, NAG files. Cited in *Rita Angus*, National Art Gallery, New Zealand, 1983, p. 121.

<sup>291</sup> Lisa Beavan, *Doris Lusk: Attitudes to the Land 1934 - 84*. Unpublished thesis, University of Canterbury, p.163.

<sup>292</sup> In reality the building's height is two-thirds of its width. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*

Mayo's prints, which typify her interest in conserving plants and animals as well as the built heritage, have two noteworthy aspects which of necessity impinge on each other: they deal with issues; and they demonstrate her integration with her New Zealand environment. Before coming to New Zealand Mayo's work was, if anything, apolitical. Consummate designer that she was, her main concern had always been, regardless of the media she was working with, "to fill a space as fittingly as possible,"<sup>294</sup> rather than to address issues. In Britain she had followed trends to a certain extent: the British linocut movement with its interest in the metropolis in the late 1920s and early 1930s and Neo-Romanticism in the 1940s; most of her Australian prints (with the exception of *Pumpkin*) were, to a degree, a rehash of some of her earlier British work. But in the prints she designed in New Zealand between 1972 and 1983 her concern with environmental issues is clear.<sup>295</sup>

The 1960s, 1970s and 1980s were decades of protest in New Zealand: the Antarctic Treaty was signed in 1961; the New Zealand Green Party emerged under the auspices of the Values Party in 1972; Greenpeace New Zealand was launched in 1974; the *Rainbow Warrior* was bombed in 1986; the Department of Conservation was created on 1 April 1987. New Zealanders in general were gradually becoming aware of the fragility of the eco-system and supported steps taken to preserve it. Fishing quotas were introduced; seal hunting and whaling by the Japanese was monitored; and publications, radio and television programmes on the environment proliferated. Mayo was particularly receptive to all of this; it fitted her own philosophy which since her early childhood had been based on a reverence and respect for nature. Accordingly, instead of looking back to her past for inspiration as she had done in Australia, she looked for it in the New Zealand environment: threatened areas of bush, endangered species of whales, the vulnerability of trees in a landscape threatened by greedy

---

<sup>294</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Barbara R. Mueller, 15 August, 1961. Collection of author.

<sup>295</sup> Mayo refused to have a fully automatic washing machine. Instead she struggled weekly with the eccentricities of a Hoovermatic – a machine which required a great deal of manual intervention – so that she could collect the water in buckets at the end of each washing cycle and re-use it on her garden.

developers and the need to preserve national heritage. All these issues were highlighted in her prints.

The satisfactory working out of a design, or part of a design, lifted Mayo from her almost habitual state of depression and self doubt. Each print was part of a cycle which related in a curious way to her need for self-acceptance and general acceptance which she had struggled with since her childhood. Each print offered her a fresh opportunity to prove her worth all over again. Consequently, it is in her prints more than in any other medium that she set herself the greatest challenges; in them we can most easily chart the highs and lows of her development as an artist. Her most creative prints were made when she was young and enjoyed the continuing accolades of press and public; her most sophisticated and successful works were created while she was working as a highly valued member of the design team at Otago Museum. In this context, her last two prints, *Victorian Jug* (1984), (Cat. no. 104; Vol. II, p. 138) and *White Cat and Poppies* (1985), (Cat. no. 105; Vol. II, p. 139) are no less important in tracing this development than her earlier and more successful works. Mayo expressed her low opinion of these works in her diary: "[I] can't help thinking (knowing!) that my work isn't as good as it was – dull and flaccid now, no guts."<sup>296</sup> In comparison with her textual and conservationist prints of the 1970s and early 1980s, this may be true, but it is certainly not true of the techniques employed. In both *Victorian Jug* and *White Cat with Poppies* she was still experimenting. In the former she used thousands of dots of glue to build up the form and detailing of the vase. The composition is no less rigorously composed than, for example, in her prizewinning print, *Pumpkin*. Each flower in the vase contributes to the over-all excellence of the design either by its colour or its shape; the repeat patterns of the plaid tablecloth stand out in stark contrast to the organic nature of the flowers. In *White Cat* Mayo experimented with a new technique of painting with glue straight on to the silk-screen to create an impression of fur.

---

<sup>296</sup> EMD 26 October 1984.

One of Mayo's important contributions to printmaking was her re-presentation of the original print to the small buying public of Canterbury. An artist of international status, a regular exhibitor of prints in London and abroad, and later a member of the Australian Print Council and the New Zealand Print Council, this *grande dame* of printmaking was well equipped with the professionalism required to do this. Accordingly, in 1968, in collaboration with Ngaire Hewson, the owner of Several Arts, a small craft-shop/gallery in Christchurch, she set up a print gallery. Although small in scale, it provided a much needed venue for exhibitions by professional printmakers. Mayo, Juliet Peters and Alison Pickmere were the first professional printmakers to exhibit there, followed by Penny Omerod, Gwen Morris, and Bonnie Quirk. Mayo was adamant that the gallery owner was responsible for the calibre of work shown; that artists who exhibited at Several Arts should be professionals in their field; and that prints shown to the public should be of the highest quality both artistically and technically. Her insistence on the uncompromising excellence of the quality of original prints shown at Several Arts promoted a huge trade in original prints in Canterbury and this, in turn, contributed significantly to the development of the print in the region.<sup>297</sup>

Despite her achievements in the field of printmaking, Mayo's diaries provide almost daily reports of self analysis and self consciousness, frequent troughs of self hatred and the long habit of self-criticism which began in her childhood. Although Mayo never achieved an appearance of spontaneity and freedom in her prints after 1934, her technical virtuosity, expert designing, exquisite colouring and sensitive responses to nature mark her out as an important contributor to printmaking in England, Australia and New Zealand.

---

<sup>297</sup> See Jillian Cassidy, "Canterbury Women Printmakers," *White Camellias : A Century of Women's Artmaking in Canterbury*, Christchurch : Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 1993, pp. 16 - 24.

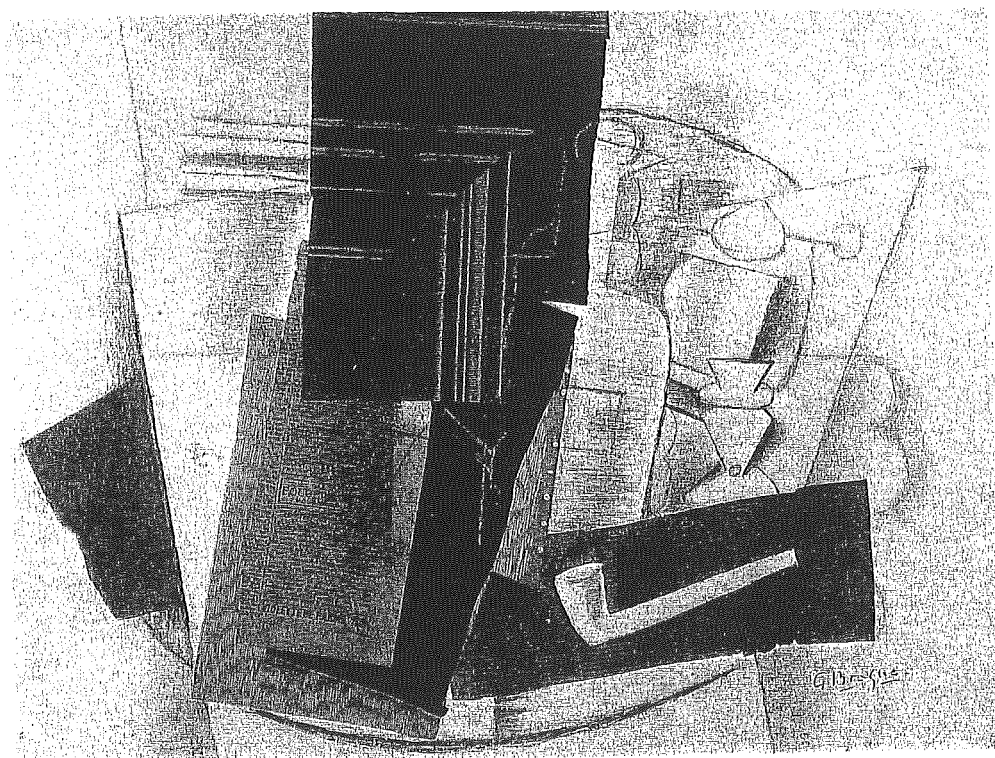


Fig. 5

Georges Braque. *Table, Glass and Pipe*, 1913

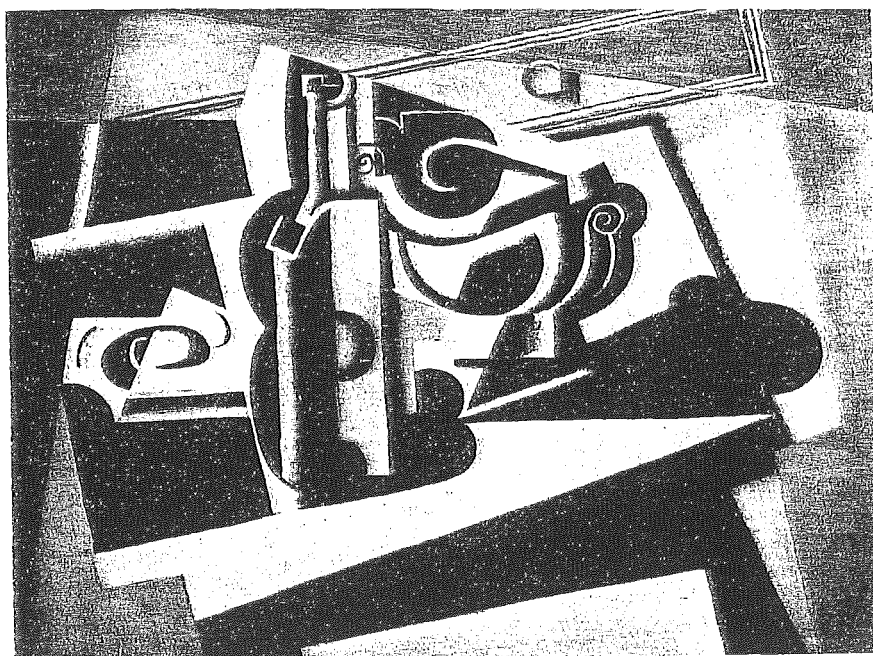


Fig. 6

Juan Gris. *Bouteille et Compotier*, 1917

derknebrounbutbrightand  
 cleerasis·the·monelight·ageyn·who·all·  
 EX·DEVINA·  
 PVLCHRITVDINE·  
 ESSE·OMNIVM·  
 DERIVATVR·  
 NEHIL·EST·IN·  
 INTELLECTV·  
 NISI·PRIVS·IN·SENSV·  
 candle·s·i·h·z·i·v·n·e·s·h·e·w·a·s·p·  
 pesterressemenbutmale

Fig. 7

David Jones. *Ex Divina Pvlchrituvdine*, 1956



EXHIBIT-JEROME ROBBINS "BALLETS U.S.A."-U.S.I.S. GALLERY 41 GROSVENOR SQ. LONDON W.1. SEPT. 15-OCT. 23. 1959

Fig.8

Ben Shahn. Poster for *Ballets U.S.A.*, 1959



## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE ARTIST AS PAINTER

In her early years as a professional artist, Eileen Mayo regarded herself primarily as a painter. When interviewed by G. S. Sandilands, the reviewer for the *Daily Herald*, concerning a portrait of her painted by Harold Knight, ARA, which was currently on show at the Royal Academy in 1930, she said, "Having been in the Academy so often as a model, I am now going to make a determined effort to get in as a painter. I am sending up my first works next year."<sup>298</sup> Despite her optimism and her efforts in painting, Mayo does not appear to have shown a painting at the Academy before 1948.<sup>299</sup>

While the late 1920s and early 1930s were a time of rising expectations for Mayo, her claim that she was a painter – despite her training and success as a designer – was no doubt influenced by her close association with Laura Knight and Dod Proctor as their model between 1925 and 1930, a period during which both these women and their husbands were showing regularly at the Academy. Although Mayo put paint on paper immaculately she lacked, however, the ability to breathe life into it. To her, painting was a craft to be mastered. This she pointed out in her review of M. Maroger's, *The Secret*

---

<sup>298</sup> 16 September, 1930. TGA 916. 18.

<sup>299</sup> The painting she exhibited that year was *Stage 17* (1948), (Cat. no. 141; Vol. II, p. 174). However, her first lithograph *Squirrel* (1945), (Cat. no. 40; Vol. II, p. 90) was exhibited at the Academy in 1945. I have been unable to find out whether or not Mayo actually submitted work for exhibition at the Royal Academy prior to 1945. She certainly makes no reference to having done so in letters to her family who were living in New Zealand. Neither does she mention it in letters to her friends the Bartons.

*Formulas and Techniques of the Masters* (1949), claiming that, “We are so obsessed with the idea of painting being an ART that we forget, or even deliberately deny, that of its very nature (since it is not abstract but concrete) it is also a craft.”<sup>300</sup>

Compared to the large body of prints and designs Mayo produced during her life-time, her paintings were fewer in number. This was because in spite of her expressed intentions painting was never her main project – a situation dictated by her financial position rather than by choice.<sup>301</sup> Although part of an entity, painting was primarily a by-product of her prints. As the catalogue to this thesis shows, Mayo’s subjects can be narrowed down to a number of themes. Some of them, for example, the London metropolis, were short lived, whereas others, such as her sunflower images, were produced over a decade, and revisited in later years. Her paintings were usually an extension of a theme she was exploring in her prints. The very late *Life Dance of Sunflowers* (1976), (Cat. no. 155; Vol. II, p. 186) is a case in point; suspecting that she had exhausted the graphic possibilities of the sunflower in her relief-prints, she went on to paint them. Applying acrylic paint like tempera to board, she created a more detailed and careful delineation of the giant plant than would have been possible to achieve in the medium of relief-printing. On the other hand, *Sunflower Dance* (1979), (Cat. no. 156; Vol. II, p. 187) which fails to move beyond what she had already achieved in print and paint, clearly signals that the theme is spent. Likewise, *Warehouses, Sydney*<sup>302</sup> (1963), (Cat. no. 153) (although not painted until the artist was living in Waimate) is an extension of her daily ferry boat journeys between Neutral Bay and Circular Quay, and clearly relates to her prints *Ferryboat* (1961), (Cat. no. 62) and *Girl on the Ferry* (1962), (Cat. no. 63; Vol. II, 109).

---

<sup>300</sup> *Art News & Review*, Vol. 1, no. 6, 1947, p. 7.

<sup>301</sup> In this regard, it is interesting to note that Mayo produced most of her paintings between 1937 and 1951 when she was supported by her husband.

<sup>302</sup> Although the subject is Sydney, this work was not painted until 1963 when the artist was living in Waimate, New Zealand.

Mayo's main painting activities belong to her early and middle years. Tellingly, none of her paintings, either in England or in New Zealand, were ever purchased for public collections. That they were not bought by public galleries suggests that they were not particularly outstanding or innovative, despite what some of the critics said about them. Unfortunately a few of her paintings remain untraced, for example, *Les Matelots* (1929), (Cat. no. 108) *Mousehole* [1930], (Cat. no. 113) *Friendship* [1937], (Cat. no. 131) as well as *Musk Duck* (Cat. no. 134) and *Musk Ducks* (Cat. no. 112), both of which date to 1945. Others, such as *[Woman with Cat]* [1930], (Cat. no. 113; Vol. II, p. 156) and *[Summer Flowers in Jug]* [1931], (Cat. no. 114) are known only from reproductions. A number of her paintings have been retained by her family while others were given as gifts to friends. These form the basis of the following discussion and provide a gauge of her work as a painter.

Mayo's first exhibited painting, *Woman with Magnolia*, [1927] (Cat. no. 111; Vol. II, p. 155) was shown with The Society of Women Artists at its 75th Exhibition, in 1930. This small decorative panel brought her to the attention of the critics. *The Daily Mail* singled it out as one of the exhibits of merit in the show.<sup>303</sup> A stylised and highly decorative work in water-colour, pencil, colour wax and crayon, it would have distinguished itself by its graphic quality. This vividly descriptive 'portrait' of a woman with heavy-lidded eyes and a small pursed mouth, wearing an elaborate hairstyle and headdress decorated with a magnolia is, in fact, a stylised self-portrait. Stylistically it has much in common with Thea Proctor's decorative work of the late 1920s as can be seen in her cover designs for example, *The Home* of July 1927 and November 1928 (Fig. 9). Like the woman who wears the magnolia in Mayo's painting, Proctor also depicted the women on her cover designs with flowers in their hair.<sup>304</sup> Although this Australian artist lived and exhibited in London between 1903 and 1921 it is doubtful that Mayo saw her work. In 1921, the year that Proctor returned to Australia to live, Mayo was

---

<sup>303</sup> 21 February 1930.

<sup>304</sup> The magnolia in Mayo's painting refers back to drawings of a magnolia made in 1927. ATL, C127 - 30, (Cat. no. 106; Vol. II, p. 151).

still a schoolgirl living in Bristol. However, the work of both artists in the late 1920s was a combination of classicism and what has been termed ‘decorative Modernism.’ Proctor’s style was an extension of Sydney’s response to Modernism which stressed the decorative,<sup>305</sup> whereas Mayo’s pattern-making and stylisation, was more of a watered down version of Cubism. In both subject and style [*Woman with Magnolia*] is similar to Tamara Lempicka’s curious painting *The Flower Wreath*, c.1932 (Fig. 10).

In 1928 Mayo had depicted herself as Queen Victoria for the cover of the Christmas edition of *The Sphere* (Cat. no. 20; Vol. II, p. 71). This interest in self-portraiture is seen to persist in a black and white photograph in the artist’s archive at the Tate Gallery, London,<sup>306</sup> which features Mayo and a painting of herself with a cat [*Woman with Cat*]. The photograph presents a triad of images of Mayo’s head: a profile view of the artist posed, palette and brush in hand, reflected frontally in a mirror placed at a right angle to her and a three-quarter view of a painted self-portrait with a cat, placed on the mantelpiece behind her. Although these three-partems were by no means uncommon, for example the famous van Dyck portrait of Charles I, Angela Kauffman’s *The Artist and the Muses of Music and Painting* and, more recently, a Royal Doulton plate of Diana, Princess of Wales, (1983) what is important in this discussion is that *Woman with Cat* is another self-portrait. They could well have been inspired by studies of her head made by various artists: Eric Schilsky<sup>307</sup> cast a bust in bronze of her in 1930 and both Bernard Meninsky<sup>308</sup> and Edith Lawrence<sup>309</sup> painted her that same year.

---

<sup>305</sup> Caroline Ambrus, *Australian Women Artists : First Fleet to 1945 : History, Hearsay and Her Say*, Woden, A.C.T. : Irrepressible Press, 1992, p. 124.

<sup>306</sup> TGA 916. 150.

<sup>307</sup> Schilsky’s bust of Mayo was shown at the first Exhibition of the National Society of Painters and Sculptors, 1930.

<sup>308</sup> Mayo worked as a model to Meninsky in 1929. His painting of her appeared in the same exhibition as Schilsky’s bust.

<sup>309</sup> Lawrence was a friend of Claude Flight’s and a lino-cut artist. Mayo was probably introduced to her while working as a model at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art. Later, she exhibited with Lawrence in the annual lino-cut exhibitions at the Redfern and the Ward galleries.

A memorial exhibition to Sergei Diaghilev, held at the Claridge Gallery<sup>310</sup> in March 1930, provided Mayo with a prestigious venue as well as an important occasion on which to show three more of her paintings. Two of these were of Serge Lifar, one of the principal dancers from the *Ballets Russes*: as the Second Officer in *Barabau* [1928], (Cat. no. 107; Vol. II, p. 152) and as the Young Man in *La Chatte* (1929), (Cat. no. 109; Vol. II, p. 153) while the third was of Alexandra Danilova as the Young Girl in *Les Matelots* (1929), (Cat. no. 108).<sup>311</sup> As discussed in Chapter Two, Mayo had made first-hand studies of Lifar for Cyril Beaumont's publication on the dancer.<sup>312</sup> In fact, it was probably due to the popularity of her illustrations to the book that her paintings were accepted for this exhibition which was arranged by Adgey Edgar, Arnold Haskell and V. Svetloff.

Both paintings of Lifar by Mayo encompass her early interest in costume and theatre design which she had studied at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in 1924. The original settings for Diaghilev's *Barabau* were attributed to Maurice Utrillo. They were not so much designed by him but modelled after his paintings.<sup>313</sup> The inspiration for *Barabau* had come from Diaghilev's admiration of Vittorio Rieti from whom he commissioned a ballet based on a tale from Italian folklore. He invited Utrillo to design a landscape with a church as well as costumes for the Italian soldiers. By 1925, however, Utrillo was an alcoholic recluse and was incapable of producing anything more than a sketch.<sup>314</sup> This was given to Prince Schervashidze who, in "colour and line captured the spirit of Utrillo's painting as opposed to an exact copy of the artist's sketch."<sup>315</sup> Mayo did likewise in the setting for her painting *Barabau*. Using Utrillo's original sketch as

---

<sup>310</sup> This was in Claridge's Hotel in Brooke Street, London.

<sup>311</sup> This painting remains untraced.

<sup>312</sup> See Beaumont, *Serge Lifar*, London, 1928.

<sup>313</sup> Robert Hansen, Robert, *Scenic and Costume Design for the Ballets Russes*, Michigan : Ann Arbor, p. 95.

<sup>314</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>315</sup> *ibid.*, p. 96.

her starting point she re-ordered the composition, moving the church moving the church into the background and the landscape to the far right-hand side. In this way she created a wide and open foreground in order to give the prominence she desired to her subject, the soldier from *Barabau*.<sup>316</sup>

The background set she devised for Lifar as the young man in *La Chatte* is more interesting and original than that of *Barabau*. *La Chatte*, the story of a young man in love with a cat who becomes a woman only to change back into a cat, has a central theme of instability and metamorphosis.<sup>317</sup> In order to portray these qualities, the designers – Naum Gabo and his brother Antoine Pevsner – applied the principles of Constructivism. They used only materials which were either transparent or reflected the light, for example, mica, talc, celluloid, black oilcloth. They clothed the dancers in costumes more associated with science-fiction than with ballet. The overall look was industrial. In her illustration to Beaumont's publication Mayo confined her portrayal of the stage-set of *La Chatte* to a transparent circle, one of the multi-form units of Gabo's and Pevsner's Constructivist setting, while the plain black background is reminiscent of the oil cloth which covered the floor of the stage. She diverged, however, from this in her painting. To concentrate the viewer's attention on Lifar she limited the background depth by painting a series of shallow constructivist shapes which appear to spring up immediately behind the dancer. The costume in both the illustration and the painting was identical to that worn by Lifar in the ballet.

There is a marked stylistic disparity between Mayo's watercolours of Lifar as the Officer in *Barabau* and as the Young Man in *La Chatte* and her illustrations of him in the same roles. While the strong graphic quality of her drawings in *Serge Lifar*, with

---

<sup>316</sup> The influence of Utrillo is also discernible in Mayo's later painting [*View of the Seines*] [1948], (Cat. no. 146; Vol. 11, p. 179).

<sup>317</sup> Nancy Van Norman Baer (ed.), *The Art of Enchantment : Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, 1909 - 1929*, San Francisco : Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; New York, NY : Universe Books : distributed by St Martin's Press, 1988, p. 57.

their emphasis on contrasts of black and white, recall the decorative work of Aubrey Beardsley<sup>318</sup> the athletic muscularity of her linear drawings reflect the image of the “ballerino” which, according to Lynn Garafola, haunted Diaghilev’s imagination.<sup>319</sup> In comparison, her paintings of Lifar, in *Barabau* in particular, are more ethereal. Part of the exoticism and excitement of the *Ballets Russes* lay in its unequivocal homo-eroticism and, in his exploration of this, Diaghilev feminised the male body.<sup>320</sup> In fact, what Diaghilev was subconsciously trying to do was to create in his ballets one sexual type by making the male dancers more feminine and the females more masculine.<sup>321</sup> Mayo’s painting of Lifar in *Barbarau* certainly straddles the sexes. While it would be gratifying to be able to claim that her portrayal of Lifar was an embodiment of Diaghilev’s theories regarding the male body, the slightness of the dancer in her painting in no way reflects Diaghilev’s vision of the “ballerino.” Besides being an example of her lack of experience and training in drawing the human figure the illusion of over-thinness is accentuated by the composition of the painting. She has relegated it to the mid-ground where it competes with the substantial architectural forms of her painted set which diminishes the scale of the figure. By way of contrast, in Mayo’s painting of Lifar in *La Chatte*, the figure gains in monumentality by occupying the entire foreground – the view given is that of the spectator standing directly below the dancer. The background is also more shallow than that of *Barabau*.

*Barabau* and *La Chatte* are early extant examples of Mayo’s use of the watercolour medium. Although it is competently laid, she appears reluctant to rely entirely on the tonal potential of the medium in her portrayal of the dancer. Instead, she

---

<sup>318</sup> Beaumont’s bookshop had previously been owned by Neumayer and Godwin who had specialised in Beardsley book illustrations. It is possible that some of the books were still on the shelves in Beaumont’s bookshop when Mayo began working for him and may have influenced her.

<sup>319</sup> Lynn Garafola & Nancy Van Norman Baer, *The Ballets Russes and Its World*, New Haven and London : Yale University Press, 1999, p. 246.

<sup>320</sup> *ibid.*, p. 263. Diaghilev had first attempted this with Nijinsky. He replaced the tautness of conventional masculinity with a softness and openness. His feminising of the male dancer was further emphasised by the use of mascara and eye-liner to darken and lengthen Nijinsky’s eyes.

<sup>321</sup> *ibid.*, p. 266.

describes details and tones with coloured chalk overdrawn with pencil. This gives a graphic, rather than a painterly effect. There is no question that Mayo had not mastered watercolour. If the critics can be believed her competence in the medium was obvious in her landscape *Mousehole* and it is certainly evident in her untitled painting of a lily [1929] (Cat. no.110; Vol. II, p. 154). She had not reached the same degree of competence, however, in her drawing of the human figure. She would have been the first to realise this disparity. Not surprisingly, neither the reviewer for *The Lady*, nor the critic for *The Morning Post* singled out any of her paintings as being particularly noteworthy. *The Lady* commented that, "The spectator's point of view is ably represented in the paintings by Laura Knight<sup>322</sup> and Eileen Mayo ..."<sup>323</sup> while *The Morning Post* merely lists the paintings shown by her.<sup>324</sup> There was no hint in the reviews of the considerable acclaim she would receive with *Turkish Bath*, which was exhibited in *The Second Exhibition of British Colour Linocuts*, Redfern Gallery, four months later<sup>325</sup> and which displayed her emerging skills as a printmaker.

Three months after the successful reception of *Turkish Bath* Mayo exhibited *Mousehole* with the London Group at the New Burlington Galleries.<sup>326</sup> A small landscape of a favourite artists' location in Cornwall, where she joined the Knights and the Proctors each summer between 1926 and 1930 to model for them, it is closely aligned in subject, style and medium (watercolour) to the landscapes that Laura Knight was producing in the late 1920s. Exhibited alongside works by Roger Fry, Mark Gertler, Bernard Meninsky, Paul Nash, Walter Sickert and Matthew Smith – some of the greatest names in British painting at the time – the critic for the *Western Morning News* singled out *Mousehole* for comment, drawing attention to the "... beautifully balanced

---

<sup>322</sup> It is quite likely that Knight suggested to Mayo that she exhibit in this show.

<sup>323</sup> 13 May 1930. See TGA 916. 18.

<sup>324</sup> 6 May 1930. See TGA 916. 18.

<sup>325</sup> This exhibition opened on 30th July, 1930.

<sup>326</sup> This painting also remains untraced.



composition ... the simplicity of the painting in cool, quiet tones .... " *Mousehole* was contrasted with the "... slickness of handling and sameness of subjects..." of other exhibits, in a show described as "... abysmally dull..."<sup>327</sup> While the critic's assessment must command our attention, it is nevertheless difficult to believe that Mayo's painting was superior to that of the other exhibitors. *Mousehole* probably stood out in the show, simply because the artist presented a fresh face, as it were, among the mature and accomplished styles of the other well-established British artists. It was also more than likely that the critic was responding to the wide publicity given her witty and distinctive work in the recent show of British linocuts,<sup>328</sup> rather than to the painting itself. Indeed, the same critic made specific reference to *Turkish Bath* in his review of the exhibition, pointing out that in *Mousehole* Mayo showed as good a grasp of landscape as of figure drawing in her colour linocut – a somewhat surprising, indeed hugely flattering assertion. Mayo's striking personal appearance certainly helped her work attract attention in turn. She had received wide publicity from the press ever since she first appeared as the model for Laura Knight's *Dressing for the Ballet*, 1927, exhibited at the Royal Academy the following year. It had also featured on the cover of *The Sphere*, 7 May, 1927.<sup>329</sup> The press was clearly captivated by Mayo's youth, figure and classical good looks. When she visited the Royal Academy to view the exhibition they followed her, describing her in the headlines of the *Daily News* the following day as "Goddess of Beauty at Academy. Even the Pictures Outrivalled."<sup>330</sup> It was not, however, until her work was exhibited in the 1930s, that the press finally realised that "The Beautiful Blonde," "The Golden Girl," was also no mean artist. They reported in a somewhat incredulous tone that, "This young woman, besides being a model is an artist. She recently exhibited at both the Claridge and the New Burlington

---

<sup>327</sup> 14 October 1930. See TGA 916. 18.

<sup>328</sup> *Turkish Bath* was mentioned as one of the best works in the show by: *The Star*, 26 July 1930; *The Times*, 26 July 1930; *The Observer*, 27 July 1930; *Western Morning News & Mercury*, 26 August 1930; *Connoisseur*, September 1930; *Apollo*, September 1930. For these newspaper references see TGA 916. 18.

<sup>329</sup> Vol. CIX, no. 1424.

<sup>330</sup> 8 May, 1928. See TGA 916. 18.

Galleries and has sold her paintings. She is only 24 ..."<sup>331</sup> Mayo's interest in costume, so clearly discernable in her illustrations and paintings of Lifar, was picked up by the press in their comments on her own costume:

Her hat was a huge black Quartier Latin sombrero, the brim artistically coiled and twisted till it took the shape of the ace of spades. Gold earrings of Eastern design swung from her ears. Over a sleeveless toe-length gown of salmon-pink material, with tight fitting corsage, she wore a flowing black cloak such as might be worn by a French priest.<sup>332</sup>

*Summer Flowers in Jug* [1931], (Cat. no. 114) known only from a colour reproduction in *The Art Sales Index*, (1988/89),<sup>333</sup> also belongs to the early phase of Mayo's development. A colourful medley of wild flowers in a floral vase, placed on a covered table, and silhouetted against a dark wall, it looks forward to her later print, *Victorian Jug* (1984), (Cat. no.104; Vol. II, p. 149). In its domesticity, decoration and loose handling of paint, it is reminiscent of still-life paintings by Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, for whom she had worked as a model. *Summer Flowers in Jug* is important in a consideration of Mayo's early development as a painter: it demonstrates her need to look to exemplars – in these instances Knight, Proctor, Bell and Grant – for inspiration both in subject and style.

Mayo was always looking for new themes and her visit to South Africa in 1934 - 35 provided her with fresh and exotic subjects. *Watching the Dances : Zulu Woman, Durban* (1935), (Cat. no.115; Vol. II, p. 157) *Zulu Woman* (1935), (Cat. no.116; Vol. II, p. 158) *Zulu Mother and Child* [1935], (Cat. no.117; Vol. II, p. 159) [*Zulu Heads*] [1935], (Cat. no.118; Vol. II, p. 160) *Chokos* [1937], (Cat. no.128) [*African Forest*] [1935], (Cat. no. 119; Vol. II, p. 161) as well as seven paintings of South African shells

---

<sup>331</sup> *Daily Herald*, 15 April 1930. See TGA 916. 18.

<sup>332</sup> *ibid.* Instructions, as well as a diagram, on how to cut the half circle cloak commented on by the critics, were given to Mayo in a letter from Laura Knight, u.d. See TGA 916. 13. Instructions on the making of the sombrero were given by Knight in a second letter. See TGA 916.14.

<sup>333</sup> 21st edition, Vol. 2, p. 65.

[1935], (Cat. nos. 121 - 127; Vol. II, pp. 162 - 168) all belong to this period. Captivated by the exotic flora and fauna of her new environment, she made a series of paintings of tropical vegetation and shells. Although these works could more accurately be described as drawings, even though she used watercolour/gouache in them, I discuss them here, since Mayo herself categorised them as paintings. They would stand out in any company by reason of the excellence of their draughtsmanship, surface texture and image-content. *Chokos*, for example, is an analytical drawing. In Mayo's hand, however, it has become much more. Characteristically she has exploited the decorative aspects of the folded fruit and curling leaves and highlighted their delicate colouring by placing them against an uninterrupted expanse of bright-blue sky thereby creating a vibrant picture rather than a botanical study. The same is true of her seven depictions of shells which are also analytical drawings. Each is carefully drawn and coloured in water-colour. The high degree of realism achieved creates an illusion of three dimensional objects resting on white paper. At the same time their super-realism takes on an air of surreality. In the totality of their aspects they appear like actors on a stage and, as such, become what Raymond Mortimer referred to as objects "in a state of surrealism."<sup>334</sup> She recreated this same air of disquietude in *Sea Holly* [1949] (Cat. no.145; Vol. II, p. 181).

Even though Mayo was the quintessential doubter in every aspect of her life, she was an unconventional figure in her thinking. She was appalled by the the plight of the blacks in South Africa. Imagining that she could personally break down the barrier of apartheid she unsuccessfully tried to board a bus in Durban which was designated for the use of blacks. She appears to have been particularly interested in the Zulu cultural identity even though they are only a minority of South African blacks. Unfortunately, her four paintings of the Zulu people, *Watching the Dances : Zulu Woman, Durban, Zulu Woman, Zulu Mother and Child* and *Zulu Heads* do not reveal any of her concerns; they are polite and uncontroversial works. Rather than choosing to make a statement on

---

<sup>334</sup> Quoted by Paul Nash in "Swanage or Seaside Surrealism," *Architectural Review*, Vol. 79, p. 151.

the segregation and social injustice that she witnessed and abhorred, she simply defined and decoratively described those physical differences which set the Zulu people apart. Therefore, her depictions, however unintentionally, take on paternalistic connotations of exploiting indigenous people's exoticism and 'otherness.'

*Watching the Dances : Zulu Woman*, like *Zulu Mother and Child*, although a competent work in pencil, watercolour and colour chalks, is more a drawing than a painting. The surfaces of the bracelets worn by the woman from calf to ankle and from wrist to elbow are carefully described; the fabric around the woman's hips is richly patterned; the curve of the wonderfully elaborate hairstyle, which Mayo admired and collected examples of in a series of postcards while living there,<sup>335</sup> is echoed in the bust, hips, knees and feet of the woman as well as in the sweep of bright pink fabric which surrounds the mother and her child. In *Zulu Heads* Mayo exhibits a surprising failure to make the composition work spatially. Dislocation of poses and gazes fragments the whole, while a lack of perspective adds to the atmosphere of recalcitrant reality. Both *Watching the Dances* and *Zulu Heads* were almost certainly painted from postcards since apartheid would have made it impossible for her to move among these people. *Zulu Woman* was based on images Mayo saw in a booklet, *Studies of Zulu Life*, which she bought in Durban. Consisting of almost full page black and white plates of village life, each was accompanied by a caption and a brief explanation.<sup>336</sup> Most prominent in Mayo's painting is the hair ornamentation of the woman. This, according to the booklet, was permanent and took years to grow, being woven up with grass and the hair trained to grow on the outside.<sup>337</sup> Likewise, her treatment of the ears was based on photographs depicting the tradition among Zulu women of wearing heavy earrings from birth in order to enlarge the lobe. In *Watching the Dances*, *Zulu Mother and Child*, *Zulu Heads* and *Zulu Woman* Mayo relied on postcards and photographs to recreate images

---

<sup>335</sup> See TGA 916. 116.

<sup>336</sup> Publisher listed as P.O. Box 225, Durban. See TGA. 916. 116.

<sup>337</sup> *ibid.*, u.p.

on paper of an exotic people. This, of course, would have contributed to the lack of spontaneity and conviction in these paintings. However, while *Zulu Heads* and *Zulu Woman* are little more than an amalgam of head studies, in *Watching the Dances* Mayo went beyond the postcard as her main point of reference and created an interesting and unusual composition.

Many of Mayo's paintings date from 1941 to 1947, the years when she was living in the countryside of West Sussex. They demonstrate, among other things, her passion for correct technique and its correct execution. *Fletching Mill* [1941], (Cat. no. 133; Vol. II, p. 170) *Tabby Cat* [1948], (Cat. no. 143; Vol. II, p. 176) and *Blue Nets* [1950], (Cat. no.150; Vol. II, p. 183) are all painted in oil. With regard to oil painting she said, "... I am especially concerned about the texture of the paint. I like to think that if a small piece were removed from any part of a picture it would be interesting in itself."<sup>338</sup> Her feeling for the material of oil paint and its correct application is a striking feature of *Tabby Cat*. A wonderfully tactile work, it contrasts the warmth and softness of the fur of the cat lying on the yielding woollen mass of a yellow blanket, with the hardness of the wooden surround. Mayo's understanding of the properties of oil paint is evident in her confident use of broken colour, particularly in the tabby markings. These are woven throughout the darker fur which breaks the surface here, and are submerged elsewhere by the interlacing of the lighter colour of the cat's coat. The underpainting was done in terra verte and the overall dark lustre of the coat was achieved by underpainting the cat in solid burnt sienna, and the sleek shininess gained by overpainting on this the white, brown and black of the tabby pattern.<sup>339</sup> In fact, Mayo's special bent for pattern-making shows in every aspect of the painting. The soft greyish background was created by dragging white paint in thick and thin layers over the terra verte background and then

---

<sup>338</sup> Mary Sorrell, "Eileen Mayo," *Apollo*, Vol. 74, no. 320, p. 111.

<sup>339</sup> *ibid.*, p. 112.

a warm brown was added to bring it into key with the blanket.<sup>340</sup> *Tabby Cat* could almost be an object lesson in how to use oil paint to achieve special effects.

*Fletching Mill* demonstrates Mayo's cautious approach to painting. Like an Italian Old Master, she worked out each painting by means of careful drawings until she finally arrived at a careful, finished drawing. This working method is apparent in her study for a proposed painting *Field with stooks of corn sheaves* [1941], (Cat. no. 132; Vol. II, p. 169) and the study for *Landscape at Audierne* [1948], (Cat. no. 147; Vol. II, p. p. 180). "First of all a miniature for main lines of lights and darks, without detail, is planned, and then gradually it is enlarged until it reaches the last stage of tone and colour values."<sup>341</sup> Although no extant drawing has been found for *Fletching Mill*, its strong "bones" suggest that it was constructed according to the lines she laid out in her interview with Mary Sorrell for *Apollo*.<sup>342</sup> The subject recalls Dora Carrington's *The Mill, Tidmarsh, Berkshire*, of 1918 (Fig. 11). While both paintings are of typical scenes from the English countryside, Carrington's painting is, however, much more 'of the place' – a vignette of an actual scene. In comparison *Fletching Mill* is 'composed' or 'designed' to such a degree that it takes on the quality of an illustration and may be compared with those produced by Eric Ravilious. It fleetingly evokes the work of Tristram Hillier who, like Mayo in *Fletching Mill*, created scenes of stillness with similar sharpness of definition and high finish.

*Blue Nets* – a sequel to her earlier lithograph, *Mending the Nets* [1949], (Cat. no. 50; Vol. II, p. 100) – shows the influence of Paul Nash on Mayo. The rusticated edge of the wharf to the right of her painting was obviously derived from Nash's broken line of tiles in the lower left hand side in *Harbour and Room* 1932 - 36, (Fig. 12). In fact, most of her paintings from the late 1940s show the influence of the second wave of

---

<sup>340</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>341</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>342</sup> *ibid.*

Surrealism in England. It was only when it became popular and therefore safe that Mayo began to exploit it for its picture making potential.

Mayo was just as assiduous in pursuing the correct application of egg tempera in *Sea Holly* [1949] (Cat. no. 145; Vol. II, p. 178) as she was in her use of oil paint in *Tabby Cat*, *Fletching Mill* and *Blue Nets*. Not surprisingly, given how she thrived on difficulty, Mayo favoured tempera over oil. Built up slowly in small touches of colour mixed to a creamy consistency and used as a wash which sets immediately, another colour may be laid over without disturbing it. Consequently, it is difficult to tamper with and therefore requires careful planning. Its exacting manipulation was, of course, in keeping with Mayo's precise, lucid thinking and clarity of execution. It was a medium peculiarly appropriate for displaying the strength of her draughtsmanship as it enabled her to obtain a realism of minutest detail.

*Sea Holly*<sup>343</sup> was shown at the Royal Academy in 1949. Although it is still a nature picture it is an important painting in which she worked out new ideas and influences. It demonstrates her receptivity to recent art which could feed her imagination and also her seeming dependence on the art of others to provide her with a starting point of her own. For example, the influence of Edward Wadsworth (although deceased by 1949) and, less directly, that of Giorgio de Chirico is evident in *Sea Holly*. That the influence of Wadsworth in the composition and style of *Sea Holly* is strong is not surprising. During the war Mayo knew Wadsworth who lived at Maresfield, about five miles from Fletching, and visited him there. According to Mayo's stepson, John Gainsborough, his father either dropped her off at Wadsworth's house on his rounds as a General Practitioner (for which he had scarce petrol as an essential user), or when he went to his surgery at Maresfield.<sup>344</sup> No doubt she saw many of his paintings during

---

<sup>343</sup> This work is known from a Christmas card published by the Medici Society, London, (date unknown).

<sup>344</sup> Correspondence, J. Gainsborough to author, 5 December 2000.

these visits and would have talked at length to the artist about tempera techniques and (seaboard) Surrealism.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s Mayo would also have seen Wadsworth's work when it was exhibited in London. For example *Gastropoda* (1927) was exhibited at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in October 1929 (no. 286) where it was re-named *Shells and Tackle*. There is no doubt that the graphic quality of Wadsworth's paintings in egg-tempera would have appealed to Mayo. His paintings in this medium consisted mostly of assemblages of objects associated with the sea, each painted in bold relief, usually against a marine background of sea and sky.<sup>345</sup> His influence on Mayo is clear in the classical construction of *Sea Holly* and in the absolute clarity with which she shows each form. Within the broad pattern of the composition, the elements of form have been assembled into an architectural framework. They bend and turn towards each other, to create the pattern of the painting as a whole. An absence of a natural perspective created by a layer of intervening atmosphere between the foreground and horizon recalls Wadsworth's surrealist paintings of the late 1920s in which the sea to shore relationship was fundamental. She also draws from her own experience, however, in that she introduces images from different locations and periods in her work: the shells recall her paintings of South African shells as well as her publication *Shells and How They Live* (1944). Like her South African shells she gives odd view of the centrally placed whorled shells in *Sea Holly* – on their side, upside down, standing upright in the sand – while, at the same time, commenting on their formal relationship to the sea holly. The emptiness of the painting and the air of desolation suggested by the wide expanse of sea, sand and sky calls to mind the work of de Chirico as well as that of René Magritte though without the latter's violent dislocation. Mayo would have known de Chirico's work from a major exhibition in London in 1928. Awareness of surrealist art, especially

---

<sup>345</sup> T.W. Earp, *Edward Wadsworth Memorial Exhibition*, Tate Gallery, 1951, p. 4.



Wadsworth's seaboard surrealism, had obviously sharpened her eye; in *Sea Holly* she shows different aspects of visual reality: ordinary objects have acquired new roles.

The technical excellence of *Sea Holly* is at once apparent. Mayo shared Wadsworth's love of egg-tempera and, although the technique had been revived in the opening years of the century, Wadsworth and Mayo were, in fact, two of very few living artists who were painting in the medium.<sup>346</sup> When Mayo reviewed Wadsworth's Memorial Exhibition at the Tate Gallery for *Art News & Review* in 1951, she highlighted the challenges of working in this "extremely refractory material ..." and observed how Wadsworth had welcomed the difficulties (as she did): "... the impracticability of rendering the perspective of atmospheric effects, the impossibility of fusing the colours as one can, with dangerous facility, in oil."<sup>347</sup> Mayo would have found the challenge of overcoming these seeming impossibilities irresistible. Like Wadsworth, she laid paint on paper and canvas meticulously and there is a strong element of shared identity and, indeed, empathy in her review.

In *Stage 17* (1948), (Cat. no. 141; Vol. II, p. 174) and *Lobster Pot* [1950], (Cat. no. 149; Vol. II, p. 182) Mayo re-visits Wadsworth and De Chirico. As already mentioned, popularised Surrealism of the late 1940s appealed to Mayo on account of the opportunities its dislocated elements offered her compositionally. In their paintings, however, Wadsworth, de Chirico and Nash moved beyond the appearance of things into dreamscapes. This was something which the pragmatic Mayo was incapable of doing. Unlike Wadsworth, whose unconnected objects took on new roles in his paintings, in *Stage 17* and *Lobster Pot*, Mayo could not resist relating elements to each other, thereby creating a narrative.

---

<sup>346</sup> The only other artists who spring to mind are Maxwell Armfield, Meredith Frampton and Eliot Hodgkin.

<sup>347</sup> 10 January, 1951, p. 22.

The most interesting and innovative (for Mayo) of all her English paintings is *Broad Bean Flowers* [1950], (Cat. no. 148: Vol. II, p. 181). She has used two different points of perspective in the thick hedge of broad beans to either side of the painting and another in the flowering plant in the foreground. The succulent-like stalks and leaves of the massive close-up of a section of a broad bean plant introduces an air of menace into the painting, in the style of Magritte, while the flowers, with their dark orifices, anticipate the later flower paintings of Georgia O'Keefe. The background to the work is as disturbing as the giant detail in the foreground. The retreating triangles of two tunnel-like paths, devoid of vegetation or decoration or any sort, adds to the air of unease and desolation. Again, it recalls the work of Hillier who, like Mayo in *Broad Bean Flowers*, permeated his work with a surrealist strangeness and otherworldliness by the juxtapositioning of incongruous objects and the use of unreal perspectives.<sup>348</sup> What sets *Broad Bean Flowers* apart from Mayo's other paintings is that it gives us a glimpse of what she might have achieved as a painter had her career path been a different one. Within the boundaries of naturalism (which I doubt she would ever have relinquished) her meditative intimacy with Nature, combined with a rigorous application of Modernist principles (which she was more than capable of doing) could have established her as an important painter in Britain in the first half of the twentieth century.

*Belinda* [1951], (Cat. no. 152: Vol. II, p. 185) is a portrait of her god-daughter, born in Sydney, in 1950, to her English friends Carol and George Foote. In this oil painting Mayo drew from her experience of christening portraits by Knight and Proctor, whose work she knew intimately. In England in the late 1920s and 1930s such portraits were a familiar sub-genre.<sup>349</sup> While working principally from photographs of Belinda Foote in her christening robe Mayo also referred to two well-known examples: Knight's

---

<sup>348</sup> Ian Chilvers. *Oxford Dictionary of 20th Century Art*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1998, p.279.

<sup>349</sup> I am grateful to Dr. Judith Collins, Tate Gallery, London, for this information.

*Baby in Long Clothes*,<sup>350</sup> (Fig. 13) and Proctor's *Study of a Baby: A Poem of Repose*,<sup>351</sup> (Fig. 14).

When *Belinda* was shown in The Society of Women Artists at the Royal Institute Galleries, London in 1952, the reviewers were highly enthusiastic. The critic for *The Scotsman* wrote that, "The first worthwhile painting in the Women's Show is an unusual study of a baby 'Belinda' by Eileen Mayo. This artist ... has painted Belinda so that she or her clothes could be identified to the last fold in her clothing or the ultimate hair of her eyelid (even by a detective)."<sup>352</sup> The reviewer for *Art News & Review*, David Waring, also praised it, saying "... there is, too, a most beautiful piece of painting by Miss Eileen Mayo, *Belinda*, which one longs to remove to a more distinguished company." It is difficult to understand why these critics were so fulsome in their praise of what is in many ways a mediocre work, certainly when compared with the standards Mayo set elsewhere.

Compared with Knight's and Proctor's paintings of the same subject Mayo's *Belinda* is poorly drawn. Throughout the painting she describes each separate part. For example, the neck of the child appears as separate from the head, the neck from the shoulders, the lower arm from the hand. The cumulative effect of this painting of parts is that it reads more as a stone effigy than a work on canvas. This is in direct contrast to the examples by Knight and Proctor cited. Knight's baby, recently settled on its bed, looks lively: its arms are raised, the hands open and shut in anticipation of the food in the mug closeby; the head turns on the pillow to look out towards some nearby centre of interest. Proctor, who was well-known for her paintings of recumbent figures, for example, the famous *Morning*, 1928, depicts a physically relaxed baby waking from

---

<sup>350</sup> This painting was included in an exhibition of West Country Artists, 1947, (location unknown) no. 16.

<sup>351</sup> Dod Proctor's *Study of a Baby : A Poem of Repose* was shown at the Leicester Galleries, London, 1927, (no. 22). In fact, she showed two other paintings of babies in this exhibition : *A Baby Asleep*, and *A Baby in Long Clothes*. Bernard Meninsky, whom Mayo also knew from working as his model, exhibited a number of drawings of babies in pen and wash in the late 1920s.

<sup>352</sup> 14 June, 1952. See TGA 916. 18.

sleep. Even in Mayo's painting of the christening gown – which one could have expected to be a strong point in *Belinda* – her penchant for decoration overwhelms rather than enhances. Again, this may be compared with Knight's and Proctor's paintings. In the example by Knight the soft, diaphanous fabric appears to float across the baby, the folds responding to its every movement. The lower edge is delicately embroidered with small floral motifs and the wavy line of the hem balances the frilled edge of the pillowcase. In contrast to the softness of Knight's robe, Proctor's christening gown is plain and unadorned and the effect is sculptural. The heavy fabric, painted in regular folds, falls across the child and over the edge of the bed to tuck behind its feet. The fluted folds of the blanket, on which the baby has been sleeping, serve to extend the pleated effect of the dress to the outer edges of the painting.

What probably lulled the critics into believing that *Belinda* was a good painting, quite apart from the disarmingly charming subject by a woman artist, was Mayo's expert control of the oil medium as well as her strong and certain arrangement of colour and texture. The dress is built up from layers of oil glazes, to achieve an illusion of dazzling luminosity on the upper-most folds which catch the light. To heighten the whiteness of the robe and the pillow she has placed the child against a background of soft, dark green velvet. She contrasted this with the deep red of the carnation the child holds in its hand which, unfortunately, adds to the artificiality of the portrait.

Mayo's acceptance of a number of major commercial commissions in Australia as well as her part-time teaching at the East Sydney Technical College, meant that she had little time to devote to painting while living there. This, combined with a slow realisation that painting was not her strength, is reflected in the fact that she did not produce any paintings while living in Australia. *Warehouses, Sydney* (1963), (Cat. no. 153) was painted as a pot-boiler while she settled into her new surroundings in New Zealand. Executed in acrylics, it was based on a drawing<sup>353</sup> she had made of the many

---

<sup>353</sup> See ATL, B - 131, Solander Box B.

century-old sandstone warehouses which stood along the eastern side of Sydney Cove and which were later demolished. In 1964 she produced a card for the Australian Mutual Provident Society (AMP) (Cat. no. 185; Vol. II, p. 213) based on the painting, showing the three warehouses which were the closest to AMP's Sydney office.

In her late years Mayo admitted that she was not a painter, saying, "I am a designer rather than a painter."<sup>354</sup> However, at the age of seventy, in 1976, she entered *Life Dance of Sunflowers* (1976), (Cat. no. 155; Vol. II, p. 186) in the Benson and Hedges Art Award. The purpose of this annual award was not only to bring new progressive work to the attention of the public but also to encourage contemporary painting in New Zealand. No one style was favoured over another; selection was based on overall competence and visual effect. This is borne out by the diversity of works chosen for the touring exhibition. For example, among the 25 works selected to tour, there were the works of the internationalist abstract painters Richard Killeen, Geoff Thornley, Ross Ritchie, Ian Scott and Patrick Hanley; Jim Tomlin's abstract landscape *Large Falls* as well as Peter Siddell's super-realist *Another City*, Louise Lewis's *Perfumed Rose*, as well as Mayo's botanical study.<sup>355</sup>

That Mayo was prepared to enter her painting in the Benson and Hedges Award demonstrates her undiminished vigour as an artist. At seventy years of age she was still trying to find proper recognition in the New Zealand art world. That *Life Dance of Sunflowers* was selected for exhibition from among two hundred and fifty entries, many by well-known and respected New Zealand painters, was also a remarkable achievement for an artist who painted so infrequently in her later years. The leading Australian curator Daniel Thomas, one of the two judges of the award, gave her painting his wholehearted commendation, describing Mayo as "... an older artist, and very fine,"<sup>356</sup>

---

<sup>354</sup> Christchurch *Press*, 12 November 1965.

<sup>355</sup> The selection of paintings was made by Daniel Thomas, Curator of Australian Art at the Gallery of New South Wales and Anthony Green, Professor of Art History, University of Auckland.

<sup>356</sup> Daniel Thomas, New Zealand Painting and the Benson and Hedges Award, *Art New Zealand*, August/September, 1976, p. 25.

and commenting that “*Life Dance with Sunflowers* owed something to [Rita] Angus’s frontal, dead-centre realism.”<sup>357</sup> Thomas also commented that *Life Dance of Sunflowers* also evoked German Romanticism, in particular, the work of Phillip Otto Runge: “... I think these classically-fluted columnar stalks and perfect roundels acknowledge the perfection of God’s handiwork in Nature, and have parallels in the art of Biedermeier Europe, where Caspar David Friedrich saw cathedral aisles in groves of trees.”<sup>358</sup> However, Thomas’s intelligent praise gives little indication of the richness of this voluptuous work which is highly detailed and yet at the same time stylised, or of the strange power it projects on the viewer.

Mayo’s repetition of the sunflower motif in *Life Dance of Sunflowers* gives the painting a formal, almost ritualistic look. Whereas her prints of sunflowers are highly decorative, she used the plant in her painting to mark the effect of time on nature. The large yellow disc of the central sunflower may be read as the sun at its zenith, while the drooping head in the foreground recalls William Blake’s words, which Mayo also incorporated into her later relief print *Summer’s End* (Cat. no. 86; Vol. II, p. ): “Ah, Sun-flower .... Significantly, this extract was also known to Mayo from an article written by Paul Seddon on Paul Nash in 1948<sup>359</sup> and which she had filed, perhaps for future reference. In his article Seddon recounts his visit to the ailing Nash in a nursing home in Oxford when he had just begun his sunflower paintings and recalls that his bedspread was covered with water-colour studies of the sunflower and its strivings for the sun. Seddon described how Nash asked him to bring him his copy of Blake’s poems, and how he turned to the passage which had first given his mind direction of his final theme: “Ah! Sun-flower ....”<sup>360</sup>

---

<sup>357</sup> *ibid.* This was, of course, Thomas’s own private reflection. The connections he suggested between the work of Rita Angus and Phillip Otto Runge are without substance.

<sup>358</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>359</sup> Paul Seddon, “Paul Nash 1889 - 1946,” *The Studio*, Vol. CXXXV, no. 660, March 1948, pp. 69 - 77. See ATL, B - 131, Solander Box B.

<sup>360</sup> *ibid.*

Mayo's tendency to treat the sunflowers in her painting as a kind of unity masks the fact that each individual sunflower is a player in an accurate botanical study of the life-cycle of the plant. In this she was also attentive to the work of Paul Nash whose concern for seasonal change and death in nature is shown in his paintings of sunflowers, for example *Sunflower and Sun* (1942) and *Eclipse of the Sunflower* (1945).<sup>361</sup> They also reflected his vision of people as being subject to the seasons, the tides, the rising and setting of the sun and the moon. Although Mayo's interest in sunflowers stemmed from botanical and literary sources she obviously absorbed something of Nash's association of the sunflower with the moon and death which is reflected in *Moon and Sunflower* (1982), (Cat. no. 101; Vol. II, p. 146).<sup>362</sup> Nash exhibited regularly in London where Mayo would probably have seen his sunflower paintings. *Sunflower and Sun* and *Eclipse of the Sunflower* were exhibited at Tooth's in December 1945.<sup>363</sup> His work continued to be shown after his death in 1946, at various venues including the Tate Gallery. Mayo was more aligned with Nash than with any of the other Neo-Romantic painters. Her work does, however, exhibit certain parallels with that of John Minton, who belonged to the younger generation of Neo-Romantics. Affinities between Mayo and Minton may be seen principally in subject-matter and style. Minton, like Mayo, built up careful compositions of vignettes of landscape lush with fruit and flowers. Minton's decorative paintings of foliage, trees and plants approximated Nature. He was prepared to sacrifice detail for the sake of over-all pattern and decorativeness. In comparison, Mayo's over-all patterning and texture emphasised detail, rather than obscured it.

---

<sup>361</sup> *Eclipse of the Sunflower* was reproduced in Seddon's article.

<sup>362</sup> The moon and the sunflower were favourite motifs of the Neo-Romantic artists. Nash painted *Pillar and Moon* in 1942 and John Minton painted his *Sunflower* the same year.

<sup>363</sup> Nash was still working on the sunflower theme at the time of his death in 1946.

Mayo's exploration of colour is also evident in *Life Dance of Sunflowers*. Yellow was not her favourite colour and indeed she usually avoided it in her painting. Captivated by the geometry of the huge seed-heads, she used other colours throughout as a foil to the yellow petals. By exploiting the contrast between the acidic yellow of the central sunflower and the soft yellow-ochre of the background hills, she throws the flower-head into strong relief. Points of yellow light define the geometry of the highly detailed seed-head in sharp contrast to the more generalised treatment of the already withered head to the right-hand side of the painting. The sky is painted in soft lavender which was also mixed into the brown of the fence to unify the painting. Mayo pulls the living bright green leaves and the dying sunflower in the foreground together by a fragmentary fringe of complementary red petals. Green is also used to define the knots and grains in the wood of the fence while a young leaf in the middle left-hand ground directs the eye towards pockets of bush in the valleys of the background hills.

Despite her tentative dialogue with Wadsworth, de Chirico and Nash, none of Mayo's painting was seriously informed by Modernism. When she exhibited in *Some Modern Trends in British Painting*, at the Worthing Gallery in 1950, her *Lobster Pot* and *Frosty Morning* (1945), (Cat. no. 136) were singled out as being free from the influence of Picasso, the School of Paris and the Surrealist Movement.<sup>364</sup> Unlike the works of more baffling contemporaries, Mayo's could be interpreted without catalogue notes. There was no place for Nicholson-like abstraction in her essentially decorative paintings; the interior world of dreams was almost irrelevant in her art which concentrated on the exterior world of Nature and its reality; her style, obsessed as it was with linearity and structure, does not show the slightest interest in a "re-examination of the Impressionist origins of British Modernism in the work of Sickert and Cezanne."<sup>365</sup> While it could be said that she subscribed to the classical aesthetic of the Twenties and showed some sympathies with the direction Picasso, Derain and Braque, not to mention

---

<sup>364</sup> *Worthing Gazette*, 7 June 1950. See TGA 916. 18.

<sup>365</sup> Frederick Gore in *British Art in the 20th Century : The Modern Movement*, Susan Compton (ed), p. 11.



the Bloomsbury artists at that time were taking, hers was a classical orientation more closely based on the art of Piero della Francesca and the draughtsmanship of Ingres.

In trying to locate Mayo's position as a painter it should be remembered that she had little time to devote to it given her preoccupation with other media. A further bar to her development was the sheer difficulty of earning her living from painting; commercial commissions which were paid for on completion, and prints, because they were made in multiples, were cheaper than paintings and sold quickly and were, therefore, more financially viable.

All Mayo's paintings, without exception, have that quality of meticulous care in execution common to all her work. She was simply too careful, too much of a perfectionist, however, to excel in the medium – too much of a draughtsperson, designer and printmaker. Her perfectionism precluded experimentation; she was not interested in the lurid themes and exotic colours of Edward Burra or the near-abstract freedom of Ivon Hitchens and she would have been repelled by the distortions of Francis Bacon. Her reverence for nature was too great to allow any of this. Arguably, there was too much of the Pre-Raphaelite in her to sustain a successful role as a painter in the twentieth century. And while she adopted simplicity of form and colour, she was ultimately too insecure and conservative to espouse Modernism with any conviction. She ultimately knew her strengths and her limitations. The artists she most admired, Wadsworth and Stanley Spencer, shared her immaculateness and reverence for drawing. They, like Mayo, laid marks carefully on a surface, but, unlike her, were able to focus far more single-mindedly on their medium – and on their idiosyncratic vision.



Fig. 9

Thea Proctor. Cover design, *The Home*, November 1928



Fig. 10

Tamara Lempicka. *The Flower Wreath*, c. 1932



Fig. 11

Dora Carrington. *The Mill, Tidmarsh, Berkshire*, 1918

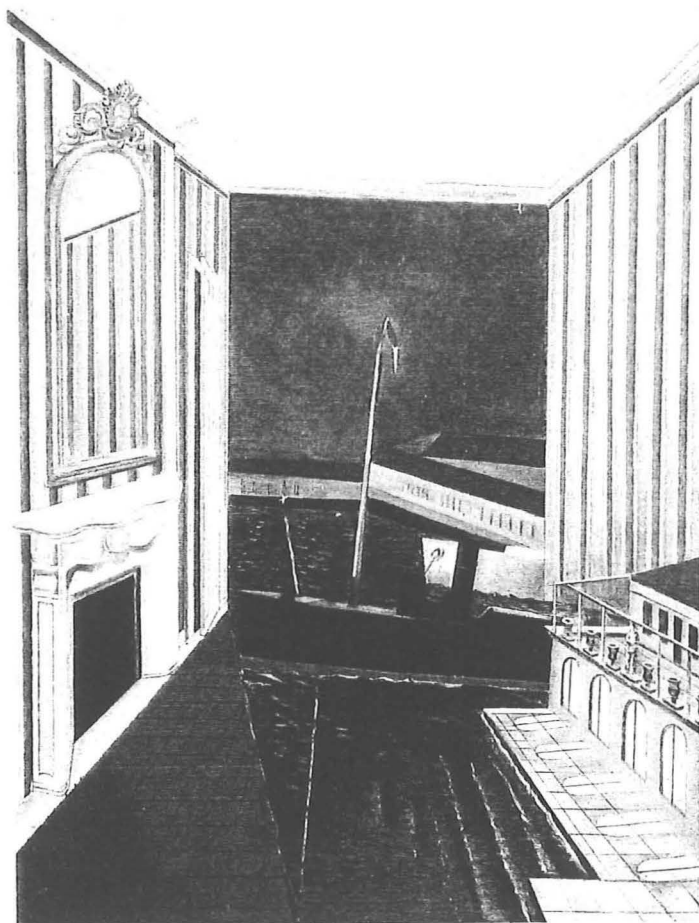


Fig. 12

Paul Nash. *Harbour and Room*, 1932 - 36



Fig. 13

Laura Knight. *Baby in Long Clothes*, c. 1927



Fig. 14

Dod Proctor. *Study of a Baby : a Poem of Repose*, c. 1927

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE ARTIST AS DESIGNER 1: TAPESTRIES, MURALS, POSTERS, TABLEWARE AND CARDS

Eileen Mayo described an artist as "... a workman who designs and/or makes things of our ordinary lives as beautiful as they can be."<sup>366</sup> She argued that any division between 'fine' art and other art forms was illusory, blaming Leonardo da Vinci for starting the idea with his praise of painting as being "... a gentlemanly, clean-handed, white-collar job compared to the 'dirty' business of being a sculptor ...."<sup>367</sup> This, she said, had resulted in an artificial compartmentalisation of fine and applied art and their attendant hierarchies. To her, the artist and craftsman were one and the same, be they architect, industrial designer, potter, commercial artist, illustrator, muralist, stained glass or stamp designer. They were people "who made things as fittingly as possible,"<sup>368</sup> whose chief joy was in good craftsmanship and appropriate embellishment. Mayo successfully pursued this principle in everything she did as a designer.

---

<sup>366</sup> Barbara R. Mueller, "The Stamp of the Artist," *Western Stamp Collector*, 21 July, 1962, p. 3.

<sup>367</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Barbara R. Mueller, philatelic journalist, American Philatelic Society, Jefferson, USA, 17 March 1962. Collection of author, Christchurch. The allusion is to Leonardo da Vinci's *Paragone*, (c. 1498) the modern title given to the first chapter of his treatise on painting; to the difference between sculpture and painting. It was edited by Dr. J.P. Richter who included it in the second edition of the *Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, published in 1939. It was widely available, including an Oxford World Classics edition. Mayo's paraphrasing Leonardo's discussion of the difference between painting and sculpture suggests that the *Paragone* made a deep impression on her.

<sup>368</sup> Mueller, "The Stamp of the Artist," p. 3.



The body of design work Mayo produced has been divided into two chapters in this thesis. Work which is traditionally and strictly design-based is discussed in this chapter,<sup>369</sup> while that which is either mass produced, or three dimensional, for example stamps and coins, is considered separately in Chapter Six.

Mayo supported herself throughout most of her life by working as a free-lance designer. Such work was highly competitive in London in the 1920s and even more so in the early 1930s when the Great Depression began to bite. Even when a commission was secured, it was by no means certain that an artist would be paid for it, work often being rejected without explanation. Mayo, for example, worked for two weeks unpaid for Liberty's of London on roughs which were eventually turned down. She maintained that, "The attitude of Liberty's was typical"<sup>370</sup> and claimed to have spent an average of six months of each year on the preparation of roughs for assignments which were never used.<sup>371</sup> While the scarcity of design commissions meant that she could not afford to refuse any work that came her way – usually as the result of door knocking – the diversity of the work she undertook contributed enormously to the development and breadth of her design skills. Referring to this in later life she said, "... freelance designing provided a very good education. I learnt that you never turn down a job however unlike your usual subject it may be."<sup>372</sup> As Margaret McKean-Taylor noted, "Each commission for an advertisement, poster or book-jacket demanded a fresh solution and image ... Each job was therefore a learning process, a stretching of skill beyond the last exercise."<sup>373</sup> Administrative abilities, crucial to her survival as a free-lance artist, were

---

<sup>369</sup> The exception is Mayo's work as a poster designer. Posters are, of course, mass-produced, but fit into either category.

<sup>370</sup> Conversation between Mayo and Margaret McKean-Taylor, 25 March 1987. Margaret McKean-Taylor, private collection, Ashurst.

<sup>371</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>372</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>373</sup> Cassidy, McKean-Taylor, *Eileen Mayo : Painter/Designer*, Wellington : National Library of New Zealand, 1992, p. 19.

also extended. No wastage could be afforded; each work had to be given full attention in order to be performed as economically as possible, in terms of time, tools and materials.

## i. TAPESTRIES

Mayo's re-location to London in 1947, after a sojourn of almost ten years living in the country writing and illustrating her nature books and drawing, painting and designing prints from nature, coincided with an exhibition *Masterpieces of French Tapestry* which she described as "burst[ing] upon us at the Victoria and Albert Museum" and whose effect on her she described as "explosive."<sup>374</sup> Although Mayo had previously been delighted by tapestries she had seen at the Musée Cluny, Paris, nothing had prepared her for those by Jean Lurçat, Marc Saint-Saens, Jean Picart le Doux, Lucien Coulaud and others,<sup>375</sup> woven in the early 1940s, "... which romped and rioted in the modern section"<sup>376</sup> [of the exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum]." These were entirely new to her and "... carried the stamp of the twentieth century with a new conviction."<sup>377</sup> Enchanted by these tapestries, she began an intensive study of the medium, discovering that the Edinburgh Tapestry Company, popularly known as the Dovecot Studios, was weaving tapestries from cartoons provided by artists. This was an attempt by the company to keep the art of tapestry designing alive in Britain in the face of a declining interest in the medium on account of its prohibitive cost. In part, this cost was due to the British Government's attitude towards tapestries. Instead of classing them as works of art they were put under the heading of 'luxury textiles' and as such had a sales tax of 100% and, if woven abroad, an additional heavy customs duty.<sup>378</sup> Despite this, the Edinburgh Tapestry Company attempted to revive the

---

<sup>374</sup> Mayo, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 March 1956. See ATL 131 - Solander Box H.

<sup>375</sup> See Jean Lurçat, *Designing Tapestry*, London : Rockliff, 1950.

<sup>376</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>377</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>378</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Sir Daryl Lindsay, 10 July 1976. Collection, author, Christchurch.

industry by commissioning designs from a number of distinguished contemporary British artists including Stanley Spencer, Graham Sutherland, Cecil Collins, Julian Trevelyan, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant. The company made the artists shareholders in return for the designs for which they were paid only a nominal fee. From 1950, presumably inspired by the 1947 French Tapestry exhibition, the British Arts Council arranged annual exhibitions of tapestries. Four works which were included in the 1950 exhibition *Recent Tapestries* were woven by the Dovecot Studios: Stanley Spencer, *The Gardener*, 190 x 135cm (no. 4); Graham Sutherland, *Birds*, 190 x 197.5 (no. 5); Cecil Collins, *The Garden of Fools*, 140.5 x 127.5 (no. 2); Julian Trevelyan, *A Decorative Panel*, 88 x 106.5 (no. 6). Cartoons were also exhibited: Vanessa Bell, *Flower Panel*, (no. 9); Duncan Grant, *The Elephant*, (no. 11); Stanley Spencer, *The Gardener*, (no. 17), (cartoon for no. 4); Graham Sutherland, *Two Birds*, (no. 19) and *Birds*, (no. 18), (cartoon for no. 5).

While exhibitions of British tapestries brought the medium before the public eye, most of the exhibiting artists were ignorant of the special techniques of weaving. Consequently, they were incapable of providing the weavers with the type of cartoon which would produce a satisfactory tapestry. This ignorance was compounded by the master weavers not being designers and, therefore, only capable of imposing their own interpretation on an artist's design, instead of exploring its possibilities in terms of weaving. According to Mayo, the prevailing perception was that tapestry was primarily the creation of the weaver who improvised on the design provided by the artist.<sup>379</sup> Her comment to the newspaper suggests that the weavers were in some way at fault, but historically, weavers' interpretive skills were extremely important. For example, from the sixteenth century, particularly when Raphael was commissioned to design the *Acts of the Apostles* tapestries for the Sistine Chapel, Rome, painters had dominated tapestry design. This was in contrast to the earlier designers who understood the requirements more fully. The weavers were required to comply with all the brush strokes and shades

---

<sup>379</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 March 1956. ATL B - 131, Solander Box H.

and, consequently, produced much finer structures using a multitude of colours to reproduce the paintings.<sup>380</sup>

Mayo, whose work in any medium was based on exhaustive research, set about learning at first-hand the techniques required for successful tapestry design. In 1948 she travelled to France to re-examine the historic tapestries at the Musée Cluny and Angers. The following year she returned to study at the Tabard Ateliers at Aubusson and was instructed at St Céré by Jean Lurçat, the leading exponent of contemporary French tapestry design. In French workshops, as in Edinburgh, where artists' designs were woven according to the weaver's vision, the results were constant with little attempt made at variation.<sup>381</sup> The outcome of this approach was a reproduction, rather than a creative tapestry. On the other hand, Lurçat, whose designs were woven at Aubusson, maintained that every square inch of the tapestry was the responsibility of the artist/designer rather than the weaver.<sup>382</sup> This reversal of thinking had far-reaching effects for tapestry design in that it rescued the medium from degenerate copying of painting and made it once again a living art form. It also meant – as Lurçat intended it should – that the designing of tapestry needed not only a thorough knowledge of the techniques of weaving, but also an entirely different approach from that of the painter. Indeed, it required a way of thinking which was unique to the medium. Lurçat advocated that the artist/designer provide a full-scale working drawing or 'cartoon' for each new work, with every change of tone and colour outlined and numbered. The artist's working drawing was slid beneath the threads of the loom, and served as a guide for the separation of the colours.<sup>383</sup>

---

<sup>380</sup> Some weavers were known to have revolted against this practice, but, presumably, the fame of the artist added to the value of workshop production and they were forced to comply. I am grateful to Margery Blackman, Honorary Curator of Textiles, Otago Museum, for this information.

<sup>381</sup> Revel Oddy, "Archie Brennan: Weaver, Designer and Teacher," *Quarterly Journal, The Guilds of Weavers and Dyers*, no. 81, Spring 1972, p. 1534.

<sup>382</sup> Jean Lurçat, *Designing Tapestry*, p. 38.

<sup>383</sup> Mary Wallace, "The Art of Tapestry," *Far and Wide*, 14, Autumn, 1950, p. 36.

At the workshop at Aubusson, one of the Mesdemoiselles Tabard strung Mayo a *chaplet de laines*, a chain of seventy-two small skeins of wool used by the weavers, each with a number.<sup>384</sup> She explained to her that this was "... the palette from which the designers for the Ateliers Tabard chose their colours."<sup>385</sup> Mayo also studied the weaving technique used at the workshop, with the low-warp loom over the detailed cartoon prepared by the artists in which "... between ten and twelve warp threads to the inch are used,"<sup>386</sup> resulting in a coarser weave. Mayo quickly realised that this coarser weave, combined with limiting the number of shades used to a maximum of fifty-five, which was advocated at Aubusson, were the keys to good tapestry design. Colour restriction and a more open weave compelled artists to keep their designs disciplined and unconfused. In this way over-elaboration, which had previously debased tapestry design, was avoided. These new techniques also brought down the price of tapestry to an economically possible level, besides making it more truly a tapestry, i.e. a woven design.<sup>387</sup> The Dovecot had independently come to much the same decision. When it reopened in 1946 after the war the new directors, Lady Jean Bertie, Lord Colum, Lord David and Lord Robert Crichton-Stuart (owner) put a new policy into place in an attempt to make the Tapestry Company more financially viable. They decided to make smaller panels, to use a coarser weave and to restrict the palette to 30 colours.<sup>388</sup> Smaller tapestries woven in a coarser weave with fewer colours would, they hoped, result in a greater output at a lower price.

---

<sup>384</sup> Mayo kept this *chaplet de laines* which is now at the Alexander Turnbull Library, B - 131, Solander Box, G.

<sup>385</sup> Mayo, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 March 1956. See ATL B - 131, Solander Box, H.

<sup>386</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>387</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>388</sup> *The Jubilee of the Dovecot Tapestries 1912 - 62*, Catalogue, The Scottish Committee of the Arts Council of Great Britain, 1962, p. 1.

Mayo could see with the amount of post-war building taking place in England alone in the late 1940s and early 1950s, that the time was ripe for a comeback of tapestry. In this regard she wrote:

Today we are again building, if not voluptuously, at least on a grand scale, and our age echoes in some ways the conditions of the Middle Ages. But instead of churches and castles, we have great blocks of offices and flats, factories, stations for rail and air travel, civic centres of all kinds for work and recreation, for the care of the sick, the young and the old. Because of technical advances, contemporary buildings can and usually do employ vast, unbroken wall-spaces which demand some relief in the form of colour and decoration. Fresco and other mural painting suitable in countries where the climate maintains the dry environment necessary to their preservation, even under ideal conditions the colours fade and finally flake from their support. A well-made tapestry on the other hand, if not indestructible, is at least far more durable. Its colours if rightly chosen, endure through the centuries, only mellowing a little with time .... It is at its best when used on a large scale where, unlike an oil painting, it gains rather than loses in decorative value. It is monumental rather than subtle, and should be part of the architectural plan of its setting.<sup>389</sup>

Consequently, in 1949, after two years of thorough research into the medium, the intrepid Mayo designed her first cartoon *Royal Avenue, Chelsea*, (Cat. no. 165; Vol. II, p. 195). This was followed by *The Work of Women* (Cat. no. 166; Vol. II, p. 196), and *Echinoderms* (Cat. no. 168; Vol. II, p. 198) in 1950, the latter being woven by the Dovecot Studio in 1951 and exhibited in *English Tapestries* that same year.

The cartoon, *Royal Avenue, Chelsea*,<sup>390</sup> which was inspired by Mayo's new locality in London in 1947, demonstrates her knowledge of weaving techniques. In a letter to Professor Joseph Burke of the Department of Fine Arts, University of Melbourne in reference to *Royal Avenue, Chelsea*,<sup>391</sup> she explained that the forms in the cartoon were deliberately small and broken because the Dovecot disliked the effect of

---

<sup>389</sup> Artist's typewritten notes. Collection of author. This was probably written for an article on tapestry designing intended for inclusion in *Art News & Review*. If this was the case, it was never published.

<sup>390</sup> This design was never woven.

<sup>391</sup> See ATL, B - 131, Solander Box B.

larges areas of woven wool in one colour. She knew from the first-hand research she had made into the techniques of tapestry weaving at Aubusson that tapestry is usually hung at right angles to the direction of the warp, that is, it is woven sideways, and vertical changes in colour make open slits, which have to be sewn by hand afterwards and are never so strong as the rest of the fabric.<sup>392</sup> This, she explained to Burke, was the reason why the vertical lines of the houses and windows were broken by pigeon and leaves – without them slits would have occurred in the woven tapestry.

*Royal Avenue* was followed by the cartoon *Women at Work* designed for a tapestry 2450 x 1850, or larger.<sup>393</sup> In direct contrast to the wide, busy and sunny *Royal Avenue*, *Women at Work* is located within a small room – a claustrophobic, over-patterned cell, crowded with the trappings of domesticity. In this cartoon, Mayo's picture-making skills have transformed what, in the hands of a lesser designer, could have resulted in a scene of mere prosaic activity and domestic paraphernalia, into a design suitable for weaving into a large scale decoration. Full of detail, none of which is startling or disruptive, the numerous objects in Mayo's room combine to form her overall design, each an oblique comment on her personal circumstances of 1950 – the breakdown of her marriage. In the cartoon she defines herself in a role which she regarded, rightly or wrongly, as being central to the survival of her marriage – the woman as homemaker. That her career as an artist had been at the expense of her marriage was a source of guilt to her for years. But, for all the anguish she ostensibly suffered, she was not radically changed by the threatened break-up and her art, rather than her marriage, remained her unswerving focus. Mayo the perfectionist in her work, but not in her home, depicts the woman in the cartoon as the perfect wife. She reinforces this by framing the design with a quotation in Latin from the Song of Songs: at the left and top '*Hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa, fons signatur, fons hortorum;*' and at the bottom

---

<sup>392</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>393</sup> This cartoon, like its predecessor, was never woven.

'*aperi mihi, amica mea.*'<sup>394</sup> This allusion to the Old Testament and the praise of Solomon's promised bride adds a layer of poignancy to the reading of the work. The vegetation represents plants from the Song itself and/or having emblematic significance.<sup>395</sup>

In *Echinoderms* Mayo transported herself into a very different realm from the detailed, crowded milieu of the perfect wife. It represented the climax of three years of concentrated study and, as already stated, was woven by the Dovecot Studios in 1951 and exhibited in July of that year. At the Dovecot her cartoon would have been scaled for the weaver's cartoon which would be placed behind the warp threads. This was usually in black and white with numbers for colours corresponding to the wools. The design was rotated 90 degrees for the weaving so that the warp ran horizontally in the finished work.<sup>396</sup> Mayo demonstrates her understanding of these methods and techniques very clearly in her cartoon. For example, the shading is drawn in a linear way for translation into the weaving technique known as hatchure.

The weaving of her cartoon by the Edinburgh Tapestry Company placed her in the elevated company of artists such as Spencer, Grant and Sutherland. Along with Sutherland's *Wading Birds*, (no. 52) and the Polish tapestry weaver Tadek Beutlich's *Figures with Birds*, (no. 54)<sup>397</sup> *Echinoderms*, (no. 53) was chosen as one of three works to represent the contemporary form of the medium exhibited in an historical exhibition, *English Tapestries*, at the Birmingham City Gallery, during the Festival of Britain held between 11 July and 26 August 1951. The inclusion of Mayo's tapestry in this show is

---

<sup>394</sup> A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Sg. 4:12. This particular poem in the Song of Songs goes on to praise the perfection of the bride.

<sup>395</sup> Mayo later regarded *Royal Avenue*, *Chelsea* and *The Work of Women* as "sentimental and very old fashioned but I enjoyed doing them at the time." Correspondence, Mayo to Professor Joseph Burke. See ATL, B - 131, Solander Box B.

<sup>396</sup> Correspondence, Margery Blackman to author, 21 June, 2000.

<sup>397</sup> Mayo attended Beutlich's classes in weaving at Camberwell School of Art.



further testament of her ability, not only to pursue and master the techniques of a new medium, but to excel in it.

Echinoderms,<sup>398</sup> animals of phylum Echinodermata, which include starfish and sea-urchins, often with spiny skins, accommodated her penchant for pattern making. In a centrepiece, flooded with sunlight, she created the illusion of looking down into a pool surrounded by steep rocks. Here, echinoderms move amongst waving coral and other underwater plants, while others move across the surface of the enclosing grotto towards decorative borders. The source of the horizontal border design for *Echinoderms* was based was the scallop shell motif Mayo saw in The Apocalypse tapestries, for example, Scene 48, *The Ascension of the Lamb*, (Fig. 15) in the 1947 exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum, which had so impressed her;<sup>399</sup> the design, based on kelp, which runs down the vertical sides, was Mayo's own invention. *Echinoderms* contains all those elements of design which are characteristic of her mature style: complex composition, rich texture, subtle colour and, of course, decorative detail – a characteristic she shared with Lurçat. Furthermore, the work displays her understanding of the techniques of weaving and of design appropriate to it. *Echinoderms* is not a woollen enlargement of a painting. Rather, it was designed specifically to be woven and could not have been created by an artist ignorant of weaving techniques.

Mayo knew from her first-hand experience at the Tabard Ateliers at Aubusson that the vertical thread, which was first stretched on the loom, was not seen because, as it was woven, the weft was packed down closely against the preceding row of woven thread.<sup>400</sup> Superb designer that she was, she emphasised both the vertical thread and the horizontal weft to create an expertly balanced composition. She stressed the weft by building up shadows around the echinoderms and defining the darker tones of the

---

<sup>398</sup> Mayo probably discovered the potential of this subject while researching *Shells and How They Live*.

<sup>399</sup> I am grateful to Margery Blackman, Honorary Curator of Textiles, Otago Museum, for this information.

<sup>400</sup> Eileen Mayo, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 March 1956. See ATL B - 131, Solander Box H.

crevices of the rocks. Equally, verticality is emphasised in keeping with the warp; the waving under-water plants, the patterns on the echinoderms, the decorative bubbles and the borders of kelp, all reach up, as it were, to the upper edge of the design. At the same time, the composition is held in equilibrium by the wide, horizontal pool of light surrounded by the dark crevices of rocks. Although this carefully balanced design at first appears detailed, closer analysis shows that only the broad outlines of construction are given, making it admirably suited to the medium. *Echinoderms* demonstrates Mayo's extensive knowledge of and interest in the structure of weaving, and her ability to exploit both the materials and the processes to meet her artistic end.<sup>401</sup>

The medium of tapestry fulfilled all Mayo's needs as a designer, offering her a further opportunity to use all the natural sources of pattern and colour in her visual vocabulary. Indeed, she felt that in tapestry she had found her true means of expression and she would have liked to specialise in it.<sup>402</sup> Had she not migrated to Australia this could well have been a possibility for her.

On her arrival in Sydney in late 1952, Mayo endeavoured to generate interest among Australian galleries in exhibiting British tapestries. In this she was backed by Lord Robert Crichton-Stuart, owner of the Dovecot Studio, and Robert Cruickshank, the director of the company where *Echinoderms* was woven. They contacted Hal Missingham, Director of The National Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney, and Sir Charles Lloyd Jones of David Jones, Limited, Sydney, on her behalf. Although interested, both men were only prepared to deal with exhibitions with commercial possibilities.<sup>403</sup> However, they saw that even this would be problematic. As Jones intimated in his reply to Cruickshank, there would be no sale for the tapestries in Australia as they

---

<sup>401</sup> *Echinoderms* was eventually purchased by a private collector, John Gillespie, Ponteland, Newcastle on Tyne, England.

<sup>402</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Lindsay, 10 July 1976. Collection of author.

<sup>403</sup> Correspondence, Cruickshank to Mayo, 1 April 1953. Collection of author.

would have to retail at approximately three times their cost price; this was beyond the budgets of Australian galleries and the buying public; furthermore, owing to import restrictions, they would not have the necessary licences allotted for such goods.<sup>404</sup>

Twenty years later, however, when invited to submit a design for a proposed tapestry for the new Parliamentary Building in Wellington,<sup>405</sup> Mayo's interest in tapestry had understandably waned. She declined the invitation saying that she "didn't have time."

<sup>406</sup> This was, of course, quite true as between 1972 and 1975 she was working on the underwater diorama at Otago Museum.

## ii. MURALS

In the late 1950s and early 1960s Mayo turned to mural painting: the *Tree of the Invertebrates* (fifty-five panels)<sup>407</sup> for the Australian Museum, Sydney, 1959 (Cat. no. 177) and a mural for the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), the Food Preservation Society, North Ryde, Sydney, 1961 (Cat. no.178; Vol. II, p. 207). These murals exhibit the same strength, originality and directness demonstrated in *Echinoderms*, and serve as a further example of Mayo's ability to adapt her design skills to whatever medium she chose to work in.

Mural painting was not a medium she would have necessarily been familiar with. Indeed, during the 1930s and 1940s mural painting was not a popular art form in Britain. A revival which began on the Continent between the wars was slow to spread to England,<sup>408</sup> the first indication of a new interest in it not being signalled until the

---

<sup>404</sup> Correspondence, Cruickshank to Mayo, 7 August 1953. Collection of author.

<sup>405</sup> Invitations to submit designs were sent to 20 weavers as well as four artists. The proposed size of the tapestry was 365 x 725cm. See ATL, B - 131, Sol. Box G.

<sup>406</sup> *ibid.* Correspondence, Mayo to J.R. Blake-Kelly, Government Architect, 28 June 1973.

<sup>407</sup> As these panels are known today only from slides it is difficult to ascertain the medium used. It looks, however, like gouache.

<sup>408</sup> Hans Feibusch, Introduction to Exhibition Catalogue, Society of Mural Painters, 1950.

exhibition of the Society of Mural Painting in 1950,<sup>409</sup> followed by another in 1951. However, Mural Decoration had been taught in some of the art schools in London as early as the 1920s, for example, at the Design School of the Royal College of Art, where two of its most enthusiastic exponents were Eric Ravilious<sup>410</sup> and Edward Bawden. Between 1928 and 1930 they successfully executed several murals at Morley College.<sup>411</sup> Ravilious, never a purist, was obviously unwilling to undertake the traditional laborious technique of true mural painting in the Morley College Murals, favouring instead oil paint covered by a wax spray.<sup>412</sup> Following his success with the Morley College murals, Ravilious was invited by Sir Geoffrey Fry to paint three *Tennis Door Panels* for the music room of his flat in Portman Square, London. Then, in 1933, he received a further commission to paint a mural in the circular tearoom and bar of the Midland Railway Hotel at Morecambe, which he worked on with his wife Tirzah Garwood.<sup>413</sup> It is doubtful that Mayo saw any of these murals since, between 1928 and 1933, she was preoccupied with commissions for book illustration, printmaking, working as a model and travelling in Germany and Berlin.

The Artists' International Association (AIA) used murals to comment on social and political conditions of the 1930s but, because the medium is so time consuming, they produced very few, preferring the more temporary and quickly executed works such as posters.<sup>414</sup> Given Mayo's strong social conscience, her non-involvement in any aspect of the art of the AIA is surprising especially since in the 1930s many artists, including established academicians such as her friends Laura Knight and Dod Proctor,

---

<sup>409</sup> Mayo probably saw this exhibition as she had a catalogue to it. See ATL, B - 131, Solander Box H.

<sup>410</sup> Ravilious chose Mural Decoration for his Diploma examination at the Royal College.

<sup>411</sup> These murals perished when Morely College was destroyed by bombing in 1940.

<sup>412</sup> Penny Jackson, *Eric Ravilious 1903 - 42 : A Re-assessment of His Life and Work*, Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne, 1986, p. 11.

<sup>413</sup> *ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>414</sup> Lynda Morris and Robert Radford, *The Story of the Artists International Association 1933 - 1953*. Oxford, 1933, p. 9.

both lent their names and paintings to the cause of peace and anti-fascism.<sup>415</sup> During her life, however, Mayo rarely joined a group or an association. The psychological price of such membership was too high for the solitary Mayo to pay.

It is possible that she saw Spencer's murals in the Burghclere Sandam. She had met Spencer on several occasions and regarded him as "a natural rather saintly and complete person ...."<sup>416</sup> She recalled their meetings in her diary on re-reading Maurice Collis' biography of the artist in 1965.<sup>417</sup> She made no mention, however, of having seen his murals.

Murals offered Mayo a new design challenge. She knew from her experience with other media that in embracing mural painting the crucial factor governing her success would be a measure of the degree of skill she attained in it. To do this satisfactorily within the time-frame of each contract<sup>418</sup> required stamina and tenacity, which she had in abundance.<sup>419</sup> Undeterred by the fact that she was a newcomer to the techniques of mural painting, she set about teaching herself the requisite skills.

Mayo's first mural, *The Tree of Invertebrates* (Fig. 16), designed for the Australian Museum, College Street, Sydney, 1959,<sup>420</sup> was a collective project organised to commemorate the centenary of the publication of Charles Darwin's book *The Origin*

---

<sup>415</sup> *ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>416</sup> EMD 15 February 1965.

<sup>417</sup> Mayo visited Spencer at Cloverden View, Cookham. She also met him at the home of Saul and Dolly Gordon. Spencer visited Mayo (and presumably Gainsborough) at Chelsea Avenue. EMD 15 February 1965.

<sup>418</sup> Nineteen months in the case of *The Tree of Invertebrates* eleven months for CSIRO.

<sup>419</sup> Mayo began work on the CSIRO mural in 1960 and, in order to complete it on time, she took a year's leave of absence from her teaching position at the East Sydney Technical College.

<sup>420</sup> The mural was on exhibition from the 1950s until the late 1970s when it was taken down. None of it survives. Correspondence, Jan Brazier, Manager, Archives & Records, Australian Museum to author, 2 April 2000.

of *Species*.<sup>421</sup> Nine metres by two metres<sup>422</sup> the mural was worked on over a period of 19 months by at least 20 people. Mayo's contribution consisted of 55 paintings of scientifically accurate enlargements of animals normally too small to be seen by the naked eye (Fig. 17).

No longer extant, the mural can only be appreciated from photographs and slides held in the archive of the museum.<sup>423</sup> It was probably her reputation as a writer and illustrator in the field of natural history which secured the commission for her. She was described in an article, *The Invertebrate Tree*, written for the Australian Museum Magazine in 1959<sup>424</sup> as "... the well-known natural history illustrator."<sup>425</sup>

The mural showed all the main groups of invertebrate animals – approximately 200 – including insects, spiders, snails, jellyfish, scorpions, seashells, sea urchins and anemones.

The relationships of the various groups of invertebrates may be traced by a system of fluorescent plastic lines and lights which flash in sequence. Eight hundred light globes and ultra violet light are used. Labels outline the characteristics of each major group, and the scientific and popular names of the individual species are shown. A panel informs visitors how to use the exhibit and how the invertebrates are divided into their main groups.<sup>426</sup>

It was an innovative project employing a number of new techniques: actual specimens preserved in formalin were exhibited in transparent plastic; new plastics were

---

<sup>421</sup> Mayo's publication, *The Story of Living Things and their Evolution*, London : The Waverley Book Co., Ltd., 1944, with its foreword by Sir Julian Huxley, was probably an important factor in securing this commission.

<sup>422</sup> These were the measurements of the entire mural, including Mayo's fifty-five painted panels.

<sup>423</sup> To date, Jan Brazier, the archivist at the Australian Museum, has been unsuccessful in uncovering any documentation relating to Eileen Mayo's contract for this project.

<sup>424</sup> Vol. XIII, (4), December 1959.

<sup>425</sup> *ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>426</sup> *ibid.*

used in the construction of models of invertebrates; large scale models of microscopic animals were assembled; "transparent" animals were given a three-dimensional effect in order to show the internal organs. On unveiling the mural, W.C. Wurth, president of the Museum Board of Trustees and Chancellor of the University of New South Wales, described it as the most ambitious display ever arranged by the museum.<sup>427</sup>

The contract for Mayo's other mural was for the foyer of the Administration Building at the new laboratories for the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, (CSIRO) Food Research Department, Sydney, 1961, is as obscure as that for *The Tree of Invertebrates*.<sup>428</sup>

The CSIRO was a major contributor to the development of food industries in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s, especially in the export trade. It saw itself as having an important part to play in feeding the rapidly increasing world population<sup>429</sup> through its research into the most effective means of preserving and canning foodstuffs.<sup>430</sup> To facilitate this work the Division was organised into four basic research groups, chemistry, physics, microbiology and plant physiology, and five applied groups, covering canning, dehydration, freezing, animal products (meat, fish, and eggs), and fresh fruit and vegetables.<sup>431</sup>

From the outset the foyer was designed with a large mural in mind. On completing her 'rough' for a mural which measured 3660 x 1830, Mayo met with K.M.

---

<sup>427</sup> *Melbourne Age*, 24 July 1959. See ATL B - 131, Solander Box H.

<sup>428</sup> It has not been possible to ascertain either the existence of or the whereabouts of a CSIRO archive. For this reason the particulars of Mayo's contract for this commission are unknown to date.

<sup>429</sup> *Food Preservation Quarterly*, Vol. 21, no. 4, CSIRO, December 1961,

<sup>430</sup> *ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>431</sup> *ibid.*, p. 85.

Digby, architect of the CSIRO building, to discuss refinements to the mural and to finalise dimensions.

The design [for the mural] was based on Dynamic Symmetry; the format is a double square (366 x 183 cm) forming a 4 Rectangle. Within this are constructed two overlapping Golden Rectangles, that is, rectangles whose sides are in the ration of 16181: 1 or  $\phi$ . This ratio is found in many forms both of natural and of man-made design. Each pictorial shape in the mural is a Golden Rectangle or a combination of two such rectangles, and the linear shapes of the ground are based on the construction links used in their placing. The spiral shapes are adumbrations of the logarithmic spirals which may be formed during this construction. Such spirals are formed in the growth lines of shells, tendrils, pineapples etc. and seem suitable to a design connected with the activities of a Department devoted in the main to organic research into living organisms.<sup>432</sup>

To integrate the design of the mural with the actual building, Mayo divided the background into seventeen small rectangles of pale yellow, blue, pink, green and orange.<sup>433</sup> These shapes echoed the construction of the north side of the Food Science Building, where the Food Technology department was accommodated. Its façade was divided into three horizontal strips, divided by 16 vertical strips, forming 17 recessed glass panels.<sup>434</sup> The geometric shapes on the background of the mural approximated the regular shapes of the glass recesses. By choosing simple, geometric blocks as the organising principal of the design and a composition based on the plan of the Golden Rectangle,<sup>435</sup> Mayo successfully aligned the mural with the façade.

To demonstrate the activities of the Division, she filled the geometric shapes with magnified sections of animal and vegetable tissue. This she over-painted with a variety of fruits, vegetables, animals, fish, poultry and eggs with overlying patterns of

---

<sup>432</sup> Artist's notes. See ATL, B - 131, Solander Box H.

<sup>433</sup> These were also representative of the raw material forming the basis of the seventeen sections of the Department of Food Research.

<sup>434</sup> See Food Preservation Quarterly (CSIRO), p. 4.

<sup>435</sup> EMD 18 September 1960.



chemical compounds and atomic models as well as linear depictions of laboratory apparatus.

Purist that she was, Mayo would have known from her research into mural painting techniques that such a decoration usually looks best if painted directly on to the actual wall surface using traditional materials such as casein oil, size and oil, egg tempera and oil, and a wax medium – all suitable for use on modern plaster walls. However, the time-frame of the contract (11 months) and the fact that the building was still under construction while she was painting the mural would have rendered working directly on the wall impracticable. Instead, it was executed in synthetic resin "applied by an old kitchen knife and a fine sable brush"<sup>436</sup> on panels of marine ply wood in her garage at Neutral Bay.

### **iii. DAVID JONES AND THE SILKS AND TEXTILES PRINTERS PTY LTD**

Many smaller commercial commissions also came Mayo's way in Australia. Well used to channelling her creative design skills to commercial use during her early years as a designer in London, she worked for the Display Department, David Jones, Baroom Avenue, Sydney, between August 1953 and April 1954, leaving the store in order to work freelance.<sup>437</sup> Although David Jones no longer has examples of the work she executed for them, her diaries record the designing of advertisements for knitting machines,<sup>438</sup> sun tan lotions<sup>439</sup> and promotions for 'Lower Ground Floor Bargains,' etc.<sup>440</sup> A black and white photograph in the artist's archive at the Alexander Turnbull Library<sup>441</sup> (Cat. no. 169; Vol. II, p. 199) shows large panels which she painted for a

---

<sup>436</sup> Mayo in conversation with author, May 1992.

<sup>437</sup> Staff records, Archives, David Jones, Sydney.

<sup>438</sup> EMD 31 December 1953.

<sup>439</sup> EMD 9 January 1954.

<sup>440</sup> EMD 2 January 1954.

<sup>441</sup> ATL, B - 131, Solander Box B.

window display for David Jones. According to the artist's notes which accompany the photograph the panels were based on a nineteenth century theme which was given to her by the Display Department "... in the form of a small cutting from a magazine."<sup>442</sup> Mayo substituted Australian birds and mammals for most of the creatures in the original design. She also changed the original colours in the cutting to "... muted turquoise blue, warm browns and metallic gold."<sup>443</sup> Comments on the bottom of her service record at David Jones' summarises the store's satisfaction with her performance: "Excellent ability, conduct good, attendance regular. Would re-engage."<sup>444</sup>

Mayo worked freelance for a number of organisations in Australia. This was probably due in part to the positive publicity and exposure afforded her as a successful and prolific author, designer and printmaker by the media and the appreciative art hierarchy in the leading Australian art galleries. One such commission was to work on colour combinations for Claudio Alcorso of Silks and Textiles Printers Pty Ltd, Hobart.<sup>445</sup> The firm was run by two brothers, Claudio and Orlando Alcorso, Italian Jewish emigrants who had arrived in Australia in 1938 and originally settled in Sydney. There the brothers, along with a friend, Paul Sonnino, founded Silk and Textile Printers Pty Ltd in Barcom Avenue at Ruchcutter's Bay.<sup>446</sup> They were excellent printers who used "newly developed Italian techniques to print textiles"<sup>447</sup> at a time when those employing the silk-screen method were few. Committed to using only designs by professional designers, the Alcorso brothers employed many well known Australian artists to work for them including Douglas Annand, Jean Bellete, William Dobell,

---

<sup>442</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>443</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>444</sup> Archive, David Jones, Sydney.

<sup>445</sup> Her name was probably given to Alcorso by either Hal Missingham, Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, who had himself designed for the firm, or from Sir Daryl Lindsay, Director of the National Gallery of Victoria.

<sup>446</sup> See Roger Butler (ed.), *The Europeans: Emigré artists in Australia 1930 - 1960*, Canberra : National Gallery of Australia, 1997, p. 78.

<sup>447</sup> *ibid.*

Russell Drysdale, Paul Haefliger and Margaret Preston. Mayo's job with the Textile Company, and one to which she was admirably suited, was to make colourways for the designs produced by the various artists, often five or six of them, preserving the tone values. Head-hunted by the firm, she worked at first for them for six weeks in 1957 at Hobart where they had moved to larger premises in 1947.<sup>448</sup> Hoping to secure her expertise permanently, they tried to tempt her to stay by promising her travel as a buyer of designs, a house and a housekeeper. By 1957, however, she was just beginning to establish good design contacts in Sydney and there was also the prospect of full-time teaching at the East Sydney Technical College.<sup>449</sup> Consequently, she refused the Textile Company's offer to work for them full-time.

#### iv. POSTERS

Between 1956 and 1957 Mayo designed six posters for the New South Wales Government Tourist Bureau, for which she won national and international acclaim. They comprise *Cockatoo & Banksia* (1956), (Cat. no. 170; Vol. II, p. 200) *Discover Australia* (1956), (Cat. no. 171; Vol. II, p. 201) *Koalas* (1956), (Cat. no. 172; Vol. II, p. 202) *Kangaroo* (1956), (Cat. no. 173; Vol. II, p. 203) *Sturt's Desert Pea* (1957), (Cat. no. 174; Vol. II, p. 204) *The Great Barrier Reef* (1957), (Cat. no. 175; Vol. II, p. 205). Mayo was not a newcomer to postermaking, having designed them since the 1930s. The first, a poster for Henry Hill Limited (Cat. no. 160; Vol. II, p. 1911), a firm of printers in John Street, Bristol, is undated. She probably picked up the commission while staying there with her friends, the Bartons, on her return from South Africa in 1935.<sup>450</sup> Striking similarities between Mayo's colour linocut *The Two Angelos* (1934), (Cat. no. 34; Vol. II, p. 85) and the Henry Hill poster, suggest a common date for the two works.

---

<sup>448</sup> Mayo continued to work on a part-time basis on colourways for Alcorso from her studio in Sydney.

<sup>449</sup> Mayo had begun teaching illustration and design, part time, at the East Sydney Technical College in 1954. Although she disliked teaching, the offer of full-time work was appealing on account of the financial security it guaranteed.

<sup>450</sup> It was during her stay in Bristol at this time that she was commissioned by Douglas Cleverdon at the Clover Hill Press there to illustrate *The Bamboo Dance and Other African Tales*.

That the woman trapeze artist in the poster and the female acrobat in the print duplicate each other, that the lino-cutting technique in both examples is almost identical,<sup>451</sup> supports the 1935 date. The Henry Hill poster is strikingly contemporary in its design. This was achieved by the simplification and stylisation of the images into a dramatic, geometrically based composition. While such compositions were common to all the new art movements of the 20th century – Cubism, Futurism, Vorticism, etc – Mayo's success was not based on Modernist influences as such. She achieved a modern look in her poster by a bold unity of mass and rhythms characteristic of the British colour lino-cut movement of the late 1920s and early 1930s, in which she had played an important part.<sup>452</sup>

Mayo's poster for Henry Hill emulates those which were produced by the London Underground, particularly during the 1920s. This is seen, especially, in her use of the sans serif display alphabet, based on Roman capitals, designed for the Underground in 1916 by the calligrapher Edward Johnston. Johnston's alphabet consisted of plain, carefully proportioned block letters, each of which was designed to fit into either a circle or a square.<sup>453</sup> For example, his O is a perfect circle and his capital M follows the shape of a square. Horizontal strokes were designed to meet exactly in the centre of the letter, two examples of this being E and G.<sup>454</sup> Such geometry would have appealed greatly to Mayo's love of order. Her design also fulfills superbly the London Underground's criterion of a good poster being a "visual telegram."<sup>455</sup> The Henry Hill poster is a simple combination of images and words in which the quirky

---

<sup>451</sup> The figures in both examples are given a third dimension by leaving areas of textured relief at the edges of torsos and limbs.

<sup>452</sup> See Chapter Three for discussion of this phase of Mayo's work.

<sup>453</sup> See Oliver Green, *Underground Art*, London : Laurence King, 1989, p. 10.

<sup>454</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>455</sup> *ibid.*, p. 6.

image attracts the viewer's attention while the words transmit the message at a single glance.

Mayo's poster for Henry Hill raises the question of why she did not submit designs to London Transport from the outset of her career as a designer. In a limited sense at least, the Company was known as a patron of art and Frank Pick, who was given responsibility for the Underground Group's publicity from 1908,<sup>456</sup> and eventually appointed Vice Chairman and Chief Executive of the London Passenger Transport Board in 1933,<sup>457</sup> claimed that there was no one particular style more suitable than another for the Underground posters: their purpose was to establish a corporate identity for the Underground Group.<sup>458</sup> Initially the Underground commissioned its posters from printing firms who employed their own freelance designers.<sup>459</sup> Later, to ensure diversity, Pick opened up the field, employing 'fine' artists as well as illustrators. Sometimes he would commission established artists to produce designs but, as often as not, he used young unknown artists, especially those recommended to him by the art schools.<sup>460</sup> His method was to buy up twice as many designs as would eventually be used<sup>461</sup> and many artists submitted designs unsolicited by him, in the hope of gaining a commission.<sup>462</sup> All these facts suggest that there would have been plenty of scope for the young Mayo to have tried her hand as a postermaker long before 1935 and the Henry Hill design. It is curious that she chose not to, particularly as London Passenger Transport, which took over from the Underground Group of companies, had, between 1933 and 1939, a policy of publicising the newly

---

<sup>456</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>457</sup> *ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>458</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>459</sup> *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>460</sup> *ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>461</sup> *ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>462</sup> *ibid.*, p. 11.

enlarged system by focussing attention on the various areas and public monuments it travelled to, which is exactly what Mayo did in her two 1948 posters for the Geffrye Museum. Both the Geffrye Museum (1) (Cat. no. 161)<sup>463</sup> and the Geffrye Museum (2) (Cat. no. 162; Vol. II, p. 192)<sup>464</sup> advertise the museum as an interesting place to visit. Her caption to (1) reads: "Your Home Away from Home" – the format probably laid down by London Transport. She provides the traveller with the name of the nearest tube station, Liverpool Street, as well as the numbers of the appropriate trams to travel on, stressing that they stop right outside the museum. She surrounds this travel information with artefacts the museum-goer will encounter on reaching her destination. Unfortunately, the style of the posters was inappropriate for the 1940s. They had more in common with those produced by London Transport in the 1930s which advertised a desirable destination. For example, Clifford and Rosemary Ellis's four posters *Down, Heath, River and Wood* (1933), Frank Ormond's *Regent's Park* (1933), Edward Bawden's *St James's Park* (1936), and Anna Zinkeisen's *I Love the Park* (1933), all advertised recreational spots to visit via the Underground. By 1947 more people than ever were using the system and, consequently, there was no longer a need for London Transport to publicise the pleasurable places to be reached by the network. It is surprising that the usually astute Mayo did not realise that the function of the publicity poster had changed by this late date, that posters were fewer and the content more expansive than it had been in the 1930s. Since 1947 London Underground had been using its posters to provide the travelling public with information about what London Transport actually did, its expectations of its staff and what it would appreciate from the commuters.<sup>465</sup> They advertised, for example, the benefits of using the newly introduced one-day Rover ticket.<sup>466</sup> Representative of these later posters are Betty

---

<sup>463</sup> Collection of author.

<sup>464</sup> Archive, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

<sup>465</sup> Green, *Underground Art*, p. 15.

<sup>466</sup> *ibid.*, p. 109. Green points out that this ticket was the forerunner of the current London Underground Travelcard.

Swanick's *Woolwich Ferry* (1949); Edward Bawden's *City* (1952); Peter Robinson's *London Rovers* (1958). Then there were the humorous posters by Fougasse<sup>467</sup> designed to help facilitate ease of movement in and out of the Underground. Photography and photo-montage – media Mayo did not begin to experiment with until the 1970s – were also being used in poster design. Compared to these, Mayo's posters, with their display of 19th century objects from the Geffrye Museum collection, look decidedly out-dated.

Why Mayo designed the two posters for the Geffrye Museum in the first place is unclear. Neither the Geffrye Museum nor the London Transport Board have any record of having commissioned them. Neither does the London Transport Archive hold any correspondence from Mayo to suggest that she made an independent submission of the designs to the Company. But, whatever the reason, Mayo came too late to the feast as far as designing for the London Underground was concerned and her posters were not adopted.

Such was not the case with those she designed for the Australian National Travel Association (ANTA). Like Frank Pick's on-going publicity drive to promote the London Underground system, posters produced by ANTA aimed at selling Australia nationally and internationally. ANTA had been formed as early as 1929 by a group of interested businessmen from the transport and accommodation industries<sup>468</sup> and, like Pick, it employed the most innovative Australian artists to design its posters. It distributed these widely throughout Australia and overseas in the 1930s but, with the advent of World War II, Australian tourism collapsed and with it its overseas offices and, as a consequence of this, its poster initiatives.<sup>469</sup> When ANTA returned to poster production in 1948 it produced six conservatively styled designs.<sup>470</sup> It regained its

---

<sup>467</sup> This was the pseudonym for the cartoonist Cyril Kenneth Bird.

<sup>468</sup> Butler, Roger, *Poster Art in Australia*, Canberra : National Gallery of Australia, 1993, p. 20.

<sup>469</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>470</sup> *ibid.*, p. 24.

reputation as a leader in the field, however, in the mid-1950s by commissioning new works from two of its outstanding designers of the 1930s, Douglas Annand and Gert Sellheim, experts in the techniques of photographic collage, and Eileen Mayo.<sup>471</sup>

The keen competition which existed between countries, resorts and travel services to advertise their attractions improved both the quality of design in posters and their reproduction. The best were selected world-wide annually and then reproduced in *Modern Publicity*, an English publication dedicated to improving design standards in the graphic arts. Such was the excellence of Mayo's posters that, for the first time in the history of Australian posters, three designs, all by Mayo, appeared in the 1955/57 edition of *Modern Publicity: Discover Australia, Cockatoo & Banksia, and Koalas*.<sup>472</sup> *Sturt's Desert Pea* featured in 1958/59 edition;<sup>473</sup> and *Great Barrier Reef* was reproduced in the 1959/60 publication of the magazine.<sup>474</sup> Her posters for ANTA exhibit the same excellent sense of what to select, simplify and exaggerate in order to create an eye-catching design as she exhibited in her later popular mammal series of postage stamps issued in 1961. A comparison of these later posters with her early examples show the extent to which Mayo's graphic skills had developed by the 1950s. A new austerity in her Australian posters ensured that a viewer's attention centred on Australia's unique flora and fauna. When focussing on Australia's Aboriginal heritage in *Discover Australia* she used pattern sparingly but decoratively to highlight a unique culture to the international tourist market.<sup>475</sup>

---

<sup>471</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>472</sup> *Modern Publicity*, Vol. no. 26, pp. 45 and 52.

<sup>473</sup> *Modern Publicity*, Vol. no. 28, p. 35

<sup>474</sup> *ibid.*, Vol. no. 29, p. 48.

<sup>475</sup> Mayo was one of a number of artists, (Margaret Preston, especially) who used Aboriginal motifs in their work at a time when appropriating images from another culture was quite acceptable. In the 1950s, and even earlier, "Artists were actively encouraged to exploit the many aspects of the local design source of Aboriginal art in order to 'avoid the necessity of paying heavily to other countries for the right to use their designs in commercial work.'" See Judith O'Callaghan, (ed), *The Australian Dream : Design of the Fifties*, NSW Australia : Powerhouse Publishing, 1993, pp. 38 - 40.



The success of Mayo's Australian posters are a measure of her continuing status as a world-class designer. These skills were recognised by *Modern Publicity* who annually selected and published her posters as outstanding designs in their field; 10,000 copies of her *Great Barrier* poster, one of seven posters chosen world-wide by *Modern Publicity* from twelve thousand entries, were distributed overseas by ANTA. Mayo's success as a poster-designer was due, in no small part, to her ability to immerse herself in a new culture, to use the exotic culture, flora and fauna she found there, and to draw together a multiplicity of strands in order to comment on the environment in which she was living and working.

## v. TABLEWARE

Mayo's artistic versatility extended to designing appropriate decoration for a dinner set for the Reserve Bank of Australia's Board Room in Melbourne (Cat. no. 179; Vol. II, p. 208). Although a newcomer to this type of work, she would have been familiar with china decorated by artists when she was living in London. Her mentor Laura Knight, for example, had designed tableware for Joseph Wedgwood & Sons, known for their promotion of elegance and simplicity.<sup>476</sup> Other artists personally known to Mayo, for example, Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell, also designed for Wedgwood. But, as Norman Wilson of Wedgwood recalled in 1982, their designs "... were quite unsuccessful on pottery, largely because they failed to learn the problems."<sup>477</sup> These problems were largely to do with the inappropriateness of their loosely painted designs for application to three-dimensional surfaces. Their free and spontaneous style obviously did not sit well with "the industrialised perfection of Wedgwood."<sup>478</sup> Eric Ravilious, who was Mayo's contemporary, took part in tableware

---

<sup>476</sup> When the Colombo and Cashel Street block of Beath's Christchurch (now Aurthur Barnett's) was completed in c. 1935 most of the first floor was occupied by a restaurant. To commemorate its opening, dinner and tea ware designed by several Royal Academicians, including Knight, was imported from England. Knight's leaf design, taken from the original imported tableware, still decorated crockery in the tea room in 1960. M.E. Thomson, M.E., *Beath's Centennial 1860 - 1960*, Caxton Press, 1960, unpaginated. I am grateful to Jenny May, Senior Heritage Planner, Christchurch City Council, for this information.

<sup>477</sup> Quoted in *Eric Ravilious 1903 - 42 : A Re-assessment of His Life and Work*, Eastbourne: Towner Art Gallery, 1986, p. 37.

<sup>478</sup> Tanya Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century*, Yale University Press, 1999, p. 22.

design schemes, his most important commissions being those undertaken for Wedgwood between 1936 and 1940. According to Wilson, all the directors of Wedgwood were unanimous in their support of Ravilious' "beautiful line drawings." However, at that particular time, his designs did not sell well, and "... only progressive buyers like Heals and Liberty's showed much interest."<sup>479</sup> Edward Bawden and Clare Leighton also produced successful designs for Wedgwood.

Unfortunately, Mayo's designs for a dinner set for the Reserve Bank of Australia appear not to have been used. According to the minutes of the meeting of the Décor Panel Committee of the Establishment Department of the Reserve Bank of Australia, held in Melbourne 22 August 1962, it unanimously recommended the adoption of Mayo's wild flower motif drawn between narrow brown bands which, they felt, would fit in with the general decor of the Board Room.<sup>480</sup> The design was also approved by the Sydney representative of Wedgwood.<sup>481</sup> In the absence of any record of Board Room china which even remotely fits the description in the minutes, it must be presumed that the final recommendation of the Panel was not acted upon.

## vi. PICTURE CARDS

Mayo's last commercial commission was a set of 36 cards<sup>482</sup> for the series *Rare and Endangered Birds of New Zealand*, published by Greggs, Dunedin. Because the end result of this commission which she worked on over a period of eight months was merely a set of cards which were distributed in packets of Greggs orange jelly crystals only,<sup>483</sup> they could easily be disregarded as minor and therefore unimportant. What

---

<sup>479</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>480</sup> Records, Reserve Bank of Australia, Melbourne.

<sup>481</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>482</sup> Twenty per cent of the breeding birds of this country were considered to be under threat of extinction.

<sup>483</sup> Children (and adults) stuck these cards into a purpose-made booklet, alongside a description of the bird and its habitat, written by John and Marie Darby.

these cards reveal, however, is that to Mayo, no project, no matter how prosaic, was considered unimportant, or unworthy of her skills and her best efforts.

The model for the 1977 card series was *Aquatic Birds of New Zealand*, which had been published by Greggs in 1965. The series of picture cards which accompanied this earlier publication had been reproduced from original paintings by the British artist, Michael Coombe. The format of Mayo's original paintings (150 x 100) is based on Coombe's paintings.<sup>484</sup> Because the birds she depicted were either rare or endangered, she was unable to research them at first hand in their natural habitat, as would have been her preference. Her information sources were, therefore, secondary: written and illustrative references, study skins and museum specimens.<sup>485</sup> Discovering that these often differed widely, on John Darby's<sup>486</sup> advice she used W.R.B. Oliver as her main written source.<sup>487</sup>

Discrepancies also existed among Mayo's illustrative sources. The Takahe is a good example of this. It had been presumed extinct until its rediscovery in 1948 in the Murchison Mountains, west of Lake Te Anau. The bird had first come to the attention of Europeans when Walter Mantell discovered its bones in 1847, near the mouth of the Waingongoro River in southern Taranaki. These were subsequently sent to Sir Richard Owen, who named the 'extinct' species, *Notornis mantelli*, or Mantell's southern bird.<sup>488</sup> In early 1931, when the artist Lily Daff (1885 - 1945)<sup>489</sup> came to Dunedin to paint it, she presumed that she was working from the only specimen of the Takahe in

---

<sup>484</sup> Although Gregg's still have Coombe's original paintings, Mayo's have been lost.

<sup>485</sup> Mayo's typewritten notes on her artwork for *Rare and Endangered Birds of New Zealand*. Collection, John Darby, Dunedin.

<sup>486</sup> Darby, the Assistant Director of the Otago Museum, and an expert on the yellow-eyed penguin, had been instrumental in securing this commission for Mayo.

<sup>487</sup> W.R.B. Oliver, *New Zealand Birds*, Wellington : Fine Arts (N.Z.) Ltd, 1930.

<sup>488</sup> Gordon R. Williams, *Birds of New Zealand*, Wellington : A.W. & A.H. Reed Ltd, (1973), p. 44.

<sup>489</sup> Daff was a designer and natural illustrator, who did numerous paintings of New Zealand birds and flowers.

New Zealand, at the Otago Museum. Her watercolour, *Takahe* 1930 - 31,<sup>490</sup> shows the bird standing at the edge of a lake, or river, presumably the Waingongoro River, where its remains were found. Fanny Wimperis (1840 - 1925) painted the takahe, *Notornis hochstetteri* from the *Te Anau Specimen* in 1879 in much the same setting.<sup>491</sup> Wimperis, like Daff, as well as the ornithologists prior to 1948, had no way of knowing that the habitat of this large, flightless bird was in rough, mountainous terrain at about 115 - 125 metres where forest gives way to scrub and snow tussock.<sup>492</sup> Although Mayo undoubtedly drew her takahe (Cat. no. 187.2; Vol. II, p. 215) after the specimen at Otago Museum, she was able to capitalise on research which had been done into the bird's habitat after its rediscovery in 1948. Consequently, her example, instead of standing near water, is depicted on a tussock-clad floor, surrounded by snowgrass (*Dathonia*) its main food source. Aware of the takahe's natural surroundings and staple food, Mayo's painting shows a naturalist's understanding of the purpose of the massive bill to enable it to efficiently cut the leaves of the tussocks and then chop off the more succulent bases to eat. Hers is a far more authentic rendering of the upper over-hanging bill than Daff's neatly triangular-shaped beak, which understandably shows little comprehension of its primary function. The same is true of the Kakapo, whose Maori name means Night-parrot. Unaware of the bird's nocturnal habits, Daff painted her bird in broad daylight, whereas Mayo presented a night-scene, placing her bird in a habitat of mossy forest, surrounded by ferns.

The habits and habitat of each bird Mayo painted for Greggs was just as carefully researched as the takahe and kakapo. For example, the Bush Wren, which lives in beech forests, is seldom seen on the ground. Accordingly, Mayo represents the bird on a moss-covered bough;<sup>493</sup> the Yellowhead is shown working head downwards, its

---

<sup>490</sup> Collection, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand, Inc., on deposit in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

<sup>491</sup> This work was gifted to the Hocken Library, University of Otago, by the artist in 1881.

<sup>492</sup> Williams, *Birds ...*, p. 44.

<sup>493</sup> Mayo's typewritten notes. Collection, John Darby, Dunedin.

characteristic position when searching for food which it found in tree bark, moss and lichens.<sup>494</sup> The Brown Bittern is depicted about to do its “freeze” pose, whereby it becomes invisible among the reeds which it used as camouflage.<sup>495</sup> Meticulous attention was also given to colour even though Mayo realised that much detail would be lost when the paintings were reproduced in four colours. She procured a kakapo feather and corrected the green of her painting to the shade of the actual feather. She fretted that the bill of the Fairy Tern could not contrast greatly with that of its nest, a shallow scrape of shellgrit and sand, because it had to be a middle tone to show up the black and white of the head. She was concerned that all references to the Buff Weka differed in descriptions of colouring, presumably because they varied considerably anyway. In the interests of authenticity and accuracy she represented those found in the Chatham Islands, with *olearia semidentata*, because she was not sure whether those which were released in Authur’s Pass had survived.

As a researcher, Mayo spent many weeks comparing her sources, and writing up data on each bird. Her archive at the Alexander Turnbull Library contains pages of research notes and drawings detailing colours, measurements from head to bill, bill to the pupils of the eye, etc.<sup>496</sup> As a designer, she faced the problem, not only of working out which pose would be the most characteristic of each bird’s physiology and habits, but also of evolving a cohesive style for the series. This had not been fully addressed in the series of picture cards designed by Coombe. Although his birds were arranged in categories, for example, coastal, oceanic, migratory, and inland birds, each appeared as a separate entity within the group. This was the result of Coombe’s allocation of equal space to the bird and its environment, which had the effect of diminishing the importance of the bird in each card. This resulted in a staccato of images throughout the booklet. Mayo, on the other hand, gave each bird centre stage, limiting its habitat to

---

<sup>494</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>495</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>496</sup> ATL, B - 131, Solander Box H.

background, or foreground details. The outcome was an easy transition from one image to the next. By varying the position of birds grouped together on a page, she added variety and rhythm to the publication.

The range of Mayo's design projects discussed in this chapter demonstrate that she was prepared to tackle anything. No commission was considered unimportant by her. The perfectionism of her work went beyond economic recompense but, ambitious and determined to make a career in art, she always focussed on the potential each commission offered for making it into a work of art. This she achieved by meticulously researching both her subject and the techniques of the appropriate medium. The excellence of her work in every field of design to which she applied herself resulted in recognition of her as a first-rate designer in England and Australia and later, in New Zealand.



Fig. 15

*The Ascension of the Lamb.* Apocalypse series, Scene 48,

The Angers Tapestries

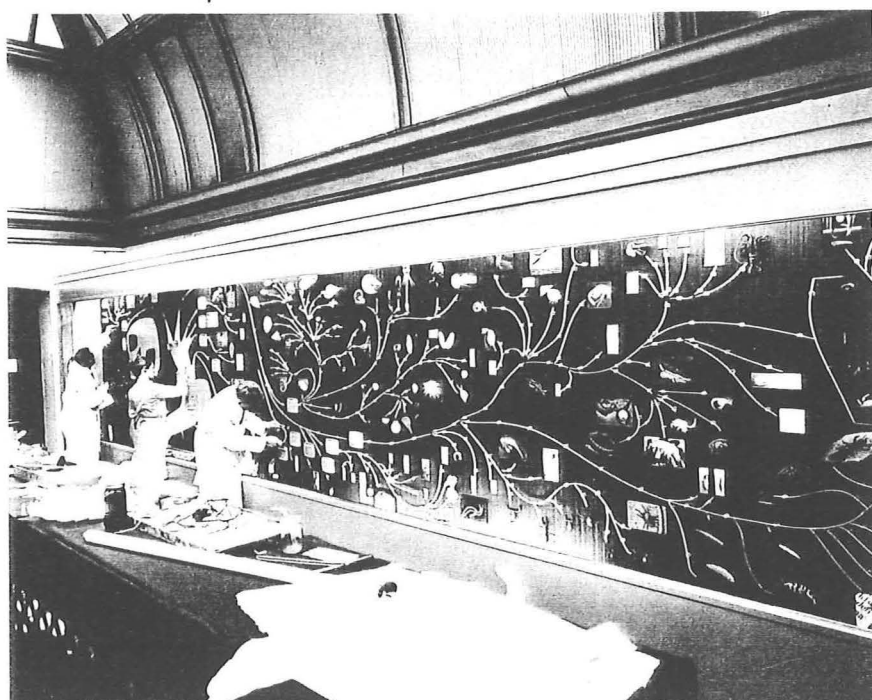


Fig. 16

*The Tree of the Invertebrates*, Australian Museum, Sydney, 1959



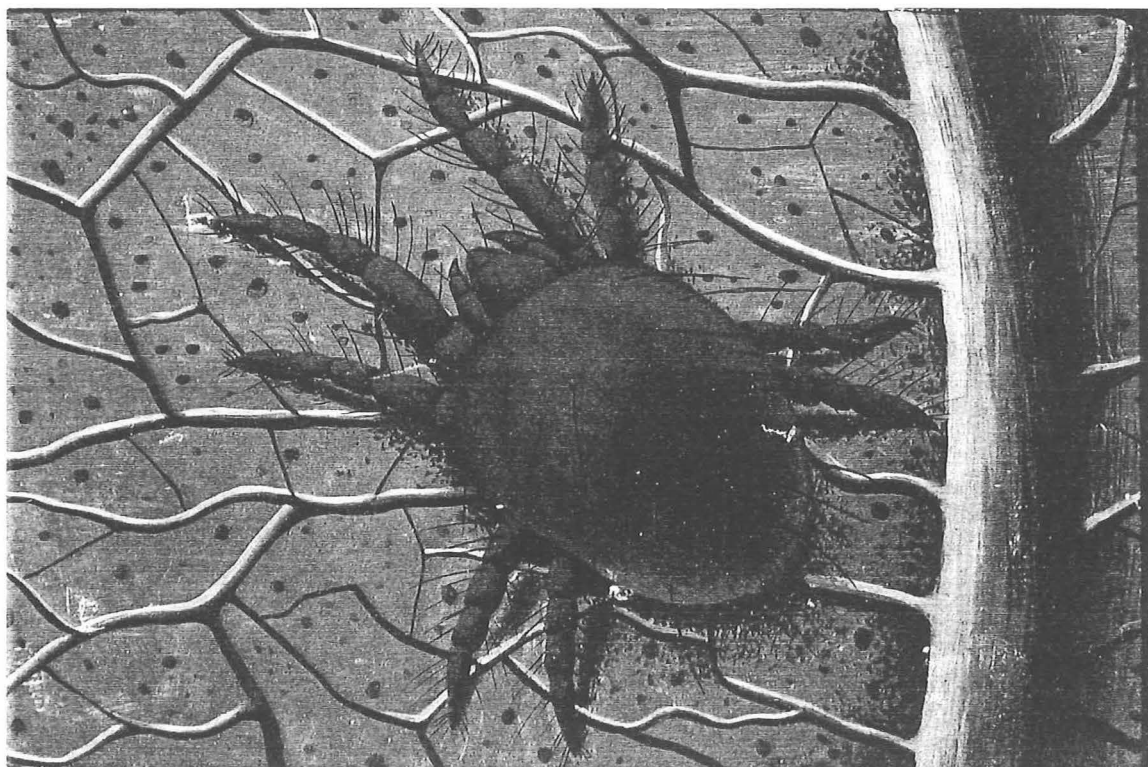


Fig. 17

Eileen Mayo. Insect (detail), *The Tree of Invertebrates*, Sydney, 1959

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE ARTIST AS DESIGNER II: STAMPS AND COINS

Historically, stamps and coins, objects which are mass produced for common usage, do not sit comfortably alongside the more traditional ‘crafts’ such as mural painting, tapestry designing and posters which, in the hierarchy of art, bear a resemblance to the ‘fine’ art of painting. Indeed, few would consider them as works of art at all. But, as far as Mayo was concerned, a design for a stamp was no different from that for a mural, a painting, or a poster; it posed exactly the same basic problem as any other of her ‘fine art’ projects, that of “filling a space as fittingly and as beautifully as one can.”<sup>497</sup> In fact, it was as a stamp designer that Mayo’s skills as a researcher, natural historian, designer and colourist culminated and reached their highest peak of excellence and quality. Her 14 sets of stamps, issued by the Post Offices of Australia and New Zealand between 1959 and 1985, left an indelible mark on stamp design in both countries. Indeed, in Australia, her stamps came to be interpreted internationally as the standard of artistic merit to be expected of that country. In 1963 she was one of six designers commissioned to submit designs for Australian decimal coinage. In New Zealand she was among seven finalists whose designs were selected by the New Zealand Treasury and the Royal Mint Advisory Committee in 1966. Although none of her coin designs were eventually

---

<sup>497</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Barbara R. Mueller, 15 August, 1961. Collection of author, Christchurch.

chosen for minting by either country her New Zealand designs received high praise from the British art historian Lord Clark.<sup>498</sup>

### **i. STAMPS**

Mayo branched out into the field of stamp designing in 1957 when she submitted several designs, on speculation, to the Stamp Advisory Committee of the Postmaster General's Department, Melbourne.<sup>499</sup> These were viewed with interest by the committee but, after they were considered in relation to subjects already used or about to be given out to other designers, none was regarded as quite suitable.<sup>500</sup> At the suggestion of Sir Daryl Lindsay,<sup>501</sup> however, Mayo was invited by the Australian Stamp Advisory Committee to undertake a specific commission to prepare six tentative stamps, each depicting an Australian animal and capable of adequate monocolour treatment by engraving for recess printing.<sup>502</sup> Animals suggested were: the kangaroo, koala, opossum, Tasmanian tiger, banded anteater and the bandicoot. Finish, exactness of pose or expression, and overall attractiveness were sought.

Prior to Mayo's mammal series, to most people in Australia a stamp was a stamp – just a payment for postage – and the old adage that 'anything goes' held good. As the designer George Hamori, an immigrant to Australia from Hungary, told *The Sun*: "... people get the impression [from our stamps] we are little more than a crude

---

<sup>498</sup> Royal Mint Archive, London, 247/9.

<sup>499</sup> These were of birds, plants, fish, animals and aborigines.

<sup>500</sup> Correspondence, Postmaster General, Melbourne, to Mayo, 1 July 1957. Collection of author.

<sup>501</sup> Sir Daryl Lindsay was the Director of the National Gallery of Australia and a member of the Stamp Advisory Committee. Lindsay knew and admired Mayo's prints and had purchased several of them for the permanent collection of the gallery. He also became a close personal friend.

<sup>502</sup> In the recess printing method the artist's drawings are handed to an engraver, who copies them line by line on to a softened steel die, using a burin. Where printing was to be in a single colour, gradations of tone were expressed by the depth of line used by the engraver. See L.N. & M. Williams, "Making a Stamp Design," *The Antique Dealer & Collectors' Guide*, March 1948, p. 27. Mayo had reservations with regard to recess printing, sometimes feeling hampered by an engraver's inability to draw; that in copying a design some of the subtleties of drawing used to show the structure of an animal could be lost. Perfectionist that she was she felt that, ideally, the artist should engrave her own designs.

colony."<sup>503</sup> But this all changed with the issue of Mayo's mammal series (Cat. no.188. 1 - 6; Vol. II, p. 216). Her impact was immediately recognised, *The Sun* reporting that there were signs that a new spirit was entering the design of Australian stamps.<sup>504</sup>

As with any work she undertook, Mayo's first approach to her stamp assignment was through the avenue of research. "My sources of information are whatever I can get and wherever I can find them."<sup>505</sup> The living animal was, of course, the best reference and she used this whenever she could, absorbing its three dimensionality and studying its movement, for example, the tiger cat and the kangaroo. Details came from museums which supplied skeletons for fundamental form, pickled specimens for muscle, and stuffed specimens for fur-direction. A study of photographs and plates in scientific texts completed the research.<sup>506</sup>

Photographs, skeletons and museum exhibits, for example, were her main resources for researching the Tasmanian tiger, the rabbit bandicoot and the platypus. The Tasmanian Tiger was believed extinct; photographs of the rare rabbit bandicoot were few; the banded anteater lives only in certain isolated regions of South and Western Australia, making it impossible (on account of the tight time-frame for the stamp-designs) for Mayo to observe this mammal at first-hand: "I had to draw it from dozens of photographs, colour slides and a life-size skeleton."<sup>507</sup> Although Sydney Zoo had a platypus, its nocturnal habits meant that it could only be seen after dark but she was refused permission to stay after closing time. The head keeper at Taronga Park was more obliging than the authorities at Sydney when it came to providing Mayo with an opportunity to study the Tiger Cat, also a nocturnal animal. "... Mr Chick Cody went

---

<sup>503</sup> *The Sun*, 14 April 1961. See ATL B - 131, Solander Box H.

<sup>504</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>505</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Mueller, 15 August 1961. Collection of author.

<sup>506</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>507</sup> *ibid.*

into the tiger cat pit and picked up a sleeping tiger for me one day. He held it upside down by the tail long enough for me to get the anatomical details down."<sup>508</sup>

The six subjects researched, Mayo planned her designs taking the dimensions specified by the committee as the starting point. "I feel that the boundary lines, or format, set the key of the whole design. I always take the given frame as the starting point to any design."<sup>509</sup> Excellence of design was of paramount importance to her: "... their design [should be] striking, simple and up to date without being gimmicky, which makes them old fashioned in a year or two."<sup>510</sup>

So well did Mayo fulfil her own design specifications in the new series of stamps that, in the 1960 annual international selection made by the London publication, *Stamp Collector's Annual*, of the 10 best designs of the year, her 1/- green platypus stamp<sup>511</sup> shared equal first place with a Canadian design – "a little masterpiece" by P. Weiss – commemorating the Tercentenary of the Battle of the Long Sault. Mayo's elevenpenny rabbit bandicoot, "[which] cannot be equalled in the world of zoological philately,"<sup>512</sup> was chosen as fifth in the world's 10 best stamp designs in 1961 and the

---

<sup>508</sup> *Sydney Daily Herald*, 15 March 1961. See ATL B - 131, Solander Box H.

<sup>509</sup> Barbara R. Mueller, *Western Stamp Collector*, 21 July 1962, p. 2.

<sup>510</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Gil Docking, Director of the City of Auckland Art Gallery, 28 April 1965. Collection of author.

<sup>511</sup> Artist's notes. Collection, author. This stamp was not without controversy. Its design was criticised by Ernest Kehr, a well-known and respected philatelist who lived in New York. Kehr called the stamp "prosaic and crude," with engraved lines looking as though they were made by a workman who had not yet mastered his art. This must have engendered a feeling of *déjà vu* in Mayo whose *Story of Living Things* had been spoilt by interfering publishing officials. Kehr's criticism prompted the irate designer to accuse the Government officials of altering the stamp without her knowledge. Mayo claimed that everything on the stamp had been designed around the denomination 10d, which she originally placed below the platypus in the lower right-hand corner. Her careful design ensured that everything led to the 10d, even the swirl of water in the background. The denomination was changed to 1/-, the platypus lowered, and the denomination placed on the upper left-hand side of the design. Mayo's original platypus did not have an eye since her research had revealed that it is always closed when the animal submerges. However, the engraver jabbed an eye in the head of the platypus. The fur which had been drawn to lie naturally was engraved every which-way so that Mayo complained that it gave the impression of scales or spines. However, that the 1/- green platypus stamp shared equal first place in the annual selection made by the *Stamp Collector's Annual* suggests that it was not nearly as bad as the often over-sensitive Mayo and the critical Kehr made it out to be.

<sup>512</sup> *Western Stamp Collector*, 21 July 1962, p. 3.

8d. Tiger Cat was included amongst the 10 best. L.E. Scott,<sup>513</sup> commenting on the excellence of the design of the Tiger Cat in the 1961 edition of the *Stamp Collectors' Annual*, wrote:

... The design is made up by this animal's truly magnificent tail, which extends in great splendour from the upper half of the stamp to curl round a tree-trunk in the lower centre..... and, incidentally, to carry the eye towards the 8d. denomination! Then the eye automatically moves up to the head again and so returns round the body to the tail..... ad infinitum. The stamp thus observes all the canons of pictorial art – something of an achievement in the space available.<sup>514</sup>

Mayo regarded the denomination of a stamp as integral to her design. The "magnificent" curving tail of the native tiger cat, for example, emphatically points to the denomination, while gum-leaves, carefully arranged so that the line running parallel to their tips do not run 'parallel' to the line of the tail,<sup>515</sup> not only creates an interesting shape between the tail and the tree in the lower left-hand corner, but also balances the numeral on the lower right-hand side. The curving body and tail of the banded anteater, which echoes the denomination numeral that fills the area left by the curve of the back, is another example of her careful consideration of the place and shape of the numeral within the overall design. A further striking aspect of Mayo's stamps is that they are designs rather than photographic representations of the animals. Like her illustrations to *The Story of Living Things*, all the mammals in the series, though biologically correct, are stylised decorative drawings. For example, the 'realistic' delineation of the furred coats of the animals is simplified into decorative patterns. As most of the mammals were nocturnal (the Banded Anteater is the exception) Mayo recommended that they be printed in dark colours to suggest their solidity, the richness of their fur, as well as twilight or night time.<sup>516</sup>

---

<sup>513</sup> Scott was the annual selector of the 10 best international stamps.

<sup>514</sup> *Stamp Collector's Annual*, p. 12.

<sup>515</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Mueller, 15 August 1961. Collection of author.

<sup>516</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Mr Collas, Secretary, Stamp Advisory Committee, n.d. Collection of author.

Conversion to decimal currency two years later necessitated new stamp designs, which resulted in four new fish designs by Mayo, the Great Barrier Reef series, issued in 1966,<sup>517</sup> and reproduced by photogravure<sup>518</sup> (Cat. no. 189.1 - 4; Vol. II, p. 218). Each was printed in three or four colours in direct contrast to the 'Mammal' series which was designed to be printed in monocolour. The subjects – the Hermit Crab, the Humbug Fish, Anemone Fish and the Coral Fish – were chosen by Mayo on account of their familiarity to all tourists who visited the Barrier Reef. Her main consideration with these designs was to show an interesting viewpoint of each of the four fish. Accordingly, each is drawn slightly in perspective in order to create a feeling of three dimensions, as well as of movement. For example, the hermit crab is depicted only partially out of its shell in order to convey an impression of movement across the ocean floor, while the Coral Fish, its transparent tail flicked to the right of its body, appears to be propelling itself deeper into its watery environment.

One of the problems Mayo faced with all her stamp designs in New Zealand, as in Australia, was that the authorities wanted her botanical, biological and zoological designs to be as realistic as possible. As already pointed out, however, she saw a stamp as a design, not a photograph. Although her portrayal of creatures and plants was always accurate, she stylised them into interesting designs. Consequently, she often found it difficult to placate the authorities on zoology to whom the drawings were submitted for verification and approval. With the hermit crab, for example, there was the difficult problem of the simplifying of the spots and hairs so that they would reproduce satisfactorily in such a small size, and still satisfy the zoologists.

---

<sup>517</sup> Mayo emigrated to New Zealand in 1962 from where she continued this commission from the Australian Post Office.

<sup>518</sup> In photogravure a carefully executed drawing of the design is photographed, and projected through a camera, in stamp size, on to a large negative the requisite number of times, and from the negative the designs are transferred to the printing plate, or cylinder. See L.N. and M. Williams, "Making a Stamp Design," *The Antique Dealer and Collectors' Guide*, p. 27.

Throughout the design process for the *Barrier Reef* stamps Mayo, as a printmaker, was aware of the technical difficulties associated with printing in a number of colours. She tried to minimise them by making it possible for a light colour to lie some way under a darker, overprinted colour, so that a little deviation of register would not be noticeable.<sup>519</sup> Each design was planned by her as if for reproduction by colour lithography, a subject in which she had had much experience and which from her perspective as a stamp designer, she saw as not dissimilar from photogravure.<sup>520</sup> After many experiments with the backgrounds she decided that a plain colour was best with such complicated subjects and that, "... even with the less elaborate subjects only a very simple one [background] could be used."<sup>521</sup> Apart from a satisfactory visual effect, Mayo, the experienced printmaker, realised that a simple background would present fewer difficulties in registration when it came to printing the stamps.

When the French Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications invited the Australian Post Office to participate in an International Philatelic Exhibition in Paris, *Philatelic Paris 1964*, the Australian Post-Master General extended an invitation to Mayo to represent the country at the exhibition. "In view of your recent work for this Department, I would therefore like to offer you the opportunity of participating in this International Exhibition"<sup>522</sup> – a tangible expression, indeed, of the high esteem in which she was held. It was also an authentication of her belief that postage stamps should be like miniature posters, with a prestige advertising value for the country of origin.<sup>523</sup>

Designing a stamp, in both Australia and New Zealand, was like participating in a competition. Consequently, some designers inevitably lost out. This competitive

---

<sup>519</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>520</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>521</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Collas, 15 August 1961. Collection of author.

<sup>522</sup> Correspondence, Australian Postmaster General to Mayo, 1964, (month not given). Collection of author.

<sup>523</sup> *ibid.*



approach produced an overly complicated procedure of monitoring and selecting the final designs. For each proposed new issue, the respective stamp advisory committees invited a selection of artists to prepare designs, for which exact specifications were given. Sometimes the net was cast wide as, for example, in the case of the New Zealand issue of United Nations commemoratives and 25th Anniversary, 1971, where competitors from member nations all over the world were invited to submit designs. Preliminary drawings, known as 'roughs,' were submitted in three stages to the Stamp Advisory Committee and a designer could be eliminated at any step. At each stage opinions were sought. In Mayo's case these were from authorities in the fields of botany, zoology, engraving and philately. Alterations, as directed, were made by the artist before the proposed stamps were once again submitted to the committee for further criticism until such time that a design that pleased everyone evolved. In both Australia and New Zealand, the designs had also to be approved by the Postmaster General's department, which made the final choice of design.

Practically all Mayo's commercial commissions in New Zealand were for stamp designs. Between 1969 and 1978 the indefatigable artist created 15 sets of stamps, 12 of which were issued by the New Zealand Post Office:<sup>524</sup> the Captain Cook Bicentenary (1969), six definitives (1970), a Chatham Islands set (1970), UNICEF 25th Anniversary (1971), four Alpine Plants (1972), Tokelau Islands: Corals (1973), Antarctic Treaty 10th Anniversary (1974), Health stamps (1974), Christmas stamps (1974), Tokelau Islands: Fish (1975), Tokelau Islands: Coronation Anniversary (1978), Christmas stamps (designed 1978, issued 1985).

Four pictorial date stamps (Cats. nos. 190.1 - 4; Vol. II, p. 219) to commemorate the Captain Cook Bicentenary in 1969 launched Mayo on to the New Zealand stamp designing scene. Her first set of New Zealand stamps is distinguished by her ability to condense each design into a small visual biography (in the elementary sense) of three of

---

<sup>524</sup> *ibid.*

the most important participants in Cook's journey to this country: James Cook, Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander. She had always delighted in meticulously accurate detail and knew from her wide experience as a designer how to portray monumentality on a small scale. Limitations imposed by the small format in which she worked forced her to concentrate on the essentials of design and to portray them with enforced simplicity. As Luitjen Bieringa pointed out, these stamps, which were less representative and less pictorial than those which had dominated New Zealand stamp issues in the mid-1930s until the mid-1960s, signalled a major change in stamp design in this country.<sup>525</sup>

At first, Mayo had doubts about using Cook's head as a subject on her stamp as she envisaged one of the usual three quarter-view portraits<sup>526</sup> which would not have fitted satisfactorily into the format of her design. The profile portrait of Cook she eventually used is based on John Flaxman's drawing of the explorer which was reproduced as a jasper ware relief/medallion by Wedgwood.<sup>527</sup> An attractive aspect of this set of stamps is the colour, which links the four designs together: pale blue, dark blue and red on the 4c and 28c denominations; pale pink, pinkish-brown, light and dark turquoise in differing proportions on the 6c and 18c denominations.

Because Mayo's art, in whatever field she worked, was based on extensive research, it was often slightly didactic. This is evident in the First Day Cover for the Cook bicentenary issue (Cat. no. 190.5; Vol. II, p. 220). Wishing to be inclusive towards the Maori "... who, whatever their feelings on the subject, are sharing the Bicentenary Celebrations..." she represented the New Zealand waters, in which Cook's anchor rests, by the traditional Maori pattern 'aramoana' or 'path of the sea.' She also carefully

---

<sup>525</sup> Luit Bieringa, *Postal Impressions*, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, 1992, u.p.

<sup>526</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Mr Griffiths, Director of Postal Services, Wellington, 28 August 1969. Collection of author.

<sup>527</sup> Wedgwood produced a lucrative line in portraits of personalities in the late eighteenth century, including Sarah Siddons, the younger and older Pitt, as well as several popes. All were modelled on classical cameos.

considered colour; she recommended that the cover be printed in a blue-grey which would look less blue when juxtaposed with the brighter blue colouring of the stamps.<sup>528</sup>

In 1970, the New Zealand Post Office issued six further stamps designed by Mayo as part of a larger issue. These were definitives – stamps issued to meet the most often used postal rates – featuring moths and fish. Those which were finally approved by the Post Office, however, were not what she had originally envisaged and designed. They suffered from an unusual degree of interference by the postal authorities and battle lines were frequently drawn between the artist and the Post Office over a number of issues. Although she made all the modifications required by the Stamp Advisory Committee, in the end she regarded the finished designs as "most unhappy."<sup>529</sup>

One of the major issues affecting Mayo's Moth and Fish series was the deletion of the Maori names from the stamps at the eleventh hour of the design process. At the original briefing of all the designers of stamps which involved natural history subjects in this large issue of definitives, artists were instructed to include the common English name as well as the Maori name. When these were checked by the experts it was found that the Maori names varied in different parts of the country. Because this led to so much disagreement among members of the public, the Post Office had designers eliminate them from their finished work only a day or so prior to them being sent to England for printing. Mayo felt that the removal of this lettering, which had formed an important part of her over-all design, compromised her as a designer. This was, of course, an exaggeration. Mayo never submitted a piece of work for exhibition or public appraisal of any description until she was satisfied with it. But her prickly, sensitive nature was always deeply offended when her work was criticised or she was asked to alter it. Indeed, the altered stamps showed none of the scars of the struggle which had

---

<sup>528</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>529</sup> Correspondence Mayo to author, 4 November 1970.

ensued between the designer and the postal authorities. It would be fudging the issue, however, to deny that the removal of the Maori names did not have any affect on her designs. The completeness of her original design is evident in drawing of the Zebra (Lichen) moth (Cat. no. 191.4; Vol. II, p. 222). The removal of the the Maori names created blank spaces which, in Mayo's opinion, upset the balance of her designs. This may be observed in the scarlet parrot fish, for example, where the original Maori title, originally placed by Mayo at right angles to its English name, was designed to balance the numeral and country of origin at the base of the stamp. The omission of the Maori name of the leatherjacket (Kokiri) (Cat. no. 191.7; Vol. II, p. 223) resulted in the awkward division of the common name of this fish, whereas Mayo's intention was to have both titles form a large right-angle to balance the unique touch of the transparent crossed tails of the two fish in the opposite corner.

Background colour was another area in which Mayo's wishes were overridden by officialdom (in this issue of stamps). She was quite prepared to accept that it must sometimes be altered to make it easier to distinguish between the different denominations; that two designers, unknown to each other, might by chance choose the same colour scheme. In the case of her designs, however, she had chosen particular colours to equate with each creature's environment. For example, originally the background of the sea-horses was "a gentler red, more like the red of seaweed;"<sup>530</sup> in the first design for the Magpie moth the background was a muted yellowish-green, similar to the colour of tussock, among which the moth's food source is located. "The foodplant was therefore less prominent and the red lettering, over the green-yellow, was less bright – more of a rust red."<sup>531</sup> The self-appointed 'colour experts' among the Postal Advisory Committee, however, insisted that, "The background is to be changed to a lighter, livelier buttercup yellow shade to 'key-up' the design and allow more

---

<sup>530</sup> Artist's notes, collection of author.

<sup>531</sup> *ibid.*

contrast with similar shades in the series."<sup>532</sup> What the committee members failed to appreciate was that any change in colour would affect the entire design. Against the required bright yellow background, the original scarlet of the denomination and the moth's body seemed to dazzle and, consequently, the denomination and image became confused. To rectify the colour imbalance, and to make the stamp more legible, Mayo toned the red down, with a little yellow, to an orange-vermillion. Congratulations on these colour changes in a letter from H.J.C. Sonderer, the Secretary, 1970 Definitive Stamps Advisory Committee, probably gave her little pleasure: "Your three moth designs are regarded by the Committee as being extremely pleasing, direct and colourful. The colour change achieved with the Magpie moth background is also most pleasant."<sup>533</sup>

Mayo felt that one of the greatest threats to her autonomy and integrity as a designer stemmed from changes made to the denomination of a stamp once the design process was underway. While she realised that it was often difficult for the authorities to be certain of these until a later stage in the development of the stamp, it posed, for her, a barrier to good design. Apart from the country of origin, she regarded the numerals as the most important part of the stamp and, in order to achieve an integrated look, the pictorial motif should be related to these from the very beginning.<sup>534</sup> "A design is a highly organised unit," she wrote. "It can no more be tampered with than a building, or a plumbing system, without complete collapse."<sup>535</sup> In what was an ongoing cause of frustration for Mayo, most of the denominations for this issue of definitives were altered. The Magpie moth, designed for a 2c denomination, was changed to 2 1/2c, resulting in what Mayo described as an "unattractive, scattered denomination." The

---

<sup>532</sup> Correspondence, H.J.C. Sonderer, Secretary, 1970 Definitive Stamps Advisory Committee, to Mayo, 16 May 1969.

<sup>533</sup> Sonderer to Mayo, 30 June, 1969.

<sup>534</sup> Artist's notes, collection of author.

<sup>535</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to A.J. Beck, Post Office Headquarters, Wellington, 20 September 1970.

Lichen moth<sup>536</sup> was designed for 1/2c denomination, the long narrow shape of which was to run down the right side. In the case of the 1c denomination, the single stroke of the figure 'one' was to form a right angle with the body of the puriri moth, this being repeated at the top right corner by the two names. Although the 1c was designed for the Puriri moth the denomination was smaller in the original in order to balance with the Maori name in the top right-hand side. The original 6c was also smaller than that used in the final version of the sea horses. The Leatherjacket was the only design to escape alteration by the Stamp Advisory Committee.<sup>537</sup> Mayo had been frustrated by similar interference from the Australian Post Office in her 1960 Native Animals issue. Venting her exasperation when changes were made to her 1/- platypus stamp, she asked: "If this principle is good, why commission artists to design stamps? It would be simpler to leave everything to the senior office boy or whoever adds and subtracts from designs accepted from experts."<sup>538</sup>

Despite Mayo's disappointment that her expertise as designer of the Definitive issue was frequently over-ruled, the thoroughness of her research was never questioned. In this regard A.J. Beck, writing to her on behalf of the Stamp Advisory Committee, said: "The Committee asked me to let you know that the thought and research which you so obviously put into your designs are very much appreciated."<sup>539</sup> This praise from the Post Office was well deserved, given the lengths Mayo went to ensure the accuracy of her drawings for this stamp issue. The leatherjacket, for example, was drawn from life in the aquarium at the Department of Zoology, University of Canterbury. As the university did not have a living specimen of the scarlet parrot fish, they ordered one for her. While awaiting its arrival, Professor G.A. Knox of the Zoology

---

<sup>536</sup> Mayo originally referred to this as the Zebra moth. It was suggested, however, by Mr Ordish, the entomologist at the Dominion Museum, that the name Lichen moth was more appropriate for this species than Zebra moth. Correspondence, Sonderer to Mayo, 30 June 1969.

<sup>537</sup> Artist's notes, collection of author.

<sup>538</sup> *Stamp News*, 1 November 1959, p. 5.

<sup>539</sup> 14 March 1969.

Department and Marie Darby, a Marine Biologist, working at Canterbury Museum, provided Mayo with accurate descriptions of colour, as well as pictorial references.

Her research problem with the Magpie moth was more complicated. It centred on tracking down the main native food of the moth and the caterpillar, which originally appeared in the design. As there were no illustrations of this native plant – it did not even have a common name – she involved the staff of the Botanic Gardens in two excursions to the Port Hills, near Christchurch, to help her locate the species, *erechites prenanthoides*. Mayo could not have predicted the far-reaching effect her persistent research to find the correct native plant for the native moth would have. The host plant on the 2 1/2c Magpie moth was noted by Dr. Michael Benn of the Faculty of Science, at the University of Calgary, Canada, who wrote to her asking for identification of the plant. He explained in his letter that, while on sabbatical leave, (year not given) he had spent time in New Zealand with the DSIR's Entomology Division in Auckland, working on the Magpie moth, but had not examined *erechites prenanthoides*, which Mayo depicted in her stamp, but another species, *erechites atkinsonii*.<sup>540</sup> Having discovered that this day-flying moth escaped predation by birds as a consequence of its unpalatable taste, and that the chemicals responsible were acquired from the host plants on which the larvae fed, he was about to publish his findings. He told her that he wished to "... enliven an otherwise staid report by commenting on the fact that the association of the moth with [the] toxic host-plant was so well known in New Zealand that several million copies of an illustration have been recently circulated; then giving a reference to your design and perhaps illustrating our paper with a reproduction of the actual stamp."<sup>541</sup>

In comparison with the design and research difficulties associated with the Definitive Stamp issue, the Chatham Island lily and Mollymawk stamps, (1970) were

---

<sup>540</sup> Correspondence, Benn to Mayo, 3 October 1977. The 1977 date given on the letter must have been a typing error as Benn refers to the recently circulated stamps. The date, therefore, is more likely to be 1971, since the stamps were issued in 1970.

<sup>541</sup> *ibid.*

relatively straightforward (Cat. no. 192.1 - 2; Vol. II, p. 224). These two large, rectangular shapes, similar in format to the Cook bicentennial issue, were designed to relate to each other. "Although ... not essential to make them obviously a pair, it seems more satisfactory to have some kind of link if possible and I have designed them with this end in view."<sup>542</sup> Mayo chose to depict only the head, bill and neck of the Mollymawk – the features which distinguished it from all others – to create her simple and bold design for the 1c stamp. The brown eye imparts a look of liveliness and intelligence to the bird and touches of the same colour in the bill and body link them back to the eye. Mayo had studied the Mollymawk from an unmounted specimen lent to her from the Canterbury Museum, which she was able to handle and draw in detail. The notes on its label gave the colour of the iris as dark blue, but her other reference, W.R.B. Oliver's *New Zealand Birds*,<sup>543</sup> gave the colour as brown. "However, blue is so good in this case (and brown impossible without another printing) that I have followed the information on the label."<sup>544</sup> It was subsequently decided that the brown eye was more correct than the blue and Mayo changed the colour accordingly. The line drawing of the whole form of the Mollymawk to the left of the 'portrait' ties up with the panel of the 1c stamp. Although the colouring of the lily is extremely variable, for the purpose of composition and unity of colour, Mayo chose to represent the typical dark-blue centred, pale-edged form of the flower, depicting it as a small spray to show as many details as possible, while the panel gives an idea of the growth of the whole plant.<sup>545</sup> Since the so-called Chatham Islands lily "is so obviously not a lily,"<sup>546</sup> Mayo, in order to satisfy the degree of accuracy she always demanded of her work, included the flower's scientific name, *Myosotidium hortensia*.

---

<sup>542</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Griffiths, 26 March 1970. Collection of author.

<sup>543</sup> Wellington : Fine Arts (N.Z.) Ltd, 1930.

<sup>544</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Scott, 8 March 1970.

<sup>545</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>546</sup> *ibid.*



Guidelines given by the Post Office to the designers competing for the Antarctic Treaty 10th Anniversary 1971 stamp issue stated that, "The artist's interpretation may be as individual as he chooses, but should convey, as simply and as vividly as possible, the message prescribed by the United Nations Postal Administration. ... The design should be unique."<sup>547</sup>

Unique, for Mayo, at this stage of her artistic development, at least, was the abstract design of her Antarctic Treaty stamp.<sup>548</sup> Her original design had been even more abstract than the one she finally evolved. Based on an impression of the "constant high winds and swirling movement of the landscape – mountains, snowdrifts, storm-whipped seas, and the transparent blues and greens which abound,"<sup>549</sup> her intention had been to show the essential turbulence of the Antarctic, "... the challenge to which all the signatory powers must face in their work there – whose very difficulties should make for co-operation rather than competition."<sup>550</sup> The off-centre position of the slightly foreshortened landmass, with the globe itself tossed on the swirling shapes, had originally helped to create the wind-swept movement she intended. The Stamp Advisory Committee, however, thought otherwise. At first it was suggested that the Antarctic continent be shown in white which, as Mayo pointed out, would have appeared as a hole through to the white background.<sup>551</sup> She was instructed to move it from off-centre to dead-centre; to add straight lines of latitude and longitude. Having made the required modifications which "completely arrested the movement which was the theme of the design,"<sup>552</sup> Mayo expressed her disappointment in a letter to the Post Advisory Committee saying:

---

<sup>547</sup> *A Guide to Artists in the Designing of United Nations Stamp*, n.d.

<sup>548</sup> As discussed in Chapter Three Mayo's first abstract print *Antarctic Base* (1972), (Cat. no. 79; Vol. II, p. 124) grew out of her design for the Antarctic Treaty stamp.

<sup>549</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Beck, 6 July, 1970. Collection of author.

<sup>550</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>551</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Beck, 20 September 1970. Collection of author.

<sup>552</sup> *ibid.*

In its original form I considered this to be the best design I had ever done and was delighted at its acceptance. The disappointment at its destruction is therefore all the more intense. Yet the matter goes further than personal distress. There should be concern about good design, in all things, especially in those in everyday use and those which may enhance or diminish our standing as a progressive nation.<sup>553</sup>

Deaf to her comments, the committee subsequently pointed out the difficulties of making a rigidly straight line from overprinted colours, and requested that the design be enclosed in a border to minimise this problem. Unwilling to compromise her design any further, Mayo emphatically stated her reservations that, "a border would decrease still further the feeling of movement; it could give a staid, old-fashioned look to the design when the current tendency seems to be towards a 'free' edge (except in the case of a solid background)<sup>554</sup> ( Cat. no.194; Vol. II, p. 226). She suggested that, "In the case of the Antarctic Treaty design, a slight lack of register at the edge might add to the sense of freshness and spontaneity and be more in keeping with modern trends" which, she pointed out to the committee, "was one of the aims of this design from the outset."<sup>555</sup>

Mayo's Antarctic Treaty design and UNICEF's 25th Anniversary stamp were part of a double issue. Her design for UNICEF (Cat. no. 193; Vol. II, p. 225) is the least impressive of all her stamp creations. Indeed, its very conventionality ensured that it presented few challenges to the Stamp Advisory Committee, whose suggestions amounted to little more than tinkering with the child's position in the design and changing some of the colours to ensure an easier reading of the finished work. With its penchant for bright colour, the committee was unhappy with the blue tint which lay over the whole child, including the chains of the swing, and requested that everything be shown at full colour. Having brightened the orange of the '25' and deepened the yellow

---

<sup>553</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>554</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>555</sup> *ibid.*

background, Mayo realised that the design would be spoilt if the other colours were made stronger. She wrote to the committee to inform them that their suggestion was untenable as far as good design was concerned. "Everything was coming forward (just like a Woolworth advertisement) and the design looked cheap and cluttered. I think you would have agreed if you had seen it at this stage."<sup>556</sup>

Mayo's instinctive eye for colour is nowhere more apparent than in the alpine plants issue (1972), (Cat. nos. 195.1 - 4; Vol. II, p. 227). These stamps are an example of the sustained imaginative effort she brought to stamp designing. Always excited by colour, she confidently used it in this series to establish a satisfying tonal relationship between a plant and its background. The colour harmony of the alpine plants is based on the use of opposites on the colour-wheel: the purple flowers of the black scree cotula against a background of orange (Cat. no. 195.5; Vol. II, p. 228); the deep yellow-orange central flower-head of the North Island edelweiss, surrounded by white leaves, against clear blue; the softer yellow of Haast's buttercup, with its grey-green leaves, against a grey-pink backdrop (Cat. no.195.6; Vol. II, p. 229); the rust-red of the underside of the leaves, centres and stalks of the brown mountain daisy to match the green background. The background colour was also intended to refer to a plant's natural surroundings: the blue background of the North Island edelweiss, "... might be taken to be deep shadow cast by strong-sunlight on the prevailing blue-grey rock surface;"<sup>557</sup> the background to Haast's Buttercup, found in Nelson and Canterbury, in screes 500 to 650 metres high, related to "many of the rocks [which] seem to have a pinkish or mauvish cast, as in the background."<sup>558</sup>

Each stamp in this issue is like a small enclosed garden which holds our attention through the slow revelation and complexity of the plant it contains. For example, a close

---

<sup>556</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Beck, 13 August 1970. Collection of author.

<sup>557</sup> Artist's notes, collection of author.

<sup>558</sup> *ibid.*

examination of Haast's buttercup reveals succulent grey-green leaves and compact growth, which made it more suitable for this series than other alpine buttercups, which had tall flower-stalks, or finely divided leaves. The North Island edelweiss has stems that bear sessile leaves, which are covered on both surfaces with silver-white 'wool.'<sup>559</sup> The underlying green shows through and the general effect seems to be that of many succulents – a pale blue-green with a hint of mauve. It also becomes apparent that the flower consists of rich yellow spherical clusters, surrounded by white, densely wooly leaves, which are not petals, as one might think at first glance. Bieringa described Mayo's 1972 Alpine Plants as the first of the scenic stamp series designed. According to him this particular issue stands apart in a period throughout the seventies and early eighties when scenic stamps based on photographic images were favoured.<sup>560</sup>

With regard to Mayo's designs for the Christmas 1974 special stamp issue, while the 3 cent stamp is a reproduction of Conrad Witz's *The Nativity*, c. 1430, and the 5 cent stamp reproduces the stained glass window from Old St Paul's Church, Wellington, consecrated 6 June 1866, the 10c stamp of the Christmas Lily, (*Lilium candidum*) (Cat. no.199.1; Vol. II, p. 237) in its subtle colouration and simple two-dimensionality, recalls her earlier alpine plant series. In this stamp she has captured something of the vibrance and translucence of stained glass – an effect she was striving for in her print *The Beginning and the End* (Cat. no. 80; Vol. II, p. 125) which she was working on that same year. She regarded this stamp as superior to any of the designs she produced for the 1985 Christmas stamp issue.

When Mayo's second set of New Zealand Christmas stamps, designed in 1978 (Cat. no. 202.1 - 3; Vol. II, p. 241) was finally issued in 1985, they were described by the Post Office as representative of three "different aspects of the first Christmas described in the carol [Silent Night]: the Nativity, the Shepherds and the Angels."

---

<sup>559</sup> Mayo described the leaves as covered in 'wool' in a letter to Sonderer, 24 January 1971.

<sup>560</sup> L. Bieringa, *Lasting Impressions*, u.p.

Personally, Mayo abhorred the sentimental lyrics to *Silent Night*,<sup>561</sup> which the Stamp Advisory Committee described as, "... perhaps the most popular [Christmas carol] in the world today."<sup>562</sup>

The main influence on these stamps was that of the early Italian painters. "In their paintings of the Nativity they used bright colours to express joy in the event and were not interested in the historical accuracy of all the clothes worn by the people of the time. I have tried to do the same in these designs."<sup>563</sup> Mayo was very familiar with the art of these painters, having learned to appreciate their work, especially that of Piero della Francesca, in the brief period she spent as a student at the Slade. However, her reverence for them did not deter her from re-arranging the traditional Quattrocento composition of the Holy Family in the stable at Bethlehem which usually consisted of a centrally placed mother and child, the ox and ass in the background, with the hunched figure of the sleeping Joseph in the lower right-hand corner. In the 18c stamp, his usual place has been usurped by a ginger tabby cat.

The influence of Ben Shahn, which was such a force in Mayo's printmaking in 1973,<sup>564</sup> is reflected in the angels on the 50c stamp. "The angels were particularly difficult. I was trying to give them an ethereal quality rather than the solidity of human beings."<sup>565</sup> She achieved this by basing her design on Shahn's angel<sup>566</sup> (Fig. 18). To capture their ethereality she drew linear outlines of them over clothes of delicate colours and scattered them with stars. Her 50c stamp is in direct contrast to the other two stamps in which the three-dimensional qualities of the figures are emphasised by

---

<sup>561</sup> Conversation between artist and author. Date unknown.

<sup>562</sup> *The New Zealand Stamp Collection*, 1985, u.p.

<sup>563</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Beck, 2 June 1985. Collection of author.

<sup>564</sup> See Chapter Two for discussion of Shahn's influence on Mayo.

<sup>565</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Beck, 2 June, 1985. Collection of author.

<sup>566</sup> See *Love and Joy about Letters*, p. 7.

modelling in bright, clear colour. Predictably, the Stamp Advisory Committee regarded these Christmas stamps as the best they had issued.

The coral fish stamp issue for the Tokelaus (1975), (Cat. no. 200.1 - 4; Vol. II, p. 239) was closely associated in subject with the 'corals' issued at the end of 1973 (Cat. nos. 196.1 - 4; Vol. II, p. 230). Mayo designed both issues to form a set of eight stamps. Accordingly, the layout, typeface and numerals all correspond to the 'corals' right down to the background colours which were chosen to harmonise with them.<sup>567</sup> As in her earlier Australian issue of Barrier Reef stamps, Mayo tried to give an impression of action of living creatures either swimming gently, or darting rapidly. To achieve this effect, both in the earlier Australian issue and in the present series, she drew each slightly in perspective, which not only gave movement to the designs, but enabled the fish to fill the format more completely.<sup>568</sup>

Mayo regarded the fish of the coral reef as "... a most delightful set of designs to work on, especially as I have made so many drawings from life of these and similar fishes and so have had plenty of material to make use of."<sup>569</sup> The red fire-fish (*Pterois volitans*) was designed from studies Mayo had made of it while working at the marine station on Heron Island, Great Barrier Reef, presumably in early 1957, when researching the fish for her Great Barrier poster for ANTA (Cat. no. 175; Vol. II, p. 205). She had been enchanted with the way in which the fire-fish used its huge pectoral fins to move slowly through the water with graceful undulations, and she endeavoured to recreate this movement in her stamp through the curved tips of the fins which appear about to close in against its body before fanning out again. Although the lined butterfly-fish (*Chaetodon lineolatus*) was not actually drawn from life, Mayo had become well

---

<sup>567</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to A.R. Anderson, Divisional Principal, Post Office Headquarters, Wellington, 22 February 1975.

<sup>568</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>569</sup> *ibid.*

acquainted with other living chaetodonts on the Great Barrier Reef. Other reference sources for the lined butterfly-fish used by Mayo were descriptions and reproductions in Tom Marshall's publication *Fishes of the Great Barrier Reef*<sup>570</sup> and Nichols and Bartsch's *Fishes and Shells of the Pacific World*.<sup>571</sup> The Moorish Idol (*Zanclus canescens*), a small but rather fierce-looking fish, which ranged from Mexico and the Galapagos Islands to the East Coast of Africa, was also based on reproductions in *Fishes and Shells of the Pacific World*.

Mayo's designs for the fish of the coral reef stamp issue are excellent examples of the high seriousness she brought to bear on her work and of her firm belief in a sound research base. As already discussed, stamp designing involved a great deal of input (often amounting to interference) by officialdom, to which Mayo was usually prepared to concede (eventually), except in the area of zoological, or botanical facts. Extant correspondence pertaining to the coral reef fish designs, provides us with an example of how didactic and dogmatic she could be in this regard. For example, the Stamp Advisory Committee required that the outline and colour of the dorsal fin of the lined butterfly-fish be changed. "The proportion of the top fin on the back of the fish is incorrect. The fin should be more even and moved down slightly towards the tail. The bright orange colour of the fin is to be altered to the same subdued yellow colour as in the body of the fish."<sup>572</sup> While Mayo was prepared to change the outline of the dorsal fin, she knew from a first-hand study of live chaetodonts on the Great Barrier Reef, that the suggested colour changes were incorrect and she was, therefore, unwilling to concur on this without taking a stand. Using Marshall as her authority, she argued with the postal authorities that in his colour plate of the fish, which he painted from life, "... [the] soft dorsal ... outer half [is] clear orange."<sup>573</sup> She insisted that, from her own study of this

---

<sup>570</sup> Marshall, Tom, *Fishes of the Great Barrier Reef*, Sydney : Angus & Robertson, 1964.

<sup>571</sup> Nicols, J. & Bartsch, Paul, New York : The Macmillan Co., 1945.

<sup>572</sup> Correspondence, Anderson to Mayo, 10 April 1975. Collection of author.

<sup>573</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Anderson, 21 April 1975. Collection of author.

particular species, the fish colouring varied greatly; that even an individual fish could change enormously as one watched it; that colour was affected by background, time of day, state of health and emotion.<sup>574</sup> Only after pointing out the incorrectness of the Post Office's suggested colour changes, did she finally acquiesce, and then, only for the sake of improving the design: "However, in this case the yellow is better from the point of view of design, so I am happy to make this amendment."<sup>575</sup> But, where distortion of zoological facts was concerned, she remained adamant that truth be adhered to. Having altered the fins of the fire-fish at an earlier stage of the design process, and while acknowledging that this, again, was an improvement from the point of view of the design, she emphatically pointed out that it clearly denied the truth concerning the back and tail fins of this fish. "According to photographs and my own drawings from life [they] are almost transparent. In the first version I tried to suggest this by showing the green background semi-visible through the membrane." "As this," she commented pointedly, "was apparently not successful I have made the fins opaque...."<sup>576</sup> She refuted, however, the claim that there were too many spots on the fins of the fish,<sup>577</sup> and refused to comply with the instruction to reduce their number. "[I] cannot honestly decrease the number of spots on them to any significant extent as this would falsify the facts to the point of justified criticism."<sup>578</sup>

## ii. COINS

Mayo was one of six designers commissioned by the Australian Treasury in 1963 to prepare alternative designs for the 1 and 2 cent coins and the cupro nickel 5, 10 and 20 cent pieces.<sup>579</sup> That each artist's coins would be the best possible from the point of

---

<sup>574</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>575</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>576</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>577</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>578</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>579</sup> Unlike the commissioning of the New Zealand decimal coinage in New Zealand, I have been unable to access extant documentation on the Australian coinage. Unfortunately there have been no replies to my



view of both the design and consideration of minting techniques, designers were required to make plaster models six times the size of the actual coin and coated with Shellac.<sup>580</sup> Photographs were also required “showing the 5 designs in actual coin size set out horizontally in a straight line in a descending order of denomination from right to left”<sup>581</sup> (Cat. no. 203.1; Vol. II, p. 242). Correspondence between Mayo and L.B. Brand, the First Assistant Secretary to the Commonwealth Treasury at Canberra, suggests that the time-frame for this commission was approximately one year.<sup>582</sup>

As always, Mayo’s first approach to a new commission was through research. “My sources of information are whatever I can get and wherever I can find them.”<sup>583</sup> Mayo was living in Waimate when she designed the Australian coins and it was, therefore, no longer possible for her to view some of her subjects at first hand. She nevertheless built up comprehensive files consisting of photographs, articles and books on each motif she had selected for her designs: gum nuts, (Cat. no. 203.2; Vol. II, p. 243) banksia, (Cat. no. 203.3; Vol. II, p. 244) Kookaburra and snake, (Cat. no. 203.4; Vol. II, p. 245) the black swan, (Cat. no. 203.5; Vol. II, p. 246) and the platypus<sup>584</sup> (Cat. no. 203.6; Vol. II, p. 247). In addition to these she compiled a file of rubbings she made of coins from various countries, England, France, Italy and South Africa included.<sup>585</sup>

The images she chose were typical Australian motifs and in this they relate to her mammal series of stamps as well as to the posters she produced for the Australian

---

repeated requests for information from the Commonwealth Treasury, Canberra, regarding the commissioning of the coins.

<sup>580</sup> Extract from statement by the Treasurer, the Rt. Hon. Harold Holt, M.P. n.d.

<sup>581</sup> Correspondence, L.B. Brand to Mayo, 28 August 1964. ATL, B - 131, Solander Box H.

<sup>582</sup> *ibid.* The file on the platypus was probably compiled when she designed the 1/- green platypus stamp in the late 1950s.

<sup>583</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Barbara Mueller, 15 August 1961. Collection of author.

<sup>584</sup> ATL, B - 131, Solander Box H.

<sup>585</sup> *ibid.*

National Travel Association. Although they were not chosen to be minted,<sup>586</sup> Mayo regarded her Australian stamp designs as an important addition to her work. By this time her reputation in Australian art circles as a designer was considerable, but among the general public it chiefly rested on her series of mammal stamp designs. These were admired for their decorative patterning and interesting designs. Armed with a raft of artistic techniques and experience which she had acquired through years of painstaking experiment and research, she went on to produce coin designs which were as assured and appealing as her stamps. The freshness of her coin designs, the sharpness of their detail as well as the excellence of the compositions compares favourably with Stuart Devlin's excellent animal designs which were ultimately chosen for minting.

In 1967, a new set of coins – 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, and a commemorative dollar – were required by the New Zealand Treasury for the change to decimal currency. In 1964 the Treasury launched a major competition and over 150 designers from New Zealand and overseas submitted more than 600 designs. The fact that it was a competition emphasises the low public perception of coin design in this country. Paul Beadle, Professor of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland and President of the Council of the New Zealand Society of Sculptors, made it clear to the then Prime Minister, Keith Holyoake, that the Society was 'profoundly disturbed' by the competition, which compromised sculptors' and designers' professionalism.

Mayo was one of five additional artists invited by the Coinage Design Advisory Committee (CDAC)<sup>587</sup> in December of the following year to submit further designs:

"Your name has been suggested<sup>588</sup> as a designer capable of the high standard of work

---

<sup>586</sup> Stewart Devlin's animal designs were ultimately chosen.

<sup>587</sup> Its members were the chairman, J.N.L. Searle, Director of the Decimal Currency Board, Stuart MacLennan, director of the National Art Gallery, A.H. McLintock, the parliamentary historian, John Simpson, Professor of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury, Alan Sutherland, past president of the Royal Numismatic Society of New Zealand and a member of the 1933 coinage design committee, and E.J. Walker, chief accountant at the National Bank.

<sup>588</sup> This suggestion was made by Professor Paul Beadle, School of Fine Arts, The University of Auckland. Correspondence, Beadle to Mayo, 3 February 1966. Collection of author.

necessary."<sup>589</sup> The carefully prepared designs she produced, were "simple and distinguished,"<sup>590</sup> displaying all the hallmarks of an expert and experienced designer.

From the outset, Mayo made her position as a designer clear to the CDAC. While she was happy to submit her work to the experts for criticism, she was not prepared to follow their advice to the detriment of her designs. "... from sad experience I know that an alteration to a design in order to follow the suggestions of a botanist, zoologist etc. can quite easily ruin a design for its specific purpose. Designers too are experts in their own field,"<sup>591</sup> she added.

Mayo's thoroughness as a researcher into every aspect of coin-making is reflected in the 17 designs she submitted to the CDAC in April 1966. To ensure that the committee obtained the best effect of the third dimension she suggested in her drawings, she instructed that they be viewed with the light coming from the spectator's left.<sup>592</sup> This would better enable them to be read as coins. Each was designed by her to ensure against the likely displacement of metal caused by the decoration on the reverse of the coin in relation to the Queen's image on the obverse.<sup>593</sup> She knew from her research and experience in coin designing in Australia that failure to consider the exact location of the effigy on the other side of the coin when designing the decoration for the reverse could have ramifications on the pressure required for stamping, were any of her designs selected for minting. Mayo's drawings demonstrate that their highest level was lower than the edge of the coins in order to allow for stacking. She was also careful to show

---

<sup>589</sup> Correspondence, J. Searle, (Chairman) Coinage Design Advisory Committee, Wellington, to Mayo, 24 December 1965. Collection of author.

<sup>590</sup> Sir Daryl Lindsay, *The Press*, 19 April 1966, p. 3

<sup>591</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Searle, 28 February 1966. Collection of author.

<sup>592</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>593</sup> The new designs applied to the reverses only, as the Queen's obverse effigy had been commissioned from Arnold Machin. Dr. M. Stocker, *'Muldoon's Money': the 1967 New Zealand Decimal Coinage Designs*, unpublished conference paper, Australian Art Association, Wellington, 1999.

that the darkest shadows in her designs – the equivalent of the deepest indentations on the reverse – did not coincide with those on the obverse. Again, this was an important consideration as far as coinability was concerned: some areas might become too thin and the stamping process at the mint would cause a fracture.<sup>594</sup> All these aspects of her designs demonstrate her awareness of the translation of her drawings into low relief with no abrupt rise from the table.<sup>595</sup>

From the outset the decimal coin designs polarised opinions. While the CDAC had been set up by Treasury in 1964, presumably as experts in the field of coinage design, the members recognised that theirs was a purely advisory role and that the government would have the last say in the selection of designs. This was made clear to them as early as the fourth meeting of 1964 when they were informed by J.N.L. Searle, Director of the Decimal Currency Board, that any selection they made must be presented to the government for consideration. When the CDAC's recommendations,<sup>596</sup> after due sanctioning by Treasury, were submitted as drawings to the Royal Mint Advisory Committee,<sup>597</sup> London, (RMAC) to have their coinability assessed, they were returned with "tactful suggestions for improvement."<sup>598</sup> The six designs were leaked to the press and reproduced in the newspapers, "with appropriate comment."<sup>599</sup> When one of the original competitors, Professor Paul Beadle, saw "the leakage of the rubbish"<sup>600</sup> he was so incensed by the CDAC's selection of coins that, when *The*

---

<sup>594</sup> Mayo knew about projections, shallow relief, etc., from a paper, *The Coining Processes for the Royal Mint Apprentices* which she received from the Australian Treasury when she was invited to prepare alternative designs for the Australian decimal coinage. See ATL, B - 131, Solander Box B.

<sup>595</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Searle, 28 February 1966. Collection of author.

<sup>596</sup> This was a majority decision by the CDAC, several members, including John Simpson, having serious reservations about the choice. Simpson, by far the youngest and least conservative member of the group, favoured the bold simplicity of Beadle's designs which, he felt, would translate well into effective, distinctive and modern coinage. However, these were not favoured by the rest of the committee. M. Stocker, '*Muldoon's Money*.'

<sup>597</sup> The committee comprised of the Duke of Edinburgh, Mr. John Betjeman, Sir Kenneth Clark, Sir Robin Darwin, Sir Francis Meynell, Dr. Sutherland, Mr. Woodford and Mr. Mackworth-Young.

<sup>598</sup> Editorial, *The Press*, 25 February 1966, p.12.

<sup>599</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>600</sup> Correspondence, Beadle to Mayo, 3 February 1966. Collection of author.

*Auckland Star* asked if they could reproduce his designs for Treasury, he agreed<sup>601</sup> and, "... the people settled down thereafter to enjoy the first big row of 1966."<sup>602</sup> What resulted was the equivalent of a public opinion poll.<sup>603</sup> The Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Robert Muldoon aptly, if cynically, summed up the ensuing bedlam: "You might get a member of the public to say he doesn't like a design – but it is harder to find one that he does like."<sup>604</sup> The public could not reach an agreement, but then neither could the CDAC.

In April 1966 a further selection of designs, including five by Mayo,<sup>605</sup> were sent to the RMAC for their consideration. The others were: ten designs by James Berry, six by Paul Beadle, four by Milner Gray, two each by Francis Shurrock and Eric Fraser and one by William Gardner. On 27 May 1966, A.J. Dowling, head of the Mint's general section, wrote to the New Zealand Treasury informing them that the opinions of the RMAC were divided about the final choice. Initially the committee had looked for a coinage designed by one man [sic]<sup>606</sup> but, as no one designer emerged, members voted on single designs.

With no clear-cut choice from the RMAC the then Prime Minister (Mr Keith Holyoake) called for an opinion poll in the Government caucus, whom he believed to be "... a good cross-section of the public."<sup>607</sup> The set eventually chosen by Cabinet "...

---

<sup>601</sup> In a letter to Mayo, Beadle wrote: "I was so angry, depressed and upset. *The Auckland Star* asked if they could reproduce my designs. I gave this serious consideration before deciding that it was time the public saw what a professional designer can and did produce in the hope that it would add good fuel to the fire now being kindled." 3 February 1966.

<sup>602</sup> Editorial, *The Press*, 25 February 1966, p. 12.

<sup>603</sup> Designs of new coinage were not usually shown to the public before they were completely ready. Robert Muldoon was reported in *The Press* 3 February 1966, p. 1, as saying, "I do not know of a country which shows coin designs before issue."

<sup>604</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>605</sup> These consisted of mountain daisies, two athletes, swordfish, shearer and fleece, punga fern.

<sup>606</sup> Royal Mint Archives, Mint 247/9.

<sup>607</sup> *The Press*, 18 June 1966, p. 1.

was favoured by only two members of the CDAC, the chairman (J.N.L. Searle) and A. Ian Sutherland."<sup>608</sup> Among the seven preferred by the other four members – three of whom were trained artists – were three designs by Mayo: the 20c Swordfish; 50c Shearer; the Commemorative dollar, depicting a Punga fern. Sutherland regarded the 20c swordfish (Cat. no.204.3; Vol. II, p. 248) as a distinguished design “which certainly ought to be used.”<sup>609</sup> He stated that the design was clear and uncluttered and yet, at the same time complex. This complexity highlights Mayo’s skills as a designer in which the fish, the lines of the movement of the water in front of as well as behind it, and the bubbles of air, all enclose and enlarge the numerals at the base of the design. It was regarded by the RMAC as having sufficient graphic qualities to make it a distinctive and serviceable coin. Lord Clark called Mayo’s 50c sheep-shearer (Cat. no. 204.4) and her commemorative one dollar coin design (Cat. no. 204.5; Vol. II, p. 249) “outstandingly good.”<sup>610</sup> John Betjeman saw a “certain charm”<sup>611</sup> about the two coin designs while the Duke of Edinburgh noted them as “being of merit.”<sup>612</sup> Mayo’s one dollar coin was the most preferred design by the RMAC for that denomination. Because it was unanimously agreed, however, that the decimal coinage should be the work of one designer, her one dollar coin was not minted. All Mayo’s coins show the use of bold numerals. This was strongly favoured by the CDAC Committee. Mayo had also favoured it in her stamp designs stating that next to the country of origin the numeral of denomination was next in importance.

The rejection by the Government of the majority decision of the CDAC of coins for the New Zealand decimal currency caused a rift in the committee, with Maclellan,

---

<sup>608</sup> *ibid.*, 23 June 1966, p. 10.

<sup>609</sup> Mint 247/9 RMAC. Memorandum to members from A.J. Dowling, 21/4/66.

<sup>610</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>611</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>612</sup> *ibid.*

McClintock, Simpson and Walker wanting to disassociate themselves with the final choice.<sup>613</sup> In what they referred to as a "clarifying statement," they jointly declared that, while "It is fair to say that the Cabinet made its own decision, ... the four members of the committee felt 'pretty strongly' about the final choice of coins."<sup>614</sup>

Mayo expressed her distress that the choice was not left to a committee of experts, such as would have been provided by the Arts Council of New Zealand, but exposed instead to the haphazard verdict of newspaper polls. She wrote to Sir Daryl Lindsay saying:

It is deplorable that a matter of such consequence to the prestige of this country should be treated with such apparent levity. ... Although I am human enough to regret that this means I shall not have the chance to design even one of the set ... I care enough about the future of the visual arts in New Zealand to regret even more that this important occasion is not being used to produce a set of first class designs, whatever the source.<sup>615</sup>

Although one of 26 finalists, in what turned out to be a controversial and divisive competition, her designs were not among those eventually chosen.

In the tight little world of postage stamp design in which there were few women designers, Mayo experienced outstanding success. Her stamps, which are miniature works of art, elevated stamp design from the status of craft to that of fine art. She believed that stamps should be restrained, dignified and well-balanced;<sup>616</sup> that they should be miniature posters, with a prestige advertising value for the country of origin.<sup>617</sup> She saw her stamps as a further means of making the general public aware of the existence of good design in everyday things; the patterns she created with the natural subjects of her stamps, the colours she chose and her skilful incorporation of text and

---

<sup>613</sup> *The Press*, 23 June 1966, p. 10.

<sup>614</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>615</sup> 3 April 1966. Collection of author.

<sup>616</sup> Correspondence Mayo to Griffiths, 26 March 1970. Collection of author.

<sup>617</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Docking, 28 April 1968. Collection of author.

denomination into harmonious compositions reflected her philosophy – one which she had held throughout her long career as a designer – that good design was as important in commercial commissions as it was fundamental to the so-called fine arts.

Mayo's coin designs could be regarded as being less successful than her stamps in that none was chosen for minting. The eventual choice of James Berry's coins, however, does not reflect adversely on Mayo's designs. The choice made by Treasury had to do with the preference of both the RMAC and the CDAC to produce the work of one designer rather than several. Compared with designs produced by Mayo, which were preferred by many members of both the RMAC and the CDAC, Berry's designs were decidedly pedestrian. In fact in his report on the coin designs Lord Clark wrote that he was "... distressed to see that a majority of the members of our committee favour the designs of Mr James Berry."<sup>618</sup> Although disappointed that not even one of her coins was minted, her reputation as a designer was in no way diminished by Treasury's choice of Berry's designs over hers; Lord Clark's imprimatur, his enthusiasm for and support of her designs was a satisfactory ending for her to what was an extraordinarily complex operation

---

<sup>618</sup> Memorandum to CDAC from A.J. Dowling, Mint 247/9, RMAC.



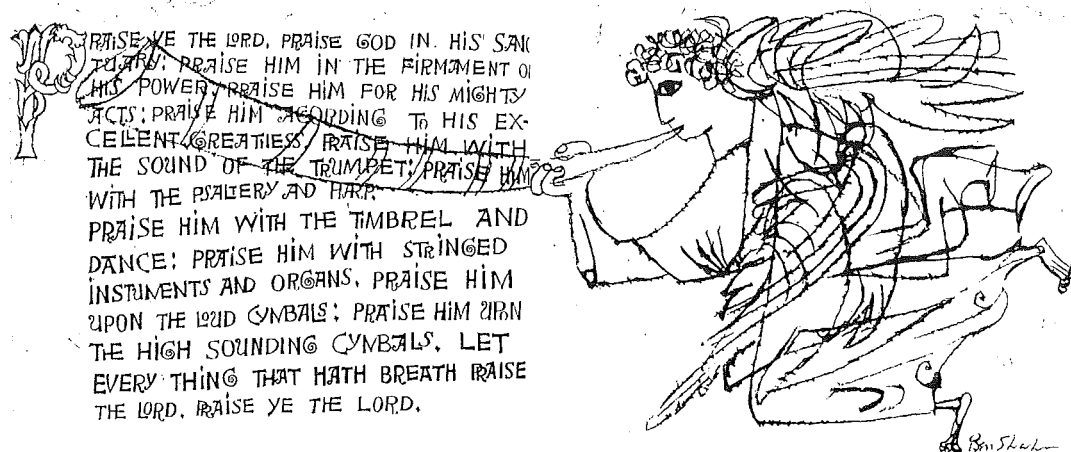


Fig. 18

Ben Shahn. Illustration to *Love and Joy about Letters*, 1964, p. 7

## CONCLUSION

This thesis positions Eileen Mayo as an artist who undertook commercial commissions in order to support herself.<sup>619</sup> Her first conscious ambition was to be an artist and she pursued this goal single-mindedly for more than six decades, sometimes in conditions of considerable hardship. Although conventional in her behaviour Mayo was an original thinker who never allowed herself to be persuaded by the rhetoric, ideas, or opinions of others. That theorists, from Giorgio Vasari to the twentieth century, have endeavoured to compartmentalise art into various categories and to establish a hierarchy among them baffled Mayo and she dismissed their views out of hand.<sup>620</sup> To her, every work she undertook, whether it was a painting, a print, a mural, a stamp or a coin, posed exactly the same problem: that of "... filling a space as beautifully as one can."<sup>621</sup> To her, regardless of what the theorists and critics might claim, there was no definable difference between the "fine arts" and the "applied arts."

Mayo's lifelong conviction that art was a seamless whole was strengthened by her experience in England. She was taken up and promoted by the critics in every medium in which she worked – whether it was printmaking, painting, tapestry design, or illustration. Her prints were exhibited at the Royal Academy and elsewhere; her paintings were shown in prestigious venues: the Claridge Gallery, the Leicester Galleries and the Royal Institute Galleries; her tapestry, *Echinoderms*, was one of three chosen to

---

<sup>619</sup> It should be noted that most of Mayo's paintings were done between 1835 and 1951 – years during which she was married and supported by her husband. Correspondingly, in 1969, when the pension paid to superannuitants was increased to a level she could exist on, she immediately dispensed with commercial work with the exception of a few stamp commissions.

<sup>620</sup> See Mayo's comments on Leonardo's *Paragone*, Chapter Five, p. 144.

<sup>621</sup> Correspondence, Mayo to Barbara R. Mueller, 15 August, 1961. Collection of author.

represent contemporary design in an exhibition, *English Tapestries*, held in Birmingham in 1951; her original drawings to Cyril Beaumont's publication *Toys*<sup>622</sup> were exhibited in the Young Painters' Society, London (1931), while those to Sally Carrighar's *One Day on Beetle Rock*<sup>623</sup> were shown at Batsford Gallery (1946) and the Royal Academy (1948).

Mayo's experience in Australia was much the same as it had been in England. Although she produced no paintings while she lived there and only 12 editions of prints, her status as an artist was in no way compromised by the commercial commissions which her financial position obliged her to undertake. Indeed, it was precisely because she was such an experienced and accomplished artist that she was able to produce such outstanding posters for the Australian National Travel Association (1956 - 57) as well as her world-acclaimed designs for the Australian Mammal stamp issue (1957 - 1962). Furthermore, *The Tree of Invertebrates*, (1959) a mural to which Mayo contributed for the Australian Museum, to commemorate the centenary of the publication of Charles Darwin's book *The Origin of Species*, led her to be described by the Chancellor of the University of New South Wales, not as a designer, but as "... one of the world's leading natural history painters."<sup>624</sup>

In New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s she was, however, regarded as an illustrator-cum-decorative artist. This raises the question as to the premises on which artists' reputations were built in New Zealand during those two decades. It would seem that in order to qualify for the title of "artist" one had to be a painter, preferably male, whose work was abstract in style and followed American and European trends of the time. Mayo, of course, deviated significantly from such requirements. Why was she perceived by the art hierarchy in New Zealand as a mere illustrator rather than as an

---

<sup>622</sup> Beaumont Press, London, 1930.

<sup>623</sup> Pleiades Books, London, 1945.

<sup>624</sup> *Melbourne Age*, 24 July 1959. See ATL, B - 131, Solander Box H.

artist? It was probably to do with her style, which emphasised the linearity and decorative qualities of her subject, as well as her use of flat colour. This was, of course, in direct opposition to the generalised abstract style then in vogue in this country, which eliminated the textural richness and detail which characterised Mayo's work. Her failure to follow an American-inspired abstraction – as in Colin McCahon, or a more Francophile one – as in Pat Hanly – only seemed to marginalise her. She was, moreover, too recent an arrival in New Zealand to be accepted as a regionalist, in the mode of W.A. Sutton.

In spite of prevailing opinion of Mayo as an artist in New Zealand during the 1960s and 1970s she was, nevertheless created a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (DBE) on 1 January 1994, just three days before her death. It is hardly surprising that this elevation in status, which ostensibly placed her achievements above those of other well-known and established New Zealand women artists, should have raised a few eyebrows. For example, was Mayo's contribution to art in New Zealand equivalent to that made by Doris Lusk? Lusk had played an important part in the re-invention of New Zealand painting during the 1930s and 1940s:<sup>625</sup> she was a long term member of both The Group (1947) and the Canterbury Potters Association (1963); the President of Canterbury Society of Arts (1982); and she was a frequent exhibitor in galleries throughout Otago, Canterbury and Wellington from 1934 to 1989. And yet Lusk was nominated for a lesser award than Mayo – the Governor General Art Award – which was granted posthumously at a ceremony in July 1990. Rita Angus, Olivia Spencer-Bower and Molly Macallister were further female near-contemporaries of Mayo who died unhonoured.

As well as ranking Mayo ahead of many other New Zealand women artists, her elevation of status placed her in the elite company of Laura Knight, Barbara Hepworth

---

<sup>625</sup> See Lisa Beavan and Grant Banbury, *Landmarks : The Landscape Paintings of Doris Lusk*. Christchurch : Hazard Press, 1996, p. 10.

and Elisabeth Frink. Would Mayo, who regarded herself primarily as "... a hardworking craftsperson, without much talent, who could only produce art through a slow building up,"<sup>626</sup> have seen herself in the same class as these British women artists or of having contributed more to the development of New Zealand art than Lusk?

Knight, for example, who was a friend and mentor to Mayo, was one of the most popular artists in Britain in the early to middle decades of the twentieth century. She was a technically consummate yet unashamedly romantic painter whose popularity stemmed from the realism of her style and the immediate appeal of her subject matter to her audiences. Her two autobiographies, *Oil Paint and Grease Paint*<sup>627</sup> and *The Magic of a Line*,<sup>628</sup> also added to her popularity. Her 'rags to riches' story would have been an inspiration to Mayo who was, like Knight, without a private income. She would also have admired Knight for her tenacity and self-reliance, as well as for the flamboyance and confidence which she expressed so eloquently in her work.

For all Mayo's undeniable qualities, it has to be said that she was not in the same category as Knight. Her careful work, which stylistically belonged to the graphic tradition, was not in the same league as Knight's bold and vigorous painting. Knight was also far more adventurous in her themes and styles than Mayo. Her romantic "documentary realism,"<sup>629</sup> based on a passionate interest in people and places, led her to choose unconventional subjects and themes, whereas Mayo's imagery was considerably more traditional in comparison. As well as her 'signature' landscapes, Knight painted circuses, gypsies, boxers, hop-pickers, munitions workers, war

---

<sup>626</sup> EMD 21 January 1965.

<sup>627</sup> Nicholson & Watson, London, 1936.

<sup>628</sup> Williams and Kimber, London, 1965.

<sup>629</sup> Teresa Grimes, Judith Collins & Oriana Baddeley, *Five Women Painters*, Oxford : Lennard Publishing Ltd, 1989, p. 25.

criminals, fairs and racecourses;<sup>630</sup> Mayo experimented with what was a traditional subject for women artists – the beautiful and the decorative in Nature.

Mayo never saw herself as belonging in the upper echelons of art. This is borne out by the frequent citations to this effect in her diaries and quoted in this thesis. Consequently, this raises a further question. Would Mayo have accepted the honour of DBE had it been offered to her ten years earlier, when she was still capable of deciding for herself?<sup>631</sup> Almost certainly not; well aware of the ambivalence with which she was viewed in art circles outside Christchurch, she would have surely questioned the motives behind any such honour. She would also have refused through fear of the publicity and the unwanted intrusion into her life which it would have represented to her.

So why was Mayo chosen at this late stage of her life for such a high honour rather than a younger and more fashionable artist? She had been thrust reluctantly into the public eye as a result of a major touring retrospective exhibition curated by Margaret McKean-Taylor. McKean-Taylor knew Mayo's work intimately; she had first encountered it in England when, as a child of ten, she read *Shells and How They Live* and "loved it."<sup>632</sup> Later, when she moved with her family to Australia, she became familiar with her work held in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia. As director of the Manawatu Art Gallery she was able to acquire several pieces of Mayo's work, her strong interest in craft leading her to purchase cartoons and drawings for tapestries (Cat. nos. 163, 164, 166 and 167; Vol. II, pp. 193, 194 & 197)) as well as prints for the gallery's collection. It was during her term as director that McKean-Taylor conceived of

---

<sup>630</sup> *ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>631</sup> Mayo's memory was seriously impaired at the latter stage of her life.

<sup>632</sup> See Cassidy & McKean-Taylor, p. 7.

the idea of a major touring retrospective exhibition of Mayo's work.<sup>633</sup> It was obvious to McKean-Taylor that an artist whose skills extended over a number of disciplines would have a far richer resource of visual experience than one who specialised in a narrow field. The exhibition she curated in 1992, *Eileen Mayo : Painter/Designer*, generated considerable if belated public interest alongside a realisation of Mayo's enormous talent and versatility. The proffering of her name for the 1994 New Year's Honours was the direct outcome of this exhibition.

Had she been in better health, Mayo would have realised that there was a political agenda behind her award. In 1979 Tosswill Woollaston was made a Knight Bachelor for his services to art but it was not until 1993 that an equivalent honour was awarded a woman artist. That year Louise Henderson was created DBE when she was eighty-nine years of age. There is no question that either of these awards was not well-deserved. Both artists had played a significant part in the development of New Zealand art. Woollaston was known for his innovative and expressionistic approach to painting the landscape in which he suppressed the pictorial, emphasising space and rhythm instead.<sup>634</sup> Henderson was equally renowned for the cubist and modernist principles she incorporated into her figurative work as well as for her abstract expressionist paintings.<sup>635</sup> But did Mayo make an equivalent contribution?

One looks in vain for any mention of Eileen Mayo in the critical writings of E.H. McCormick, Gordon Brown, Peter Tomory, Gil Docking or Hamish Keith. If they bothered to consider her, New Zealand critics viewed her work as too predetermined and therefore not spontaneous; her art was never fashionable and, when it came down to it, she could never be considered a New Zealander – terms which would appear to have

---

<sup>633</sup> McKean-Taylor was also responsible for packing up Mayo's Christchurch studio in 1990 and depositing all material relating to her publications, manuscripts, book illustration and the design of her New Zealand stamps and coins in the Turnbull Collection, the National Library, Wellington.

<sup>634</sup> Claudia Orange, (ed.), *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Vol. 5, 1941 - 1960, Auckland : Auckland University Press, pp. 578 - 580.

<sup>635</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 215 - 217.

been seen as sufficient grounds on which to dismiss the merit of her work. The attitude that critics displayed smacked of an apartheid-like situation which existed in New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s, where invidious and out-dated distinctions were made between the so-called 'fine' arts and the 'applied' arts. In their assessment of Mayo's work they signally failed to appreciate what stood outside the current "ism." Only a small number of artists, nearly all male, and all painters, stood within the charmed circle: Colin McCahon, Toss Woollaston, Gordon Walters, Milan Mrkusich, Patrick Hanly, are some examples. This is not to deny their outstanding qualities. But they were far from being the only major New Zealand artists of their times. Talented artists with a greater commitment to figuration – Rita Angus, who only belatedly was recognised as a figure of comparable importance to Woollaston and McCahon, Lois White, Eric Lee Johnson, Denis Knight Turner, Peter McIntyre – and, indeed, the proud, shy, English perfectionist, Eileen Mayo – were effectively and quite unfairly written out of New Zealand art history. Critics appear to have been unable to understand that Mayo never pursued abstraction because of the sheer pleasure that representing an identifiable subject gave her – unity of colour and form were crucial to her, whatever her chosen medium. As far as they were concerned, there was no place in New Zealand art for her naturalistic, immaculate work.

The year 1993 was particularly significant in that it marked one hundred years of Women's Suffrage in New Zealand. The visual arts played an important part in these celebrations: exhibitions of women's art were mounted throughout the country and plays, books and art works were commissioned to commemorate the centenary. Women's work was highlighted and celebrated in almost every field of endeavour. It would therefore have been regarded as highly appropriate that a woman artist be created a DBE. In this context Mayo was an appropriate choice. She was elderly and the conservative nature of her work in her recent touring retrospective exhibition placed her achievement beyond controversy. Her award, indeed, did not strain the credibility of the system; her DBE was a richly deserved honour for a life of dedication to art and, too



late, amends were made for her neglect in New Zealand. That she was in no position to appreciate the honour was sad indeed, but at least it made her continued exclusion from the history of art in New Zealand unthinkable.

How best, then, to view Mayo's art? Was she, as she claimed, just a "... hardworking craftsman, without much talent..." , or did Daniel Thomas, the director of the Art Gallery of South Australia 1958 - 1978 and Senior Curator of Australian Art, Art Gallery of New South Wales from 1984,<sup>636</sup> come nearer the truth when he described her as a "... very fine [artist]?"<sup>637</sup> Sir Frank Rutter, Lord Clarke, Sir John Betjeman, Bernard Denvir, Sir Julian Huxley, Hal Missingham and Sir Darryl Lindsay – a formidable array of twentieth century opinions – had all handsomely endorsed Thomas' assessment of her in their various ways.

Mayo was, unquestionably, a significant figure in London in the 1930s and 1940s. Her prints were bought by leading galleries for their permanent collections; her paintings were acquired by connoisseurs of small expertly executed nature pictures. Her writings and illustrations on natural history were praised by no less an expert in that field than Sir Julian Huxley. It was no different in Australia in the 1950s where she was awarded prizes for her prints and received prestigious commercial commissions which won her international acclaim. Unfortunately, her experience was different in New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s. Although she was always riled by criticism, Mayo had the inner strength to withstand it. Characteristically her analytical mind sifted it, either accepting or dismissing it and then moving on. As a designer in this country her stamps and coins reflected her life-long habit of thorough research. They also reflected a character which was intolerant of anything that was less than perfect. This trait was

---

<sup>636</sup> Kerith Cadman, (ed.), *Who's Who in Australia 1988*, Melbourne : Herald and Weekly Times Limited, 1988, p. 869.

<sup>637</sup> "New Zealand Painting and the Benson and Hedges Award," *Art New Zealand*, August/September, 1976, p. 25.

combined with her expert skills as a designer which she had developed and honed over a period of over half a century. Intrinsic to this was her innate sense of colour harmony. She created her own representation of nature and experimented with techniques rather than subject matter. While her work was always linked with reality she did not, however, enter into what Roger Fry described as “five-finger exercises in brilliant technique.”<sup>638</sup>

With the inclusion of her prints in a touring exhibition, *The Grosvenor School : British Linocuts between the Years*, mounted by the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, USA, 1988; with the prominence of her work in *Claude Flight and His Followers : The Colour Linocut Movement between the Years*, an exhibition curated by the Australian National Gallery and which travelled throughout Australia and to Auckland and Wellington in 1992; with the inclusion of her posters in the Powerhouse Museum’s *The Australian Dream : Design of the Fifties* in 1993; with the pride of place given her posters for the Australian National Travel Association in the exhibition promoted by the National Library of Australia, Canberra in 1999; and with a show of her early colour linocuts due to open at Abbot and Holder, Museum Street, London in May 2001 to coincide with the London Print Fair, her standing as a printmaker and designer looks increasingly inviolable. She played an integral part in twentieth-century printmaking and design in the English-speaking world and the passing of years seems to magnify, not minimise, her very real achievement.

Self-critical though she was, she obviously realised the enduring quality as well as the timelessness of her work. Let Eileen Mayo have the last word: “... my small talent has meant a great struggle for something which ends up being unimportant. The struggle has been important in my own development, but I have done it.”<sup>639</sup>

---

<sup>638</sup> R. Fry to H. Anrep, 11 November 1925. See *Letters to Roger Fry*, D. Sutton, (ed.), London, 1972, p. 584.

<sup>639</sup> EMD 24 January 1973.

**Part 11****Volume I****DOCUMENTATION**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Catalogue of Works</b>	220
	Part One: Illustrations	222
	Part Two: Prints	230
	Part Three: Paintings, Drawings and Watercolours	266
	Part Four: Designs for tapestries, murals, book-plates posters, tableware, diorama and cards	277
	Part Five: Designs for stamps and coins	283
<p>Works are numbered sequentially from 1 - 204.5 and are arranged chronologically within each section.</p>		
<b>2.</b>	<b>Bibliography</b>	288

## CATALOGUE OF WORKS BY EILEEN MAYO

### Author's Note

**Order:** The prints, paintings and designs are, as far as possible, arranged chronologically within sections. Illustrations are organised according to date of publication; stamp designs according to date of issue.

**Titles:** In the case of prints titles have been taken wherever possible from the works themselves. Titles for paintings come from the back of the works or from references made to them in various literature. Works which have not been known consistently by the same title have been recorded in the notes. Titles in square brackets have been given by the author.

**Dating, colours and printing sequence of prints:** Descriptions of colour and printing order in Eileen Mayo's British and Australian prints have been derived from visual examination of the actual prints wherever possible. Conjectural dates are bracketed. The date, colours and printing sequence of the New Zealand prints are derived principally from the artist's diaries. The number of blocks is given, followed by the colours in their order of printing where this is known, from the artist's writings or from other sources.

**Measurements:** Measurements refer to image size as defined by the border line of the image, in the case of books outer dimensions. All measurements are in millimetres, height before width.

**Exhibitions:** The exhibition history of each work has been ordered chronologically wherever possible.

**Collections:** Museum and art galleries where prints, paintings, drawings, designs and illustrations have been exhibited or collected have been listed. Where these are not known, the name of at least one private collector has been cited. Collections are arranged in alphabetical order, with edition numbers given where known.

**Literature:** This section comprises citations of works in selected newspaper reviews, journal articles, catalogues and books.

**Notes:** These discuss questions of dating and technique, and, where known, the circumstances leading to the production of individual works. Other relevant information, including quotations from other contemporary sources, (as well as) from the artist's diaries are included.

## PART ONE: BOOK ILLUSTRATIONS, BOOK COVERS AND ILLUSTRATIONS FOR PERIODICALS

### Book illustrations:

1. Zelia Raye, *Rational Limbering*  
Beaumont Press, London, 1929.  
225 x 145 mm

Copy at the Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide, South Australia.

Thirty eight illustrations in black and white by Eileen Mayo.

These first illustrations by Mayo for the Beaumont Press were executed in 1928 just prior to her sixteen black and white drawings for *Serge Lifar*.

This book reflects Cyril Beaumont's interest in dance. It was a manual for teachers on correct teaching procedures relating to active exercise. The text was accompanied by Mayo's careful outline drawings to illustrate the correct way each exercise should be performed in order to protect students from injury to muscle fibre, ligaments and joints. See Vol. II, illus. 1.1 - 1.4

2. Cyril Beaumont, *Serge Lifar*  
Beaumont Press, London, 1928.  
330 x 280. Unpaginated.

Copy: author's collection, Christchurch, no. 27.

Edition of 500 copies numbered 1 to 500 (ten of which were not for sale).

The text consists of a three page foreword by Boris Kochno, translated from the French by Sacheverell Sitwell and an appreciation by Cyril Beaumont.

Cover design and sixteen black and white pen and ink illustrations by Eileen Mayo.

Mayo's background drawings are authentic reflections of stage sets used in the various ballets in which Lifar danced. They are not, however, mere copies of them. Throughout the publication Lifar is depicted in outline and in order to ensure that the dancer remained central to each illustration she adapted and modified the sets accordingly. The costumes depicted are also true to the originals. Some of Mayo's paintings, for example, *Barabau* [1928], (Cat. no. 107), *Les Matelots* (1929), (Cat. no. 108) and *La Chatte* (1929), (Cat. no. 109). were based on these drawings as was her later print *Apollon Musagète* (1932), (Cat. no. 32).

Mayo's illustrations to this publication consisted of the following:

#### 2.1 Cover Design

- |      |           |                               |                  |
|------|-----------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 2.2  | Plate 1.  | <i>Zéphry et Flore</i>        |                  |
| 2.3  | Plate 2.  | <i>Les Matelots</i>           |                  |
| 2.4  | Plate 3.  | <i>Barabau</i>                |                  |
| 2.5  | Plate 4.  | <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>       | Part I           |
| 2.6  | Plate 5.  | <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>       | Part II          |
| 2.7  | Plate 6.  | <i>La Pastorale</i>           |                  |
| 2.8  | Plate 7.  | <i>The Triumph of Neptune</i> | Act I. Scene 3   |
| 2.9  | Plate 8.  | <i>The Triumph of Neptune</i> | Act I. Scene 6   |
| 2.10 | Plate 9.  | <i>The Triumph of Neptune</i> | Act II. Scene II |
| 2.11 | Plate 10. | <i>Cimariosiana</i>           |                  |

- 2.12 Plate 11. *La Chatte*  
 2.13 Plate 12. *Les Pas D'Acier*  
 2.14 Plate 13. *Las Meninas*  
 2.15 Plate 14. *Ode*  
 2.16 Plate 15. *Ode*  
 2.17 Plate 16. *Apollon*

3. Edmund Blunden, *A Japanese Garland*.

Beaumont Press, London, 1928.

210 x 135

Copy: National Art Library, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Press mark: Special Collections 95. CC. 43

Edition of 80 on Japanese vellum signed by the author, illustrator and publisher.

Edition of 310 (not signed) on Japanese paper.

Cover in silver and grey designed by Eileen Mayo.

Title page and six illustrations by Eileen Mayo.

Mayo's cover design, title page and illustrations are appropriately oriental in their cropping and spacing.

See Vol. II, illus. 3.1 - 3.5

4. Sir William Jones (trans.), *The Poem of Amriolkais*, Sir William Jones (trans).

High House Press, Shaftsbury, 1930.

170 x 230

Copy, author's collection, no. 52/200

Edition of 50 on hand-made paper signed by the artist and printer and containing an extra set of engravings (1 - 50); 150 on mould-made paper (51 - 200).

Cover in red, olive-green and black on cream paper (designer unknown).

Four black and white illustrations from wood-engravings by Eileen Mayo.

All Mayo's illustrations to this book are wood engravings and each measures 110 x 90mm.

The illustrations are Mayo's own comments on the text rather than a reflection of it. *Deer in a Storm* and *Prancing Horse* were subsequently printed as single prints by Mayo. See (Cat. nos. 24 and 25).

4.1 **Onaiza** p. 6

4.2 **Woman and crying infant** p. 12

4.3 **Prancing Horse** p. 21

4.4 **Deer in a Storm** p. 24

5. Cyril Beaumont, *Toys*  
 Beaumont Press, 1930.  
 (measurements unknown)  
 Copy: National Art Library, Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Pressmark 95.  
 MM. 19

Signed by both author and illustrator.

Twenty-eight black and white drawings and eight full-page plates in colour, by Eileen Mayo.

Mayo's illustrations to this book are unusual in that she depicts only a partial representation of the toys. All the illustrations of toys are stylised and the overall effect is highly decorative.

6. J.H. Driberg (ed.). *The Bamboo Dancer and Other African Tales*.  
 Douglas Cleverdon, the Clover Hill Press, London, 1937.  
 (measurements unknown)

Edition of six copies on pure vellum, bound in full morocco, each containing an original watercolour and a set of signed proof engravings; an extra set of the engravings on special paper of which five copies are for sale at £15.15.0; 45 copies on hand-made paper, in quarter morocco, each containing an extra set of the engravings of which 40 are for sale at £2.10.0.

Title page and sixteen coloured engravings in yellow, blue, pink, brown and black.

The Clover Hill Press was established by Douglas Cleverdon for the occasional printing of pleasurable books which were usually illustrated with engravings. *The Bamboo Dancer and Other African Tales* was the first of these publications.

The illustrations shown below have been selected from printer's proofs and specimen pages from the Tate Gallery Archive, London, (TGA 916. 43 - 95).

### 6.1

#### **Girl with snake**

TGA 916. 59 shows three different printing states in varying colour combinations of one of the illustrations to the book. The diamond-patterned body of the snake in yellow, brown and blue in State 3 highlights Mayo's decorative skills.

### 6.2

#### **African girls with drummer**

In TGA 916. 63 each of the four blocks stands on its own as an interesting and dynamic composition.

### 6.3

#### **Reptile playing a xylophone**

TGA 916. 49 of a reptile (in two states) partly submerged in water and playing a xylophone in yellow, brown, blue and pink.

### 6.4

#### **The maidens of the sky**

TGA 916. 90 shows the final print in yellow, brown, blue, pink and green.

7. Eileen Mayo, *The Story of Living Things*  
Waverley Book Co., Ltd, London, 1944.  
250 x 180  
Copy: author's collection.  
Text and 375 illustrations by Eileen Mayo.  
See Vol. II, illus. 7.1 - 7.5
  
8. Eileen Mayo, *Shells and How they Live*  
Pleiades Books, London, 1944.  
195 x 270  
Copy: author's collection  
Original manuscript: John Darby, Dunedin.  
See Vol. II, illus. 8.1 - 8.5
  
9. Eileen Mayo, *Little Animals of the Countryside*  
Pleiades Books, London, 1945  
190 x 268  
Copy: John Darby, Dunedin  
See Vol. II, illus. 9.1 - 9.6
  
10. *Larger Animals of the Countryside*, Eileen Mayo  
Published by Pleiades Books, London, 1945  
190 x 268  
Copy: Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, B - 131-1-003-19  
See Vol. II, illus. 10.1 - 10.3
  
11. Sally Carrighar, *One Day on Beetle Rock*  
Pleiades Books, London, 1945  
220 x 140  
Copy: author's collection  
Cover design and ten illustrations by Eileen Mayo.  
See Vol. II, illus. 11.1 - 11.4
  
12. Eileen Mayo, *Nature's ABC*  
Universal Text Books Ltd., London, 1945  
272 x 202  
Copy: Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, B - 131-1-003-19  
Book jacket, book cover and 26 illustrations by Eileen Mayo.  
See Vol. II, illus. 12.1 - 12.2



13. Eileen Mayo, *Animals on the Farm*  
Puffin Picture Book, no. 84, 1951  
180 x 222  
Copy: author's collection  
See Vol. II, illus. 13.1 - 13.3
14. Michael Joseph (ed). *Best Cat Stories*.  
Faber and Faber, London, 1952  
210 x 140  
Copy: author's collection  
Cover design and 17 illustrations and cover by Eileen Mayo  
This publication consists of short stories by 18 well-known writers.

#### 14.1

##### Cover design

The front of the dust jacket depicts a cat lying on a flowering lawn and surrounded by flowers while the back cover reproduces the tabby cat grooming itself on p. 50, (Cat. no. 53).

#### 14.2 p. 16

*A Little White Cat*, Dorothy Bakery, pp. 15 - 22.

#### 14.3 p. 34

*A Fine Place for the Cat*, Margaret Bonham, pp. 23 - 35.

#### 14.4 p. 40

*Smith*, Ann Chadwick, pp. 36 - 47.

#### 14.5 p. 50

*"When in doubt – Wash,"* Paul Gallico, pp. 48 - 63.

#### 14.6 p. 73

*The Blue Flag*, Kay Hill, pp. 64 - 77.

#### 14.7 p. 79

*God and the Little Cat*, pp. 78 - 88.

#### 14.8 p. 122

*The Fat of the Cat*, pp. 89 - 125.

#### 14.9 p. 132

*Broomsticks*, Walter de la Mare, pp. 126 - 152.

#### 14.10 p. 170

*Johnnie Poothers*, Charles Odger, pp. 157 - 170.

#### 14.11 p. 173

*The Fat Cat*, Q. Patrick, pp. 171 - 176.

14.12 p. 180

*Kitty, Kitty, Kitty*, John Pudney, pp. 177 - 181.

14.13 p. 194

*Mr. Carmody's Safari*, Kermit Rolland, pp. 182 - 195.

14.14 p. 205

*Cat Up a Tree*, William Sansom, pp. 196 - 208.

14.15 p. 212

*Feathers*, Carl van Vechten, pp. 209 - 223.

14.16 p. 226

*Calvin, the Cat*, Charles Dudley Warner, pp. 224 - 235.

14.17 p. 249

*The Traveller from the West and the Traveller from the East*, Sylvia Townsend Warner, pp. 223 - 236.

14.18 p. 266

*The Story of Webster*, P.G. Wodehouse, 243 - 267.

#### **Bookcovers and illustrations for periodicals:**

15. Cyril Beaumont, *The First Score*

Beaumont Press, London, 1927.

230 x 145

Copy: Australian National Gallery Research Library, Canberra

This book is bound in yellow buckram with decorative paper boards by Mayo. The boards consist of a diagonal repeat pattern of the lower-case letters bp (Beaumont Press) on a patterned background.

16. Cyril Beaumont, *Second-hand Sale Catalogue*

Beaumont Press, London, 1929.

210 x 145

This cover design is known only from a reproduction at the Tate Gallery Archive, TGA 916. 169

17.1 *Countrygoer*, 1949

17.2 Insect life, *Countrygoer*, 1949

**18. *Landfall : a New Zealand Quarterly*, Vol. 79**

Caxton Press, September, 1966.

214 x 138

Copy: James Hight Library, University of Canterbury, Christchurch

This abstract design, created from cut paper shapes and printed in strong colours of Indian red, orange and black, differs markedly from Mayo's earlier book-covers. Caxton Press had evolved its own 'house-style' for *Landfall* consisting, for the most part, of simple abstract designs. Mayo's design was in keeping with those produced on covers of previous issues and designed by leading New Zealand artists such as Patrick Hanley, Ralph Hotere, Quentin McFarlane and Gordon Walters. That Charles Brasch commissioned Mayo to design a cover for a publication with a nationalist public agenda was indeed a triumph for her; it suggests that Brasch saw her in the same company of artists. Although abstraction was not normally an aspect of her artistic style, she possessed the imaginative capacity and assured draughtsmanship necessary to adapt to *Landfall's* national style.

**19. *Landfall : a New Zealand Quarterly***

gouache on card

214 x 138

This cover, designed for Vol. 86, was not published. ATL, B - 131-6-006

**20. *Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and Princess Alice***

This appears to be a severely stylised and highly decorative earlier version of Cat no. 21 (TGA 916. 170) for the Christmas edition of *The Sphere*. Victoria wears a pair of the artist's Russian earrings (see photograph by E. Hoppé, TGA 916. 123) and the heavily lidded eyes, small pursed mouth and smooth hairstyle suggests that Victoria is a self-portrait of Eileen Mayo.

**21. *Christmas in Good Prince Albert's Days*, from the Commonplace Book of Laetitia Throstlethwaite.**

*The Sphere*, Christmas Number, Nov 25, 1929.

Copy: Tate Gallery Archive, London

This illustration shows Prince Albert standing, Queen Victoria seated with the young Princess Alice on her lap with the Princess Royal (Vicky) and Bertie at her side. The children all display Christmas gifts: the baby a rattle, the older children a doll, a ball and a balloon. This second version for *The Sphere* is a much softer and prettier version than (Cat. no. 20). Victoria appears a demure figure beside a haughty Albert. Small pearl earrings replace the striking Russian baubles; the setting is more overtly Christmas with tones of red and green used throughout.

22. *Art News & Review*

Copy: author's collection

This self-portrait was published on the front page of the fortnightly *Art News & Review*, Vo. III, no. 14, 11 August 1951. The periodical was founded by her husband, Dr. Richard Gainsborough, and the art critic Bernard Denvir was its first editor. Mayo was responsible for the graphic design of the original *Art News and Review* and her graphic style was favoured for many years. To find a distinctive first page Gainsborough commissioned self-portraits from artists, thus giving him the opportunity to profile a new artist in each issue. The original artists' portraits published by *Art News and Review* between 1949 and 1960, were exhibited in *Portrait of the Artist*, The Tate Gallery, 1989.

## PART TWO: PRINTS

## England 1925 - 1952

23. *Skaters* [1925]  
 from 1 woodblock, printed in black  
 110 x 87  
 edition unknown  
 Impression on off-white oriental paper.  
 Unnumbered and unsigned.  
**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 2; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 2; Dunedin (OM), no. 2; Palmerson North (MAG), no. 2; Rotorua (RM), no. 2; Timaru (AG), no. 2; Wellington (ATL), no. 2  
**COLL:** Anne Bowes, Christchurch, u.n.  
**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 44; Cassidy 1996, pp. 45-46 (ill. fig. 3)

This was probably Eileen Mayo's first single print, designed while attending Noel Rooke's evening classes in wood engraving and book illustration at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London, from 1924. The decorative qualities which became characteristic of her style are seen here in embryo. According to the artist's sisters, Margery Ball and Josephine Campey, Eileen did not skate – she disliked all recreational sport, except walking. The subject of skaters, however, was popular amongst English artists in the 1920s, reflecting the current interest in downhill skiing, tobogganing, surfing and ice-skating.

24. *Deer in Storm* [1929]  
 from 1 woodblock, printed in black  
 114 x 89  
 edition 30  
 Impression on off white oriental paper.  
 Unnumbered and unsigned.  
**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 3; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 3; Dunedin (OM), no. 3; Palmerson North (MAG), no. 3; Rotorua (RM), no. 3; Timaru (AG), no. 3; Wellington (ATL), no. 3  
**COLLS:** ATL u.n.; V&A (Circulations) (lost); AGO, u.n.  
**LIT:** *Times Literary Supplement*, November 1929 (TGA 916.18)

*Deer in Storm* was one of four original wood engraved illustrations to *The Poems of Amriolkais*. They were translated into English by Sir William Jones and published by High House Press in 1930. It appears as an illustration on p. 25, entitled *The Storm*, opposite the text of the relevant poem. As a single print it was included in *Eileen Mayo Painter/Designer*, 1992. That it was exhibited elsewhere is certain since the artist produced it as an edition of 30 prints and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, (Circulations) purchased one in 1931 and the Gallery of Ontario in Toronto in 1936.

25. *Prancing Horse* [1929]  
 from 1 woodblock, printed in black  
 115 x 89  
 Impression on off-white oriental laid tissue.  
 Unnumbered and unsigned  
**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 1; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 1; Dunedin (OM), no. 1; Palmerson North (MAG), no. 1; Rotorua (RM), no. 1; Timaru (AG), no. 1; Wellington (ATL), no. 1  
**COLL:** ATL, ed. u.n.

To my knowledge this print, also one of the four wood-engravings to *The Poem of Amrioklais* (p. 21), has only been exhibited in the *Eileen Mayo Painter/Designer* touring exhibition, 1992. Apart from a reference made to it in *The Times Literary Supplement*, November 1929, (TGA 916. 18) no other literature appears to exist on it.

26. *Turkish Bath* 1930  
 from 4 blocks printed in: 1) pink; 2) yellow-ochre; 3) red; 4) black  
 350 x 233  
 edition 30  
 Impression on oriental paper.  
 Signed and numbered u.l.; titled l.r.  
**EXH:** London 1930 (RG), no. 17; China 1931 (SAC); 1932 Melbourne; Ottawa; USA 1934 (BMB); Ottawa (1934-35); 1988: USA: Rhode Island (Museum of Art), no. 35; Cleveland (Museum of Art), no. 35; Santa Barbara (Museum of Art), no. 35; 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 4; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 4; Dunedin (OM), no. 4; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 4; Rotorua (RM), no. 4; Timaru (AG), no. 4; Wellington (ATL), no. 4; Canberra (ANG), no. 55; Melbourne (NGV), no. 55; Sydney (AGNSW), no. 55; Auckland (AAG), no. 55; Wellington 1993 (MONZ), no. 55  
**COLLS:** V & A, London (Circulations); AGO, u.n.; ANG, ed. 24/30; AAG, ed. 20/30; MONZ, ed. 25/30; RMAG, ed. u.n.; Private collection, Polegate, England  
**LIT:** *The Herald*, 24 July 1930; *The Star*, 26 July 1930; *The Times*, 26 July 1930; *The Observer*, 27 July 1930; *Evening Express*, 31 July 1930; *Western Morning News and Mercury*, 26 August 1930; *Apollo*, September 1930; *Connoisseur*, September 1930; *The Herald*, 16 September 1930; *The Daily Mail*, 9 October 1930; *The Times*, 14 October 1930; *Western Morning News and Mercury*, 14 October 1930; Cassidy, McKean-Taylor, 1992, pp. 9, 44, col. ill. p. 13; Coppel, 1992, p. 16; L. Urbanelli, 1998, ill. p. 61; Cassidy, 1999, p. 35

*Turkish Bath* was Mayo's first colour linocut. The process of cutting and printing was explained to Mayo over the telephone by Claude Flight. In a letter to Stephen Coppel, 3 September 1985, Mayo wrote that Flight often stopped her in the street on which they both lived to enquire about her free-lance art work and gave her much good advice. He encouraged her to exhibit in the Second Exhibition of British Lino-Cuts held at the Redfern Gallery, London, organised by the Rex Nan Kivell and co-director Knyvett Lee. The exhibition opened on the 4 July 1930.

The subject of Mayo's print, that of women bathing, is traditional. A great admirer of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Mayo may have had his *Turkish Bath* (1862-3) in

mind when she chose the subject for her first lino-cut print. The composition certainly reflects Ingres' painting of the subject in the placement of the woman in the foreground like a piece of low-relief sculpture. Equally the inspiration may have come from her weekly visits to a Turkish bath in London with her life-long friend Margaret Strive. Although the interior Mayo depicts does not provide sufficient clues to identify the actual bath in which the scene is set, the poses, gestures and the fan held by the figure in the foreground, as well as the bright pink skin colour of the women, suggests that it is one of the hotter of a succession of rooms, where temperatures ranged from 112 - 280 F. Mayo's print was bought by the Circulations Department of the Victoria & Albert Museum for inclusion in the travelling exhibitions which the museum organised to reach a wider audience. Such prints were regarded as expendable and, unfortunately, *Turkish Bath* was either lost or damaged beyond repair.

27. *The Plunge* 1930

from 3 blocks, printed in 1) yellow; 2) pink; 3) black

305 x 210

edition 30

Impressions on off-white oriental paper.

Signed and numbered l.l.; titled l.r.

**EXH:** London 1931 (RG), no. 20; Bristol 1932 (CAC); London 1934 (RG); London 1937 (BAG), no. 83; 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 5; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 5; Dunedin (OM), no. 5; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 20; Rotorua (RM), no. 5; Timaru (AG), no. 5; Wellington (ATL) no. 5

**COLLS:** MONZ, ed. 1/30; V & A, (Circulations) (lost); Private collection, Polegate, England, ed. u.n.

**LIT:** *Bristol Evening World*, 22 November 1932; Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, pp. 9, 44; Cassidy, 1999, p. 35

*The Plunge* is a sequel to *Turkish Bath*. According to George R. Sims's *Living London*, 1903 - 4, pp. 369 - 370, the turkish bath was the most luxurious way of bathing. The woman in the print, having worked up sufficient perspiration by moving through a series of rooms, each hotter than the last, having been soaped and massaged with a variety of soaps and brushes, is completing her bath by plunging into a pool of cold water. This activity was usually followed by some time spent in the cooling room followed by a light meal or a cigarette. As Mayo was a smoker when she was young she probably finished off her own turkish bath by relaxing with a cigarette.

28. *Cats in Trees* 1931

from 4 blocks, printed 1) viridian; 2) yellow-ochre; 3) grey; 4) Prussian blue

303 x 225

edition 35

Impressions on off-white oriental paper.

Signed and numbered in image u.r.; titled below image l.r.

**EXH:** London 1931 (RG), no.15; Bristol 1932 (CAC); provincial tour 1933 RG); London 1933 (Heal's); Provincial Tour (1935); Australasian tour 1933 (RG); London 1935 (WG); London 1937 (BAG) no. 84; Birmingham 1939 (BMAG), no. 110; 1992: Canberra (ANG), no. 56; Melbourne (NGV), no. 56;

Sydney (AGNSW), no. 56; Auckland (AAG), no. 56; Wellington 1993 (MONZ), no. 56  
**COLLS:** AAG, ed. 7/30; MONZ, ed. 20/30; NGV, ed. 6/30; RMAG, ed. 11/30; Private collection, Polegate, England, ed. 22/30  
**LIT:** *Western Morning News & Mercury*, 18 July 1931; *Bristol Evening News*, 22 November 1932; Claude Flight, London, 1934, Plate 1[iv], pp.10 and 13, figs. 1,2,3, and 4; Te Papa Diary 1999, col. ill. p.105; Coppel, Canberra 1992, p. 20

Claude Flight used this print as the frontispiece and object lesson in his book *Lino Cutting and Printing*, 1934, Plate 1, iv, 10, 13. It was also made into a postcard by the National Gallery of Victoria in 1996.

29. *Apollo* 1931  
 from 1 block, printed in black  
 300 x 200  
 edition unknown  
 Impressions on oriental tissue.  
 Signed and titled u.l.  
**EXH:** London 1931 (RG), no. 17; Bristol 1932 (CAC)  
**COLLS:** V&A (Circulations) (lost); Private collection, Polegate, England  
**LIT:** *The Times*, 13 July 1931; *Western Morning News & Mercury*, 18 July 1931; *Bristol Evening World*, 22 November 1932
30. *Woman at a Dressing Table* [1931]  
 from 5 blocks, printed in 1) vermillion; 2) pink; 3) pale-blue; 4) yellow-ochre; 5) black  
 315 x 216  
 edition 30  
 Impressions on oriental tissue.  
 Signed, numbered and titled in image u.r.  
**EXH:** London 1932 (RG), no. 32; Bristol 1932 (CAC); London 1937 (BAG), no. 87; Birmingham 1939 (BMAG), no. 111; 1988: Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, no. 34; 1992: Canberra (ANG), no. 58; Sydney (AGNSW), no. 58; Melbourne (NGV), no. 58; Auckland (AAG), no. 58; 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 6; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 6; Dunedin (OM), no. 6; Palmerson North (MAG), no. 6; Rotorua (RM), no. 6; Timaru (AG), no. 6; Wellington (ATL), no. 6  
**COLLS:** MONZ, ed. 20/30; Private collection, Polegate, England, ed. 7/30.  
**LIT:** *Bristol Evening World*, 22 November 1932; Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 30, (ill. fig. 6); Coppel, 1992, p. 20; 1993 Thomson, ill. p. 82

The decorative influence of Art Deco is strong in this print. Also of interest is the varying pressures the artist applied to different sections of the work in order to achieve the effect she wanted. This was possible through hand-printing which was advocated by Claude Flight.



31. *Morning Tea* [1932]

from 4 blocks, printed 1) pink; 2) grey; 3) yellow; 4) warm reddish-brown

331 x 227

edition 30

Impressions on off-white oriental paper.

Signed and numbered in image u.r.; titled below image, l.r.

**EXH:** 1933: London (WG), no. 65; London (GG); London (RG), no. 24; 1934: Provincial Tour, England; London (GG); London 1937 (BAG) no. 85; 1988: Rhode Island (Museum of Art), no. 34; Cleveland (Museum of Art), no. 34; Santa Barbara (Museum of Art), no. 34; 1992: Canberra (ANG), no. 20; Melbourne (NGV), no. 20; Wellington (MONZ), no. 20; Auckland 1993 (AAG), no. 20

**COLLS:** MONZ, ed. 24/30; V&A, (Circulations) (lost)

**LIT:** L. Urbanelli, 1988, pp.17, 61, col. ill. p.32; Cassidy, McKean-Taylor, 1992, p. 9; Coppel, 1992, p. 20

The influence of the Art Deco style is evident in the stylised curves of the ruffled sheet and the patterned coverlet on top of the bed.

32. *Apollo Musagètes* 1932

from 1 block printed in black

503 x 340

edition 40

Impressions on off-white oriental paper.

Signed and numbered l.l.; titled l.r.

**EXH:** 1932: Provincial tour (RG); London 1933, (HL); London 1934, (RG); 1992: Auckland (AAG), no 7; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 7; Dunedin (OM), no. 7; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 7; Rotorua (RM), no. 7; Timaru (AG), no. 7; Wellington (ATL), no. 7

**COLLS:** Anne Bowes, Christchurch, ed. 7/40; Private collection, Polegate, England, u.n.

**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 44, ill. p. 31; Cassidy 1996, pp. 41-48, (ill. fig. 3)

This print was created after Balachine's ballet, *Apollon Musagète*, in which Serge Lifar danced the principal role of Apollo. It was a significant ballet in the history of Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* – a work which ushered in their 'neo-classical' phase. Mayo's stark black and white linocut (reminiscent of a John Flaxman drawing) captures the 'neoclassicism' of this last period of the *Ballets Russes*. In it she records one of the most striking moments in the *Apollon Musagète* when, in the course of a *pas de quatre*, Apollo, Calliope, Polymnia and Terpsichore create a diamond figure with a muse set at each of the three angles and Apollo at the apex.

33. *Ice Cream Cart* 1932  
 from 5 blocks, printed in 1) grey-green; 2) yellow-ochre; 3) pink; 4) red; 5) black  
 310 x 210  
 edition 30  
 Impressions on off-white oriental paper.  
 Signed and numbered within image l.r.; titled below image l.r.  
**EXH:** 1932: Bristol (CAC); London (RG), no. 23; Paris (BXAG), no. 36;  
 Provincial tour, England (1933); London 1934 (HL); London 1937 (BAG), no.  
 86; 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 8; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 8; Dunedin  
 (OM), no. 8; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 8; Rotorua (RM), no. 8; Timaru  
 (AG), no. 8; Wellington (ATL), no. 8  
**COLLS:** AAG, ed. 25/30; DPAG, ed. 27/30; MONZ, ed. 24/30; Private  
 collection, Polegate, England, ed. 20/30  
**LIT:** *The Times*, 4 September 1932; *Bristol Evening World*, 1932; Cassidy,  
 McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 44
34. *The Two Angelos* [1934]  
 from 5 blocks, printed in 1) yellow; 2) pink; 3) grey; 4) red-brown; 5) black  
 320 x 200  
 edition 30  
 Impressions on oriental paper.  
 Signed and numbered l.l.  
**EXH:** London 1934 (WG) no. 90  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England, ed. 3/30  
**LIT:** *Daily Mail*, London, 31 May 1934

This print was also purchased by the Circulations Department, Victoria & Albert Museum in 1935 and subsequently damaged beyond repair. Mayo's inspiration may have come from Laura Knight. The names of the two circus acrobats could have been known her through Knight who frequented many circus companies drawing the animals and performers. There is a strong stylistic link between Mayo's *Two Angelos* and her poster for Henry Hill, (Cat. no. 160).

35. *Doric Diary* 1935  
 from 5 blocks, printed in 1) grey; 2) pink; 3) yellow; 4) reddish brown; 5)  
 dark brown  
 209 x 278  
 edition 30  
 Impressions on off-white oriental paper.  
 Signed and numbered within image l.l.  
**EXH:** London 1937 (WG), no. 47; Birmingham 1939 (BMAG), no. 112;  
 London 1940 (RG); 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 13; Christchurch (RMAG), no.  
 13; Dunedin (OM) no. 13; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 13; Rotorua (RM),  
 no. 13; Timaru (AG), no. 13; Wellington (ATL) no. 13  
**COLL:** MCG, ed. 16/30; Private collection, Polegate, England, ed. 18/30  
**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 44

An alternative name for this print is *Milk Float*. In a letter to Margaret McKean-Taylor, 17 October 1991, John Gainsborough (Mayo's stepson) enclosed two photographs of an ice cream cart, an original 'model' dairy cart which stood outside the Clifton Arts Club in Bristol. He suggested that they were probably taken by the artist. The 1935 date suggests that Mayo designed and printed *Doric Diary* on her return to Bristol from South Africa. Five purchases of this print were made by the British Council in 1933 and 1934 for distribution among various provincial art galleries.

36. *Watching the Dance* [1935]  
 wood engraving from 1 block, printed in black  
 120 x 80  
 Impression on oriental paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** To date no exhibition record of this print has been found.  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England

In 1934/35 the artist lived with her cousin May Shearman, in Durban. On her return to England she used her drawings and experience of Africa to produce this print, as well as to illustrate *The Bamboo Dance and other African Tales*, (Cat. nos. 6.1 - 6.4). There is no direct correlation between this print and the colour engravings.

37. *Skylight* 1936  
 untraced  
**EXH:** London 1936 (RG), no. 65

*Skylight* was exhibited at the Redfern Gallery London in 1936 and is recorded in the catalogue of the exhibition held at the National Art Library, Victoria & Albert Museum, London. No copies of the print have been located.

38. *Water Carrier* 1937  
 from 4 blocks printed in 1) yellow; 2) pink; 3) blue-grey; 4) black  
 310 x 220  
 edition 30  
 Impressions on Japanese paper.  
 Signed and numbered u.r.; numbered and dated u.l.  
**EXH:** London 1936 (WG), no. 52; Birmingham 1939 (BMAG), no. 113; 1940: London (CAS); London (RG); London 1944 (GG); London 1945 (RA), no. 914; 1992: Auckland (ACAG), no. 17; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 17; Dunedin (OM), no. 17; Rotorua (RM), no. 17; Timaru (AG), no. 17; Wellington (ATL), no. 17  
**COLLS:** ATL, ed. 7/30; BM, ed. 9/30; Private collection, Polegate, England, ed. 3/30  
**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 44

This print also drew its inspiration from the artist's 'South African' period. Three purchases of it were made by the British Council and for the British Museum print collection by Campbell Dodgson.

**39. *Prowling Cat* [1937]**

from 1 block printed in black

125 x 180

edition 50

Impressions on Japanese paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** London 1945 (RA), no. 1192

**COLL:** V & A, ed. 21/50; Private collection, Polegate, England, ed. 25/50

This print is sometimes referred to as *Tyger Burning Bright*. In 1938 numbers 1 - 20 of the edition were given as Christmas gifts and 22 - 29 in 1940. Only 46 of the intended edition of 50 were printed as the block warped. It was presented by the artist in its damaged condition to Peter Floud, Keeper of Circulation, Victoria & Albert Museum, February 1948. Eight prints were bought by the British Council in 1945 for distribution among various provincial galleries.

The cat is Paul of the Goldings, described by Mayo as the "most noble of cats."

**40. *Squirrel* 1945**

1 stone, printed in black

192 x 154

edition 80

Impressions on Whatman paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** 1945: London (RA), no. 1138; London (LG), no. 52; London 1948 (RWS); Sydney 1954 (AGNSW), no. 52; Sydney 1955 (JG) no. 25; Sydney 1961 (FBG), no. 52; Timaru 1972 (AG)

**COLLS:** AG, ed. 53/80; BM, ed. 26/80; V&A, ed. 14/80; Private collection, Polegate, England, ed. 28/80

**LIT:** *Scotsman*, 24 July, 1948; Cape, 1974, p.128, ill. p.15

*Squirrel* was Mayo's first lithograph. In 1962 it was reproduced on the cover of the Sydney Dental Alumni Bulletin, *Apollonia*.

**41. *The Toilet* 1945**

from 1 block printed in black

100 x 75

edition 30

Impression on oriental paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** London 1945 (RA), no. 1181; Huddersfield 1948 (HAG); Sydney 1961 (FBG), no. 46

**COLLS:** Victoria & Albert Museum, eds. 23/30 and 27/30; Private collection, Polegate, England, ed. 8/30

**LIT:** *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, 7 March 1948; *The Studio*, Vol. 141, 1951, p. 176, (ill. p. 171)

*The Toilet* is sometimes referred to as *Cat Washing*. The artist referred to it as *Paul Washing*. The *Huddersfield Daily Examiner* reports an entertaining account of the disappearance of this print from its frame at the Royal Academy Exhibition at the Huddersfield Art Gallery on 28 January 1948. A few days later it was found lying folded near the Gallery door. The theft was traced to a sixteen year old boy who told the police that he had stolen the print because he "admired it very much. My conscience pricked me and I got scared ... and left the engraving lying near the door."

In his article "The Younger British Wood Engravers," *The Studio*, 1951, John Buckland Wright, commenting on this print, wrote, "... Mayo is another extremely capable engraver whose work has not received sufficient appreciation. Her admirable print of a cat making its toilet is not only a good pattern but is far more a synthesis of a cat than any of Steinlin's."

Five prints were purchased by the British Council for distribution among various provincial galleries.

**42. *Musk Duck* [1945]**

from 1 stone printed in black

153 x 181

edition 50

Impressions on Whatman paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** London 1948 (RA), no. 1134; London 1949 (RSBA), no. 28; London 1951 (RBA), no. 279; Sydney 1961 (SAC), no. 91; Timaru 1972 (AG); 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 26; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 26; Dunedin (OM), no. 26; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 26; Rotorua (RM), no. 26; Timaru (AG), no. 26; Wellington (ATL), no. 26

**COLLS:** ATL ed. 23/50; DPAG, ed. 17/50; HLUO, ed. 15/50; V&A eds. 28/50 and 34/50

**LIT:** *Sussex Daily News*, 1 May 1948; *Scotsman*, 3 December 1949; *Art News & Review*, 21 April, 1951; Cassidy, McKean-Taylor, 1992, p. 45

**43. *Sleepy Cat* 1946**

from 1 stone printed in black

168 x 205

edition 31

Impression on Whatman paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** London 1948, (RWS); London 1949, (RSBA), no. 31; 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 25; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 25; Dunedin (OM), no. 25; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 25; Rotorua (RM), no. 25; Timaru (AG), no. 25; Wellington (ATL), no. 25

**COLLS:** ATL, ed. u.n.; V&A, ed. 11/31 and 21/31; Catherine & Derry Gordon,

Napier, ed. 30/31

**LIT:** *Scotsman*, 24 July, 1948; P. Floud, *The Studio*, September 1950, p. 176; *Scotsman*, 3 December 1949; Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 45

44. *Two Ducks* 1947  
 from 1 block printed in black  
 135 x 152  
 edition unknown  
 Impression on India paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**COLL:** Alexander Turnbull Library, B - 131-4-001
45. *Cat in Cherry Tree* 1947  
 from 1 block, printed in black  
 76 x 103  
 edition 80  
 Impressions 1 - 20 japan paper; 61 - 80 japan tissue stuck down on to thicker paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** London 1951 (CC), no. 80; London 1952 (CC), no. 8; Sydney 1954 (DJ), nos. 13 and 14; Sydney 1955 (JG), no. 25; Sydney 1957 (PB), no. 19; 1961: Sydney, (Sydney Printmakers' exhibition); Sydney (FBG), no. 47; Sydney (SAC) no. 86; Dunedin 1965 (RSG), nos. 45 and 46; Nelson 1968 (SAG), no. 56; Auckland 1969 (NV), nos. 31, 51 and 76; Timaru 1972 (AG); 1974: Dunedin (RSG), no. 34; Timaru (AG), no. 66; 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 23; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 23; Dunedin (OM), no. 23; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 23; Rotorua (RM), no. 23; Timaru (AG), no. 23; Wellington (ATL), no. 23  
**COLLS:** AGNSW, Sydney, ed. 72/80; ATL, ed. 51/80; NGV, ed. 28/80; V&A, London, eds. 3/80 and 21/80; (The latter was presented by the artist to the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1948); Pauline Evans, Vancouver, ed. u.n.; Jenny May, Christchurch, ed. 4/80  
**LIT:** *Apollonia*, Vol. II, no. 10, 1962, pp. 6-9, ill. p. 6; Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 45, ill. p. 33; Peter Cape, 1974, p.128, ill. p.125; Cassidy 1994, unpaginated

This print marks a return to wood engraving by the artist after a period of almost twenty years.

46. *Cat in the Sun* 1948  
 from 3 stones, printed in: 1) ochre; 2) brown; 3) black  
 315 x 255  
 edition 50  
 Impression on Whatman paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** London 1949 (RG), no. 95; 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 24; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 24; Dunedin (OM), no. 24; Palmerston North, (MAG), no. 24; Rotorua (RM), no. 24; Wellington (ATL), no. 24  
**COLLS:** MONZ. ed. 1/50; V&A, ed. 17/50  
**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 45

47. *Doves* 1948

from 1 block, printed in black  
 152 x 115  
 edition 50

Impressions on fine japan paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** London 1951 (CC), no. 9; 1953: Sydney (DJ); Sydney (MACQ), no.38; Melbourne (NGV), no. 22; 1957: Brisbane (JN), no. 8; Sydney (FBG), no. 38; 1961: Sydney (FBG), no. 48; Sydney (SAC), no. 39; 1969: Auckland (NV), nos. 23, 24; Timaru 1972, (AG); 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 29; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 29; Dunedin (OM), no. 29; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 29; Rotorua (RM), no. 29; Timaru (AG), no. 29; Wellington (ATL), no. 29

**COLLS:** ATL, ed. 45/50; DCAG, ed. 19/50; RMAG, ed. 26/50; NGV; J. Darby, Dunedin, ed. 28/50; Pauline Evans, Vancouver, ed. 47/50; Private collection, Polegate, England, ed. 1/50

**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 10, 45, ill. p.24; Cassidy 1994, unpaginated

48. *Liriodendron* 1948

from 1 woodblock, printed in black  
 278 x 196  
 edition 50

Impression on India paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** London 1951 (CC)

**COLL:** ATL, ed. 10/50; J. Darby, Dunedin, ed. 4/50

A handwritten note by the artist in the Alexander Turnbull Library reads: "All these prints were destroyed because I disliked the design." ATL, B - 131-4-003

49. *New Year* [1949]

from 1 woodblock, printed in black  
 207 x 140  
 edition 50

Impressions on oriental paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** London 1952 (CC), nos. 3, 7, 11, 24, 46, 49; Sydney 1953 (MACQ); Sydney 1957 (PBG), no. 37; 1961: Sydney (FBG), no. 34; Sydney (SAC), no. 90; Timaru 1972, (AG)

**COLLS:** ATL, 38/50; RMAG, ed. 20/50, Catherine and Derry Gordon, Napier, ed. A/P 1; Julie King, Christchurch, ed. 4/50; Drs. Lynne and Ian Lochhead, Christchurch, 3/50

**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 10; Cassidy 1994, unpaginated

**50. *Mending the Net* [1949]**

from 5 stones printed in: 1) yellow-ochre; 2) pink; 3) pale-green; 4) red; 5) black  
150 x 505

edition 50

Impression on oriental paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** London 1949 (RG), no. 274; 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 27; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 27; Dunedin (OM), no. 27; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 27; Rotorua (RM), no. 27; Timaru (AG), no. 27; Wellington (ATL), no. 27

**COLLS:** DPAG, ed. 12/50; Private collection, Polegate, England, ed. 39/50

**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 45

In 1948 Mayo visited Audierne (Britany) with her stepson. She often walked to Menton, entering it "through plane-tree lined streets, all very gentle in colour. If ever there was a place where it is always afternoon, it is Menton." *Mending the Net* includes a partial view of a large hotel which is identified in the print as "Hotel de ...." This was the Hotel de la Page where Mayo and her stepson stayed. The towel marks the room in the hotel which was either Mayo's or John's. Mayo included the hotel because she felt that it set the period of the place, fifty or so years earlier. This print is possibly a variation of the painting *Blue Nets [Drying the Nets, Audierne, Brittany]* [1949] (Cat. no. 150) which is based on two black and white photographs in the Tate Gallery (TGA 196. 153). The print is a clever composition, in which the softness and rhythms of the moving net are echoed in the cloud forms above, while the verticals of the architecture provides stability and balance.

Mayo also made numerous drawings of the area. For one such example see (Cat. 147) *Landscape at Audierne*.

**51. *Roquebrune* 1952**

from 3 stones, printed in 1) yellow-green; 2) pink; 3) black  
405 x 290

edition 25

Impression on oriental paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** London 1952 (RBAG), no. 453

**COLLS:** Jillian Cassidy, Christchurch, ed. 17/25; Victoria Hearnshaw, Christchurch, ed. 10/25; Drs Lynne and Ian Lochhead, Christchurch, ed. 11/25

**LIT:** *Art News and Review*, October 1952

The subject also relates to the artist's four-month stay in France from October 1949 to January 1950. Initially she stayed in Paris, later moving to Roquebrune. She heard of Roquebrune quite by chance, having walked into a large shop (presumably in Paris)



where artists sold their own pictures. The two artists in attendance advised her to go to Roquebrune. It was within walking distance of Montecarlo; there was a Marine Museum at Monaca, which "pulled me as a magnet" and it was close to Menton "where it is always afternoon." Her diary for this period is full of small vignettes of the characters and cats she shared her life with at the pension which "overlook[ed] Monaco, with Montecarlo just hidden in the next bay." *Roquebrune* depicts the narrow, stepped passages, arches and semi-tunnels of this medieval hill-town.

52. *Bread and Wine* 1952

from boxwood block, printed in black

283 x 193

edition 50

Impressions on oriental paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** London 1952 (CC), nos. 49, 50; Melbourne 1956 (NGV), no. 36; 1961:

Spain (TPL); USA (BFG); Sydney (FBG), no. 13; Sydney (AGC), no. 88;

Timaru 1971 (NV); Timaru 1972 (AG); Christchurch 1992 (RMAG), no. 52

**COLLS:** ATL, ed. 27/50 & 47/50; RMAG, ed. 22/50; RM, ed. 5/50; Marie Prendeville, Sydney, ed. 42/50; Roger Collins, Dunedin, u.n.

The idea for this print came from a visit the artist made to Spain in 1952, to the small coastal town of Cadaqués on the Costa Brava (the home of Salvador Dali at the time). The fishermen took their food and drink to sea in a form which could be shared by everyone in the boat. The pierced bread, about 60 centimeters long, could be broken easily into meal-sized pieces. The wine was passed around in this flask called a *peron*. According to Mayo each man held the wine flask about 15 centimeters from his mouth and, with his head tilted backwards, poured the wine directly into his throat. The opening of the flask was thus untouched by the lips of anyone in the crew. See artist's notes, TLA, B - 131, Sol. Box B. The *peron* also appears in *Spanish Table*, begun 1947. See (Cat. no. 61).

## Australia 1953 - 1962

53. *Spring Morning* 1953  
 from 5 stones printed in 1) pale grey; 2) yellow; 3) green; 4) orange; 5) pink  
 419 x 318  
 edition 25  
 Impression on Whatman paper.  
 Titled and numbered u.l.; signed u.r.  
**EXH:** Sydney 1953 (MACQ), no. 36; Sydney 1957 (PBG), no. 18  
**COLLS:** AGNSW, Sydney, ed.14/25

This image is derived from the front cover Mayo drew for *Best Cat Stories*, (Cat. no. 14.1).

54. *Woman and Siamese Cat* 1953  
 from 5 stones; printed in 1) pale ochre; 2) light brown; 3) pale mauve; 4) purple;  
 5) turquoise  
 83 x 343  
 edition 20  
 Impressions on buff-coloured Japanese cartridge.  
 Signed l.r.; titled and numbered l.l.  
**EXH:** London 1953 (CC); 1956: Melbourne (Olympic Games Exhibition);  
 Killara (KMH), no. 152; Sydney 1961 (SAC), no. 92; Sydney 1962 (FBG), no.  
 60  
**COLLS:** AGNSW, Sydney, ed. 19/20

The woman in the print is a self-portrait of Mayo which she drew for an illustration for *Best Cat Stories*, p. 249, (Cat. no. 14.17). One of the outstanding features of *Woman with Siamese Cat* is the wide range of tonal variations achieved, despite only five stones being used.

55. *Mother and Son* 1954  
 from 1 block, printed in black  
 171 x 123  
 edition 50  
 Impressions on English India paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** Sydney 1954 (AGNSW), no. 51; 1955: London (LGS); Sydney (DJ);  
 Sydney (JMG), no. 6; 1956: Sydney (JG); Melbourne (NGV), no. 9; 1957:  
 Brisbane (JG), no. 12; Sydney (PB); 1961: Sydney (FBG), no. 51; Sydney  
 (SAC), no. 87; Brisbane (JG), no. 13; Timaru 1972 (AAG); Christchurch 1993  
 (RMAG), no. 27  
**COLL:** AG u.n.; ATL, A/P 4; RMAG, ed. 27/50; Catherine & Derry Gordon,  
 Napier, ed. 3/50; Victoria Hearnshaw, Christchurch, ed. 30/50; Jenny May,  
 Christchurch, 18/50

**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor, 1992, p. 10; Cassidy 1993, ill. p. 46; Cassidy, 1994, unpaginated; Cape, 1974, p. 128, ill. p. 33, wood-block, p. 33; Cassidy, 1993, ill. p. 46

In 1953, shortly after Mayo settled in Neutral Bay, Sydney, she was 'adopted' by a pregnant black and white cat, Twinkle, who produced one kitten, Peter. In 1962 Mayo crossed the Tasman with Peter, who eventually died of old age in Christchurch in 1970 and was buried in the artist's garden at 80 Malcolm Avenue, Beckenham. The edition was printed in two lots. The first (number unknown) was printed by Waite and Bull's, Sydney, in 1954, but Mayo found their printing unsatisfactory. The second printing was done by the artist herself in her studio at Christchurch in 1966.

56. *Nativity* 1955  
 from 1 block printed in black  
 203 x 153  
 edition 50  
 Impressions on English India paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** Sydney 1955 (DJ); Sydney 1955 (JG)  
**COLL:** ATL, Wellington, ed. 7/50

The artist also printed *Nativity* as a Christmas card for her own use. ATL, B - 131, Solander Box, H.

57. *Turtles* [1956]  
 monotype printed in black  
 Impression not traced  
**EXH:** Sydney 1957 (PBG), no. 17

*Turtles* was exhibited at the Peter Baxandall Gallery, Sydney, in 1957 and is recorded in a catalogue of the exhibition at the Research Room, Art Gallery of New South Wales. No copies have been located.

58. *Black Swan* [1956]  
 monotype printed in black  
 Impression not traced  
**EXH:** Sydney 1957 (PBG), no. 20

*Black Swans* was also exhibited at the Peter Baxandall Gallery in 1957 and is recorded in the same catalogue as *Turtles*. No copies have been located.

59. *Girl with Cat* [1956]  
 from 5 blocks, printed in 1) light grey-pink; 2) dark grey-pink; 3) light grey; 4) dark blue-grey mauve; 5) red  
 340 x 230  
 edition 25

Impression on buff-coloured Japanese cartridge.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** Killara 1956 (KMH), no. 153; Sydney 1957 (PBG), no. 21; Sydney 1962 (FBG), no. 61; Timaru 1972 (AG)

**COLL:** ATL, ed. 23/25; NGV, Melbourne, ed. 13/25; Catherine and Derry Gordon, Napier, A/P u.n.

**LIT:** *The Etruscan*, (staff magazine of the Bank of NSW) Vol. 10, no. 3, (December 1960), pp. 36-30, ill. pp. 28, 29, 30

*Girl with Cat* was subsequently used by Mayo to illustrate an article for *The Etruscan* on the process of linocutting and printing. Stylistically this print owes much to Pablo Picasso's paintings which date to the 1920s.

**60. *Pumpkin* 1960**

from 12 blocks, printed in 1) greenish-black; 2) orange; 3) yellow; 4) grey; 5) pale pink; 6) deep pink; 7) light blue-grey; 8) mid blue-grey; 9) dark blue-grey; 10) red; 11) green; 12) black

456 x 267

edition 18

Impression on white japon paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** 1962: Sydney (FBG), no. 59; Leipzig 1965 (Buchkunst-Ausstellung), no. 169; Timaru 1972 (AG); 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 45; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 45; Dunedin (OM), no. 45; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 45; Rotorua (RM), no. 45; Timaru (AG), no. 45; Wellington (ATL), no. 45

**COLLS:** AG, ed. 2/18; AGNSW, ed. 1/18; ATL, ed. 14/18; MONZ, ed. 17/18

**LIT:** *Graphik aus fünf Kontinenten*, illus. p. 60; Cassidy, 1999, p. 32

Mayo experimented extensively with the colour sequence of this print, printing light over dark for the first time. She remembered Thomas Griffiths, the chief lithographer at the Baynard Press, doing this when she working there part-time between 1931 and 1934. This print won the Maude Vizard Wholohn prize, Adelaide, 1962.

The influence of Picasso and of Robert MacBryde is apparent in *Pumpkin*.

**61. *Spanish Kitchen* 1961**

from 3 stones, printed in 1) light green; 2) orange; 3) dark green

360 x 280

edition 25

Impressions on buff-coloured Japanese cartridge.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**COLLS:** ATL, ed. 24/25; Private collection, Polegate, England, ed. 6/25; Victoria Hearnshaw, Christchurch, ed. 14/25; Drs Ian and Lynne Lochhead, Christchurch, ed. 22/25

The artist visited Spain in 1952 and the idea for this print probably originates from that date. The peron and the distinctive bread appear in an earlier wood-engraving *Bread and Wine* 1952, (Cat. no. 52).

62. *Ferryboat* [1961]  
no impression traced

*Ferryboat* was Mayo's first experimental print. According to diary entries made in 1961 she experimented with various textures in order to achieve the effects she wanted. She off-set from an old plank, using the woodblock as padding with thin paper; using a varnished sandpaper 'block' stuck down on cardboard; cutting a masonite and plywood backing and then using the interesting grain of the ply as an inking surface. Although she was not 'specially pleased' with *Ferryboat*, she said that it gave her plenty of ideas for subsequent prints. EMD 3 December 1961.

63. *Girl on the Ferry* 1962  
from 7 blocks, printed in 1) pale mauve; 2) pink; 3) yellow; 4) orange; 5) red; 6) green; 7) mauve; yellow and dark purple (stencilled)  
390 x 195  
edition unknown  
Impression on buff-coloured Japanese cartridge  
Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**COLL:** ATL, ed. A/P no. 1; Anne Bowes, Christchurch, ed. A/P no. 3

Mayo travelled daily by ferry between Neural Bay and Circular Quay to teach at the East Sydney Technical College. The inspiration for this print was obviously derived from those journeys. Her approach to *Girl on the Ferry* was experimental and she discovered the effects which could be achieved by stencilling areas of colour. The overall softness – the unusual grainy, sandpapered look – was achieved by using a foam plastic roller and by light inking and light pressure.

64. *Children with Umbrellas* 1962  
from 7 blocks, printed in 1) yellow; 2) pale pink; 3) pale grey; 4) mid-grey; 5) green; 6) red; 7) dark grey  
390 x 195  
edition 25  
Impression on oriental paper.  
Numbered and titled l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** Sydney 1962 (FBG), no. 58; 1965: Dunedin (LAG), A/P u.n.; Timaru 1972 (AG); Dunedin 1999 (HLUO), no. 90  
**COLLS:** ATL, ed. u.n.; DPAG, A/P. 9/10  
**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p.11; Cassidy 1999, p. 35

This print was influenced stylistically and compositionally by Ethel Spowers' *Wet Afternoon* (1930), which was exhibited with Mayo's *Turkish Bath* in the Second Exhibition of British Lino-Cuts, 1930. She returned to this theme in *Rain on the Hill*, 1975, (Cat. no. 83).

65. *Scherzo I* 1962  
 from 3 blocks (string and lino) printed in 1) turquoise; 2) brown; 3) green  
 316 x 280  
 edition 14  
 Impressions on various papers.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**COLL:** Southern Cross (Hilton) Hotel, Melbourne

This print started out as a project for Mayo's design class at the National Art School in Sydney. It was an experimental and lighthearted print, so she called it *Scherzo*, Italian for something playful, a bit of fun. The blue block was cut from lino, while the brown block was made from string stuck down on heavy card. This first edition was sold almost completely to the Southern Cross (now the Hilton) Hotel, Melbourne.

66. *Scherzo II* 1962  
 from 2 blocks, (string and lino) printed 1) turquoise; 2) brown  
 316 x 280  
 edition 14  
 Impressions on various papers.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** Timaru 1972 (AG)

*Scherzo II* is the second edition of *Scherzo I*, the difference being that the third colour was not printed. This print was pulled on a variety of interesting papers, some of them dating from the 18th century. (From the artist's notes, collection of author).

## New Zealand 1964 - 1985

### 67. *Winter Sleep* 1964

from 7 screens, printed in 1) pale turquoise; 2) turquoise; 3) red-brown; 4) yellow-green; 5) navy-blue; 6) pink; 7) white

534 x 330

edition 30

Impressions on special thick Japan paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** 1965: Leipzig 1965 (Internationale Buchkunst Ausstellung), A/P 3; Dunedin (LG), no. 4; Christchurch 1966 (LW), no. 5; Wellington 1968 (Gallery 116), no. 12; Lugano 1968, nos 14, 16; Dunedin 1970 (NV), no. 26; Christchurch 1971 (UC), no. 20; 1972: Auckland (BL), no. 17; Timaru (AG); Timaru (ARCG)

**COLLS:** AG, ed. no. 2/30; ATL, ed. A/P 1; DPAG, ed. 4/30

An avid listener to radio, Mayo had been inspired to create a print of an insect after hearing a story entitled *The Ant and the Grasshoper*. She explained the subject matter of the subsequent print as follows: "In mid-winter, lit by a cold, red sun, the promise of new life lies buried in the ground (cicada, sprouting seed, bulb, and hidden in the leaf buds of trees). The two 'figures' can be thought of as Egyptian mummy cases, holding the dead, and at the same times as chrysalises holding the coming butterfly. The falling leaves and snowflakes help to bring about the awaiting Spring. The fern frond is ready to uncoil." (Artist's notes, collection of author).

*Winter Sleep* is significant in that it was Mayo's first screen-print. Here, as in her relief prints, experimentation played an important part. She was thrilled by "the exciting chalky effect" of the opaque white which she achieved by drawing on carbon paper on to the screen. The small particles of carbon which adhered to the screen 'opened' up the solid drawn line, giving the impression of drifts of snow. Pink, the artist's favourite colour, also features prominently in this work.

### 68. *Wounded Bird* 1965

from 5 blocks, printed in 1) turquoise; 2) dark blue; 3) brown; 4) mauve; 5) yellow; red (stencilled)

594 x 365

edition 30

Impression on special thick Japanese paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** 1965: Timaru (SCAS); Waimate (WAG); Nelson (SAG)

**COLLS:** ATL, ed. 2/30; DPAG, ed. 3/30; MONZ, ed. 4/30; Ngairé and George Hewson, Christchurch, ed. 8/30.

This was a second, and simpler version of the original design for this print. The textures were arrived at accidentally, the artist having cut out the fingers of the woman by mistake. Having filled the area with epiglass she discovered that by rubbing the repairs down and using agate paint on the tail, she achieved an interesting texture. Regarding the subject as "a bit sentimental," she resolved that her next print would be "pure abstract." However, the next few months were taken up with house repairs and her commitment to abstraction appears to have been forgotten.

The subject, style and composition of this print was influenced by David Jones's wood engraving, *The Bride* 1930, which Mayo probably saw exhibited in the Eleventh Annual Exhibition of the Society of Wood Engravers, Redfern Gallery, London, 26 November to 27 December, 1930. It was also reproduced as the frontispiece to W.H. Shrewing's *Hermia and Other Poems*, St. Dominic's Press, London, 1930, which Mayo owned a copy of.

**69. *Late Harvest* 1966**

from 5 screens, printed in 1) dark purple; 2) olive green; 3) dark pink; 4) orange; 5) dark green; yellow (stencilled)

360 x 562

edition 30

Impression on hand-made Japanese paper.

Signed l.r.; titled and numbered l.l.

**EXH:** Timaru 1966 (SCAS), no. 150; Lugano 1968; Timaru 1972 (AG)

**COLL:** AAG, ed. 9/30; ATL, ed. A/P 10; DAM, ed. 12/30; DPAG, ed. 3/30;

UC, ed. 18/30; J. Darby, Dunedin, ed. 11/30

**LIT:** Cape, 1974, p.128, col. ill. p.126

This print, a still-life, is of vegetables gathered from Mayo's garden: "On a cold grey day in late autumn I gathered these glowing things from the garden." (Artist's notes, collection of author).

Sixteen prints from this edition were sold when this work was exhibited at Lugano.

EMD 21 May 1968.

**70. *Summer Evening* 1967**

from 8 blocks, printed in 1) blue; 2) green; 3) pale grey; 4) dark grey; 5) blue-green; 6) pale pink; 7) dark pink; 8) red

439 x 331

edition 30

Impression on hand-made Japanese paper.

Signed and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** Timaru 1972 (AG)

**COLL:** AG, ed. A/P 2; ATL, ed. 11/30

This print was originally intended as a monotype but the artist decided to make it "a quick (!!) linocut" which was not finished until 16 March (4 months later) "after a terrific struggle." She was not too displeased with it, regarding it as a pretty decoration which she thought might sell well in small town exhibitions. EMD 14 March 1964. It did not sell well, however, and Mayo put this down to the fact that "those who want a flowerpiece want something natural, while those who want modern decoration do not want flowers." EMD 26 May 1968.

The harmonious tonal relationships in *Summer Evening* were achieved by mixing two existing colours to create a third, for example, the red used was mixed from 'Rose Lake' and green.



71. *Travellers* 1968  
 from 5 blocks, printed in 1) dark green; 2) purple; 3) blue; 4) pink; 5) yellow  
 454 x 560  
 edition 18  
 Impressions on handmade Japanese paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** Lugano 1968  
**COLL:** ATL, ed. 9/18  
**LIT:** Cassidy, 1999, pp. 32, 35

*Travellers*, the eventual title given to this print, was the outcome of a decision Mayo made in 1966 to try to work in a more abstract style. In late 1965 she had begun jotting down ideas for *The Wanderers*, planktonic forms in the sea, with strong suggestions of a third dimension, if possible.

Many interesting techniques were used in this print to achieve the various surfaces, for example, the textured foreground on the green block was made with sand, crumpled paper (including Japanese tissue) and acrylic paint; the figures were cut out in cardboard and stuck all over with 'stick-ons.' Discovering that the relief created by the flying figures was too high, resulting in too much white around them, she unstuck them and made them lower by inserting them into the lino-block.

The background was made by using a water based undercoat applied with crumpled Japan paper. When this was dry, a water-based undercoat and Plaster of Paris was applied. Before this was quite set the artist, having placed coarse sandpaper face down on the block, stood on it. She discovered on cleaning the green block that a pleasant effect could be achieved by brushing on thinned colour instead of rolling on viscous ink straight from the tin.

72. *Mantis* 1968  
 from 6 blocks, printed in 1) sulphur- yellow; 2) mid green; 3) dark green; 4) gold; 5) red and turquoise; 6) dark blue (eye shadow and spots stencilled)  
 edition 30  
 Impression on handmade Japanese paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** 1968: Tokyo (International Print Biennale); Christchurch (COCA), no. 11; Auckland (AAG) 1969, no. 33; Timaru 1972 (AG)  
**COLLS:** ATL, ed. 18/30; Hocken Library, ed. 15/30; J. Darby, Dunedin, 24/30  
**LIT:** Cape, 1974, col. ill. p. 127

*Mantis* was exhibited in Tokyo where Mayo was an invited exhibitor at the International Print Biennale, 1968.

73. *Mantis in the Sun* 1968  
 from 6 blocks, printed in 1) yellow-green; 2) pale green; 3) orange; 4) grey; 5) mid-green; 6) purple  
 534 x 332  
 edition 30  
 Impression on handmade Japanese paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** Tokyo 1968 International Biennale of Prints

**COLL:** ATL, ed. 18/30; J. Darby, Dunedin, ed. 20/30; Sylvia & Gordon Ducker, Christchurch, ed. 1/30

It was Mayo's intention in *Mantis in the Sun* to make a simple design showing "much paper." In this it differs from any of her earlier work where colour covered the entire background.

**74. *Moths on the Window* 1969**

from 10 blocks, printed in 1) pink; 2) jade green; 3) light-brown; 4) mid-brown; 5) dark-brown; 6) silver; 7) mid-green; 8) dark-green; 9) gold; 10) dark-blue (watercolour)

535 x 333

edition 35

Impression on handmade Japanese paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** Auckland 1969 (AAG) no. 32; Timaru 1972 (AG)

**COLLS:** University of Canterbury, Christchurch, ed. 1/35; J. Darby, Dunedin, 4/35; Sylvia & Gordon Ducker, Christchurch, ed. 7/35; Drs Ian & Lynne Lochhead, Christchurch, ed. 26/35

**LIT:** P. Cape, 1974, p. 128, block, p. 24, col. ill. p. 124

To make *Moths on the Window* "rich and jewel-like and exquisite" Mayo made extensive use of a wide variety of materials. It is the first example of her use of metallic ink to achieve the decorative effect she was looking for on the moth's wings. Mayo also experimented with some interesting printing techniques in this work. See Chapter 3 for further details on the evolution of this print.

**75. *Gently Floating Forms* 1970**

from 6 blocks, printed in 1) pale turquoise; 2) dark turquoise; 3) mid-blue; 4) dark green; 6) magenta; (red and green spots stencilled)

533 x 330

edition 40

Impression on handmade Japanese paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** 1971: Auckland (BLG); Wellington (NV); Christchurch (CSA), no. 42; Christchurch (SA); Timaru 1972 (AG)

**COLLS:** ATL, ed. 3/40; Jillian Cassidy, Christchurch, ed. 2/40; John Darby, Dunedin, ed. 10/40

**LIT:** Cape, 1974, p. 128, ill. p.129; Cassidy, 1999, p. 32

In *Gently Floating Forms* Mayo moved away from using applied texture and began using mezzotint tools (roulettes). The drawback was, that although the mezzotint tools gave a pleasant, controllable texture, the block had to be cleaned at each pull in order to avoid a build-up of ink.

76. *Genesis* 1971  
 from 6 blocks, printed in 1) yellow; 2) light turquoise; 3) dark turquoise; 4) dark blue; 5) orange; 6) reddish brown  
 405 x 265  
 edition 30  
 Impressions on handmade Japanese paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**COLL:** Catherine and Derry Gordon, Napier, ed. 6/30  
**LIT:** Cassidy, 1999, p. 32
77. *Sunflower* 1971  
 from 7 blocks, printed in 1) yellow; 2) light turquoise; 3) dark turquoise; 4) light purple; 5) dark purple; 6) orange; 7) blue  
 625 x 357  
 edition 30  
 Impression on Steinbach paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** Timaru 1972 (AG); Dunedin 1973 (OM)  
**COLLS:** ATL, ed. A/P u.n.; John Darby, Dunedin, ed. 15/30

In *Sunflower* the sky was made from PVA, talc and tobacco seeds. The pattern on the leaves was created from tissue paper, with Lépage. Different consistencies of ink were used to create special effects. The first printing was full bodied and the overprinting was done in very thin ink to give a veil-like quality. Mayo also experimented with finger-wiping the inked block, but found the result too smooth. Finally she found that an old toothbrush worked best.

On completing this print Mayo wrote in her dairy that *Sunflower* was about the first print that she was "fairly satisfied" with. "*Sunflower* has a unity and the glowing look I wanted." EMD 12 August 1971.

78. *Lunaria* 1972  
 from 5 blocks, printed in 1) light green; 2) blue; 3) mauve; 4) silver; 5) brown (surface shapes in purple were stencilled)  
 403 x 246  
 edition 15  
 Impression on Steinbach paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** 1972: Auckland (AAG), no. 25; (NAG) no. 25; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 25; Dunedin (DCAG), no. 25; 1973: Timaru (AG); Dunedin (OM); Dunedin 1999 (HLUO), no. 84  
**COLL:** HLUO, Dunedin, ed. 1/15  
**LIT:** Cassidy, 1999, pp. 32, 38, col. ill. p. 32

The background block from *Moths at the Window* was re-shaped, re-worked and re-used by Mayo, as the background to *Lunaria*. Some of the textured ellipses were cut from the yellow and grey shape in the foreground of *Mantis in the Sun*. The engraved areas (3 ellipses, printed in brown over silver, as well as some of the vertical and oblique lines)

were inked in copperplate ink and then carefully hand-wiped to ensure that it remained trapped in the deeply engraved lines. When the brown block was printed, the dampened paper was pressed into the deep crevices, lifting the ink from them.

This semi-abstract work continues the more austere and rigorous style which began to emerge in *Gently Floating Forms* and *Genesis*.

**79. *Antarctic Base* 1972**

from 4 blocks printed in 1) pale grey; 2) pale blue; 3) dark-blue; 5) silver; orange (stencilled)

247 x 410

edition 10

Impression on Steinbach paper.

Titled and numbered l.l. ; signed l.r.

**EXH:** Timaru 1972 (AG); Dunedin 1999 (HLUO), no. 85

**COLLS:** AG, ed. no. 8/10; ATL, ed. A/P u.n.; John Darby, Dunedin, u.n.

**LIT:** Cassidy, 1999, pp. 32, 34 & 38, col. ill. p. 33

This print grew out of Mayo's design for the Antarctic Treaty stamp issue, (Cat. no. 194). The embossing was inspired by Marilyn Webb's engraved linocuts which were exhibited at the specialist print gallery "Graphics," in 1970.

**80. *The Beginning and the End* 1973**

from 87 blocks, printed in 1) yellow; 2) brown; 3) red; 4) blue; 5) purple; 6) black; 7) deep embossing; gold (painted on and then burnished)

475 x 359

edition 20

Impression on Steinbach paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** 1973: Dunedin (OM); Dunedin (Hospital); 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 49; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 49; Dunedin (OM), no. 49; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 49; Rotorua (RM), no. 49; Timaru (AG), no. 49; Wellington (ATL), no. 49; Christchurch 1994 (RMAG), no. 23; Dunedin 1999 (HLUO), no. 86

**COLL:** Hocken Library, ed. 15/20; St. Joseph's Maori Girls' College, Napier, ed. 19/50

**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, pp.12 - 13, p. 45; Cassidy, 1999, pp. 32, 34 & 38, col. ill. p. 33

This was the first of Mayo's religious prints and the first to incorporate lettering into the design. In *The Beginning and the End* the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet are combined with religious symbols. The composition, based on the Golden Section, is an intricate plot of revolving circles, triangles and rectangles. The symbolism is equally intricate: the triangular-shaped monstrance with the sacred wafer at its centre, refers specifically to Roman Catholic ritual; at the centre of the cross the heavily embossed Star of David refers to Judaism as the root of Christianity; within the star is the three legged man, a symbol of eternity. While *The Beginning and the End* is a religious work, it is religious in a questioning way. Mayo found listening to classical music and reading the poems of George Herbert to be more satisfying spiritual experiences than attending

church services. The print was produced during a period in the artist's life when she was rethinking her allegiance to Anglicanism and was considering converting to Roman Catholicism.

**81. *Town Belt* 1973**

from 9 blocks, printed in 1) cream; 2) light grey; 3) dark grey; 4) turquoise; 5) pink; 6) blue; 7) orange; 8) brown; 9) green

780 x 360

edition 25

Impression on Steinbach paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** 1974: Dunedin (Otago Hospital); Christchurch (COCA), no. 74/3; Dunedin 1999 (HLUO), no. 87

**COLL:** ATL, ed. A/P 2; John Darby, Dunedin, ed. 2/25

**LIT:** Cassidy, 1999, pp. 32, 34 & 35, ill.p. 31

In *Town Belt* Mayo returns to the seduction of bright colour and the virtuoso effects of decorative detail and recognisably local subject matter after her more abstract prints, *Lunaria*, *Antarctic Base*, and *The Beginning and the End*.

**82. *Pigeon in Winter* 1974**

from 3 blocks in 1) cream; 2) purple; 3) black

482 x 360

edition 30

Impression on grey sugar paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** 1974: Dunedin (OM); Christchurch (COCA), no. 74/2; 1992: Auckland AAG), no. 48; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 48; Dunedin (OM), no. 48; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 48; Rotorua (RM), no. 48; Timaru (AG), no. 48; Wellington (ATL), no. 48; Dunedin 1999 (HLUO), no. 88

**COLLS:** ATL, ed. 28/30; HLUO, ed. 4/30; John Darby, Dunedin, ed. 1/30; Drs Ian & Lynne Lochhead, Christchurch, ed. ?/30

**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 45, ill. 41; Cassidy 1999, pp. 32 & 35, col. ill. p. 37

The composition of this print is almost identical to that of the *Cockatoo and Banksia*, one of a series of very successful posters Mayo designed in 1956 for the Australian National Travel Association (Cat. no. 170).

**83. *Rain on the Hill* 1975**

from 6 blocks, printed in 1) pale grey; 2) pale green; 3) orange red; 4) purple; 5) blue; 6) pale vermilion; 7) dark green

324 x 528

edition 20

Impression on Steinbach paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** Christchurch 1976 (COCA), no. 60; Dunedin 1999 (HLUO), no. 89  
**COLL:** ATL, ed. A/P u.n.; John Darby, Dunedin, ed. 3/20  
**LIT:** Cassidy 1999, pp. 32, 34 & 35m col. ill. p. 36.

Mayo worked on this, her last Dunedin print, for nine months. "Exactly 9 months and is the child stillborn?" In it she demonstrates her taste for detailed surface ornament, something she had successfully dispensed with in *Antarctic Base*. From her studio at 13 Bewick Street, Dunedin, she looked across the road to the green hedge which she depicts in this print. As the street was nowhere near a school, few children made their way along it. In fact, *Rain on the Hill* was based on her earlier *Children with Umbrellas* (1962), (Cat. no. 64).

Her diaries reveal her doubts about *Rain on the Hill*: "I shan't have the courage to send it to an exhibition – shall give some away and some to the Rosslyn Gallery." EMD 30 May 1975. "[I] can't bring myself to put my name to them." EMD 2 June 1975.

**84. *Rain, Coal and Wood* 1977**

from 6 blocks printed in 1) light-grey; 2) dark-grey; 3) black-brown; 4) purple;  
 5) black; 6) white

326 x 530

edition 20

Impression on Steinbach paper.

Signed l.r.; titled and numbered l.l.

**EXH:** 1978: Christchurch (COCA), no. 22; Palmerston North (MAG); 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 50; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 50; Dunedin (OM), no. 50; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 50; Rotorua (RM), no. 50; Timaru (AG), no. 50; Wellington (ATL), no. 50

**COLLS:** AAG, ed. no. 15/20; AG, ed. no. 7/20; ATL, ed. no. 5/20; RM, ed. 3/20; John Darby, Dunedin, ed. 6/20; Sylvia & Gordon Ducker, Christchurch, A/P u.n.; Catherine and Derry Gordon, Napier, ed. 4/20

**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 45

According to Mayo *Rain, Coal and Wood*, an interesting pattern of light and dark, "fitted extraordinarily well into Golden Section grid" and the working out of the various blocks she described as "an almost mathematical operation." Grained wood, after being subjected to vigorous scrubbing with a steel brush, was printed to add texture. The coal heaps, perhaps the most important feature of the print, were created by sticking little 'diamonds' of paper on to three separate blocks which were then printed in varying shades of grey and black. The subject, a small coalyard close to the Beckenham Post Office, Colombo Street, Christchurch, was in Mayo's neighbourhood. Captivated by the patterns of decaying wood, coal heaps and reflecting puddles, she had photographed it on many occasions. When it was threatened with, and finally demolished to make way for a car park, she made this print to preserve its image.

85. *Homage to Pierre Finch Martineau Burrows 1842-1920* 1977  
 from 8 blocks, printed in 1) yellow brown; 2) orange; 3) brown; 4) off-white; 5) pale blue; 6) mid-blue; 7) green-blue; 8) black  
 330 x 530  
 edition 25  
 Impression on Japanese cartridge.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** Dunedin 1977 (OM); Christchurch 1978 (COCA), no. 58  
**COLLS:** ATL, ed. 21/25; MONZ, ed. 4/30; Sylvia & Gordon Ducker, Christchurch, A/P u.n.; Josephine Campey, Christchurch, A/P u.n.

The title given to this work by Mayo was based on a mis-attribution made by J. Stacpoole (see *Colonial Architecture in New Zealand*, p. 134). The Post Office in Cathedral Square, Christchurch was in fact designed by W.H. Clayton in 1876. Mayo liked the building, regarding it as "a rich piece of ornament." When it was threatened with demolition in 1976 she decided to make a print of it. Working from a series of photographs, she struggled to get the proportions in perspective. Equally difficult was her four month long battle to achieve the result she wanted. She experimented with washes of colour over printed areas to add richness to the tones of the bricks. These washes consisted of dissolved tins of brown and black Dylon, to which she added black Quink and a little vaseline and "Got just the effect I wanted." Experimenting further with this technique, Mayo discovered that a wash of water followed by dabbing with a paper towel, gave a pleasant effect on dry prints. She then proceeded to wash colour over matt, unprinted areas, and then dabbing them dry. The trees were cut from thin cardboard and then placed in 'pockets' prepared for them in a print sized piece of card. Apart from the trees Mayo left the setting plain in order to avoid a "fussy" result.

86. *Summer's End* 1978  
 from 6 blocks, printed in 1) yellow; 2) grey; 3) grey-green; 4) orange; 5) brown; 6) black; red (stencil)  
 533 x 328  
 edition 20  
 Impression on Steinbach paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** 1978: Christchurch (WCC); Palmerston North (MAG); Christchurch (COCA), no. 22  
**COLL:** ATL, 20/20; Philip and Linda Ducker, Christchurch, ed. u.n.  
**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p.15

Mayo used a 'jig-saw' method on this print, cutting 25 movable pieces from various blocks, for example, the brown centres of the leaves, the brown stem, black sepals and the orange strips of the lettering were jig-sawed into the first pull, and the orange top into the second. Her aim was "to keep it [the print] in high minor, with [the] disc the centre of attraction." EMD 21 September 1977. Finally, watercolour was washed over the trees, the seat and the rotunda.

87. ***Ginger Cat*** 1978  
 from 5 blocks, printed in 1 & 2) yellow and pale blue (printed together); 3) orange; 4) mid-blue; 5) purple  
 314 x 516  
 edition 20  
 Impression on Steinbach paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** Christchurch 1978 (COCA), 44  
**COLL:** ATL, ed. 11/20

Mayo continued with the jig-saw technique in this print which is also known as *Cat Drinking*. The cat was printed from a cut ply-wood block and stuck down which meant that blocks one and two could be printed together.

The subject, Ginger, originally lived at a shop on the corner of Malcolm and Birdwood Avenues, Beckenham, Christchurch. The artist used to feed him on weekends and holidays until he finally decided to move in permanently with her.

88. ***Hot Afternoon*** 1978  
 from 5 blocks in 1) yellow; 2) light green; 3) pale mauve; 4) mid green; 5) dark purple  
 530 x 400  
 edition 10  
 Impression on Steinbach paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** Christchurch 1979 (COCA), no. 45  
**COLLS:** John Darby, Dunedin, ed. 2/10; Sylvia & Gordon Ducker, Christchurch, A/P 4

Mayo began this print in 1965 when she was living in Waimate. In the original version she experimented with vinyl instead of lino in an attempt to find a material which was "thin but engravable." She also experimented with various textural effects, brushing xylene on to the vinyl surface to soften it, then scraping it and mixing these into dissolved plastic "goo" which was then applied to the surface of the vinyl. The print was originally referred to by the artist in her diary as *Cat in the Shade*. "[I] don't think it will turn out to be in the shade! At the end of the day didn't think it would turn out at all," EMD 28 June 1978. Mayo expressed her disappointment with this print in her diary entries for 22 and 23 November 1965, blaming its failure on her unhappy and unsettled surroundings in Waimate. In the later reworking of the design, texture was obtained by sticking cut-out shapes in lino on to mounted card. Always a harsh critic of her work, she judged it as being "too posterish to be lastingly satisfactory." The cat, Peter, also appears in *Mother and Son*, (Cat. no. 55). Compositionally *Cat in the Shade* is similar to *Spring Morning*, (Cat. no. 53).



89. *Le Milieu Divin* 1979

from 5 blocks, printed in 1) yellow; 2) blue; 3) dark green; 4) dark bluish-charcoal; 5 red

433 x 600

edition 20

Impression on Steinbach paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 52; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 52; Dunedin (OM), no. 52; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 52; Rotorua (RM), no. 52; Timaru (AG), no. 52; Wellington (ATL), no. 52

**COLLS:** ATL, ed. 13/20; Jillian Cassidy, Christchurch, ed. 7/20; Alice Flett, Christchurch, ed. 6/20

**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, pp.12-14 and p. 46, col. ill. p. 32; Cassidy 1999, p. 38, ill. p. 39

The influence of David Jones' painting *Ex Devina Pvlchritvdine*, 1956, is clearly evident in the composition of this print. The text is taken from Acts 17:28 but the title refers to Volume Four in Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's collected works, *Le Milieu Divin*. This title had caused problems for translators. When the writings of this French Jesuit were first published in the English language in the 1960s no exact English equivalent could be found and, as no agreed solution was ever reached, the title was left in French. Mayo, who had begun reading Chardin in 1969, was fascinated by the philosophy of this scientist-priest who, in the language of poetry, communicated in his writings both his reverence for the material world and his constant awareness of the spiritual in every aspect of the universe.

She used the jigsaw method for the text, sticking each letter to card then detaching in pieces, making knife and pencil marks for re-sticking. Each piece was thoroughly roughened with the point of broken scissors in order to ensure that it adhered to the linoleum block. Mayo made this print for her own development and enjoyment as a printmaker saying: "It is only a 'text' (not a seller, but I am not thinking about that) but I think I shall enjoy doing it." EMD 21 July 1978.

90. *Young Sunflower* 1979

from 6 blocks, printed in 1) light yellow; 2) dark yellow; 3) orange; 4) blue; 5) brown; 6) purple

625 x 357

edition 20

Impression on Steinbach paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** Christchurch 1979 (COCA), 31; Dunedin 1973 (Otago Hospital); 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 52; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 52; Dunedin (OM), no. 52; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 52; Rotorua (RM), no. 52; Timaru (AG), no. 52; Wellington (ATL) no. 52

**COLLS:** ATL, ed. A/P u.n.; John Darby, Dunedin A/P 4; Sylvia and Gordon Ducker, Christchurch, ed. A/P. 6; Julie King, Christchurch, ed. 20/20

Every year Mayo grew giant sunflowers in her garden at Beckenham from a seed-head originally given to her by the Christchurch painter Bill Sutton. *Young Sunflower* was

based on a series of photographs of the developing plant taken in early January. Her aim was to make the sunflower look realistic, but at the same time stylised: "It must be naive and delicate." EMD 8 November 1978. She experimented extensively with the background colour, finally choosing a pale gold and, by teaming it up with a dark gold, she achieved the 'solid' look she wanted for the plant. The lettering, *Helianthus Annus*, and the disc were cut from linoleum and mounted on card. This enabled her to print the brown and orange together.

91. *Future Harvest* 1980

from 5 screens, printed in 1) yellow; 2) pale green; 3) dark green; 4) brown; 5) burgundy; light pink (stencilled)

351 x 606

edition 20

Impression on Steinbach paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**COLLS:** ATL, ed. A/P 9; RMAG, ed. 10/20; Sylvia & Gordon Ducker, A/P 1; Catherine and Derry Gordon, ed. 8/20; Victoria Hearnshaw, Christchurch, ed. 14/20

By 1980 Mayo's health had begun to decline. She was suffering from arthritis and the sheer physicality of relief printing exhausted her. In *Future Harvest* she returned to screen-printing imagining that this would be easier on her arms and back than relief printing. In this work she experimented with a new technique of scratching out parts of the ink while it was still wet. This can be seen in the light pink and pale green areas of the print.

92. *A Garden Enclosed* 1980

from 8 screens printed in 1) grey; 2) pale green; 3) dark green; 4) burgundy; 5) pink pale-brown; 6) burgundy; 7) dark brown; 8) white

290 x 471

edition 25

Impressions on Steinbach paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**COLLS:** ATL, ed. 10/25; Sylvia and Gordon Ducker, Christchurch, A/P 2; Catherine and Derry Gordon, Napier, ed. A/P vii

The idea for this print occurred to the artist in 1966 while walking in the glasshouse in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. It was not until 1980, however, that she revisited the idea and developed it into *A Garden Enclosed*. The problems for Mayo (if they were indeed problems) were what kind of plants to have inside the glasshouse, how to treat them and what scale to use? Many of the plants are identifiable, for example, the Kentia palms, pointsettia and cyclamen.

93. *Humpback and Bottlenose* 1980  
 from 6 screens printed in: 1) mauve; 2) mid.-blue; 2) pale blue; 3) dark blue;  
 4) green  
 292 x 470  
 edition 25  
 Impression on Steinbach paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** Christchurch 1981 (COCA), no. 58  
**COLL:** Sylvia and Gordon Ducker, Christchurch, A/P 1  
**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p.14

In 1980 whales were a popular subject. Mayo mentions listening to a radio programme on bats and whales and comments on the coincidence of hearing it at a time when she was actually designing a print on them. (EMD 3 August 1980) The idea for *Humpback and Bottlenose* was sparked off by the controversy in 1980 surrounding the killing of whales by the Japanese. Always a conservationist, Mayo donated money from sales of this print to the Save the Whales campaign, sending edition numbers 1 and 18 - 25 to Project Jonah in December, 1980.

94. *The Tree* 1981  
 from 7 screens, printed in 1) pale yellow-green; 2) mid-green; 3) dark-green; 4)  
 orange; 5) light brown 6) dark brown; 7) black  
 594 x 365  
 edition 35  
 Impression on Steinbach paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** 1972: Auckland (AAG), no. 24; Wellington (NAG), no. 24; Christchurch  
 (RMAG), no. 24; Dunedin (DCAG), no. 24; Christchurch 1979 (COCA), no.  
 18; Timaru 1981 (AG); Christchurch 1982 (GG), no. ?; 1992: Auckland (AAG),  
 no. 53; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 53; Dunedin (OM), no. 53; Palmerston  
 North (MAG), no. 53; Rotorua (RM), no. 53; Timaru (AG), no. 53; Wellington  
 (ATL), no. 53  
**COLL:** AG. ed. no. 17/20; ATL, ed. A/P 5; Sylvia & Gordon Ducker,  
 Christchurch, A/P 6; Julie King, Christchurch ed. 11/35

The text is taken from the writings of the most celebrated English poet-painter of the Romantic Movement in Britain, William Blake. Mayo had made a private study of Blake's manuscripts at the British Museum while she was a student at the Slade School of Art, London.

95. *Sun and Earth* 1981  
 from 9 screens, printed in 1) pale grey; 2) orange; 3) light brown; 4) mauve; 5)  
 pale green; 6) dark green; 7) purple; 8) dark brown; 9) black  
 594 x 365  
 edition 35  
 Impressions on Steinbach paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** Christchurch 1982 (GG); 1986: Palmerston North (MAG)  
**COLLS:** ATL, ed. 4/35; MAG, Palmerston North, 3/35; Sylvia and Gordon Ducker, Christchurch, A/P 1

Despite the physical discomfort it caused her, Mayo returned to relief printing with *The Tree* because the textured effects she wanted could only be achieved through the relief method. In its early stages she referred to this print as *Four Seasons*. Later she decided to "play it safe and call it simply *The Tree* and let people work out the message for themselves." The 'wood' was made from a quick-set mixture of plaster and resin and then scraped carved into it until it resembled wood. The texture around the roots was created from tissue paper and PVA glue.

96. *Early Morning* 1981  
 from 6 screens, printed in 1) green; 2) grey; 3) orange; 4) brown; 5) pink; 6) red  
 592 x 366  
 edition 35  
 Impression on Steinbach paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** Christchurch 1981 (COCA), no. 29; Dunedin 1982 (OM)  
**COLLS:** ATL, 25/35; Sylvia & Gordon Ducker, Christchurch, A/P 2; Catherine and Derry Gordon, Napier, ed. 8/35

The houses in the background of *Early Morning* are from photographs Mayo took in Albany Street Dunedin in 1973. They also appear in *Town Belt* 1973 (Cat. no. 81). The model was Pepe, a neighbour's cat, who frequented Mayo's kitchen and bed.

97. *Oliver* 1982  
 from 6 screens printed in 1) orange; 2) pale green; 3) turquoise; 4) cream; 5) burgundy; 6) grey-pink  
 358 x 494  
 edition 36  
 Impression on Steinbach paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** Christchurch 1983 (COCA), no. 30  
**COLLS:** ATL, ed. 12/36; John Darby, Dunedin, ed. 19/36; Sylvia & Gordon Ducker, Christchurch, A/P 1; Catherine & Derry Gordon, Napier, ed. A/P iv; Victoria Stafford, Christchurch, u.n.

By 1981 continuing bad health was having a serious effect on the working-life of the artist. Feeling disinclined to tackle anything too difficult, she returned to her favourite subjects, cats. The cat on the mat is also the neighbour's cat, Oliver, who took his meals with them, but spent the rest of the time (including nights) with Mayo. Her diary entries reveal that she began this work diffidently, more for the sake of working than from any faith in it. But, as she added in her usual spirited way, "At 74, why shouldn't I simply enjoy the 'follies of my age' like Rossini?" EMD 23 February.

98. *Quiet Afternoon* 1982  
 from 12 screens,  
 291 x 470  
 edition 25  
 Impressions on Steinbach paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**COLLS:** ATL, 18/25; Sylvia & Gordon Ducker, Christchurch, A/P 5; Catherine  
 and Derry Gordon, Napier, ed. 10/25

*Quiet Afternoon* was the outcome of over 30 years of working with, and then abandoning the park subject. "It [*The Park*] has been gestating since 1950, when I drew that seat in Chelsea park." EMD 16 December 1981. In 1966 Mayo began a small painting, *The Park*, intended for entry in the Pan Pacific Exhibition in 1965. After experiencing difficulties with using the oil medium, she decided to abandon the painting and send a print instead. Her intention in *Quiet Afternoon* was to keep the figural group as a design of colour shapes, to which she added "... if I can." Reconsidering the finished work she decided that she was uneasy about the print as it was 'pretty.' "This must be eliminated." EMD 8 January 1982.

99. *Alphabets* 1982  
 from 9 screens, printed in 1) mauve; 2) lime-green; 3) blue-green; 4) red; 5)  
 magenta; 6) olive green; 7) ultramarine; 8) purple; 9) brown  
 422 x 280  
 edition 35  
 Impressions on Steinbach paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**COLLS:** AAG, ed. 27/35; ATL, ed. 35/35; Sylvia & Gordon Ducker,  
 Christchurch, ed. 4/35; Pauline Evans, Vancouver, ed. 30/35; Milada and Oliver  
 Stocker, Christchurch, ed. 19/35

The blocks of colour overprinted with letters in *Alphabet* and *Alphabets Two* were adapted from Ben Shahn's poster designed for Jerome Robbins' "Ballets U.S.A." in 1959. Diary entries between 2 February and 7 April indicate that Mayo encountered numerous problems with registration and also with emulsion and gum dissolving on the screen. There is evidence of 'touching-up' in many of these prints.

100. *Alphabets Two* 1982  
 from 9 screens, printed in 1) lime-green; 2) turquoise; 3) mid-green; 4) orange-red;  
 5) bright pink; 6) mauve; 7) mid-blue; 8) dark blue; 9) brown  
 600 x 355  
 edition 35  
 Impressions on Steinbach paper.  
 Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.  
**EXH:** Palmerston North 1986, (MAG); Christchurch 1993, (RMAG)  
**COLLS:** AAG, ed. 29/35; ATL, ed. 34/35; (MAG), ed.15/35; (RMAG), ed.  
 10/35; John Darby, Dunedin, ed. 2/35; Sylvia & Gordon Ducker, Christchurch,

ed. 12/35; Catherine and Derry Gordon, Napier ed. 30/35; Victoria Hearnshaw, Christchurch, ed. 33/35; James Lochhead, Christchurch, ed. 28/35

**LIT:** 1993, Cassidy, Gerrish-Nunn, et. al., 1993, col. ill. p.16

The same screens were used for this print as for *Alphabets* but printed in a different colour-wave.

**101. *Moon and Sunflower* 1982**

from 2 screens, printed in 1) blue-grey; 2) grey-green

472 x 295

edition 35

Impressions on Steinbach paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** Palmerston North 1986 (MAG); 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 54; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 54; Dunedin (OM), no. 54; Palmerston North (NAG), no. 54; Rotorua (RM), no. 54; Timaru (AG), no. 54; Wellington (ATL), no. 54

**COLLS:** ATL, ed. A/P 7; MAG, ed. 23/35; John Darby, Dunedin, ed. A/P 4; Sylvia & Gordon Ducker, Christchurch, ed. 1/35; Victoria Hearnshaw, Christchurch, ed. 10/35

**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 46

The two screens for *Moon and Sunflower* were covered with emulsion and stippled with 'millions of dots.' *Moon and Sunflower* is the last work in Mayo's 'sunflower' series which includes the paintings *Life Dance of the Sunflower* 1976, (Cat. no.155) and *Sunflower Dance* 1979 (Cat. no. 156).

**102. *Springing Fern* 1983**

from 7 screens printed in 1) pale burnt Sienna; 2) dark green; 3) dark brown; 4) black; 5) pale green; 6) black; 7) red-brown

573 x 361

edition 34

Impressions on Steinbach paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** Palmerston North 1986 (MAG); 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 55; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 55; Dunedin (OM), no. 55; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 55; Rotorua (RM), no. 55; Timaru (AG), no. 55; Wellington (ATL), no. 55

**COLLS:** ATL, ed. A/P 3; RM, ed. 4/34; John Darby, Dunedin, ed. 11/34; Sylvia & Gordon Ducker, Christchurch, A/P 4; Catherine & Derry Gordon, Napier, ed. 10/34; Julie King, Christchurch, ed. 17/34

**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, pp.14 and 46

*Springing Fern* is Neo-Romantic in conception in that it expresses Mayo's respect for and love of nature, but it is conservationist in intention. It portrays the convictions she expressed in *The Story of Living Things* concerning humankind's responsibility for caring for the earth.

**103. *Black Swans* 1983**

from 7 screens, printed in 1) pale green; 2) pale grey; 3) black; 4) mid-green; 5) dark green; 6) brown; 7) white; (red stencilled on)

290 x 407

edition 44

Impressions on white Steinbach paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 56; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 56; Dunedin (OM), no. 56; Rotorua (RM), no. 56; Timaru (AG), no. 56; Wellington (ATL), no. 56

**COLLS:** Sylvia & Gordon Ducker, Christchurch, A/P 1; Victoria Stafford, Christchurch, ed. 23/44

**LIT:** Thomson 1993, col. ill. p. 81; Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, ill. p. 42

How to treat the water in *Black Swans* was a baffling problem for Mayo and she continued to experiment with various techniques for over two months. She had successfully dealt with much the same difficulty in *Humpback and Bottlenose* 1980 (Cat. no. 93) by echoing the curving bodies of the whales with over-printings of stippled arcs of turquoise-blue and green. The problem was exacerbated in *Black Swans* by the degree of transparency she wished to achieve. Finally, by grading three shades of green and texturing each to suggest the movement of water, she achieved the look she wanted. Commenting on this in her diary she wrote: "Daringly, I am pleased with it, so far." EMD 3 January 1983.

**104. *Victorian Jug* 1984**

from 7 screens, printed in 1) grey; 2) dark green; 3) magenta; 4) pale-green; 5) blue; 6) grey-pink; 7) mauve

561 x 366

edition 50

Impression on Steinbach paper.

Titled and numbered l.l.; signed l.r.

**EXH:** Palmerston North 1986 (MAG); 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 58; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 58; Dunedin (OM), no. 58; Palmerston North (NAG) no. 58; Rotorua (RM), no. 58; Timaru (AG), no. 58; Wellington (ATL), no. 58

**COLLS:** ATL, ed. A/P 6; MAG., ed. 4/50; RMAG, ed. no. 9/50; Christchurch South Medical Centre, ed. 22/50; John Darby, Dunedin, ed. 13/50; Sylvia & Gordon Ducker, Christchurch, A/P. 12; Catherine & Derry Gordon, Napier, ed. A/P viii; Victoria Hearnshaw, Christchurch, ed. 36/50; Elizabeth Lochhead, Christchurch, ed. 21/50

**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 46, ill. p. 43; Thomson 1983, col. ill. p. 83

The stippling technique used so successfully in *Moon and Sunflower* 1982 (Cat. no. 101), was continued by Mayo in *Victorian Jug*. The jug belonged to her cousin, Rose Jennings, and the artist thought that it would make a 'frivolous print.' Although this was to be her penultimate print, she was still experimenting even at this late stage on improving her composition skills. In designing this print the artist drew the various

types of flowers she wanted to include in the vase in crayon, cut them out and then 'cow-ed' them on. In this way she was able to arrange her colours and shapes satisfactorily before transferring them on to the various screens for printing. Mayo loved flowers; she cut them reluctantly from her garden and arranged them so that each flower could be seen. In *Victorian Jug* she portrayed two of her favourite flowers, the cornflower and the passion flower. The jug was chosen for its curvilinear shape and its lavender-white colour. The plaid tablecloth on which the jug of flowers stands was used to introduce pattern and geometry into the print which Mayo regarded as "a suitable accompaniment."

**105. *White Cat and Poppies* 1985**

from 9 screens, printed in 1) pale-green; 2) mid-grey; 3) pale pink; 4) dark pink; 5) mid-grey; 6) mid-green; 7) dark green; 8) brown; 9) white

346 x 240

edition 50

Impression on Steinbach paper.

Signed and numbered l.l.; titled l.r.

**COLLS:** ATL, A/P 9 & 10; John Darby, Dunedin, ed. 31/50; Sylvia & Gordon Ducker, Christchurch, A/P 10; Blossom Hart, Christchurch, ed. 44/50; Victoria Hearnshaw, Christchurch, ed. 36/50; Elizabeth Lochhead, Christchurch, ed. 42/50; Pamela Gerrish Nunn, ed. 40/50

The colours used in *White Cat with Poppies* are almost identical to those in *Victorian Jug*. It is a highly decorative work which depends on colour and texture for its impact. The white cat is Snow Queen whom Mayo adopted shortly after moving into her new house at 140 Fisher Avenue, Christchurch in 1977.

This was the artist's last print.



## PART THREE: PAINTINGS, DRAWINGS &amp; WATERCOLOURS

## ENGLAND 1930 - 1952

106. *Magnolias* [1930]  
pencil on paper 271 x 220  
unsigned  
**PROV:** The artist; 1992 gifted to Alexander Turnbull Library, C-127-030
107. *Barabau* [1928]  
coloured chalk on paper 810 x 730  
signed l.l.  
**PROV:** The artist; owner and whereabouts unknown  
**EXH:** London 1930, the Claridge  
**LIT:** Phillips, London "Modern British...Paintings," illus. p. 54  
*The Morning Post*, 6 May 1930, p. 7; *The Lady*, 13 May 1930

This work, sometimes referred to as *Dancing Harlequin*, is an adaptation of Mayo's illustration of Serge Lifar as the Second Sailor in *Barabau* for Beaumont's publication on the dancer. The painting of Serge Lifar was first exhibited in 1930 in a memorial exhibition to Sergei Diaghilev, the founder of the *Ballets Russes*.

108. *Les Matelots* 1929  
untraced  
**PROV:** The artist; owner and whereabouts unknown  
**EXH:** London 1930, the Claridge  
**LIT:** *The Morning Post*, 6 May 1930, p. 7.; *The Lady*, 13 May 1930

The dancer depicted is Alexandra Danilova in her role as the Young Girl in *Les Matelots*.

109. *La Chatte* 1929  
chalk, pencil and watercolour (measurements unknown)  
signed l.l.  
untraced  
**PROV:** The artist; owner and whereabouts unknown  
**EXH:** London 1930, the Claridge  
**LIT:** *The Morning Post*, 6 May 1930, p. 7.; *The Lady*, 13 May 1930; Lynne Garofala and Nancy Van Baer, 1999, ill. p. 287

This painting is known from a reproduction in *The Ballets Russes and Its World*, ill. p. 287. The background to the painting is not a copy of the original set by Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsener. The forms depicted by Mayo are, however, Constructivist in style.

110. *[Lily]* [1929]  
 watercolour and gouache 340 x 220  
 signed l.l.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted to Ralph Gainsborough; 1969 bequeathed to John Gainsborough  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England
111. *[Woman with Magnolia]* [1930]  
 pencil, colour wax and crayon on paper 206 x 161  
 signed l.l.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1934 gifted to Rose Jennings; 1979 bequeathed to Anne Bowes  
**COLL:** Anne Bowes, Christchurch  
**EXH:** London 1930 (RG), no. 53; London 1930 (RIG), no. 498; 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 9; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 9; Dunedin (OM), no. 9; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 9; Rotorua (RM), no. 9; Timaru (AG); Wellington (ATL), no. 9  
**LIT:** *Daily Mail*, 21 February, 1930; TGA 916.13
112. *[Woman with Cat]* [1930]  
 untraced  
**LIT:** *The Morning Post*, 6 May 1930; *The Lady*, 13 March 1930

This painting is recorded in a black and white photograph in the artist's archive at the Tate Gallery, TGA 916. 150. It was also reproduced in *The Passing Show*. The cheapness of the paper of this magazine, as well as its small dimensions, suggests that it was a predecessor to *Time Out*.

113. *Mousehole* [1930]  
 watercolour and pencil on paper  
 untraced  
**EXH:** 1930: London (NBG); London (The London Group), no.77  
**LIT:** *Western Morning News and Mercury*, 14 October 1930
114. *[Summer Flowers in Jug]* [1931]  
 oil on canvas 651 x 510  
 untraced

This painting was reproduced in colour in Christie's *The Art Sales Index*, vol. II, 1988/89, 21st edition, p. 65. Its present whereabouts is unknown.

115. *Watching the Dances : Zulu Woman, Durban* 1935  
pencil, watercolour, colour chalk on card 380 x 274  
signed u.r.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1992 gifted to Jillian Cassidy  
**COLL:** Jillian Cassidy, Christchurch
116. *Zulu Woman* 1935  
watercolour and pastel on paper 391 x 290 (irregular)  
**PROV:** The artist; 1992 gifted to the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington  
**COLL:** ATL, C-127-019
117. *Zulu Mother and Child* [1935]  
conté on card 412 x 365  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted to Ralph Gainsborough; 1969 bequeathed to John Gainsborough  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England
118. *Zulu Heads* [1935]  
pencil, watercolour, colourchalk on card 430 x 305  
signed u.r.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1992 gifted to Jillian Cassidy  
**COLL:** Jillian Cassidy, Christchurch
119. *African Forest* [1935]  
gouache on card 440 x 335  
signed u.r.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted to Ralph Gainsborough; 1969 bequeathed to John Gainsborough  
**EXH:** London 1935 (WG), no. 20  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England  
**LIT:** *Morning Post*, 11 July 1935
120. *Pelican in Durban* [1935]  
pencil, watercolour, colour chalk on paper 368 x 255  
**PROV:** The artist; 1992 gifted to Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington  
**COLL:** ATL, C127/18
121. [Shells] *Conus millipunctatus, Conus tessallatus, Conus Hebraeus, Terebra dimidiata, Natalina caffra* [1935]  
pencil, watercolour on paper 249 x 356  
**PROV:** The artist; 1992 gifted to the Alexander Turbull Library, Wellington

- EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 12; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 12; Dunedin (OM), no. 12; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 12; Rotorua (RM), no. 12; Timaru (AG), no. 12; Wellington (ATL), no. 12  
**COLL:** ATL, C-127-015
122. [Shells] *Argonauta bottgeri*, *Cypraea mauritiana*, *Cassis glauca* [1935]  
pencil, watercolour on paper 268 x 361  
**PROV:** The artist; 1992 gifted to Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington  
**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 12; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 12; Dunedin (OM), no. 12; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 12; Rotorua (RM), no. 12; Timaru (AG), no. 12; Wellington (ATL), no. 12  
**COLL:** ATL, C-127-016
123. [Shells] *Ancilla optima* [1935]  
pencil, watercolour on paper 118 x 195  
**PROV:** The artist; 1992 gifted to Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington  
**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 12; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 12; Dunedin (OM), no. 12; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 12; Rotorua (RM), no. 12; Timaru (AG), no. 12; Wellington (ATL), no. 12  
**COLL:** ATL, C-127-014
124. [Shells] *Harpa ventricosa*, *Achatina zebra*, [unnamed shells] [1935]  
pencil, watercolour on paper 261 x 347  
**PROV:** The artist; 1992 gifted to Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington  
**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 12; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 12; Dunedin (OM), no. 12; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 12; Rotorua (RM), no. 12; Timaru (AG), no. 12; Wellington (ATL), no. 12  
**COLL:** ATL, C-127-013
125. [Shells] *Strombus pacificus*, *Terebra cenulata*, *Conus rosaceus*, *Conus generalisa* [1935]  
pencil, watercolour on paper 250 x 357  
**PROV:** The artist; 1992 gifted to Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington  
**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 12; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 12; Dunedin (OM), no. 12; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 12; Rotorua (RM), no. 12; Timaru (AG), no. 12; Wellington (ATL), no. 12  
**COLL:** ATL, C-127-012
126. [Shells] *Voluta Ponsonbyi*, *Melapium elatum* [1935]  
pencil, watercolour on paper 252 x 334  
**PROV:** The artist; 1992 gifted to Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington  
**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 12; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 12; Dunedin (OM), no. 12; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 12; Rotorua (RM), no. 12; Timaru (AG), no. 12; Wellington (ATL), no. 12  
**COLL:** ATL, C-127-011

127. [Shells] *Purpura succinta, Murex axicornis, Murex tenuispina* [1935]  
pencil, watercolour on paper 242 x 355  
**PROV:** The artist; 1992 gifted to Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington  
**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 12; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 12; Dunedin (OM), no. 12; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 12; Rotorua (RM), no. 12; Timaru (AG), no. 12; Wellington (ATL), no. 12  
**COLL:** ATL, C-127-010
128. *[Chokos]* [1937]  
pencil, pen, watercolour, colour chalk on paper 342 x 260  
**PROV:** The artist; 1992 gifted to the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington  
**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 15; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 15; Dunedin (OM), no. 15; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 15; Rotorua (RM), No. 15; Timaru (AG), no. 15; Wellington (ATL), no. 15  
**COLL:** ATL, C127. 9
- 129 & 130.  
*Studies of teazels* [1937]  
pencil (a) 323 x 206; (b) 237 x 219  
**PROV:** The artist; 1992 gifted to the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington  
**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 16; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 16; Dunedin (OM), no. 16; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 16; Rotorua (RM), no. 16; Timaru (AG), no. 16; Wellington (ATL), no. 16  
**COLL:** ATL, C127.
131. *Friendship* [1937]  
watercolour and pencil on paper (measurements unknown)  
untraced  
**EXH:** London 1937 (RG), 1937, no. 67
- This painting was exhibited at the Redfern Gallery, London in 1937. It is recorded in a catalogue, National Art Library, London. Its whereabouts is unknown.
132. *Study for painting, field with stooks of corn sheaves* [1941]  
pencil, crayon on paper 280 x 500  
unsigned  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted to Ralph Gainsborough; 1969 bequeathed to John Gainsborough  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England

133. *Fletching Mill* [1941]  
oil on canvas 490 x 595  
signed u.r.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted to Ralph Gainsborough; 1969 bequeathed to John Gainsborough  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England

Fletching Mill was one of the local landmarks in the area in East Sussex where Mayo lived between 1941 and 1947.

134. *Musk Duck* [1945]  
conté on paper 414 x 303  
signed l.r.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted to Ralph Gainsborough; 1969 bequeathed to John Gainsborough  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England.

According to John Gainsborough, Mayo insisted that musk duck was the proper name for this species, commonly known as muscovy ducks. These ducks were at Fletching both during and after the war.

135. *Musk Ducks* 1945  
ink, watercolour, chalk on paper 340 x 380  
**PROV:** Sold Christies, London 12,5,87m P173/R.  
**EXH:** London 1946 (LG), no. 44  
**COLL:** unknown

136. *Frosty Morning* 1945  
watercolour and chalk on paper  
dimensions unrecorded  
**PROV:** The artist; c.1990 gifted to Ruth Newlove  
**EXH:** 1950: Worthing (WAG); 1972: Timaru (AG)  
**LIT:** *Worthing Gazette*, 7 June 1950; *West Sussex Gazette*, n.d.  
**COLL:** Ruth Newlove, Dunedin

Ruth Newlove, a friend of Mayo's, admired this work and with characteristic generosity the artist gave it to her. The present whereabouts of the owner and the painting is unknown.

137. *Fallen Leaves* [1946]  
 conté on paper 410 x 292  
 signed u.r.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted to Ralph Gainsborough; 1969 bequeathed to John Gainsborough  
**EXH:** London 1947 (RSBA)  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England
138. *Bean Flowers in the Sun* [1946]  
 conté on paper 455 x 340  
 signed u.r.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted to Ralph Gainsborough; 1969 bequeathed to John Gainsborough  
**EXH:** London 1947 (RSBA)  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England
139. *Wayside Ferns* 1947  
 tusche, watercolour on paper 475 x 295  
**PROV:** The artist; 1982 gifted to Ngaire and George Hewson  
**COLL:** Ngaire and George Hewson, Christchurch
- Mayo parted reluctantly with this dry-brush work of ferns. It was a work that she particularly liked and it was also of sentimental value to her: it was of Fletching and it had hung on the first floor of her home at 33 Royal Avenue, London.
140. *Waterlillies* [1947]  
 conté on paper 304 x 230  
 signed u.l.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted to Ralph Gainsborough; 1969 bequeathed to John Gainsborough  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England
141. *Stage 17* 1948  
 tempera on oak panel, 505 x 400  
 signed l.r.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted to Ralph Gainsborough; 1969 bequeathed to John Gainsborough  
**EXH:** London 1948 (RA), no. 844; 1950: London (RA), no. 349; London (LG). no. 32  
**LIT:** *Art News and Review*, Vol.11, no.7, May 6, 1950, p. 2  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England

This painting is sometimes referred to as *Sea Scape with Tackle*. It was composed from photographs which the artist took at Newhaven docks, East Sussex. TGA 916. 153 and

916. 159. The date (1948) is written on the back of the photograph in the artist's handwriting.

142. *[Running Cat]* [1948]  
 conté on paper 230 x 380  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted to Ralph Gainsborough; 1969 bequeathed to John Gainsborough  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England

The cat, Puttens, lived at Stroods, Fletching around this time. He was also the model for the painting *Tabby Cat* [1948].

143. *Tabby Cat* [1948]  
 oil on canvas 196 x 205  
 untraced  
**LIT:** *Apollo*, Vol. IV, no. 320, October 1951, pp.109-112

This painting was reproduced in *Apollo* (details above). It is also recorded in a black and white photograph at the Alexander Turnbull Library, B 131-2-001.

144. *Fig Tree* [1948]  
 conté, watercolour over pencil drawing on paper 620 x 470  
 signed u.r.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted to Ralph Gainsborough; 1969 bequeathed to John Gainsborough  
**EXH:** 1948: London (AH); London 1950 (LG), no. 32  
**LIT:** *The Times*, 25 August 1950  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England

This fig tree grew near the house, Stroods, East Sussex, where Mayo lived between 1941 and 1947.

145. *Sea Holly* [1949]  
 tempera on board 350 x 450  
 untraced  
**EXH:** London (RA) 1949, Summer Show, no. 736.  
**LIT:** *Daily Herald*, 30 April 1949.

*Sea Holly* was reproduced as a Christmas card for the Medici Society, London, 1949. The present whereabouts of the painting is unknown. This work refers in style, technique and subject to Edward Wadsworth's Surrealist (seaboard) paintings.



146. *[View of the Seine]* [1948]  
oil on canvas 452 x 545  
**LIT:** Cat. NAG, *The First Fifty Years: British Art of the 20th century*, p. 67  
**COLL:** Private collection, Auckland

This painting is referred to as *Paris* in a 1996 catalogue, Ferner's Gallery, 367 Parnell Street, Auckland.

147. *Study for painting, Landscape at Audierne* [1948]  
pencil on paper 265 x 390  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted to Ralph Gainsborough; 1969 bequeathed to John Gainsborough  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England

*Mending the Net*, (Cat. no. 50) is based on this drawing. It does not appear to have been worked up into a painting.

148. *Broad Bean Flowers* [1950]  
chalk, colour wax and crayon on paper 365 x 270  
signed  
signed l.l.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted Ralph Gainsborough; 1969 bequeathed John Gainsborough  
**EXH:** London (LG), 1950, no.113  
**LIT:** *Art News & Review*, Vol.11, no.13, July 1950, p. 2.  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England.

Refer to Chapter Four for discussion of this work.

149. *Lobster Pot* [1950]  
tempera on oak panel 410 x 325  
signed l.l.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted to Ralph Gainsborough; 1969; bequeathed to John Gainsborough  
**LIT:** *Worthing Gazette*, 7 June 1950; *Art News & Review*, 21 April 1951  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England

150. *Blue Nets* [1950]  
oil on canvas 610 x 439  
signed l.l.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted to Ralph Gainsborough; 1969 bequeathed to John Gainsborough  
**EXH:** London (RA), 1950, no. 349  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England

This painting was based on photographs taken by the artist at Audierne, Brittany, France. See ATL, B - 131, Solander Box B.

151. *Frozen Stream* [1950]  
 conté and watercolour on card 455 x 300  
 signed l.l.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted to Ralph Gainsborough; 1969 bequeathed to John Gainsborough  
**EXH:** London 1951 (LG), no. 25  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England
152. *Belinda* [1951]  
 oil on canvas 905 x 485  
 unsigned  
**PROV:** The artist; 1952 gifted to Dr. Ralph Gainsborough; 1969 bequeathed to John Gainsborough  
**EXH:** London 1952 (RIG), no. 22  
**LIT:** *The Scotsman*, 14 June 1952; *Art News and Review*, 28 June 1952  
**COLL:** Private collection, Polegate, England

#### NEW ZEALAND 1962 - 1979

153. *Warehouses, Sydney* 1963  
 acrylic on board measurements  
**PROV:** The artist; 1965 purchased by G & N Hewson, Christchurch  
**COLL:** G & N Hewson, Christchurch

This painting was produced as a card for the Australian Mutual Providence Society in 1966, (Cat. no. 185). ATL. B - 131-6-009

154. *Circular Quay* 1964  
 pastel, watercolour and pencil on paper 410 x 600  
 untraced
155. *Life Dance of Sunflowers* 1976  
 acrylic on board 686 x 660  
 signed l.l.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1977 purchased by W.D. & H.O. Wills, Auckland  
**EXH:** Wellington (NAG), 1976; 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 51; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 51; Dunedin (OM), no. 51; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 51; Rotorua (RM), no. 51; Timaru (AG), no. 51; Wellington (ATL) no. 51  
**LIT:** "New Zealand Painting and the Benson and Hedges Award," *Art New Zealand*, August/September 1976, pp. 24, 25; Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, col. ill. p. 29  
**COLL:** Wills New Zealand

156. *Sunflower Dance* 1979  
acrylic on board 950 x 580  
signed l.l.  
**PROV:** The artist; 1985 gifted to Sylvia and Gordon Ducker  
**COLL:** Sylvia and Gordon Ducker, Christchurch

**PART FOUR: DESIGNS TAPESTRIES, MURALS, POSTERS, TABLEWARE AND CARDS**

**England [1925] - 1952**

- 157. Malvolio "Twelfth Night" [1925]**  
 costume design  
 gouache 260 x 194  
 TGA 916. 110

- 158. Maria "Twelfth Night" [1925]**  
 costume design  
 gouache 260 x 194  
 TGA 916. 111

- 159. Olivia "Twelfth Night" [1925]**  
 costume design  
 gouache 260 x 194  
 TGA 916. 112

These three costumes were probably designed when Mayo was a student in Janetta Cochrane's classes in theatrical design at the Central School of Arts and Crafts. A sketchbook belonging to the artist and dated 1924 (TGA 2000/7) depicts illustrations, as well as a history of costumes through the ages. It appears to be a book of exercises associated with Cochrane's classes.

- 160. Poster for Henry Hill, printers [1935]**  
 from 3 lino blocks (colours unknown) 765 x 510

This poster has been reproduced as a photocopy in the ATL B - 131, Sol. Box, H. The composition of the heads in the lower left hand corner bears a striking resemblance to Sybil Andrew's linocut, *Concert Hall*, which was exhibited in the First Exhibition of Colour Linocuts at the Redfern Gallery (no. 42), London, 1929 and which Mayo probably saw either then, or subsequently.

- 161. Poster for Geffrye Museum (1) [1948]**  
 graphite, ink, watercolour, coloured chalk on board 544 x 341  
**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 30; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 30; Dunedin (DCAG), no. 30; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 30; Rotorua (RM), no. 30; Timaru (AG), no. 30; Wellington (ATL), no. 30  
**COLL:** Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

162. **Poster for Geffrye Museum (2)** [1948]  
graphite, ink, watercolour, coloured chalk on board 510 x 303  
**COLL:** Jillian Cassidy, Christchurch
163. **Study for tapestry** [1949]  
ink and pencil on paper 561 x 191  
**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 31; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 31; Dunedin (OM), no. 31; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 31; Rotorua (RM), no. 31; Wellington (ATL), no. 31  
**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 45  
**COLL:** Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North
164. **Study for tapestry** [1949]  
pencil on paper 502 x 552  
**EXH:** 1986: Palmerston North (MAG); 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 32; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 32; Dunedin (OM), no. 32; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 32; Rotorua (RM), no. 32; Timaru (AG), no. 32; Wellington (ATL), no. 32  
**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 45  
**COLL:** Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North
165. **Royal Avenue, Chelsea** 1949  
cartoon for tapestry  
gouache on off white wove paper 600 x 753  
**EXH:** Timaru 1972, (AAG); Palmerston North 1986, (MAG); 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 33; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 33; Dunedin (OM), no. 33; Palmerston North (NAG), no. 33; Rotorua (RM), no. 33; Timaru (AG), no. 33; Wellington (ATL), no. 33  
**LIT:** *The Sydney Sunday Herald*, 13 September 1953; Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, p. 45  
**COLL:** Aigantighe Gallery, Timaru

In 1974 Mayo was persuaded by the Aigantighe Gallery, Timaru, to sell this design to them for their permanent collection. The work was of sentimental value to her as it had hung in the studio of her home at 33 Royal Avenue, Chelsea from 1949 to 1952. On receiving a cheque for \$300 in payment for the cartoon from the Aigantighe Gallery in February 1975 she wrote in her diary that she felt "as if I have sold a child."

166. *The Work of Women* 1950  
 cartoon for tapestry  
 gouache 650 x 910  
**EXH:** 1986: Palmerston North (MAG); 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 34; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 34; Dunedin (DCAG), no. 34; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 34; Rotorua (RM), no. 34; Timaru (AG), no. 34; Wellington (ATL), no. 34  
**COLL:** Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North
167. *Echinoderms* 1950  
 cartoon for tapestry  
 gouache 445 x 610  
**EXH:** Palmerston North 1986, (MAG); 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 35; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 35; Dunedin (OM), no. 35; Palmerston North (MAG), no.35; Rotorua (RM), no. 35; Timaru (AG), no. 35; Wellington (ATL), no. 35  
**LIT:** Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, pp. 24, 45, col. ill. p. 37  
**COLL:** Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North
168. *Echinoderms* 1950  
 woven tapestry 1830 x 1370, the Dovecot Studio, The Edinburgh Tapestry Company  
**EXH:** 1951: Birmingham (BCAG), no. 53; 1953: Edinburgh (RSA), no. 33  
**LIT:** *Apollo* vol. LIV. no. 320, October 1951, p. 112; *Falkirk Herald*, 14 March 1953; *Inverness Courier*, 27 November 1953; *Edinburgh Evening News*, 28 November 1953; *The Scotsman*, 28 November 1953; *Evening Dispatch*, 2 December 1953; Cassidy, McKean-Taylor 1992, pp. 25, 45. col. ill. p. 37; Thomson 1993, col. ill. p. 81  
**COLL:** John Gillespie, private collection, Ponteland, Newcastle on Tyne, England

## AUSTRALIA 1953 - 1962

169. **Display Panels** designed for David Jones' shop window, Sydney, 1955  
 black and white photograph 191 x 250  
**COLL:** Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington

These panels are recorded as a black and white photograph at the Alexander Turnbull Library, B - 131-4-028

170. **Poster, *Cockatoo & Banksia* 1956**  
 offset lithography 1006 x 635  
**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 38; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 38; Dunedin (OM), no. 38; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 38; Rotorua (RM), no. 38; Timaru (AG), no. 38; Wellington (ATL), no. 38; Canberra (NLA), 1999  
**LIT:** *Modern Publicity*, Vol. no. 26, 1955/57, col. ill. p. 52; Cassidy, McKean-Taylor, 1992, col. ill. p. 40; Cassidy, 1999, p. 35
171. **Poster, *Discover Australia* 1956**  
 offset lithography 1008 x 632  
**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 41; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 41; Dunedin (OM), no. 41; Palmerston North (MAG), Rotorua (RM), no. 41; Timaru (AG), no. 41; Wellington (ATL), no. 41; Canberra (NLA), 1999  
**LIT:** *Modern Publicity*, Vol. no. 26, 1955/57, p. 45
172. **Poster, *Koalas* 1956**  
 offset lithography 1010 x 632  
**LIT:** *Modern Publicity*, Vol. no. 26, 1955/57, p. 45
173. **Poster, *Kangaroo* 1956**  
 offset lithography (dimensions unknown)
174. **Poster, *Sturt's Desert Pea* 1957**  
 offset lithography 1010 x 632  
**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 39; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 39; Dunedin (OM), no. 39; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 39; Rotorua (RM), no. 39; Timaru (AG), no. 39; Wellington (ATL), no. 39; Canberra (NLA), 1999  
**LIT:** *Modern Publicity*, Vol. no. 28, 1958/59, col. ill. p. 35; R. Butler, p. 24, col. ill. p. 39
175. **Poster, *Great Barrier Reef* 1957**  
 offset lithography 1006 x 634  
**EXH:** 1992: Auckland (AAG), no. 40; Christchurch (RMAG), no. 40; Dunedin (OM), no. 40; Palmerston North (MAG), no. 40; Rotorua (RM), no. 40; Timaru (AG), no. 40; Wellington (ATL), no. 40; Canberra (NLA), 1999  
**LIT:** *Modern Publicity*, Vol. no. 29, 1959/60, col. ill. p. 48
176. [Logo for] ***Mawallok* [1956]**  
 pen and ink on paper 82 x 140  
**COLL:** ATL, B - 131-4-026

177. *The Tree of Invertebrates* [1958]  
mixed media 3660 x 9760  
**EXH:** Australian Museum, Sydney, 1959

This mural is no longer extant. The museum holds colour slides of Mayo's paintings for this mural, [gouache on board] (Figs. 16 and 17).

178. **Mural**, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, North Ryde, Sydney, 1960  
synthetic resin on panels of marine ply wood 183 x 366  
**EXH:** Foyer of Administrative Building of the Division of Food Preservation.

179. **China design** (Wedgewood) for Reserve Bank, Sydney 1962  
gouache and pencil on paper 285 x 274 (irregular)  
**COLL:** Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, B - 131-4-020

180. Bookplate: **Howard Beale** 1957

181. Bookplate: **Howard Beale** 1959

182. Bookplate: **Julian Beale** 1959

183. Bookplate: **Elizabeth Pope** [1960]

184. Bookplate: **Esther Rossi** 1962

185. Card for *Amicus*, September 1964, Australian Mutual Provident Society

186. *Five Fathoms Deep*: Underwater diorama, Otago Museum 1972 - 75

*Five Fathoms Deep* was a diorama designed by Mayo for the Marine Hall at Otago Museum. Although she was the designer of the various living organisms portrayed she often acted as technician as well. According to Linden Cowell, Head of Display at the museum at the time, Mayo spent much of her time experimenting and solved aesthetic and craft problems in unorthodox ways. She made seaweed and corallines out of miscellaneous materials and recycled scraps such as pantyhose, milk bottle tops and scrubbing brushes. Working in three dimensions was unfamiliar to her and she encountered unforeseen problems such as having to paint out the shadows of fish on the back wall of the diorama to maintain the illusion of an underwater scene. Author in



conversation with Linden Cowell, August 1999. The Otago Museum holds Mayo's working drawings and sketch books to this project. The diorama was finally dismantled in August 1999.

**187.1 - 35 Cards** Greggs, Dunedin 1976 - 77  
goauche 150 x 100

- 187.1 Kakapo or Night Parrot
- 187.2 Takahē or Notornis
- 187.3 Native Thrush or Piopio
- 187.4 North Island Kokako – Blue Wattled Crow
- 187.5 South Island Kokako – Orange Wattled Crow
- 187.6 Yellowhead or Mohua
- 187.7 New Zealand Falcon or Karearea
- 187.8 Little Spotted Kiwi or Kiwi-Pukupuku
- 187.9 Bush Wren or Matuhi
- 187.10 Orange Fronted Parakeet
- 187.11 Red Crowned Parakeet or Kakariki
- 187.12 Buff Weka
- 187.13 Chatham Island or Black Robin
- 187.14 Stitchbird of Hihi
- 187.15 Saddleback or Tīeke
- 187.16 Shore Plover or Tuturuatu
- 187.17 Subantarctic Snipe or Tutukiwi
- 187.18 Black Petrel or Taiko
- 187.19 King Shag or Kawau
- 187.20 Northern Royal Albatross or Toroa
- 187.21 Yellow-eyed Penguin or Hoiho
- 187.22 Fairy Tern
- 187.23 Wrybill or Ngutu-Parore
- 187.24 New Zealand Dotterel or Tuturi-Whatu
- 187.25 Reef Heron or Matuku-Moana
- 187.26 Marsh Crake or Koitāreke
- 187.27 Banded Rail or Mohopereru
- 187.28 Fernbird or Matata
- 187.29 Brown Bittern or Matuku
- 187.30 Southern Crested Grebe or Puteketeke
- 187.31 White Heron or Kotuku
- 187.32 Royal Spoonbill or Kotuku-Ngutupapa
- 187.33 Blue Duck or Whio
- 187.34 Brown Duck, Brown Teal or Pateke
- 187.35 Black Stilt or Kaki

Mayo painted these bird cards over a period of eight months. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of this commission.

## PART FIVE: DESIGNS FOR STAMPS AND COINS

### Stamps: Australia 1957 - 1962

**188.1 - 6 Stamp design: Six Australian Mammals 1957 - 1959**

issued 21 March, 1960

**188.1 Tasmanian Tiger 1/2d**

**188.2 Banded Anteater 6d**

**188.3 Tiger Cat 8d**

**188.4 Kangaroo 9d**

**188.5 Rabbit Bandicoot 11d**

**188.6 Platypus 1/-**

**188.7 Original drawing of the Tasmanian Tiger**

**189.1 - 4 Great Barrier Reef series issued February 1966**

The fish for this series were drawn from life either in the Aquarium of the 'Musée Océanographique de Monaco' or at the Marine Laboratory, Heron Island, Great Barrier Reef, Australia when Australia changed to decimal currency.

**189.1 Humbug Fish 7 cents**

**189.2 Coral Fish 8 cents**

**189.3 Hermit Crab 9 cents**

**189.4 Anemone Fish 10 cents**

### Stamps: New Zealand 1969 - 1985

All original art work pertaining to Eileen Mayo's New Zealand stamp designs are held at the Philatelic Records Archive, New Zealand Post Office, Auckland

**190.1 - 4 Captain Cook Bicentenary stamps issued 1969**

**190.1 Captain James Cook 4 cents**

**190.2 Joseph Banks Esq. F.R.S. 6 cents**

**190.3 Dr. Daniel Solander F.R.S.** 18 cents

**190.4 Cook's Chart of 1769** 28c cents

**190.5 First Day cover**

Mayo represented the New Zealand waters, in which Cook's anchor rests, in the traditional Maori pattern 'aramoana' or 'path to the sea' on the first day cover. She felt that this was a far more appropriate way of including the Maori people than the usual 'tiki.'

**191. 1 - 7 Six Definitive stamps** issued 1970

The three moths, the Puriri, the Zebra and the Magpie were all regarded as species native to this country. The Scarlet Parrot Fish, the Sea Horses and the Leather Jacket were chosen by Mayo because all were found in New Zealand waters and all were very distinctive.

**191.1 - 3 Moths** (first release of definitives) issued 2 September 1970

**191.1 Magpie Moth** 2 1/2 cents

**191.2 Puriri Moth** 4 cents

**191.3 Zebra (Lichen) Moth** 3 cents

**191.4 Zebra (or speckled) Moth** (original drawing) 1/2 cent

**191.5 - 7 Fish** (third release of definitives) issued 4 November 1970

**191.5 Scarlet Parrot Fish** 5 cents

**191.6 Sea Horses** 6 cents

**191.7 Leather Jacket** 7 cents

**192.1 - 2 Chatham Island stamps** issued 2 December 1970

**192.1 Chatham Island lily** 1 cent

**192.2 Mollymawk** 2 cents

**193. UNICEF 25th Anniversary** issued 1971

**194. Antarctic Treaty 1961 - 1971 stamp** issued 9 June 1971

**Antarctic Treaty** 6 cents

**195.1 - 4 Alpine Plants series:** issued 1972

**195.1 Black Scree Cotula** 4 cents

**195.2 North Island Edelweiss** 6 cents

**195.3 Haast's Buttercup** 8 cents

**195.4 Brown Mountain Daisy** 10 cents

**195.5 Black Scree Cotula** original drawing and colour-wave

**195.6 Haast's Buttercup** original drawing and colour-wave

**196.1 - 4 Tokelau Islands: Corals** issued 12 September 1973

**196.1 Horny Coral** 3 cents

**196.2 Soft Coral** 5 cents

**196.3 Mushroom Coral** 15 cents

**196.4 Staghorn Coral** 25 cents

**196.5 Soft Coral** original drawing and colour-wave

**196.6 Mushroom Coral** original drawing and colour-wave

**196.7 Staghorn Coral** original drawing and colour-wave

**197. Christmas stamps** 1973 (not issued)

These are the artist's original designs for the 1973 Christmas stamps. Mayo depicted the lily on the 10c stamp on the first day cover of the 1974 Christmas stamp issue, (Cat. no. 199.1).

**198.1 - 3 Health Stamps** issued 7 August 1974

**3 cent, 4 cent and 5 cent stamps**

**198.4 First Day cover**

**199.1 Christmas stamp(s)** issued 2 October 1974

The 3c stamp is a reproduction of a painting of the *Nativity*, c.1430, by Conrad Witz, whose style owed much to the Flemish painters especially the Master of Flémalle. This is revealed in his use of deep diagonal spaces and extreme perspective.

The 5c stamp features the stained glass window from Old St Paul's Church, Wellington. The lily depicted by Mayo is the Christmas Lily (*Lilium candidum*).

## 199.2 First Day cover

### 200.1 - 4 Tokelau Islands: Fish issued 19 November 1975

This issue was designed to harmonize with those of the Corals. Mayo chose the same background colours, lay-out, typeface and numerals to correspond with the earlier issue.

**200.1 Moorish Fish** 5 cents

**200.2 Long-nosed Butterfly-fish** 10 cents

**200.3 Lined Butterfly-fish** 15 cents

**200.4 Red Fire-fish** 25 cents

### 201.1 - 4 Tokelau Islands: Coronation Anniversary: first day cover issued 28 June 1978

The problem Mayo confronted with these stamp designs was that of celebrating a single event, the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, in four stamps. She overcame the limited potential of the issue by emphasising three incidents from the ceremony of coronation on each of the first three stamps:

**201.1** The entrance into the Church: Her Majesty enters Westminster Abbey, 8 cents

**201.2** The recognition: the queen, standing by King Edward's Chair, shows herself to the people, 10 cents

**201.3** i. The Oath and the presentation of the Bible

ii The Delivery of the Orb

iii The investiture and the giving of the Sceptre and Rod

iv The putting on of the Crown, 15 cents

**201.4** This depiction of the queen was derived from the the portrait shown on current English definitive stamps, 30 cents

### 202.1 - 3 Christmas stamps: issued 1985 (designed 1978)

This issue of stamps was based on the Christmas carol *Silent Night*.

Mayo's inspiration for the 18 cent stamp was the early Italian painters who used bright colours in their paintings of this scene. Rather than dress the participants in accurate historical costume they wear clothes typical of those worn in 15th century Italy.

The same bright colours and contemporary dress appear in the 40 cent stamp.

Mayo has achieved the ethereality she desired for the angels in the 50 cent stamp by portraying them as a series of rhythmic, linear patterns.

**202.1 The stable** 18 cents

**202.2 The shepherds** 40 cents

**202.3 Angels** 50 cents

## **PART FIVE: COINS, AUSTRALIA 1963**

### **203.1 Australian Decimal Coinage: 6 plaster marquettes covered with shellac 1963**

The Australian Treasury required its designers to produce their coin designs in the first instance as plaster casts. These were photographed singly and then together against a black background. The flora and fauna chosen by Mayo are all uniquely Australian. Within the obvious limitations of a circular face and the requirements of embossing they are worked with scientific accuracy.

**203.2 Gum nuts** 1 cent

**203.3 Banksia** 2 cents

**203.4 Kookaburra and snake** 5 cents

**203.5 Black swan** 10 cents

**203.6 Platypus** 20 cents

## **COINS, NEW ZEALAND 1966**

### **204.1 - 5 New Zealand Decimal Coinage**

**204.1 Mountain daisies** 2 cents

**204.2 Two athletes** 10 cents

**204.3 Swordfish** 20 cents

**204.4 Shearer and fleece** 50 cents

**204.5 Punga fern** commemorative dollar

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### ARCHIVES:

Central School of Arts and Crafts, London; Student Records, 1925 - 1928  
 Public Record Office, Kew; Register of births, deaths and marriages, 1906  
 Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Eileen Mayo Archive, Print Room  
 Royal Mint Archive, London; Correspondence, Royal Mint Advisory Committee to the  
 New Zealand Treasury, 1966  
 St Martin's School of Art, London; Staff Records, 1950 - 1952  
 Slade School of Fine Arts Archive, University College, London; Attendance books,  
 1923 - 24  
 Tate Gallery Archive, London; Eileen Mayo Archive (TGA 916)  
 David Jones, Sydney; Staff Records, 1953 - 54  
 Reserve Bank of Australia, Melbourne; Minutes of meeting, Establishment Department,  
 22 August 1962  
 National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Artists' Files, Eileen Mayo  
 Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; Eileen Mayo Archive (B - 131)  
 New Zealand Post Office, Wellington; Philatelic Records, correspondence 1967 - 1978  
 New Zealand Post Office, Auckland; Philatelic Records, correspondence 1967 - 1978  
 Otago Museum Archive, Dunedin; Eileen Mayo, sketch books, 1972 - 1975  
 Author's collection, Christchurch: Eileen Mayo, diaries 1952 - 1985  
 - - - - : Eileen Mayo, outward correspondence  
 - - - - : Eileen Mayo, inward correspondence.

### PUBLISHED SOURCES:

Aitken, Charles. "The Slade School of Fine Art." *Apollo*, Vol. III, no. 13, January, 1926:  
 pp. 1 - 11

Ambrus, Caroline. *Australian Women Artists : First Fleet to 1945 : History, Hearsay  
 and Her Say*. Woden, A.C.T. : Irrepressible Press, 1992

Appelyard, R.G. "Lithographs by Eileen Mayo," *Bulletin of the National Gallery of  
 South Australia* (1954), Vol. 15, no. 3, u.p.

Baer, Nancy Van Norman, (ed.). *The Art of Enchantment : Diaghilev's Ballets Russes,  
 1909 - 2*. San Francisco : Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; New York, NY:  
 Universe Books : Distributed by St Martin's Press, c1988

Barton, Christine. *Louise Henderson, 1902 -*. Auckland : Auckland City Art Gallery,  
 1991

Baruch, Grace and Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne (eds.). *Women in Midlife*. New York; London :  
 Plenum Press, 1984

Battersby, Martin. *The Decorative Twenties*. New York : Whitney Library of Design, 1988

Beale, Dorothea. *Work and Play in Girls' Schools by three headmistresses, Dorothea Beale, Lucy H.M. Soulsby, Jane Frances Dove*. London : Longmans, Green, and Co., 1898

Beaumont, Cyril W. *Bookseller at the Ballet : Memoirs 1891 to 1929*. London : Beaumont Press, 1975. 3rd ed.

- - - - . *Complete Book of Ballet*. London : Putnam, 1949. 2nd ed.

- - - - . *Design for the Ballet*. London : The Studio Ltd., 1937

- - - - . *The Diaghilev Ballet in London : A Personal Record*. London : Beaumont Press, 1940

- - - - . *The First Score*. London : Beaumont Press, 1927

- - - - . (ed.). Raye, Zelia. *Rational Limbering*. The Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing, London : Beaumont Press, 1929

Bell, Clive. *Art*. London : Chatto and Windus, 1914

- - - - . "Inside the 'Queen Mary' : A Business Man's Dream." *The Listener*, 8 April, 1936, pp. 658 - 660

Bell, Quentin. *Bloomsbury*. London : Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974

Bieringa, Luitjens. "Eileen Mayo." *Postal Impressions*, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington 1992

Bliss, Douglas Percy. "The Development of Wood Engraving." *The Listener*, 9 December, 1931, pp. 1000 - 02

- - - - . "The Last Ten Years of Wood Engraving." *Print Collector's Quarterly*, Vol. 21, 1934, pp. 251 - 271

Blondel, A. *Tamara de Lempicka : a Catalogue Raisonné*. Lausanne : Acatas, 1999

Blunden, Edmund. *Japanese Garland*. London : Beaumont Press, 1928

Bolling G. Frederic and Withington, Valerie A. *The Graphic Work of Laura Knight*. England : Aldershot, 1993

Branson, Noreen and Heinemann, Margot. *Britain in the Nineteen Thirties*. London : Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971



- Branson, Noreen. *Britain in the Nineteen Twenties*. London : Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1975
- Burke, Janine. *Australian Women Artists 1840 - 1940*. Collingwood, Vic : Greenhouse Publications, 1980
- Burstall, Sara. *English High Schools for Girls : their aims, organisation and management*. New York; London : Longmans, Green, and Co., London, 1907
- Butler, Roger. "Lithography in Australia : Melbourne 1948 - 1958," in P. Gilmour (ed.), *Lasting Impressions : Lithography as Art*, Canberra : ANG, 1988, pp. 283 - 95
- . *The Europeans : Emigré Artists in Australia 1930 - 1960*. Canberra : National Gallery of Australia, 1997
- . *The Prints of Margaret Pretson*. Canberra : National Gallery of Australia; Melbourne : Oxford University Press, 1987
- . "Stencil and screenprint in Australia," *Imprint* (1985), nos. 3 - 4, pp. 4 - 11
- Cape, Peter. *Prints and Printmakers in New Zealand*. Auckland : Collins, 1974
- Carey, Frances and Antony Griffiths. *Avant-Garde British Printmaking 1914-1960*. London : British Museum, 1990
- Carrighar, Sally. *One Day on Beetle Rock*. London : Pleiades Books, 1946
- Carson, Rachel. *The Sea Around Us*. London : New American Library, 1951
- . *The Edge of the Sea*. London : Staples Press, 1955
- Caselberg, John. "The Whales' Song." *Art New Zealand*, Vol. 7, August/September/October 1977, pp. 30 - 38
- Cassidy, Jillian. "Eileen Mayo and the British Wood Engraving Tradition." *Bulletin of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery*, 90, June 1994, pp. 3 - 4
- . "Eileen Mayo and the Ballets Russes." *Bulletin of New Zealand Art History*, Vol. 17, 1996, pp. 41 - 48
- Castleman, Riva. *Prints of the Twentieth Century*. London : Thames & Hudson, 1976
- Cave, Roderick. *The Private Press*. New York : R.R. Bowker, 1983
- Chamberlain, Walter. *The Thames and Hudson Manual of Wood Engraving*. London : Thames & Hudson, 1978
- Chilvers, Ian. *Oxford Dictionary of 20th Century Art*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1998

- Collins, Judith. *The Omega Workshops*. London : Secker & Warburg, 1983
- Compton, Susan (ed.). *British Art in the 20th Century : The Modern Movement*. Munich; London : Prestel-Verlag, 1986
- Cooper, A.C. "Notes on the Printing Methods of the Golden Cockerel Press." *Matrix*, Winter 1989, 18 - 22
- Cooper, Douglas. *Picasso Theatre*. London : Wodenfield & Nicolson, 1968
- Coppel, Stephen. *Linocuts of the Machine Age*. London : Scolar Press, 1995
- de Chardin, Teilhard. *Le Milieu Divin : an Essay on the Interior Life*. London : Collins, 1965
- Deepwell, Katy. "Dod Proctor (1892 - 1972)." *Women Artists Slide Library Journal*, No. 34 May/June, 19 - 20
- Delaney, Paul. "Great Book Illustrators III, Ethelbert White." *Antiquarian Book Monthly Review*, Vol VIII, no. 8, Issue 88, August, 1981, pp. 300 - 305
- Draper, W.J. (ed.). *Who's Who in Australia*. Melbourne : The Herald and Weekly Times Limited, 1985
- Driberg, J.H. (ed.). *The Bamboo Dance and Other African Tales*. Bristol : Clover Hill Press, 1937
- Dunbar, Janet. *Laura Knight*. London : Collins, 1975
- Dunn, Jane. *A Very Close Conspiracy : Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf*. London : Cape, 1990
- Duro, Paul (ed.). *Papers of the Art Association of Australia*, Canberra, 1991
- Duveen, (Sir) Joseph. "Thirty Years of British Art." *Studio Special*, Autumn Number, London, 1930
- Ellwood, G. "Famous Contemporary Art Masters: Noel Rooke." *Drawing and Design*, December, 1924, pp. 236 - 238
- Faeber, Ruth. "Earl Bracken." *Imprint* (1992), Vol. 27. No. 4, pp. 1 - 2
- Farleigh, John. *Graven Image*. London : MacMillan, 1940
- - - - . *It Never Dies*. London : Sylvan Press, 1946
- Fitzgerald, Sue. "From humble beginnings to great expectations: The history of printmaking in Western Australia." *Imprint* (1993), Vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 19 - 20

- Flight, Claude. *Lino-Cuts : a handbook of linoeleum-cut colour printing*. London : John Lane, The Bodley Head Ltd, (1948)
- Flight, Claude. *The Art & Craft of Lino Cutting and Printing*. London : B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1934
- Food Preservation Quarterly*. Vol. 21, no. 4, CSIRO, December 1961
- Forge, Andrew. "The Slade : 1 & 2." *Motif*, 1960 - 62, pp. 29 - 43
- Fox-Davies, A.C. *A Complete Guide to Heraldry*. New York : Bonanza Books, 1977
- Frayling, Christopher and Claire Catterall (eds.). *The Royal College of Art : One Hundred & Fifty Years of Art and Design*. London : Barrie & Jenkins, 1998
- French, Jane. *The Education of Girls*. London : Cassall, 1990
- Garafola, Lynn. *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1989
- Gararola, Lynn & Baer Van Norman, Nancy, (eds.). *The Ballets Russes and Its World*. New Haven, London : Yale University Press, 1999
- Garrett, Albert. *British Wood Engraving of the 20th Century : a personal view*. London : Scolar Press, 1980
- Garton, Robin. *British Printmakers 1855 - 1955 : a century of printmaking from the Etching Revival to St Ives*. London : Scolar Press, 1992
- Gillespie, Diane Filby. *The Sisters' Arts : The Writing and Painting of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell*. New York; Syracuse : Syracuse University Press, 1991
- Gilmore, Pat (ed.). *Lasting Impressions : Lithography as Art*. London : Alexandria Press, 1988
- Green, Oliver. *Art for the London Underground*. London : Laurence King, 1990
- Grigoriev, S.L. *The Diaghilev Ballet 1909-1929*. Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1960
- Grimes, Teresa, Collins, Judith & Baddeley, Oriana. *Five Women Painters*. Oxford : Lennard Publishing, 1989
- Grishin, Sasha. *Contemporary Australian Printmaking*. Roseville, East, N.S.W. : Distributed by Craftsman House, 1994
- Hamilton, James. *Wood Engraving and the Woodcut in Britain c.1890-1990*. London : Barrie & Jenkins, 1994
- Hansen, Robert C. *Scenic and Costume Design for the Ballets Russes*. Ann Arbor, Michigan : UMI Research Press, 1985

- Harrison, Charles. *English Art and Modernism 1900 - 1939*. London : Allen Lane, 1981
- Harrod, Tanya. *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century*. Yale : Yale University Press, 1999
- Hone, Joseph. *The Life of Henry Tonks*. London : Heinemann, 1939
- Hunt, Felicity. *Lessons for Life : The Schooling of Girls and Women 1850-1950*. Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1987
- Hylton, Jane. *South Australian Women Artists*. Art Gallery Board of South Australia, Adelaide, 1994
- Jaffé, Patricia. *Women Engravers*. London : Virago, 1990
- Jeffrey, Ian. *The British Landscape 1920 - 1950*. London : Thames & Hudson, 1984
- Joseph, Michael (ed.). *Best Cat Stories*. London : Faber and Faber, 1951
- Jones, William (trans.). *The Poem of Amriolkais*. Shaftsbury, Dorset : High House Press, 1930
- Kanner, Barbara (ed.). *The Women of England : from Anglo Saxon Times to the Present*. London : Mansell, 1980
- Kirker, Anne and Tomory, Peter. *British Painting 1800 - 1990 in Australian and New Zealand Public Collections*. Sydney : The Beagle Press, 1994
- Knight, Laura. *Oil Paint and Grease Paint*. London : I. Nicholson & Watson, 1936
- . *The Magic of a Line*. London : William Kimber, 1965
- Kochno, Boris. *Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes*. New York : Harper & Row, 1970
- Kodicek, Ann (ed.). *Diaghilev Creator of the Ballets Russes*. London : Lund Humphries, 1996
- Lear, Linda. *Rachel Carson : Witness for Nature*. New York : H. Holt, 1997
- Legge, J.S. (ed.). *Who's Who in Australia*. Melbourne : The Herald and Weekly Times Limited, 1971
- de Lempicka-Foxhall, Kizette (as told to Charles Phillips). *Passion by Design : the Art and Times of Tamara de Lempicka*. Oxford : Phaidon, 1987
- Lewis, Jane E. *Women in Britain since 1945 : Family, Work, and the State in the Post-War Years*. Oxford : Blackwell, 1992

----. *Women in England 1870 - 1950 : Sexual divisions and Social Change*. Brighton : Wheatsheat, 1984.

Lifar, S. *Serge Diaghilev : His Life, His Work, His Legend*. New York : Da Capo Press, 1976

Luçart, Jean. *Designing Tapestry*. London : Rockliffe, 1950

Lucie-Smith, Edward. *Art of the 1930s : the Age of Anxiety*. New York : Rizzoli, 1985

MacNab, Ian. *The Student's Book of Wood-Engraving*. London : Pitman, 1938

Maroger, M. *The Secret Formulas and Techniques of the Masters*. London : Studio Publications, 1949

Marshall, Tom. *Fishes of the Great Barrier Reef*. Sydney : Angus & Robertson, 1964

Mayo, Eileen. "Making a Linocut." *The Etruscan*, Vol. 10, no. 3, December 1960, pp. 26 - 30

----. *The Story of Living Things and their Evolution*, London : Waverley Book Co. Ltd, 1944

----. *Shells and How They Live*, Pleiades Books, London, 1944

----. *Larger Animals of the Countryside*. London : Pleiades Books, 1945

----. *Little Animals of the Countryside*, London : Pleiades Books, 1945

----. *Nature's ABC*, London : Universal Text Books Ltd., 1951

----. *Animals on the Farm*. London : Puffin Books, 1951

Mollison, James. "Printmaking in Australia." *Art and Australia*, (1964), Vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 231 - 38

Moncrieff Perrine. *New Zealand Birds and How to Identify Them*. Auckland; Wellington; Christchurch; Dunedin; Invercargill; London; Melbourne; Sydney : Whitcombe and Tombs Limited, 1930. 2nd ed.

Nabokov, Nicolas. *Old Friends and New Music*. Boston : Little, Brown and Co., 1951

Naylor, Gillian. *Bloomsbury Portraits : the Artists, Authors and Designers by Themselves*. London : Pyramid, 1990

Newsom, John. *The Education of Girls*. London : Faber & Faber, 1948

Nicols, J. & Bartsch, Paul. *Fishes and Shells of the Pacific World*. New York : The Macmillan Co., 1945

- Nunn, Pamela Gerrish. *Victoria Women Artists*. London : Women's Press, 1987
- Oddy, Revel. "Archie Brennan: Weaver, Designer and Teacher," Quarterly Journal, *The Guilds of Weavers and Dyers*, no. 81, Spring 1972
- Oliver, W.R.B. *New Zealand Birds*. Wellington : Fine Arts (N.Z.) Ltd, 1930
- Pastoureau, Michel. *Heraldry : Its Origins and Meaning*. London : Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1997
- Pederson, Joyce, S. *The Reform of Girls' Secondary and Higher Education in Victorian England : a study of elites and educational change*. New York; London : Garland, 1987
- Percival, Alicia, C. *The English Miss Today and Yesterday : Ideals, Methods and Personalities in the upbringing of Girls during the Last Hundred Years*. London : Harrap, 1939
- Pevsner, Nikolaus. *Academies of Art Past and Present*. New York : Da Capo Press, 1973
- Pickering, Charles, L. *The Private Press Movement : An address given to the Manchester Society of Book Collectors, Maidstone College of Art, School of Printing*, n.d.
- Planchenault, René. *Some Notes about the Angers Tapestries*. Paris : Braun, Mulhouse, 1977
- Postan, Alexander. *The Complete Graphic Work of Paul Nash*. London : Secker & Warburg, 1973
- Pozharskaya, Militisa and Voldina, Tatiana. *The Art of the Ballets Russes : the Russian Season in Paris 1908 - 1929*. New York : Abbeville Press, 1990
- Price, Mary and Glenday, Nonita. *Reluctant Revolutionaries : a Century of Headmistresses 1874 - 1974*. London : Pitman, 1974
- Raverat, Gwendolen. "Wood Engraving of To-Day." *Studio*, Vol. II7, 1939, pp. 42 - 51
- Raye, Zelia. *Rational Limbering*. London : Beaumont Press, 1929
- Reilly, Robin. *Wedgwood*. London : MacMillan London Ltd, 1989. (2 vols.)
- Richter, Irma A. (trans.). *Paragone : A Comparison of the Arts*, London : Oxford University Press, 1949
- Ridler, William. "The Smaller Pre-War Presses," *Antiquarian Book Monthly Review*, Part I, November 1979, pp. 458 - 465; Part 2, December 1976, pp. 526 - 533

- Rooke, Noel. "A Great Calligrapher and his Art." *The Listener*, Vol. XXXIV, no. 880, 22 November, 1945: pp. 582 - 584
- - - . "British Wood Engraving of the 20s and 30s." *Print Collectors' Club*, Vol. 6, 1926, u.p.
- Scott, L.E. "Best Designs of 1960." *Stamp Collectors' Annual*, 1961, pp. 11 - 16
- Seddon, Jill and Worden, Suzette (eds.). *Women Designing : Redefining Design in Britain Between the Wars*. Brighton : University of Brighton, 1994
- Seddon, Paul. "Paul Nash 1889 - 1946." *The Studio*, Vol. CXXXV, no. 660, March 1948, pp. 69 - 77
- Seidal, Brian. *The Arts in Australia: Printmaking*. Melbourne : Longmans, 1965
- Seligman, Patricia. "Sladey Ladies: women who attended the Slade School." *Art Review*, Vol. 38, June, 1986, pp. 332 - 3
- Shahn, Ben. *Love and Joy about Letters*. London : Cory, Adams and MacKay, 1964
- Shaw, Bernard. *The Adventures of the Black Girl in her Search for God*. London : Constable and Company Limited, 1932. 2nd ed.
- Shone, Richard. *Bloomsbury Portraits : Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, and their Circle*. London : Phaidon, 1993
- Sims, George (ed.). *Living London*. London : Cassell and Company, Limited, 1902
- Social Security in New Zealand Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry, *Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives*, H. 53, 1972
- Sorrell, Mary. "Eileen Mayo." *Apollo*, Vol. LIV, no. 320
- Spalding, Frances. *British Art Since 1900*. London : Thames & Hudson, 1986
- - - . *Duncan Grant A Biography*. London : Chatto and Windus, 1997
- - - . *Roger Fry Art and Life*. London: Granada, 1980
- - - . *Vanessa Bell*. London : Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983
- Spencer, Charles. *The World of Serge Diaghilev*. London : Elek, 1974
- Stacpoole, John. *Colonial Architecture in New Zealand*. Wellington : Reed, 1976
- Strachey, Lytton. *The Illustrated Queen Victoria*. London : Bloomsbury Publishing Ltd, 1921

- Sykes, Christopher. *Evelyn Waugh : A Biography*. London : Collins & Co Ltd, 1975. 2nd ed.
- Syme, Eveline. "Claude Flight and his Teacher." *Recorder*, September, 1929, u.p.
- Taylor, A.J.P. *English History 1914 - 1945*, Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1976. 2nd ed.
- "The Invertebrate Tree," *Australian Museum Magazine*, Vol. XIII (4), December 1959
- Tye, J.R. *The Image Maker: the Art of James Berry*. Auckland : Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, 1984
- Thomas, Daniel. "New Zealand Painting and the Benson and Hedges Award, *Art New Zealand*, August/September, 1976
- Thomson, J.M. "Eileen Mayo Painter/Designer." *Art New Zealand*, no. 66, Autumn 1993, pp. 81 - 83
- Thorpe, Lesbia. "Printmakers Today." *Art and Australia* (1984), Vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 318 - 20
- Wallace, Mary. "The Art of Tapestry." *Far and Wide*, no. 14, Autumn, 1950
- Watney, Simon. *The Art of Duncan Grant*. London : Murray, 1990
- Wells, G.P. *The Outline of History : being a plain History of Life and Mankind*. London : Cassell and Company Ltd, 1922
- Wells, Herbert, Huxley, Julian, & Wells, G.P. *The Science of Life*. New York : Doubleday, 1931 (4 vols)
- Williams, L.N. and M. "Making a Stamp Design." *The Antique Dealer and Collector's Guide*.
- Woolf, Virginia. *Kew Gardens*. Folcroft, PA : The Folcroft Press, Inc., 1969
- Wilcox, Tim (ed.). *The Pursuit of the Real : British figurative painting from Sickert to Bacon*. London : Lund Humphries in association with Manchester City Art Galleries, 1999
- Williams, Gordon R. *Birds of New Zealand*. Wellington : A.W. & A.H. Reed Ltd, 1973. 2nd ed.
- Worden, Suzette and Seddon, Jill. "Women Designers in Britain in the 1920s and 1930s: Defining the Professional and Redefining Design." *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 8, no. 3, 1995, pp. 177 - 193
- Yeldham, Charlotte. *Women Artists in Nineteenth Century France and England : their art education, exhibition opportunities and membership of exhibiting societies and*



*academies, with an assessment of the subject-matter of their work and summary biographies.* New York : Garland, 1984 (2 vols.)

Yorke, Malcolm. *Keith Vaughan.* London : Constable, 1990

---. *The Spirit of Place : Nine Neo-Romantic Artists and their Times.* London : Constable, 1988.

## CATALOGUES:

*Australian Print Survey.* Daniel Thomas, Sydney : AGNSW, 1963

*AIA The Story of the Artists International Association, 1933 - 1953.* Lynda Morris and Robert Radford, Oxford : The Museum of Modern Art, 1983

*Claude Flight and His Followers : The Colour Linocut Movement between the Wars.* Stephen Coppel, Canberra : The Australian National Gallery, 1992

*Edward Wadsworth Memorial Exhibition.* T.W. Earp, London : The Tate Gallery, 1951

*Eileen Mayo : Painter/Designer.* Jillian Cassidy and Margaret MacKean-Taylor, Wellington : National Library of New Zealand, 1992

*Eric Ravilious 1903 - 42 : A Re-assessment of His Life and Work.* Penny Johnson, Eastbourne : Towner Art Gallery, 1986

*Henry Tonks and the 'Art of Pure Drawing.'* Lyda Morris (ed.), Norwich : Norwich School of Art Gallery, 1985

*Landmarks : The Landscape Paintings of Doris Lusk.* Lisa Beavan and Grant Banbury, Christchurch : Hazard Press, 1996

*Master Weavers : Tapestry from the Dovecot Studios 1912 - 1980,* Edinburgh : Conongate Publishing Ltd., 1980

*Painting in Newlyn 1880-1930.* Caroline Fox and Francis Greenacre, London : The Barbican Art Gallery, 1985

*Portrait of the Artist.* David Fraser Jenkins & Sarah Fox-Pitt, London : The Tate Gallery Publications, 1989

*Poster Art in Australia.* Roger Butler, Canberra : National Gallery of Australia, 1993

*Paul Nash Book Designs.* Clare Colvin, [Colchester, England] : The Minories, 1982

*Paul Nash's Photographs : Document and Image.* London : Tate Gallery Publications, 1973

*Rita Angus*. National Art Gallery, New Zealand, 1982

*Second Exhibition of British Linocuts*. Claude Flight, London : Redfern Gallery, 1931  
*Ten Printmakers: 1970*. Ursula Hoff, Melbourne : PCA/NGV, 1970

*The Art of Bloomsbury, Roger Fry, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant*. Richard Shone, London : Tate Gallery Publishing Limited, 1999

*The Art of Margaret Preston*. Ian North (ed.). NSW Australia : Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1982. 2nd ed.

*The Art of the Ballets Russes : The Serge Lifar Collection of Theater Designs, Costumes and Paintings*. Alexander Schouvaloff, New Haven and London : Yale University Press, 1997

*The Australian Dream : Design of the Fifties*. Judith O'Callaghan (ed.). NSW Australia : Powerhouse Publishing, 1993

*The Jubilee of the Dovecot Tapestries 1912 - 62*. The Scottish Committee of the Arts Council of Great Britain, 1962

*The Last Romantics : The Romantic Tradition in British Art : Burne-Jones to Stanley Spencer*. John Christian (ed.). London : Lund Humphries in association with the Barbican Art Gallery, 1989

*The Omega Workshops 1913-19 : Decorative Arts of Bloomsbury*. A Crafts Council exhibition 18 January - 18 March 1984, London : The Publications Section, Crafts Council, 1983

*The Streets as Art Galleries - Walls Sometimes Speak: Poster Art of Australia*. Roger Butler, Canberra : National Gallery of Australia, 1993

*Three Dunedin Designers*. Linda Tyler (ed.). Dunedin : Hocken Library, University of Otago, 1999

*Edward Wadsworth, 1889 - 1949 : paintings, drawings and prints*. P. & D. Colnaghi & Company (organisers), 16 July - 16 August 1974. London : Lund Humphries, 1974

*White Camellias : A Century of Women's Artmaking in Canterbury*. Pamela Gerrish Nunn, Jillian Cassidy, et. al., Christchurch : Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch, 1993

**UNPUBLISHED THESES:**

Beavan, Lisa. *Doris Lusk: Attitudes to the Land 1934 - 84*. M.A. thesis, University of Canterbury, 1988

Catchpole, Julie. *The Group*. M.A. thesis, University of Canterbury, 1984

Selborne van Antwerp, Joanna. *The Break with Tradition: Innovation in British Wood Engraved Book Illustration, and the Typographical Renaissance 1900-1940*. 2 vols. PhD thesis, University of London (Courtauld Institute of Art), 1992