

Artists in Focus November 1985

# ANGUS GRAY

1906-1983

## At Home and Abroad

Watercolour Paintings



*Rural Scene Italy 1943*



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Robert McDougall Art Gallery  
Christchurch City Council  
New Zealand

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GRA

# ANGUS GRAY 1906–1983

Perhaps one of the most important features of the Canterbury School of Art teaching programme earlier this century was its part-time classes, in particular those held in the evenings. These evening studies provided many artists with their formative training.

Often they were engaged in a more commercial art capacity during the day but frequently they worked at occupations quite unrelated to art. Angus Gray was one of the latter. During the period around World War One and shortly thereafter Gray attended the school's part time evening classes where he gained a measure of success among such outstanding students as Russell Clark, Cedric Savage, John Weeks and Alfred and James Cook.

Although never completely professional as an artist in his lifetime Gray was by no means amateur either and up until the early 1950's he was able to continue his painting activity part-time, often whilst employed elsewhere. In a way this was no different from many of his contemporaries who had become teachers of art. Perhaps the most productive period in his painting was during the 1940's. The war years provided Gray with the opportunity, at first while on active service in Italy and then in New Caledonia, to realise much of his potential as a watercolourist.

At times he was strongly drawn to the stylistic directions of other New Zealand watercolourists. Cedric Savage and T. A. McCormack both proved of influence in the development of his work but for the most part these were passing influences. Gray eventually resolved his own approach to his media.

Angus Gray had an abiding dedication to his work and a devotion to the landscape as a subject source wherever he travelled. Through this exhibition we hope to acknowledge this dedication and reveal some of the qualities of this artist as a New Zealand watercolourist.

We are indebted to Mrs Gray, the artist's widow, for making the works in this exhibition available for display.



*Angus Gray painting*

## ANGUS GRAY 1906–1983

- 1906 Born of English parents who were on holiday in Capetown, South Africa.
- 1909 The family settles in New Zealand at Christchurch where he gains his formative education and shows an early interest in art.
- 1918 Begins part-time attendance at Canterbury College School of Art.
- 1920 Awarded a prize for Antique Evening Elementary.
- 1922 Awarded Common Object 'prize' for best set of six common objects.
- 1923 Awarded Antique Evening Prize advanced, second class Apprenticed in tailoring with J. Ballantyne & Co Ltd Christchurch: Tailoring has been a traditional occupation in Angus Gray's family.
- 1927 Travelled to England and joined his Uncle's tailoring firm in Saville Row, London.
- 1930 Moved to Capetown South Africa where he set up business as a tailor but continued to paint in his spare time mainly in his preferred medium of watercolour.

1936-38 Returned to New Zealand where he joined the tailoring firm of Peter Jackson in Wellington. During this time he continued to paint and exhibit receiving much encouragement from Mrs Murray Fuller, Nugent Welch, and Roland Hipkins. He also spends time painting with T. H. McCormack.

1939 His work is selected for inclusion in the Centennial Exhibition of International and New Zealand Art.

1940 Joined the Armed forces in a non combatant unit. Served in Italy where he had time to paint.

1944 His unit is posted to New Caledonia where there is also time to paint.

1945 He moves to Nelson where he paints with Cedric Savage.

1946 Work exhibited at the New Zealand Academy Exhibition gains favourable mention in the press reviews.

1947 Awarded a two year travelling scholarship to attend the Academy School in Rome.

1948 Returns to New Zealand Exhibits with M. T. Woollaston and Pat Hutchison  
At this time he is living almost completely from his painting.  
Holds first solo exhibition at McGregor Wright Gallery in Wellington.

1949 Marries.

1950 Moves to Christchurch where he rejoins the Staff of J. Ballantyne & Co Ltd and continues to paint.

1975 Retires and devotes time to painting.

1983 The artist dies.



*From the Botanic Gardens, Wellington 1937*

## At Home and Abroad Catalogue

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| <p>1. <i>Cottages Capetown</i> c 1931<br/>Watercolour</p> <p>2. <i>Backyard Capetown.</i> c 1932<br/>Watercolour</p> <p>3. <i>Canterbury Museum</i> c 1936<br/>Watercolour</p> <p>4. <i>Back of St Pauls Wellington</i> c 1937<br/>Watercolour</p> <p>5. <i>From the Botanic Gardens Wellington</i> c 1937<br/>Watercolour</p> | <p>6. <i>Italian Landscape with Church and Garden</i> 1942<br/>Watercolour</p> <p>7. <i>Bari Street Scene</i> 1942<br/>Watercolour</p> <p>8. <i>Chiesa Della Pace Rome</i> 1942<br/>Watercolour</p> <p>9. <i>San Nicola Southern Italy</i> 1942<br/>Watercolour</p> <p>10. <i>Piazza Milvio Italy</i> c 1943<br/>Watercolour</p> |
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11. *Naples* c 1943  
Watercolour
12. *Rural Scene Italy* c 1943  
Watercolour
13. *Repairing Fishing Nets Naples* c 1943  
Watercolour
14. *River Scene New Caledonia* c 1945  
Watercolour
15. *Noumean Dwellings* 1944  
Watercolour
16. *Houses* c 1944  
Watercolour
17. *The Lane Noumea* 1944  
Watercolour
18. *Church and Palms Noumea* 1944  
Watercolour
19. *Street New Caledonia* 1944  
Watercolour
20. *Central Square Noumea* 1944  
Watercolour
21. *The New Stack* 1946  
Watercolour
22. *Takaka Landscape* 1946  
Watercolour
23. *Kaiteriteri Beach with Boats* 1948  
Watercolour
24. *Wellington Wharf* 1948  
Watercolour
25. *Lake Wakatipu* 1948  
Watercolour
26. *University of Canterbury Building* 1948  
Watercolour
27. *Canterbury landscape* 1951  
Watercolour
28. *Fishing Boats* 1947  
Watercolour
29. *Molfetta Italy* c 1947  
Watercolour



University of Canterbury Buildings 1948