

Mildred Lovett

1880 ~ 1955

A S U R V E Y



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Curated by Jonathan Holmes and Elizabeth Lada

In 1909, an article appeared in the journal *Art and Architecture* titled 'Miss Mildred Lovett: Some Notes on her China Painting' in which the author is fulsome in his praise of the work of this young artist:

The object of this sketch is a young Tasmanian who, amongst other gifts, has developed the art of painting on china to a degree that, as far as I know, is superior to anything we have seen in the Commonwealth.¹

The judge of this young woman's ability was one of the keenest critics of the fine arts in Sydney, Julian Ashton, who had arrived in Australia in the late 1870s to take up a position as staff artist on the *Illustrated Australian News* and who had, over the next thirty years, established a reputation as a major Australian painter and educator. Ashton's Art School was to remain one of the foremost independent art schools in Sydney in the first three decades of the twentieth century and in many ways was to be a benchmark for fine art education in Australia. A large number of artists, particularly painters and printmakers, who were to form the nucleus of the modern movement in the 1920s and 1930s in Australia were to study at the School, and it was to Ashton's that Mildred Lovett had gone when she decided to further her education after six years' study at the Hobart Technical College first under J.R. Tranthim Fryer and then under Benjamin Sheppard and, for a time, Ethel Nicholls.²

The subject of Ashton's article was Mildred Lovett's noted skill as a china painter, a skill which she had begun to develop whilst at the Hobart Technical College as a student and which she pursued first at Ashton's as a student (1903) and later as a teacher at the Hobart Technical College (1904-1909) and as assistant to Julian Ashton (1910-1913). The china and the glazes were both imported and the application of the decoration to these pieces represented a quite substantial cottage industry at the turn of the century. Evidence of the appeal of this craft can be gauged from the records of the Hobart Technical College - Mildred Lovett's classes were well attended from 1905 onwards, and the School obtained something of a reputation for the quality of its products.³

Ashton, whose praise for Lovett's work is unreserved in this article, notes her interest in introducing Australian motifs in her designs (an interest which would have been encouraged by Lucien Dechainieux when he arrived to teach at the Hobart Technical College in 1907), which were to culminate in several important works including a vase now in the collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales which she executed in collaboration with Sidney Long. This was to be a significant piece and is regarded as one of the key works of decorative art in the *art nouveau* style in Australia. The fine tea cup and saucer in the collection of the Shepparton Art Gallery is another excellent example of Lovett's chinapainting style of the time. (cat. no. 33)⁴

Ashton's opinion is of considerable importance because it was an open acknowledgement of Lovett's professional commitment and determination at

a time when it was extremely difficult for a young woman to establish herself as a visual artist,⁵ and, no doubt, it was this determination and her rapidly developing talent as a draughtswoman and figure painter, that made him decide to employ her as his teaching assistant at the school in 1910 after she had returned to Sydney from Hobart to further her career.

Marrying in 1913, Mildred Lovett was to continue to be the 'breadwinner' - by many accounts, her husband, Stanley Paterson, did not do a day's work in the forty years of their marriage, merely supplementing her generally meagre income gained as a teacher and artist with a small private income.⁶

Leaving school at the age of thirteen, Lovett had begun work as a photographic retoucher at McGuffie's 'Alba Studio' in Hobart in 1893. Photographic retouching was an established late nineteenth century job for talented school leavers and, as Helen Ennis points out in *Shades of Light*, it was an important source of income for many artistically inclined women well into the twentieth century.⁷ Lovett was to continue to work there until towards the end of 1896 when she enrolled at the Hobart Technical College. At the Technical College, she was to study modelling, china painting, drawing and painting with several teachers but was clearly strongly influenced by the appointment, in 1899, of Benjamin Sheppard whose thorough training at the Royal Academy and his continuing commitment to the development of his own painting and sculpture proved him to be an excellent role-model.⁸

Following almost six years of training, Mildred Lovett spent 1902 trying to establish herself as an artist and appears to have been successful in gaining a number of small portrait commissions during that year.⁹ Then, sometime during the following year, she moved to Sydney and studied at Julian Ashton's art school before returning to Hobart in 1904. In October 1904, Mildred Lovett applied for a teaching position at the Hobart Technical School and, although not immediately successful, during November she was informed that she was to be appointed to begin day and night classes in modelling in early 1905.¹⁰ The appointment was to mark the beginning of a distinguished teaching career.

Lovett's impact on the students in the Art Department appears to have been rapid: although she only began teaching in the New Year, at the prize giving night in May, the Chairman of the Hobart Technical College was full of praise for her efforts, announcing that:

In the Art Department the life modelling and drawing class under Miss Lovett, exhibited a grand lot of subjects, some of the portraits being most successful.¹¹

The most descriptive account of the state of art education in Tasmania at the turn of the century is to be found in Lindsay Broughton's introduction to the exhibition *A Place for Art: A Century of Art, Craft, Design and Industrial Arts Education in Hobart*. Broughton describes the extensive problems that were

4 besetting the Hobart Technical College at the time, particularly the financial difficulties which occurred largely because of the constant struggle which the council had to wrest adequate resources from the State Government.¹²

In the first decade, the College was dominated by training schemes for the more traditional skilled trades such as masonry, plastering, plumbing, and cabinet-making. However, although teachers like Lovett trained students who were intending to become tradesmen, giving them basic design and modelling skills, it was a dedicated group of students who were principally concerned to acquire a fine arts and decorative arts education who dominated the classes at the time. There is, for instance, a 1901 photograph in which Benjamin Sheppard is seen surrounded by a bevy of young women (including Mildred Lovett) and a solitary male student, a ratio which was not to be uncommon throughout the period that Mildred Lovett taught at the School of Art. Lucien Dechaineux's arrival to take the position of Principal of the Hobart Technical College in early 1907 saw the college begin to establish itself on a much firmer financial footing, and it was Dechaineux who recommended that the College be split up into a number of discrete departments (including the art department), a move which was to give the art department a more definite identity.

In the period up until 1909, Lovett's income from teaching was not large although it would have been adequate. In a letter to her in June 1907, Lucien Dechaineux was instructed to renew her contract in art and modelling for the following year at an annual salary of £50.00, although it appears that she was able to supplement her income through retaining all but 10% of the fees raised from her china painting classes.¹³ She would have further supplemented her income with the sale of her own works, either privately or through exhibition.¹⁴

Although in her second sojourn at the art school in the 1920s, Lovett's most important contribution was to be in painting and drawing, it seems that in the period 1905-1908, her best work was done in modelling and in china painting. Over the next few years, Lovett was to produce a number of strongly modelled portrait busts and it appears that she developed this skill considerably during this period. The Art Gallery of New South Wales was to purchase her plaster bust, *Child's Head*, in 1912, and it is known that she produced a number of fine sculptural works while she was teaching at Julian Ashton's school.¹⁵

It was clear that she was held in high regard at the Technical College for when Mildred Lovett decided to travel to Sydney to work, towards the end of 1908, and requested leave of absence from the Technical College, Lucien Dechaineux was instructed to respond on behalf of the Council, informing Mildred Lovett that the College could not grant leave of absence but that 'on your return, should there be a vacancy / that you would care to fill, the committee desires to / say that your former services in the school would / be taken in favourable circumstances'.¹⁶

Works from this period include the two portraits of her brother and

sister (cat. nos 31 & 13) and the lovely miniature portrait paintings which she produced, predominantly for her immediate family. (cat. nos 20, 21 & 42)

Mildred Lovett moved to Sydney sometime after February 1909¹⁷ and later in the year asked the Technical College for some assistance with the acquisition of a representative collection of works by her students, presumably as evidence of her teaching ability. Although the College could not assist, it was suggested that Beattie, the photographer, should be called in to take photographs of the student work,¹⁸ and it is likely that these were the illustrations used in the *Art and Architecture* article which Ashton was to write.

Although it can be assumed that they were used as reference material for the teaching assistantship she later obtained, evidence suggests that Lovett was closely associated with the school during 1909 and that this would also have been influential in Ashton's decision to appoint her. In an article in the *Lone Hand* in 1913 mention is made of her coming to Sydney to 'study' at Ashton's school 'five years or so ago' and it may be that she re-enrolled in the school for six months during 1909.¹⁹

From 1910 until 1913 when she married, Mildred Lovett was to teach modelling, drawing and china painting at the Ashton School. During this period, the work she exhibited was clearly well received. Ashton's article was not the only one to have made reference to her ability as a china painter: the *Lone Hand* reviewed the Society of Artists' exhibition in 1910 and noted the work of Mildred Lovett and her compatriot Florence Rodway:

Among the ladies, Miss Lovett and Miss Rodway have something new to say Miss Lovett paints vases most charmingly, and is a skilful miniaturist; and the clay sketch she exhibits of Mr Sid Long shows that she possesses the first essential of the sculptor's art, a knowledge of character, and the significance of the 'masses'.²⁰

And this was to be followed up in 1913 with a short article on Mildred Lovett alone in which she was described as 'amongst the three or four great Australian painters on china'.²¹ Mention is made in both articles that her work was quickly sold at the Society of Artists' Annual exhibitions, exhibitions in which her work was shown regularly from 1909 onwards.²²



[20]
Untitled n.d.
Painted china

Mildred Lovett and Stanley Paterson moved to Brisbane in late 1913 or early 1914 and were to remain there for two years. Little is known of Lovett's activities in this period although it was at this time that she met up with Vida Lahey, a fine painter in her own right, with whom Lovett was to maintain a close and productive friendship for many years. Lahey taught privately in Brisbane up until her move to London in 1915, where she was to involve herself in war work,²³ and so it must have been during 1914 that they struck up their friendship.

It appears that Vida Lahey and Mildred Lovett were avid correspondents since, in the few extant postcards from Lahey in Europe, mention is often made of forthcoming letters, whilst Mildred Lovett refers to letters to Lahey on several occasions in her letters to her parents written in Europe in 1929. Their close friendship was to lead to Vida Lahey spending two years working in Tasmania in 1920-1921, living with Mildred Lovett and Stanley Paterson, and

the two were to go off on numerous painting excursions together.²⁴

The one extant letter from Mildred Lovett to her parents during this period was a delightful one written on 17th June 1915, a few days after they had moved into a rented house in Morningside near Brisbane. In it she writes that it is the first time since they left Sydney that they had felt really comfortable, and the letter is full of charming observations about the semi-rural setting in which they found themselves. She refers to a studio in town and later in the letter speaks of 'starting to go to town again,' as if she had had some time away from the studio.²⁵ Although Lovett was to exhibit in the Society of Artists exhibition in 1914, in their second year in Brisbane she was not to send work to Sydney.

In 1916 Lovett returned to Sydney and she and Paterson moved to Addison St, Manly. She exhibited several works at the 1916 Society of Artists' Exhibition - a number of

colour studies and three figure studies. At this time her small drawings and pastels were fetching about five guineas each. Never a prolific artist, Mildred Lovett exhibited few oil paintings during her career and relied extensively on well-chosen small drawings, watercolours and pastels when she showed in these annual exhibitions; in the next twenty years the price of her major works (oils) rarely exceeded twenty five guineas and for most of the exhibits she usually asked between five and ten guineas. Although listed as a committee member of the Society of Artists in 1917 she did not exhibit that year, but in 1918 she exhibited a major work, a full length portrait in oils of her teacher and mentor, Julian Ashton. The painting, now in the collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, was the most ambitious work she had yet attempted. When one compares it to later work of the 1920s, *Portrait of Julian Ashton* (cat. no. 35), is a relatively conservative painting with its muted tones and subdued background, but the figure is beautifully modelled and the choice of pose, with its striking 'X', formed by the relationship between the two arms and the hands, gives the figure both stability and considerable authority. Not long afterwards, Lovett's palette was to lighten dramatically; and where the sobriety that marks this picture emanates from the use of subdued lighting which isolates the figure and highlights the face and hands, later portrait paintings rely on a much higher key light source which often seems to enervate the space surrounding the figure.

In 1919, Mildred Lovett and Stanley Paterson were to move from Sydney to Hobart and for the next twenty years, with a brief break when they travelled to Europe in 1929, Lovett was to be a key figure in the Hobart art scene.²⁶ During the 1920s, they obtained one of three houses next door to one another in Risdon Road which the family owned and occupied during the 1920s.²⁷

Once they had settled in Hobart, Mildred Lovett began to take on private students at her Collins Street studio. By 1921 she was listed as a part-time teacher at the Hobart Technical College again²⁸ and from 1925 until 1941, Mildred Lovett was listed as on the staff of the Art Department, and was to make her name as a highly influential teacher during this period.

The *Illustrated Tasmanian Mail* article of 1921, in which it was noted that she was teaching again at the Hobart Technical College, was the first of a number of favourable reviews of her work after she had settled in Hobart. In this review, the reader's attention is drawn to her reputation in Sydney and particularly to the fact that the Governor of New South Wales, Lord Northcliffe, had purchased *Towards Evening: Hobart* in the recent Society of Artists' Exhibition. This commentary was used to exhort the local art gallery to purchase a work by her.²⁹ Examples of Mildred Lovett's work were soon to be represented in the collection although almost all of her works were to be gifts. She, herself, donated the *Portrait of Julian Ashton* (cat. no. 32) in 1921, which had figured prominently in the



[35]

Portrait of Julian Ashton 1918
Oil on canvas

Art and Australia special issue, *The Julian Ashton Book*,³⁰ and a group of subscribers donated the *Portrait bust of a girl* (c.1920) (cat. no. 40) in 1922. This latter work was to be sent to London for the British Empire Exhibition (Palace of the Arts, Wembley) in 1924, when Mildred Lovett was chosen to represent Tasmania in this important survey exhibition.³¹

The subject matter of Mildred Lovett's pictures fell into a fairly familiar pattern during the 1920s: in the annual exhibitions of the Art Society of Tasmania, the Society of Artists, Sydney, and the Launceston Art Society it was usual for her to submit at least one oil painting, and then to supplement this with several figure drawings and watercolours of landscapes, and, occasionally, a still life.

The Paddle Maker (c.1924-25) which she exhibited in all three annual exhibitions in 1925³² was one of the few genre subjects which she appears to have produced: a small oil painting, it consists of a solitary figure, the paddle maker, ankle deep in shavings, absorbed in shaping an oar in the long woodworker's vice at his work bench. There are one or two nice pictorial conceits in this little picture. Lovett has chosen to paint from a position by the darkened near wall of the shed so that we get a strong sense of the near end of the shed occupying the viewer's own space. Sunlight floods across the foreground from an open door on our left and gives a rich, creamy hue to the woodshavings and the furled sail attached to a wooden boom leaning against the near right hand side wall of the workshop. The self-absorption of the worker who is set quite deep in the pictorial space is heightened by a subtle contrast break: the middle ground is thrown into shadow, and Lovett uses the bright sunlight from a window over the work bench to allow the eye to re-focus on the figure. It at once isolates the figure and makes him the 'subject' of the picture. Light also seeps in through gaps in the roof behind the figure at the back of the shed so that nowhere is the shed thrown into complete darkness and detailing can be expressed, while the figure itself is left bathed in its own special light.

A year earlier she had exhibited a painting titled *The Jazz Jumper*, the whereabouts of which is unknown, but which appears to have caused quite a stir. The work was first shown in Hobart at the Art Society of Tasmania's exhibition in February before being sent to Sydney for the Society of Artists' exhibition in September. In the *Illustrated Tasmanian Mail* it was described in the following terms:

Miss Mildred Lovett has some striking oils exhibited. *The Jazz Jumper* is a very clever portrait study by her, in which the colours are distinctly bizarre and daring. A woman in a jumper of mingled hues is seated near a table on which there are blue teacups, a green teapot, and a blue vase containing orange, red, yellow, and blue flowers. Although the colours are vivid, they are well balanced and do not appear crude.³³

The heightened palette and the arbitrary exploitation of colour were to be features of a number of works of the period: while she continued to produce

relatively subdued and academically rendered drawings and watercolours which made a point of dealing with local colour, in a number of the major works there is a real sense of investigation and experimentation. One of the most resolved works was to be the beautiful portrait *Florice* (cat. no. 27) which was painted in 1926 at the time that Mildred Lovett was associated with a shortlived breakaway group of Hobart painters called the '86 Club'. Mrs Florice Parsons, the then 15 year old sitter for this portrait, recalls that Mildred Lovett painted this picture while she rented a studio in the Susman Gardens Buildings in Murray Street.³⁴

This lovely painting marks one of the high points of Lovett's career and is one of the most considered and subtle pictures of her oeuvre. She has depicted Florice in a simple scooped-necked creamy-white frock against a background which is close in tone and colour (a very light grey drapery which blends with the tones of the dress). A handful of carefully conceived compositional devices mark this picture. The isolation of the figure, the describing of the girl in a carefully defined space, is achieved by the way in which Lovett has introduced the strips of a multi-coloured rug or cape slung over the seat, backing the figure. It creates the dramatic effect of throwing the figure forward, separating it from the background, and the balance of the seated figure (its poise) is then achieved through careful attention to the intensity of the high points of the face (the black hair, the luminous eyes, the shadowy cast of the nose, and red mouth) and the pendulous necklace of yellow beads which pulls the figure forward, away from the background. Another considerable achievement of this picture lies in the rendering of the hands and arms of the figure: the palpable sense of weight in the limbs and their displacement in space gives the figure its seemingly effortless three-dimensionality and suggests that Mildred Lovett, at her best, was a figure painter of great ability.³⁵

There are several extant landscapes in watercolours painted from 1910 onwards which suggest her to be a capable painter in this medium. Two works in the exhibition, both of Risdon Road, Newtown, (cat. nos 6 and 19) depict almost rural countryside which she and her husband were to choose to live in on the northern outskirts of the city of Hobart.

The earlier work, painted in 1912, is extremely interesting since it depicts the family home at Risdon road in 1912, presumably during a vacation trip which Lovett must have made back to Tasmania to visit her family. The great



[36]
Reclining Nude (early
Lithograph)

interest of this work lies in the fact that Julian Ashton visited Hobart at the same time and there is an extant work of his painted during the same painting session. (see cat. nos. 19 and 44) Lovett and Ashton had obviously rowed out in a boat and, in a spirit of friendly competition, produced a work on exactly the same subject.

Artists acquainted with her work confirm that she was held in high regard at the time. In a letter to Joseph Connor possibly in 1928, Margaret Preston in a slightly 'scatty' passage, praises his and Mildred Lovett's work at the Society of Artists' exhibition:

Yours and Mildred Lovat's(sic) works were about the best works in the S.y Artists exhibition (sic) - they absolutely stood out from the rest of the work - in fact with a stupidity only possessed by myself, I harangued the assembly on the way to draw which was M.Lovat's way & not Mr Lamberts or Miss Proctors - now you hear a fool confessed but I still think so, and do not expect great love from people on whom I drop bricks, but you two are really good and I got muddled up in the millenium & spake the deadly truth.³⁶

Hers was not the only complimentary letter - on a number of occasions William Moore in his correspondence to Joseph Connor speaks of the regard in which he holds her work, and this was to be borne out in articles he wrote and in his pioneering book *The Story of Australian Art*.³⁷

Julian Ashton by 1930 a ferocious critic of the Contemporary Group of painters wrote, somewhat scandalised, to Joseph Connor that he was 'greatly interested in [Mildred Lovett's] account of the modernist tendencies (sic) which she seems to have adopted³⁸ concluding that she is the most 'charming modernist' he knows.' Presumably, Mildred Lovett had corresponded with Ashton sometime during the previous year while she was overseas, and had spoken about the modern art she had seen. Although Ashton's comments were not meant in a particularly complimentary way, his acknowledgement of her 'modernism' added to the list of commentators who noted her significant place in Australian art of the period: clearly her work was causing quite considerable interest amongst the modernist push in the period from about 1924 through to about 1928.

The interest seems to have centred upon a quite small number of works which were seen in Sydney. *Florice* was obviously one such work, but it seems that it was the water colour and pencil figure studies she was producing at the time which attracted the most attention. Sydney Ure Smith purchased the lovely 1928 pencil and watercolour study *Resting* (now in the collection of the AGNSW)³⁹ and several others were acquired by collectors. *Resting* was one of a series of works which Mildred Lovett completed which appear to have used the artist Dorothy Stoner as the model. Stoner began her studies in the Art Department in Hobart in 1925, and was able to pay her way through art school as a life model, and she was to sit for Mildred Lovett on many occasions.(see cat. nos. 2, 22, 26, and 34)

The earliest work is *Portrait of Dorothy Stoner*(cat. no. 34), a charming profile study in oils which must have been completed sometime in 1924. It depicts the head and bare shoulders of the extremely youthful sitter set against a blue-grey background. The portrait is significant for its uncompromising treatment of the head: there is no attempt to 'prettify' the figure and Lovett seems to have read a certain ungainliness into the portrait as though the presumably naked sitter is not quite sure of herself. The flush of the face and nose is contrasted evocatively against the pallor of the bare shoulders.

Later works depict a much more confident model, and indeed several of the studies were to have a languorousness and sensuality which few artists in Australia achieved at the time. Of particular note was to be the *Nude (Study of Dorothy Stoner)*(c.1928?)(cat. no. 2), a pencil and wash drawing given to John Bowden and his wife as a wedding present, which is a most supple figure study - the drawing is strikingly minimal and executed with great confidence, a sure sign that the artist and model were working really well together. *Resting* and another lovely portrait sketch of Dorothy Stoner (cat. no. 22) were both significant for the ambitious and severe cropping which Mildred Lovett used.

In February 1929, after almost a decade of teaching in Hobart, Mildred Lovett and Stanley Paterson left for Europe on a year-long study tour and in a weekly correspondence with her family she was to provide an engaging picture of their trip, although in deference to her family, the letters give little detail of her reaction to the exhibitions she saw and the museums she visited, and instead are packed with descriptions of their day-to-day experience. The first letter after their arrival in London, written between the 3rd and the 9th April 1929, gives some indication of the overwhelming experience it must have been. After a sharply observed description of their train ride from Plymouth to London (at 60 miles an hour) the letter goes on to describe London:

April 5th Two whole days in London. One continual thrill ever since we landed. I intended to write a bit to you every night but couldn't yesterday, for by night time my eyes were fairly bulging out of my head, in fact felt like nothing on earth. - London has fairly winded me. We walked all day from about 10 in the morning until 5.30. Found no trouble in getting about, everything is so well-organised, everyone tumbling over themselves to give you information. We started off for Australia House and on the way passed the British Museum, St James PalaceBuckingham Palace, then along Pall Mall to the Strand via Trafalgar Square, the National Art Gallery, etc. etc. It is useless me trying to tell you of the grandeur and dignity of these places, no photograph you have seen gives you any idea.⁴⁰

The next day brought more excitement:

Today has been thriller

The National Gallery this morning!!!!

Words fail me
The Tate Gallery this afternoon
& sandwiched between a visit to the tailor.⁴¹

It is likely that her descriptive accounts of her visits to the museums and art galleries were to be reserved for Vida Lahey, since from references she makes in her letters, it appears that she was corresponding almost as regularly with her. However, although the letters to her family are really interesting, they give little idea of how she felt about the massive amount of visual art which she saw. The letters record her many visits to institutions such as the National Gallery and the British Museum, the Tate Gallery, and a host of other galleries but we get little idea of what she thought. Her letter towards the end of the first month was fairly typical.

Went to two very important exhibitions today. Augustus John's this morning and to the Spring Exhibition of Modern Art at the Goupil Gallery this afternoon. The Augustus John Exhibition was attended by all the aristocracy of England on the opening day and by Stanley and Mildred the next day. I really don't know where I have had such an amusing time. The room was filled with people in wonderful get-ups. Men and women in fur coats, check suits, long hair, spats, gloves eyeglasses, English accent and evidently long purses, for nearly everything was sold and he asks fancy prices and between ourselves I feel he painted with his tongue in his cheek. The other exhibition interested me very much indeed but am now feeling that I want to get away from London and digest all I have seen.⁴²

Virtually all of her gallery and museum visits were couched in the same way - witty and interesting for her family, but rarely forthcoming about her response to particular works of art.

Lovett kept a very patchy 'art diary' which was basically a list of noteworthy shows she had seen, although just occasionally she included a descriptive comment. Writing to her family in mid-May, she mentioned that she had been to see a Marie Laurencin exhibition in a Bond Street gallery which had impressed her and it appeared that the exhibition had been amongst the most interesting for her,⁴³ since she writes in her notebook:

Marie Laurencin: I found this show delightful like a lark singing on a spring morning, one held one's breath. ([?]) feminine and valuable for that reason alone) - Framing very unusual. Some of mirror glass.⁴⁴

This was one of the few times that she wrote more than the name of the artist against a date of gallery visited.

Towards the end of May Lovett enrolled in a life drawing class that was being run three mornings per week at the Westminster School of Art. She attended the classes for about a month. She wrote to her parents that she had enrolled because 'it has the reputation of being the most up to date'⁴⁵ and a couple of weeks later noted that she 'got much entertainment [from the classes] and the experience will make me still more sympathetic to the students, but this will not be of much interest to you.'⁴⁶

After a visit to Scotland and a protracted journey down through England, they made preparations to visit the continent and on 9th August they arrived in Bruges from London. Lovett was to write that they were absolutely enthralled by the city and it was to be the beginning of a wonderful three month stay in Europe for them. Bruges was followed by Brussels and, towards the end of August they had made their way to Florence, which she describes as a 'knock out'.⁴⁷ By all accounts she dragged a complaining husband around the various places of architectural interest, although it apparently got too much for him in Florence where the heat was unbearable. She wrote that 'Stan has gibbed and refuses to go into another church and spends most of his time as Adam did before the expulsion from the garden of Eden, and only dons his clothes to go for a walk. He says he never wants to see another madonna or church, a comic opera is more to his taste.'⁴⁸

On 14th September Mildred Lovett wrote, with evident relief, that they had arrived in Paris and that they were relishing the cooler temperatures. She went on to describe their visits to the various art museums and cathedrals, again with little reference to particular works of art that she had seen. After two weeks of sightseeing, Mildred Lovett enrolled in a morning life-drawing class at André Lhote's academy, and was to spend the next month there.⁴⁹ Her enrolment at Lhote's had probably been on the advice of Grace Crowley and Anne Dangar who had both studied there and who had been students of Lovett's before the war. Evidently, Mildred Lovett had tried to contact Grace Crowley who had been living in Paris at the time, although Crowley was away in the south of France during early October, and it is uncertain whether they met before Lovett returned to London. But it is likely that Lovett had sought her advice on a suitable place to enrol for a short period.⁵⁰

Janine Burke in *Australian Women Artists, 1840-1940* is extremely critical of André Lhote's own work describing him as on the right-wing of cubism, seizing on the superficial aspects of the style and using them to create an up-to-date academicism' but she does go on to make the following constructive observation:

Lhote could not impart the new revolutionary pictorial idioms of cubism to his students, for he had not grasped them himself. He was, however, a very good teacher and from his insistence that all form could be perceived and then rendered in geometric shapes, he brought the work of Crowley, Dangar and Dorrit Black alive in a way that Australian art teaching never could.⁵¹

Interspersed with the classes which she attended throughout October, Lovett kept up a constant schedule of museum-visiting. In observing that Lovett was extremely reticent in her commentary about what she had seen, it is not intended to imply that she was gaining little out of the visit. On the contrary, the letters suggest a woman of enormous stamina, a remarkable eye for detail, and a very considerable ability to absorb reflectively what she was experiencing. Later students (students of the 1930s) have spoken of Mildred Lovett's lack of

didacticism in her teaching and her encouragement of experimentation, and one senses that the kind of experiences she had had in Europe and particularly in France and England were influential in this regard.

Lovett and Paterson returned to London in mid-November and the letters suggest that they were ready to come home. Experiences such as an unforgettable visit to Chartres Cathedral, and another to Fontainebleau (the château and to Barbizon School haunts), were to be set against an increasing yearning to be back in Hobart. Leaving London on 10th December 1929, Mildred Lovett and Stanley Paterson reached Adelaide on 14th January 1930, and, it would seem, they were back in Hobart towards the end of February.

On her return to Hobart, Mildred Lovett was to throw herself back into teaching with considerable vigour and was to be remembered as an influential figure. Dorothy Stoner recalls that Mildred Lovett declared that Hobart was one hundred years behind Europe in its culture, and one suspects that the return to Hobart proved something of a letdown.⁵² Many years later, in an eloquent letter to Dorothy Stoner, written in response to one which Stoner had written her after she herself had returned from Europe, Mildred Lovett was to say:

My dear Dorothy, / what a dreadful hang-over you're suffering from. / I'm so glad you wrote to me as I have been wondering how / you managed to settle in after all you had seen. The Tec / is a dreadful place to come straight to from the excitement and life / of Paris and its not surprising to me at all that you are / feeling so depressed. I'm *delighted* to know that you / are not changed and have been able to keep your own personality / for that is the most precious thing you have. One goes to ex / after ex here and sees nothing but echoes of European art and so / very few original works.⁵³

A number of individuals who remember Mildred Lovett from the 1930s have observed that she was not particularly productive in this period, and, interestingly, Dorothy Stoner raised this point with Lovett in her 1951 letter, asking whether it was the impact of Europe that had disillusioned her. Mildred Lovett was to respond:

You ask if my trip was the cause of me giving up / painting? (I also had been made a fuss over). I found / it was not possible to manage a house, to paint and / to teach. My trip made me understand how different / all great works are and the quality they all possess is / life strongly felt through different personalities. Of course / I don't find it hard to appreciate modern contemporary / painting. Why should I? It's the art of your time / [p.3] we can only live in our time and today there is something / different to say about this mad world. I agree / with what you say about abstract art.⁵⁴

While it is true that increasingly in the 1930s Mildred Lovett found it difficult to maintain the three sides of her life, particularly with her husband's developing blindness placing ever-increasing demands upon her, it seems fair to comment

that the experience of Europe was not to be utilised in a radical shift in her own practice. Indeed one suspects that it would be experienced vicariously in the increasing experimentation of her students, in a period when the Art Department of the Technical College was regarded as progressive.

This is not to claim that Mildred Lovett's output in the 1930s was without significance. On the contrary, works such as her outstanding oil painting, *Portrait of Edith Holmes*, (cat. no. 37) place her in the front rank of artists working in Tasmania. But, as already noted, she was never a productive artist in the sense of producing large quantities of work, and the return to Australia did not see her embark upon an ambitious new body of experimental work, although generally what she did produce was both considered and very carefully rendered.

The *Portrait of Edith Holmes* (cat. no. 37) is perhaps the one work which gives a glimpse of what might have been. Edith Holmes returned to Hobart in 1931 after two years at Ashton's school and she was to occupy a studio in the Gas Works building, Collins Street, along with Lovett, Nicholls and Stoner. She was thirty-eight at the time, which suggests that Lovett's portrait was produced around 1931 or 1932. Stylistically, there is little to go on in dating this work since, although it bears superficial resemblance to some of the 1920s portraits, the broad use of the brush and the ambitious new palette used for a figure painting is almost without precedence in her work. The red-green predominance in the composition makes this lovely painting vibrant and, at the same time, renders the figure as a palpable figure within space: there is a strong plastic sense to the painting. The picture is flooded with suffused and direct light but at no time does one get the sense that Lovett is losing control of the modelling of the figure. Familiar devices occur within the picture - well-considered cropping, a very careful working of the figure-ground relationship and the depiction of the figure in a reflective and self-contained pose - and these qualities mark this painting as one of Lovett's most successful.⁵⁵

In the 1930s, Mildred Lovett experimented with lithography, and in 1932 produced two fine prints, possibly in collaboration with Roy Cox. The *Portrait of Mrs Roy Cox* (cat. no. 39) and *Reclining Nude* (cat. no. 36) were exhibited in Art Society of Tasmania annual exhibition in March 1933, receiving favourable comment from the reviewer of the exhibition, 'Pigment', in the *Illustrated Tasmanian Mail*.⁵⁶ Both works emphasise the figure-drawing facility which was such a mark of Lovett's oeuvre.

In concentrating, in this essay, on the exhibition pieces which Lovett produced there has been a tendency to downplay the quite large body of work which Mildred Lovett produced as a journeywoman artist. She executed a large number of drawings, especially figure studies - on commission and for friends and relatives - and was extremely competent in this regard. As previously

noted, she was a fine watercolourist with a keen eye for the effects of local colour and in exhibitions in the late-1920s and 1930s, the landscape studies were to prove an important aspect of her oeuvre. Likewise, there is a number of fine miniatures which she produced at various stages in her career. But Lovett's major contribution has to be the body of work which she produced as an observer of the figure and it seems fair to say that on a number of occasions she was to produce work which was to mark her as amongst the very best of her period in Australia.

Towards the end of her working career she produced less and less work, but we do well to remember that for almost forty years, Lovett made a living as a visual artist and was to prove a splendid role model for a generation of artists training in the 1920s and 1930s. In *Tasmanian Artists of the Twentieth Century*, Sue Backhouse cites an important observation of Mrs Margaret McNeil's:

She was a wonderful foil for the Head of the Art School, Lucien Dechaineux, again a remarkable person and technician but (he) often lacked the foresight that Mrs Pat had - two artists in particular may easily have given up without her encouragement - Edith Holmes and Dorothy Stoner and there may be many more.⁵⁷

Although there were other staff teaching in the Art Department at the Technical College (with the dominating figure of Lucien Dechaineux splitting his time between running the College and teaching in the department), Mildred Lovett was regarded as the lynch-pin to its success during the 1930s and in a number of interviews conducted with former students the impression is given that her teaching was considerably more influential than that of Dechaineux, whose didacticism tended to pall against Lovett's encouragement of experimentation. Lucien Dechaineux was not to travel overseas until almost the end of the 1930s (although by all accounts he was transformed by the trip), whereas Lovett's experience of European art of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was to come at an opportune time and would prove most productive for her teaching.

The best examples of her late work were to be a series of pastel studies of her great-nieces and great-nephews, many of whom had been born in the 1930s. Studies such as *Portrait of Tim Bowden* [cat. no.1] and *Portrait of Tom Loney* [cat. no. 11] completed in 1937 and 1938 respectively were two fine examples of these portraits - hardly the easiest of sitters with whom to work. However, the project to produce studies of all of the next generation of her family was not to be completed since, towards the end of her teaching days, Mildred Lovett's hands were increasingly to become crippled with arthritis, and this, and her husband's ill health, seems to have brought her output to a virtual standstill.

Mildred Lovett retired from the Technical College in 1940 and she and Stanley Paterson returned to Sydney where they were to remain until

Paterson's death in 1952. A number of her former students visited her in Sydney in her retirement. Amie Kingston who had been a student of Lovett's in the mid-1920s, and taught with her during the 1930s, recalled visiting her on a couple of occasions during the 1940s with other ex-students visiting Sydney. One such occasion followed their meeting at a Contemporary Arts Society exhibition at Farmer's Store (where Kingston worked as a designer) and the impression is given that Lovett retained her interest in the art scene throughout the period.⁵⁸ Valda Griffiths, a student from the late 1930s, also recalls visiting Mildred Lovett in 1947 with ex-student friends and Oliffe Richmond wrote to Eileen Brooker that he had been to see 'Mrs Pat' on his way back from New Guinea to Hobart in 1944.⁵⁹

Virtually all of these visits appear to have been sentimental social visits, however the interesting letter to Dorothy Stoner in 1951 suggests that she retained a keen interest in what was going on in the contemporary art scene, even if she was by then critical of what was occurring. She speaks with some authority about her impressions when imploring Stoner to stick to her guns and to ride out the criticism which Stoner was receiving at the time, and she discourages her from attempting to seek out further assistance from teachers in Sydney. She comments, for instance:

You ask about teachers up here. Well my advice to you/ is to avoid them like poison especially in your case. You/ have spent too much time in studios. I do wish you/ would do what I think is the only thing for you to do/ and that is to keep on painting and exhibit on the mainland./ If you can get some good notices it will [p.21] help you tremendously./ Tasmania has never really been painted it is a magnificent/ country gloomy and depressing most of the time paint it as/ you feel it, paint the depression of the Tec. but keep/ on painting. Its the only way to get ideas.

And a paragraph or two later she adds:

You ask about teachers up here the "Man of the Hour" is Lloyd/ Rees, his work could have been painted a hundred/ years ago, no birds sing nothing happens, a poetic calm/ broods over all and all his pupils do the same. There are/ numerous other cliques who follow various ism's/ [p.4] My advice to you is to keep away from them for I think/ you would go home more depressed than ever.⁶⁰

The letter is a feisty piece of correspondence and suggests that Mildred Lovett had lost none of the determination which seems to have marked her career.

The fact remains, however, that these last ten years or so seem to have been led in relatively quiet retirement and there appears to be no extant work from the period, suggesting that the arthritis that had set in in the late 1930s had precluded a late flurry of work.

She was to return to Hobart in 1953, following the death of her husband, and she bought a house in Sandy Bay where she was to live for two years until her own death in 1955 at the age of 75.

Jonathan Holmes, October 1989



[19]
Risdon Road, Newtown 1912
Watercolour, 25.5 x 35.5 cm
Unsigned
Private collection



[40]
Portrait bust of a Girl (c.1920)
(later Mrs Phyllis Armstrong)
Painted plaster, 43.2 cm high
Signed with initials, 'M.L.' below lower right shoulder
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery



[34]
Portrait of Dorothy Stoner (mid 1920s)
Oil on canvas, 31.0 x 32.0 cm
Unsigned
Private collection



[41]
The Paddle Maker (c.1925).
Oil on canvas, 50.0 x 50.0 cm,
Signed l.r. Inscribed on back "The
Paddle Maker"
Mr Graeme Yeoland



[27]
Florice n.d.
Oil on canvas, 57.0 x 80.0 cm
Signed 'M Lovett' l.r.
Private collection



[2]
Nude (Study of Dorothy Stoner) (c.1928)
Pencil and wash on paper, 31.5 x 26.1 cm
Signed 'M. Lovett' l.r.
Mr J. Bowden



[37]
Portrait of Edith Holmes (early 1930s)
Oil on canvas, 75.8 x 45.2 cm
Unsigned
Purchased 1984
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery



[1]
Portrait of Tim Bowden 1937
Pastel on paper, 36.5 x 26.5 cm
Unsigned
Mr J. Bowden

- 1 Ashton, J. R. 'Miss Mildred Lovett: Some Notes on her China Painting' *Art and Architecture*, 1909; 189-192
- 2 Broughton, L. (et.al) *A Place for Art: A Century of Art, Craft, Design and Industrial Arts Education in Hobart*, Hobart, Centre for the Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania, 1988; 39. In January 1899, Ethel Nicholls was to travel overseas and in an interesting reversal of roles, she was to become a student of Mildred Lovett's when Lovett returned to Hobart to teach at the Hobart Technical College sometime after 1904. See S.Backhouse *Tasmanian Artists of the Twentieth Century*, Hobart 1988; 157
- 3 An indication of the success of the classes can be seen from the fact that the article written by Julian Ashton included illustrations of work by her students. See Ashton, op.cit. In a letter to Mildred Lovett following her arrival in Sydney in 1909, Lucien Dechaineux, principal of the Hobart Technical College, discussed ways in which Mildred Lovett could obtain photographs from Beattie's studios which would be used for the proposed article.[Letter 966, Hobart Technical College, October 26th 1909]
- 4 She replaced the painter Sid Long who had resigned to go to work in London.
- 5 ibid. Ashton speaks of 'that most difficult of careers in Australia - the making of a living by the exercise of Art as a profession.'
- 6 Shortly after Mildred Lovett and Stanley Paterson had moved to Brisbane, Lovett, in a letter to her parents, referred to Stan going off, presumably to work, at 7.30 am and not returning until 5.30 pm but even if he did work as a clerk (his 'profession' on the marriage certificate) in Brisbane it was only for a short while, since once they had settled in Hobart he appears to have been a 'man of leisure'. [Mildred Lovett to the Lovett family, 17th June (1915)(Kate Street, Morningside, Near Brisbane). Private collection]
- 7 See Helen Ennis's article, 'Contemporary photographic practices' in *Shades of Light: Photography and Australia, 1939-1988* by Gael Newton, Canberra [A.N.G.], 1988
- 8 See Broughton, op. cit. 'A brilliant painter, Sheppard was greatly loved by his adoring classmembers (who dubbed him 'Benjy') and proved himself to be a highly effective teacher, receiving accolades himself for the standards and future successes achieved by former students. Notable among these were Mildred Lovett ... and Florence Rodway.' As Broughton goes on to say: 'Rodway herself gained entry to the Royal Academy and performed with distinction, while Lovett became an outstanding student and later instructor at the Julian Ashton School in Sydney, prior to a long and highly influential sojourn back on the staff of the Art Department of the Hobart Technical College.' 41-42
- 9 There are two extant figure studies of members of the Hurst family from this period in private collections, both of which were portrait commissions. Notes relating to these commissions suggest that the money was used specifically to finance Lovett's study at Ashton's in 1904.
- 10 A.V.Southern, Secretary of the Technical College to Mildred Lovett, Letter 569, Record Book, Hobart Technical College, Hobart 18th October, 1904. 'In answer to your application to/hold day art classes at the school,/ I have to inform you that the/committee at a meeting held on/the 17th inst., considered that it/ would be advisable to open such/ classes this year.'
- 11 *Mercury* 6th May 1905
- 12 It was not really until the First World War when a range of major engineering programmes (E.Z. Industries and the Hydro in particular) began to be developed that a real need for well-qualified technicians and engineers saw technical education came into its own in Tasmania.
- 13 Lucien Dechaineux to Mildred Lovett, 27th June 1907, Hobart Technical College; for records of the fees paid, see Record Book: Classes and Exams of the Hobart Technical College, 1906-1907; for the quarter up to September 1908, Lovett received £9 14s 6d for the day time china painting class. This was 9/10ths of the value of the receipts accrued in the previous three months. See Letter 882 To M. E. Lovett, China Painting Classes, September 24th 1908, Hobart Technical College
- 14 Mildred Lovett exhibited in the Art Society of Tasmania Annual Exhibitions in 1905, 1906, 1907.
- 15 See K Scarlett *Australian Sculptors* Melbourne 1980; 384-85
- 16 Lucien Dechaineux to Mildred Lovett, 30th November 1908, Record Books, Hobart Technical College
- 17 Lucien Dechaineux to Mildred Lovett, Record Books, Hobart Technical College 2nd February, 1909; this letter informed Lovett that the College was not in a position to purchase the excess undecorated pottery which she had bought in for her students. At that time she was still listed as 'Instructor, China Painting Class'.
- 18 Lucien Dechaineux to Mildred Lovett, Letter 966, October 26th 1909.
- 19 Whether or not the writer had confused the dates and had meant to refer to the period of study in 1903 is open to question, but whatever the case Lovett must have been closely associated with the school before Sidney Long's departure for London since in the Julian Ashton School's collection there is a plaster bust of Long modelled by Lovett, and there is the recorded collaboration between Long and Lovett which led to the execution of the Art Gallery of New South Wales vase, both presumably carried out in 1909. See 'Miss Mildred Lovett' in 'Pages for Everywoman' *The Lone Hand* 1st May 1913; xl
- 20 'The Art of the Year,' *The Lone Hand*, 1st April 1910; 665
- 21 op.cit. *The Lone Hand*, 1st May, 1913
- 22 See S Backhouse *Tasmanian Artists of the Twentieth Century*; 130. Lovett exhibited in the following years: 1909, 1911-1912, 1914, 1916-1921, 1923-1929, 1932. She was a committee member of the Society of Artists in 1916, 1917, 1918, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932
- 23 Vida Lahey to Mildred Lovett, 30th October 1916(?) [Private collection]. In the card Vida Lahey mentions that she is 'very busy tracing drawings of aeroplane parts all day and writing letters and odd jobs at night.' Mention is also made of 'Jack' whom 'I /have only 20 miles/ away and am able to see him/ twice a week, which is lovely. He still/ has no power [in?] the fingers of his left hand,/ otherwise is very well, so/ we are not worrying.'
- 24 In an interview with Mrs Madge McNeil who was a student of Lovett's in the early 1920s, she recalled that Vida Lahey returned to Australia in an extremely depressed state from her war work in England and came almost immediately to live and work with Mildred Lovett. (Interview: Mrs Margaret McNeil and Elizabeth Lada, 20th February 1987)
- 25 Margaret McNeil sat for them both in the Collins Street studio.
- 26 Mildred Lovett to the Lovett family, 17th June 1915]. Private collection
- 27 Sue Backhouse in *Tasmanian Artists of the Twentieth Century* (op.cit; 130) notes that Lovett returned to Hobart in 1919, although it was not until 1920 that Mrs S.L.Paterson's studio is listed as at 76 Collins Street Hobart. These rambling studios were where the AMP building stands today: the entrance was up three rounded steps on the Collins Street side, opposite Drysdale House. It was known as the Gas Works Building, because people paid their gas accounts there, but in actual fact was called Hamilton Building. Miss Gwen Vimpany (daughter of Violet Emma Vimpany) remembers the building well and often went with her mother to the studio she had there. It was an L shaped building with a wooden balcony running around the internal courtyard. The studios opened up off the balcony. Syd Cunningham, Ethel M Nicholls, Viv Webb, Keith Moffat, Mildred Lovett, Violet Vimpany, Florence Rodway, and Edith Holmes all had studios there. It was a meeting place for the artists of the 1920's and 30's. In 'Off the Mainland', *The Home*, 1st April 1927, there is a photograph of Mildred Lovett and Ethel Nicholls on the balcony outside Lovett's studio. Taken by William Moore during his stay in Hobart in 1926, it was one of a number of 'snaps' of prominent members of the art community that he took at

- the time. See William Moore to Joseph Connor, 24th October 1926. Private Collection..
- 27 Mildred Lovett and Stanley Paterson lived there until 1936 when they moved to Battery Point for three years, possibly while a new house on the Risdon Road waterfront at Newtown Bay was being built. They remained in this house from 1939 until 1941.
- 28 *Walshes Year Book* lists a Mrs Paterson as teaching in the Technical College but not in the Art Department in 1921, 1922, 1923 and 1924. We can assume that a publishing error of some sort had occurred, since in an article 'Prominent people: What they do & say' in *Illustrated Tasmanian Mail*, 29th September 1921; 27, it was noted that Mildred Lovett was back teaching at the Technical School in Hobart, and in the Christmas number of the Christmas number of the *Illustrated Tasmanian Mail* in the following year [7th December 1922], mention is made that she is in charge of figure drawing.
- 29 *Illustrated Tasmanian Mail*, 29th September 1921; 27
- 30 See *The Julian Ashton Book*, special issue of *Art and Australia*, Sydney 1920; plate 13
- 31 The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery was to purchase an outstanding work of Lovett's in 1984 when it acquired the beautiful *Portrait of Edith Holmes* (1930s), one of the best figure paintings which Lovett produced in her career.
- 32 The work was priced at 25 guineas in the Society of Artists and the Art Society of Tasmania's exhibition and at £26 5s in the Launceston Art Society show in 1925,
- 33 'Art in Tasmania' *Illustrated Tasmanian Mail* 28th February 1924; 47
- 34 Interview with Mrs Florice Parsons, 15th August 1987
- 35 The reviewer of the Society of Artists' Exhibition, 1927 in *The Home* speaks of the 'charming portrait by Mildred Lovett'. H.H. 'Sydney Art Exhibitions,' *The Home*, 1st October, 1927; 26-27
- 36 Margaret Preston to Joseph Connor, n.d. Private Collection. Joseph Connor showed at the Royal Academy in 1928 and at the Imperial Gallery of Art, Imperial Institute, London in 1929. Since Mildred Lovett did not exhibit at the 1929 Society of Artists exhibition, and was represented by two nudes in the 1928 show, perhaps we can assume that the letter was written sometime after October 1928
- 37 In the letter to Connor dated 24th October 1926, op. cit., Moore writes: '.... Sydney is now divided into two groups, the moderns and anti-moderns. The most original and vital work is coming from the former & you can't demolish a group which includes Lambert, Gruner, John Moore, Kenneth Macqueen, Thea Proctor and others. Tell Mrs Paterson that apart from what my daily paper may say her work is much appreciated by the artists coming on.' A later letter, William Moore to Joseph Connor, 1st December 1928: Private Collection, includes the following message to Mildred Lovett: 'Tell Mrs Paterson that her figure subjects at the Society of Artists ex. impressed the people who now(sic). The fact that she is to be reproduced in Art and A is evidence enough that she has made a decided hit. In the work at the Contemporary Painters she well maintains her reputation.' Although the date on the letter does not include the year, Lovett showed in the November-December exhibition of the *Contemporary Group* in 1928, and one of the small portrait studies, *Girl's Head* (a coloured pencil drawing) from the Contemporary Group exhibition was illustrated in *Art and Australia* September 1929(plate 29). One of the nudes from the Society of Artists exhibition was illustrated in *Art and Australia* December 1928 (plate 12), fixing the date of the letter at the end of 1928. William Moore appears to have been in something of a quandry with regard to Mildred Lovett in his forthcoming book, *The Story of Australia Art*, 2 vols., Sydney 1934. Although Lovett's work was referred to in the book on numerous occasions, the references are typically brief and in a letter to Connor in 1933 (William Moore to Joseph Connor, 7th October 1933: Private Collection), he explains that because he has no chapter for figure subjects, her work would have to be illustrated in the chapter on galleries. As it turned out, her work was to be illustrated in the chapter 'Black and White'.
- 38 Julian Ashton to Joseph Connor, 15th June 1930. Private Collection. Thea Proctor, in a letter to Connor possibly dated 30th October 1929, wrote 'Old Julian Ashton, who alas has lived too long, is going to have an exhibition of his best students to show how superior they are & how sane.'

- 39 This work is illustrated in Burke, J *Australian Women Artists, 1840-1950*, Melbourne 1980; 117.
- 40 Mildred Lovett to the Lovett family, 5th April 1929. Private collection.
- 41 *ibid.*
- 42 Mildred Lovett to the Lovett family, 25th April 1929. Private Collection. They were to spend some time on the Devon coast over the next few weeks.
- 43 Mildred Lovett to the Lovett family, 17th May 1929. Private collection.
- 44 Notebook (Mildred Lovett's European notebook including notes from André Lhote), unpublished ms., 1929. Private collection. A page later she notes that the William Rothenstein show she saw after the Laurencin looked dull in comparison.
- 45 Mildred Lovett to the Lovett family, 23rd May 1929. Private collection.
- 46 Mildred Lovett to the Lovett family, 9th August 1929. Private collection.
- 47 Mildred Lovett to the Lovett family, 26th August 1929. Private collection.
- 48 Mildred Lovett to the Lovett family, 6th September 1929. Private collection.
- 49 Mildred Lovett to the Lovett family, 27th September 1929. Private collection.
- 50 *ibid.* 'I go round to class every morning from 9 till 12, and am going to find it very interesting. André L'Hote appears on the scene tomorrow. There was quite a stir in the room when the news was announced this morning. There are a lot of English and Americans; spoke to a woman from Victoria who knows several of my artist friends.'
- 51 Grace Crowley to Mildred Lovett, 3rd October 1929; Private collection. Janine Burke's *Australian Women Artists, 1840-1940* op.cit, includes a short autobiographical account, 'Grace Crowley's Student Years', in which Crowley describes at some length her experience at Lhote's academy.
- 52 *ibid.*; 52
- 53 Interview with Dorothy Stoner, March 1987.
- 54 Mildred Lovett to Dorothy Stoner, 3rd November 1951; reprinted in Kolenberg, H *Edith Holmes Dorothy Stoner: Two retrospectives* Hobart, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 1983; 20
- 55 *ibid.*
- 56 There is, for instance, the carefully conceived introduction of a 'light' across the shoulders of the figure which serves to separate the figure from the uprights of the window panes.
- 57 'Pigment' 'Art' *Illustrated Tasmanian Mail* 16th March 1933; 14. 'Pigment' had foreshadowed the exhibition of these works in an earlier article, 'Art' *Illustrated Tasmanian Mail* 22nd September 1932; 15. In this article he had made the following observations.
- 58 The reproduction of the girl's portrait is the first lithograph accomplished by Mildred Lovett (Mrs Paterson), and the original pencil drawing for this is now on view in the Exhibition of the Society of Artists in Sydney. Another lithograph of hers, of a nude figure, is in the same exhibition. Both drawings are excellent of their kind, the bold, free lines are typical of this artist's work....
- 59 op. cit. Backhouse; 6
- 60 Amie Kingston to Elizabeth Lada, 17th November 1987. Collection: Centre for the Arts
- 61 Valda Griffiths to Elizabeth Lada, 23rd April 1987; Oliffe Richmond to Eileen Brooker, 15th November 1944: Collection Miss Eileen Brooker
- 62 Mildred Lovett to Dorothy Stoner, 3rd November 1951; op. cit.



[33]
Cup and Saucer with
Design (c. 1915)
Hand painted porcelain

E XHIBITIONS

- 1901 The Commonwealth Exhibition of Australian Art, Society of Artists, Sydney 1901
1905 Art Society of Tasmania, Hobart 1905
1906 Art Society of Tasmania, Hobart 1906
1907 Art Society of Tasmania (Study from Life, any medium), Hobart 1907 *My Brother* , 5 guineas
1909 Society of Artists' Exhibition, Sydney 1909
1911 Society of Artists' Exhibition, Sydney 1911
1912 Society of Artists' Exhibition, Sydney 1912
1914 Society of Artists' Exhibition, Sydney 1914
1915 Society of Artists' Exhibition, Sydney 1915
1916 Society of Artists' Exhibition, Sydney 1916 (Committee Member) 84. *Study of Head* - 5 gns 89. *Study of a Head* - N.F.S 100. *Study of a Head* - 5 guineas; 149-51; 153-155 . *Colour Notes No. 1* - 6 - 2 guineas; 152. *Colour Study* - 5 guineas



[26]
Reclining Nude (late 1920s)
Pencil on paper

- 1918 Society of Artists' Exhibition, Sydney 1918 (member) 169. *Portrait of J.R. Ashton, Esq.* (Oil)
1919 Society of Artists' Exhibition, Sydney 1918
1920 Society of Artists' Exhibition, Sydney 1920
1921 Society of Artists' Exhibition, Sydney 1921
1923 Society of Artists' Exhibition, Sydney 1923
1923 Art Society of Tasmania, Hobart 1923 37. *Zinc Works from Risdon Road* - 8 guineas; 38. *The Leggo Furnace* - 10 guineas
1924 The British Empire Exhibition (1924) London 1924 Wembly, Palace of Arts *Study of a Girl's Head*
1924 Society of Artists Annual Exhibition, Sydney 1924 (member) 83. *The Jazz Jumper* - 2 guineas (oil)
1924 Art Society of Tasmania, Hobart
1924 *A Sunny Afternoon* - 8 guineas; 33. *Summer* - oil 87. *The Jazz Jumper* - 15 guineas
1924 Artists Week Exhibition, Institute Building, Adelaide
1925 Society of Artists' Exhibition, Sydney 1925 (member) 115 *An Old Barn* - 15 guineas; 119. *The Paddle Maker* - 25 guineas; 219 *Apple Orchards, Tasmania* - 8 guineas; 220. *Landscape, Tasmania* - 20 guineas; 223. *Orchard Country, Tasmania* - 10 guineas (oils)
1925 Art Society of Tasmania, Hobart 1925 79. *Red Chalk Drawing* ; 48. *Orchard* - 6 guineas; 49. *A Sunny Afternoon* - 15 guineas; 50. *Flower Study* - 6 guineas; 51. *The Paddle Maker* - 25 guineas; 52. *Afternoon Sunlight* - 25 guineas (Oil)
1925 Launceston Art Society, 1925; 107. *Sunny Afternoon* - 15 guineas; 123. *The Paddle Maker* - £26.5.0 (oils)

- 1926 Society of Artists' Exhibition (member) 68. *The Coming Storm* - 20 guineas; 116. *The Valley, Tasmania* - 15 guineas
1926 Art Society of Tasmania, Hobart 1926. 1. *Summer Landscape* - 20 guineas; 2. *The Coming Storm* - 20 guineas; 22. *Summer Afternoon* - 6 guineas
1927 A Group of Modern Painters, Grosvenor Galleries, Sydney 1927
1927 Society of Artists' Exhibition, Sydney 1927 (member) 153. *Tasmanian Landscape* - 20 guineas; 171 - *Florice* - 25 guineas
1927 Art Society of Tasmania, Hobart 1927 (Council member) 1. *The Valley* - 15 guineas; 2. *Portrait* - 20 guineas; 3. *Portrait* - 20 guineas; 4. *Portrait* - 20 guineas
1927 Launceston Art Society. *The Valley, Tasmania* - 15 guineas
1928 Society of Artists' Exhibition, Sydney 1928) 27. *Nude* - 10 guineas; 31. *Nude* - 15 guineas
1928 A Group of Contemporary Painters Sydney, Grosvenor Galleries, 1928 1. *Nude* - 10 guineas, 2. *Nude* - 10 guineas; 3. *Girl Resting* - 10 guineas
1928 44th Annual Exhibition of Pictures, Hobart, Art Society of Tasmania, 1928 (Council member) 1. *Florice* - 25 guineas; 2. *Portrait* - 20 guineas; 3. *Portrait* - 15 guineas
1929 Imperial Gallery of Art Exhibition London 1929 *Nude* - watercolour drawing
1930 Exhibition of Loan Pictures Brisbane Queensland Art Gallery 1930
1931 Art Society of Tasmania, Hobart 1931 (Council member) 1. *Nude* (drawing) - 5 guineas; 2 *Girl's Head* - 5 guineas; 3. *Tasmanian Snow Berries* (coloured lino cut) - 1 guinea
1932 Society of Artists' Exhibition, Sydney 1932 (member) 3. *The Nude*, Lithograph - 10 guineas; 100. *Gwen* - 10 guineas
1933 Art Society of Tasmania, Hobart 1933 49th Annual exhibition of Pictures (council member) 75. *Nude* (lithograph) - 2 guineas; 76. *Gwen* - 2 guineas (both unframed)
1933 Launceston Art Society, Launceston 1933 *Study of Nude* - 2 guineas
1934 Jubilee Catalogue, Art Society of Tasmania Hobart 1934 46. *Tinted Drawing* - 5 guineas; 47. *Girl's Head* (tinted drawing) - 5 guineas
1934 Launceston Art Society, Launceston 1934 *Portrait Study* - 5 guineas; 123. *Girl's Head* - 5 guineas (oils)
1935 Loan Exhibition of Pictures from The National Art Gallery N.S.W. and from Local Collection Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart Hobart 1935 Z
1956 *Catalogue of Australian Paintings and Drawings* Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery Hobart TMAG 1956 *Portrait of Julian Ashton*,
1975 *Australian Women Artists 1840-194*, Melbourne University of Melbourne 1975
1977 Exhibition of original paintings and drawings, Sydney, Sydney Teachers College, 1977
1978 *Project 24: Cicadas and Gumnuts, the Society of Arts and Crafts*, 1906-1935 AGNSW, 1978
1978 *Mildred Lovett and her Students: Grace Crowley, Jean Bellette, Amie Kingston* Melbourne, Important Women Artists Gallery, 1978
1978 *Women's Images of Women*, Sydney A.G.N.S.W. 1978
1980 *Australian Women Artists: One Hundred Years 1840-1940* Sydney AGNSW 1989 *Resting* (c.1929)
1980 *An Exhibition of Art Nouveau in Australia* Ballarat Ballarat Fine Art Gallery 1980
1983 *The Launceston Art Society in Retrospect 1891-1983* Launceston QVMAG 1983
1988 *A Place for Art: A Century of Art, Craft, Design and Industrial Arts Education in Hobart*, Hobart, Centre for the Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania, 1988



MILDRED ESTHER LOVETT

- 1880** Born Hobart, 13th September 1880, first born child of Edward Frederick Lovett, clerk with the Railways, and his wife Alice Edith, née Gibson. Sister Dorothy and two brothers, Gordon and Reginald, made up the family. The address at the time of Mildred Lovett's birth was listed as Colville Street, Battery Point.
- 1887-1893** Mildred Lovett attended Mrs. H. Barnard's Ladies' School in Hobart.
- 1890** Family address, Argyle Street, New Town.
- 1893** Worked as a photographic retoucher at McGuffies' Photography Studios.
- 1896** October, began studies at the Technical School, Hobart. Art classes were held 4 nights per week under the instruction of Mr. J.R. Tranthim-Fryer. Miss Ethel Nichols gave art classes at the Technical School one afternoon per week. It is not known which art classes Mildred Lovett attended; records show only that she was registered as a student in October and November of that year. The Minutes Book, Hobart Technical School, December 1896 shows M. Lovett - passed - first grade.
- 1897-1901** Attended Technical School in Hobart taking classes in modelling, life drawing, art and china painting, both day and evening classes. Benjamin Sheppard, sculptor, was the Art Master at the Technical School, 1900-1903, taking both day and evening classes in modelling, plaster cast drawing and life drawing.
- 1899** Address of family, 5 St. Georges Terrace, Battery Point.
- 1902** Taking commissions.
- 1903** Taking instruction from Julian Ashton at his Sydney Art School? (second half of the year?).
- 1904-1905** Address 113 Collins Street, Abbots Building, Hobart.
- 1905** Instructed day and evening classes in modelling, Technical School, Hobart.
- 1906** Instructor at Technical School, Hobart, teaching modelling 1 night per week.
- 1907** Instructor at Technical School, Hobart, teaching modelling and life drawing, two nights per week. July, instructor in art and modelling, day and evening classes for a salary of £50 p.a.



[38]

Head study n.d.
Pencil and sanguine



[22]

Study of Dorothy Sto
(late 1920s)
Pencil and wash on paper



[39]
Roy Cox (early 1930s)
Lithograph



[28]
Woman knitting
(Jessie Lovett)
(early 1920s)
Oil on canvas

- 1908 Teaching art, modelling and china painting.
- 1909 Leave of absence from the Hobart Technical College, went to Sydney.
- 1910 Took over from Sydney Long as assistant teacher to Julian Ashton at the Sydney Art School.
- 1913 On the 19th November, 1913 at the Presbyterian Church, Manly, Mildred Esther Lovett married Stanley Livingstone Paterson, clerk.
After her marriage Mildred Lovett left Ashton's Sydney Art School (her successor was H.C. Gibbons; Elioth Gruner became assistant to Julian Ashton 1914).
- 1914-1915 Mildred Lovett and Stanley Paterson lived in Brisbane, met and worked with Vida Lahey.
- 1916 Returned to Sydney, address 45 Adison Road, Manly, Sydney.
- 1916-1932 Committee Member, Society of Artists.
- 1918 Painted Julian Ashton's portrait now in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.
- 1919-1920? Returned to Hobart.
- 1921-1924 Art Instructor (possibly part-time), Hobart Technical College.
- 1924 Chosen to represent Tasmania in the British Empire Exhibition, London.
- 1925-1928 Art Instructor, Hobart Technical College. Address Risdon Road, Hobart.
- 1928-1933 Council Member, Art Society of Tasmania.
- 1929 Travelled to England, Scotland, France, Holland, Belgium, Italy and Switzerland. Studied at the Westminster School of Art, London, commencing last week in May, attending three mornings per week. Studied at Andre Lhote's Summer School, Paris, commencing 29th September, classes from 9am to 12 noon. Exhibited at Imperial Art Gallery of Art, London.
- 1930 Member, the Contemporary Group.
- 1930-40 Continued as Art Instructor, Hobart Technical College, retiring in 1940.
- 1940-1952 Lived in Sydney.
- 1952 Stanley Livingstone Paterson died.
- 1953 Returned to Hobart, gave some private lessons.
- 1955 Died, childless, in Hobart 23rd March 1955.

LIST OF WORKS

- 1 **Portrait of Tim Bowden** 1937
Pastel on paper, 36.5 x 26.5 cm
Unsigned
Mr J. Bowden
- 2 **Nude (Study of Dorothy Stoner)** (c.1928)
Pencil and wash on paper, 31.5 x 26.1 cm
Signed 'M.Lovett' l.r.
Mr J. Bowden
- 3 **Portrait of Mr Porter** n.d.
Oil on canvas, 52.5 x 43.0 cm
Signed 'M.Lovett' l.r.
Mrs Janet. Boyle
- 4 **View of Hobart and the Derwent River** n.d.
Oil on canvas, 24.5 x 34.0 cm
Unsigned
Mr R.W. Cane
- 5 **Summer** 1923-1924
Oil on canvas, 25.0 x 33.0 cm
Signed 'M.Lovett' l.r.; inscribed on back: "Summer"
Exhibited in Art Society of Tasmania Annual Exhibition, Hobart 1924
Private collection
- 6 **Risdon Road, Newtown** (early 1920s)
Watercolour, 25.8 x 24.0 cm,
Signed 'M.Lovett' l.r.
Mrs J.Diprose
- 7 **Portrait of a Young Woman** c.1922
Oil on canvas, 44.5 x 25.5 cm
Unsigned
Private collection
- 8 **Untitled (Study of a Seated Girl)** (early 1920s)
Pencil and pastel on paper, 63.5 x 50.5 cm
Unsigned
Private collection

- 9 **Marigolds** n.d.
Oil on canvas, 27.4 x 28.0 cm
Unsigned
Private collection
- 10 **Untitled**
Red chalk drawing, 40.0 x 26.0 cm
Signed 'ML' l.r.
Private collection
- 11 **Portrait of Tom** 1938
Pastel on board, 32.5 x 27.3 cm
Unsigned
Private collection
- 12 **Buckle** n.d.
Painted china, 4.5 cm diam.
Unsigned
Private collection
- 13 **Portrait of Dorothy** 1908
Oil on canvas, 43.3 x 35.2 cm
Unsigned
Private collection
- 14 **Still life with Daisies and Calendulas** n.d.
Oil on canvas, 20.9 x 24.2 cm
Unsigned
Private collection
- 15 **The Two Dolls** (c.1922)
Oil on canvas, 32.0 x 37.2 cm
Unsigned
Private collection
- 16 **Tasmanian Snow Berries** (c. 1930)
Linocut, 24.5 x 24.0 cm
Signed l.r. and inscribed: l.l. "Coloured Lino Cut", l.c. "Tasmanian Snow Berries"; inscribed on back: "Berries and Marigold"
Exhibited: Art Society of Tasmania Annual



[32]
Tasmanian Berrie
Coloured lino cut

| | | | | |
|----|--|----|---|----|
| | Exhibition, Hobart 1931 Private collection | | Private collection | 25 |
| 17 | Apple Orchards , Tasmania (mid-1920s) Oil on canvas, 24.5 x 34.4 cm Signed 'M.L.' l.r. Inscribed on back: Apple Orchards, Tasmania Exhibited: Society of Artists Annual Exhibition Sydney 1925 Private collection | 26 | Reclining Nude (late 1920s) Pencil on paper, 40.5 x 36.4 cm Unsigned Private collection | |
| 18 | Still life with Peony Roses n.d. Oil on Canvas, 29.0 x 23.2 cm Unsigned Private collection | 27 | Florice n.d. Oil on canvas, 57.0 x 80.0 cm Signed 'M Lovett' l.r. Exhibited: Society of Artists Annual Exhibition, Sydney 1927; Art Society of Tasmania Annual Exhibition 1928; reproduced in <i>Illustrated Tasmanian Mail</i> , 9th December 1928 and <i>Illustrated Tasmanian Mail</i> , 22nd January 1930 Private collection | |
| 19 | Risdon Road, Newtown 1912 Watercolour, 25.5 x 35.5 cm Unsigned Private collection | 28 | Woman Knitting (Jessie Lovett) (early 1920s) Oil on canvas, 42.5 x 55 cm Unsigned Private collection | |
| 20 | Untitled n.d. Painted china, 2.5 cm diam Unsigned Private collection | 29 | At the Wharf n.d. Oil on board, 13.5 x 26 cm Unsigned Private collection | |
| 21 | Untitled n.d. Painted china, 2.5 cm diam Unsigned Private collection | 30 | Strelitzia n.d. Pencil on paper, 44 x 31 cm Unsigned Private collection | |
| 22 | Study of Dorothy Stoner (late 1920s) Pencil and wash on paper 27.5 x 23.0 cm Signed 'M.Lovett' l.r. Private collection | 31 | Gordon (c. 1908) Oil on canvas, 39.0 x 50.5 cm Unsigned Private collection | |
| 23 | Mother (Portrait of Jessie Lovett) n.d. Conté on paper, 25.5 x 32.5cm, Signed with initials, 'M.L.' l.r Private collection | 32 | Tasmanian Berries (c.1930) Coloured lino cut, 23.5 x 25 cm Signed and inscribed below the print 'Tasmanian Berries Lino cut M. Lovett' Private collection | |
| 24 | The Goat and Post n.d. Oil on Board, 20.5 x 21.5 Unsigned Private collection | 33 | Cup and Saucer with Lily Design (c. 1915) Hand painted porcelain blank 5.4 x 14.9 cm diam Inscribed on base, transfer 'IRIS/BAURIA' with Coat of Arms Purchased 1979 Shepparton Art Gallery | |
| 25 | Jessie n.d. Pencil on paper, 40.x 28 cm Unsigned | | | |

- 26 34 **Portrait of Dorothy Stoner**(mid 1920s)
Oil on canvas, 31.0 x 32.0 cm
Unsigned
Private collection
- 35 **Portrait of Julian Ashton** 1918
Oil on canvas, 198 x 111.5 cm
Signed 'Mildred Lovett, 1918' l.r.
Reproduced: *The Julian Ashton Book*, Sydney (*Art in Australia*)1920,
plate 13; exhibited in *A Place for Art: A Century of Art, Craft, Design
and Industrial Arts Education in Hobart*, Hobart, Centre for the Arts
Gallery, University of Tasmania, 1988
Presented by the artist 1921
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery
- 36 **Reclining Nude** (early 1930s)
Lithograph, 33.4 x 46.7 cm
Unsigned
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery
- 37 **Portrait of Edith Holmes** (early 1930s)
Oil on canvas, 75.8 x 45.2 cm
Unsigned
Purchased 1984
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery
- 38 **Head study** n.d.
Pencil and sanguine, 43.1 x 25.3 cm
Signed with initials 'M.L.' lower right
Exhibited: 1st Annual Exhibition' Tasmanian Group of Painters,
TMAG 1940 (138); 'Women's Images of Women,' Art Gallery of New
South Wales, Sydney 1977 (25); 'The Launceston Art Society in
Retrospect 1891-1983,' QVMAG 1983 (43 as *Head in red chalk*.;
reproduced p 39); S Backhouse *Tasmanian artists of the twentieth
century* Hobart 1988, p 131 (as *Head in red chalk*)
Presented by Mrs M I Urquhart 1968
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery
- 39 **Mrs Roy Cox** (early 1930s)
Lithograph, 57.3 x 42 cm
Unsigned
Reproduced in *Illustrated Tasmanian Mail* 22nd September 1932; 15
Presented by Mrs Margaret McNeil 1984
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery
- 40 **Portrait bust of a Girl** (c.1920)
(later Mrs Phyllis Armstrong)
Painted plaster, 43.2 cm high
Signed with initials, 'M.L.' below lower right shoulder

Exhibited: British Empire Exhibition, Palace of the Arts, Wembley,
London, 1924
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

- 41 **The Paddle Maker** (c.1925).
Oil on canvas, 50.0 x 50.0 cm,
Signed l.r. Inscribed on back "The Paddle Maker"
Exhibited at Society of Artists Annual Exhibition, Sydney 1925; Art
Society of Tasmania, Hobart 1925
Mr G.Yeoland

- 42 **Gretchen** 1904
Locket with miniature, painted china, 2.5 cm diam
Unsigned
Miss Patricia Giles

- 43 **Portrait of Ivy Lovett** (c.1930)
Pastel on textured paper, 41.3 x 31.6cm
Unsigned
Private collection

- 44 **Julian Ashton**

Risdon Road, New-
town 1912
Watercolour, 25.5 x
35.5 cm
Signed 'Julian Ashton,
1912,' l.r.
Private collection



[10]
Untitled n.d.
Red chalk drawing,

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