



Peter McIntyre

1910 - 1995

Peter McIntyre is one of New Zealand's most renowned artists.

McIntyre grew up in a creative environment in Dunedin, with his artistic pursuits avidly supported by his artist father, who signed him up for painting lessons under Dunedin artist Alfred O'Keeffe. After noticing his son's lack of interest in a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Otago, McIntyre's father encouraged him to study art at the Slade School of Art in London.

Whilst at the Slade, McIntyre thrived from the study of old masters, such as Raphael and Ingres, and received several prizes in drawing and composition during his final year.

Following the completion of his studies, McIntyre worked as a commercial artist in Britain and became heavily influenced by the European avant-garde movements that developed in the 1930s, particularly Cubism. When war broke out in 1939, McIntyre enlisted as a gunner with the 34th Anti-tank Battery, a New Zealand volunteer unit formed in London. Sent to Egypt with his platoon, McIntyre was soon contributing illustrations to the British war magazine *Parade*.

In January 1941, General Freyberg learned of McIntyre's painting talent and duly appointed him New Zealand's official war artist, chronicling the activities of 2nd NZEF throughout Europe and North Africa. These images became a frequent presence in magazines such as *Illustrated London News* and the *New Zealand Listener*, causing McIntyre's paintings to quintessentially represent the experiences of New Zealand soldiers in the Second World War. These works documented the campaigns of ANZAC troops in Crete, North Africa, Tripoli and Italy, and are now held at the National Archives in Wellington.

McIntyre returned to New Zealand in February 1946 as a respected and established artist, setting up a studio in Dunedin to quickly become a renowned portrait and landscape painter. His artworks from the war had toured both during and after the Second World War, causing McIntyre to become a familiar face in the press and on television.

Despite the financial difficulties experienced by full-time artists in New Zealand, McIntyre's friendship with then-Governor General Freyberg provided him with valuable support as well as substantial patronage. McIntyre also served on the council of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts from 1959 until 1964, during which time he won numerous national art competitions; the Kelliher Art Award (1959); the watercolour section of the National Bank Art Awards (1960); as well as the Hay's Art Competition (1962).

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Following these successes, McIntyre began writing and illustrating books between 1962 and 1981, beginning with an illustrated biography entitled *The Painted Years* in 1962. His book *Peter McIntyre's New Zealand* was released in 1964 and was so popular that it sold out within six days.

McIntyre undertook numerous trips around the globe including Antarctica, Hong Kong, the Pacific, and the American West, writing and illustrating books documenting his experiences.

McIntyre became a particularly popular painter in the United States in 1971 following the release of *West*. His ability to capture the spirit and atmosphere of a scene and infuse peopleless scenes with anthropomorphic character, caused his paintings to be highly sought after.

McIntyre's contribution to New Zealand art history was recognised in December 1970 with an OBE for his work as an author and for his accomplishment in the fine art fields. A retrospective show of McIntyre's war paintings was held at the Wellington City Gallery in 1995 to popular acclaim. His work is held in numerous private and public collections, including those of the National Army Museum in Waiouru, Te Papa, and the Auckland War Memorial Museum, however it is McIntyre's paintings of New Zealand cities and landscape which continue to make him one of the most recognisable and respected New Zealand artists of the twentieth century.