

Frances Hodgkins and Cedric Morris

Solving 'the modern problem'
through Romantic Modernism

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Abstract

This thesis explores the mutual support between Frances Hodgkins and Cedric Morris for the first time in the scholarly art-historical literature and will, consequently, open up revisionist ways of addressing questions of exchange and collaboration between artists. Between the First and Second World Wars, Hodgkins's and Morris's biographies as well as their art demonstrate shared cultural experiences and stylistic similarities. Together, these two British Modernists developed a distinctive pictorial language, which this thesis characterizes for the first time as "Romantic Modernism".

The interplay between eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British Romantics and the French avant-garde provided a significant aesthetic foundation from which Hodgkins's and Morris's own visionary painting evolved. This thesis proposes that Hodgkins and Morris were leading figures in the interwar British Modernist shift towards pastoral subject matter with their exchange of Romantic Modernist pictorial explorations. Yet, both artists have been and continue to be critically neglected and overshadowed by the perpetual canons of the widely-examined Neo-Romantics. The identification of Romantic Modernism, as a twentieth-century British modern movement, has never received art historical attention and will, therefore, redefine Modernism in Britain.

By investigating the "modern" in Hodgkins's and Morris's art, which originated from Continental travels and time spent in Paris, their joint definitions of modernity provide a framework regarding their transnational influences and identities. Thus, this thesis presents an opportunity to widen the view to scholarly thought concerning the connection between British Modernism and "Englishness". Identifying what came to be regarded as Hodgkins's and Morris's "disadvantages"—foreign nationality, gender, advanced age and same-sex relations—brings forth the objective of this thesis which will demonstrate why their participation and influential roles in the modern British context continue to be marginalized and will, subsequently, reposition both Hodgkins and Morris from the peripheries to the center of British Modernism.

Table of Contents

Abstract	3
Table of Contents	5
List of Illustrations	7
Acknowledgements	15
Declaration	16
Introduction	17
The Beginnings of a Friendship: A Tale of Two Sides	24
The Construction of British Inter-war Modernism: Interpretations and Exclusions	31
Joint Romantic Modernist Leitmotifs	40
Chapter One	
A Singular Friendship in British Modernism	56
1.1 The Foundation between Friends	57
1.2 Hodgkins's and Morris's Wartime Portraits in Cornwall	65
1.3 A Post-war Period of Asymmetrical Experiences in Europe and in Britain	70
1.4 The 'modern problem': An Unrecognized Breakthrough	83
Chapter Two	
Material and Spiritual Manifestations of Romantic Modernism	93

2.1 Spaces and Places: Returning to a Lost Eden	107
2.2 The Eggs of England	115
2.3 The Weight of a Petal: The Significance of Flowers and Ornaments in the Still Lives of Hodgkins and Morris	129
2.4 'Unquiet Landscapes' of Britain and Abroad during the Second World War	139
2.5 The Missing Links: Hodgkins and Morris as British Romantic Modernists	152
Chapter Three	
Expanding the English Canon through the Investigation of Hodgkins's and Morris's "Outsider" Identities	154
3.1 Debunking Nationalism in Modernist Artistic Identities	162
3.2 Painting Personas: Discrimination on Three Fronts	173
3.3 Veiled Recognition: Hodgkins's and Morris's Subversion of English Art Establishments through their Radical Teaching	198
Conclusion	208
Illustrations	215
Bibliography	315

List of Illustrations

1. Samantha Niederman, rendering of Frances Hodgkins's drawing of Cedric Morris and inscription, c. 1917, pencil drawing, 24.2 x 16.2 cm, reverse side of Cedric Morris, *Frances Hodgkins*, Tate, T03831
2. Cedric Morris, *Frances Hodgkins*, 1919, watercolor, 30.5 x 24 cm, location unknown
3. Cedric Morris, *Frances Hodgkins*, c. 1917, gouache on paper, 24.2 x 16.2 cm, Tate, T03831
4. Walter Sickert, *Ennui*, c. 1914, oil on canvas, 152.4 x 112.4 cm, Tate, N03846
5. Frances Hodgkins, *Loveday and Ann: Two Women with a Basket of Flowers*, 1915, oil on canvas, 67.3 x 67.3 cm, Tate, N05456
6. Vanessa Bell, *Virginia Woolf*, 1912, oil on board, 40 x 34 cm, National Portrait Gallery, NPG 5933
7. Edward Wadsworth, *Ladle Slag*, 1919, watercolor and ink, dimensions unknown location unknown
8. Frances Hodgkins, *Houses and Outhouses, Purbeck*, 1938, oil on canvas, 85 x 111.5 cm, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puno O Waiwhetu, P75
9. C.R.W. Nevinson, *English Landscape in Winter*, c. 1925-26, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Walker Art Gallery, WAG 3151
10. Cedric Morris, *Flowers and Butterflies*, 1926, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Private Collection
11. Hannah Richie, Frances Hodgkins, and Jane Saunders seated in a garden., c. 1925, photographic print, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, PAColl-5467-03
12. Frances Hodgkins, *Double Portrait*, 1922, oil on canvas, 61.0 x 77.0 cm, Hocken Collections, Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago, 73/169
13. Cedric Morris, *The Dancing Sailor*, 1925, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Collection Miss Mary Rose Wakefield
14. Frances Hodgkins in Morocco, 1913, 25.4 x 20.6 cm, E.H. McCormick Papers, E. H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, RC2001/22/27

15. Frances Hodgkins in the Wharf Studio, St Ives, 1918, 6.4 x 9.8 cm, E.H. McCormick Papers, E. H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, RC2015/4/4/42
16. Frances Hodgkins, *Baby with Abacus*, c. 1918, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Private Collection
17. Frances Hodgkins, *Child Study*, c. 1918, watercolor and charcoal on paper, 33.7 x 35.3 cm, Queensland Art Gallery, 1:1101
18. Frances Hodgkins, *Sleeping Child*, c. 1918, watercolor on paper, dimensions unknown, Private Collection
19. Frances Hodgkins, *Unshatterable (Belgian Refugees)*, c. 1919, oil on canvas, 87.5 x 95 cm, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, 80/80
20. Cedric Morris, *Refugee*, c. 1919, 74.0 x 61.0 cm, Gainsborough's House, 2017.016
21. Frank Brangwyn, *Belgian & Allies Aid League. Will you help these sufferers from the war to start a new home. Help is better than sympathy*, 1915, poster, 101 x 76 cm, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., 20540
22. Arthur Lett-Haines, *Frances Hodgkins*, 1919-20, charcoal, 32.4 x 20.4 cm, National Portrait Gallery, NPG 6686
23. Frances Hodgkins, *Cassis*, 1920, chalk on paper, 33.7 x 38.2 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 1972/6
24. Cedric Morris, *Les Ponts de Céret*, 1923, oil on canvas, 65.1 x 81 cm, Tate, T07784
25. Frances Hodgkins, *Café Les Martigues*, c. 1921, pencil on paper, 25 x 32.5 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 1954/10/3
26. Cedric Morris, *Café Rotonde, Paris*, 1921, pencil and ink on paper, dimensions unknown, Gainsborough's House, 2017.076
27. Frances Hodgkins, *Red Cockerel*, 1924, oil on canvas, 70.7 x 91.4 cm, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 42-1957
28. Cedric Morris, *Caterpillar of the Euphorbia Moth*, 1927, oil on board, 25.2 x 25.0 cm, Gainsborough's House, 2017.082
29. Cedric Morris, *Corner in Tréboul*, 1927, oil on canvas, 54 x 65.5 cm, Private Collection

30. Frances Hodgkins, *Tréboul*, 1927, watercolor, 53.7 x 43.8 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 1954/9/5
31. Frances Hodgkins, *Portrait of Arthur Lett-Haines*, 1927, oil on canvas, 61.0 x 49.0 cm, Private Collection
32. Giorgione completed by Titian, *Sleeping Venus*, 1508-1510, oil on canvas, 175.0 x 108.5 cm, Old Masters Picture Gallery, Dresden State Art Museums
33. Wyndham Lewis, *Ezra Pound*, 1939, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 101.6 cm, Tate, N05042
34. Frances Hodgkins, *Portrait of Cedric Morris (Man with Macaw)*, c. 1930, oil on canvas, 63.5 x 52.5 cm, Towner Art Gallery, EASTG 1262
35. Frances Hodgkins, *Still Life*, 1929, oil on canvas, 73 x 60 cm, The Fletcher Trust Collection
36. Cedric Morris, *Poppies*, 1926, oil on canvas, 61 x 50.8 cm, Private Collection
37. Frances Hodgkins, *Still Life*, c. 1937, oil on canvas, 64.0 x 52.8 cm, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 6-1949
38. Cedric Morris, *The Iron Birds*, 1942, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Private Collection
39. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., 'Flow chart' diagram of art movements, 1936, from the jacket of the catalogue for the 1936 exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art* at The Museum of Modern Art, New York
40. Frances Hodgkins, *Untitled (Textile design, no. I)*, c. 1925, gouache on paper, 41.8 x 50 cm, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 1998-0006-5
41. Frances Hodgkins, *Untitled (Textile design, no. IV)*, c. 1925, gouache on paper, 29.2 x 20.7 cm, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 1998-0006-8
42. Cedric Morris, *Untitled (Furnishing fabric)*, 1940, screen-printed linen, 182.88 x 121.92 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, CIRC.37-1940
43. Cedric Morris, *Iris*, 1934, printed cotton and rayon, dimensions unknown, Victoria and Albert Museum, T.6-1981
44. Frances Hodgkins, *Wings over Water*, c. 1931-2, oil on canvas, 71.1 x 91.4 cm, Tate, N06237
45. Pierre Bonnard, *The Window*, 1925, oil on canvas, 108.6 x 88.6 cm, Tate, N04494

46. Cedric Morris, *Iris Seedlings*, 1943, oil on canvas, 121.9 x 91.8 cm, Tate, T03230
47. Raoul Dufy, *Open Window at Saint- Jeannet*, c. 1926-27, gouache on paper, 65.6 x 50.7 cm, Tate, T03565
48. Cedric Morris, *Floreat*, 1933, oil on canvas, 140 x 109.5 cm, Cyfarthfa Castle Museum & Art Gallery, CCM.41.992
49. Frances Hodgkins, *Still Life with Lilies*, c. 1929, watercolor, 41 x 54.6 cm, Private Collection, New Zealand
50. Frances Hodgkins working outdoors at Flatford Mill, 1930, 21.6 x 25.4 cm, E.H. McCormick Archive of Frances Hodgkins Photographs, E H McCormick Research Library Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, RC2001/22/53
51. Cedric Morris painting in the garden at Benton End, Photograph © John Norris Wood
52. Cedric Morris, *The Pound*, 1933, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Christchurch Mansion
53. Postcard of Flatford, Constable's Mill from Hodgkins to Howell, Tate Archive, 735.1
54. Frances Hodgkins, untitled drawing of a seated man outdoors wearing a coat and hat, smoking a pipe and painting, undated, Tate Archive, TGA 846/29
55. Cedric Morris, 1920s, © National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG x 128725
56. Cedric Morris in the garden at Benton End, 1975, Photograph © John Norris Wood
57. Frances Hodgkins, *Study for Pembrokeshire Landscape*, 1938, gouache, 52.7 x 77.5 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 1956/20/1
58. Photograph of Benton End from Tony Venison, 'The Painter's Living Legacy', *Country Life*, 50 (9 February 2006), p. 52
59. William Henry Hunt, *Primroses and Bird's Nest*, watercolor on paper, 18.4 x 27.3 cm, Tate, N03564
60. Frances Hodgkins, *Still Life in a Garden*, 1929, watercolor, dimensions unknown, Private Collection
61. Frances Hodgkins, *Eggs and Ferns*, c. 1931, watercolor, 53 x 45.8 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 1954/9/3

62. Frances Hodgkins, *Still Life with Eggs and Willow*, 1929-1930, watercolor with pencil, 57.2 x 49 cm, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2000-0007-6
63. Frances Hodgkins, *Still Life: Eggs, Tomatoes and Mushrooms*, c. 1929, oil on canvas, 64 x 53 cm, Royal Pavilion & Museum, Brighton & Hove
64. Cedric Morris, *Unstill Life*, 1943, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, location unknown
65. Cedric Morris, *Cotyledon & Eggs*, 1944, oil on canvas, 58.42 x 48.26 cm, Colchester Art Society
66. Frances Hodgkins, *Arrangement of Jugs*, 1938, watercolor, 45 x 60 cm, Tate Archive, TGA 846.5
67. Cedric Morris, *The Eggs*, 1944, oil on canvas, 61.5 x 43.2 cm, Tate, T06522
68. Henri Fantin-Latour, *Summer Flowers*, 1880, oil on canvas, 50.8 x 61.9 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997.347
69. Frances Hodgkins, *Arum Lilies*, c. 1931, oil on board, 64 x 54 cm, Private Collection, United Kingdom
70. Pablo Picasso, *Still Life with Pitcher and Apples*, 1919, oil on canvas, 65 x 43 cm, Musée National Picasso, Paris
71. Frances Hodgkins, *Flowers in a Vase*, c. 1928-30, oil on canvas, 88 x 70 cm, Government Art Collection, United Kingdom, GAC 4513
72. Frances Hodgkins, *Flowers and a Cat*, 1941, gouache on paper, 30.5 x 41 cm, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 231-1982
73. Cedric Morris, *Summer Garden Flowers*, c. 1930s, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Private Collection
74. Cedric Morris, *Easter Bouquet*, 1934, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Private Collection, © the artist's estate, photo credit: Philip Mould & Co.
75. Cedric Morris, *Hey-Day*, 1931, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, location unknown
76. Cedric Morris, *Irises*, 1941, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, location unknown
77. Frances Hodgkins, *Houses and Outhouses, Purbeck*, c. 1938, oil on canvas, 80 x 115 cm, Private Collection, New Zealand

78. Frances Hodgkins, *Smithy*, c. 1940, gouache on paper, 49.5 x 65 cm, Private Collection, New Zealand
79. Paul Nash, *Totes Meer (Dead Sea)*, 1940-41, oil on canvas, 102 x 152.4 cm, Tate, N05717
80. Frances Hodgkins, *Broken Tractor*, 1942, gouache on paper, 38.1 x 57.1 cm, Tate, N05406
81. John Piper, *All Saints Chapel, Bath*, 1942, ink, chalk, gouache and watercolor on paper, 42.5 x 55.9 cm, Tate, N05719
82. Michael Rothenstein, *Tractor and Plough*, 1947, oil on canvas, 154.9 x 233.7 cm, location unknown
83. Cedric Morris, *Pontypridd*, 1945, oil on canvas, 51 x 76.2 cm, Glynn Vivian Art Gallery
84. St. Catherine's Church, Pontypridd, South Wales © Durbin Photography
85. Cedric Morris, *Lake Patzcuaro, Mexico*, 1939, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 91.4 cm, National Museum Wales, NMW A 4987
86. James Dickson Innes, *Arenig, North Wales*, 1913, oil on plywood, 85.7 x 113.7 cm, Tate, N04385
87. John Piper, *The Rise of the Dovey*, 1943-44, oil on canvas on board, 69.3 x 87 cm, National Museum Wales, NMW A 24736
88. Cedric Morris, *Shags*, 1938, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 122 cm, National Museum Wales, NMW A 16938
89. Cedric Morris, *Heron*, 1941, oil on canvas, 50 x 75 cm, Tameside Museums and Galleries Service: The Astley Cheetham Art Collection, ASTAC1946.2
90. Attributed to Xu Daoning, *An Autumn Scene with Birds*, 10-13th century, album leaf, ink and color on silk, 25.7 x 25 cm, Yale University Art Gallery, 1952.52.25.3
91. Leng Mei, *Nine White Egrets*, 1725, ink and color on silk, hanging scroll, 165.3 x 96.5 cm, Private Collection
92. John Craxton, *Bird Among Rocks*, 1942, pen and ink, 15 x 23 cm, Christopher Hull Gallery, London
93. Cedric Morris, *The Celtic Twilight*, 1924, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Private Collection

94. Frances Hodgkins, *Summer*, c. 1912, watercolor and charcoal, 58.6 x 49.8 cm, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 3-1913
95. Berthe Morisot, *Julie Manet and her Nurse*, 1880, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen
96. Mary Cassatt, *Sara and Her Mother with Baby (No.1)*, c. 1901, pastel on paper, 57.78 x 60 cm, The Columbus Museum, Georgia, G.2005.14
97. Frances Hodgkins, *Lancashire Family*, 1927, oil on canvas, 68.5 x 70.5 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 1963/11/1
98. Pablo Picasso, *Mother and Child*, 1901, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Private Collection
99. Frances Hodgkins, *Portrait of Arthur Lett-Haines*, 1920, oil on canvas, 38.2 x 43.7 cm, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2006-0030-1
100. Harold Gilman, *Meditation*, 1910-11, oil on canvas, 62 x 46.5 cm, Leicester Arts and Museums Service
101. Frances Hodgkins, *Spring in the Ravine*, c. 1933, oil on canvas, 62.6 x 76.1 cm, National Gallery of Canada, NGC_4772
102. Frances Hodgkins, *Head of an Old Woman*, 1895, watercolor on paper, 49.2 x 37.1 cm, Theomin Gallery, Olveston Historic Home, Dunedin
103. Rosalba Carriera, *Self-Portrait as Tragedy*, c. 1746, pastel, dimensions unknown, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice
104. Frances Hodgkins at Flatford Mill, Suffolk, 1930, 11.6 x 18.9 cm, E.H. McCormick Papers, E. H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Linda Gill, 2015, RC2015/4/4/117
105. Frances Hodgkins when at the Hampstead Gallery, London, held an exhibition of her work, 1920, photographic print, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, PAColl-5567
106. Cedric Morris, *Portrait of Frances Hodgkins*, 1928, oil on canvas, 73.6 x 60.3 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 1954/5
107. Frances Hodgkins, *Still Life: Self-Portrait*, c. 1935, oil on panel, 97.5 x 62.4 cm, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 1999-0017-1
108. Frances Hodgkins, *Self Portrait: Still Life*, c. 1935, oil on cardboard, 76.2 x 63.5 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 1963/11/2

109. Parmigianino, *Self-portrait in a Convex Mirror*, c. 1524, oil on convex panel, 24.4 cm diameter, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, GG_286
110. Mark Gertler, *Still Life with Self Portrait*, 1918, oil on canvas, 50.8 x 40.6 cm, Leeds Art Gallery, LEEAG.PA.1956.0001.0003
111. Frances Hodgkins, *Untitled [Woman with a mirror]*, c. 1912, watercolor and charcoal, 54.8 x 42.5 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2007/8/16
112. Formal head and shoulders portrait of Frances Hodgkins, 1912, photographic print, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington
113. Bernardo Strozzi, *Old Woman at the Mirror*, 1615, oil on canvas, 132 x 108 cm, Pushkin Museum, Moscow
114. Felix H. Man, Frances Hodgkins at her studio in Corfe Castle village, Dorset, 1945, photographic print, National Library of New Zealand, 35mm-00335-A-F
115. Felix H. Man, Frances Hodgkins painting in her studio, Corfe Castle village, Dorset, 1945, photographic print, National Library of New Zealand, 35mm-00338-E-F
116. Barbara Hepworth with *Three Forms Vertical (Offering)*, 1967, photographic print, Private Collection
117. Cedric Morris, *Flowers in a vase*, c. 1930s, oil on panel, dimensions unknown, Private Collection
118. John Piper, *Abstract I*, 1935, oil on canvas and plywood, 91.7 x 106.5 cm, Tate, N06212
119. Cedric Morris, *Gutted Art School, Dedham*, 1939, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Private Collection
120. Lucian Freud, *Sir Cedric Morris*, 1940, oil on canvas, 30.7 x 25.6 cm, National Museum Wales, NMW A12875
121. Cedric Morris, *Lucian Freud*, 1940, oil on canvas, 73 x 60.3 cm, Tate, T03231

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Pepa, Mema, Gertie and Carmen.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis entitled 'Frances Hodgkins and Cedric Morris: Solving "the modern problem" through Romantic Modernism' is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.



30 September 2019

Introduction

This thesis explores the artistic friendship between two twentieth-century British Modernists, Frances Hodgkins and Cedric Morris. Born in Dunedin, the South Island of New Zealand, in 1869, Hodgkins was based in England for over thirty years until her death in 1947. Cedric Morris, a Welshman born in Swansea twenty years later in 1889, established England as his base from the outbreak of the First World War until 1920 and again in 1927 until his death in 1982. Nevertheless, both artists were committed to peripatetic movement in order to gain fresh inspiration for their art. The period between the First and Second World Wars resulted in Hodgkins's and Morris's creative practices concurrently transforming their distinctive style and particular motifs into the most experimental work of their oeuvres. The scholarly literature surrounding the coupling of Hodgkins and Morris as professional artists working together does not exist, but instead there is limited literature on the artists as separate narratives. This thesis will uncover an uncharted friendship between Hodgkins and Morris, and the particular stylistic movement, which they worked in and developed together. Thus, I will present a critical cultural and artistic biography by interpreting and reassessing both Hodgkins's and Morris's aesthetic contributions as well as provide original material that will expand accounts within the cultural networks that shaped these artists and the larger British Modernist context in which they worked.

Recent scholars have offered useful biographical approaches to the study of friendship and life writing including literary and cultural theorist, Leela Gandhi, whose book, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fine-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship*, rescues the significance of cross-cultural collaborations by eloquently expounding on connections amongst differing communities. One of Gandhi's examples focuses on 'the relationship between the Jewish French mystic Mirra Alfassa and the Indian nationalist, extremist, and mystic Sri Aurobindo.¹ As Gandhi writes, "Together Mirra Alfassa and Sri Aurobindo

¹ Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fine-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship* (Durham & London; Duke University Press, 2006), p.11.

developed a culturally collaborative “spiritualist” critique of both imperial culture and its anticolonial nationalist derivation.² Gandhi outlines a lifelong collaboration, which critically assessed ‘both imperial culture and its anticolonial nationalist derivation’.³ Interweaving biographical narratives of unlikely friendships throughout her text, Gandhi explores a wide range of unexpected pairings from Oscar Wilde and the Indian poet, Manmohan Ghose, to the anti-colonial nationalist and political ethicist, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, and members of the London Vegetarian Society. Through these personal yet compelling accounts, Gandhi provides a critical framework of biographical writing. Discourses on friendship are also explored by queer theorist, Jennifer Doyle, who has written about ‘queer friendships between men and women as a form of attachment that can disturb both the presumption of an “us” and a “them” and the opposition of desire and friendship’.⁴ Doyle’s persuasive argument also subverts philosophers like Derrida and Montaigne, who dismissed women as only being able to function in the role of lovers and, thus, incapable of friendship.⁵ Proving that friendship with women is, in fact, possible, Doyle’s essay, “Between Friends”, examines the importance of friendship in queer communities ‘... between men and women in order to ask how they push against the pressures of heteronormative ways of being...’⁶ Additionally, Maggie Nelson deftly provides a feminist perspective using a biographical framework for collaborations between poets and artists, who challenged gendered conventions, within the New York School. In a case study between the painter, Joan Mitchell, and the poet, Barbara Guest, Nelson considered ‘how Guest and Mitchell are each central to their fields and periods, and at the same time to chart the ways in which their specific “abstract practices” represent an important mark of difference within them...’⁷ One of the main aims of this thesis is to further this significant

² Ibid., p.11.

³ Ibid., p.11.

⁴ Jennifer Doyle, “Between Friends”, in George Haggerty and Molly McGarry (eds.), *A Companion to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), p. 325.

⁵ Ibid., p. 325.

⁶ Ibid., p. 326.

⁷ Maggie Nelson, *Women, The New York School, and Other True Abstractions* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2007), p. 6.

narrative concern through examining the importance of Hodgkins's and Morris's friendship in the art historical context of British Modernism.

Art historians of British Modernism have investigated the phenomenon of the "artist couple" by grouping them as— husband and wife such as Ben and Winifred Nicholson, as lovers such as the Bloomsbury love triangle, as family members such as siblings Gwen and Augustus John or as two powerful forces in a professional relationship such as Francis Bacon and Lucian Freud. Art historical attention has also been directed to towering individuals such as Paul Nash, Graham Sutherland or Henry Moore and dynamic artistic groups such as the Bloomsbury Group, the Vorticists or the Camden Town Group. These repeated reevaluations of the same legendary groupings of British artists or those with international renown continue to shape contemporary discourse on British twentieth-century art. Consequently, equally compelling collaborations such as that between Hodgkins and Morris remain overlooked and obscured by what has been established as mainstream Modernism for which critical attention is granted.

Therefore, the primary objective of this thesis identifies for the first time the significance of the unique creative friendship between Hodgkins and Morris, two artists who came from completely different backgrounds and were twenty years apart in age, but, nevertheless, remained life-long friends as they continually influenced each other's work through their departure from typically modern twentieth-century subjects. By reconstructing a critical narrative of their collaboration, this thesis will illuminate their combined impact as significant in reshaping the canon of British Modernism and will radically revise previous preconceptions of Romanticism as a separate and distinct movement from British Modernism in the twentieth century. I will do this by illustrating a complex, interwoven web of exchanges and equivalences, which will demonstrate the core similarity between both artistic movements— the 'individual temperament'⁸ of the artist. Overarching theories of the opposition between the Romantics versus the Modernists will be refuted. I will argue that the underlying affinity between the

⁸ Walter Pater, *Appreciations: With an Essay on Style* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1913), p.257.

Romanticists and the Modernists expresses a persistently analogous principle rooted in the manifestation of the imagination. The standardized and parochial understandings of the movements as disparate also relates to the widely held belief in the opposition between British and French art— with Romanticism often fixed in the British school and French art more generally rooted in Modernism. Instead, I will illustrate the importance of Anglo-French artistic relations seen in both Hodgkins’s and Morris’s art produced at the same time and, thus, a cross-cultural and trans-temporal fusion leading to the term I am proposing as “Romantic Modernism”.

My research will not only examine Hodgkins and Morris as a vital pair rather than postscripts in the British twentieth-century modern context, which is demonstrated by the lack of critical literature on these two artists, but will also emphasize their crucial role in developing a Romantic Modernist pictorial language based on a fusion of British eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landscapes and doctrines, avant-garde technical methods transported from the Continent and emotive and expressive powers behind ordinary still life objects. Previous and dominant views have positioned Hodgkins as a New Zealand expatriate and Morris as an outsider Welshman, leading to their nominal and inconspicuous roles in British Modernism. I will, instead, argue the contrary— by recuperating these two artists and placing them in the center of British avant-garde art made during this period. This, in turn, will prompt future art historians to critically reevaluate those who have not previously acquired historical credibility largely due to the fact that they were women or queer artists. There is not a single publication that critically examines the works of Hodgkins and Morris together, and only a select few place them in the context of modern British art. This thesis is, thus, necessary in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of their contributions not only to Romantic Modernism, which I will argue later feeds into the development of the widely-recognized Neo-Romantic movement, but also to modern British art, in general.

That Hodgkins and Morris knew one another and shared a friendship lasting three decades has surprisingly only been mentioned in minor biographical

footnotes, despite the fact that an analysis of their friendship, in turn, proves to be an integral aspect of their art. Mainly, exhibition catalogues cursorily state that Hodgkins and Morris were 'close friends' such as in *Frances Hodgkins: Leitmotif* and *Frances Hodgkins*.⁹ The majority of references to Hodgkins's and Morris's friendship claim Morris's influence over Hodgkins and her subsequent indebtedness to him: 'under the influence of such young English artists as Cedric Morris... she assessed and renewed the impressions that she had got before but had not begun to exploit'.¹⁰ Another example highlighting Morris's 'influence' over Hodgkins can be found in an exhibition catalogue marking the centenary of her life and work: 'In the small Breton port she renewed her friendship with Morris... whose... influence may often be detected or inferred in the events leading to her recognition'.¹¹ Morris's assistance with managing practicalities in Hodgkins's life has also been emphasized:

Her friends were vitally important in giving her the practical support and encouragement that enabled her to keep working— and also in ensuring that her work was seen by people who had influence in the art world. Cedric Morris seems to have arranged for Frances's invitation to show with the prestigious London Group in June 1927 and with the New English Art Club in December that year.¹²

Hodgkins's foremost biographer, New Zealander Eric Hall McCormick, has written the most commentary on Morris's significance in Hodgkins's life in *Portrait of Frances Hodgkins*.¹³ In McCormick's *Late Attachment: Frances Hodgkins and Maurice Garnier*, he also addressed the role Morris played in increasing Hodgkins's recognition and propelling her artistic career: 'Sponsored by her friend Cedric Morris, she became a member of the progressive Seven and Five Society and

⁹ Mary Kisler et al., *Frances Hodgkins: Leitmotif* (Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery, 2005), p.15. Another example: Jill Trevelyan, *Frances Hodgkins* (Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 1993), p.16.

¹⁰ *Ethel Walker, Frances Hodgkins, Gwen John: A Memorial Exhibition* (London: Arts Council, 1952), p.14. Morris was frequently referred to as English, but, in fact, he was very proud of his Welsh origins.

¹¹ *Frances Hodgkins, 1869-1947: A Centenary Exhibition* (Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery, 1969), unpaginated.

¹² Alexa Johnston, *Frances Hodgkins: Femme du Monde* (Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2009), p.121.

¹³ E. H. McCormick, *Portrait of Frances Hodgkins* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1981), pp. 92, 95, 97-98, 104, 106-107, 109, 111, 123.

attracted the notice of several London dealers'.¹⁴ McCormick continued by emphasizing Morris's influence over the artist's decisions about her life and subject matter: 'probably at the suggestion of Cedric Morris... she gave up her London studio to spend the summer and early autumn near them at Higham in Suffolk... a favourite subject and her studio for a time'.¹⁵ Finally, Linda Gill's edited *Letters of Frances Hodgkins* draws attention to the fact that despite the three-decade-long duration of Hodgkins's and Morris's friendship, Gill's selection of 616 abridged letters only contains 'three letters, a postcard and a telegram, all to Lett Haines'.¹⁶ This may have to do with the fact that Morris's lifelong partner, who was known as Lett, managed all of the daily responsibilities that Morris refused to trouble himself with such as answering correspondence, paying the bills, cooking all of the meals and managing Morris's artistic career. Beyond the direct references to Morris in several letters by Hodgkins herself, Gill, consequently, perpetuates the narrative of a one-sided relationship, since there is no commentary on the significant role Hodgkins played in Morris's life. Instead, Gill highlighted that 'her long friendship with the English painter... Cedric Morris' can be defined by the fact that he used his 'influence to advance her career in the late twenties and early thirties...'¹⁷

Indeed, a considerable asymmetry can be detected regarding Hodgkins's and Morris's relationship in that only publications on Hodgkins briefly mention Morris, but there is rarely reference to Hodgkins in publications on Morris. It is true that there are far fewer publications on Morris than there are of Hodgkins. However, one of the most relevant publications on Morris, which remains to be Richard Morphet's Tate retrospective exhibition catalogue from 1984, continues this knight in shining armor narrative in which Morphet wrote: 'The late 1920s and early 1930s were a low period in Hodgkins' fortunes, during which Cedric's... help and encouragement were of decisive importance in the events leading up to the major

¹⁴ E.H. McCormick, *Late Attachment: Frances Hodgkins & Maurice Garnier* (Auckland: Auckland City Art Gallery, 1988), p.9.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.12.

¹⁶ Frances Hodgkins, *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, edited by Linda Gill (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1993), p.3. Arthur Lett-Haines and Morris were together for sixty years, until Lett's death in 1978.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.3. Again, Morris was Welsh not English.

change in her success and reputation'.¹⁸ Morphet goes on to briefly mention Hodgkins's and Morris's painting excursion together: 'In the summer of 1927 Cedric... and she were painting together in Tréboul'.¹⁹ Yet this would have been an ideal place to discuss Morris's claim that Hodgkins was a 'good painter and a completely original one'.²⁰ On this particular trip together, Hodgkins radically experimented with landscapes, while Morris painted rather conservative Cubist scenes, as will be later addressed in Chapter I.

This significant omission of Hodgkins's influence and importance in Morris's life only continues the narrative of the woman artist allegedly "needing" male companionship, assistance and guidance rather than recognizing a realistic reflection of their true relationship— a joint and reciprocal friendship. However, Richard Stokes, who was at the time Director of The Minories Galleries in 1990, did state in his foreword to an exhibition of Hodgkins's late work that Morris openly acknowledged Hodgkins's influence.²¹ Therefore, this thesis will begin by examining not only the mutual support between Hodgkins and Morris but also will critically investigate their art side by side for the first time in the scholarly art-historical literature concerning twentieth-century British Modernism.

How did these two British Modernists enter into a reciprocal relationship, and what sustained their artistic interactions over a three-decade-long friendship? What specifically linked Hodgkins's and Morris's art together? How did the critical reception of their Romantic Modernist pictorial explorations compare from the post-war period of economic collapse up until the Second World War? Why did Romantic Modernism come about, and what were Hodgkins and Morris trying to achieve? Was it one single movement or were there multiple interwoven strands? What exactly does an examination of their friendship and their development of Romantic Modernism have to offer for future scholars? These are several of the fundamental questions to be addressed throughout the course of this thesis.

¹⁸ Richard Morphet, *Cedric Morris* (London: Tate Gallery Publications Department, 1984), p.37.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.37.

²⁰ Cedric Morris, Recording transcript for BBC Documentary of Frances Hodgkins, 1969: Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.12.

²¹ Liz Reintjes et al., *Frances Hodgkins: The Late Work* (Colchester: The Minories Art Gallery, 1990), p.5.

The Beginnings of a Friendship: A Tale of Two Sides

The friendship between two such unique individuals, Hodgkins and Morris, grew out of their joint interest in becoming professional artists in Britain. With Hodgkins's family back home in New Zealand, the unmarried, childless artist found Morris's friendship to be a supportive alternative. The same could be said of Morris, who although possessed a life-long partnership with Lett, often found friendships such as the one he had with Hodgkins to fulfill familial satisfactions. Over time, the boundaries between the person and the painter became blurred, as Hodgkins and Morris were confident enough to develop their own artistic practices alongside one another. One of the most significant reasons why the bonds of this particular friendship lasted for a lifetime was due to the fact that the adventure both Hodgkins and Morris embarked on was kept alive by a healthy competition in which mutual growth and development added to the depth of understanding and respect for one another's work. By investigating the close creative camaraderie between Hodgkins and Morris for the first time in art historical literature, this thesis will open up a new category for this period of twentieth-century British Modernism, which I refer to as Romantic Modernism. Additionally, by framing Hodgkins and Morris as a groundbreaking artistic duo, stronger evidence emerges when considering the marginalization of their twentieth-century pictorial expressions due to unequal and unjust social and cultural factors surrounding their identities. Nevertheless, both Hodgkins and Morris persisted with their artistic practice, and their friendship continued to flourish.

Both Hodgkins and Morris were based in Paris before the First World War, but throughout my research, I did not come across any evidence that the two artists knew each other during this time. While Hodgkins was living in Paris during May 1914, she also taught a series of watercolor classes during the summer in Équihen-Plage, Boulogne-sur-Mer, Concarneau, Le Faouët and Saint-Malo. When war was declared, the artist decided to return to England and settled in St Ives, Cornwall, after having previously painted in the British coastal art colonies of St Ives, Newlyn and Penzance at the turn of the century. In April 1914, Morris was enrolled at the Académie Delécluse in Montparnasse. By the end of his first term, he joined a

sketching class in Brittany, which was interrupted by the outbreak of the war. Morris also returned to England, where he volunteered for the Artists Rifles regiment but was shortly discharged as medically unfit. He then moved to Zennor, Cornwall, where I believe he first met Hodgkins sometime in 1917.²²

I have determined that both artists met each other during the First World War, most likely in 1917, based on evidence of Hodgkins's and Morris's first artistic encounter. Underneath Hodgkins's pencil drawing of Morris's head in profile with a pipe in his mouth (**Fig. 1**) is a short inscription: 'painted by/ Cedric Morris/ Newlyn 1917 (?)'.²³ Hodgkins included a question mark after the date, indicating that she perhaps returned to the drawing years after it was completed in order to document the identity of the sitter, location and year in which it was made. When considered in context of Morris's systematic errors in keeping track of dates, I do believe 1917 to be accurate. In a recording transcript by Morris for a 1969 BBC Documentary of Hodgkins, Morris stated, 'In 1918 Lett Haines and I took a studio at Eldon Road in Kensington, from Frances Hodgkins. I do not think I met her then. I can't remember when'.²⁴ In fact, Morris has recalled all dates involving interactions with Hodgkins exactly two years later than the actual occurrence. For instance, he erroneously wrote that he and his partner, Lett, first met Hodgkins when she sublet them a furnished studio in Kensington in 1919, and that he re-met Hodgkins after the Paris years in 1929 instead of 1927. Morris also mistakenly recalled that he proposed Hodgkins for membership with The Seven and Five Society in 1931 rather than in 1929. There does not seem to be a specific reason why Morris frequently post-dated his exchanges with Hodgkins by two years. Nevertheless, since he did document that they first met in 1919 and Hodgkins inscribed her drawing with the

²² Draft of speech by Morris for opening of Hodgkins's posthumous exhibition in 1948. Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.2.

²³ The Collection Care Department at the Tate did not grant me permission to take a snapshot of this integral drawing and inscription, which has not yet been reproduced in print or online. Thus, I have drawn my own rendering of Hodgkins's sketch of Morris with the corresponding inscription. According to Tate's website, John Piper confirmed its attribution to Frances Hodgkins based on her handwriting below the portrait: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/morris-frances-hodgkins-t03831>. After viewing the drawing and inscription myself, I can confirm her expressive, calligraphic handwriting, as well.

²⁴ Morris, Recording transcript for BBC Documentary of Frances Hodgkins, 1969: Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.12.

date of 1917, I do believe this inscribed date to be correct.²⁵ Later, Morris commemorated Hodgkins with her own profile portrait, which is inscribed in the lower right corner, 'C.M. 1919' (Fig. 2). Unfortunately, the location of this watercolor remains unknown, and this black and white image is all that is currently available.²⁶

Hodgkins's profile portrait of Morris with its corresponding inscription can be found on the verso of what was, in fact, Morris's earliest extant portraits, a gouache of Hodgkins in an interior setting entitled *Frances Hodgkins* (Fig. 3).²⁷ There are well known British twentieth-century precedents for the presentation of figures in interiors such as Sickert's *Ennui* (Fig. 4) in which the composition and point of view are quite similar to Morris's later *Frances Hodgkins*. For instance, in *Ennui* the male figure is seated in a tilted chair contemplatively smoking, while Morris also positions Hodgkins at an angle as she sits quietly reading in a chair. Not only are the figures positioned similarly but also the rooms in which they sit have comparable furnishings and decorative objects. For instance, both interiors include pictures hanging on the walls and a mantelpiece displaying ornaments, as can be seen on the right side in Sickert's painting and on the left side in Morris's gouache. Sickert affords the decorative objects, such as the oversized glass bell jar, with detailed attention, while Morris also explores ceramics and house-hold ornaments, all of which Hodgkins was very fond of, albeit more experimentally, as will soon be discussed. However, the overall tone of *Ennui* signifies weariness and isolation, as the wife turns away from her husband and uninterestingly slumps staring off into space. On the other hand, Morris suggests a sense of admiration for his sitter by emphasizing a lower point of view, which can be interpreted as monumentalizing the artist to physically loom and appear larger than she was in reality. Another

²⁵ Morphet provides additional confirmation of this date: 'When Remounts were taken over by the army in 1916-17, he as a civilian was discharged. He spent a year in Cornwall studying plants and insects and painting in watercolor, living at Zennor; the earliest work in this exhibition is a watercolor portrait of Frances Hodgkins painted at this time.' Morphet also wrote, 'Apart from juvenilia, no work by Cedric has been traced before the watercolour portrait of Hodgkins of 1917.' Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, pp.19, 27.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.121.

²⁷ See a brief chronology of Morris's early years in *Ibid.*, pp.18-19. From 1914, Morris began his studies as a painter at Académie Delécluse, but whatever work he created during this period did not survive.

reading of this portrait can relate to the proximity between the two artists, as Morris positions Hodgkins in the immediate foreground in a compressed and flattened space; thus, revealing how their friendship was caught within the materiality of their art. Indeed, *Frances Hodgkins* marked the beginning of a long artistic admiration, which continued even after the artist's death, when Morris opened her first posthumous exhibition in 1948 by stating, 'I have always been an admirer of her [Hodgkins's] work'.²⁸

In his first portrait of the artist, rather than capturing Hodgkins's exact likeness, Morris employs an abstracted, highly decorative approach, which was just the beginning of his conscious dedication to Modernism; Hodgkins's head is shrunken, her facial features are undefined, and her neck, shoulders, torso and hands have been enlarged to an exaggerated proportion. In *Frances Hodgkins*, interest in the decorative also slightly directs Morris's attention away from the artist to the domestic environment itself, as the patterned wallpaper, framed pictures on the wall, objects on the mantelpiece and jagged-edged curtains convey a sort of frenetic energy through his use of quivering bold black lines. Morris's intimate and rather ornamental portrait of the artist could have very well been influenced by Hodgkins's earlier expressively dream-like portrait, *Loveday and Ann: Two Women with a Basket of Flowers* (Fig. 5), which was exhibited at the National Portrait Society in 1916. Unlike the other more traditional British society portraits in this exhibition, Hodgkins's painting was very different in both its spirit and technique. Her delight in the Nabi artists such as Pierre Bonnard and Édouard Vuillard is revealed through her almost theatrical depiction of the two sitters, daughters of local fishermen; their unnatural seafoam green-tinted skin blends into the decoratively patterned domestic environment in which they are informally positioned. The central placement of a basket filled with bright flowers unites the figures and also provides an additional colorful touch. Although the painting is in oil, Hodgkins treats the medium as if it were her earlier Impressionist watercolor method of light, ephemeral washes contributing to the instinctively free feeling of the overall

²⁸ Draft of speech by Morris for opening of Hodgkins's posthumous exhibition in 1948. Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.2.

composition. As Hodgkins rightly concluded, her visionary Modernist portraits were not yet understood by the British critics of the time. One detractor wrote, 'This is the exhibit of a pyrotechnic artist in paint, it is not portraiture, or if it is, I never want to meet Loveday and Ann'.²⁹ Morris's early appreciation for Hodgkins's art as expressed in his portrait *Frances Hodgkins* takes particular interest in Hodgkins's use of vibrant patterned fabrics and furniture found in *Loveday and Ann*.

Hodgkins's and Morris's joint interest in the decorative, revealed through an ornamental Romantic Modernist language, was part of a larger major strain within twentieth-century European Modernism not only throughout these years but also leading into the Second World War. Through their use of expressive colors and abstraction, their joint early explorations in Cornwall demonstrate their interest in the work of the Fauves, for instance. In *Loveday and Ann* and *Frances Hodgkins*, both artists situate their figures in a brilliant almost otherworldly space in which realistic recession into depth is replaced by pulsating patterns that convey the vibrant energy of the interiors and the sitters themselves. Indeed, in Hodgkins's portrait the permeating decoration links the two sitters together in a rhythmical way. Although Morris's portrait features only one sitter, he employs a similar decorative approach, so that this time Hodgkins is connected more closely with her inanimate surroundings, which, in turn, come to life.

These two experimental portraits, *Loveday and Ann* and *Frances Hodgkins*, executed one after the other from around the time when Hodgkins and Morris first met reveal evidence of Morris's declaration of admiration for her work as well as a synchronicity in their interest in the decorative. At the same time, these two portraits suggest Hodgkins's and Morris's joint exclusion from mainstream Modernism, due to their focus on interior spaces. The standard British Modernist narrative has been and continues to be typically embodied by anti-domestic tendencies, such as the Vorticists' spare visualizations of an increasingly mechanized world. Although it is true that wartime limited Hodgkins's and Morris's choice of subjects to their studios, their mutual interest in portraits set in domestic

²⁹ John Salis, *New Witness* (24 February 1916).

interior spaces can seemingly be aligned with several Bloomsbury artists' interest in domesticity such as Vanessa Bell's portrait of her sister, *Virginia Woolf* (Fig. 6), as she reclines in a bright orange armchair and is absorbed in the task of knitting.³⁰ Christopher Reed has noted the major dichotomy in British Modernism during the early decades of the twentieth century between Bloomsbury's relation to domesticity and the 'persistence of an anti-domestic critical standard'.³¹ Reed looked at radical Modernists such as Wyndham Lewis, who believed that 'the cozy and decorative are equated with the superficial and unimportant, the homey is necessarily insipid, and modernism is seen as incompatible with sociability'.³² However, this thesis considers two artists, who never identified as part of Bloomsbury's tightly-knit, exclusive group and remained as "outsiders" to their overall style and aesthetics. Where, if at all, does Hodgkins's and Morris's art fit into Reed's equation?

As Reed has discussed in relation to the Bloomsbury artists:

Domesticity was a potent issue in England in the first decades of the twentieth century, for the previous generation of artists had made the home the central arena of aesthetic and social reform. England was the primary source of new ideas about design.³³

According to Reed, the main contenders for twentieth-century British avant-garde art were the Bloomsbury Group with their 'domestic modernism' and the Vorticists with their 'radicalism'. As Reed has emphasized, 'Bloomsbury's artists dedicated themselves, individually and collectively, to creating the conditions of domesticity outside main-stream definitions of home and family'.³⁴ Yet, I would agree with the outspoken writer, Osbert Sitwell, who argued that their aesthetics were 'smacking of Roger's Omega workshop, wholesome and home-made'.³⁵ This can be seen, for

³⁰ A related image is Bell's *Conversation at Asheham House*, 1912, oil on canvas, University of Hull Art Collection.

³¹ Christopher Reed, *Bloomsbury Rooms: Modernism, Subculture, and Domesticity* (New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press, 2004), p.5.

³² *Ibid.*, p.5.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.7.

³⁵ Osbert Sitwell, "Armistice in Bloomsbury", in S.P. Rosenbaum (ed.), *The Bloomsbury Group: A Collection of Memoirs and Commentary* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p.324.

example, with several works by Vanessa Bell, who often ‘turns the stylistic devices of Sickert’s modernism to the service of the drawing-room domesticity’.³⁶ For instance, Bell’s portrait of her sister, Virginia, features a rather austere space composed of solid blocks of colors and without any decorative objects in sight. Whereas, Morris and Hodgkins subvert the subtle and quiet domesticity of the typical Bloomsbury style by highlighting a joint interest in the French manner of laying design layer upon layer and delighting upon its resulting interplay amongst a variety of objects and patterns. This delight in the coordination and interplay of designs, wallpapers and chintzes has been identified as the national style of France at the turn of the century with Vuillard leading the way in capturing this kind of decoration.³⁷

Hodgkins and Morris, instead, entered into a reciprocal creative relationship by fusing avant-garde influences, particularly from their time spent in Paris and elsewhere on the Continent, while also seeking to connect with non-naturalistic visual languages, as can be found in the tenets of British Romanticism. Thus, this thesis will explore the common thread that binds Hodgkins’s and Morris’s distinctive art together. Indeed, what sets Hodgkins’s and Morris’s art apart from many of their contemporaries, when considered within the overall context of British Modernism, is their early determination to ‘— Get the character & essential spirit of the place in the simplest manner—’.³⁸ In the beginning of their experimentations, Hodgkins and Morris both focused this technique on their portraits. Later, throughout the late twenties and into the thirties and the forties, they directed this approach more to their still lifes, landscapes and a completely original type of genre— still life-landscapes. A thorough analysis of these works will be presented in Chapter II.

³⁶ Reed, *Bloomsbury Rooms: Modernism, Subculture, and Domesticity*, p.35.

³⁷ Stephen Calloway, *Twentieth-century Decoration: The Domestic Interior from 1900 to the Present Day* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988), p.41.

³⁸ Frances Hodgkins to Hannah Ritchie, August 1917, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, pp.325-326.

The Construction of British Inter-war Modernism: Interpretations and Exclusions

In *English Art and Modernism*, Charles Harrison dubbed the twenties as a 'rootless' and 'an unpromising decade', proposing that Modernism during this time was 'historically uncontroversial'.³⁹ Roger Fry's and Clive Bell's interest in pictorial design was widely accepted as the legitimate expression of English Modernism, enabling artists who worked within the confines of Bloomsbury aesthetics to dominate most discussions on this movement during the decade and even until the present. However, I would argue that Hodgkins's and Morris's attention to the technical and formal aspects of design in Modernism was just one of a variety of responses to their experiences of modernity in England after the First World War. As David Peters Corbett rightly urged in *The Modernity of English Art*, "The art between the end of the Great War and the reappearance of Modernism as a significant force towards the end of the 1920s remains a neglected subject".⁴⁰ Artists outside the peripheries of the Bloomsbury Group, such as Hodgkins and Morris as well as artists they exhibited with in The Seven and Five Society, avoided popular artistic trends by painting in highly individualized methods in order to capture the life force within all animate and inanimate entities. Hodgkins described her artistic process: 'every stroke I put down comes from real conviction & is a sincere aspect of truth— if not the whole truth'.⁴¹ Similarly, throughout the twenties, Morris's art was described as having 'the imprint of the personal, though it flows with the current of the times'.⁴² Therefore, one of the main aims of this thesis is crystallizing Hodgkins's and Morris's joint search for a sincere truth. A truth they were able to realize through the exploration and development of not only a transnational convergence but also through the process of re-contextualizing time.

³⁹ Charles Harrison, *English Art and Modernism 1900-1939* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1981), p.167.

⁴⁰ David Peters Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art, 1914-30* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), p.2.

⁴¹ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 30 December 1918, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.338.

⁴² Ana Berry, "La pintura inglesa contemporánea: Cedric Morris y su obra", *La Nacion* (17 August 1924): p.5.

In this thesis, I have characterized their individual quest for truth, manifested in a pioneering ornamental pictorial language, as Romantic Modernism.

It has been established that during the twentieth century many British artists, particularly the Neo-Romantics, were forming visual identities, which responded to the brutality of the Second World War by aligning their work to Romanticism from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁴³ For instance, Piper's war works from the forties have been examined in this context:

Piper had a strong sense of the historical, but the threat and eventual onset of war gave to his portrayal of Britain's architectural heritage a new drama and intensity. Not surprisingly, the success of these moody and romantic paintings lay in their appeal to patriotic sentiment; also, in Piper's ability to recapture past monuments for present-day imagination. He specialized in ruins. In keeping with his nostalgic romanticism, Piper employed a bravura technique.⁴⁴

John Rothenstein connects Piper's 'moody and romantic paintings' and 'his nostalgic romanticism' with a sense of 'patriotic sentiment' related to the Second World War. Similar sentiments are traceable in John Craxton's interpretations of the war, which were also manifested in the typical Neo-Romantic manner; this time with shepherds or poets within bucolic landscapes that appear to be enigmatically eternal.⁴⁵

Sutherland has been routinely labeled as a main Neo-Romantic contender with his landscapes 'fuelled by nostalgia and inclined towards the melodramatic'.⁴⁶ Through a close examination of Romantic Modernism, this thesis aims to demonstrate that stylistic characteristics associated with eighteenth-and-nineteenth century British Romanticism became a fundamental part of British Modernist artistic practices decades earlier and extended beyond just a sense of patriotism.

Kenneth Clark, a leading British critic on contemporary art during the thirties and forties, largely opposed extremist avant-gardism, which crept its way into English Modernism. In Clark's "The Future of Painting", he wrote: 'post-War

⁴³ On the links between nationalism, identity and Neo-Romanticism, see, for instance: Virginia Button, *The Aesthetic of Decline: English Neo-Romanticism c. 1935-1956*, PhD thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, London, 1992.

⁴⁴ John Rothenstein, *British Art Since 1900: An Anthology* (London: Phaidon Press, 1962), p.129.

⁴⁵ See an extended discussion on Craxton in *Ibid.*, p.131.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.133.

movements in the arts, with their belief in violence and superstition, have been essentially German. We paid, as usual, the price for having conquered Germany materially by being in turn conquered by German culture'.⁴⁷ Instead, Clark was far more in favor of Neo-Romanticism. Thus, he helped the term take on more meaning. In Clark's "The New Romanticism in British Painting", he listed Graham Sutherland, John Piper and Henry Moore as the leading figures of the Neo-Romantic movement with Hodgkins, Ithell Colquhoun, John Tunnard, Edward Burra and Francis Bacon under its influence.⁴⁸ Martin Hammer has demonstrated Clark's key role in supporting this increasingly present Modernist pictorial language in Britain during the thirties and forties:

It might be argued, then, that the growing impulse towards "Romantic Modernism", as the 1930s went on, represented, for Clark... not just a defensive response to an imported modernism but also a positive reassertion of British cultural identity, progressive in political and cultural terms, at a time when much less benign versions of nationalism were being imposed and threatened elsewhere.⁴⁹

There have been a few publications which have examined conscious parallels and stylistic connections between twentieth-century "Romantics" and "Neo-Romantics" to Romanticism from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in relation to the Second World War.⁵⁰ What about British Modernists working in the Romantic vein during and after the First World War, however? Stuart Sillars's *British Romantic Art and the Second World War* limits Neo-Romantic and Romantic Modernist art specifically to the forties. Sillars wrote: 'Romantic art of the forties is firmly and deeply a response to the brutality and suffering it finds all around it. During the thirties, English art was a splendidly various as it had ever been'.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Kenneth Clark, "The Future of Painting", *Listener* XIV, no. 351 (2 October 1935).

⁴⁸ Kenneth Clark, "The New Romanticism of British Painting", *Art News* 45, no. 12 (February 1947): pp.56-58.

⁴⁹ Paragraph 15. It is interesting to note Hammer's inclusion of the term "Romantic Modernism" in footnote #1: 'The term "Romantic Modernism" is taken from art historian Alexandra Harris's book *Romantic Moderns: English Writers, Artists and the Imagination from Virginia Woolf to John Piper* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010).'

⁵⁰ See, for instance, David Mellor (ed.), *A Paradise Lost: The Neo-Romantic Imagination in Britain, 1935-55* (London: Barbican Art Gallery, 1987).

⁵¹ Stuart Sillars, *British Romantic Art and the Second World War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), p.3.

Sillars continued to distinguish Modernist art made in the thirties from that of the forties:

English art of the thirties has been fully... discussed elsewhere... and it is not my intention to cover the ground again here. The point I wish to make is that the period was one of very great diversity, and that seeing in it an abrupt switch from Abstraction to Romanticism is to simplify it in at least two ways. First, there is no gathering together under the banner of Romanticism, since the art of the forties is in its own way markedly disparate in styles and stances; secondly, Abstraction does not die at the birth of Romanticism, but rather the two are different facets of the same philosophy, the newer Romanticism growing in part from the purity of vision that Abstraction has achieved and giving to it, in return a sense of direction which perhaps before it lacked.⁵²

This thesis takes issue with Sillars's analysis, since he falls back on generalizations of an undoubtedly complex period of modern art. The fact that 'the art of the forties' was 'markedly disparate in styles and stances' does little to contribute further clarity on what distinguishes art made during this period from that of the thirties, which he previously stated was also 'splendidly various as it had very been'. This generation of British Modernists as well as the various movements they worked in did not exist in a bubble. Whether artists expressed an interest in abstract decoration, building on nineteenth-century Nabi artists, or eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landscapes by John Constable, for instance, signifying cultural and political identities, this thesis proposes that British twentieth-century art crossed nationalities and centuries in time, so that the great power and significance behind Hodgkins's and Morris's work rested in the idea that their aesthetics were at once universal and timeless.

Should Romanticism in the twentieth century be understood as an international movement, a historical period or both? On the whole, critical scholarship concerning the relationship between twentieth-century British Modernism and eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Romantic painting is limited and, therefore, requires immediate attention. Harrison described *Axis*, a magazine founded by Myfanwy Evans, as an influencer to the Neo-Romantic movement by

⁵² Ibid., p.4.

acting as a 'sensitive barometer, marking the swift change of interests among the community of modern artists and their supporters'.⁵³ However, this publication rarely featured the specific words "Romantic" and "Romanticism" making it difficult for contemporary historians to reassess various terms without using broad and, at times, correspondingly vague language. In fact, reexaminations on the distinguishing factors between "Romantic", "Romanticism" and later "Neo-Romanticism" continue to be elusive. Therefore, part of the motivation for examining specific formal aspects of Hodgkins's and Morris's art together for the first time is to offer necessary critical insight into the differences between Romanticism and Neo-Romanticism through their development of what I argue amounts to an intermediary between the two movements, Romantic Modernism.

The representation of modernity in a specifically British art-historical canon has played a significant role in the development of the object of this thesis. Lisa Tickner presented a useful study of Modernism in Britain in the twentieth century by focusing on the larger social and cultural contexts in the lives of Walter Sickert, Augustus John, Wyndham Lewis, Vanessa Bell and David Bomberg in *Modern Life and Modern Subjects: British Art in the Early Twentieth Century* (2000). One of the tasks of this thesis will be to continue Tickner's narrative on the nature of Modernism in Britain, which she suggested to be speculative.⁵⁴ There has been considerable deliberation on whether modern British art can be considered both "modern" and "British" at the same time. For instance, in "Foreigners and Fascists: Patterns of Hostility to Modern Art in Britain before and after the First World War", Brandon Taylor argued:

The immediate post-war turns out to have been a moment of some intensity with the first flush of British avant-gardist and modern art already past, with British art... groping to reformulate its sense of identity in the wake of a collapse of confidence in modernist methods, and with the economic crises of the 1920s only a step away.⁵⁵

⁵³ Harrison, *English Art and Modernism 1900-1939*, p.319.

⁵⁴ Lisa Tickner, *Modern Life and Modern Subjects: British Art in the Early Twentieth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p.74.

⁵⁵ Brandon Taylor, "Foreigners and Fascists: Patterns of Hostility to Modern Art in Britain before and after the First World War" in Corbett et al. (eds.), *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past, 1880-1940* (New Haven, CT. & London: Yale University Press, 2002), p.169.

Literature has claimed that during the early decades of the twentieth century what was seen as “radical” in Britain was French Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, despite these movements no longer being avant-garde developments on the Continent at the same time. Most commonly cited as evidence of Britain’s tardy acceptance of Modernism is Roger Fry’s *First Post-Impressionist Exhibition*, also known as *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*, in 1910 and the *Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition* in 1913. The significance of these critical events, and the largely hostile reception of mainly French avant-garde art by the London audience have been well documented.⁵⁶ The public, including the critics, accused the exhibited artists as barbaric: “To revert in the name of “novelty” to the aims of the savage and the child— out of lassitude of the present— is to act as the anarchist, who would destroy where he cannot change’.⁵⁷ At the same time, however, Hodgkins, who was a strong advocate of the French avant-garde, encouraged one of her students to ‘take off one afternoon a week, go across to the other side (of the Seine), and visit one of the many one-man shows...’⁵⁸ Her student continued to recall, ‘she said some of Picasso’s work was always to be seen there, and mentioned the names of Cézanne, Gauguin and other Post-Impressionists’ and reminded her to ‘keep an open mind, try to understand what they are getting at’.⁵⁹ Morris, too, was a dominant proponent of Post-Impressionism, while he was studying in Paris.

For Hodgkins and Morris, the pursuit of modernity required the recovery of a universal spirituality in art. The parameters of British Modernism during the twenties and early thirties, however, were not particularly inclusive of a Continental influence bleeding into the spiritual and the metaphysical realms inspired by the painters of eighteenth-and-nineteenth century British Romanticism. Indeed, what sets Hodgkins and Morris apart from the later Neo-Romantic painters of the forties

⁵⁶ See, for instance, Roger Fry, *A Roger Fry Reader*, edited by Christopher Reed (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996); Peter Stansky, *On or About December 1910: Early Bloomsbury and Its Intimate World* (Cambridge, Mass. And London: Harvard University Press, 1996); Rachel Teukolsky, *The Literate Eye: Victorian Art Writing and Modernist Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁵⁷ Charles Ricketts, “Post-Impressionism”, *Morning Post* (9 November 1910).

⁵⁸ Miss Cora Wilding provided this recollection as quoted in E.H. McCormick, *The Expatriate: A Study of Frances Hodgkins* (Wellington: New Zealand University Press, 1954), p.141.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.141.

is that they never turned away from European Modernism in order to search for a purely insular nostalgia of the English countryside. The genealogy of asserting the difference between the 'English domestic tradition' from 'continental modernism' can be found in Herbert Read's *Art and Industry* (1934). During the two decades after the First World War, Read emphasized the 'native' and specifically 'English vernacular' traditions shaping a nationalistic discourse. Particularly in reference to modern crafts and domestic ceramic objects, the association with total "Englishness" was meant to reassure the supremacy of English design. This nativist outlook continued with Harrison's *English Art and Modernism* in which he wrote, "To look for specifically English forms of modern art, then is to examine the development of modernism within a provincial world."⁶⁰ In *The Modernity of English Art*, Corbett links English art with an exclusively English landscape tradition by means of Romantic Modernism:

There is a broad category of English art after the war which shows a renewed interest in rural and non-urban sites, especially those where an "authentic" or aboriginal Englishness might be thought to reside— the areas to which the cities exported their leisure, and the coastal ports and spaces where national identity had been formed out of imperial command of the seas... the "romantic modernism" of critical discourse.⁶¹

While this thesis is indebted to Corbett for addressing the concept of "romantic modernism", my argument reexamines Corbett's connection of "romantic modernism" with the sense of patriotism embedded within the English landscape by revealing how Hodgkins and Morris acted as purveyors of a European Modernist vision blended with inspiration from previous painters of British Romanticism. Unlike experimental literature, British painters, who fit within cosmopolitan Modernism, continue to be neglected as moderns. Harrison claimed 'a new period of internationalism' in Britain came about between the years 1931 until 1934, but this thesis will prove through Hodgkins's and Morris's Romantic Modernist works that elements of internationalism could be detected at least a decade prior to these

⁶⁰ Harrison, *English Art and Modernism 1900-1939*, p. 8.

⁶¹ Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art, 1914-30*, p.156.

dates.⁶² Attention has been devoted to Nash's 'advocacy of divergent positions... internationalism and the affirmation of national identity' in the thirties.⁶³ However, scholars have not yet explored the topic of internationalism when considering The Seven and Five Society Artists, including Winifred Nicholson, Christopher Wood, Hodgkins and Morris, whose use of the decorative, was derived from time spent on the Continent, that they then brought back to Britain in order to blend its doctrines into British still lifes and landscapes. It is interesting to note that Hodgkins and Morris never associated with the Omega Workshops, despite having designed textiles later in their careers, which will be explored in Chapter I. Hodgkins's and Morris's interest in decorative detailing challenged definitions of designs and aesthetics of an inherently English taste championed by Fry, who wrote of his distaste for an 'eczematous eruption of pattern'.⁶⁴ Indeed, the textures of Hodgkins's and Morris's art crossed over to shared strategies, illuminating the textures of their friendship.

Why have so few historians or scholars critically analyzed Hodgkins's and Morris's art not only on their own but also in recent British art surveys? Why have scholars not yet explored Hodgkins's and Morris's work together? Women artists and queer artists still do not have a substantial presence in the extensive literature on Modernist art. These two groups often deemed as the "other" lack the Masculinist signs, which canonized the history of modern art. The limited publications on Hodgkins and Morris are individual life studies; however Ian Buchanan et al. *Frances Hodgkins: Paintings and Drawings* (1995) served as a useful entry point to critically understand Hodgkins's art. By offering a reassessment of Hodgkins's work, this text is invaluable, since it remains to be one of the few that positions Hodgkins's art at the forefront of British Modernism. Linda Gill's edited *Letters of Frances Hodgkins* (1993), largely sourced from the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, and Peter Field, Hodgkins's nephew and trustee of her estate, remains to be the only primary mapping of nearly six decades of a selection of

⁶² Harrison, *English Art and Modernism 1900-1939*, p. 233.

⁶³ Paul Nash, *Paul Nash: Writings on Art*, Andrew Causey (ed.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.3.

⁶⁴ Roger Fry, 'Art and Socialism', in *Vision and Design* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1925), p. 45.

Hodgkins's relations, daily events, struggles, etc. These letters function as an incredibly useful resource, providing insight into 'the human being in front of the artist'.⁶⁵ Hodgkins's letters mainly focus on the practicalities of pursuing an artistic career rather than provide direct evidence into the nature of her artistic process. Nevertheless, the artist's correspondence with her family, friends, agents and fellow Modernists function as a form of unintended self-representation. Hodgkins's letters not only paint a broader picture of the turbulent politics during the times in which she worked, especially before and after the World Wars, but also reveal frequent alienation from the English art scene, despite having lived and worked in Britain for over thirty years. Nathaniel Hepburn's *Cedric Morris & Christopher Wood: A Forgotten Friendship* (2012) and Liz Reintjes's, *Influence and Originality: Ivon Hitchens, Frances Hodgkins, Winifred Nicholson: Landscapes, c.1920-50* (1996) were useful models for their incorporation of case studies to investigate Morris and Hodgkins together in relation to their Modernist contemporaries. For instance, in *Cedric Morris & Christopher Wood*, a study on their little-known friendship uncovers affinities between the two artists' works such as their joint focus on the surface and texture of their brushwork. In *Influence and Originality*, Reintjes supported her argument that Hodgkins was 'a major figure of the period'⁶⁶ by placing Hodgkins within a broader context and identifying the ways in which younger artists were influenced by her practice.

Through extensive and significant unpublished archival resources, this thesis will reveal the implications of examining Hodgkins's and Morris's art together for the first time in literature. Tate Gallery Archive, particularly ref. TGA 8317, contains an abundance of materials exhibiting Hodgkins's and Morris's artistic and personal associations: Morris's notes for his opening address for Hodgkins's posthumous exhibition, Morris's and Lett's transcripts for a 1969 BBC documentary on Hodgkins, postcards between the two artists, an untitled and undated drawing by Hodgkins of

⁶⁵ I have taken poetic license from Hodgkins's own expression: 'She has kept the artist well in front of the human being' found in a letter from 4 April 1943, regarding the artist's response to Myfanwy Evans, *Frances Hodgkins* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Modern Painters, 1948). Frances Hodgkins to Katharine West, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.535.

⁶⁶ Liz Reintjes (ed.), *Influence and Originality: Ivon Hitchens, Frances Hodgkins, Winifred Nicholson: Landscapes, c. 1920-50* (London: Lund Humphries Publishers Ltd., 1996), p.9.

Morris, volumes of relevant press clippings, numerous exhibition catalogues and various paraphernalia. Also, Mary Kisler, Chief Curator of Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, generously shared a trove of unpublished letters found in Hodgkins’s sister, Isabel Field’s, estate. Finally, *The Complete Frances Hodgkins*, an online catalogue raisonné project developed by The Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, was published in July 2019 and consists of a database of more than 1200 works of art by Hodgkins as well as nearly 3000 digitized letters and 300 documents and photographs relating to Hodgkins’s life. This phenomenal resource will, undoubtedly, provide the means for future scholars to continue to position the artist as a leading member of British Modernism.

Joint Romantic Modernist Leitmotifs

This thesis offers a two-pronged approach: by excavating a critical biographical account of Hodgkins’s and Morris’s lost creative exchanges, I will demonstrate how their friendship enabled both artists to engage with avant-garde techniques, leading to the creation of a Romantic Modernist pictorial language, and will seek to revise the previous canon under which their work has been assessed. Hodgkins and Morris will not just be inserted into pre-existing histories of British art, but through an analysis of their friendship, these two artists will be revealed as central players to British exhibiting groups such as The Seven and Five Society. The significance of examining and exposing ideological obstacles, which faced Hodgkins as an aging, woman artist and Morris as a homosexual, is also necessary to challenge traditional modes of writing art history. Thus, thesis will add to the important feminist and queer theory work by deconstructing discourses on the canonical esteemed male artists and their masterpieces.

In Chapter One, “A Singular Friendship in British Modernism”, I will reveal what is so special about the friendship between Hodgkins and Morris. I will prove that this relationship was one of equal exchange and mutual interest without any ulterior motive, which was far different from the dynamics of a romantic relationship, for instance, such as that between Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson or that of a brotherhood such as the Pre-Raphaelites. In current

literature, there have been examinations of Modernist group collectives and friendships. For example, Fabio A. Durão and Dominic Williams (eds.) *Modernist Group Dynamics; The Politics and Poetics of Friendship* (2008) and Sarah Cole's, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War* (2003) both explore intimacy between multiple males in the twentieth century. Michael White's *Generation Dada: The Berlin Avant-Garde and the First World War* addresses how dynamics amongst artists within Club Dada served as an essential component of their artistic practice. The first chapter of this thesis, however, will focus on the development of a friendship between two artists only, and the trajectory of their careers in parallel throughout the early years of their friendship and into the twenties for the first time.

There are numerous cause and effect results to consider when critically investigating Hodgkins's and Morris's works side by side. I will argue that one main component, which will help to illustrate the links between Hodgkins's and Morris's art, was their joint interest in the interconnection between decoration and European Modernism, as well as their early experimentations with abstraction. Both Hodgkins and Morris spent the majority of the twenties based in Paris and traveled throughout the Continent. This thesis will explore how their time away from Britain would later shape the formal aspects of their Romantic Modernist art made in Britain. On the other hand, Hodgkins's and Morris's English counterparts, who later exhibited with them in The Seven and Five Society, for instance, Winifred Nicholson and Christopher Wood also traveled abroad and were influenced by modern art produced in Paris, but when they returned to England, their English identity facilitated an increase in recognition of their shared artistic aims and ambitions to those of Hodgkins and Morris.

Despite shifting social contexts during and after the First World War, a growing number of women artists participated in exhibitions and trained in international educational institutions. Nevertheless, accepted forms of Modernism largely assumed masculine idioms in the veins of realism or complete abstraction as can be seen with Vorticism, one of England's major contending Modernist movements of the time. However, I will argue that Hodgkins and Morris supported

a bohemian dedication to gender and the advancement of alternative expressions of modernity by opposing the new heroic identification with Modernism. Instead, these two artists began to construct bodies of work with an abundance of typically feminine tropes. Parallels can be drawn between the British artist, Hannah Gluckstein, a lesbian known as Gluck, and the society florist, Constance Spry, who created arrangements of flowers that were then painted in a neoclassical manner by Gluck in the thirties. British painter, Christiana Herringham, also explored floral themes on a personal level similar to Hodgkins and Morris. These essential players were, nevertheless, undermined and shunned due to their “otherness”, just like Hodgkins and Morris had been. By exploring Hodgkins’s and Morris’s oppositional artistic responses to what has been accepted as definitive expressions of modernity, this thesis will reveal that the standard Modernist narrative still requires revising. I will investigate how the discourse has been and continues to be too “Masculinist”.

In Chapter Two, “Material and Spiritual Manifestations of Romantic Modernism”, I will reveal how a combination of factors all provided an aesthetic foundation from which Hodgkins’s and Morris’s pictorial language evolved into what I characterize as Romantic Modernism. Some examples include the influence of the British Romantics and the French avant-garde along with a strong sense of spirit manifested through twentieth-century Modernist design and decoration. Through the methodology of examining Hodgkins’s and Morris’s works together for the first time, I will argue that this term is, indeed, a distinctive British Modernist movement, despite never having been explored within this context. I will deliver a framework for considering this critically overlooked concept of Romantic Modernism through Hodgkins’s and Morris’s still lifes, landscapes and their characteristic combination of the two, still life-landscapes. Through Hodgkins’s and Morris’s art, I will demonstrate how Romantic Modernism helped to shape the foundations for a significant amount of art made in Britain during the interwar period and, therefore, will prove the movement’s implications in the larger British Modernist context.

Before I identify the ways in which the conception of Romantic Modernism helped to structure the argument of this thesis, it is important that I define the term

itself. The discursive term, Romantic Modernism, has previously been explored in two scholarly texts, from which my argument takes its cue. Alexandra Harris, who at the time was Professor of English at the University of Liverpool, has examined the concept in relation to how writers and artists in the thirties reconnected with the Romantic movement in *Romantic Moderns: English Writers, Artists and the Imagination from Virginia Woolf to John Piper*. Mainly operating with a social, historical and literary lens, Harris's use of the term, nonetheless, served as an inspiration for my designation of Romantic Modernism as a specific stylistic classification in British twentieth-century art history. While Harris's text focuses on the thirties, I will argue that Romantic Modernism, as a purely art historical movement, had its roots during the First World War and continued throughout the twenties and into the late thirties. Regarding the term itself, Harris wrote, "The "Romantic" of my title is meant loosely and inclusively, as Piper uses it in *British Romantic Artists*".⁶⁷ Piper's publication from 1942 traces eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British Romantic painting until the forties. A close friend of Hodgkins and a co-exhibitor in The Seven and Five Society, Piper, in fact, advanced the artist's placement in the circle of prominent male Neo-Romantic painters with his writing. In his book, Piper claimed that Hodgkins was a 'subjective painter whose harmonies of colour have their origins in Wiltshire farmyards, Welsh hills and Dorset coves'.⁶⁸ Harris's interpretation of modern 'Romantic' writers and artists as a 'loosely and inclusively' cultural phenomenon proves that the term itself is difficult to define with absolute precision. However, through the critical investigation of the development of Hodgkins's and Morris's pictorial language, I will transform this rather broad and open-ended term to a more exacting, coherent art historical label that could be applied to other British Modernists, who worked in a similar style, shared cultural concerns and common aims; examples include artists who exhibited alongside Hodgkins and Morris such as Winifred Nicholson, Christopher Wood, John Piper and David Jones, as well as those who worked in an

⁶⁷ Harris, *Romantic Moderns: English Writers, Artists and the Imagination from Virginia Woolf to John Piper*, p.14.

⁶⁸ John Piper, *British Romantic Artists* (London: William Collins of London, 1942), p.47.

explicitly mystical vein of British Modernism including Rex Whistler and Stanley Spencer.

In the previously mentioned book by Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art*, this term can also be found in the section entitled 'Romantic modernism' in the fifth chapter, "Nostalgia and mourning".⁶⁹ Corbett is the first art historian to assess the concept of Romantic Modernism in relation to a British twentieth-century pictorial language through the case study of Edward Wadsworth's 'Black Country' series. Corbett wrote that these watercolor drawings are 'notable for its ability to bring together a number of otherwise incompatible discourses about landscape, modernity, and representation'.⁷⁰ Wadsworth has been designated as 'a major figure in the reconstitution of Modernist painting during the years after 1918' with his watercolor drawings of the industrial landscape found in the West Midlands, such as *Ladle Slag* (Fig. 7).⁷¹ According to Corbett:

The issues the drawings seem to raise have to do with the attitude one should take to industrialisation, with its radical consequences for the shape and character of the English landscape, and with the artistic idiom in which those questions can be addressed and represented. Wadsworth concentrates on the discards of industrial processes rather than on production itself. The drawings are of the waste products of steelmaking in slag-heaps and tips, the piled detritus of industrial creation, massed into landscapes of impurities... It draws attention to the importance of modernity in national life, and does so in a way which has some positive resonances within the culture.⁷²

In other words, Corbett linked Romantic Modernism with Wadsworth's reaction to the significant effects of mass production on the English landscape represented by 'piled detritus of industrial creation'. Rather than a commentary on the detrimental consequences that industrialization had on the pastoral countryside, Corbett interprets Wadsworth's pictorial response as having 'positive resonances within the culture'.⁷³ Corbett continued, 'Wadsworth's drawings, delineating the industrial landscape in a recognisably realist idiom, are a prime justification of this process of

⁶⁹ Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art, 1914-30*, pp.164-179.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.164.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p.165.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.165.

recovery and enrichment'.⁷⁴ For Corbett, Romanticism can be seen in a modern light if it highlights the direct processes of modernization— the shifts from the old to the new, particularly in terms of industrialization. Indeed, Corbett's focus on modernity's debris is the leitmotiv of Romanticism, which can be found in both Hodgkins's and Morris's later Romantic Modernist pictorial language. Corbett's revisionist work is ambitious, although I believe it is significant to note that he did not address the explicit term itself throughout the section entitled 'Romantic modernism'.⁷⁵ The majority of art historians have treated British modern art encountering Romanticism during the interwar period with caution. In *Romantic Roots in Modern Art*, August Wiedmann outlines how 'the Romantic Movement laid the aesthetic and intellectual foundation from which sooner or later modern art was bound to evolve'.⁷⁶ Wiedmann uses the example of Kandinsky's writing:

The artist must strive for union and communion with the whole of creation. He must cultivate "inner vision", a form of pure perception, which enabled him to perceive "dead matter" as something essentially alive with the "inner voices" of things not sounding in isolation, but in one concord— the music of the spheres.⁷⁷

Wiedmann elucidated Kandinsky's idea further: "This "music" Kandinsky believed formed "the germ" of the artist's work the "unconscious" generative principle operative in all genuine production'.⁷⁸ Spirituality and the 'sphere of invention and visionary conception' is not mentioned in Corbett's analysis rather his 'realist idiom' is the point that is emphasized.⁷⁹ Overall, Corbett argued that the materiality of these drawings, that is modernity's explicit industrial detritus, is what makes Wadsworth's art romantically modern.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp.166-167..

⁷⁵ Corbett refers to 'the romantic picturesque', 'a romanticism of the detritus of the modern', 'romantic idiom' and 'the registration of modernity returns to a more sentimental and romantic level' Ibid., pp.167, 168, 169, 171-172.

⁷⁶ August Wiedmann, *Romantic Roots in Modern Art* (Surrey: Gresham Books, 1979), p. xiii.

⁷⁷ This is translated and interpreted from Wassily Kandinsky, "Zwei Richtungen", in Max Bill (ed.), *Kandinsky: Essays über Kunst und Künstler* (Teufen, 1935), p.193 in Ibid., p.25.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.25.

⁷⁹ William Blake, "A Descriptive Catalogue" in David Erdman (ed.), *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* (New York: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1988), p.607.

The gaps within a complex period of British interwar art can be filled by transforming Romantic Modernism into a more decisive art historical label. In 1941, Piper wrote that Hodgkins's war art such as her painting *Houses and Outhouses, Purbeck* (Fig. 8) was similarly symbolic of its time, leading up to the Second World War. Piper wrote that Hodgkins's war paintings were:

... not of tank traps or of gun emplacements but... in the much quarried man-disturbed ground of Purbeck Island subjects that are symbolic enough: railed in areas, concentration camps of rusty milk cans, farm implements in disuse or dereliction. In fact they are of the times and timeless... They are powerful and extraordinary and are about humanity and its fate.⁸⁰

In *Houses and Outhouses, Purbeck*, Hodgkins scatters an arrangement of abstracted discarded objects and debris, which fill the shallow space of a farmyard scene. The artist expresses her subject with a bright, luminous and natural palette of cool colors. Hodgkins's deliberate choice lacks the melancholic tone often found in Neo-Romantic art of this time but instead proposes an optimistic approach of rebirth and renewal. On the other hand, in the drawing, *Ladle Slag* Wadsworth's heavy use of black transmits a contrary tone of foreboding.

Can eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Romanticism be viewed as more than just a movement that came before Modernism? Is it possible to evoke a relationship between elements from the two art historical movements in a blurring of stylistic boundaries? This thesis argues that Romantic Modernism is, in fact, a solution to fill the vast divide between these two movements. Through the use of C.R.W Nevinson's art, Corbett addressed an alternative to his argument regarding 'a romanticism of the detritus of the modern'.⁸¹ For Corbett, the fall of modernity in the twentieth century relates back to typical icons of Romanticism: shipwrecks or crumbling ruins of classical temples, for instance. Corbett wrote that Nevinson's work instead 'is already conceived outside those issues, and is immediately available for interpretations in which modernity is sunk without trace'.⁸² Corbett argued that unlike his modern cityscapes, Nevinson's turn towards nature produced

⁸⁰ John Piper, "Frances Hodgkins", *Horizon* 4, 24 (December 1941): p.413.

⁸¹ Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art, 1914-30*, p.168.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.175.

images 'of the most inward and private satisfaction'.⁸³ Corbett illustrated this by providing a specific example, Nevinson's *English Landscape in Winter* (Fig. 9). Corbett wrote that this painting is able to 'replay the landscape as counter-modern in the idiom of rhapsodic and innocent celebration, a self-consciously non-modern approach and subject-matter which finds further expression in the flower studies Nevinson began to exhibit...'⁸⁴ Corbett's consideration of artists' turning to the spiritual in nature, transcendentalism or concepts of immateriality constitutes as an evasion of modernity, but I would suggest that Romantic Modernism encompasses more than just explicitly "modern" subjects.

There has been extensive historical and contemporary discourse on the critical relationship between Modernism and modernity in British art. The central argument in *Modernism and Modernity: The Vancouver Conference Papers* claims that Modernism 'operates as an art of combat, employed by an avant-garde which [is] often tied, albeit ambiguously, to the idea of revolution'.⁸⁵ Corbett, too, is a firm believer of a similar theory that Modernism can be defined as 'an art of innovation with an explicit interest in the formal character of its practice and with a self-consciously radical public stance'.⁸⁶ He continues the 'man as machine' discourse of modernity promoted by the London critic Frank Rutter, who wrote that Modernism 'cannot fruitfully be applied to any subject in which man is not regarded as part of the machine'.⁸⁷ This thesis questions this model of modernity, which rejects the diversity of modern movements at this time. Corbett's argument is comparable to the formalist theory of 'significant form' stressed by Roger Fry and Clive Bell as the dominate aesthetic in interwar England, despite the rise of other movements such as Social Realism, Surrealism and Constructivism. However, both Hodgkins's and

⁸³ Ibid., p.175.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.175.

⁸⁵ B.H.D. Buchloh et al., *Modernism and Modernity: The Vancouver Conference Papers* (Halifax, N.S.: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1983), p. xii.

⁸⁶ Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art, 1914-30*, p.3. For the term "avant-garde" linked to the theory that asserts the artist as a hero in the militaristic sense, also see, Peter Bürger, *The Theory of the avant-garde*, translated by Michael Shaw (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974). Linda Nochlin, "The Invention of the Avant-Garde: France, 1830-1880", in *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968): pp.1-18.

⁸⁷ Frank Rutter, "Extremes of Modern Painting, 1870-1920", *Edinburgh Review* (April 1921): p.314 as quoted in Ibid., p.177.

Morris's Romantic Modernist subject matter overtly renounces explicit signs of what is most commonly accepted as avant-garde twentieth-century modernity— an obsession over materiality, urbanity, radicalism, mechanizations and politics, for instance.

In *English Art, 1860-1914: Modern artists and identity*, Liz Prettejohn and Tim Barringer 'question Modernist accounts of modern art at a fundamental level' in order to reclaim and revise the legacy of painters, respectively Frederic Leighton and Byam Shaw, who have been historically labeled as "academic" or "conservative" rather than modern.⁸⁸ In her chapter, Prettejohn convincingly makes her case by pointing out the decorative and distinctively modern qualities to Leighton's work, which Greenberg overlooked or even misunderstood. Prettejohn wrote that Greenberg

did not recognise Leighton's important role in the same revolt against the sway of "literary" values, the revolt associated in the Victorian period with the labels "art for art's sake" and "aestheticism". In fact, it would not be difficult to situate Leighton's art somewhere in a historical trajectory from mid-Victorian narrative plenitude to modernist abstraction.⁸⁹

Barringer, too, questioned the possibility to renounce 'the existing master narrative of the development of modernism in Britain, and rewrite the history of British art' in relation to Shaw's work.⁹⁰ Critics and historians from as far back as Rutter to as recent as Harrison derided Shaw's paintings for their lack of interest in typically modern idioms, but Barringer challenges 'the modernist trope whereby a teleological rewriting of history evacuates a historical period of figures not conforming to a particular (and allegedly hegemonic) stylistic tendency'.⁹¹ This thesis has benefitted from positioning Hodgkins's and Morris's Romantic Modernist works in relation to these revisionist definitions and interpretations.

Other Modernists working in Britain, particularly Hodgkins and Morris, were united in finding meaning and purpose in more esoteric essences in order to restore

⁸⁸ David Peters Corbett and Lara Perry (eds.) *English art, 1860-1914: Modern Artists and Identity* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), p.6.

⁸⁹ Elizabeth Prettejohn, 'The modernism of Frederic Leighton', *Ibid.*, p.34.

⁹⁰ Tim Barringer, 'Not a "modern" as the word is now understood'? Byam Shaw, imperialism and the poetics of professional society', in *Ibid.*, p.66.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.65.

a sense of stability and spirituality in an increasingly mechanized modern world. Yet their manifestations of spirituality in their Modernist works continue to receive only marginal attention. For instance, Morris's *Flowers and Butterflies* (Fig. 10) reveals attention to design and form, as the pastel-colored bouquet harmoniously fills the canvas, but Morris also pushes further into the realm of the spiritual through his use of decoration itself. As Harrison has stated in *English Art and Modernism*:

“Decoration” for him [Fry] signified that aspect of plastic art which bore witness, by means of embodied form and achieved unity of design, to the uncompromised functioning of the “spirit”. If design or decoration thus understood was the expression of spirit, then better design must testify to a greater spiritual health.⁹²

Therefore, in this thesis I will develop, refine and refocus Romantic Modernism to be interpreted as more definable than Harris's ‘loosely and inclusively’ use of the term or Corbett's projection of it as simply a ‘nostalgic return to a pre-modern past’.⁹³

When considering Hodgkins's and Morris's conception of Romantic Modernism, this thesis will argue that it was their search for the spiritual in everyday life and in ordinary objects that would later influence Neo-Romantics such as Piper and Sutherland. Indeed, Hodgkins's and Morris's Romantic Modernist visualizations balanced a fusion of doctrines from eighteenth-and-nineteenth century Romanticism. Aspects of their particular blend between the historical and the modern include a desire for freedom of expression and conveying authenticity through the power of the imagination, as well as cosmopolitanism rooted in the French avant-garde. Another characteristic feature includes their reconstructions of landscapes and motifs from memory through combinations of abstraction with figuration. Avant-garde aggression, depicted either directly or indirectly, was exchanged for the underlying spirituality found in objects, places and spaces through their mastery of certain color combinations, which evoked mystical effects. The critic Eric Newton wrote:

⁹² Harrison, *English Art and Modernism 1900-1939*, p.71.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.179.

... to call her colour “delicious” is merely to praise it without giving an inkling as to its quality; but, for want of an adequate vocabulary, one must leave it at that. Titian’s colour glows, but it lacks acidity; Matthew Smith’s is luscious and exuberant, but it is simple like tropical sunshine. Frances Hodgkins needs a finer adjustment. Hers is a twilight colour. It is queer and surprising. Moreover it continues to be surprising. Looking at her best gouaches, the eye, long after the first impact, goes on receiving little subsidiary shocks of delight.⁹⁴

Morris’s art has been described as a translation of a ‘decorative mosaic of colour’, and that his ‘brush-work produces an almost tapestry-like effect’.⁹⁵ However, Hodgkins’s and Morris’s use of Romantic Modernism was viewed as expressive of essential femininity, due to their often delicate palettes and their frequent choice of still life subjects with flowers. Overall, Hodgkins’s and Morris’s main source of inspiration was the natural world, and through their absorption of Modernist sources they were able to forge a completely original style within Romantic Modernism.

In the final Chapter Three, “Expanding the English Canon through the Investigation of Hodgkins’s and Morris’s Outsider Identities”, I will analyze Hodgkins’s and Morris’s positioning in English Modernism as “others” or “outsiders”, when considered alongside their English contemporaries. I will begin by investigating nationality and “Englishness” in British modern art with Hodgkins, as an expatriate artist from New Zealand, and Morris, as Welsh, while their careers were being positioned in a particularly English-centric interwar art scene in London. I will look at Hodgkins’s and Morris’s foreign identities and rather provincial places of birth in relation to the development of “Englishness” and that which does and does not fit within this exclusive construction in London. Historical scholarship has previously examined the discourse of “Englishness” treated as a stylistic category in the art historical canon. The beginning of this national narrative has been most commonly cited in 1955 with Nikolaus Pevsner’s *The Englishness of English Art*. Pevsner’s definitions, however, are generalizations of the categorization of art made in Britain largely based on the English climate. Pevsner wrote:

⁹⁴ Eric Newton, “Frances Hodgkins”, *Listener* (2 October 1941): p.473.

⁹⁵ Mary Chamot, *Modern Painting in England* (London: Country Life, 1937), p.97.

... a decent home, a temperate climate, and a moderate notion. It has its disadvantages in art. There is no Bach, no Beethoven, no Brahms. There is no Michelangelo, no Titian, no Rembrandt [but] a nice crop of amateur painters from maiden aunts to Prime Ministers.⁹⁶

Although the term 'Englishness' was never used in the title of a book before Pevsner's, it was, in fact, John Barrell who 'points out the focus on climate in discussions of the peculiarities of English art pre-dated Pevsner by more than 150 years, and can be traced back to the work of John Ruskin'.⁹⁷ Perpetuating the continuity of this cultural phenomenon, 'the construction of Englishness as a focus for national identity'⁹⁸ was a dominant concern for Corbett et al. (eds.) *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past, 1880-1940*. Scholars have also defined 'Englishness' during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with a more negative tone, due to its construction of exclusions. For instance, Philip Dodd focuses on the notion of national identity and its transformation during an intensified period of modern industrialization with its associated social and political changes in *Englishness: Politics and Culture, 1880-1920*.

I will then move to consider the marginalization of Hodgkins's and Morris's work based on Hodgkins's gender and advanced age as well as Morris's homosexuality. This thesis builds on over a generation of feminist art historians, and their significant work has propelled an alternative understanding of the art historical canon by revealing overlooked and overshadowed women artists. *Women Artists and Modernism* (1998), edited by Katy Deepwell, served as one of the most useful reference points to this thesis. This twentieth-century-focused text put forth two questions, which helped to frame Hodgkins's work around her contemporaries: 'what are the qualities of women artists' work (qualities frequently juxtaposed to or read against a normative "male" model), and what is the relationship of women's

⁹⁶ Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Englishness of English Art* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1955), p.60.

⁹⁷ John Barrell, "Sir Joshua Reynolds and the Englishness of English Art", in Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990): pp.154-76. As quoted in Corbett and Perry, *English Art, 1860-1914: Modern Artists and Identity*, p.184. This significant point can also be found in Janet Wolff, *AngloModern: Painting and Modernity in Britain and the United States* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 141.

⁹⁸ David Peters Corbett et al. (eds.), *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past, 1880-1940* (New Haven, CT. & London: Yale University Press, 2002), p. ix.

work to contemporary concepts of femininity?’⁹⁹ During the height of Hodgkins’s career, the artist routinely exhibited with male Modernists, and critics during the thirties and forties often expressed praise for her work. Yet Hodgkins’s artistic practice pales in comparison to the giant legacies of Nash, Sutherland and Moore, for instance. Griselda Pollock’s *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and Histories of Art* (1988) also helped as a starting point to better understand the normalization of a specifically male Modernist tradition. Pollock’s investigation of the social and economic conditions between female and male artists results in a clearly defined historical asymmetry, which calls for continued corrections. My own research, however, addresses questions concerning the relationship of Hodgkins’s work, which did not renounce typical feminine tropes, to those of her mostly male contemporaries. Hodgkins’s art moved beyond the typical Modernist interest in abstraction to highlight a connection between decoration and European Modernism by incorporating a distinctive artistic perspective shaped by her life experiences as a woman. Hodgkins’s “feminine” mode of Modernism, that is her unification of an inner spontaneity and intuition with abstracted decorative arrangements, attests to the importance of women’s art at this time. This argument is, indeed, notable, since Hodgkins strove to earn an equal position amongst the most significant British modern artists by the end of her life.

The topics of ageism and old age have received very little critical attention in scholarly literature, particularly relating to art history; however, the oppressive implications of why age does, in fact, matter can be found in *Age Matters: Realigning Feminist Thinking*. While this text is more of a sociological study, its findings are closely aligned to Hodgkins’s life story. For instance, Kathleen E. Slevin’s chapter, “The Embodied Experiences of Old Lesbians”, explores how:

Old people internalize these notions of old age in early life and carry them as they age. Indeed, they may come to see old age as “a social contagion” that

⁹⁹ Katy Deepwell (ed.), *Women Artists and Modernism* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), p.1.

compels them to avoid other old people and to seek the company of those younger than themselves.¹⁰⁰

Hodgkins, who as previously mentioned was 20 years older than Morris, frequently spent time not only with artists younger than herself, whether for social or professional reasons, but also with many of her younger pupils. Former pupils, who became lifelong friends, such as Hannah Ritchie and Jane Saunders (**Fig. 11**) helped Hodgkins gain employment at the Calico Printers' Association in Manchester in 1925. A testament to their long friendship can be seen in a painting Hodgkins dedicated to both women, *Double Portrait* (**Fig. 12**). In this portrait Hodgkins flattens her two subjects and reduced their facial features to a few lines and shadows, evoking the mask-like Cubist faces associated with Picasso. The influence of Matisse can also be detected with Hodgkins's daring sense of decorative design, bold use of red and unusual juxtapositions of color— particularly noticeable with her attention to the fabrics of the sitters' dresses and the yellow and teal checkered settee.

Queer theory has also received relatively little attention, although there has recently been an influx of interest. Developments in gay scholarship, nevertheless, lack the kind of impact on art history that feminism has been able to achieve. An explanation for this obscurity surrounding queer theory is:

At the root of queer theory is a profound distrust of any kind of fixed identity, of any categorisation of people and the binary divisions that structured much feminist work— male and female, masculine and feminine, homosexual and heterosexual— are decisively rejected... Queer theory argues that these are not stable, but very unstable categories. To invoke one is always to reveal the other.¹⁰¹

Morris's homosexuality has been explored only on a cursory level. In *The Sexual Perspective: Homosexuality and Art in the Last 100 Years in the West*, Emmanuel Cooper explored Morris's sexuality referenced by works such as *The Dancing Sailor* (**Fig. 13**) from 1925. About this work, Cooper wrote, 'a bare-chested sailor dancing in

¹⁰⁰ Kathleen E. Slevin, "The Embodied Experiences of Old Lesbians", in Toni Calasanti and Kathleen F Slevin (eds.), *Age Matters: Realignment Feminist Thinking* (New York and London: Routledge, 2009), pp.8, 247-268.

¹⁰¹ Michael Hatt and Charlotte Klonk, *Art History: A critical introduction to its methods* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), p.165.

a field of cows in front of a bay crowded with sailing boats has a subtle homoerotic quality'.¹⁰² Another work from a year earlier, *The Celtic Twilight* (Fig. 93), could also be interpreted in this 'homoerotic' light; however, I will later propose a different reading of this work in Chapter III. It is interesting to note that Cooper refers to Frances Hodgkins as a 'homosexual'.¹⁰³ As an unmarried woman, who never had children, Hodgkins's sexuality remains to be ambiguous, and critical work could find connections and meaning in her art.¹⁰⁴ Morris's art continues to be neglected even in surveys of homosexual artists. One recent exhibition *Queer British Art* along with Clare Barlow's exhibition catalogue does not mention Morris, despite the fact that he influenced several artists featured in the exhibition such as Lucian Freud, who was one of Morris's pupils at his East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing.

Finally, this thesis will address Hodgkins's and Morris's lack of academic training in Britain compared to the majority of successful English artists, who mainly studied at institutions in London. I will argue that the intensity of Hodgkins's and Morris's authenticity to their directness lies in the fact that both artists continually experimented on their own rather than following strict aesthetic doctrines. Both artists shunned intellectual artists, who became increasingly preoccupied with abstraction, which Hodgkins, in fact, referred to as 'the modern problem'.¹⁰⁵ When Hodgkins was invited by Nash to join the group known as Unit One, she refused. Nash wrote her a letter expressing his disappointment:

We greatly appreciate your frankness and I think everyone would like to express regrets. At the time we understood that if you felt, as you express it "Out of joint" in relation to the group, it was no good making complications by begging you to reconsider your decision... may I send my personal regrets even so and my sincere hope we may soon meet again.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Emmanuel Cooper, *The Sexual Perspective: Homosexuality and Art in the Last 100 Years in the West* (Hoboken: Taylor and Frances, 2005), p.122.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.122.

¹⁰⁴ See, for instance, Alison J. Laurie, "Frances Mary Hodgkins: Journeys into the Hearts of Women" in Alison J. Laurie (ed.), *Lesbian Studies in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2001), pp.27-48.

¹⁰⁵ Frances Hodgkins to Duncan MacDonald, 24 June 1936, Auckland Art Gallery transcript ATL Ms85/11_6.

¹⁰⁶ Paul Nash to Frances Hodgkins, 19 October 1933, as quoted in *Frances Hodgkins 1869-1947: A Tribute* (London: Gillian Jason Gallery, 1987), unpaginated.

This thesis will prove that all of these alternative lines of enquiry— their transnational frame of reference, advanced age, gender, sexuality and truth to self over formal education— relate to Hodgkins’s and Morris’s work. By examining these factors in depth, this thesis will help to revise and expand past readings of a selective Modernist narrative. Indeed, these elements raise questions regarding Hodgkins’s and Morris’s “outsider” identities that I will argue ultimately restricted their artistic legacies in British Modernism.

Chapter I. *A Singular Friendship in British Modernism*

This chapter explores the birth and development of an unexpected friendship between Frances Hodgkins and Cedric Morris by capturing creative artistic interactions as well as personal bonds of support and trust between these two British Modernists. What exactly brought this New-Zealand born woman and this Welshman, with an age difference of twenty years, together? What enabled their life-long friendship to continue to thrive until Hodgkins's death in 1947? What is the significance and influence of Hodgkins's and Morris's singular friendship on British Modernism?

In this chapter, I will chart the beginning of Hodgkins's and Morris's friendship from the war years during which they exchanged portraits of one another (refer back to Figs. 1-3) to their early preoccupation with European Modernism and the avant-garde art scene in Paris. I will also look at their participation in important societies, exhibitions and painting excursions throughout the twenties, which I will argue all resulted in an evolution of their own distinctive pictorial language. Based on a profound understanding and respect for one another's work, the artistic ideal pursued by both not only transcended all obstacles but also culminated with their development of a method of expression, Romantic Modernism. The specific implications of this term will continue to be investigated throughout this thesis.

Rather than presenting an analysis of two separate unconventional life stories, I will examine the exchange of ideas and mutual support between both individuals, who developed their own take on Modernism throughout the twenties. Hodgkins and Morris never worked on nor were they commissioned to carry out a single project together. Their life circumstances and the contexts in which they created their art were vastly different. Nevertheless, their own careers progressed alongside one another and lead to an artistic relationship unparalleled throughout the twentieth century in Britain.

I. *The Foundation between Friends*

Who's this tripping down the street I see?
Most dainty, gallant, merry, sparkling, true,
All captivating garbed with broiler new;
Sportive with witty speech and pleasantrie;
Daring all other womens' rivalry.
Oh this is she who lives laborious days,
Who toilsome works, heedless of blame or praise.
Here, Womanhood to Art has bowed the knee,
And body, soul, and spirit all are bent
On making permanent the vision sent:
This painter grudges not to life the cost,
So Art achieve, the world may be well lost.
This is her portrait, just my thought's surmise
Touching the splendor of a soul's emprise.¹

This poem, entitled “Friendship’s Garland” was dedicated to ‘F.H.’ in 1918. Although the author remains to be known, I would be confident in hypothesizing that Morris was the one who wrote this dedication to Hodgkins. Firstly, the attention dedicated to Hodgkins as someone who is ‘captivating[ly] garbed’ is one distinguishing feature Morris frequently touched on in his recollections. Morris stated, ‘I remember a strange looking woman in strange clothes’, and ‘she was completely unconventional, rather comic especially to look at’.² In Morris’s portrait *Frances Hodgkins* (refer back to Fig. 2), he presents the artist with a string of long beads wrapped around her neck along with one of her fanciful hats, perhaps a beret, which she often wore. A decade later, Morris painted another likeness of the artist, *Portrait of Frances Hodgkins* (Fig. 106), again including one of her hats—this time with a crescent moon pin. Secondly, the anonymous author’s mention of Hodgkins’s ‘witty speech’ was another characteristic Morris often addressed: ‘Her wit too of which she had abundance...’ and her ‘witty waywardness’.³ Also, the poet’s repeated reference to Hodgkins’s

¹ “Friendship’s Garland”, 1918, E.H. McCormick Papers, E.H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, RC2015/4/4/15. *The Complete Frances Hodgkins, 2019*, accessed Aug 14, 2019: <https://completefranceshodgkins.com/objects/27977/friendships-garland>.

² Morris, Recording transcript for BBC Documentary of Frances Hodgkins, 1969: Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.12.

³ Draft of speech by Morris for opening of Hodgkins’s posthumous exhibition in 1948. Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.2.

'soul' and 'spirit' were significant motifs to Morris both in his life and in his art, as will later be discussed in terms of Hodgkins's and Morris's joint development of Romantic Modernism. Finally, the date when the poem was written, 1918, serves as a major indication, since this was when Hodgkins's and Morris's friendship was at its first peak as they grew close in Cornwall.

What then exactly constitutes the bond of friendship? In order to better understand this socially constructed phenomenon between Hodgkins and Morris it is useful to begin by considering a series of previously posed questions:

What makes a relationship a friendship as opposed to something else? An understanding between two people? A feeling? A moral obligation? Sympathy? Love? Esteem? How does friendship differ from affection that exists between lovers, brothers, sisters, or parents and children? Or, if these are different species of friendship, what is the *genus*? Is friendship a matter of self-interest or of altruism; or something of each? Is friendship a *duty*? How does a friendship that exists for its own sake differ from one that exists for the sake of pleasure or utility? How can one tell a true friend from a false one, or friendship from flattery? Does authentic friendship exclude other people?⁴

All of these pertinent questions confirm that the meaning of friendship can be elusive rather than concrete. However, to attempt to grasp the subtle dynamics of friendship can lead to unparalleled psychological as well as practical benefits, which both Hodgkins and Morris enjoyed from one another. In fact, although Hodgkins had countless friendships throughout her life, it was with Morris that 'the acquaintance ripened into a friendship which (rather uniquely it appears) lasted all her life'.⁵

The factors that played into Hodgkins's and Morris's singular friendship were complex and multifaceted. In terms of their background, Morris descended from the aristocracy, while Hodgkins's father, William, declared bankruptcy in 1888, which left the artist with no financial means to rely upon. Hodgkins and Morris came from completely different parts of the world, but, nevertheless, both settled in England as

⁴ Philip Blosser and Marshall Carl Bradley (eds.), *Friendship: Philosophic Reflections on a Perennial Concern* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997), p. vii.

⁵ Draft of speech by Morris for opening of Hodgkins's posthumous exhibition in 1948. Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.2.

immigrants. As far as their identities are concerned, neither artist fit into traditional notions of gender. Hodgkins remained a spinster, who put her career above everything else including the possibility of having children.⁶ Morris preferred to tend to his garden and to his painting. Thanks to Morris's independent income, he did not need to concern or trouble himself with making money.⁷ Hodgkins's sexual orientation was rather ambiguous, and Morris identified as a homosexual. Their significant age difference of twenty years could have led to unfavorable power dynamics with Hodgkins potentially acting in the role of a domineering mentor. Additionally, both artists met during the unsettlingly circumstances of wartime and continued their friendship under the influence of an increasingly industrialized and modern world. One is left to wonder how these various distinguishing features of Hodgkins's and Morris's friendship could not have offset a harmonizing balance between these two artists. Indeed, the factors that drew Hodgkins and Morris together as friends may mysteriously reside not in their commonalities, which is so often the case when two people meet and may become friends, but in the fact that Hodgkins and Morris were, in fact, so very different.

The foundation of discussions on friendship can be traced back to Aristotle's philosophies of *philia*, which is frequently translated as 'friendship' and has been defined as representing proactively altruistic characteristics.⁸ On the broad topic, 'the form *philia* does in fact cover relationships far wider than friendship, including the love between kin and the affection or solidarity between relatively distant associations such as members of the same fraternity or city'.⁹ Many philosophers such as Immanuel Kant have written about the topic of friendship in regards to its history and interpretation, including Kant's *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785). Indeed, Kant's theory in *Lectures on Ethics*, a collection of essays and notes taken from his lectures, has proven my hypothesis regarding Hodgkins's and Morris's friendship to be true:

⁶ Morris noted, 'She was devoted to children and was happy and at ease with them and certainly enjoyed painting them.' Ibid., Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.2.

⁷ Lett sacrificed his own artistic career to support Morris's in order to make possible 'ideal conditions of work for Cedric and advancing his career in the public eye'. Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, pp.19-20.

⁸ See, *The Eudemean Ethics*, translated by Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁹ David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 9.

What, then, is the basis for that compatibility and bond of friendship? Identity of thought is not required for the purpose; on the contrary, it is difference, rather, which establishes friendship, for in that case the one supplies what the other lacks; but in one particular they must agree: they need to have the same principles of understanding and morality, and then they can fully understand each other; if they are not alike in that, they cannot get on at all together, since in judgement they are poles apart.¹⁰

Hodgkins's and Morris's singular friendship was certainly marked by 'difference' on a variety of levels from their backgrounds to their identities, but they undoubtedly shared a joint 'morality' and 'judgement'. Despite Morris's great fortune, Hodgkins greatly admired the artist for his humility: 'Cedric is on the wings of an incomparable success— selling & selling— over 40 pictures now gone. Princess Patricia has bought— so also Knoedler for New York— Connell 3 for Glasgow etc. The Gods connive to do him honour. He is simple & charming as ever— no swank'.¹¹ Morris also expressed his admiration for Hodgkins, when he spoke at the opening of the artist's first posthumous exhibition in 1948: 'I had much respect and affection for her as a person... she was a woman of immense courage, pride and independence...'¹²

Friedrich Nietzsche has evaluated the definitions of friendship in two publications, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887) and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None* (1883). While the ideal of friendship was upheld during Antiquity, Nietzsche lamented its decline during the nineteenth century, due to society's emphasis on the increasing importance of independence and self-sufficiency. Nietzsche wrote:

I and Me are always too zealous in conversation: how could it be endured if there were no friend? For the solitary the friend is always the third one: the third one is the cork that prevents the conversation of the two from sinking

¹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, in Peter Heath and J.B. Schneewind (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.189.

¹¹ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Selby, June 1928, *The Complete Frances Hodgkins*, accessed Aug 14: https://completefranceshodgkins.com/objects/29827/letter-from-frances-hodgkins-to-dorothy-selby#field_description.

¹² Draft of speech by Morris for opening of Hodgkins's posthumous exhibition in 1948. Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.2.

into the depths. Ah, there are too many depths for all solitaries. Therefore they long so much for a friend and for his height.¹³

According to Nietzsche, humans require friendships in order to live a well-balanced and meaningful life. Similar to Aristotle, Kant and others in the canon of Western philosophy on friendship, Nietzsche continued the discourse and wrote about the role of friendship both on the individual and on society at large.

Nietzsche categorized friendships into three types: joyful, agonistic and bestowing.¹⁴ I would argue that aspects of Hodgkins's and Morris's friendship, in fact, falls within each one of these categories. On joyful friendships, Nietzsche wrote:

Why is making joyful the greatest of all joys?— Because we thereby give joy to our fifty separate drives all at once. Individually they may be very little joys: but if we take them all into one hand, our hand is fuller than at any other time— and our heart too!¹⁵

Nietzsche's claim that we gain more joy by sharing with others is revealed in Hodgkins's and Morris's friendship, despite the fact that both artists were incredibly independent individuals. In Hodgkins's case, Morris provided a respite from the everyday difficulties of her life. For instance, Lett discussed the many times in which Hodgkins took up residence with them during the war in Newlyn, 'where her work took on a new and decisive vitality, and the oils are of a more painterly quality'.¹⁶ It is true that Hodgkins was constantly without money. Perhaps while she was staying with Morris and Lett, she felt safe and, thus, was able to focus solely on her art, which continued to progress. Whereas, Fanny May, as Morris affectionately called her, shared in a completely non-material way by inspiring the artist with her free spirit. Morris recalled, '... [she] was content to find new horizons

¹³ Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Friend", in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, translated by Thomas Common (New York: Modern Library, 1917), p.14.

¹⁴ For an in-depth evaluation of each category see Willow Verkerk, *Nietzsche and Friendship* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019).

¹⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Dawn of Day*, IV, p.422. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, in Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.177.

¹⁶ Arthur Lett-Haines, Recording for BBC Documentary of Frances Hodgkins, 1969: Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.11.

in the gaiety and freedom of life and the energy and enthusiasm of work with which she came in contact'.¹⁷

According to Nietzsche, an agonistic friendship is rooted in a joint pursuit to achieve a higher goal. This type of friendship enables friends to provide one another the possibility for 'self-examination through cooperative competition'.¹⁸ Nietzsche wrote:

One should honour even the enemy in one's friend. Can you step up close to your friend without going over him? In one's friend one should have one's best enemy. You should be closest to him in your heart when you strive against him.¹⁹

Even though Hodgkins and Morris were never enemies, and there was never a trace of envy for each other's success throughout their long friendship, they both strove to achieve a common aim. Instead, Hodgkins's and Morris's friendship allowed them to participate in a shared growth as artists by continually developing their joint Romantic Modernist pictorial language. Recently, Willow Verkerk, a philosophy scholar, reflected similarly on Nietzsche's theory: 'Attainment of the shared goal is a process that involves competitive reciprocity and is best experienced by well-matched equals who find each other admirable'.²⁰

Finally, in order to define a bestowing friendship, Nietzsche used the metaphor of gold. Nietzsche wrote, 'how did gold come to have the highest value? Because it is uncommon and useless and luminous and gentle in its brilliance; it always bestows itself'.²¹ Nietzsche continued, 'Only as an image of the highest virtue did gold come to have the highest value'.²² Nietzsche argued that in order to reach the level of a bestower, one needed to be able to condition and develop oneself to the level of self-mastery, so that when it came time to give to another, the gift would be indispensable. The real gift in the case of Hodgkins's and Morris's friendship is one of knowledge and spiritual generosity rather than anything of material

¹⁷ Draft of speech by Morris for opening of Hodgkins's posthumous exhibition in 1948. Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.2.

¹⁸ Verkerk, *Nietzsche and Friendship*, p.38.

¹⁹ Nietzsche, "On the Friend", in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, p.49.

²⁰ Verkerk, *Nietzsche and Friendship*, p.38.

²¹ Nietzsche, "On the Bestowing Virtue", in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, p.56.

²² *Ibid.*, p.56.

consequence. Nietzsche wrote, 'This is your thirst: to become sacrifices and gifts yourselves, and therefore you thirst to amass all riches in your soul'.²³ In this, too, I would argue that both Hodgkins and Morris shared a bestowing friendship, since it was one of complete reciprocity. It was not so much the material generosity and support Morris provided Hodgkins, whether he opened his home to the artist or provided her with an additional income such as subletting her studio in Kensington Gardens, but it was more the time and consideration he bestowed onto the artist in order to help propel her career.²⁴ For instance, after Hodgkins's death Morris recalled, 'In fact she was treated disgracefully all round [sic]. Ignored by her own country, also ignored and then exploited by this one at the end of her life. I introduced her to Ben Nicholson and the rest of the 7 and 5 group, and they admitted her to it'.²⁵ In return, Hodgkins offered her own free spirit and courage to persevere despite tough times, which left a profound impression on Morris. Her gift was not out of social obligation for gratitude towards Morris but out of a desire to share a portion of herself— a rare gift few others experienced to the same degree.

Perhaps what I find to be the most strikingly relevant definition of friendship in relation to the one between Hodgkins and Morris is Aristotle's concept of 'a friend is another self'.²⁶ This notion, when considered within the context of modernity, negates the many ways in which Modernism has come to be understood as a movement either riddled with anxieties of aggressive individualism or as one composed of closely-linked societies and groups of artists. An example of modernity's preoccupation with artistic isolationism can be seen in Wyndham Lewis's *The Code of a Herdsman* in which he states, 'Yourself must be your Caste'.²⁷ Alternative to Lewis's radical avant-garde image was an English tradition continuing into the twentieth century of organizing networks of small exhibiting societies and

²³ Ibid., p.56.

²⁴ On the material side, Lett recalled, 'Seeking relief from the rent of the studio I was embarrassed to discover that she depended mainly upon the difference between the rent she paid a superior landlady— a Mrs. Watt-Black— and my sub-tenancy for her livelihood'. Lett-Haines, Recording for BBC Documentary of Frances Hodgkins, 1969: Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.11.

²⁵ Morris, Recording transcript for BBC Documentary of Frances Hodgkins, 1969: Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.12.

²⁶ Aristotle, *The Eudemian Ethics*, VII, p.12.

²⁷ Wyndham Lewis, *The Code of a Herdsman* (Glasgow: Wyndham Lewis Society, 1917), p.4.

groups, which benefitted from commercial, social and professional relationships. These processes of isolated public and private exchanges perpetuated a certain sense of conformity as members often came from similar backgrounds and studied at the same educational institutions. The formation of the Bloomsbury circle falls within this group category, as many of the Bloomsbury-affiliated artists featured in Noel Annan's study of what he referred to as 'the intellectual aristocracy'. The Cambridge historian wrote:

Here is an aristocracy, secure, established and like the rest of English society, accustomed to responsible and judicious utterance and skeptical of iconoclastic speculation. As a corollary it is also often contended that they exert a stultifying effect upon English intellectual life by monopolizing important posts and thus excluding a new class who, unbeneficed and indignant, eat out their hearts in the wilderness.²⁸

The scholar David Morgan has also illustrated the exclusivity of the Bloomsbury Group by referencing Leonard Woolf's list of members.²⁹ In *AngloModern: Painting and Modernity in Britain and the United States*, Janet Wolff described this Bloomsbury network of friendship as:

... a system of patronage and brokerage, in which the friends reviewed one another's books, served as editors for each other's work on journals (the *New Statesman* and *The Nation*) and published through the Woolfs' Hogarth Press each other's books. These informal intersections of social relations and systems of cultural production resulted in a relatively closed system with considerable power and influence in the intellectual and cultural life of the period.³⁰

Outside the peripheries of this exclusive entity, however, were Hodgkins and Morris, whose friendship was built on a bond beyond class, background and education, despite the fact that Morris was, in fact, an aristocrat himself.

The ancient treatise on friendship, *Laelius de Amicitia*, also aptly defines Hodgkins's and Morris's twentieth-century friendship, particularly during the early years leading into the twenties, which was a period marked by a significant

²⁸ Noel Annan, "The Intellectual Aristocracy", in J.H. Plumb (ed.), *Studies in Social History: A Tribute to G.M. Trevelyan* (London: Longmans Green, 1955), pp.285-86.

²⁹ David Morgan, "Cultural Work and Friendship Work: The Case of 'Bloomsbury'", *Media, Culture and Society* 4 (1982): pp.19-32.

³⁰ Wolff, *AngloModern: Painting and Modernity in Britain and the United States*, p.124.

asymmetry between Morris's accomplishments and Hodgkins's hardships. In this treatise, Cicero wrote:

Prosperity and adversity are both good tests... Above all, a friend should be on footing of *equality* with his humbler friends: confer aid and honour on them. So the humbler should accept their inferiority; and avoid expostulating or claiming credit. And the great should help on the humbler, according to the capacity of each.³¹

This respectful and democratic idea of equal footing, despite glaring inequalities in Hodgkins's and Morris's material, social and professional circumstances, is but one feature that truly distinguishes their artistic friendship as a singular one in twentieth-century British Modernism. Jacques Derrida has investigated important questions regarding the reciprocity of friendship's otherness:

But is there more or less freedom in accepting the gift of the other? Is this reorientation of the gift that would submit friendship to the consideration of the other something other than alienation? And is this alienation without relation to the loss of identity, of responsibility, of freedom that is also translated by "madness", this living madness which reverses, perverts or converts (good) sense, makes opposites slide into each other and "knows" very well, in its own way, in what sense the best friends are the best enemies?³²

Starting with Hodgkins's and Morris's early friendship in Cornwall, I will explore how their sense of artistic autonomy was retained. Neither felt their freedom over their individual identities, an essential element of their lives and artistic practice, was restricted or jeopardized in any way.

II. *Hodgkins's and Morris's Wartime Portraits in Cornwall*

In September 1914, Hodgkins had established her own studio in St Ives but mainly kept to herself. By 1918 the artist regularly visited Morris and Lett in what she referred to as 'their Futuristic abode'.³³ Before Morris's arrival, Hodgkins wrote

³¹ Marcus Tullius Ciceronis, *Laelius De Amicitia*, in A. Sidgwick (ed.) (London, Oxford and Cambridge: Rivingtons, 1878), p. xxi.

³² Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, translated by George Collins (London and New York: Verso, 1994), pp.63-64.

³³ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 15 May 1920, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.347.

to her friends and family that she felt rather isolated from the vitality of her former life amongst the Parisian avant-garde: 'I find I am too modern for people down here & I am conscious of the cold eye of distrust & disapproval by the older members of St Ives'.³⁴ Not only was the artist's social life limited, but her preferred *en plein air* subjects, which she previously explored on her trip to Morocco (Fig. 14) and during her time on the Continent, were now completely out of bounds. As can be seen from a photograph of Hodgkins in her studio in St Ives (Fig. 15), where she is positioned next to a portrait of a baby, the artist frequently turned to portraiture at this time.³⁵ Although the exact work in the photograph is not identifiable, Hodgkins painted similar portraits all from around 1918. Hodgkins's *Baby with Abacus* (Fig. 16), *Child Study* (Fig. 17) and *Sleeping Child* (Fig. 18) all reveal the artist's interest in this genre. *Baby with Abacus* looks back to Hodgkins's earlier experimentations in Impressionism at the turn of the century. The healthy baby rests upright with a little grin and is surrounded by feminine floral arrangements and pastel colors. On the other hand, *Child Study* and *Sleeping Child* assume a far more radical approach. The greenish-blue complexion of the babies' skin in these two portraits suggests somewhat sickly states, particularly since both babies are rendered while sleeping. Why this sudden shift in Hodgkins's style? Was Hodgkins's turn to Modernism intended to serve as a political and social commentary on the negative impact on the health of civilians during wartime? Either way, from this point onwards, Hodgkins's portraits take a far more dramatic turn.

One of the main reasons why Hodgkins most likely focused on portraiture confined within her studio walls during her years in Cornwall was due to the impact of wartime restrictions. The Defence of the Realm Act (DORA), passed on 7 August 1914, was draconian, banning artists from sketching outdoors along the English coastline. With growing paranoia over the presence of spies, persons engaged in

³⁴ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 17 February 1915, *Ibid.*, p.303.

³⁵ Portraiture was not a new genre for Hodgkins, however. Between 1896 and 1914, Hodgkins painted more than 200 portraits and studies of Māori women, children and babies, friends, family members and as commissions, for instance. See, the extensive portraits section of *The Complete Frances Hodgkins*, Accessed Aug 14: <https://completefranceshodgkins.com/artworks-by-genre/Portraits/objects>.

depicting locations for unknown reasons were considered as “potential threats” to national security. The Defence of the Realm Regulations stated:

No person shall without the permission of the competent naval or military authority make any photograph, sketch, plan, model, or other representation of any naval or military work, or of any dock or harbour work or, with intent to assist the enemy, of any other place or thing, and no person in the vicinity of any such work shall without lawful authority or excuse have in his possession any photographic or other apparatus or other material or thing suitable for use in making any such representation...³⁶

Thus, when Hodgkins and Morris began their friendship in Cornwall, both artists shared similar First World War experiences. Limited to only working within their studios, both artists, instead, explored the lives of those around them during these troubling times through their experimental portraiture.

During the unique conditions of the war years, the public largely perceived artists to be unpatriotic, since their ‘activities came to be considered trivial, unethical’, and they ‘were regularly identified as profiteers rather than patriots and as shirkers rather than soldiers’.³⁷ Nevertheless, artists undoubtedly suffered too as Hodgkins wrote:

It has been a black week. The fall of Antwerp a great blow... The misery & horrors are too awful— Belgium is a mere skeleton of herself, two thirds of her population are flocking to English, penniless & starving... We live from day to day... normal life is quite upset, ones [sic] centre of gravity queerly shifted. I envy the people with something definite to do. Of course we can all knit & push open cottage doors & cheer women up a bit, but the real work falls only to the trained workers—... Any woman who can say “Avez vous famm?” is allowed to snap up a Belgian refugee & cherish them. One smiles at these things in order not to weep for the tragedy is heart breaking.³⁸

In fact, Hodgkins and Morris proved to take a proactive humanitarian approach through their art in order to engage with powerful subjects of emotional importance. As immigrants in England themselves, the plight of Belgian refugees held personal meanings for both Hodgkins and Morris. Consequently, the two

³⁶ Thomas Baty and John Hartman Morgan, *War: Its Conduct and Legal Results* (London: John Murray, 1915), p.448.

³⁷ James Fox, *British Art and the First World War, 1914-1924* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.9.

³⁸ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 15 October 1914, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.297.

artists shared an expressive creative collaboration by capturing the resilient spirit of the Belgian refugees through their somber-colored portraits. Their particular choice to portray Belgian refugees in a common sympathetic light marks a rare divergence for both artists, who tended to avoid depicting wartime themes altogether. There is even the possibility that Hodgkins and Morris worked on these portraits together in Morris's studio, since it has been determined that at this time 'she [Hodgkins] was doing most of her work in Newlyn'.³⁹

St Ives was the first town in Cornwall to welcome Belgian refugees, amounting to a total of 250,000 exiles in Great Britain during the war, since they were fleeing German occupation. Contributing their own commentary on the politics of the time, both Hodgkins and Morris created a number of portraits of those seeking refuge in England. Looking back, Lett stated, 'She [Hodgkins] was very upset about the Belgian refugees. She was very upset about all the children'.⁴⁰ Hodgkins's *Unshatterable (Belgian Refugees)* (Fig. 19) and Morris's *Refugee* (Fig. 20), painted around the same time in 1919, reveal far more similarities than meets the immediate eye, despite the obvious difference that Hodgkins's portrait depicts a group or family, while Morris's painting is of a single boy.⁴¹ Unlike their earlier decorative portraits (refer back to Figs. 3 & 5), Hodgkins and Morris now use a more conservative palette in order to express a melancholic subject. Both of their sitters are presented in an ambiguous bleak setting emphasizing their rootless existence, very much like the artists themselves, who never felt quite at home in England.⁴² Each of the sitters in both *Unshatterable* and *Refugee* bear an anxious, weatherworn expression, yet at the same time there is also a contrasting sense of unbreakable resilience, which comes to the fore. For instance, in Hodgkins's family portrait this can be seen with the dramatic form created by the unified bond amongst the five

³⁹ Draft of speech by Morris for opening of Hodgkins's posthumous exhibition in 1948. Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.2.

⁴⁰ Lett-Haines, Recording for BBC Documentary of Frances Hodgkins, 1969: Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.11.

⁴¹ It is interesting to note that Hodgkins's *Unshatterable (Belgian Refugees)* was in Morris's personal collection, and he lent this painting to the Auckland Art Gallery's *Frances Hodgkins, 1869-1947: A Centenary Exhibition* in 1969.

⁴² More on this subject will be discussed in Chapter III.

sitters. Each individual is connected in a way, whether by human touch or through the fabrics of their overlapping clothes. In Morris's portrait, the young boy's pensive face is uplifted, as he stares off into the distance suggesting a determined search for brighter horizons.

During these wartime years, other artists also explored this particular motif of Belgian refugees including Frank Brangwyn, who was born in Bruges, and, thus, directly responsive to their plight. However, Brangwyn's work tends to be explicitly patriotic and propagandistic such as can be seen with his poster of refugees made in 1915 (Fig. 21). Brangwyn's poster presents a faceless, struggling crowd in a state of distress, and his use of a Social Realist style provides a sharp contrast with Hodgkins's and Morris's paintings. Instead, *Unshatterable* and *Refugee* focus on a deep human connection with one family in Hodgkins's work and a single boy in Morris's portrait. Hodgkins's and Morris's paintings do not reduce their figures to vague masses or frenzied shapes as in Brangwyn's poster, but these two artists, instead, are able to instill a monumental presence in their stoic but dignified figures.

While they were confined to their studios and painted portraits of refugees, both Hodgkins and Morris were at the beginning of their artistic careers in England, although Hodgkins had already spent many years attempting to gain recognition by this point. Even though Hodgkins was significantly older with, undoubtedly, more experience than Morris, he made it clear that 'she [Hodgkins] made no attempt to teach us, although we were but children in the Arts'.⁴³ Working within the constraints of wartime did not obstruct their subjective creativity, however. Indeed, this was a creative friendship in which an exchange of ideas flowed fluidly with no sense of hierarchy or rivalry, unlike the contentious friendship between the two Post Impressionists— Vincent Van Gogh and Paul Gauguin, for instance. Unlike Hodgkins and Morris who respected each other's personal and artistic freedom, Gauguin wrote that he 'resisted a long time' Van Gogh's 'insistence with which he

⁴³ Draft of speech by Morris for opening of Hodgkins's posthumous exhibition in 1948. Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.2.

tried to get me to come to Arles to found an atelier after an idea of his own'.⁴⁴ Although Gauguin rejected rumors that he had caused Van Gogh to go mad, he did admit, 'undoubtedly some men have more or less influence over their friends, but there is a great difference between that and causing madness'.⁴⁵ Hodgkins and Morris were also strong willed, independent-minded artists, but their selfless friendship never faced the legendary turbulence that Van Gogh and Gauguin shared.⁴⁶ In fact, Hodgkins's and Morris's three-decade-long friendship outlasted life itself.⁴⁷

III. *A Post-war Period of Asymmetrical Experiences in Europe and in Britain*

While perpetually struggling with her finances, Hodgkins hoped to secure more portrait commissions, so she moved to London briefly at the end of 1918 and again in 1920. However, post-war conditions proved to be a time of significant austerity, with few enjoying such luxuries as commissioning portraits. When this disappointing reality set in, Hodgkins returned to Cornwall, and Morris sublet her studio in London, which provided the artist with a much-needed income. By subletting Hodgkins's studio, Morris, in turn, was offered further insight into the artist's own work. Looking back on that time, Morris recalled:

I remember the walls of the studio we rented were lined with these compositions in which textural effects were juxtaposed with an emphasis on pattern. They contained that all-over quality concerning which the late Roger Fry was so much interested. (I often wished later that his attention could have been drawn to her work).⁴⁸

This example of an exchange between the two artists relates back to the previously explored categories of friendship defined by Nietzsche. In fact, all three of Nietzsche's categories can be detected here. The joyful friendship can be seen with

⁴⁴ Paul Gauguin, *Gauguin's Intimate Journals*, translated by Van Wyck Brooks (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2011), p.7.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.7.

⁴⁶ For instance, the notorious story of Van Gogh threatening Gauguin with a razor and then cutting a piece off of his own earlobe.

⁴⁷ For instance, Morris praised Hodgkins at the opening of her first posthumous exhibition in 1948.

⁴⁸ Draft of speech by Morris for opening of Hodgkins's posthumous exhibition in 1948. Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.2.

Morris's generosity in alleviating Hodgkins's financial problems. The bestowing friendship is visible with Hodgkins sharing her most prized possession, her creativity, with Morris by leaving her studio filled with her works. The agonistic friendship is also revealed in that Morris does not leave Hodgkins to fall prey to her financial ruins, and Hodgkins does not shield her work and her unique creative vision from Morris's eyes. Instead, with a joint mission to advance their Romantic Modernist art together, both Hodgkins and Morris supported each other in the ways in which they could.

Although Hodgkins could not manage to earn enough money from her paintings during the early post-war years, she did finally begin to receive several positive reviews from London critics. In particular, Frank Rutter, who was highly influential during his career, praised the artist for her work in the Women's International Art Club in March 1919 at the Grafton Galleries. Indeed, Rutter was one of the first important London critics to recognize Hodgkins's artistic talents. Rutter wrote that Hodgkins was 'one of the most richly gifted and personal painters of either sex we have today'.⁴⁹ Rutter went on to emphasize Hodgkins's significance amongst both men and women artists:

For sheer virility there are few male painters who can give points to Miss Frances Hodgkins. Her pictures convey a feeling of immense strength, both in the artist and her subjects, and her two big groups... are as original in conception and treatment as they are powerful in expression.⁵⁰

Rutter's commentary was advanced for its time, since women artists often had to contend with the notion of men artists as the "geniuses". If critics were not ambivalent to work by women artists, then they frequently disparaged them as "lady painters" or, at best, accomplished amateurs. Rather than undercutting Hodgkins's work simply based on her gender, Rutter, instead, disregarded the

⁴⁹ Frank Rutter, "The Galleries: Women's International Art Club", *Sunday Times* (March 16, 1919): n.p. Goldsmiths University of London, Women's Art Library, Special Collections, WAL/AGA/WIAC. Founded in Paris in 1900, the Women's International Art Club was originally known as the Paris International Art Club. Its aim was to enable women of all nationalities to organize exhibitions at a professional level. The Club moved to London in 1900 under its new name and held its first exhibition at the Grafton Galleries. This particular show, which Hodgkins exhibited in, was its eighteenth exhibition. The Club held annual exhibitions until it closed in 1976.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, n.p.

boundaries erected around mainly male artists by placing Hodgkins within the same confines.

Delighted by Rutter's positive attention, Hodgkins wrote:

My work has attracted a lot of notice & the press is showing itself less hostile (or asinine) towards it. Frank Rutter of the Sunday Times has defined my place in the Art world with some emphasis & being an authority the other papers are taking their cue from him & about time too... The best notice... places me 3rd among 4 big women painters of Continental fame— Mrs Swynnerton (English), Mary Cassatt (American who lived in France 30 yrs [sic] ago), F.H. and then “wonderful Mdme [sic] Mutermilch” a Polish painter now in Paris. The elite!⁵¹

Rutter's list of '4 big women painters of Continental fame' was rather diverse, and the oeuvres of these artists ranged widely in spirit and technique. Annie Swynnerton, who was elected to be the first woman Associate Member of the Royal Academy in 1922, was known for her allegorical paintings and for co-founding the Manchester Society of Women Painters. Mary Cassatt remains to be recognized as one of the leading Impressionists of her era and is now heralded for depicting the “New Woman” of the nineteenth century. The lesser-known Maria Melania Mutermilch, a Jewish painter who went by the pseudonym of Mela Muter and lived most of her life in France, painted portraits especially of mothers with their children, in addition to landscapes and still lifes. Muter was the first woman from Poland to devote herself to becoming a professional artist. Hodgkins, who was experimenting with a completely radical form of Modernism rooted in the interrelationship between abstraction, ornamentation and the underlying essence, or spiritual force, of the objects and people she chose to depict, nevertheless, shared a striking similarity with these three other artists. Whether these four women knew one another remains beside the point. Instead, none of these painters wished to be regarded primarily as “women artists” but sought to be recognized as professional artists, while they lived unconventionally independent lives for their times.

⁵¹ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 12 April 1919, NMS 85/36_5. Thanks to Mary Kisler, Chief Curator of the Auckland Art Gallery, for providing these unpublished letters. Anne Swynnerton was the co-founder of the Manchester Society of Women Painters. Mary Cassatt settled in Paris in 1868 and exhibited with the Impressionists. Maria-Melania Muter, formerly Mutermilch settled in Paris in 1902 and studied at the Académie Colarossi.

In 1919, Rutter, who was also an active supporter of women's suffrage, asked a seminal question later posed by feminist art historian Linda Nochlin in 1971: 'Why has there never yet been any woman-painter of outstanding eminence?'⁵² It was in this article, entitled "Private Views", that Rutter distinguished Hodgkins as one of the finest women painters. Nonetheless, there were critics, who did not agree with Rutter's progressive views on women's art and on Hodgkins, in particular. One anonymous critic wrote:

The present exhibition of the Women's International at the Grafton Galleries has... the defect that it is not feminine enough... Too many of the pictures are painted with a masculine roughness evidently not natural to the artists... Miss Frances Hodgkins's "The Victorians" is clever, but a little too modish; it is bric-a-brac on too large a scale and with too much labour.⁵³

In the same year, another anonymous critic penned a dismissive review of the Society of Women Artists exhibition held in the Royal Institute Galleries, 195 Piccadilly. The critic wrote that this exhibition contained 'a good deal that is not very agreeable... Miss F. Hodgkins's "Night Peace" is a clever exercise in conscious distortion, carried perhaps a little too far'.⁵⁴ Indeed, it was not until 1930 that Hodgkins was to finally receive more unanimously favorable reviews amongst the London critics, which, consequently, increased the sales of her works. In the meanwhile, Morris helped Hodgkins to stay afloat financially as much as he could through his sublease of her Kensington studio as well as introducing her to various dealers, patrons and other painters, though Morris stated:

The dealers would have none of her then. The art boys, i.e. critics etc. were not interested. My sister tried to interest people and hung her work in her flat in Mecklenburg Square, but made no sales. Later those same people were clacking exceedingly about her.⁵⁵

Before Hodgkins and Morris left Cornwall in 1920 to spend time in Europe, Lett drew a portrait of the artist entitled, *Frances Hodgkins* (Fig. 22). In turn,

⁵² Frank Rutter, "Private Views", *Arts Gazette* (March 15, 1919): n.p. Goldsmiths University of London, Women's Art Library, Special Collections, WAL/AGA/WIAC.

⁵³ Unauthored, "Women Painters: The 'International' at the Grafton", *Times* (March 11, 1920): n.p.

⁵⁴ Unauthored, "The Society of Women Artists", *Times* (February 11, 1919): n.p.

⁵⁵ Draft of speech by Morris for opening of Hodgkins's posthumous exhibition in 1948. Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.2.

Hodgkins painted an oil portrait of Lett (**Fig. 99**), which will be discussed at length later in Chapter III. In Lett's portrait, *Frances Hodgkins*, the artist's face is cast in shadow. The drooping corners of her mouth form a slight frown, and dark circles have formed around her eyes, suggesting restless sleep and endless concerns. Hodgkins's rather melancholic expression was most likely due to lack of sales. Nevertheless, the artist's face is uplifted. She looks off into another direction, suggesting a brighter horizon ahead, similar to the posture of the figure in Morris's *Refugee* (refer back to **Fig. 20**). Lett signed the charcoal drawing with the date, 1919, and the location as Newlyn. However, a lighter pencil inscription underneath reads as: 'Hodgkins by Lett 1919-20'. Either way, the exchange of these two portraits marked a temporary period of closure for Hodgkins's friendship with Morris and his partner. During my research, I did not come across any evidence that Hodgkins and Morris spent time together from 1921-1926, or that they even corresponded during these years. Lett reaffirmed this loss of contact and blamed himself and, indirectly, Morris. Lett wrote, 'A selfish and very much younger person such as myself, at that date, did not reply very often to her keep-in-touch entreaties and the correspondence petered out'.⁵⁶

Even though they were now apart during these years abroad, Hodgkins and Morris still explored similar Modernist directions, and connections continued to emerge between their bohemian way of life and in their experimental art. While Hodgkins and Morris were based in Europe, they increasingly experimented with abstraction, Cubism and Surrealism; styles and movements they frequently encountered in Paris and which later broadened their understanding of avant-gardism. While in Paris, Hodgkins often visited the Louvre, the Musée du Luxembourg and the Bernheim-Jeune gallery to enhance her artistic vocabulary. Several decades later in 1969, Morris wrote about the artists he looked to for inspiration, while he was in Europe: 'Influences apart from the classical were... Giorgio de Chirico in Italy, W. Kandinsky in Germany and Pablo Picasso in

⁵⁶ Lett-Haines, Recording for BBC Documentary of Frances Hodgkins, 1969: Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.11. I was unable to locate any 'keep-in-touch entreaties' allegedly sent by Hodgkins during these years to Morris and Lett.

France...'⁵⁷ However, now that the war was over and Hodgkins and Morris were no longer constrained to studio work, at the beginning of the decade, both artists were simply eager to return to the outdoors and looked towards untamed nature for new ideas such as their time spent in the provinces of France. Hodgkins's *Cassis* (Fig. 23) is one of many landscape chalk drawings she made during this period. Near Marseilles, the fishing harbour with its imposing coastal cliffs inspired the artist to draw using a decisive black line, which was a response to the Post-Impressionist doctrines of Cézanne. Hodgkins's tonal shading of the overlapping limestone precipices in a series of jagged planes contrasts with the subtly defined terraced meadows and a sun-bleached village in the lower-left foreground. The rhythmic modulations of form layered in *Cassis* suggest an immaterial almost mystical quality.

Morris and Lett were based in Paris from 1921-1926, but, like Hodgkins, they frequently travelled to more provincial locations such as *Céret*, where Morris painted the medieval stone arch bridge. Morris's *Les Ponts de Céret* (Fig. 24) is just one of a number of landscapes he painted during the several months he spent there. Like Hodgkins, Morris expressed an interest in the separate forms of nature as can be seen in the highly texturized surface of the river and the staccato shaped leaves in the foreground. The French influences, such as Cézanne's interest in expressing the essence of nature through a dynamic intensity rather than a traditional perspective of a realistic landscape, joins Hodgkins's *Cassis* and Morris's *Les Ponts de Céret* together. Additionally, a common thread can be linked back to Fry's doctrines of 'significant form'. About 'significant form', Fry wrote:

We mean by significant form something other than agreeable arrangements of form, harmonious patterns, and the like. We feel that a work which possesses it is the outcome of an endeavor to express an idea rather than to create a pleasing object. I feel that it implies the effort on the part of the artist to bend to our emotional understanding by means of his passionate conviction some intractable material which is alien to our spirit.⁵⁸

In other words, the role of realistic representation has been subverted in a way by Hodgkins's and Morris's landscapes, since both artists manipulated spatial

⁵⁷ Ibid., Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.3.2.

⁵⁸ Fry, *Vision and Design*, p.302.

ambiguities through experimentations with traditional linear perspective. Instead, topographical accuracy was replaced with landscapes imbued with a spiritual significance.

Despite Hodgkins's and Morris's lack of communication at this time, another common interest these artists shared can be seen with their Parisian café and bar genre scenes. Both created in 1921 and stylistically unified in a way, Hodgkins's *Café Les Martigues* (Fig. 25) and Morris's *Café Rotonde, Paris* (Fig. 26) attest to their delight in socializing with other artists and observing and recording bohemian Parisian life, following the footsteps of earlier spectator scenes such as those by Édouard Manet and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. Both Hodgkins and Morris render their similar subjects through a use of sketchy yet skillful draftsmanship. While Hodgkins delineates her figures as minimally as possible, Morris, on the other hand, fills his composition with many thin, lightly drawn lines. Yet a uniform result is produced in both drawings, as each artist experiments with a popular motif from the turn of the century.

When Hodgkins had depleted all of her savings by January 1922, she shifted her base to Burford in the Cotswolds, where she taught art classes, until the end of 1923. After having earned and saved enough, she then returned to France for most of 1924 but soon found her constant pecuniary troubles haunting her again, since few of her works sold. Close to abandoning her artistic career both in Britain and in Europe altogether, Hodgkins booked a ticket back to Melbourne in 1925, but at the last moment, she was offered employment as a fabric designer at the Calico Printers' Association in Manchester. While Hodgkins struggled throughout these fraught years of attempting to gain recognition for her art, Morris, who was independently wealthy and, therefore, did not have to concern himself with the sales of his work to support himself, became deeply entrenched within the artistic milieu of Montparnasse.⁵⁹ During the twenties, Morris also sought fresh inspiration for his work by travelling throughout North Africa in 1921 and again in 1925-26 as well as to Germany and to Italy in 1922.

⁵⁹ For the full list of artists, actors and authors Morris fraternized with see Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.23.

While the early-to-mid years of the twenties proved to be harsh for Hodgkins, as she struggled to keep her artistic career afloat and was constantly distracted by the financial responsibilities of everyday life, Morris, contrarily, enjoyed international recognition throughout avant-garde artistic circles during these same years. In 1922 Morris had an exhibition in Rome at the Casa d'Arte Bragaglia, and in 1924 he was honored with his first major joint exhibition in London with William Staite Murray. In 1926 Morris even participated in two group shows across the Atlantic in New York City.⁶⁰ Up until this point, Morris was also deeply involved in exhibiting societies such as with The London Group, the Arts League of Service and the London Artists Association. In an exhibition catalogue for the Arts League of Service, R.H. Wilenski wrote, 'Morris... is on the threshold of a great career'.⁶¹

Despite the asymmetry in their success, and lack thereof, I would argue that it was Hodgkins's art that was on the whole far more experimental than Morris's at this time. For instance, in 1924 Hodgkins painted an abstract still life entitled, *Red Cockerel* (Fig. 27), by assimilating cubist doctrines into segments of color combined with a rather naturalistic rendering of the central hanging bird. In this work Hodgkins slyly juxtaposes natura morta in the form of the upside-down bird and the three dead fish hanging on the left with a surprisingly upright small sprig of green in the lower foreground. Not only is she experimenting with her style and technique but also with the genre of still life itself. It was not until 1927, that Morris painted *Caterpillar of the Euphorbia Moth* (Fig. 28), which one cannot help but notice bears a striking resemblance to Hodgkins's earlier *Red Cockerel*. Not only does Morris choose a similar muted, milky palette of steel blue and rusty red with white highlights for his still life, but the motif of a caterpillar attached to a leaf alongside

⁶⁰ In addition to these shows, Morris was invited by Roger Fry to exhibit in their annual exhibition at the Mansard Gallery in 1921, and he continued to exhibit with them until 1929. Ana Berry, who ran the Arts League of Service, was a significant supporter of Morris's work throughout the twenties. Not only did she write a praised-filled article on his art for the Argentine newspaper, *La Nación*, but she also organized this exhibition, which showed 56 works by Morris.

⁶¹ R.H. Wilenski, *The Arts League of Service Exhibition: Stoneware Pottery by W.S. Murray, Painting & Drawings by Cedric Morris* (London: Arts League of Service, 1924), unpaginated.

additional floating larvae expresses a comparable interest in geometric dynamism of biomorphic and naturalistic combined forms.

By 1927 the two artists met again and renewed their friendship in Paris.

About their reunion, Morris recalled:

Later we contacted her again in Paris where we then lived— she was deadly poor— ... We took her to Brittany with us to Tréboul. We left her there working. Soon after we went to London, where we soon contacted her again. This was in 1927. She was still deadly poor and lived and worked in all sorts of places.⁶²

What is particularly interesting when considering the several years Hodgkins and Morris spent apart is determining the impact their reunion had on their art, thereafter. Hodgkins's and Morris's joint painting excursion to Tréboul resulted in many paintings of the same countryside landscapes and scenes of the harbour; however, their depictions of these views at this time diverged quite significantly as can be seen with Morris's *Corner in Tréboul* (Fig. 29) and Hodgkins's *Tréboul* (Fig. 30). Despite Morris's success as an avant-garde artist, *Corner in Tréboul* reveals a rather conservative composition in its continuation of Cézannesque spatial ideas and of form itself (refer back to Fig. 24). In this work Morris fragmented the landscape into geometric elements, which are also evocative exponents of Cubism practiced by Picasso and Gris throughout the twenties. On the other hand, Hodgkins's watercolor, *Tréboul*, suggests a far more radical sense of experimentation in the Romantic vein of Turner with her reflection of the harbor before her rather than a naturalistic, descriptive study. Hodgkins's particular use of blue also connects her work to the English Romantic painter as Ruskin wrote:

Wherever Turner gives blue, there he gives atmosphere; it is air, not object. Blue he gives to his sea; so does nature; — blue he gives, sapphire-deep, to his extreme distance; so does nature; — blue he gives to the misty shadows and hollows of his hills; so does nature: but blue he gives not, where detail and illumined surface are visible; as he comes into light and character, so he breaks into warmth and varied hue...⁶³

⁶² Draft of speech by Morris for opening of Hodgkins's posthumous exhibition in 1948. Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.2.

⁶³ John Ruskin, *Modern Painters: Their Superiority in the Art of Landscape Painting* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1844), p.120.

The minimally rendered blue boat in the distance, along with its reflection in the water, and the calligraphic use of blue in the mid and foreground demonstrate Hodgkins's structuring of the harbor through her innovative deployment of color. Nevertheless, Hodgkins's artistic standing was not even close to Morris's during the twenties, and contemporary literature about her work from this period continues to misinterpret her distinctively experimental vision. For instance, in the 2019 exhibition catalogue *Frances Hodgkins: European Journeys*, Mary Kislner, Chief Curator of Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, wrote: 'a series of Hodgkins' watercolours from this period demonstrate her emotional fragility, their compositions awkward and fragmented, the harshness of expression and jagged brushstrokes seem to speak of her inner turmoil'.⁶⁴ Both Hodgkins and Morris were depicting Tréboul at the same time, but Hodgkins's vision exudes an authenticity that Morris's work lack, even though he was the artist who was garnering sales and increased recognition for his art at this time.

One of the most significant aspects of Hodgkins's and Morris's friendship during their summer together in 1927 was not necessarily the influence each one had on the other's art but their overall mutual support of their joint artistic pursuit in the British Modernist context. This is clearly expressed through a creative exchange of commemorative friendship portraits of one another that occurred around this time. Similar to her portrait of Lett before they parted ways in 1920 (**Fig. 99**), Hodgkins again picked up where she left off and painted a second portrait of Morris's partner, who was also a frequent supporter of Hodgkins and her art. In a gesture of gratitude, Hodgkins painted *Portrait of Arthur Lett-Haines* (**Fig. 31**), when they all reunited. In this unusual portrait, Lett is depicted sleeping, or at least comfortably resting with his eyes closed, suggesting a certain sense of intimacy between the artist and the sitter. Sleeping figures were depicted for the first time in the art historical canon with Hellenistic sculpture, but one of the most iconic images of sleep remains to be Giorgione's *The Sleeping Venus* (**Fig. 32**). Much has been written about this reclining nude, who stretches sensually across the width of the

⁶⁴ Mary Kislner et al., *Frances Hodgkins: European Journeys* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2019), p.43.

canvas, surrounded by a pastoral landscape.⁶⁵ The motif of the sleeping female nude was not just a favorite of many Renaissance artists but persisted throughout the centuries. The theme of sleeping women, especially in the form of symbolic and allegorical goddesses and nymphs, watched by men was frequent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The eroticism of the nude slightly evolved during the aesthetic movement into a more languid, dreamy figure in the nineteenth century, as can be seen in paintings by Albert Moore, Alfred George Stevens, Lawrence Alma-Tadema and Sir Edward Burne-Jones, for instance. By the twentieth century, the sleeping woman had been transformed into a muse referencing unconscious states and portals into the soul. Picasso has been cited as the first artist in the early thirties who ‘reverses the roles and depicts a sleeping man watched by a woman’, but ‘the watcher is never seen as an intruder, but rather as a guardian of the sleeping partner’.⁶⁶ However, I would argue that it was Hodgkins, who in 1927 reinterprets and subverts this long voyeuristic tradition. Instead of the sleeping woman motif, Hodgkins’s *Portrait of Arthur Lett Haines* replaces physical desire or eroticism with a transcendental and spiritual objective and shifts the exclusively male audience to an inclusive one. Over a decade later in 1939, Wyndham Lewis follows Hodgkins’s footsteps with his portrait, *Ezra Pound* (Fig. 33). Lewis’s commemorative portrait of his friend Pound, the American poet and critic, celebrates knowledge over physicality with a pile of newspapers stacked on the table positioned next to the sleeping figure.

A year after Hodgkins painted Lett’s portrait, Morris painted, *Portrait of Frances Hodgkins* (Fig. 106), which will be discussed in detail in Chapter III. Later, Hodgkins painted a portrait of Morris sometime around 1930 during one of her visits to Pound Farm, Morris’s and Lett’s estate, near Higham, Suffolk. In *Portrait of Cedric Morris (Man with Macaw)* (Fig. 34), Hodgkins links Morris’s identity to his Arcadian life far removed from the fast-paced London art world and instead to his

⁶⁵ See, for instance, John T. Paoletti and Gary M. Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2005), pp.466-67. Maria Ruvoldt, “Sleeping Beauties” in *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration: Metaphors of Sex, Sleep, and Dreams* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp.90-121. Jaynie Anderson, *Giorgione: The Painter of ‘Poetic Brevity’* (Paris: Flammarion, 1997), pp.307-8.

⁶⁶ Udo Kultermann, “Woman Asleep and the Artist”, *Artibus Et Historiae* 11, no. 22 (1990), p.145.

paradisiacal macaw, Rubio. This portrait of her friend was important to Hodgkins, as it was included in her first successful exhibition, *Paintings and Water-colours by Frances Hodgkins* at Arthur Howell's St George's Gallery in October 1930. To both Hodgkins and Morris, working in the countryside became an essential part of their practice throughout the thirties and into the forties as will be discussed in the next Chapter.

Another significant outcome of their reunion in 1927 was Morris's encouragement for Hodgkins to give up teaching in order to focus on the production of her own work. By directing attention away from her pupils and only to her own art, Morris convinced Hodgkins that she could gain a secure and steady foothold in the London art scene. Morris had no ulterior motive to advise Hodgkins in this way, since she was, after all, competition. This sincere gesture of camaraderie is another indication of the singularity of their friendship, unlike, for instance, Alfred Stieglitz's rigorous promotion of Georgia O'Keeffe's art, which was undeniably influenced by their romantic relationship. O'Keeffe, too, gave up teaching after knowing Stieglitz only for a short time, so that he could fully promote the artist and her art. Upon reflecting about this dramatic change in her life and in her career, Hodgkins wrote, 'I am making a big effort to recover my lost footing in London. It is now a matter of "brute cash" & holding on till I am recognized'.⁶⁷

Soon after, Hodgkins exhibited with The London Group and the New English Art Club in that same year— thanks to Morris's assistance. In 1928 Hodgkins again exhibited with the New English Art Club, and Morris helped the artist organize her first solo show in London after five years at the Claridge Gallery, where he had exhibited in 1926. Morris and his sister, Nancy, also held a celebration in Hodgkins's honor after the opening of her exhibition. However, few sales were to be had, causing the show to be a financial disaster. Morris recalled, 'she had put her best foot forward for that exhibition and felt herself defeated, ageing and penniless'.⁶⁸ One month later, Morris held a solo exhibition of his own at Arthur

⁶⁷ Frances Hodgkins to Isabel Field, December 1927, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.403.

⁶⁸ Draft of speech by Morris for opening of Hodgkins's posthumous exhibition in 1948. Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.2.

Tooth and Sons, and sold over 40 works. Hodgkins, surprisingly, was not resentful.⁶⁹ Morris's career was officially confirmed as 'sensationally successful'⁷⁰ and steadily continued with his work represented at the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1928 and again in 1932.

Rather than falling prey to envy over Morris's success, Hodgkins was encouraged by his achievements. Spurred by his support at critical moments, the artist finally experienced the beginnings of her own success. McCormick, has pointed out that the artist's 'greatest debt lay... to Cedric and Lett. They arranged for her to meet their dealers, they welcomed her into their circle, they encouraged her with their praise'.⁷¹ In fact, Hodgkins herself confirmed this in 1930 to a mutual patron and friend, Lucy Wertheim: 'if Cedric is fond of me as you say I am 100% fonder of him & with more cause— so that's that— the fact that I am working here today— in a state of comparative liberty & independence I very largely owe to the friendship of Lett & Cedric— and I don't forget it—'.⁷² Of course, their friendship was never one-sided, as Morris recollected of Hodgkins:

I personally liked her very much and for a variety of reasons— I always felt at ease with her, she was completely unconventional... was witty in a strange oblique way and was malicious, again obliquely, and covered up. And above all was very gallant and of course a good painter and a completely original one.⁷³

Despite Hodgkins's and Morris's aims to achieve a common goal within the British Modernist context, their remarkable friendship continued to be one strengthened by supportive encouragement rather than resulting in a competitive rivalry.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Refer back to the earlier quote, 'Cedric is on the wings of an incomparable success...' on p. 5.

Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Selby, c. 24 May 1928, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.407.

⁷⁰ T.W. Earp, "Cedric Morris", *The Studio* 96, no. 427 (1928): pp.241-48.

⁷¹ McCormick, *Portrait of Frances Hodgkins*, p.106.

⁷² Frances Hodgkins to Lucy Wertheim, c. 24 February 1930, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.424.

⁷³ Morris, Recording transcript for BBC Documentary of Frances Hodgkins, 1969: Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.12.

⁷⁴ In January 1928, Hodgkins sent a letter to Lett, while she was in France. She wrote, 'I hope Cedric is doing some shining work...' Frances Hodgkins to Arthur Lett-Haines, 30 January 1928, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.406. Later in the same year, Hodgkins moved into a studio in Fitzrovia close to Morris's studio in Great Ormond Street. In 1929, Cedric asked his sister, Nancy, to let Hodgkins stay at her flat in Bloomsbury in January, and a few months later Lett arranged for Hodgkins to stay at a cottage in Wilmington, Sussex.

IV. *'The modern problem': An Unrecognized Breakthrough*

The twenties in Britain has been treated by both past and present art historians as a conservative period rather than one of Modernist explorations; for instance, Spalding has argued, 'the revolutionary period of Modernism was now over'.⁷⁵ Yet, in 1919 the founding of The Seven and Five Society⁷⁶, which lasted until 1935, led to a reinvigoration of the British Modernist movement by encouraging a progressive plurality of styles. Although The Society's initial objective was to maintain membership to seven painters and five sculptors, there were eighteen founding members in the first exhibition in 1920 at Walker's Galleries. To introduce their aims to the public, the avant-garde artists presented a manifesto in a brief exhibition catalogue:

The "Seven & Five" desire to explain that they are not a group formed to advertise a new "ism"... The object of the "Seven & Five" is merely to express what they feel in terms that shall be intelligible, and not to demonstrate a theory nor to attack a tradition. Individual members have their own theories of Art, but as a group the "Seven & Five" has none. Each member is free to develop his own individuality: all that the group asks is that he shall do that, and not try to exploit someone else's. Their desire is to group together men who do not attempt to achieve publicity by mere eccentricity of form or colour, but believe that to be sincere is not necessarily to be dull.⁷⁷

Spalding has argued that The Society's declaration was 'far from being a dynamic manifesto' but rather 'sounds more like an avant-garde in retreat'.⁷⁸ Harrison, too, derided The Society for its 'timorousness' and its 'conservative concept of professionalism' based on what he referred to as their 'attaching value to "sincerity" in the absence of criteria for deciding truth'.⁷⁹ Instead, this thesis will disprove historians' dismissive arguments, such as Spalding's and Harrison's, which did not take into consideration these artists' major innovation in British Modernism at this time.

⁷⁵ Frances Spalding, *British Art Since 1900* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1986), p.63.

⁷⁶ For the remainder of this section, I will refer to this exhibiting group in an abbreviated format: 'The Society'.

⁷⁷ The Seven and Five Society, original manifesto, Tate Archive, GB 70 TGA 849.

⁷⁸ Frances Spalding, "Frances Hodgkins and British Modernism" in Mary Kisler et al., *Frances Hodgkins: European Journeys*, p.26.

⁷⁹ Harrison, *English Art and Modernism 1900-1939*, p.165.

Determined to carve a defined place for herself amongst the avant-garde circles in London, where Morris was already firmly established, Hodgkins wrote:

I preferred not to show at all rather than exhibit with the older traditional set with whom I have nothing in common. But chiefly, I have not been able to afford to exhibit & have had to put my art aside & do other money making jobs— in order to live. That’s the whole secret of my *delayed* success. But now I am slowly creeping back— and invitations from the right quarters are coming in— and, I hope, my Show will make things right for me— ... I have changed & evolved & experimented— but am none the worse for that. My present work is consistent— I shall sink or swim by it— I think swim...⁸⁰

Morris was a member of The Society since 1926, and since he had complete faith in and admiration for Hodgkins’s art, he introduced the artist to the group in 1929, which resulted in her successful election. Indeed, it was during these years, while Hodgkins and Morris exhibited alongside one another, that their friendship prospered, and their art was most closely aligned as will be addressed in Chapter II.⁸¹ During this period, Hodgkins and Morris encouraged each other to push ideas and experimentations further. They also made sure to remain their authentic artistic selves by never completely shunning their “outsider” identities— an ageing Antipodean female and a Welsh homosexual— compared to many of their English counterparts, who more often than not came from similar backgrounds.⁸²

Particularly during the time they exhibited together in The Society in London, Hodgkins’s and Morris’s art conveys a similar interest in the unification of decoration and European Modernism. What is particularly revolutionary about Hodgkins’s and Morris’s work in relation to other British Modernists at this time is their negotiation between their identities, and the form that their art assumed, as their work continues to subvert the alleged “inferiority” of the “typically female” in

⁸⁰ Frances Hodgkins to Lucy Wertheim, 13 February 1928, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.406.

⁸¹ In Chapter II, I will present thorough evidence that Hodgkins’s and Morris’s art was closely linked through, for instance, their exploration of the relationship between the inner and the outer essences of domestic objects.

⁸² More on the topic of Hodgkins’s and Morris’s “outsider” identities will be addressed in Chapter III. Although it is true that Winifred Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth exhibited with The Society as well, they were significantly younger than Hodgkins— respectively 24 and 34 years apart. Also, Maurice Lambert, another member of The Society, was of foreign nationality, but he was educated in England at an early age.

art to this day. Hodgkins's and Morris's salient self-understanding enabled them to work in a dissimilar way to the aesthetic practices of many British Modernists, since they never resisted decorative imagery and employed a Romantic yet fearless palette so often characterized as essentially "feminine", particularly through their use of soft yet striking color harmonies to depict the beauty of nature. An example of this can be seen with Hodgkins's *Still Life* from 1929 (Fig. 35) and Morris's *Poppies* from 1926 (Fig. 36). Both paintings are very different from the Constructivist paintings and sculptures of Marlow Moss or the highly abstracted compositions of Ben Nicholson produced at the same time, for instance. Hodgkins reinvented the centuries-old genre of the still life, which were predominantly positioned in interior settings, by uniting her still life with a landscape. Hodgkins has repositioned the table to the outside in an English pastoral setting, and she reconciles unusual spatial concepts by dramatically tilting and foreshortening the perspective of the still life itself. The wilting rose-colored cut flowers in the vase as well as the adjacent floral-patterned urn serve as a striking juxtaposition with the redbrick country house in the distance. In Morris's *Poppies* a jubilant but untidy bouquet conveys a sense of the baroque with his unique sensitivity to unpredictable color combinations, an especially shallow sense of space and an illuminating light. All together, these disparate elements elicit a heightened emotional or spiritual response from the viewer.

Avant-garde artists in The Society, particularly Hodgkins and Morris, were experimenting in a Modernist pictorial language rooted in a combination of the Romantic, lyrical and faux-naïf. Tate Gallery curator, Jim Ede, was able to identify their contributions of a thoroughly Romantic yet modern pictorial vision: 'It is to use everyday objects, but with such a swing and flow that they become living things, they fall into rhythm in the same sort of way that music does, but their vitality comes through colour and form instead of sound and time'.⁸³ Hodgkins's *Still Life* (Fig. 37) from around 1937 and Morris's *The Iron Birds* (Fig. 38) from 1942 demonstrates how both artists continued to 'use everyday objects' 'with such a

⁸³ Jim Ede, "Introduction", in *7th exhibition of pictures and sculpture by the 'Seven and Five' Society* (Beaux Arts Gallery, 1927), unpaginated.

swing and flow' in order to turn them into 'living things' with a recognizable 'rhythm' 'through colour and form' throughout the rest of their careers. Hodgkins's *Still Life*, comprised of harmonious assemblages of equally essential yet distinctive elements, reveals a highly individualistic approach. Set in a shallow space and tilted upwards, an ethereal still life of various fruits, vases and flowers in subtle shades of green, silver blue and luminous yellow all float on an undulating cloth, suggesting wind triggering movement amongst the many objects as they fly through the sky. Morris's *The Iron Birds*, which was made five years after Hodgkins's *Still Life*, suggests that he may have had her work in mind. Even though the objects in Morris's painting securely rest on the table, the background strangely swells and surges as if the plates, jug, mug and metal birds are set against an abstracted waterfall. That the birds are inanimate rather than anthropomorphized in Morris's characteristic style also evokes an enigmatic mood. There is a definite sense of 'rhythm' through 'colour and form' in these works that Ede refers to, which elicits an invisible spirit within these inanimate objects.

In 1932 and 1934 Morris and Hodgkins would respectively show signs of solidarity in rebelling against the establishment after their withdrawal from The Society, due to Ben Nicholson's spearheading of the fundamental change in the exhibition policy towards abstract, non-objective art. Nicholson, who had become chairman in 1926, attempted to change The Society's name in 1934 to the 7 & 5 Abstract Group, and although this was not agreed by the other members, there was an accepted shift in their overall aims. Now, the hanging committee was empowered to install purely abstract and non-representational art. Upon reflection, Morris stated that after joining the group 'he soon realized that formal and painterly problems on their own bored him'.⁸⁴ Hodgkins resigned not only due to her obvious divergence of interest with Nicholson's but also because she refused to sacrifice her freedom to paint what she preferred. Both Hodgkins and Morris continued to stand

⁸⁴ Christopher Neve and Tony Venison, "A painter and his garden: Cedric Morris at Benton End", *Country Life* CLXV, no.4271 (17 May 1979): p.1533.

up to radical or geometric abstraction, which Hodgkins dubbed as ‘the modern problem’⁸⁵ throughout their careers.

How did this creative duo react to the increasing preoccupation with abstraction or ‘the modern problem’ then? Both artists felt that the problem with Modernism was due to the dogmatic interest in pure abstraction. One way not to ‘retreat’ from this method of portrayal but wholeheartedly to confront and solve it was through their ability to blur the boundaries between abstraction and figuration. In an interview from 1928, Morris stated:

Morris: I am inclined to believe that selection from natural forms is the expression of our national genius; natural forms as against the highly stylized geometric ones... I do not think there is such a thing as realism in art... If I paint a bird, because I do not happen to see it with Mrs Jones’s extraordinarily ugly vision must you accuse me of not being real and find my imagination at fault? It is my vision and very real to me. Realism is not Reality.

Interviewer: Does it follow then that you copy nature exactly?

Morris: No, I cannot. Neither has anyone exactly copied nature for nature cannot be copied. From natural objects, I obtain line for line’s sake, color for color’s sake, form for form’s sake.⁸⁶

The word “abstraction” is ‘perhaps the most hotly debated one in the terminology of modern art’.⁸⁷ Abstraction particularly prominent in European Modernism at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the beginnings of modern abstract art has been tied to the emergence of Cubism, as demonstrated by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., the founding director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Barr’s *Flow Chart* (Fig. 39) demonstrates how abstract art has been divided into two main movements, ‘geometrical’ and ‘non-geometrical’. The style characterized as ‘modern’ only relates to ‘architecture’, not as a movement in the art historical canon. In Britain, however, Fry attempted to balance abstraction and representation in his lecture, “Post Impressionism”, at the Grafton Gallery, in which Fry acknowledged ‘a certain amount of naturalism, of likeness to the actual appearances, of things is necessary,

⁸⁵ Frances Hodgkins to Duncan MacDonald, 24 June 1936, Auckland Art Gallery transcript ATL Ms85/11_6.

⁸⁶ *Design and Art* (London: Arts League of Service, 1928), unpaginated.

⁸⁷ Irving Lavin, “Abstraction in Modern Painting: A Comparison”, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 19, no. 6 (1960): p.166.

in order to evoke in the spectator's mind the appropriate associated ideas'.⁸⁸ By the thirties, abstraction served as the mainstream vocabulary of British Modernism. An example can be seen with The Society's ultimate move towards abstraction under the leadership of Nicholson.

In which ways exactly did Hodgkins's and Morris's brand of Modernism engage with modernity throughout the interwar period? From their initial encounter during the First World War as well as throughout the interwar years, Hodgkins and Morris shared more than just 'sincere' painting, as stated in The Society's manifesto. The collaboration between these two artists brought their respective styles together to create new and characteristic visualizations by synthesizing their French frame of reference with their foreign identities in a country which was not their own, in addition to their transformation of past methods of depiction into modern twentieth-century ones. Thus, their joint visual language, elusively cloaked, transgressed national boundaries and even temporality. Hodgkins's and Morris's joint visualizations was very different from Corbett's characterization of British Modernism as one of 'retreat, evasion and concealment of modernity's impact'.⁸⁹ Instead, Hodgkins and Morris confronted 'the modern problem', which extended beyond just abstraction, in a distinctive way. For these two Modernists, dealing with 'the modern problem' involved selecting motifs, which fused the inner with the outer through the merging of abstraction and figuration. By the twenties Hodgkins and Morris chose to produce still lifes, landscapes and a combination of still life-landscapes, influenced by a number of Post-Impressionists from their time spent in Paris, with a preference for capturing the inner spirit, or essence, of the subject including inanimate material objects. In 1912, Wassily Kandinsky also wrote on this concept in his essay "On the Problem of Form":

The form is the outer expression of the inner content. Therefore one should not make a deity of form. And one should fight for the form insofar as it can

⁸⁸ Fry, *A Roger Fry Reader*, 99. This article, "Post Impressionism" is the lecture that Fry delivered and was reprinted from *The Fortnightly Review* (1 May 1911): pp.856-67.

⁸⁹ Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art, 1914-30*, p.1.

serve as a means of expression of the inner resonance. Therefore one should not seek salvation in one form.⁹⁰

In other words, Kandinsky, like Hodgkins and Morris, believed that to a certain extent the Modernist preoccupation with form should be manifested through elevating the 'inner content' or spirituality to the level of the outer or visible surface. Depicting the exterior physicality itself should not be the sole purpose of the artist, but the unification of both realms should be sought.

In Hodgkins's and Morris's art, there was no 'retreat', and they never resorted to 'concealment', as they both pursued the roots of modernity through the materiality and spirituality of their subjects. Instead, Hodgkins's and Morris's version of 'modernity's impact' was far subtler than the radical abstractions of the Vorticists or the ideological purity of the International Style in that they echoed the Romantic propensity for opposites not just in the exterior and interior realms of their motifs. Both artists sought for the inclusion of interactive and dynamic complementary forces: '*coincidentia oppositorum*: simultaneously (or alternately) revolutionary and counterrevolutionary, individualistic and communitarian, cosmopolitan and nationalistic, realist and fantastic, retrograde and utopian...'⁹¹ Their engagement with modernity may have looked backwards in time but only to reshape the present through a Romantic Modernist critique. Nevertheless, Corbett would most likely define Hodgkins's and Morris's art as typical of English painters of the postwar period, through their 'erosion of modern experience' and instead replacing modernity with an 'adaptive "modernism"'.⁹² Why has the aggressive response to a "Masculinist" modernity, which assumes explicit "experiences of war", been accepted as the definitive and official cover image for British Modernism at this time? Is not a more 'domestic'⁹³ form, which confirms the critical role of the decorative in Modernism, just as compelling and equally as significant?

⁹⁰ Wassily Kandinsky, 'On the Problem of Form' in Herschel B. Chipp (ed.), *Theories of Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p.157.

⁹¹ Michael Löwy and Robert Sayre, *Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity*, translated by Catherine Porter (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001), p.1.

⁹² Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art, 1914-30*, pp.3-4.

⁹³ This term is in opposition to the 'anti-domestic' as discussed in Reed, *Bloomsbury Rooms: Modernism, Subculture, and Domesticity*, pp.2-3.

During the early decades of the twentieth century, several British Modernists believed that modern art ought to have an ‘all-over’ decorative effect— that is, flat fields of patterns rather than illusionistic representations, as prompted by Fry in his book *Vision and Design*. Decoration was integral to Hodgkins’s and Morris’s work and, ultimately, ceased to be decorative in that the role of design was incredibly significant in both artists’ work. This was largely due to the fact that both Hodgkins and Morris also had experience working as skilled designers of prints and textiles. Despite modest working trips abroad, invariably staying in inexpensive lodgings, Hodgkins faced constant pecuniary troubles throughout the twenties, as I have previously addressed. Few of her paintings sold, as with other Modernists, during the bleak period of economic depression after the war. Desperately in need to gain a steady income through employment, Hodgkins worked for six months as a fabric designer at the Calico Printers’ Association in Manchester in 1925. Not many of Hodgkins’s designs survive but those that do (**Figs. 39 & 40**) feature Modernist concerns she had previously experimented with, such as expressive color arrangements and deliberate abstraction, in other media. Soon after she began her position, Hodgkins was sent to Paris to broaden her knowledge in design. It was there that she visited the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs*, which she described as ‘an ultra-modern Show ... all marvellously well done & displayed— that is all except the British Section, which quite failed to express itself in modern terms, & as a consequence looked old fashioned & dingy beside the faultless order & taste of France....’⁹⁴ Returning to her work in Manchester, Hodgkins now drew from an array of new influences, including the formal elements found in the applied arts of works by Art Nouveau and Art Deco artists, as well as art connecting to her colonial roots. For instance, *Textile design, no. I* (**Fig. 40**), features Art Deco diamond patterning and resembles the rectangular units of warm tones seen in *Textile design, no. IV* (**Fig. 41**). Both are reminiscent of the geometric designs and earthy colors of the *tapa*, or bark, cloth found in the rich history of Antipodean and Polynesian art.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Frances Hodgkins to Isabel Field, 29 Aug 1925, Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.391.

⁹⁵ Lett-Haines, Recording for BBC Documentary of Frances Hodgkins, 1969: Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.11.

Having earned enough of an income to continue painting in Britain, Hodgkins left the Calico Printers' Association after six months, since she was eager to 'escape the tedium of textiles...' and what she referred to as the 'monotonous life of a designer'.⁹⁶

In 1929, Morris, too, became involved with commercial work designing textiles for Cresta Silks, a textile manufacturer owned by Tom Heron in Hertfordshire. Morris submitted a variety of designs to Cresta including 'China Tea', 'Hostess', 'Design for Dark Lady', 'Souvenir of Childhood and Lac de Tunis', but, unfortunately, I have not come across any of these designs from this period.⁹⁷ However, a later, untitled screen-printed linen (**Fig. 42**) still resides safely in the V&A collection. At first glance, the decorative features of this richly ornamented textile resemble Persian Islamic art with an abstracted vegetal design, but Morris instead challenges expectations by also including unlikely fauna such as birds, lizards and even cats. Along with Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell, Morris also designed fabrics for Allan Walton Textiles, an example of which can be seen with the botanical print, *Iris* (**Fig. 43**). This slightly more traditional textile with the repetitive iris patterning was possibly inspired by Japanese designs in which floral and naturalistic themes were simplified in order to attain a degree of purity, while simultaneously producing optically striking results. Hodgkins's and Morris's experimentations and arrangements of lines, shapes, volumes and colors in the textile medium conversely translated into their art, whether through similar spatial ambiguities or expressive qualities of their chosen colors, for instance.

Beyond presenting Hodgkins's and Morris's singular friendship, in the next chapter, this thesis will reveal what set this creative pair apart from their British contemporaries during the thirties and forties. By examining these two British Modernists together for the first time, I will demonstrate their assimilation of French aesthetics into their art made in Britain, their blurring of boundaries between abstraction and figuration and the immaterial inner quality of their

⁹⁶ Frances Hodgkins to Isabel Field, 3 December 1926, Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.396.

⁹⁷ Morphet has written about letters exchanged between Lett and Tom Heron, but does not state in which archive this correspondence resides. Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.33.

materiality, which all lead to their distinctive development of Romantic Modernism. With a further exploration of Romantic Modernism, I will also argue that Hodgkins and Morris were able to achieve a solution to 'the modern problem'. Thus, I will prove the importance of taking a closer look at the links between Hodgkins's and Morris's art.

Chapter II: *Material and Spiritual Manifestations of Romantic Modernism*

Throughout the thirties and into the early years of the Second World War, Hodgkins and Morris turned towards Britain's Arcadia,¹ both in their way of life and in their depictions of still lifes, landscapes and still life-landscape combinations. Both Hodgkins and Morris exchanged early twentieth-century methods of expression, particularly— war-torn landscapes and the idioms of industrialization and development, as well as their consequent effects on humanity and the environment, for timeless and tranquil rural scenes of nature's bounty, which would later darken and turn eerily surrealistic with the onset of the Second World War. Unlike the Vorticists' nationalistic tendencies, I will argue that Hodgkins's and Morris's 'modernity of experience'² did not have powerful patriotic undertones but instead expressed a far more subtle form of reverence for Britain by setting the foundations for Romantic Modernism. In this chapter, I will propose that mapping the countryside with poetic perspectives proved to be a mere starting point for these two artists who evolved the atmospheric landscapes of British Romanticism into their own strand of Romantic Modernism by juxtaposing timelessly pastoral backdrops with still lifes in a way which highlighted both Hodgkins's and Morris's innate sense of design and form.³

Through their deliberate omissions of characteristically modern references, their still lifes and still life-landscapes came to represent modernity through an unexpected lens, one rooted in the past traditions of British Romanticism. Similarly to the British Romanticists of the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, both Hodgkins and Morris sought to capture their deep empathy with the natural

¹ Simon Hucker, *Ivon Hitchens: Unseen Paintings from the 30s* (London: Jonathon Clark Fine Art, 2009), unpaginated; Hucker originally used the term 'English Arcadia', but I have chosen 'British' for my purposes.

² Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art, 1914-30*, p.2.

³ On design, Frank Rutter wrote, "The army of art had so cumbered itself with baggage that, staggering under its self-imposed load, it was hardly able to bear, and almost unable to wield, its most effective weapon. That weapon always has been, still is, and ever will be design". Rutter, *Revolution in Art* (London: Art News Press, 1910), pp.14-15. As previously addressed, Roger Fry was a leading proponent on the formal aspects of design in modern painting. In fact, Fry admired Morris's work for its strength in design, see Christopher Neve and Tony Venison, "A Painter and His Garden: Cedric Morris at Benton End", *Country Life* CLXV, no. 4271 (17 May 1979), pp.1532-34.

environment expressed through the poetic⁴ mood of their pictures. Nevertheless, their associations with 'Englishness', as discussed in the previous chapter, eluded aspects of 'defensive... realities', as they continued to travel throughout Britain and the Continent with unguarded sensibilities designed to unify manifold artistic visions into a distinctive visual language, which I am defining as Romantic Modernism. During the beginning of the decade, the works of eighteenth and nineteenth-century British Romantics were recognized as truly national achievements. In 1934 the Royal Academy hosted an exhibition *British Art, c. 1000-1860*, which was to serve two main purposes: 'a comprehensive view of British Art... selected with the purpose of showing that the creations of British artists, in their special aims and excellences, are well worthy of comparison with those of the artists of other lands' and to 'demonstrate to other nations the important part that the British School has played in the development of European Art'.⁵ Amongst prominent portraits and landscapes by academicians such as Johan Zoffany, Joshua Reynolds and John Constable were paintings by Samuel Palmer, William Blake and J.M.W. Turner, since the British painter was also considered to belong 'to a nation of poets' and has, therefore, 'never shunned and has often deliberately courted the use of association and symbolism to create a definitely romantic art'.⁶

⁴ Like many of the works of Romantic Modernism and Neo-Romanticism, the descriptive adjective 'poetic' was and still is often used to describe Hodgkins's and Morris's works. See, for instance, 'Her [Hodgkins's] mature work was characterized by a... poetic harmony...' in Alan Windsor, *Handbook of Modern British Painting, 1900-1980* (England: Scolar Press, 1992), p.142. Morris's pictures have been described as 'wrapped in a poetic haze' in Norbert Lynton, *The Flower Show: An Exhibition on the Theme of Flowers in Twentieth Century British Art* (Stoke-on-Trent: City Museum and Art Gallery, 1986), p.20. Nash frequently wrote on the topic of poetry in art, 'The spirit which has led painters in England to express themselves is a lyric thing. Our best artists in any age have always possessed great poetic qualities'. Paul Nash, "Nature, Life and Art", in Nash, *Paul Nash: Writings on Art*, p.66. Nash also wrote, 'By poetry I do not mean, of course, the written word alone, but the essence which is distilled in thought and makes itself known in many different forms— in painted and sculptured images— in diverse objects, natural or designed, but, beyond all, in the idea itself however suggested or compelled'. In Paul Nash, "A New Poetry" in Nash, *Paul Nash: Writings on Art*, p.140. Other artists who shared this idea include Ben Nicholson who wrote, 'A painting if its anything has a poetic reality more real than life itself'. Ben Nicholson letter to Charles Harrison, Tate Archive, TGA 8717.3.1.22.

⁵ See Andrew Causey, "English Art and 'The National Character', 1933-34", in Corbett, Holt and Russell (eds.), *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past, 1880-1940*, pp.275-302. Quotes from preface by William Llewellyn, *Exhibition of British Art, c. 1000-1860*, exhibition catalogue (London, William Clowes and Sons Ltd., 1934), p. v.

⁶ Introduction by W.G. Constable, *Ibid*, p. xiv. See, for instance, Palmer's *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (#558), *Ibid.*, p.210. See, Blake's *The Canterbury Pilgrims* (#573) and *Adam Naming the Beasts*

Additionally, reproductions of works by Romantics such as Palmer and Fuseli appeared in magazines such as *Axis*, which served as the literary voice for the British modern movement from 1935 until 1937.⁷ Although the publication was influential in shedding light on contemporary European trends, both John Piper and Geoffrey Grigson asserted the values of Romantic paintings in their co-authored article “England’s Climate”, by referencing Blake’s poetry— ‘Spirit, who lov’st Britannia’s Isle...’,⁸ along with noting Palmer’s powerfully felt scenes of rural life as he ‘acknowledged his environment into passion’.⁹ Another significant visual arts magazine, *Apollo*, reproduced images of Palmer’s sepias for the first time in 1936.¹⁰ Hodgkins was an ardent admirer of Palmer, whom she referred to as ‘that massive and holy man’ and expressed her disappointment in not having known the artist himself, writing, ‘What a pity he is not alive!’¹¹ From the thirties and onwards, critics increasingly described Morris’s work in ways which aligned his art with the Romantics, since the artist was skillful in demonstrating ‘wonderment at the beauty of nature’,¹² ‘the essence of the subject’,¹³ ‘the very spirit of his scene,’ which is marked ‘with his own emotion...’¹⁴ and that ‘...younger men [Morris]... above all seek originality and self expression...’¹⁵ For a 1968 retrospective exhibition of Morris’s work, Lett wrote, ‘I believe that Cedric Morris...is the most *romantic* painter that the United Kingdom has produced since the time of the Impressionists... the... pictures display the exploration and faithful rendering of a unique vision’.¹⁶

(#575), *Ibid.*, pp.217-18. See, Turner’s *Mercury and Herse* (#692) and *Salisbury Cathedral* (#701), *Ibid.*, p.259, 262.

⁷ Geoffrey Grigson and John Piper, “England’s Climate”, *Axis*, 7 (Autumn 1936), p.11.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.6.

¹⁰ Rachel Campbell-Johnston, *Mysterious Wisdom: The Life and Work of Samuel Palmer* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 2011), p.332.

¹¹ Quoted in Avenal McKinnon, *Frances Hodgkins 1869-1947* (London: Whitford & Hughes Gallery, 1990), unpaginated. Frances Hodgkins to Jane Saunders, 4 January 1944, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.543.

¹² Chamot, *Modern Painting in England*, p.97.

¹³ Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.54.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.45.

¹⁵ T.W. Earp, “The Edward Marsh Collection: Modern British Art”, *The Studio* XCVII, 432 (March 1929), pp.183-4.

¹⁶ Introduction by Arthur Lett-Haines, *Cedric Morris: Retrospective* (Cardiff: National Museum of Wales, 1968), unpaginated.

Hodgkins, too, was classified as a 'romantic, lyrical painter'.¹⁷ In fact, the majority of art critics at this time such as Rutter suggested that revolutionary art was 'an affair of the emotions' and defined a 'great artist' as '... a rebel because he finds existing conventions hindering and hampering the full expression of his emotions'.¹⁸

By the beginning of the forties, a modern twist on the work of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century British Romantics reached a dominant position in the British avant-garde art world. Art critic Raymond Mortimer had coined the term 'Neo-Romantic', and his 1942 review of the exhibition *New Movements in Art: Contemporary Work in England* was the first to include Hodgkins together with a cluster of 'visionary' artists like Graham Sutherland, John Piper, John Minton, Paul Nash and Henry Moore.¹⁹ Neo-Romantic artists were categorized as such due to their focus on poetic images of landscapes marked by the presence of humankind. Unlike the existing literature, I am arguing for the first time, that Hodgkins, as well as Morris, who was never typically described as a Neo-Romantic, do not necessarily belong in this category but instead should be viewed as leading pioneers of the critically-neglected movement, which I am referring to as Romantic Modernism. Later in this chapter, I will present my proposals that Romantic Modernism, and thus the works of both Hodgkins and Morris, in fact, served as the foundation and the beginnings for later Neo-Romanticism.

An example of Hodgkins's and Morris's merging of landscapes and still lifes with a thoroughly modern approach to design can be seen with their experimental act of framing, which destabilizes the conventional separation that occurs between space and form. Jacques Derrida has written about framing as an active, philosophical construct rather than a golden, Baroque object that simply contains a canvas, for instance:

A frame is essentially constructed and therefore fragile: such would be the essence or truth of the frame. If it had any truth. But this "truth" can no

¹⁷ Eardley Knollys, "Obituaries- Frances Hodgkins", *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 89, no. 532 (July 1947), p.197.

¹⁸ Frank Rutter, *Revolution in Art* (London: The Art News Press, 1910), pp.4-5.

¹⁹ Raymond Mortimer, "Painting and Humanism", *New Statesman and Nation* (28 March 1942).

longer be a “truth”, it no more defines the transcendentalty than it does the accidentality of the frame...²⁰

As Derrida has stated, the viewer can only engage in the artist’s deliberate manipulation of contours, edges and boundaries, and through this process the artist is able to reveal her own structure of truths. Primarily associated with purely interior settings, the subject of still lifes assume new meanings in Hodgkins’s and Morris’s works as they are combined with unexpected landscapes. Hodgkins and Morris were able to break free from conventionalized devices of seventeenth-century Dutch containment, for example, with the incorporation of windows into their interior compositions. Through Hodgkins’s and Morris’s nearly sacred, celebratory still life-landscapes, interior scenes are now set in front of expansive landscapes. This progressive approach widens the traditional narrative by portraying values extending beyond straightforward associations with the pastoral and by emblemizing expressions of an alternative perception to the rapidly modernizing world. The motif of views through windows can be traced to German, Russian, Danish, British and French Romantic paintings of the early nineteenth century, where windows often served as metaphors for unfulfilled yearnings.²¹ The particular innovation of these paintings was the positioning of the window, placed in the center of the composition, so that attention would be directed through the window onto a distant view rather than serving only as a source of light.²² Unlike these genre scenes, which often feature contemplative figures at the window, Hodgkins and Morris forgo the figure and instead concentrate on domesticating

²⁰ Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, translated by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p.73. Meyer Schapiro started the modern discourse on the role of the frame with his exploration of the frame as a limit. In Meyer Schapiro, “On some Problems in the Semiotics of Visual Art: Field and Vehicle in Image-Signs”, *Semiotica*, 1 (1969): pp.223-42. Before that, Kant wrote on the frame as an ‘external complement’. In Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, translated by James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961). More contemporary literature on the frame includes Paul Duro (ed.), *The Rhetoric of the Frame: Essays on the Boundaries of the Artwork* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

²¹ Sabine Rewald, *Rooms with a View: The Open Window in the Nineteenth Century* (New York and New Haven, Conn.: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2011).

²² Lorenz Eitner, “The Open Window and the Storm-Tossed Boat: An Essay in the Iconography of Romanticism”, *Art Bulletin* XXXVII (December 1955), p.285.

landscapes through their use of still life objects, both man-made and natural.²³ Origins for this method of depiction can be traced to French influences of the later nineteenth to early twentieth centuries with Impressionists such as Claude Monet, Fauves like Henri Matisse and Raoul Dufy, Post-Impressionists like Paul Gauguin and Nabi artists such as Pierre Bonnard.²⁴ Interpreted as simultaneous signs of privacy and of access, these windows open onto tranquil harbors and bucolic countryside panoramas.²⁵ Hodgkins and Morris, as well as their contemporaries in The Seven and Five Society, began to explore framing still lifes against windows with views of the distance beyond during the late twenties.²⁶ However, it was not until the thirties that these artists truly experimented with this technique and evolved it into a distinctive feature of British Romantic Modernism or what has previously been referred to as the “seeds” of neo-Romanticism’.²⁷

The unpredictability of British weather meant that working outdoors, more often than not, was less likely for Hodgkins and Morris who favored such practices. Thus, a plentitude of windows was an absolute necessity— in Hodgkins’s studio spaces such as at the Flatford Mill in Constable’s country and with Morris’s East Anglian estates, The Pound and Benton End. Not only did windows serve as a functional method of reaching nature when Britain’s weather conditions, which Hodgkins described as ‘horrible’,²⁸ restricted access, but they also provided a means for Modernist self-reflexive investigations into the nature of seeing and

²³ An early “romantic” use of the figure positioned near a window is to be found in the undated drawing by Henry Fuseli, *Girl Reading in Front of a Window*, Lowinsky collection, in footnote #8 in Eitner, “The Open Window and the Storm— Tossed Boat: An Essay in the Iconography of Romanticism”, p.284.

²⁴ See, for instance, Claude Monet’s *At the Window, Argenteuil*, 1873, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 83.38. See Henri Matisse’s *Open Window, Collioure*, 1905, National Gallery of Art, Smithsonian, 1998.74.7. See, Raoul Dufy’s *Open Window at Saint-Jeannet*, c. 1926-7, Tate, T03565; Paul Gauguin’s *Still Life, Vase with Flowers on the Window*, 1881, Musée d’Orsay, RF 1953 6; Pierre Bonnard’s *The Window*, 1925, Tate, N04494.

²⁵ Ian Jeffrey, “Public Problems and Private Experience in British Art and Literature” in Judy Collins (ed.), *Landscape in Britain* (London: Arts Council, 1983), p.32.

²⁶ See, for instance, Winifred Nicholson’s *Flowers at a Window*, 1939, Birmingham Museums Trust, 2001P6; David Jones’s *Curtained Outlook*, 1932, British Council, P125.

²⁷ Mark Glazebrook, *The Seven & Five Society, 1920-35: An Exhibition* (Southport: Michael Parkin Fine Art Ltd., 1979), unpaginated.

²⁸ Hodgkins often lamented about British weather. For instance, see Frances Hodgkins to Lucy Wertheim, c. 3 August 1930, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.430.

representation by joining interior and exterior worlds. As windows impose boundaries, spatial considerations come into the forefront when cropping an otherwise infinite landscape.

Both Hodgkins and Morris were able to successfully unite man-made, domestic and natural objects with distant views through divisions of areas into a harmonious whole. I propose that their knowledge of French painting led to the discovery of these distinctive technical characteristics and ideas, which they then further developed into their own canon of British Romantic Modernism. I will now look at two comparative French paintings alongside works by Hodgkins and Morris in order to illustrate this idea, although it is unclear whether or not Hodgkins and Morris were familiar with these two particular paintings. Hodgkins's *Wings over Water* (Fig. 44) depicts the view from her window at Bodinnick, Cornwall, and elicits a fruitful comparison to an earlier French painting by Bonnard, *The Window* (Fig. 45). Foreshortened and tightly squeezed into the foreground, a table covered with books, paper, an inkwell and a quill pen is adjacent to the open window frame in Bonnard's painting. The town of Le Cannet, cradled in a bucolic landscape, fills the majority of the work, while Bonnard's wife, Marthe, can be seen in the nearby balcony. The quintessential South of France sunlight fills the interior joining the external and domestic scenes into a unified quite rectilinear and carefully structured world. As in Hodgkins's two preparatory drawings, *Wings over Water* also reveals a fluid rhythm between interior and exterior spaces, since distinctions between the two are blurred through the flattening of objects in the foreground, as is the case in Bonnard's *The Window*. However, in *Wings over Water* Hodgkins further experiments with spatial planning, unlike Bonnard's strict arrangements, and distorts the spaces of foreground, middleground and background through her use of lighting, choice of objects and modern perspectival techniques. Unlike Bonnard's warm and cheerful glow, there is an unnatural sort of light, which seems to be artificial, as the interior space is brightly lit and spills outwards into a darkened seascape. Instead of Bonnard's use of man-made objects, Hodgkins focuses on the natural, blending both worlds further by transposing outside life into the human sphere— seashells on top of a crumpled cloth, two potted plants and a vase with

flowers displayed in the foreground. The middle ground then transitions to a colorful parrot perched on top of a picket fence, and in the distance a luminous sea infinitely extends beyond its rambling shoreline.²⁹ Framed by billowing curtains, the objects on the window ledge, along with the distant view, are treated with a free, loose brushwork of thin, shimmering layers of paint, almost as if the medium were watercolor, combining separate components into one continuous whole.³⁰ Both Bonnard and Hodgkins use a similar hovering perspective as the viewer looks down onto the external world from the safety of their castle-like fortress, almost trying to signify mankind's power over nature.

As the decade progressed, mounting fears over the possibility of the Second World War limited movement and again forced citizens to take refuge indoors. Thus, windows offered an alternative means to accessing forbidden landscapes. Painted in 1943, Morris's *Iris Seedlings* (Fig. 46) offers insight into the often-overlooked wartime restrictions on everyday life such as the ability to access windows, especially when compared to peaceful, inter-war paintings such as Dufy's *Open Window at Saint-Jeannet* (Fig. 47). In Dufy's painting, a delicate vase with nearly transparent flowers sits on a windowsill with the windowpanes thrust wide open onto terraced hills, gardens and houses. Despite its central positioning, the vase assumes a rather insignificant status, as it is overpowered by the decoratively colorful view of Saint-Jeannet, which extends upwards encompassing the majority of the composition. Instead, in Morris's *Iris Seedlings*, the artist inventively presents a jug filled with irises in the foreground, which semi-obscures what at first appears to be a closed window overlooking rolling green hills and a bright, blue sky but upon closer inspection, in fact, reveals itself to be a framed painting of a pastoral scene.³¹ The close-up, frontal presentation of flowers juxtaposed with the fictionalized

²⁹ The inclusion of birds occurred in Hodgkins's art and quite frequently in Morris's works. In the same year, Hodgkins also painted *Cedric Morris (Man with Macaw)* (Fig. 34). Morris's paintings with birds will be addressed later in this chapter.

³⁰ Hodgkins was primarily known for her Impressionist watercolors, before she settled in Cornwall during the First World War, and she continued to develop and expand her expertise in the medium throughout her career.

³¹ According to Christopher Neve, there were a thousand iris seedlings at Morris's Benton End garden, many of which Morris bred himself. Christopher Neve, *Unquiet Landscape: Places and Ideas in Twentieth-Century English Painting* (London: Faber & Faber, 1990), p.50.

landscape beyond may allude to an unnerving sense of confinement during a time of conflict. Unlike Dufy's painting, the vase of irises takes monumental significance in Morris's work, perhaps overcompensating in a way to be able to experience nature, despite limited contact with the outside world.

When circumstances permitted, however, both Hodgkins and Morris preferred to free their still lifes from traditional interior settings by arranging the assemblages outside in the landscapes themselves. Morris's *Floreat* (Fig. 48) features one of the artist's favorite still life subjects—arrangements of cut flowers exuberant with energy. Set in the immediate foreground, centrally placed and filling the majority of the canvas, Morris obscures much of the landscape setting, in which his still life of flowers sits with a 'jungle-like density'.³² The landscape 'appears to be a pretext for a darker lower half and a luminous, benedictional upper half' offering 'not a factual account of anything but a vision' with the bouquet's 'nearness and heraldic frontality... wrapped in a poetic haze'.³³ At the time Hodgkins painted *Still Life with Lilies* (Fig. 49), the artist was staying at a cottage at Haywards Heath, Sussex, and wrote:

I should do some good work here— the bush fires blackened the country side [sic] but it is all now gently screened by palest green— & the blossoms so lovely— a sweet moment & I feel great & big with inspiration & will to paint— rain however has damped my spirit...³⁴

Amidst the ashen-colored, smokey landscape, enlarged jugs of arum lilies assume exaggerated proportions compared to the thin, calligraphic-like trees in the distance. The surrealistically inflated scale of the still life objects versus miniature aspects of the landscape and the hazy coloring produce a melancholic, dream-like quality, which prefigures the mature Neo-Romantic works of Piper, Nash and Sutherland.³⁵ I believe that this work by Hodgkins is one example which largely

³² Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.87.

³³ Lynton, *The Flower Show: An Exhibition on the Theme of Flowers in Twentieth Century British Art*, p.20.

³⁴ Frances Hodgkins to Lucy Wertheim, c. 4 May 1929, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.415.

³⁵ McKinnon, *Frances Hodgkins 1869-1947*, unpaginated.

contributed to the development of Romantic Modernism and, thus, inspired future Neo-Romantics. In fact, Sutherland later recalled,

... about the year 1929 or 1930... a whisper went around that there was an artist of originality working in England. Frances Hodgkins became, at that time, quite a myth and I can remember even such small things as people saying that she mounted her gouaches in the "French" way, and that she drew landscapes in front of which were placed still lifes. This seemed, at the time, a daring procedure...³⁶

Behind Hodgkins's and Morris's still lifes and still life-landscapes linger an 'imprisoned spirit',³⁷ one which serves as the source of animating the inanimate. Paul Nash has argued that 'this spirit is of the land; *genius loci* is indeed almost its conception', and 'its expression... I would say... is almost entirely lyrical'.³⁸ This particular characteristic of British painting has also been designated as a form of 'emotionalism',³⁹ 'heightened inward awareness'⁴⁰ and 'visionary conception'⁴¹ with the use of color, which becomes 'expressive to the spirit'.⁴² However, I would like to expand this concept beyond just the 'spirit' of the pastoral to encompass man-made objects found in both interior and exterior settings in the still lifes and still life-landscapes of Hodgkins and Morris.

Although writings by Nash, as well as other critics during the thirties such as Herbert Read, identified the need for an international view of Modernism that would divert English art away from its insular roots of the twenties, the question of 'What is English taste'⁴³ remained at the core of artistic values.⁴⁴ National identity continued to be a preoccupation as British art exhibitions, such as the one I have previously addressed, re-evaluated the meaning of British art. The artist as designer

³⁶ June Opie, "The Quest for Frances Hodgkins", *Ascent* (December 1969), p.60.

³⁷ Paul Nash, "Art Now, Contributions to Unit One" in Nash, *Paul Nash: Writings on Art*, p.109.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.109.

³⁹ Introduction by Geoffrey Grigson, *British Watercolours and Drawings of the Twentieth Century*, British Council, 1955-57, unpaginated, Tate Archive, TGA 200817.2.81.

⁴⁰ Patrick Heron, *The Changing Forms of Art* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1955), p.155.

⁴¹ Wiedmann, *Romantic Roots in Modern Art*, p.52.

⁴² Chamot, *Modern Painting in England*, p.68.

⁴³ Paul Nash, "A Characteristic" in Nash, *Paul Nash: Writings on Art*, p.25. In this piece, Nash does not distinguish between English and British.

⁴⁴ For Read's writings see Herbert Read, "Our Terminology", *Axis 1* (January 1935): pp.6-8. Instead, insularity was not an issue for Hodgkins and Morris, since they spent most of the twenties on the Continent and continually traveled during the thirties.

and craftsman connected to preindustrial links with the eighteenth century, proved to be at the core of a distinctively British canon.⁴⁵ Valued characteristics were determined not by the vigorous and revolutionary currents of Vorticism but instead responded to national associations of Romanticism with an art featuring ‘an individuality and refinement of craftsmanship which are peculiarly English’.⁴⁶ As Nash wrote, ‘I do not set a Toby Jug against an Etruscan vase or a Staffordshire Spotted Dog beside a Ming ornament. Their value lies in the fact that they have individuality, they have character, and their character is English’.⁴⁷ For Read, pottery illustrated ‘the relationship between truth to materials, the handmade and the vitality of the object...’ and through the artistic process ‘pottery epitomized the relationship between material, the individual creator and drawing on Bergsonian theory, a vital object’.⁴⁸

When viewing the two artists’ works together for the first time, I illustrate how both Hodgkins and Morris seemed to have had a particular fascination for ceramics— notably clay pots with houseplants, simple vases holding bouquets of flowers and kitchen dishes and bowls, since such objects were repeatedly featured in their still lifes and still life-landscapes. The Seven and Five Society exhibitions with Hodgkins’s and Morris’s works often included pottery by Hodgkins’s and Morris’s friends William Staite Murray, who was a member of the Society from 1928 until 1935, and Amy Krauss.⁴⁹ Morris and Staite Murray also held simultaneous one-man shows at three separate occasions between 1924 and 1928.⁵⁰ At one point, Morris even crossed medias by creating designs for application to Staite Murray’s pots.⁵¹ Derived from the craft tradition of ‘peasant work’, the revival of English

⁴⁵ Many have written on the significance of craftsmanship in British art but see, for instance, Arthur Howell, “An Artists’ Colony for Wales”, *Western Mail (Cardiff)* (14 July 1931). Tate Archive, TGA 735.1. Howell states, “The craftsmanship of the Britisher is supreme.”

⁴⁶ *Exhibition of British Art, c. 1000-1860*, p. xii.

⁴⁷ Paul Nash, “An English Ballet”, in Nash, *Paul Nash: Writings on Art*, p.43.

⁴⁸ Corbett et al. (eds.), *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past, 1880-1940*, p.232.

⁴⁹ Ian Buchanan, Michael Dunn and Elizabeth Eastmond, *Frances Hodgkins: Paintings and Drawings* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 1995), p.59.

⁵⁰ Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.36.

⁵¹ According to Morphet, one was reproduced in the catalogue of Sotheby’s sale of ceramics on 29 April 1983, lots 224 in Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.36.

slipware, which had been lost during the industrial revolution, continued from the Arts and Crafts movement and was part of a wider interest in English pottery marked by events such as the Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition of *English Medieval Art* in 1930.⁵² In *English Pottery*, Bernard Rackham and Read correlate a specifically English tradition between the ‘traditional handmade methods of pre-industrial pottery’ and an ‘insistence on the primacy of utility’, while conjoining this association of traditional craft and national identity with a ‘rural domesticity’.⁵³ The potter Bernard Leach also established a connection between ‘Englishness’ and ‘the domestic sphere’ in his slipware works, which he referred to as ‘domestic ware’.⁵⁴ This ‘domestic ware’ would later be characterized by critic J.P. Hodin as ‘warm in character... and homely in color... suitable... for simple, country life, the extreme opposite to life in the metropolis’.⁵⁵ My research analyzes the objects in Hodgkins’s and Morris’s still lifes set in the pastoral countryside and, therefore, draws a parallel alongside the production of British pottery throughout the thirties and into the early forties.⁵⁶

I would like to argue that Hodgkins’s and Morris’s frequent depiction of ‘domestic ware’ placed in both private realms and rural settings did not so much reflect a continued crisis of insularity spilling over from the twenties after the First World War but instead demonstrated personal investigations into the process of creation, while, simultaneously, fitting into a broader British Modernist agenda of critics like Read promoting the individuality of the maker. The extensive literature on still lifes, the genre, deemed inconsequential in the art historical hierarchy until the late nineteenth century, has mainly been interpreted as a mechanical method of

⁵² Corbett et al. (eds.), *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past, 1880-1940*, p.236.

⁵³ Ibid, p.237.

⁵⁴ Bernard Leach, *Beyond East and West: Memoires, Portraits and Essays* (London: Faber & Faber, 1985), p.146.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p.25.

⁵⁶ Although excluding Hodgkins and Morris, this concept is discussed in Chris Stephens, “Ben Nicholson: Modernism, Craft and the English Vernacular”, in Corbett et al. (eds.), *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past, 1880-1940*, pp.225-47.

copying inanimate objects involving the eye rather than the mind.⁵⁷ Yet, by expanding upon the doctrines of their predecessors such as Cézanne, Hodgkins and Morris continued to perceive the inherent essence of objects in their still lifes in order to reveal the subjectivity or the spirituality of the things themselves. Hodgkins and Morris did not necessarily follow Impressionist prescriptions such as capturing modulations of light vibrating off the petals of flowers or that of Cubism with its fracturing of geometrical forms into abstract planes but, nevertheless, painted their still lifes with an 'aesthetic eye'⁵⁸ narrowing in on an intuitive delight in formal pattern and design. In the words of critic H.S. Ede, Hodgkins's and Morris's still lifes are 'not so much pictures as ideas',⁵⁹ and their ordinary jugs, pots and bowls translate into objects of spiritual divinity.

Up until this point, I have revealed how the eighteenth and nineteenth-century Romantics, as well as the Continental avant-garde, most notably the French, provided a foundation for the 'Aesthetics of Inwardness'⁶⁰ from which Hodgkins's and Morris's pictorial language evolved into its own modern interpretation. Through their development and implementation of Romantic Modernism, a movement which redefined British Modernism in the early decades of the twentieth century and eventually led to Neo-Romanticism, Hodgkins and Morris implemented a 'proper sphere of invention and visionary conception'.⁶¹ The subsequent sections of this chapter will demonstrate how these two Modernists rejected imitation and realism, as they produced work 'concerned with feeling, an art... turned inward', as

⁵⁷ Calouste Gulbenkian Fundação et al., *In the Presence of Things: Four Centuries of European Still-Life Painting*, Vol. 1 (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2010), p.13. For seminal publications see, for instance, Charles Sterling, *Still life Painting from Antiquity to the Present Time* (Paris: Editions Pierre Tisné, 1959); Pierre Skira, *Still Life: A History* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1989); Norbert Schneider, *Still Life: Still Life Painting in the Early Modern Period* (Köln: Benedikt Taschen, 1994).

⁵⁸ 'Gertrude Stein once asked Matisse and Picasso the same question: is it with the same eye that you look at the tomato you are going to put into a still life and the tomato that appears on your plate? Matisse said they were different eyes: it was an "aesthetic eye" that he turned upon the tomato to be painted' in Heron, *The Changing Forms of Art*, p.96.

⁵⁹ The Seven and Five Society, exhibition catalogue, Tate Archive, GB 70 TGA 849.

⁶⁰ 'What mattered was not the external object but the artist's emotional response to it, the pictorial and poetic instinct it aroused him in,' see, Wiedmann, *Romantic Roots in Modern Art*, p.83.

⁶¹ William Blake, *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, edited by Geoffrey Keynes (United Kingdom: The Bodley Head Ltd, 1961), p.607.

the Romantics had done a century earlier when they embraced ‘inwardness’ which ‘drove the artist away from visible nature into the invisible depths of the self’.⁶² Through their revelations beyond the materiality of both natural and man-made objects, Hodgkins’s and Morris’s works, which this thesis critically examines together for the first time, convey their crucial role in the development of Romantic Modernism and, thus, in broader terms British Modernism.

The first section will explore the environments in which Hodgkins and Morris worked. Both Hodgkins’s and Morris’s attraction to the natural world led to their “return to nature”, despite the increasingly mechanized times in which they lived. During the thirties, their personal explorations of nature often coincided as Morris invited Hodgkins to work at his estate in Suffolk, and the two journeyed on painting excursions together such as their trip to Morris’s home country, Wales. Moving beyond working together in shared environments and spaces, I will then explore for the first time in art-historical literature Hodgkins’s and Morris’s mutual artistic interest in the form of their still lifes with eggs. I will propose that these two artists concentrated on this motif not only to rejoice in the rebirth of life during the interwar period and their tenacity to continue onwards despite the impending Second World War, but also as foreigners and, therefore, “outsiders” to the English Modernist circle. They established their grounding by perhaps referencing and repurposing the archetypal work of nineteenth-century British artist William Henry Hunt. Although Hunt was acknowledged by Ruskin as a specialist in naturalistic still lifes, his work was rather neglected during his lifetime, due to the fact that his preferred subject was still considered low in the hierarchy of genres.⁶³ Yet, a century later, his intricate still lifes of flowers, fruit and birds’ nests garnered great admiration by many British Modernists for their emphasis on decorative detailing and design. Although equally inventive, I will argue Hodgkins’s possible influence over Morris’s interpretation of their similar subjects at this time.

⁶² Wiedmann, *Romantic Roots in Modern Art*, p.54.

⁶³ Ruskin organized the largest exhibition of Hunt’s work in his memory at the Fine Art Society’s Galleries in 1879-80 and included multiple admiring references to Hunt’s art in Ruskin, “Notes on Samuel Prout and William Hunt, 1879-1880” in *The Works John Ruskin XIV*, edited by E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, (London and New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1904), pp.365-454.

Next, I will look at the ways in which Hodgkins and Morris treated flowers and man-made ornaments in their still lifes and still life-landscapes. The pervasive presence of flowers in their work takes on distinctive meanings as signs of personal manifestations and symbolic implications. A notable instance is that of a male artist focusing on a subject formerly designated for women and amateur artists, due to social restrictions, consequently, raising questions of evolving perspectives on masculinity and its relationship to the art and culture of British Modernism in the early twentieth century. I will conclude the chapter with an analysis of Hodgkins's and Morris's landscapes of the late thirties and early-to-mid-forties, which although are frequently overshadowed by the canons of established Neo-Romantics, share similar poetic qualities, and I will argue may have even served as precursors to their work.

I. Spaces and Places: Returning to a Lost Eden

Like many of the French Impressionists and Post-Impressionists preceding them, Hodgkins and Morris preferred working *en plein air* (Figs. 50 & 51), but when weather conditions were unfavorable, both artists required studios with an abundance of windows, which would provide them with immediate access to nature and an abundance of natural light, as addressed earlier in this chapter. Constant contact with the countryside was essential for both Hodgkins and Morris to gain inspiration, and, indeed, their work did flourish throughout the thirties and into the Second World War. Although Hodgkins led a continually peripatetic existence, she often found herself hosted by Morris and Lett at their estate at The Pound Farm, and later in 1940 when they moved just four miles away to Hadleigh, where they purchased Benton End, which was to be their home for the remainder of their lives. Both Hodgkins and Morris painted some of their most inventive work at Morris's estates and on their joint painting excursions to Wales.

In 1929, Morris and Lett moved away from the heart of the art scene in London to sign the lease for their new home known as The Pound Farm (Fig. 52) outside of Higham, Suffolk. After quickly settling into the countryside, Lett recalled that he:

... motored her [Hodgkins] from London with her belongings where she was in the utmost distress, to the Pound, and from there every day that she was not working on the premises with a packed lunch, mostly to Flatford [Flatford Mill], but also to other suitable sites. With the exception of two weeks... in East Bergholt... she lived at The Pound, from June until October.⁶⁴

At The Pound, Morris and Lett created a 'paradise'⁶⁵ to invoke inspiration for themselves and for fellow artists like Hodgkins. Escaping the overcrowded, polluted metropolis in search of earthly environments was the eternal plight for the Romanticists, as well, but the legendary rhetoric of the Romantic school ceased to be convincing for these Modernists. Thus, Hodgkins and Morris translated the Romanticists' grandiose motives into Edenic visions nearer to everyday life. The idyllic grounds of The Pound such as the ornamental gardens provided the artists with paradisiacal constructs for their paintings:

... at the back of the house lay a garden which ran down a slope to a pond... and beyond a marvelous view of the whole valley. The garden was a series of low hedged beds, Cedric's studio was beside the house in the garden... parrots flew about the garden, hung in the trees and stumped in and out of the house...⁶⁶

Until the late eighteenth century, ornamental flowers were considered to be 'glimpses of paradise on earth', since their appeal to all of the senses was rare and prohibitively expensive.⁶⁷ As will be discussed later in this chapter, Hodgkins's and Morris's pictures of gardens and flowers took on meanings very different from eighteenth-century cautions against sensual pleasures or reminders of the transience of life. However, Hodgkins's and Morris's focus on still lifes and still life-landscapes conveyed the opposite of modernity by evading increased technological mechanizations and instead nostalgically reverting back to a simpler way of life in

⁶⁴ June Opie recorded these recollections of various significant people in Hodgkins's life for a *Documentary on Frances Hodgkins* to be broadcasted by The New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation in 1969. I have referenced both Lett's and Morris's recollections on numerous occasions thus far. Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.11 and Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.12. Although McCormick states that Hodgkins mainly stayed at a local inn near the Pound in McCormick, *Portrait of Frances Hodgkins*, p.111.

⁶⁵ Joan Warburton, one of Morris' pupils, described their estate as such in Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.48.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.48.

⁶⁷ Sybille Ebert-Schifferer, *Still Life: A History* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1999), p.63.

the country; thus, these two artists played instrumental roles in the development of the Romantic Modernist movement, despite their sustained exclusion from British Modernism at large.⁶⁸

While Hodgkins was at Flatford Mill, she regularly corresponded with Lucy Wertheim, a proponent, patron and soon-to-be dealer of both Hodgkins's and Morris's work, about the pleasant settings in which the artist flourished in. In July, Hodgkins wrote, 'the big free Studio at the Mill (Fig. 53) is a real catch— & worth a lot to me— quite like the mile walk thro' [sic] fields & over stiles to & fro night & morning— it tunes one up & puts one in the mood— for work— so good for the health also—'.⁶⁹ And in August, Hodgkins continued to express the benefit of her environment: 'I have got well into the spirit of the place & it is yielding up riches— undreamed of, at first sight— I am glad I have stayed & got so into rapport with the country...'⁷⁰ It was during these artistically productive months at the Mill and at The Pound, that Hodgkins painted a portrait of Morris and a member of his 'veritable menagerie'⁷¹, Rubio, the macaw in *Cedric Morris (Man with Macaw)* (refer back to Fig. 33). In addition to this portrait I would like to propose that Hodgkins made another portrait of Morris (Fig. 54), most likely during her time at The Pound or on one of their painting excursions together. Throughout his long life, Morris was rarely without his pipe and fedora, as can be seen in the photo of Morris as a young man (Fig. 55) up until his eighty-sixth year (Fig. 56).⁷² In Hodgkins's drawing, Morris, who is smoking his pipe and wearing his recognizable fedora, is depicted sitting with his back to the viewer, whilst busy at work in what is most likely his beloved garden, as this was the setting in which he most frequently worked at this time.

⁶⁸ Why were Hodgkins and Morris excluded from exhibitions such as the Barbican's 1987 *A Paradise Lost: The Neo-Romantic Imagination in Britain, 1935-55*? Even in 2017, Hodgkins and Morris continue to be neglected. Neither artist's work was featured in the British Museum's *Places of the Mind: British Landscape Drawings and Watercolors, 1850-1950*.

⁶⁹ Frances Hodgkins to Lucy Wertheim, 9 July 1930, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1993), p.429.

⁷⁰ Frances Hodgkins to Lucy Wertheim, 8 August 1930, *Ibid.*, p.431.

⁷¹ Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.9.

⁷² Refer back to (Fig. 1), where you will find my rendering of Hodgkins's drawing of Morris with his pipe. Lucian Freud, Morris's pupil from 1939-40 at the East Anglia School, also painted an oil portrait of Morris with his pipe, *Sir Cedric Morris* (Fig. 120).

New locations always inspired Hodgkins with ideas: 'I must look around for something fresh to which I can re-act— touch and see—'.⁷³ Lett soon arranged for the artist to stay at St Osyth, Essex, in a seaside cottage, just fifteen miles from Flatford but according to Hodgkins with 'quite different country— as much Dutch as English... level fields, winding estuary, a real water mill, tidal river mud flats... I feel pleasantly anchored'.⁷⁴ However, Hodgkins quickly came to the conclusion that the cottage was 'too lonely & remote— gets on the nerves...'⁷⁵ and was convinced that she 'simply cannot face living alone... at the present moment... I am much too nervy... I think I would do wisely to go to friends... I am much more likely to do the "work of my life"⁷⁶ in such a setting—'.⁷⁷ Lett again arranged for Hodgkins to move to Wilmington, Sussex, his 'ancestral home'⁷⁸, where Hodgkins was lent a cottage called Wise Follies, situated on Lett's parents' estate with family friends of his.⁷⁹ But, Hodgkins quickly felt the need to escape Britain's 'exuberant Nature', which the artist often commented on as being 'so gross green & lush—'.⁸⁰ Within a few months, Hodgkins found herself in France, mainly Les Martigues and St Tropez, until mid-August 1931, when she moved back to London from one studio to the next in Fitzrovia. From 1932-39, Hodgkins constantly traveled around country villages in Britain and made the last of her Continental journeys to Ibiza, Spain and France.

The new landscapes in which Hodgkins found herself in shaped a resurgence of ideas. One of these inspirational journeys took place when Morris invited Hodgkins on a painting excursion to West Wales, his native territory, sometime in 1934.⁸¹ In Morris's opinion Hodgkins painted 'some of her best landscapes'⁸² on this

⁷³ Frances Hodgkins to Arthur Howell, 19 October 1930, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.434.

⁷⁴ Frances Hodgkins to Arthur Howell, 19 October 1930, Ibid., p.434.

⁷⁵ Frances Hodgkins to Arthur Howell, 3 November 1930, Ibid., p.436.

⁷⁶ Howell expected Hodgkins to be doing the work of her life, Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Selby, c. 17 November 1930, Ibid., p.437.

⁷⁷ Frances Hodgkins to Arthur Howell, 11 November 1930, Ibid., pp.436-37.

⁷⁸ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Selby, c. 17 November 1930, Ibid., p.437.

⁷⁹ Lett-Haines, Recording for BBC Documentary of Frances Hodgkins, 1969: Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.11.

⁸⁰ Frances Hodgkins to Lucy Wertheim, c. 9 August 1930, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.432.

⁸¹ Morris stated in his transcript 'about 1934'. Morris, Recording transcript for BBC Documentary of Frances Hodgkins, 1969: Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.12.

trip. I will now quote at length a memorable event from their painting excursion to Wales in order to demonstrate for the first time ever the visionary way in which Hodgkins painted, and how her imaginative technique influenced Morris's own practice, as he openly acknowledged his admiration of her work.⁸³ Morris later recalled:

On the way down to Wales in the train, I talked to her a lot about the landscape there. She had never been to Wales... the following morning I went round to see that she was getting on all right. And there was nobody there. So I went down to the village— it was quite early in the morning— to look for her. Couldn't find her anywhere... I saw an old man coming down the street and I asked him if he'd seen an old lady with painting materials anywhere, and he said, "Oh, yes she's down there, in the gorge, painting, sitting on a stone in the river." ... It was quite deep and there she was, sitting on her stone, painting away. Now the gorge was so high, the sides of it, she couldn't see the mountains and yet she was painting a picture of those mountains which was exactly like them. And so I said to her, "Frances how can you possibly paint those mountains when you can't see them?" "Oh," she said, "that doesn't matter, you told me all about them coming down in the train!" And that turned out to be one of the best landscapes she ever did.⁸⁴

Morris's recollection reveals wider implications regarding how Hodgkins worked such as the previously mentioned typically French method of painting *en plein air*, as well as the imaginative abstracted versus realistic approach to capturing an unseen scene— all of which I propose relates back to Hodgkins's development and use of the Romantic Modernist pictorial language. Although the exact work which Morris described as 'one of the best landscapes' Hodgkins ever painted is not known, the Welsh 'landscape of steep valleys speedy rivers & castles looking like their own mountains',⁸⁵ as can be seen in *Study for Pembrokeshire Landscape* (Fig. 57) must have made an indelible impression on Hodgkins. Upon Morris's suggestion, the artist returned to Wales to paint with her friend Dorothy Selby in 1936, in 1938 when she visited the Neo-Romantic painter Graham Sutherland and later again in 1942. In *Study for Pembrokeshire Landscape* the blue-tinged mountains, naïvely

⁸² Ibid., Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.12.

⁸³ Morris's draft of speech for the opening of Hodgkins's first posthumous exhibition at Bournemouth Art Society in 1948, Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.2. See, also, Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.12.2.

⁸⁴ Ibid., Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.12.

⁸⁵ Frances Hodgkins to Duncan Macdonald, c. 12 November 1936, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, pp.471-72.

painted houses, an inflatable-like bridge, a rushing river and cows delineated with just a few brushstrokes are all portrayed in a deceptively simple, flattened way that is not only reminiscent of medieval art but also evokes the work of The Seven & Five Society's idol, Alfred Wallis. As discussed in the previous chapter, the admiration for naivety, 'intended or unintended,' was central to The Society's mission, since these artists such as Christopher Wood relished in unsophisticated expressions of themes from everyday life and in the divinity of nature, which extended back to the work of Palmer, who had been rediscovered in the twenties.⁸⁶ Grigson, for example, found spirituality in Palmer's scenes of rural life. These landscapes consisted of 'a visible image of an invisible, hardly attainable blessedness'.⁸⁷ Later in the thirties and into the forties, Palmer's influence continued to inspire artists to look to the British countryside with an increased reverence for their 'Englishness', by rejecting Continental Modernism and its international associations.⁸⁸ I would argue that Hodgkins's and Morris's frank interpretations of nature, painted in a kind of 'landscape Expressionism'⁸⁹ with daring colors and bold effects such as thick outlining as can be seen with *Study for Pembrokeshire Landscape* contributed to their pictorial language of Romantic Modernism and later led to the developments of Neo-Romanticism, a movement that embodied the British countryside with a nostalgia heightened by the war.

In July 1939, just one month before the outbreak of the Second World War, the progressive East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing, which Morris and Lett had founded in 1937 in Dedham, Essex, had succumbed to a fire. The Pound was simply not large enough to house Morris and Lett, their friends, as well as their pupils, so the two decided to purchase a much larger house, which came to be known as Benton End, on the outskirts of Hadleigh, Suffolk. Despite wartime shortages of petrol and supplies, Morris and Lett moved their School, their home and the majority of Morris's plants to Benton End (**Fig. 58**) in 1940 and maintained

⁸⁶ Andrew Wilton, *Five Centuries of British Painting: From Holbein to Hodgkins* (London: Thames and Hudson Inc., 2001), p.222.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.223.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.223.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.223.

this property as their base for the remainder of their lives. Benton End, a sprawling sixteenth-century house and 'exotic'⁹⁰ estate not too far from London but set in the pastoral countryside overlooking the River Brett with rambling gardens, has been compared to the home of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant— Charleston in Sussex, which was associated with the Bloomsbury circle.⁹¹

Whether Hodgkins visited Benton End remains slightly vague.⁹² According to Bernard Brown in his article "Cedric Morris at Benton End: A Footnote to Frances Hodgkins", Brown thought he met Hodgkins at Benton End but also notes, '(I may be mistaken, for it was over forty years ago and now no more, or less, clear than the memory of a memory)'.⁹³ Brown also states that Morris, 'a long time later, thought she had made a visit in... early 1940. She was, if she it was, the oldest person I had seen there'.⁹⁴ Hodgkins would have been seventy-one years of age at this time. Regardless of Hodgkins's alleged visit to the estate, both artists were still connected until the last years of Hodgkins's life, as her letters indicate a continued interest in Morris's artistic career and a desire for him to visit her in Dorset in 1945, two years before her death.⁹⁵

What is certain about Hodgkins's movement is that during the unsettling summer of 1939, the artist relocated to Corfe Castle, Dorset, where her friend from earlier years in St Ives, the potter, Amy Krauss had established herself. However, unlike the years of the First World War spent in St Ives, Dorset's nearness to the

⁹⁰ Glyn Morgan, one of Morris's pupils, described Benton End as having a 'heady exotic atmosphere' in *Master and Pupil: Cedric Morris & Glyn Morgan Oil Paintings* (Colchester, Chappel Galleries, 1994), unpaginated.

⁹¹ Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, pp.73-74.

⁹² On 7 September 2017, Maggi Hambling, who was Morris's and Lett's pupil at their East Anglia School, gave a talk "Cedric Morris- Artist" for the Hadleigh Festival of Gardening and Art. After her presentation, I was able to interview Maggi, and she believed that Hodgkins visited Benton End at least once.

⁹³ Bernard Brown, "Cedric Morris at Benton End: A Footnote to Frances Hodgkins", *Art New Zealand*, 2 (1982), p.50.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.50.

⁹⁵ In one letter Hodgkins wrote, 'I owe you a letter for the very interesting one you sent me after seeing Cedric's Show. I wrote him. He wrote back. He thought he might come to the Greyhound & get some rest & change- He wasn't [sic] down cast over his Show. Said it 'was alright...' Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Selby, 26 June 1944, in, Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.551. In a later letter, Hodgkins wrote, 'I am very interested to hear you are working with Cedric Morris- How wise of You! Tell him I hope he will come & visit us soon...' Frances Hodgkins to Lorna Style, 17 December 1945, *Ibid.*, p.564.

Channel meant that its villages suffered the fate of enemy bombings, and military tanks frequently rolled down Corfe's narrow streets as a thoroughfare. During this time, Hodgkins rented a Wesleyan chapel as a studio but also continued to take excursions to Somerset and other rural locations throughout Britain. About her studio, Hodgkins wrote, '... It overlooks the Channel. The mornings are very lovely & I want to paint even before I have finished breakfast. Sunsets splashed yellow and black—'.⁹⁶ But, Hodgkins frequently worried that her Studio would be seized to house soldiers: 'I live in fear of my Studio being taken from me. I believe the vicar has his eye on it— that would be a minor catastrophe'.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, Hodgkins focused with complete resolution on her art and, unlike before, she tired easily of social interaction: '... I am aging,' the artist wrote to her brother back in New Zealand, '... I find the social side of living a great strain. Art is definitely anti-social you can only work in solitude— that is, work creatively'.⁹⁸ Despite Hodgkins's deteriorating health and advanced years, the forties marked the height of her artistic career, unlike Morris's, which began to decline. With wide-ranging developments and experimental Romantic Modernist techniques, Hodgkins came to be associated with the Neo-Romantic movement, was invited by the British Council to represent British art at the twenty-second Venice Biennale in 1940, held a retrospective exhibition in 1946 and was invited to participate in a number of group exhibitions in Britain and abroad.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the artist's peak during this decade progressively tapered to a nominal positioning in British Modernism, which I will address in the following chapter.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Frances Hodgkins to Rée Gorer, 23 July 1937, *Ibid.*, pp.473-74.

⁹⁷ Frances Hodgkins to William Hodgkins, 28 September 1939, *Ibid.*, pp.491-92.

⁹⁸ Frances Hodgkins to William Hodgkins, 22 July 1939, *Ibid.*, p.486.

⁹⁹ Due to wartime travel restrictions, Hodgkins's works were prevented from reaching the Biennale and instead were exhibited in London at the Herford House that same year.

¹⁰⁰ The question 'Where does Frances Hodgkins fit in the context of British Modernism?' can be found in Kendrah Morgan, *Frances Hodgkins: A Modernist Eye* (Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery, 2001), unpaginated.

II. *The Eggs of England*

One of the first examples of British still life painting, according to Nash's "The Pictorial Subject" was William Henry Hunt's *Primroses and Bird's Nest* (Fig. 59).

Painted in the 1840s, *Primroses and Bird's Nest* embodies Hunt's technical virtuosity, so much so that the vibrant saturation of watercolor layers heightens Hunt's naturalism to a point of photorealism. This painting, one of many still lifes depicting Hunt's passion for birds' nests filled with eggs, earned the artist the nickname 'Bird's Nest Hunt'.¹⁰¹ Reflecting upon the nineteenth-century artist's work, Nash claimed:

These were downright portraits of relentless fidelity... This is not intended to suggest that English portraiture was usually synonymous with an attempt at verisimilitude, but that the manner of regarding subject-matter generally was naturalistic rather than imaginative, and in relation to its character and appropriate surroundings rather than to its possibilities of formal design.¹⁰²

Perhaps one of the reasons why Nash, amongst other British Modernists of the time, appreciated Hunt's work was due to his interest in going back to nature and living in the countryside. Hunt remarked that in nature 'you will find drawing, expression, colour, and light and shade, all of the most perfect kind'.¹⁰³ Ruskin, too, ruminated on the connections between natural science and design, in this case, on the art of "Nest Building".¹⁰⁴ Ruskin wrote about the 'nest of a common English bird', which '... was altogether amazing and delightful to me...', and that the bullfinch's nest was constructed of

... twigs it had interwoven lightly, leaving the branched heads all at the outside, producing an intricate Gothic boss of extreme grace and quaintness, apparently arranged both with triumphant pleasure in the art of basket-making, and with definite purpose of obtaining ornamental form.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Paul Nash, "The Pictorial Subject" in Nash, *Paul Nash: Writings on Art*, p.71. See William Henry Hunt *Primroses and Bird's Nest*, watercolor, Tate, N03564.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.71.

¹⁰³ Tom Jones, *William Henry Hunt 1790-1864* (Wolverhampton: Wolverhampton Art Gallery, 1981), p.47.

¹⁰⁴ John Ruskin, "Nest Building" in *Selections from the Writings of John Ruskin* 2nd series (London: George Allen, 1899), pp.5-9.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.6.

Although Hodgkins and Morris chose to depict eggs not in their natural nest setting but in man-made pottery, I would argue that both Hodgkins's and Morris's abundant number of still lifes with eggs created throughout the interwar years and into the Second World War are twentieth-century "imaginative" interpretations in relation to Hunt's nineteenth-century "naturalistic" motif.¹⁰⁶ In presenting this distinctive case study, I wish to further illustrate my argument that Hodgkins and Morris intentionally positioned themselves in the British art historical canon, while, simultaneously, fusing Anglo-French methods of painting, particularly influenced by the presence of Cézanne, to reinvent the art of the still life through Romantic Modernism.

Even before the Modernists' appreciation of Hunt, however, Palmer himself stated in 1872 after Hunt's death, "The only quite certain way of making money by watercolours is, I fancy, to do such figures, fruit and flowers as William Hunt did and to do them as well."¹⁰⁷ Hunt's traditionalist approach to still lifes serves as an antithetical counterpoint to the French avant-garde artists, many of whom also influenced the artists of the thirties and forties, including the two artists I propose—Hodgkins and Morris, as addressed earlier. One might ask what was particularly fascinating about this subject matter that managed to capture the attention of British artists spanning a century apart? Additionally, did Hodgkins and Morris choose to paint eggs to intentionally situate themselves amongst artists like Hunt, who after his death acquired a somewhat legendary status, in order to secure their own positions in the canon of British art?

Amongst favored subjects Hodgkins focused on during these years were those uniting still life and landscape, which the artist characterized as 'open-air still life'.¹⁰⁸ During a brief visit to Wilmington, Sussex in the summer of 1929, Hodgkins

¹⁰⁶ Morris also painted eggs in nests such as *Greenland Falcon*, 1928, oil on canvas, Ulster Museum, Belfast; *Bitterns*, 1938, oil on canvas, location unknown; *Peregrine Falcons*, 1942, oil on canvas, Tate, T05498.

¹⁰⁷ Alfred Herbert Palmer (ed.) *The Life and Letters of Samuel Palmer, Painter and Etcher* (London: Seeley, 1892), p.336.

¹⁰⁸ Frances Hodgkins to Arthur Howell, 23 September 1930, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.434. Setting still lifes in the landscape was a practice by Dutch seventeenth-century artists such as can be seen with Abraham Brueghel's *An Extensive Still Life of Fruit in a Landscape*, 1670, location unknown.

produced *Still Life in a Garden* (Fig. 60).¹⁰⁹ In this watercolor the artist presents a foreshortened cushion with an assemblage of objects: a bowl of eggs, scattered apples, a jug, two cut branches and a plant in a glass jar. The gathered collection is centrally placed, fills the composition, and appears to be floating. Possibly inspired by the early table still lifes of the seventeenth century, Hodgkins sets the angle of vision at a high vantage point, so that the objects appear to be tilted forward.¹¹⁰ Over time, Hodgkins continues to experiment with this perspectival device in her still life subjects creating highly dramatic effects; thus, Hodgkins strengthens her alignment with French avant-garde artists such as Cézanne. Delineation of the ground in addition to a few trees and shrubs can be deciphered in the background of the scene, providing a context for the otherwise surreal setting of this still life. I would argue that this work served as the first of three studies, in which the artist progressively abstracted the outdoor environment of the still lifes, for her later oil painting of a similar subject entitled *Still Life: Eggs, Tomatoes and Mushrooms* (Fig. 63).

Hodgkins's second study *Eggs and Ferns* (Fig. 61) begins to transform the definite landscape, as in the previous watercolor, into an infinite, indefinite one. Light blue wash at the top of the painting differentiates the sky from the charcoal-colored middle ground, which appears to be sloping upwards to the right suggesting the beginning of a hill or a mountain, and a patch of brown, beneath the crumpled sheet, eases the viewer's apprehension, since the still life is securely situated on the ground. In this watercolor, the eggs are gathered together but not contained in a bowl or platter, perhaps, because if they were to roll from their place, there would be no danger to their fragile state, unlike in the other still lifes in which the eggs are placed at an elevated position. Fern fronds jut upwards towards the sky, while a trophy cup is filled with what appears to be cut magnolias and a bountiful plant overflows from a flowerpot. A mysterious blue sheet coils amongst the mass of

¹⁰⁹ As previously mentioned, this cottage was on the property of Lett's family, and *Still Life in a Garden* (Fig. 60) was formerly in Lett's personal collection. A similar drawing *Still Life*, c. 1929 was given to Arthur Howell for his birthday and now resides in the Tate collection. Perhaps, this was the first study as it is the most complete 'open-air still life' scene in the series.

¹¹⁰ For instance, Floris Claesz van Dijck's *Still Life with Cheese*, c. 1615-20, Rijksmuseum, SK-A-4821.

plants, almost as if symbolizing a snake. In the next watercolor, *Still Life with Eggs and Willow* (Fig. 62) Hodgkins distills the landscape by completely abstracting it into one of ethereal uncertainty. The still life, arranged upon a salmon colored cushion, seems to be steadied upon a table this time rather than hovering in space as in *Still Life in a Garden* and like the two preceding this watercolor, the objects are the central focus filling the majority of the painting. Here, though, the artist frames the grouping with an asymmetrical arrangement of willow branches set against a stony space of a subtle beige watercolor wash. The same luminous jug from *Still Life in a Garden* materializes, as well as the three apples now gathered on a precariously slanting plate. Contained in a smaller dish than the previous watercolor, the eggs are positioned in front of the other objects and look as though they are about to roll off the seemingly secure surface to face their ultimate destiny. Instead of resting on the cushion, the cut branches now stand upright in a ceramic tankard also at the very edge of the table. New to the scene are the pink scallop shell and the creased beige cloth, both of which enhance the background sepia tones.

In the watercolor studies, Hodgkins takes inspiration from her Cubist predecessors by definitively delineating the shapes of the objects in black with measured simplicity. Much like Cézanne who ‘drew and painted in watercolor in order to isolate and absorb for the first time the discovered qualities of the object that were right for the projected picture’¹¹¹, Hodgkins’s preparatory practices reveal the ‘significance of form’ expressed in the shapes of ovular eggs and rounded apples, as well as with the circular cushion or that of one with curved edges. Art critic Lionello Venturi addressed the importance of incorporating rotund objects into still lifes: ‘Since 1860 the prevailing interest has been the study of form. This study may be symbolized by the pictures of apples’.¹¹² Hodgkins’s use of these curving forms act as animated units of design.¹¹³ Set off at juxtaposing angles, the individual spherical and oval objects seem to interact with one another, creating an overall

¹¹¹ Meyer Schapiro, “The Apples of Cézanne: An Essay on the Meaning of Still-life”, in *Modern Art: 19th and 20th Centuries, Selected Papers* (New York: G. Braziller, 1978), p.44.

¹¹² Lionello Venturi, *Art Criticism Now*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1941), p.47 quoted in Schapiro, *Modern Art: 19th and 20th Centuries*, p.16.

¹¹³ Heron, *The Changing Forms of Art*, p.7.

formal harmony and unified balance. This rhythmic manipulation of form through line serves as Hodgkins's underlying use of abstraction, ultimately unveiling the 'emotional elements of design'.¹¹⁴ By boldly outlining the convex and concave contours of these surprisingly inanimate objects, the artist, simultaneously, evokes their objective volume, density and weight, as well as their inner life.¹¹⁵ In 1927, Fry's pivotal publication *Cézanne. A Study of His Development* assessed the centrality of still life as a genre by arguing for the 'purely plastic significance of still life'.¹¹⁶ Fry also wrote:

In still life the ideas and emotions associated with the objects represented are, for the most part, so utterly commonplace and insignificant that neither artist nor spectator need consider them. It is this fact that makes the still-life so valuable to the critic as a gauge of the artist's personality.¹¹⁷

For Fry, modest and insignificant objects found in still lifes signified purity. Thus, Cézanne's paraphernalia proved to be directly expressive and emblematic of the artist's inner state. I, too, propose that the choice of objects in Hodgkins's and Morris's still lifes and the forms in which they were painted express the spiritual significance of what at first glance may seem insignificant.

Hodgkins's choice of depicting apples and eggs moves beyond attention to form but expresses her interest in the still life genre itself. Since classical Antiquity, Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* situated still life painting as a "lesser" genre due to its 'mimesis' of nature requiring technical virtuosity without the need for the intellect, which was assigned to more "elevated" subject matter involving figurative narratives.¹¹⁸ With the rebirth of European still life painting in the sixteenth century through to its development by the end of the nineteenth century, most artists would have been conscious of the considerations of still life as a "less worthy"

¹¹⁴ Fry, *Vision and Design*, p.33.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.119.

¹¹⁶ Roger Fry, *Cézanne: A Study of His Development* (London: Hogarth Press, 1927), pp.38-54.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.41.

¹¹⁸ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, Vol. 9, Books 33-35, (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press & William Heinemann, 1984), p.112, in Calouste Gulbenkian Fundação et al., *In the Presence of Things: Four Centuries of European Still-Life Painting*, pp.1-13. Pliny writes of Piraikos as a painter of 'humble edibles', and gives him the 'nickname of *rhyparographos*, a painter of common or ordinary subjects'. As quoted in Norbert Schneider, *Still Life: Still Life Painting in the Early Modern Period* (Köln: Taschen, 2003), p.46.

artistic endeavor. Such beliefs were further incorporated into a hierarchical canon established by the French Academy during the seventeenth century.¹¹⁹ “Golden ages” of the genre broadly ranged from Southern Netherlands to Spain; nonetheless, most specialists in this type of painting focused on technical virtuosity, creating highly detailed and finished works of both man-made and natural subjects.¹²⁰ Yet, superior technical methods when painting ordinary things revived advanced mystic and spiritual understandings of the still lifes of the eighteenth-century master, Jean Baptiste Simeon Chardin, for example. Chardin’s work rejected the extravagant still lifes of his predecessors by arranging simplified groupings of humble objects with monumental importance and illusionistic realism. The contemporaneous critic and philosopher, Denis Diderot, provided the most recognized and lasting praise of Chardin’s still lifes in his Salons of the 1760s, referring to the artist as a ‘great magician, with your silent arrangements!’¹²¹ Diderot also praised the painter’s still lifes for their naturalism:

There are many small pictures by Chardin at the Salon, almost all of them depicting fruit with accouterments for a meal. This is nature itself. The objects stand out from the canvas and they are so real that my eyes are fooled by them... This is the man who really understands the harmony of colour and reflections. Chardin, it’s not white, red or black pigment that you grind on your palette but rather the very substance of objects; it’s real air and light that you take onto the tip of your brush and transfer onto the canvas... It’s magic...¹²²

Michael Fried has written on the achievement of Chardin in relation to upsetting the eighteenth-century official doctrines of the hierarchical order, eventually leading to their rejection by the nineteenth century.¹²³ By the mid-nineteenth century, artists began to react against the pejorative connotations associated with still life and

¹¹⁹ Anne W. Lowenthal, *The Object as Subject: Studies in the Interpretation of Still Life* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.7.

¹²⁰ Fundação et al., *In the Presence of Things*, Vol.1, p.54.

¹²¹ Denis Diderot, “Chardin”, (translated by John Goodman) in *Diderot on Art: The Salon of 1767*, Vol. I (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), p.60.

¹²² Denis Diderot, “Salon of 1763”, (translated by Kate Tunstall) in Charles Harrison, Paul Wood, and Jason Gaiger (eds.) *Art in Theory 1648-1815: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p.604.

¹²³ Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting & Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1980), p.72.

initiated its re-evaluation by approaching the subject matter from a subjective standpoint revealing elusive aspects burdened by previous prejudices.¹²⁴ In 1895, Marcel Proust continued to celebrate the supernatural forces and energy behind the artist's still lifes, writing that for Chardin, '... metal and stoneware are living and to whom fruit speaks... Still-life will... change into life in action. Like life itself, it will always have something to say... some mystery to reveal...'¹²⁵ During Hodgkins's time spent in Paris, the artist became fully aware of this radicalization of the genre by studying the still lifes of Cézanne, Matisse and Derain.¹²⁶ Although based in England for the remainder of her life, Hodgkins's stylistic associations with the French avant-garde continued to be interwoven into the artist's British context.

In *Still Life: Eggs, Tomatoes and Mushrooms* (Fig. 63), Hodgkins synthesizes various stylistic and thematic explorations from her earlier watercolor studies into this final expression of related motifs. Throughout the four works, the artist reconciles spatial concepts with distinctively modern framing techniques. Hodgkins begins with the integration of a foreground grouping and a receding landscape in *Still Life in a Garden*, then situates *Eggs and Ferns* into a vast, barren setting, following by framing her *Still Life with Eggs and Willow* with an irregular bunch of willow branches and ultimately ends with filling the entire composition of *Still Life: Eggs, Tomatoes and Mushrooms* by tilting and foreshortening the perspective of the still life, positioned on wooden planks of a tabletop, to the point of almost being parallel to the picture surface. This still life lacks the 'open-air' quality of the others and assumes a more claustrophobic approach, practiced by Braque and Picasso, lacking recession and depth into space.

The sense of balance in Hodgkins's designs manipulated by various methods of framing is integral not only to the pictorial unity of forms but also to the creation of the motif itself.¹²⁷ Following Cézanne's pioneering legacy of distorting perspectives, Hodgkins arranges the elements of design— lines, shapes and

¹²⁴ Schapiro, *Modern Art: 19th and 20th Centuries*, p.20.

¹²⁵ Marcel Proust, "Chardin: The Essence of Things", (translated by Mina Curtiss), *ARTnews* 53 (1954), p.103.

¹²⁶ Myfanwy Evans, *Frances Hodgkins* (West Drayton: Penguin Books, 1948), p.9.

¹²⁷ Fry, *Vision and Design*, p.31.

angles— through the act of framing: ‘The frame in which the picture is composed—the whole arrangement, the whole composition, which all these things make when they are cut off in precisely this way for the four edges of the composition— can be new’.¹²⁸ Thus, framing here reflects not a reproduction of a scientifically accurate reality but Hodgkins’s definitive translation of artistic truth. This ‘subjective distortion’¹²⁹ of an innovative outlook is what I believe links Hodgkins’s still lifes with those by Morris. Both artists preferred to search for an original expression of nature rather than follow popular movements of the time. Illustrating this concept is Morris’s own writing:

There must always be great understanding between the painter and the thing painted, otherwise there can be no conviction and no truth. This might be called “vision” and reality, as opposed to realism. Reality is knowledge and realism is only the appearance of knowledge.¹³⁰

Thus, remaining true to their sensibilities, I propose that Hodgkins’s and Morris’s experimental approach to a centuries-old genre joins their still lifes together and sets them apart from their British contemporaries.

In *Still Life: Eggs, Tomatoes and Mushrooms* the tightly organized selection of objects varies from Hodgkins’s three previous watercolors and is also portrayed with the artist’s characteristic use of aerial perspective. A narrative, seen from above, begins to unfold as the interactions between the objects are analyzed. A potted plant cropped at the far right side of the picture rests on what might be a decorative tablemat, while a ceramic white bowl and a white cloth of Cézannesque character direct the viewers’ attention to the leading characters centered in the foreground—the bright, blue bowl of sliced tomatoes, strewn mushrooms and a platter of eggs— all presented on a wooden board.¹³¹ This painting is not just a study of form and an expression of the artist’s interest in still lifes as a genre but

¹²⁸ Heron, *The Changing Forms of Art*, p.11.

¹²⁹ Maurice Denis, *Le Ciel et l’Arcadie* (Paris: Hermann, 1993), p.133 quoted in Richard Shiff, *Cézanne and the End of Impressionism: A Study of the Theory, Technique, and Critical Evaluation of Modern Art* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1984), p.134.

¹³⁰ Cedric Morris, “Concerning Flower Painting”, *The Studio* 123, no. 590 (1942): p.122.

¹³¹ See Paul Cézanne’s *Still Life with Bread and Eggs*, 1865, Cincinnati Art Museum, Gift of Mary E. Johnston, 1955.73. The dark, wooden slates of the table also evoke the somber-colored background of Cézanne’s painting.

also documents a celebration of nature's gifts with an allusion to the ingredients of a vegetarian English Breakfast.

Hodgkins's reference to a variation of this national meal underlines the value she found in living and working in the British countryside, which I argue further connects her work to Hunt's. While living in rural settings, Hodgkins had access to locally grown food, which she was able to enjoy thanks to the luxury of time. The leisurely affair of breakfast was nonexistent when living her fast-paced and austere London lifestyle. Indeed, the 'Full English breakfast' was an implicitly aristocratic custom derived from its country house roots, as well as an aura of long-established tradition.¹³² With the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign in 1837, this tradition had become firmly fixed, even amongst most of the English working classes.¹³³ *Still Life: Eggs, Tomatoes and Mushrooms* signifies this memorialized moment of plenitude, a rarely known state for Hodgkins, which was largely due to the generosity of Morris's and Lett's friendship. In return, I argue that Hodgkins's reinterpretation and reinvention of Hunt's subject by assimilating Cubist doctrines into her own Modernist pictorial language served as great artistic inspiration, particularly to Morris. At the time that Hodgkins painted *Still Life: Eggs, Tomatoes and Mushrooms*, the two artists' lives constantly intertwined. She was his house guest at The Pound and Morris sub-leased her studio in London. Both exhibited together in The Seven & Five Society, and their work was often selected for the same shows.¹³⁴ On multiple occasions, they traveled together on painting excursions.¹³⁵ They attended each other's exhibitions, socialized in the same bohemian circles and also shared patrons.¹³⁶ Thus, I believe this continuous interaction and exchange, undoubtedly, left lasting impressions on one another's work, and evidence of Hodgkins's creative influence on Morris continued its legacy even after her death in 1947.

¹³² Kaori O'Connor, *The English Breakfast: The Biography of a National Meal, with Recipes* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 2013), p.24.

¹³³ Heather Arndt Anderson, *Breakfast: A History* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2013), p.16.

¹³⁴ For example, Hodgkins and Morris were both invited to submit paintings to an exhibition at the Carnegie International, Pittsburgh in 1931.

¹³⁵ In the mid-thirties, Morris and Hodgkins painted together in West Wales.

¹³⁶ Lucy Wertheim was a patron and dealer of both Hodgkins's and Morris's works.

As Morphet has noted Morris also had a ‘special feeling for eggs’.¹³⁷ In fact, Morris’s Tate Retrospective exhibition in 1984 included five pictures, out of many in his oeuvre, that featured the motif.¹³⁸ In Morris’s *Unstill Life* (Fig. 64) the essence of the eggs is revealed by means of: ‘the projection of the subject through a dynamic economy in combination with an acute sense of pictorial relation’.¹³⁹ Despite the fact that *Unstill Life* consists of simple elements— a bowl of eggs and a linear vase on top of a stool in a bare room, the spatial relations between objects and Morris’s particular method of framing illustrates an intriguingly mysterious atmosphere. Morphet explained a chief characteristic of Morris’s success with this Modernist pictorial language is due to, ‘the vitality of its [the picture’s principal motif]’ juxtaposed ‘with the pictorial setting... almost a rival subject over which it has been surprisingly superimposed’.¹⁴⁰ The stool, featuring the main subject— the still life, is aligned with a cropped doorframe which opens onto an empty hallway, a surrealistic ‘pictorial setting’ which Morris will explore and develop a year later in *The Eggs* (Fig. 67).

I would like to propose that Morris’s *Cotyledon & Eggs* (Fig. 65) may have been inspired by Hodgkins’s watercolor studies and final composition *Still Life: Eggs, Tomatoes and Mushrooms*. In *Cotyledon & Eggs*, Morris centers the still life in the foreground on a pale pink floating and dramatically cropped surface, reminiscent of Hodgkins’s particular method of framing. Also tilted at a dramatic angle, the objects, a slipware dish of whimsically colored eggs, a lilac-colored vase with two irises, and a potted succulent, are similarly arranged with the eggs as a central focal point and the plants placed off to the side. As can be found in many of Hodgkins’s still lifes, the objects appear as though they are about to slide off the surface. Morris’s delicate range of pastel shades may differ from Hodgkins’s juxtaposition of earthy colors and cool tones but, nevertheless, recalls the significance that her supreme orchestration of color harmonies had on Morris. In this painting, Morris also expresses an interest

¹³⁷ Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.87.

¹³⁸ One of these paintings, *Bitterns*, 1938, unknown location, is reminiscent of Hunt’s bird’s nest pictures, although Morris’s work includes two birds with their nest of eggs rather than just the egg nest by itself.

¹³⁹ Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.82.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.82.

in Hodgkins's placement of still lifes set in an exterior environment under the bright sunlight as opposed to their expected interior context. Yet, far more surrealistic than Hodgkins's earlier still lifes, Morris includes a shadowed archway leading to a small, square portal, which perhaps may be an outdoor oven. The darkened realm of *Cotyledon & Eggs* elicits an unnerving sense of foreboding, an understandable context, since Morris painted this work during the Second World War. The celebration of life signified by the bountiful arrangement of eggs and plants juxtaposed with the sinister darkness in the background emblemizes a period of uncertainties ahead.

Hodgkins included more man-made objects such as pottery in her still lifes than Morris, who had a particular affinity for portraying plants.¹⁴¹ I believe Hodgkins's interest in pottery relates to her conscious positioning between the French avant-garde, such as Picasso and Dufy who were not only frequent painters of various wares but also accomplished potters themselves, and her contemporaries in the British canon. Pottery was a stock motif for many of The Seven and Five artists, and as I have previously mentioned, many of their exhibitions often included pots by Staite Murray and Krauss. Hodgkins even practiced the craft herself at one point. In fact, it was at Morris's Benton End that Hodgkins may have been introduced to the potter's wheel.¹⁴² Serving as signifiers of abundance, along with curvaceous, organic shapes, pottery can also be interpreted as symbolic connotations of the feminine form, thus, by associating with these objects subliminal attempts can be read for Hodgkins's reassertion of her position as a woman artist. In *Arrangement of Jugs* (Fig. 66) Hodgkins removes natural life, with the exception of a spindly twig, and focuses on a variety of modest objects most likely made by hand to highlight a characteristic English tradition. The jugs are simply delineated by bold washes of mainly primary colors, emphasizing that primacy is placed on utility and function. The wares in Hodgkins's still lifes were far removed from the delicate and luxurious objects found in the paintings by Henri Fantin-Latour, whose still lifes

¹⁴¹ Hodgkins's interest in pottery started early from her time in Morocco in 1902 and continued throughout her life, while Morris was renowned as a gifted plantsman and for his many breeds of bearded irises.

¹⁴² Brown, "Cedric Morris at Benton End: A Footnote to Frances Hodgkins", p.50.

remained rooted in the past but were widely collected both by public institutions and private collectors in Britain.

Hodgkins's and Morris's differences in materiality lead to a system in which the abstract and spiritual originated from the finite, physical world.¹⁴³ Particularly in their depictions of eggs, both Hodgkins and Morris sought to represent a union of the subjective and objective—the 'inner' and 'outer'— pictorial essence of the subject by taking delight in their design, color and plastic solidity.¹⁴⁴ Neither artist relies on a merely decorative or imitative approach but rather enables their vision to emphasize the two vital components of modern art— expressive color and free form— through their liberated subject matter.¹⁴⁵ I believe their fragile balancing between inner and external realities was one of the ways in which Hodgkins and Morris expressed their visions of Romantic Modernism. According to art historian Laurence Binyon, 'Romanticism is an equation between inner and outer reality founded on a spiritual or intellectual experience within the artist', implying 'neither a retreat from reality nor a feat of simple... illustration'.¹⁴⁶ The harmony between 'internal and external forces, symbolic, imaginative, creative and spiritual' elements further illustrates Binyon's idea of Romanticism and is a fundamental consideration of the 'inner-outer balance implicit within all Romantic art'.¹⁴⁷ Binyon believed that the British Modernists' relationship with Romanticism should not 'discard the past' and instead 'should remould their heritage' so that 'the fusion... shall make art again a single language expressing the whole modern man'.¹⁴⁸

The Eggs (Fig. 67) is highly reminiscent of Morris's earlier *Unstill Life*; however, in this painting, the artist sets his still life consisting solely of eggs at a higher vantage point in a bare but brightly colored interior scene of pinks and purples. Morris's distinctive color range magnifies the significance that he placed on

¹⁴³ Lowenthal, *The Object as Subject*, p.8.

¹⁴⁴ Heron, *The Changing Forms of Art*, p.123.

¹⁴⁵ Jerrold Morris, *On the Enjoyment of Modern Art* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1968), p.18.

¹⁴⁶ Stuart Sillars, *British Romantic Art and the Second World War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), p.21.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.21-22.

¹⁴⁸ Laurence Binyon, *The Art of Botticelli: An Essay in Pictorial Criticism* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1913), p.17.

color, as he used it to not only build up forms but to also direct attention to the eggs, which rest in a slipware dish, also placed on what appears to be a fuchsia stool top. Centrally positioned, the slightly cropped stool is framed by a yellow, opened door, which opens onto an adjacent room with a second but closed door, a similar compositional technique used with the surrealistic doors in *Unstill Life*. The flattened perspective of this ambiguous space intensifies its strange, dreamlike quality and further illustrates Morris's distinction between 'reality' and 'realism.' By tipping the dish of eggs as if they were at an improbable vertical angle, as well as emphasizing the foreshortened perspective of the stool, the relation of distilled forms 'could hardly be more life-affirming', as this still life celebrates '... the weight, shape and colour of good things'.¹⁴⁹ Morris's striking palette range greatly adds to the liveliness of the eggs as if they are about to jump out of the dish rather than succumb to their fate of being consumed.

Cotyledon & Eggs and *The Eggs* were painted in the same year, and the ominous tone in the former is carried into a disquieting, albeit intriguing, atmosphere in the latter, due to its unexpected range of typically feminine pastel colors. *The Eggs* was bought by Morris's friend the food writer, Elizabeth David, for £100 in 1953. Upon reflecting on this work, David recalled:

Cedric told me he painted the picture during one of the rationing years of the last war and that... Arthur Lett-Haines repeatedly demanded that the eggs be released because they were actually needed in the kitchen— which was run by Lett, since Cedric never in his whole long life put saucepan to stove...¹⁵⁰

The set of open and closed doors in both *Unstill Life* and *The Eggs* may emphasize how closely the eggs now belong to the world of man by isolating them from their natural outdoor environment. The feeling of entrapment signified by the doors can relate not just to the eggs but for Morris, too, since restrictions and curfews were a part of daily life during the war years. Although one to usually avoid following artistic trends, Morris's inclusion of doors connects to Freud's psychoanalytic tendencies, which were central to the formation of Surrealism. Above everything,

¹⁴⁹ Peter Wakelin, "Benton End Remembered", *New Welsh Review*, no.60 (summer 2003), p.16.

¹⁵⁰ Artemis Cooper, *Writing at the Kitchen Table: The Authorized Biography of Elizabeth David* (London: Michael Joseph, 1999), p.30.

‘Surrealism sought to transform reality via the liberating force of the imagination’¹⁵¹ — a feature which can be detected throughout the majority of Morris’s and Hodgkins’s still lifes. Morris’s incorporation of surrealist elements in his still lifes from the war years, after the artistic trend reached its influential peak in the thirties, signifies his independent stance amongst his peers.¹⁵² Yet Morris, as well as Hodgkins, experimented with a ‘modified’ version of Surrealism.¹⁵³ With Romantic Modernism, both artists were able to tie individual motifs of man-made objects, natural life and hints of the celestial into a single work through semi-abstraction.

As I have addressed in the beginning of this chapter with the comparison of Hodgkins’s work to Bonnard’s and Morris’s to Dufy’s, I believe that Hodgkins and Morris were artistically linked. Evidence of this resides with their still lifes featuring eggs, while simultaneously setting themselves apart from their British contemporaries through their use of experimentation with perspectival effects, emphasis on form and design, interest in *en plein air* painting, knowledge of French art publications like *Cahiers d’Art*¹⁵⁴, extensive travels and painting excursions, particularly time spent in Paris, a playful approach to color providing almost ritualistic associations and the fact that they were foreigners and, therefore, “outsiders” to the English art scene. By following ‘Bird’s Nest’ Hunt’s tradition of manipulating the still life genre and elevating it into a form of portraiture, I have argued that both artists assert their “British” identity, while, simultaneously, expressing their relationship to an art created in France through Continental aesthetics and techniques. Therefore, I believe Hodgkins and Morris found ways in which to situate their still lifes with eggs between both British and French art, unlike

¹⁵¹ João Carvalho Dias, et al. (eds.) *In the Presence of Things: Four Centuries of European Still-Life Painting*, Vol. II (Lisbon, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2011), p.199.

¹⁵² Surrealism in Britain developed later than in other countries. For example, works in *The International Surrealist Exhibition* in London shocked the public and press in June 1936, while André Breton’s first Surrealist Manifesto was written in 1924, which soon gathered a group of Surrealists together in Paris.

¹⁵³ McCormick argues this in Hodgkins’s case, but I would like to expand this to Morris’s usage of Surrealism as well. McCormick, *Late Attachment: Frances Hodgkins & Maurice Garnier*, p.27.

¹⁵⁴ In a letter to Lett, Hodgkins apologized for not ‘sending the Paris ‘Cahiers’ as I said-’ Frances Hodgkins to Arthur Lett-Haines, 30 January 1928, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, pp.405-06.

the explicitly “British” still lifes of their contemporaries like Winifred Nicholson or David Jones, who expressed different preoccupations than Morris and Hodgkins.¹⁵⁵

III. *The Weight of a Petal: The Significance of Flowers and Ornaments in the Still Lifes of Hodgkins and Morris*

Throughout the nineteenth century, the work of Victorian artists was based on ‘the result of intense looking’¹⁵⁶, which culminated in an unsurpassable taste for realism and detail. Thus, one of the essential variances between Victorian still lifes and those of modern art— in this case the works of Hodgkins and Morris— reveals that nineteenth-century painters relinquished the doctrines of Romanticism, such as painting with bravura brushstrokes, in order to accommodate a growing admiration for painting the ‘Language of Flowers’¹⁵⁷ with technical veracity and symbolism to highlight the aesthetic beauty of the subject. I have previously mentioned William Henry Hunt as one of the leading figures of still life painting in Britain from this period, and the flowers and objects in his still lifes have been praised by critic John Ruskin as the epitome of art itself: ‘... the whole art of painting is in that mug— ... If you can feel how beautiful it is, how ethereal, how heathery, and heavenly, as well as to the uttermost muggy, you have an eye for colour and can enjoy heather, heaven, and everything else below and above’.¹⁵⁸ Yet, in spite of Ruskin’s exclamations for the ‘ethereal’ and ‘heavenly’ qualities of the objects in Hunt’s painting, Victorian still

¹⁵⁵ ‘Nicholson’s still lifes were more concerned with the “luminous effects of light” in Buchanan et al., *Frances Hodgkins: Paintings and Drawings*, p.56. David Jones was more interested in ‘linear fragmentation of form.’ Ibid., p.56. However, Kendrah Morgan points out that Jones’s *The Briar Cup*, 1932, in the Helen Sutherland collection, demonstrates a similar calligraphic approach to Hodgkins’s use of line, as well as an experimental unification of still life objects with their exterior environment in Morgan, *Frances Hodgkins: A Modernist Eye*, unpaginated. Beyond their connection with The Seven and Five Society, Hodgkins and Jones both exhibited at the St George’s Gallery and at the Wertheim Gallery in the late twenties and early thirties. All three artists— Hodgkins, Morris and Jones— shied away from associating with particular movements and preferred to retain their sense of independence as artists.

¹⁵⁶ Spalding, “Changing Nature: British Landscape Painting, 1850-1950”, in Collins (ed.), *Landscape in Britain*, p.9.

¹⁵⁷ A symbolic flower alphabet reached its peak throughout the Victorian era, which allowed for a coded method to express sentiments and thoughts. ‘Victorians dreamt of the age of courtly love and faithfulness that made use of the sentimental “language of flowers”’ in Marina Heilmeyer, *The Language of Flowers: Symbols and Myths* (Munich, London and New York: Prestel, 2001), p.18.

¹⁵⁸ Ruskin, “Notes on Samuel Prout and William Hunt, 1879-1880”, in Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin* XIV, p.441.

lives embraced a close examination of nature with reverence for science, as the publication of horticultural material and prints of drawings by botanical artists increased rapidly by the early nineteenth century.¹⁵⁹ Another renowned nineteenth-century still life painter in Britain was Henri Fantin-Latour, yet when his art is compared to the inventive, directness of the moderns, his paintings look rather 'stiff and dead, as if painted from accurate paper replicas of flowers'.¹⁶⁰ Although informally arranged, *Summer Flowers* (Fig. 67), remains closer to the Dutch Old Masters than to Fantin-Latour's French contemporaries. Fantin-Latour embraced a more traditional technique, which highlighted the splendid beauty of still lifes, as can be seen by the transparency of the fragile glass vase emphasized by faint glimpses of floating cut stems.

The philosophical approach to 'beauty' and 'truth' was widely written about during the nineteenth century and earlier including Kant's claim that 'The Visual arts, i.e., the arts of expressing ideas in *sensible intuition* (not by presentations of mere imagination that are aroused by words), are those of *sensible truth*...' ¹⁶¹, as well as 'in every art there is a scientific [element] whose concern is that the object of this art be exhibited [or rendered] truthfully'.¹⁶² Hegel wrote, 'that beauty is Idea, so beauty and truth are in one way the same. Beauty, namely, must be true in itself'.¹⁶³ Ruskin, too, pronounced, 'All qualities of execution, properly so called, are influenced by, and in a great degree dependent on, a far higher power than that of mere execution, — knowledge of truth'.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, the precision with which many nineteenth-century British artists adhered to simply carried out the artistic expression and manipulation of truth and beauty.

Unlike the techniques of fidelity used by the British to paint flowers and still lifes, however, the French Romantics such as Eugène Delacroix and Gustave Courbet

¹⁵⁹ Robin Gibson, *Flower Painting* (Oxford: Phaidon Press Limited, 1976), p.5.

¹⁶⁰ Robert Gordon and Andrew Forge, *The Last Flower Paintings of Manet* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1986), p.13.

¹⁶¹ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p.191.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p.230.

¹⁶³ G.W.F. *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, translated by T.M. Knox, Vol. 1, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p.111.

¹⁶⁴ John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Vol. 1 (London: George Allen, 1900), p.39.

utilized a broad style of painting in order to realize new mechanical possibilities, which Édouard Manet was to develop, as well as the Impressionists like Claude Monet and Pierre-Auguste Renoir, who took further radical steps forward with their brilliantly colored and unceremoniously arranged bouquets.¹⁶⁵ The French diverged from the British hyper-realistic, three-dimensional representations of flowers and delighted in the expressive contours and shapes of the petals enclosing flat areas of color in overtly decorative designs such as those by Post-Impressionists like Gauguin and Cézanne, who established the foundations for twentieth-century still life painting.¹⁶⁶ The French manner of painting still lifes certainly appealed to both Hodgkins and Morris, particularly when they lived in Paris.¹⁶⁷ The decorative values inherent in flowers were further enhanced by the French avant-garde through their flattening, patterning, texturizing and emphasizing dazzling colors, which produced visionary depictions unlike the British method of painting flowers straightforwardly as botanical specimens. However, by the twentieth-century Modernism in Britain reacted against the luxuriousness and realism of the nineteenth-century and called for compositional and spatial explorations often through the use of floral still lifes.¹⁶⁸

I propose that Hodgkins's and Morris's aesthetic associations with the French flavor of flowers and still lifes served as a starting point from which they then developed into their very own Romantic Modernist visions. For Hodgkins, as a woman artist who suffered the consequences of her sex defined by the social conventions of Victorian society, I believe that she attempted to disassociate herself

¹⁶⁵ Gibson, *Flower Painting*, p.5.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.14.

¹⁶⁷ Before the time she spent in Paris throughout the twenties, Hodgkins traveled to the city multiple times and lived there periodically throughout the early years of the century. For a thorough chronology of Hodgkins's travels see Buchanan et al., *Frances Hodgkins: Paintings and Drawings*, pp.168-71. During the first decade of the century, Hodgkins had 'effectively explored the heritage of the Impressionists and their disciples' and as a teacher while in Paris, 'she had urged her pupils to take note of... Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Picasso, Vuillard and Bonnard.' In Anne Kirker, *New Zealand Women Artists: A Survey of 150 Years* (Tortola: Craftsman House BVI Ltd., 1993), p.46. During the years Morris spent in Paris and throughout his travels around the Continent, he associated personally and artistically with the Futurists and Surrealists. I would argue, however, that Morris's work of the thirties and forties recalls similarities to the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists such as his experimental use of perspective and flattening of subjects.

¹⁶⁸ Lynton, *The Flower Show: An Exhibition on the Theme of Flowers in Twentieth Century British Art*, p.17.

from the trappings of a typical woman artist— mainly, classic yet conventional flower painting. Not only did she travel abroad throughout her youth but by also choosing to remain in England as an expatriate for the remainder of her life, Hodgkins broke away from the confining realities of the colonial society, which eventually granted women professional reputations mainly as flower painters.¹⁶⁹ Instead, the flowers incorporated into Hodgkins's still lifes often assume an air of mourning or are presented almost as if they are pagan offerings, particularly with her frequent use of the milky-white arum lily.¹⁷⁰ Examples of this flower feature frequently in her work throughout the interwar period such as the previously mentioned *Still Life with Lilies* (**Fig. 49, c. 1929**), *Red Jug* from 1931, *Arum Lilies* (**Fig. 69, c. 1931**), *The Croft, Still life with Divan* from c. 1931-34, *Decorative motif* from 1933, *Still Life with Fruit Dishes* from c. 1937 and *Spanish Pottery* from c. 1939. The composition of *Arum Lilies* centers on an arrangement of stacked apples, eggs, pottery and lilies dominating a moody Mediterranean landscape.¹⁷¹ *Arum Lilies* has rightly been compared to Picasso's *Still Life with Pitcher and Apples* (**Fig. 70**) from 1919 and to the Classicism movement through Hodgkins's use of the urn, 'together with the more substantial and stately approach to the depiction of objects'.¹⁷² Unifying principles such as a similar chalky color palette of subtle gradations of grey-blue and creamy yellow can be traced in both Hodgkins's *Arum Lilies* and Picasso's *Still Life with Pitcher and Apples*. In both works, an interest in linearity of form can be detected with the flat spaces, which 'aim at no illusion of relief'¹⁷³, a

¹⁶⁹ An example is Dorothy Richmond, who travelled with Hodgkins to Europe in 1901, but unlike Hodgkins, Richmond remained in New Zealand. Upon learning about Richmond's success in New Zealand, Hodgkins claimed that Richmond, indeed, had 'nice taste and judgment' but the possibility of the artist becoming renowned would be nominal, since she 'lacks fire and originality.' Kirker, *New Zealand Women Artists: A Survey of 150 Years*, p.29.

¹⁷⁰ *Arum Lilies* c. 1931 is described as a 'pagan offering to plenty' in Buchanan et al., *Frances Hodgkins: Paintings and Drawings*, p.138.

¹⁷¹ According to Buchanan et al., this painting is related to other oils painted in the south of France in 1931 including *Red Jug*, *Cut Melons* and *The Green Urn* in *Ibid.*, p.138.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p.138.

¹⁷³ One of the essential characteristics of English art identified by Pevsner was the importance of the 'linear' in Pevsner, *The Englishness of English Art*, p.119. The quote comes from Laurence Binyon, *Painting in the Far East: An Introduction to the History of Pictorial Art in Asia Especially China and Japan* (London: Edward Arnold & Co, 1908), p.14.

technique originating in Chinese and Japanese painting.¹⁷⁴ Hodgkins's recurrent use of arum lilies, and the fact that this painting, in particular, was titled after the flowers themselves has not previously been explored. These three cut lilies, an archetype often associated with the purity of the Virgin Mary, are quite tributary as they spring forth from their steely-colored containers. Although Hodgkins was not religious, did the artist choose to scatter three in order to reference the Trinity to receive this bountiful offering? Or did these flowers relate to Hodgkins on a more personal level symbolizing her chaste life of spinsterdom? Either way, Hodgkins's preference for the lily— a flower cultivated in the Mediterranean world and spread throughout Europe by the Romans— elicits her love for the Continent, despite being based in England.¹⁷⁵

Even if Hodgkins did not typically paint traditional flower pictures, the artist, nevertheless, excelled at the motif by treating bouquets in the quirkily-distorted, faux-naïf manner of *The Seven and Five Society* but with her own intuitive approach to harmonious coloring. A characteristic example can be seen with *Flowers in a Vase* (Fig. 71). Although this painting is dated c. 1928-30, I would argue that it was painted in 1929, when Hodgkins was staying at Lucy Wertheim's flat in London.¹⁷⁶ In a letter dated 23 April 1929 Hodgkins wrote:

... I have had a long day in the dining room— painting the bouquet which look[ed] exquisite against the green curtains— & touches of yellow spring green leaves from outside— I bought 2 white lilies to give it the white note— it just gives it that “kick” as a composition.¹⁷⁷

The dramatic device of the curtain tucked diagonally into the window frame draws attention to the scene outside, a prominent framing technique that Hodgkins, Morris and their *Seven and Five* contemporaries utilized, as I have previously discussed. Although the exterior scene does not evoke a London cityscape, Hodgkins was known to have imaginatively incorporated elements, which did not in actuality exist

¹⁷⁴ Binyon linked linear designs to the art of Chinese and Japanese paintings in *Ibid.*, p.14.

¹⁷⁵ Celia Fisher, *Flowers in Medieval Manuscripts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p.19.

¹⁷⁶ James Morrison from the Government Art Collection provided confirmation of this date through an email exchange with me on 18 September 2017.

¹⁷⁷ Frances Hodgkins to Lucy Wertheim, 23 April 1929, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.414.

but benefitted her own overall vision. I have addressed this imaginative technique earlier with Hodgkins's landscapes, but the artist clearly carried this practice across genres. Determining what the individual flowers are in the bouquet was not Hodgkins's main objective for this picture or any of her flower paintings for that matter; instead, Hodgkins, like Morris, reflected their sensitivity to the character or the spirit of the individual flowers themselves. Hodgkins's and Morris's depictions are reminiscent of Odilon Redon's work. Redon freed flower paintings from their traditional function of imitating nature, and once stated about his cherished subject, 'flowers' ... 'have come to the confluence of two streams, that of representation and that of memory. It is the ground of art itself, the good ground of reality, harrowed and ploughed by the spirit'.¹⁷⁸

Flowers rarely appear in Hodgkins's work during the years of the Second World War, which instead focused more on landscapes in the Neo-Romantic vein, as will be addressed in the next section, yet an exception can be found with her *Flowers and a Cat* from 1941 (Fig. 72). In a letter to her friend and patron, Geoffrey Gorer, Hodgkins described these troubling times as 'too awful for comment', but that she was able to "endure the unendurable" whether it was coping with the blackouts or feeling 'a bit lonely'.¹⁷⁹ Despite these challenges, *Flowers and a Cat* is a joyful work with singing modulations of vibrant colors. The omnipresence of the sun can be felt by the cluster of canary yellow flowers at the top of the composition, loose strokes of blue and white evoke the sky on the right and dots and dabs of green on the left suggest a lush meadow. A radiating red boldly outlines the cat, pot and flowers and emanates a sense of warmth and security. Most likely this work was produced inside the studio, due to safety precautions, but one can detect Hodgkins's longing to be back outdoors.

¹⁷⁸ Peter Mitchell, *European Flower Painters* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1973), p.209.

¹⁷⁹ Frances Hodgkins to Geoffrey Gorer, 14 January 1941, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.509.

Morris, on the other hand, discovered his true romantic artistic identity through planting and painting flowers.¹⁸⁰ Through Morris's painting of flower still lifes, 'one can sense a complete coherent character built up from its texture, its shape, its carriage, its colour and the extent to which it contrasts with or is similar to others of its own kind or of different species'.¹⁸¹ When asked when he first became interested in flowers, Morris replied, '... I suppose I've always loved flowers. My mother once told me that when I was a screaming brat, in my pram, defying comfort, she found that if she gave me a flower I would hold it carefully in my hand and keep quiet for hours!'¹⁸² To Morris, painting flowers and gardening seemed to be two strands dovetailed into a single pursuit. The connection between gardening and painting can be traced to Kant, who wrote on landscape gardening, 'which arranges nature's product's beautifully,' paired with 'painting proper, which renders nature beautifully'.¹⁸³ Kant wrote:

For painting proper provides only the illusion of corporeal extension; landscape gardening, while providing corporeal extension truthfully, provides only the illusion of the use and utility [the garden has] for purposes other than the mere play of the imagination in the contemplation of its forms.¹⁸⁴

Morris particularly enjoyed working with tall bearded irises and lilies for their vertical linearity and statuesque contours— the Madonna lily, the Arum dioscoridis, the iris Benton Cordelia and the arum lily Green Goddess frequently feature in his

¹⁸⁰ Morris not only painted flowers in an almost sensual manner, but he also named his own breeds with romantic names such as 'Benton Damozel', 'Benton Ophelia', 'Benton Fandango' in Beth Chatto, "Cedric Morris: Artist-Gardener", *Hortus*, no. 1 (Spring 1987), p.18.

¹⁸¹ Arthur Giardelli, "Cedric Morris", *Wales* 3, no.2 (Oct-Dec. 1943), p.72.

¹⁸² "Sir Cedric Morris, Flower Painter and Naturalist", *Leisure painter* (Winter 1970). Accessed Aug 15: https://www.painters-online.co.uk/techniques-and-tips/view/sir-cedric-morris-flower-painter-and-naturalist_5263.htm.

¹⁸³ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p.192.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.192. Kant elaborated in his footnotes, 'It seems strange that landscape gardening could be regarded as a kind of painting despite the fact that it exhibits its form corporeally. It does, however, actually take its forms from nature (at least at the very outset: the trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowers from forest and field), and to this extent it is not art— whereas (say) plastic art is, [though it also exhibits its forms corporeally]— and the arrangement it makes has as its condition no concept of the object and its purpose...but merely the free play of the imagination in its contemplation. Hence to that extent it does agree with merely aesthetic painting, which has no determinate topic (but by means of light and shade makes an entertaining arrangement of air, land, and water).' *Ibid.*, p.192.

still lifes and were taken from his own garden at Benton End.¹⁸⁵ Christopher Neve has drawn a perceptive parallel between Morris's gardening and painting of flowers:

Outside is a place where the world teems, where nothing may be controlled except by the imagination. When a man has part of the world under his hand, to re-order it as something according to his own nature, it becomes like a painting or a poem. The gardener, like the painter, selects, discards and rearranges, revising as he goes. The garden like a picture has a dominant mood and often a particular color. Its edges determine the build-up of shapes within it.¹⁸⁶

Like Hodgkins, Morris was not concerned with botanical accuracy, but instead the artist treats flowers 'with a Celtic wonderment at the beauty of nature'¹⁸⁷, and the persistent portrayal of his own plants proved to be the most captivating sitters in his oeuvre. Whether painted in situ with stretches of the garden and a distant landscape beyond or gathered in a bouquet and placed in an ambiguous interior (refer back to Fig. 10), the viewer is dizzied 'like an insect, crawling' and '... losing his way in a jungle of stems'.¹⁸⁸

Morris, like Hodgkins, concentrated on the inner life force or spirit of flowers with expressiveness comparable to the soulful energy found in sublime Romantic landscapes. Yet, the operatic drama so easily extracted from roaring waves crashing against a jagged precipice or a savage storm gathering above a biblical battle, shifts to notions of the beautiful in Morris's work such as with the fleeting life of a single fragile flower.¹⁸⁹ The opposition of 'the beautiful' to that of 'the sublime' was a defining feature of Romanticism.¹⁹⁰ Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* best defines this Romantic

¹⁸⁵The iris has had a long-held omnipotence over artists including J.M.W. Turner, who called the plant the 'English fleur-de-lyse', in addition to Leonardo and French medieval artists, who 'encrusted the banners of France...' with 'most probably the crisp yellow irises which smothered the banks of the River Lys.' Neve, *Unquiet Landscape: Places and Ideas in Twentieth-Century English Painting*, p.51. Blythe, Ronald, "Artist of the Iris", *The Sunday Times* (8 June 1958), n.p.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.49.

¹⁸⁷ Chamot, *Modern Painting in England*, p.97.

¹⁸⁸ Neve, *Unquiet Landscape: Places and Ideas in Twentieth-Century English Painting*, p.51.

¹⁸⁹ For examples of Romantic landscapes see, for instance, Caspar David Friedrich, *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*, c. 1819, oil on canvas, Kunsthalle Hamburg, Germany; John Martin, *Joshua Commanding the Sun to Stand Still upon Gibeon*, 1816, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, 2004.64.1.

¹⁹⁰ Donald Davie, "The Industrial Landscape in British Literature", in Davie, *Landscape in Britain*, p.37.

philosophy between the sublime, which ‘is built on terror’¹⁹¹ and ‘founded on pain’¹⁹², and the beautiful, which ‘should be light and delicate’ ... and founded ‘on pleasure’¹⁹³, in nature. Burke believed nothing rivaled the beauty of flowers, since the ‘flowery species, so remarkable for its weakness and momentary duration’¹⁹⁴, ... ‘gives us the liveliest idea of beauty and elegance’.¹⁹⁵ However, Morris’s, as well as Hodgkins’s depictions of flowers extend beyond the mere ‘light’ and ‘delicate’ ‘pleasures in nature’ by possessing inherently awe-inspiring qualities that the Romanticists typically limited to weather conditions or vast landscapes. Thus, Hodgkins’s and Morris’s flowers, which assume a spectrum of qualities from mournful to eerily unearthly, are able to fuse the sublime with the beautiful.

Morris instills freshness into his vision of flowers that shuns the descriptive and moves towards a paradisiacal abstraction. An example is *Summer Garden Flowers* (Fig. 73) with its thickly painted undulating mounds of petals, criss-crossing stems and jewel-toned colors. The flowers are heraldically and flatly painted in a shallow picture plane with a mostly obscured earthen-colored background. The colors pulsate with rhythm and movement almost as if the flowers were swaying in response to a gentle breeze. The same can be said for *Easter Bouquet* (Fig. 74). Here too, Morris sets up his composition similarly to *Summer Garden Flowers*— the wild arrangement is brought close to the picture plane, with a hazy, inconsequential background. The pastel colors in *Easter Bouquet* create a sense of tranquility unlike the bold vibrancy of *Summer Garden Flowers*, but the ‘all-over quality’¹⁹⁶ seen in both paintings was a key characteristic of many of Morris’s flower paintings throughout his oeuvre.

¹⁹¹ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (London: J. Dodsley, 1767), p.119.

¹⁹² Ibid., p.112.

¹⁹³ Ibid., p.112.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p.77.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p.102.

¹⁹⁶ Donald Preziosi (ed.), *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.145. Morris himself used this term to describe Hodgkins’s works. Morris, Recording transcript for BBC Documentary of Frances Hodgkins, 1969: Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.12.

Although flower still lifes have been painted as early as the fifteenth century, the genre was not fully accepted as a valid and independent motif until the twentieth century.¹⁹⁷ In the first decade of the century, Fry, who was also a botanist, expressed remorse over the treatment of the undervalued flower, both by historical artists as well as by the Modernists:

We know how deeply Van Gogh's own predecessors of the seventeenth century sinned in their thick-skinned cleverness and self-assurance, using flowers as a kind of animate furniture. But modern European art has always maltreated flowers, dealing with them at best as aids to sentimentality until Van Gogh saw, with a vision that reminds one of Blake's, the arrogant spirit that inhabits the sun-flower, or the proud and delicate soul of the iris.¹⁹⁸

Fry's reference to the 'arrogant spirit that inhabits the sun-flower' can be found in Morris's *Hey-Day* (Fig. 75) and the 'delicate soul of the iris' in his *Irises* (Fig. 76). Curling in every possible direction, the petals of Morris's sunflowers in *Hey-Day* encapsulates the artist's absorption of foreign influences such as Van Gogh's energetic sunflowers but, simultaneously, manages to retain his native British character and the 'arrogant spirit' in the consciously primitive manner of his painting. According to Nash, who did not distinguish between British and English art, he argued an 'imprisoned spirit... is the source, the motive power which animates this art... This spirit I would say it is of the land... it is almost entirely lyrical'.¹⁹⁹ Indeed, I believe that Morris's paintings of flowers can be classified as lyrical, since he deviated from the nineteenth-century descriptive technique and

¹⁹⁷Flower still lifes were painted on the reverse of portraits by Hans Memling's such as *Flowers in a Jug* (verso), c. 1485, oil on panel, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, Inv.no.284.b (1938.1.b). By the nineteenth century, Ruskin, offered a progressive reflection on flower still lifes using Hunt's work as a reference: '... the highest honors which flowers can attain are in being wreathed into grace of garlands, or assembled in variegation of bouquets, for the decoration of beauty or flattery of noblesse.... Irrespectively of these ornamental virtues... the painter never seems to perceive any conditions of beauty in the things themselves, which would make them worth regard for their own sake; nor, even in these appointed functions, are they ever supposed to be worth painting... the feelings shown in the works of Hunt... directly reverse those of the preceding age. So far from being garlanded into any polite symmetry, his primroses fresh from the bank, and hawthorns white from the hedge, confess at once their artless origin in the village lane- have evidently been gathered only at the choice, and thrown down at the caprice, of the farmer's children.' Ruskin, *Works* XIV, pp.377-78. Also in Schneider, *Still Life: Still Life Painting in the Early Modern Period*, p.86.

¹⁹⁸ Fry, "The Post-Impressionists-II", in Fry, *A Roger Fry Reader*, Reed (ed.), p.92. Reprinted from *The Nation* (3 December 1910): pp.402-3.

¹⁹⁹ Nash, "Art Now, Contributions to Unit One", in Nash, *Paul Nash: Writings on Art*, p.109.

instead offered intense incantations of singing color harmonies. The way in which Morris painted *Iris*es also mirrors their 'delicate soul', as if the flowers have nothing to hide, since they are brought up as close to the picture plane as possible. The pale mauves, icy-blues and soft notes of yellow and cream contribute to the quiet character of this flower. Indeed, Morris was able to identify all of nature with a single flower.²⁰⁰ The artist, along with Hodgkins, turned to ephemeral flowers, as they 'possess an orderly arrangement whose different parts have their allotted function in the existence of the whole and can reveal its own life...'²⁰¹ I have argued that both artists greatly contributed to the twentieth-century advancement of the genre, despite their continued exclusion from exhibitions and publications on modern flower still lifes, which will be addressed in the following Chapter.

IV. 'Unquiet Landscapes' of Britain and Abroad during the Second World War

Amongst the British avant-garde throughout the thirties and into the forties a 'return to nature' was in vogue.²⁰² The association of English national identity and the pastoral landscape has been extensively examined in the context of Neo-Romanticism, where British Modernists retraced a tradition of British Romantics such as Blake, Palmer and Turner and their interests in landscapes, ruins and prehistory. These painters, such as Piper, believed

Romantic art deals with the particular...[It] is the result of a vision that can see in things something significant beyond ordinary significance: something that for a moment seems to contain the whole world; and, when the moment is past, carries over some comment on life or experience besides the comment on appearances.²⁰³

Piper expressed this urgency to go back to nature as a source of inspiration, since the 'object must grow again; must reappear as the 'country' that inspires

²⁰⁰ John Piper, "Lost, A Valuable Object", in Myfanwy Evans (ed.) *The Painter's Object* (London: Gerald Howe, 1937), p.70. Piper writes, 'we find Paul Nash identifying all nature with a Bronze Age standing stone.'

²⁰¹ Sir Philip Hendy, Francis Halliday and John Russell, *Matthew Smith* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1962), unpaginated.

²⁰² Kirker, *New Zealand Women Artists: A Survey of 150 Years*, p.50.

²⁰³ Piper, *British Romantic Artists*, p.7.

painting'²⁰⁴, and that 'it will be a good thing to get back to the tree in the field'.²⁰⁵ Nash, too, was able to 'perceive presences in natural objects and to uncover symbolic or associative meanings'²⁰⁶ in them. However, the Romantic conception of the 'emotive significance'²⁰⁷ behind landscape, which is able to convey the inner condition of being a human rather than direct representations of figures in portraiture, for example, has been an overlooked yet fundamental feature to what I would characterize as a more inclusive genre— Romantic Modernism. I would argue that both Hodgkins's and Morris's eerily Romantic visions of landscapes of Britain and abroad reflect the 'emotive landscape in the mind of the artist'²⁰⁸, searching beyond the main tenets of Romanticism, by exploring highly individualized symbols during this time of conflict. Hodgkins's scenes of the natural world often featured skeletons of mechanical debris, producing hauntingly evocative effects. The mood of Morris's landscapes varied, depending on the locations in which they were painted, although they all emanated a mysterious natural power. For instance, in his Welsh scenes, abandoned chimney stacks 'stand like night-mare fungi'²⁰⁹, while soaring birds of prey reveal 'the very spirit of evil lurking in dark, horrid and primeval growth'.²¹⁰

Contrary to the inter-war poetic depictions of pastoral scenes of peace and security, paradise is now lost and replaced by 'unquiet landscapes'²¹¹, reflecting uncertainty and dark times ahead. According to Neve, landscapes originate 'from inside and not out... Nature finds its way into his [the painter's] imagination via all his senses; it becomes part of his spirit and then it may be brought back again by hand into the visible world'.²¹² Hodgkins's and Morris's landscapes of this time are charged with this 'spirit' that Neve speaks of, consequently, leading to the

²⁰⁴ Piper, "Lost, A Valuable Object", p.72.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p.73.

²⁰⁶ Rothenstein, *British Art Since 1900: An Anthology*, p.128.

²⁰⁷ Reginald Howard Wilenski, *The Modern Movement in Art* (London: Faber & Faber, 1945), p.30.

²⁰⁸ Frances Spalding, "Changing Nature: British Landscape Painting, 1850-1950", in Collins (ed.), *Landscape in Britain*, p.19.

²⁰⁹ Giardelli, "Cedric Morris", p.72.

²¹⁰ Ibid., p.73.

²¹¹ Christopher Neve coined this term in Neve, *Unquiet Landscape: Places and Ideas in Twentieth-Century English Painting* (London: Faber & Faber, 1990).

²¹² Ibid., p. vii.

domination of their pictures by a mystical, eerie presence, unlike the reassuring glory of still lifes situated in an Arcadian setting. The word 'eerie' in Middle English *eri*, from *argh*, means 'timid', but for the modern meaning it has been defined as 'inspiring fear, as the double sense of fearful'.²¹³ As Robert Macfarlane has established in his article "Walking in unquiet landscapes", the word—eerie, can be interpreted as:

... alarming because its cause can rarely be explained or detected. This sourcelessness distinguishes the eerie from the horrific, and is the reason that eerie art... deals often in glimpses, tremors and forms of failed detection or observation... The eerie is monstrous precisely because it will not demonstrate itself...²¹⁴

Macfarlane goes on to list the 'key preoccupations' of 'modern British eerie art' including: 'trees... stones... fields and woods, dark... figures... power sources... relics and burial... and abandoned infrastructure'.²¹⁵ Indeed, these are common motifs throughout the Neo-Romantic works of artists like Nash, Piper and Sutherland, but I would argue that the visual language of Romantic Modernism continues to be excluded from this categorization of over one-hundred-years, lacking equally as 'eerie' themes found in the works of Hodgkins and Morris.

The majority of Hodgkins's painting starting from 1938 until the remainder of her life was landscape-related and can be largely defined by the artist's interpretation of the destruction in Britain caused by the war. An example, which foreshadows the Neo-Romantic tendency so prominent in the forties, is Hodgkins's *Houses and Outhouses, Purbeck* (Fig. 77), of which two versions exist. The composition of this painting is composed of 'patches, swoops and ripples of mainly greens, some earth tones and intense blues, suggesting an exotic camouflage...'²¹⁶ In the foreground are 'clusters and swathes of often baffling shapes'²¹⁷ of supernatural silhouettes, perhaps, suggesting remnants of objects, while juxtaposed with clearly

²¹³ Ernest Weekley, *An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*, Vol. I, (New York, Dover Publications, 1967), p.495.

²¹⁴ Robert Macfarlane, "Walking in unquiet landscapes", *Tate Etc.* 36 (Spring 2016). Accessed August 15, 2019: <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/walking-unquiet-landscapes>.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, unpaginated.

²¹⁶ Buchanan et al., *Frances Hodgkins: Paintings and Drawings*, pp.70-71.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.70.

defined bits of scattered debris. This work, amongst others, was exhibited at the Leicester Galleries in 1941, and Piper, one of Hodgkins's close friends and supporters, wrote a review of the exhibition, describing this painting as '... Frances Hodgkins' war art.... urgent, tragic comments on dereliction and wreckage.... not war subjects, but humanity at war is the emotional background for these rubbish heaps among the out-houses of a south Dorset farm'.²¹⁸ Piper continues to write:

She has a sense of place. The exciting gloom of parts of the Welsh coast, damp hollows with small sluggish rivers in Somerset— she substantiates one's feelings for such places. And she has a sense of the times. As this is wartime and as she is a good painter her recent art is war art... Described, these subjects are apt to sound simply "modern". In fact they are of the times and timeless.²¹⁹

Piper's wife, Myfanwy Evans, also wrote about this work in her book on Hodgkins, and noted that in this painting, 'in each folded space is a life of color'.²²⁰ Hodgkins wrote multiple letters at this time stressing the events leading to war. One to her brother in New Zealand stated, 'Many people think war may come sooner than we think & this time (Oh Lor!) [sic] there will be no warning we shall just be bombed to bits...'²²¹ Thus, *Houses and Outhouses, Purbeck* serves as an indication of Hodgkins's preoccupation with surviving yet another world war.

Hodgkins most often focused on man-made objects set in surrealistic landscapes, and I would argue that her work prefigured many of the well-known Neo-Romantics and even possibly served as an inspiration to some of these artists. A connection can be made between Hodgkins's *Smithy* (Fig. 78) painted in c. 1940 and Nash's *Totes Meer (Dead Sea)* (Fig. 79) from 1940-41.²²² Hodgkins's wheels and Nash's airplanes featuring wheels completely 'disengage from a functional relationship with their setting'.²²³ A shared similarity in surrealistic objects can be found in these two works, which form the foundation of a 'landscape-based

²¹⁸ John Piper, *Spectator* (17 October 1941), n.p. Piper also illustrated this work in his article on the artist in John Piper, "Frances Hodgkins", *Horizon* 4, no.24, (December 1941), p.415.

²¹⁹ Piper, *Spectator*, n.p.

²²⁰ Myfanwy Evans, *Frances Hodgkins* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Modern Painters, 1948), p.17.

²²¹ Frances Hodgkins to William Hodgkins, 15 October 1938 in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.482.

²²² Buchanan et al., *Frances Hodgkins: Paintings and Drawings*, p.156.

²²³ *Ibid.*, p.156.

surrealism that was a British response to the exploration of the subconscious'.²²⁴ The core of Nash's landscapes, which, like Hodgkins's works, were not too concerned with the typical sense of a landscape, can best be understood through '... speculation upon the mystery and mysticism of the "living inanimate"'.²²⁵ Though the inanimate for Nash tended to be natural objects, such as upright stones or twisted tree trunks. I believe that Hodgkins was, in fact, the true pioneer of man-made, inanimate objects such as those with connotations of power and speed, prompting an interest in this motif for other artists like Nash. Displayed in a group exhibition at the Leicester Galleries in 1940, *Smithy* presents a pair of centrally placed overlapping wheels, which overshadow the rest of the "landscape" of abstracted patches of grass in the foreground and a few calligraphic lines filled with green to evoke the leaves of an invisible tree in a modulated greyish-blue background. Meanings behind wheels have been interpreted as 'suggestions of the self, of modernity, of transformation or, here, where a rustic setting is specified in the title, of English rural life'.²²⁶ The wheels can also be interpreted anthropomorphically with the hubs as eyes and the floating white ovoid connecting the wheels as a mouth.²²⁷ This phantom presence embedded into an inanimate object evokes the heightened sense of being constrained and monitored during a time of conflict, as well as the constant necessity of hiding during black-outs. The manifestation of spirits also serve as a concrete example of Macfarlane's 'glimpses, tremors and forms of failed detection or observation', as I have mentioned above.²²⁸ In the widely acclaimed and recognized Neo-Romantic work entitled *Totes Meer (Dead Sea)*, Nash depicted an aircraft salvage site of German planes shot down and

²²⁴ Gill, "Introduction", in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.8.

²²⁵ Paul Nash, "The Life of the Inanimate Object", in Nash, *Paul Nash: Writings on Art*, p.139.

²²⁶ Buchanan et al., *Frances Hodgkins: Paintings and Drawings*, p.156.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.156.

²²⁸ In a letter to her dealer, Hodgkins explained the need to postpone an upcoming exhibition due to lack of work, since traveling during wartime proved to be challenging, if not impossible, and continual movement was her main strategy to search for new ideas: 'Wales is difficult to access these times & cut off from here [Dorset]... I have been to Studland for a week- It rained- There was a savage raid on Poole one night-... I returned here without a single sketch. The barbed wire had beaten me-...'. Frances Hodgkins to A.J. McNeill Reid, 5 July 1942, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.525. Also, Hodgkins often wrote about the depressing effect black-outs had on her and her work. For instance, see Frances Hodgkins to Geoffrey Gorer, 14 January 1941, Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.509.

stacked at Cowley.²²⁹ 'The thing,' Nash wrote in a letter to Kenneth Clark, 'looked to me, suddenly, like a great inundating sea... This is a vast tide moving across the fields... And, then, no, nothing moves... it is something static and dead...'²³⁰ A great deal has already been written about this painting; however, few have mentioned the significance of the centrally placed wheel of one of the wrecked planes.²³¹ A direct line can be drawn from the wheel straight up to the moon possibly referencing the relationship between technology and nature. Unlike Hodgkins's *Smithy*, however, nature seems to have persisted and even conquered, despite encroaching mechanical advancements, as the bright moon hovers above in an expanse of blue sky.

Well into the war, a sense of disquiet takes full form in Hodgkins's scenes of agricultural machinery and barnyards such as can be seen with *Broken Tractor* (Fig. 80). Hodgkins's Romantic Modern "symbols" have been interpreted as reminders of the 'purposeful disturbance of war'.²³² These twentieth-century artifacts of discarded tractors, pipes and engines in the countryside have not only replaced the artist's frequent still life motifs of ceramics, flowers and fabrics but Hodgkins has also been able to identify the potential beauty from their utilitarian shapes and forms.²³³ As has been recently mentioned, Surrealism was a contributing factor in the development of Neo-Romanticism, and although the broken tractor is wholly suitable to its countryside backdrop, its 'ambiguously anthropomorphic appearance', like Hodgkins's earlier *Smithy*, is quite surrealistic such as can be seen with the 'mangled tractor's wheel hubs', which 'look like grotesque, anguished eyes

²²⁹ This painting serves as an example where scholars have identified Nash's work as 'Romantic' (relating to German Romanticism, in this case Caspar David Friedrich), while other artists like Hodgkins, who produce motifs in a similar vein, do not receive such recognition. James Attlee, *Nocturne: A Journey in Search of Moonlight* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), p.260.

²³⁰ Simon Wilson, *Tate Gallery: An Illustrated Companion* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1990), p.185.

²³¹ See, for instance, Michael Rothenstein, *Looking at Paintings* (London: George Routledge and Sons Ltd., 1947), p.14. Mary Acton, *Learning to Look at Modern Art* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p.258. Esther Leslie, *Liquid Crystals: The Science and Art of a Fluid Form* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2016), pp.178-79.

²³² John Russell, *From Sickert to 1948: the achievement of the Contemporary Art Society* (Bradford: Lund Humphries & Co Ltd., 1948), p.83.

²³³ McKinnon, *Frances Hodgkins 1869-1947*, unpaginated.

and the cutter's jagged teeth.²³⁴ An edifice with a darkened cross looms in the background alongside the ruins of what is perhaps an abbey, suggesting a graveyard setting. *Broken Tractor* has been compared to Piper's *All Saints Chapel, Bath* (Fig. 81), both painted in 1942, although I believe their graphic approach is quite unique—Hodgkins's work glows with a shimmering light, while Piper's subject is cloaked with a shadowy darkness.²³⁵ Yet, both works reveal more than just remainders of what once was; one can sense an unseen, lurking spirit. I, however, would like to compare *Broken Tractor* to Michael Rothenstein's *Tractor and Plough* (Fig. 82) from 1947. The abstracted landscape is rather barren with outlines of a pink mountain in the distance, and patches of mauve, black and white form an earthly quilt in the foreground. The tractor, as a symbol, now becomes a part of the Neo-Romantic vernacular, as Rothenstein paints the subject five years after Hodgkins's *Broken Tractor*. Although Rothenstein includes a figure in profile managing a complete machine, further mechanical fragments are piled behind him. The collision of natural and man-made worlds continues to be examined, perhaps, suggesting that the ruins of the war are left behind, while progress marches onwards. Indeed, I believe that works by Hodgkins such as *Broken Tractor* had an effective yet overlooked influence over her younger Neo-Romantic contemporaries.²³⁶

Morris never identified as a Neo-Romantic, and his work was never categorized as such by critics or by historians. Nevertheless, the artist's paintings of Wales, as well as his landscapes from abroad, such as Mexico and Portugal, reveal Romantic Modernist elements that most likely served as an influence for those working within the later Neo-Romantic vein. Additionally, I believe Morris's landscapes featuring birds of prey can be interpreted as some of the most eerily

²³⁴ Buchanan et al., *Frances Hodgkins: Paintings and Drawings*, p.74.

²³⁵ In a letter, Piper wrote to Hodgkins about *Broken Tractor* and other works: 'Thank you for the enormous pleasure and instruction that these new works give, your humble admirer J.P.' John Piper to FH, c. Sept 1941, as quoted in *Ibid.* p.74.

²³⁶ My point is strengthened by previous declarations of Hodgkins's inevitable influence: 'It would be surprising if these very individual artists [one of whom is Hodgkins], with their powerful sponsors among the great English painters of the past, had not attracted followers among their younger colleagues.' In Russell, *From Sickert to 1948: the achievement of the Contemporary Art Society*, p.83.

suggestive and Romantic works from this period.²³⁷ In Morris's Welsh countryside landscapes, 'houses shelter in gloomy and mysterious valleys or are set like jewels in the bare rocky mountains'.²³⁸ Paintings such as *Pontypridd* (Fig. 83) fit into the former category. Similar to his Neo-Romantic contemporaries, Morris sensed the true character and spirit of places. However, Morris preferred to focus more on scenes from his native country over cherished locations in England such as one of Nash's favorite places—the Victorian seaside town of Swanage. Morris was deeply invested in the cultural and artistic development of South Wales, yet conditions continued to remain relatively poor, which caused the artist great anguish. In Morris's *Pontypridd*, which features St. Catherine's Church (Fig. 84) in the foreground, the artist's melancholic reaction to the defeated landscape is easily recognizable. Rather than highlighting effects of the war's destruction wrought upon the countryside, as can be seen in Nash's depiction of a sea of wrecked planes (refer back to Fig. 79) or Piper's remains of a bombed chapel (refer back to Fig. 81), Morris paints the deepening effects of the Depression and industrialization. Swirls of smoke rise from chimneys in the distance, and a bluish-grey smog-like cloud settles over the buildings in the valley like a smothering blanket. It is this 'confrontation with landscape that British artists have repeatedly felt a quickening of spirit, a challenge or a release'²³⁹, and I would argue that paintings such as *Pontypridd* offer just as much emotive and imaginative powers as works by recognized Neo-Romantic landscape artists.

Before war broke out, Morris traveled abroad to remote locations, and the landscapes he came across were transformed into views embodying 'an almighty, expansive power'.²⁴⁰ Lett has described these paintings as 'spontaneous and crystal clear in their inspiration, deliberate in Design, their graphic construction the result

²³⁷ Established Neo-Romantics, like Nash, incorporated hunting birds into their work, such as the previously discussed *Totes Meer (Dead Sea)*. About the work, Nash wrote, 'The only moving creature is the white owl flying low over the bodies of the other predatory creatures, raking the shadows for rats and voles.' Wilson, *Tate Gallery: An Illustrated Companion*, p.185.

²³⁸Giardelli, "Cedric Morris", p.73.

²³⁹Rothenstein, *British Art Since 1900: An Anthology*, p.58.

²⁴⁰Giardelli, "Cedric Morris", p.73.

of infinite pains over a very long period'.²⁴¹ I would describe these works such as *Lake Patzcuaro, Mexico* (Fig. 85) as emblems of Romantic Modernism in their perceptive sensibility to the spiritual grandeur of nature. The 'simplicity of overall conception and poetic sense of distance and place' of *Lake Patzcuaro, Mexico* has been connected to an earlier work of another Welshman, James Dickson Innes's *Arenig, North Wales* (Fig. 86).²⁴² As Morphet has illustrated, both Morris's *Lake Patzcuaro, Mexico* and Innes's *Arenig, North Wales* express a 'directness... of... means and sincere emotion'²⁴³, even if Morris's work is naturalistic in color, while Innes experimented with rich modulations of blues and pinks. I, instead, would like to compare Morris's *Lake Patzcuaro, Mexico* to a later Neo-Romantic work by Piper entitled *The Rise of the Dovey* (Fig. 87), which depicts the mountains of North Wales. Painted during the war, there is an ominous mood in Piper's painting, which is missing from Morris's. *Lake Patzcuaro, Mexico* is a peaceful scene of blue skies. The natural world is practically untouched by the destruction of man, and the mountains assume a majestic quality as they continue to rise from middleground to background. *The Rise of the Dovey*, on the other hand, exudes a sense of fear. Black clouds gather in the sky above darkening the landscape of soaring mountains with disturbing shadows. A blackened lake, which appears to be filled with a tar-like substance, can be found in the lower foreground. Although the two landscapes reveal two antithetical emotions, tranquility versus fear, I would argue that both artists sought to depict the 'spiritual space'²⁴⁴ of their landscapes; thus, the root of these images are derived from the same place— Romantic Modernism.

I have argued that Morris's landscapes, both with marks of industrialization and without, were painted in the Romantic Modernist tradition. I believe his landscapes featuring predatory birds prove to be the most powerful of his Romantic motifs, leading to works, which could easily be characterized as Neo-Romantic, despite not having been recognized as such. Similar to the penetrating nature in which he painted birds' eggs and individual flowers, Morris had a great love of birds

²⁴¹ Lett-Haines, *Cedric Morris: Retrospective*, unpaginated.

²⁴² Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.40.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.40.

²⁴⁴ Term used in Ebert-Schifferer, *Still Life: A History*, p.322.

and painted them, as Morphet stated, not with an ‘attempt to compete with Audubon in precision of detail...’ but his depictions ‘... are nevertheless uncannily “like”’.²⁴⁵ One critic wrote that Morris’s birds were painted ‘not photographically, but with the sympathy and succinctness that we associate with early Chinese masters. Mr. Morris paints living, breathing, flying birds, not colored reproductions of stuffed carcasses’.²⁴⁶ Another wrote that Morris ‘simplifies and arranges them [the birds] on canvas[es] so that his design enhances the natural interest of the subject’.²⁴⁷ Yet these paintings, I believe, have been rather trivialized and simply referred to as his ‘bird paintings’²⁴⁸ or his ‘ornithological pictures’²⁴⁹ with an emphasis on the appearance and character of the birds in what could be identified as a sort of Modernist bird portraiture, ‘translated into a rather decorative mosaic of colour’.²⁵⁰ What about the bird’s placement in its environmental context? The landscapes are altogether overlooked. Instead, I would propose that these paintings should be considered as Romantic Modernist landscapes featuring birds such as can be seen with the cormorants in Morris’s paintings *Shags* (Fig. 88) and *Heron* (Fig. 89).

The inclusion of birds, as well as insects, in still lifes can be traced back to early Baroque flowerpieces, both underlining aspects of illusionism and documenting exotic species in natural history.²⁵¹ However, just as the previously mentioned critic noted an association of Morris’s birds with those of ‘early Chinese masters’, there was undoubtedly an Eastern influence on Morris’s work. I will illustrate for the first time how Chinese landscapes including birds, indeed, served as a foundation for Morris’s paintings such as *Shags* and *Heron*, which were rather uncommon subjects in Britain during this time.²⁵² Binyon, who was an authority on

²⁴⁵ Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.86.

²⁴⁶ “D.C.F.”, in *Manchester Guardian* (9 May 1928) quoted in Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.32.

²⁴⁷ “Animals in Art 2. Cedric Morris”, *Zoo* (July 1936): n.p.

²⁴⁸ Morphet categorizes these works as Morris’s ‘bird paintings’ in Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, pp.82, 86. McCormick has also used this term, writing that Morris was ‘renowned for his bird paintings’ in McCormick, *Portrait of Frances Hodgkins*, p.107.

²⁴⁹ Chamot, *Modern Painting in England*, p.97.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.97.

²⁵¹ Gibson, *Flower Painting*, p.4. For an example see Hyronimus Sweerts, *Flower still life with parrot*, 1626, oil on wood, Kunsthalle Bremen.

²⁵² In later interviews, Morris stated that he admired Chinese painting in John Bensusan-Butt, “Baronet with Palette”, *Essex County Standard* (16 October 1959): n.p. Morris also wrote about the

Romanticism, as I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, also wrote on the influence of Eastern art on European artists in his *Painting in the Far East*.²⁵³ On Eastern painting, Binyon wrote:

The life of nature and of all non-human things is regarded in itself; its character contemplated and its beauty cherished for its own sake, not for its use and service in the life of man... These men painted birds and flowers as they were in nature, with no explicit symbolism, with nothing factitious added...²⁵⁴

Binyon illustrates indebtedness to Eastern painting in ways which link Romantic Modernists, like Morris, to the art of Chinese landscapes by following united visual principles which depend on 'beauty cherished for its own sake' such as the paintings of 'birds and flowers as they were in nature.' Thus, Binyon draws a significant yet overlooked connection between Romantic Modernism and the art of the East, and I will expand upon his argument by looking at Morris's *Shags* and *Heron* in relation to two Chinese paintings— *An Autumn Scene with Birds* (Fig. 90) and *Nine White Egrets* (Fig. 91).

In 1938, Morris painted *Shags* with three cormorants in profile view perched on a barren landscape of rocky cliffs overlooking the sea. Although the sea is calm, one can sense a storm gathering as dark-colored clouds begin to fill what was before a peaceful blue sky. Perhaps the birds are watching and waiting for just another storm to approach, or maybe, given the date the painting was made, Morris intended this landscape to represent the fortitude required on behalf of animals and humankind in the face of an impending war. Three years later, during the height of war, *Heron* was painted, and even though there is a blue sky and a still river cutting across the mountainous terrain, a heron with its outstretched wings and talons soars above surveying the landscape for its prey. Both *Shags* and *Heron* have a

power of Chinese painting, 'In an indifferent picture the usual redundancy of non-essential betrays the poverty of the vision,' unlike 'in the monotype of Chao Meng-Chien (thirteenth century)... no brush stroke could be omitted or one added.' Cedric Morris, "Concerning flower painting", *The Studio* 123, no.590 (May 1942): pp.121-23.

²⁵³ For literature on the subject of Binyon engaging on the topic of Romanticism see Sillars, *British Romantic Art and the Second World War*, pp.20-22. Also, Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art*, pp.26-27. Corbett has also written on Eastern art's influence on European artists but in relation to the Vorticists in *Ibid.*, pp.27-29.

²⁵⁴ Binyon, *Painting in the Far East*, p.164.

heightened sense of drama, though, expressed in different ways. The spectacle in the former painting is attributed to the transformative mood of the landscape, while the latter depends more on the watchful eye of the bird as it descends for its victim. *Shags*, and I would argue the same for *Heron*, has been described as having 'both an outer and an inner meaning'²⁵⁵, conveying a sense of surrealistic intrigue, which firmly ground these works in a British Romantic Modernist context. Yet, one cannot ignore their link to Eastern origins. Although the landscape is minimally delineated with great precision and detailing, both *An Autumn Scene with Birds* and *Nine White Egrets* depict naturalistic settings with bare trees and rocky banks along the water. The birds in the former work are still and observant as can be seen with those in *Shags*, while the birds in *Nine White Egrets* are active and flying about catching prey like in *Heron*. Morris's reductive technique can be partly attributed to the pared down quality of Chinese works such as can be seen with *An Autumn Scene with Birds* and *Nine White Egrets*.²⁵⁶

Yet Morris's landscapes with birds extend beyond their Eastern influences by incorporating a particularly imaginative sentiment with implications of 'high Romantic art in Britain', which can be described as 'the interchange between outer and inner worlds where each becomes symbols of the other, that is central to the finest and most typical of English Romantic paintings of landscape'.²⁵⁷ Thus, I argue that Morris's landscapes featuring birds stress the peak of individuality over national and political overtones implicit in Neo-Romantic landscapes of this time such as with Nash's *Totes Meer (Dead Sea)* (refer back to Fig. 79). I would also propose that Morris's visionary landscapes featuring birds, in fact, played an influential part on younger Neo-Romantics like John Craxton. At the age of 19, Craxton met Lucian Freud, and the duo developed an inseparable friendship.²⁵⁸ From 1939 until 1942, Freud was, in fact, a pupil at Morris's East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing,

²⁵⁵ Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.30.

²⁵⁶ Tufnell, *Cedric Morris and Lett-Haines: Teaching Art and Life*, p.25.

²⁵⁷ Sillars, *British Romantic Art and the Second World War*, p.52.

²⁵⁸ The artistic relationship between Craxton and Freud and that of the older artist Graham Sutherland has been examined in Malcolm Yorke, *The Spirit of Place: Nine Neo-Romantic Artists and Their Times* (London and New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2001), pp.300-26.

and Freud's early work has been perceived to be indebted to his teacher.²⁵⁹ Through Craxton's and Freud's friendship, I believe that Craxton came into contact with Morris's art and ideas.²⁶⁰ Like Morris, Craxton displayed an awareness of a combination of Surrealism and Romanticism, as well as touches of Eastern influences, in works such as *Bird Among Rocks* (Fig. 92). The influence of John Minton's pen and ink drawings, Sutherland, Palmer, Blake, and the French Neo-Romantics, have all been cited, yet the work of Morris remains missing from the equation.²⁶¹ How is this blatant omission possible? Craxton's drawing seems to have a 'supernatural fertility'²⁶², which strikingly resembles Morris's landscapes with birds. In *Bird Among Rocks*, Craxton instills the bird with a powerful agency, a characteristic that Morris developed and excelled in, as the animal is perched centrally in profile making direct eye contact with the viewer. The twisting tree branches and jagged rocks of the landscape dizzily spiral into the distance, creating an ominous effect, while the careful delineation of forms links this work to the previously discussed Chinese paintings. Why then were Morris's landscapes, as well as those with birds, overshadowed and undermined in the context of both older and younger generations of British Neo-Romantics? While Hodgkins's landscapes garnered the artist recognition as a Neo-Romantic by critics and fellow artists like Mortimer and Piper, Morris remained an outsider with his surrealistic and dreamy landscapes minimized to rather inconsequential 'bird paintings' rather than finding their rightful place in either Neo-Romanticism or what I propose as Romantic Modernism. In the following chapter, I will address potential reasons for the overall disregard of Morris's Romantic Modernist landscapes and exclusion from the Neo-Romantic circle.

²⁵⁹Tufnell, *Cedric Morris and Lett-Haines: Teaching Art and Life*, p.28.

²⁶⁰ The British avant-garde art world was exceedingly intertwined at this time. It has been noted that even Craxton's art teacher at Betteshanger preparatory school was a friend of Frances Hodgkins and 'passed on the message that art was both a serious and marvelous pursuit...' Yorke, *The Spirit of Place: Nine Neo-Romantic Artists and Their Times*, p.300. Later in the forties, Craxton's work was often shown with Hodgkins's paintings in Neo-Romantic exhibitions in Buchanan et al., *Frances Hodgkins: Paintings and Drawings*, p.73. Craxton, also, proclaimed to be an admirer of Hodgkins's work. Frances Spalding, *Dance Till the Stars Come Down: Biography of John Minton* (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, 1991), p.37.

²⁶¹ Rothenstein, *British Art Since 1900: An Anthology*, p.131.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, p.131.

V. *The Missing Links: Hodgkins and Morris as British Romantic Modernists*

In this chapter, I have demonstrated ways in which Hodgkins and Morris shared imaginative inclinations in their depictions of still lifes, landscapes and still life-landscape combinations during the interwar period and leading into the Second World War. Both Hodgkins and Morris sought to explore an unfettered Modernist pictorial language by forming their own individual expressions, set against the backdrop of the British countryside and the historical British Romanticism movement. I have argued that this particular method of painting should be referred to as Romantic Modernism. Yet, both artists continued to maintain connections to the Continent and abroad, during times of peace and conflict; thus, their art developed multi-faceted, transnational associations beyond the British Isles and brought about innovative forms of twentieth-century visual expression. Personal meanings and profound levels of consciousness were channeled through these artists' still lifes and landscapes, creating metaphysical expressions, while they embraced tenants related to Surrealism. Although British Modernism engaged an explicit focus on individualized experience while, simultaneously, celebrating an instinctive sensitivity to the pastoral, I believe and have demonstrated that Hodgkins and Morris were two of the most influential artists of this time, despite the fact that it took until the forties for Hodgkins to finally receive relative success, if only for a few years, while Morris's work drifted into a state of perpetual obscurity.

Hodgkins and Morris experimented with 'sincere expressions' of an 'inner necessity'²⁶³ revealing emotive symbols and powers behind their, otherwise, common and domestic still-life objects, flowers and landscapes. The prominent role of nature is inescapable, while Hodgkins worked together with Morris at his English estates set in the bucolic countryside and on painting excursions in Wales, leading to the characterization of their work as a type of 'lyrical naturalism'.²⁶⁴ Celebrating rural existence, both artists focused on nature's bounty in shared motifs— from

²⁶³ Chamot, *Modern Painting in England*, p.74.

²⁶⁴ Hodgkins's work, specifically, was defined as a form of 'lyrical naturalism' in Buchanan et al., *Frances Hodgkins: Paintings and Drawings*, p.53. Also in Morgan, *Frances Hodgkins: A Modernist Eye*, unpaginated.

their depictions of eggs relating to Hunt's work and drawing connections to British national identity to retracing the interest of the British Romantic tradition of turning to landscapes for material and spiritual inspiration. Hodgkins's and Morris's still lifes and landscapes were able to convey a rarely sought after dimension to these unassuming subjects— a soul. Reviving ancient endeavors by philosophers like Aristotle to determine whether plants had a soul, Hodgkins and Morris expanded the physical beauty of plants and landscapes to a level of spiritual intangibility.²⁶⁵ As eventualities of another world war unfolded into a stark reality, their images of Arcadian beauty and plentitude turned to meditations of a darker character whether in the realization of morphed and ghostly agricultural debris, landscapes overburdened by industrialization or the threat of preying birds.

Yet, even though both Hodgkins and Morris outshined many in an 'Aesthetics of Inwardness' through their painting of individualized still lifes, landscapes and still life-landscape combinations, which reflected the tendency of the time and avoided overtly "modern" associations, I believe their work has been largely relegated to the shadows of British Modernists and Neo-Romanticists. Hodgkins's and Morris's aesthetic and imaginative freedom were not imitations or derivatives of their contemporaries but instead proved to be uniquely their own. In this chapter, I have, in fact, demonstrated how their work served as an inspiration for younger generations of British artists. What were the reasons then for this shadow to be cast over their work, leading to their overlooked reception in Britain? Has critical work and analyses of their paintings been limited due to their "lesser" and "feminine" subject matter of still lifes compared to the androgynous and surrealist abstractions of the same period? Even if this were to be the case, why did their landscapes not gain the recognition that their counterparts enjoyed? In the next chapter, I will explore Hodgkins's and Morris's placement in the British Modernist context and will examine why these two artists have been and continue to be neglected, despite their indelible contributions to Romantic Modernism.

²⁶⁵ Heilmeyer, *The Language of Flowers: Symbols and Myths*, p.7.

Chapter III: *Expanding the English Canon through the Investigation of Hodgkins's and Morris's "Outsider" Identities*

Throughout this thesis, my research has demonstrated how both Hodgkins and Morris significantly contributed to the advance of twentieth-century British Modernism with the development of their distinctive pictorial language, which I have described by means of my own term: Romantic Modernism; yet their work has been and continues to be excluded from the historiography and scholarship on British Art History as a whole as well as that of Neo-Romanticism, more specifically. For instance, the following texts serve as a selection of examples that omit both Hodgkins and Morris from the British Modernist discourse: Mary Chamot's et al. *The Modern British Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture* (1964), Raymond Lister's *British Romantic Art* (1973), Stuart Sillars's *British Romantic Art and the Second World War* (1991), David Peters Corbett's *The Modernity of English Art* (1997), Corbett's and Lara Perry's *English Art, 1860-1914: Modern Artists and Identity* (2001), Andrew Wilton's *Five Centuries of British Painting* (2001), Corbett's et al. *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past* (2002), Janet Wolff's *AngloModern: Painting and Modernity in Britain and the United States* (2003) and Alexandra Harris's *Romantic Moderns: English Writers, Artists and the Imagination from Virginia Woolf to John Piper* (2010). Why were Hodgkins's and Morris's compelling Romantic Modernist voices overshadowed by their contemporaries, particularly after their deaths? Similar questions raised in the conclusion of my previous chapter will now be answered.

I wish to consider the "outsider" identities of these two Romantic Modernists, which framed their isolation from "insider" English Modernists and Neo-Romantics. The first section will be based on factors surrounding the national identities of these two artists, who both came from more provincial places compared to that of London. Is Hodgkins's and Morris's rather obscure fate in Britain due to the fact that British Modernism demonstrates a mainly English or London-bred artistic canon? Born in Dunedin into an English family in a Scottish settlement, Hodgkins has been heralded and continues to be celebrated as New Zealand's most

distinguished twentieth-century expatriate artist.¹ From 1914 until her death in 1947, she was based in England, but her positioning in British Modernism has been demoted to a mere footnote. The same can be said about Morris, who was born in Swansea. Although he settled for the remainder of his life in East Anglia in 1929, Morris continually travelled to his native country. Even though Morris received considerably more recognition than Hodgkins in England during the twenties and into the early thirties, little critical scholarship has been conducted over the past three decades on his paintings. His work is rarely, if ever, mentioned in recent surveys of British art. Thus, I will argue that it is necessary to revise the mainly English canon of British Modernism to incorporate this creative pair from more provincial locations than the capital of England.

By focusing on Hodgkins's and Morris's "other" national identities, I will widen the view to recent scholarly thought concerning the connection between British Modernism and "Englishness". I will revise the premise that due to uncertainties at the end of the First World War, the formation of "Englishness" redefined the nation and its cultural assets, leading to significant omissions in British Modernism up to the present day. This will be demonstrated by referencing relevant critical reviews and articles expressing the importance of nationality to English art critics and, consequently, their denunciations of non-English artists, particularly during the twenties and thirties. Hodgkins's and Morris's Romantic Modernism is composed of artistic elements, which originated from their Continental travels and their extensive time spent in Paris, as has been previously addressed. When they returned to Britain, was their transnational frame of reference principally French, or did this creative pair eventually assimilate avant-garde Franco-aesthetics into their artistic identity based on a dialogue between a growing consciousness of an English "native" tradition and that of "foreign" influences? Here, too, I plan to assess the critical response to the work of these two

¹ See Jonathan Gooderham and Grace Alty, *Frances Hodgkins: The Expatriate Years, 1901-1947* (Auckland, Jonathan Grant Galleries, 2012); Christina Barton, *The Expatriates: Frances Hodgkins and Barrie Bates* (Wellington: Adam Art Gallery, 2005); *Six New Zealand Expatriates: Grace Joel, Rhona Haszard, Frances Hodgkins, Francis McCracken, Raymond McIntyre, Owen Merton* (Auckland: The Auckland City Art Gallery, 1962); E.H. McCormick, *Works of Frances Hodgkins in New Zealand* (Auckland: Auckland City Art Gallery, 1954).

artists, which will enable an understanding of the relevance of “Englishness” in modern art, based on the identification and exclusion of non-English visual languages.

Hodgkins’s and Morris’s foreign nationalities and transcultural aesthetic assimilations were not the only “outsider” influences on the reception of their Romantic Modernist art, however. In the next section I will propose that Hodgkins’s gender, as well as her advanced age, and Morris’s homosexuality could very well have been contributing factors to the, at times, quite negative response to their work during their lives and up to the present day. Working as a woman artist, Hodgkins endured challenges related to establishing her professional identity during her career in her native country, throughout the Continent and ultimately in Britain. Hodgkins was born into a middle-class background, and her father was not only an amateur watercolorist but also Dunedin’s major artistic champion. This progressive upbringing provided her with the advantage to train under the visiting Italian painter Girolamo Pieri Nerli in 1893, and she later entered the Dunedin School of Art in 1895 to study for the South Kensington examinations. Before leaving New Zealand for the last time, Hodgkins relayed her accomplishments in an interview, while, simultaneously, expressing her discontent with her colonial career. She had ‘painted a great deal, done a lot of teaching, and had illustrated for our newspapers’, but she continued to reveal, ‘perhaps I ought to have been content with what was a very interesting life, but I felt I was only groping; that I had not realized myself... that I wanted to measure myself with the moderns. So I sailed for the old world’.² During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women artists in colonial societies struggled to develop their artistic potential from amateur to professional artist.³ Hodgkins knew that if she were to have a chance at a successful career as an artist in Europe, she would have to sacrifice her family, friends and material comforts back home in New Zealand. Fellow New Zealander, McCormick, was the first biographer to acknowledge Hodgkins’s art, and his

² Thomson C. Hay, “An Artist of the Moderns”, *Everylady’s Journal*, Melbourne (6 January 1913), p.12.

³ In New Zealand at this time, women’s roles remained within the confines of wife and mother with the possibility for single women to undertake careers in nursing and teaching. Kirker, *New Zealand Women Artists: A Survey of 150 Years*, p.25.

writings accorded her as one of New Zealand's most important expatriate artists with appropriate 'recognition, reappraisal and "reclaiming"'.⁴ However, Britain's overdue recognition of Hodgkins has yet to be fully determined.⁵

Hodgkins's struggle to gain recognition for her art did not stop at her sex. The artist's advancing years proved to be an inescapable burden rather than a gift of experience and wisdom, as various critics wrongfully misconstrued her work as following in the footsteps of her younger contemporaries. For instance, more than three decades after her death, Harrison's *English Art and Modernism* continued to trivialize Hodgkins's significance in British Modernism, when he wrote:

Although a painter of an older generation than the other members of the Seven & Five she shared their interests and painted uncomplicated subjects in a fluid style which showed the effects of exposure to second-rate French painting of the twenties as well as to the work of Matisse.⁶

Therefore, ageism, along with sexism, proved to be an oppressive obstacle for Hodgkins to conquer, particularly in the art world, which frequently featured exhibitions organized for emerging artists under a certain age such as the *Young Artists Exhibition* and *English Artists under Forty*.⁷ Hodgkins did not enjoy the stability and the benefits of a gallery contract until the age of 61, which at this late date finally marked a turning point in her career. Wanting to be recognized for her own distinctive aesthetic voice and certainly not as an aging woman artist, Hodgkins sought to overcome these barriers through her radically inventive self-portraits in the form of still lifes, which will be examined later in this chapter. Portraits based

⁴Elizabeth Eastmond and M. Penfold, *Women and the Arts in New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin Books Ltd., 1986), unpaginated. This major exhibition in 1969 helped to shape Hodgkins's significance: *Frances Hodgkins, 1869-1947: A Centenary Exhibition*.

⁵ My concise book, *Frances Hodgkins* (Eiderdown Press, 2019), is part of a series on British Women Modernists from 1900-1950. The other four books in the series include: *Sylvia Pankhurst* (by Katy Norris), *Laura Knight* (by Alice Strickland), *Marlow Moss* (by Lucy Howarth) and *Lee Miller* (by Ami Bouhassane).

⁶ Harrison, *English Art and Modernism 1900-1939*, p.196. Harrison never mentioned Morris in this text.

⁷ The *Young Artists Exhibition* was arranged by the *Daily Express* in 1927 and included 'the best known artists of the younger generation... Thomas Monnington, Colin Gill, Eric Kennington, [Edward] Wadsworth, Gilbert Spencer, [Mark] Gertler, [Christopher R.W.] Nevinson, Paul Nash and Mary Adshead.' "Young Artists Exhibition", *Daily Express* (7 June 1927): n.p. The exhibition *English Artists under Forty* was also organized by the *Daily Express* during the same year and proved that the majority of recognized English Modernists at that time were young.

on Hodgkins's physical appearance are rare, since she was rather self-conscious about her age. The fact that she allowed Morris to depict her likeness on three separate occasions— twice during their time together in Cornwall (refer back to Figs. 2 & 3) and again in 1928 (Fig. 106)— indicates the exceptional bond these two artists shared.⁸

In terms of Morris's "outsider" identity as a homosexual, I will argue that his sexuality defied the vigorous masculinity implicit in the accepted Modernist identity referred to as 'Vorticist machismo'.⁹ Thus, Morris's use of Romantic Modernism fell victim to sexual politics. Homosexuality was not decriminalized until 1967 with the passing of the Sexual Offences Act in Britain. I will argue that Morris's homosexuality, when negotiating between commercial repercussions and public opinion, even in more progressive artistic circles, served as a setback during this socially intolerant time. Morris's sixty-year personal as well as professional relationship with Lett was largely founded on their efforts to make art as accessible as possible to practitioners and to the public. Their beliefs and practices were similar to another twentieth-century British same-sex couple— the tenor, Peter Pears, and the composer and conductor, Benjamin Britten, whose life-long companionship inspired one another and developed into one of the most creatively prolific partnerships of their time.¹⁰ Despite Morris's and Lett's joint accomplishments such as the establishment in 1937 of their East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing, which shaped generations of British artists, the literature continues to minimize their relationship simply as a 'life-long friendship'.¹¹

The final section of this chapter will address one more reason for why this creative pair remained as "outsiders": their lack of academic training in Britain. I will argue that Hodgkins's and Morris's "outsider" status resulted in the relatively

⁸ Also, refer to Lett's charcoal portrait, *Frances Hodgkins*, from 1919-20 (Fig. 22).

⁹ This term originates from Lisa Tickner, "Vanessa Bell: *Studland Beach*, Domesticity and 'Significant Form'", in Whitney Chadwick and Isabelle de Courtivron (eds.) *Significant Others: Creativity and Intimate Partnership* (London: Frances Lincoln, 1998), p.80.

¹⁰ The relationship between these twentieth-century musical giants is revealed in a collection of their letters in Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears, *My Beloved Man: The Letters of Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears*, edited by Vicki P. Stroeher, Nicholas Clark and Jude Brimmer (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2016).

¹¹ See the catalogue description for Morris in Collins (ed.), *Landscape in Britain*, p.121.

minor recognition of their work compared to their English counterparts, due to the fact that these two artists were not only deemed to be less qualified but were also not immediately affiliated with established English academic circles. Unlike Hodgkins and Morris, artists such as Ben Nicholson and Paul Nash, who were instructed at the Slade School of Fine Art, or John Piper, who studied at the Royal College of Art, were unified with the “old boys’ network”. Although Hodgkins did not receive formal instruction in Britain, she fulfilled artistic training in New Zealand, as I have previously mentioned. In 1908 she enrolled in the studio of Pierre Amédée Marcel-Bérroneau for lessons in oil in Paris, in addition to a class on watercolors at the Académie Colarossi in 1910. Like Hodgkins, Morris did not receive art training in Britain. In 1914 Morris entered the Royal College of Music, London, to study singing but quickly abandoned this pursuit for painting, when in April of the same year he enrolled at the Académie Delécluse in Paris for one term. With the outbreak of the First World War, his studies were interrupted, and so he returned to England. While training in Paris was popular amongst particular groups of twentieth-century Modernists, this practice, nevertheless, sparked sparring amongst certain British critics, who felt that the English school was in a state of peril. Not only did Hodgkins and Morris remain artistic “outsiders” to British academic institutions, but also their French training led them to create their own distinctive methods of teaching through promoting doctrines of individuality and complete artistic freedom, which would significantly influence generations of British artists.

The modernization of British institutions enabled art made in Britain to become progressively professionalized, while, simultaneously, causing practitioners outside of the system to bear the consequences of overcoming stigmas relating to their international, “outsider” identities. This necessity to receive a formal artistic education led to increasing distinctions between the “amateur” versus the “professional” artist, causing amateurism to be viewed by some critics as a sign of artistic weakness.¹² At the same time, modern artists such as those in the

¹² Charles Marriott, *Modern Movements in Painting* (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1920), p.139.

Bloomsbury group shared a commitment to amateurism, which they aligned with experimentalism. An example is the Bloomsbury's experimental design collective, the Omega Workshops, established in 1913 by Fry. The Omega's mission, has been described by Spalding as: 'instead of imposing restrictions in order to arrive at a recognisable house style, Fry wanted to give full rein to the artist's sensibility, hoping that his or her delight in free play would be conveyed to the owner of the product'.¹³ Morris's and Hodgkins's desire to remain independent of larger artistic trends and movements, which only strengthened as the years progressed, furthered their alien status to the English art world. This can be demonstrated by their respective decisions to withdraw from exhibiting groups such as The Seven and Five Society in 1932 and in 1934.

In this chapter, I will also reevaluate the concept of conventionality. Hodgkins and Morris were far more radical in their anti-establishment existence and self-imposed isolation from life in the metropolis, so often associated with and definitive of modernity, than their English counterparts. I will argue that Hodgkins's and Morris's exclusion from the British Modernist context relates to their genuine "outsider" approach to their artistic careers. For instance, even if one can argue that the inter-war years in which Hodgkins's and Morris's Romantic Modernist works were marked by attempts to associate modernity with national identity through the pastoral, their desire to remain in rural realities created serious logistical complications such as maintaining active contacts with London dealers and galleries. Despite receiving mostly positive press during the early-to-mid forties as well as an invitation to exhibit at the Venice Biennale by the British Council, Hodgkins's reputation in Britain quickly vanished after her death in 1947. By the forties, Morris was struggling to exhibit his work, which persisted for the remainder of his life. He even wrote to friends pleading for assistance in scouting opportunities: 'I wonder if sometime you would do something for me— ... if you

¹³ Frances Spalding, *Roger Fry: Art and Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), p.178.

could find out while you are snooping round [sic] the galleries in London if any of them would be interested in staging a retrospective show of my work'.¹⁴

It is important to conclude with an examination of how these two artists have been marginalized soon after their death and up until the present day. From the onset of my research in 2016, there have been multiple exhibitions supplemented by catalogues, which would have greatly benefited from the inclusion of Hodgkins's and Morris's Romantic Modernist art. Tate Britain's *Queer British Art, 1861-1967*, and its exhibition catalogue by curator, Clare Barlow, did not include Morris or Lett, who was an artist in his own right, despite the fact that this creative couple influenced and mentored queer artists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries such as Maggi Hambling, Denis Wirth-Miller and Richard Chopping. Morris's and Lett's bohemian estates were uninhibited places where explicit homosexuality was unrestrained at a time when it was still illegal. The British Museum's exhibition, *Places of the Mind: British watercolour landscapes, 1850-1950*, did not include Hodgkins's watercolors, despite the fact that she was one of the most skilled British watercolorists of this period. Hodgkins produced diaphanous still life-landscapes, which inspired the lyrical quality so frequently mentioned in Nash's and Sutherland's art. In 2017, Maria Bucur, Professor at Indiana University, published *Gendering Modernism: A Historical Reappraisal of the Canon*, which focuses on how gender changes the way Modernism should be reevaluated. Including Hodgkins's work would have enhanced its feminist perspective. Another recent academic text, *A Companion to British Art: 1600 to the Present*, edited by Dana Arnold, Professor at Middlesex University, and David Peters Corbett, who was then Professor at the University of East Anglia, would have amplified discussions on national identity and British Modernism by including Hodgkins and Morris.¹⁵ Current museological and academic perspectives continue to isolate these two significant artists from critical discourses, and I aim to resolve their present outsider status in order to determine

¹⁴ Cedric Morris to David Carr letter, 15 May 1950, 86.NN. 48-50, National Art Library, Special Collections.

¹⁵ The first chapter on national identity is entitled "The 'Englishness' of English Theory" by Mark A. Cheetham. The chapter on British Modernism is "Modernity and the British" by Andrew Ballantyne.

reasons for their unwarranted omissions in the context of British Modernism and Neo-Romanticism.¹⁶

I. *Debunking Nationalism in Modernist Artistic Identities*

Was Hodgkins's and Morris's Romantic Modernist art aligned with their fellow English Modernists, and if so, did they receive the same critical attention and treatment of their distinctive works from the critics, curators and historians of their time? Hodgkins's and Morris's respective New Zealand and Welsh nationalities have been translated into their Modernist visions, which I have categorized as Romantic Modernism, but their work, particularly Hodgkins's, nevertheless, faced belated recognition during the twenties and thirties amongst their English counterparts. For it was not until the forties and fifties that "Englishness" was finally accepted more as an universal vision with art critics such as Geoffrey Grigson, who later helped define certain aspects of "Englishness" with his reviews of Hodgkins's art, for example. Through the methodological approach of examining archival materials and exhibition catalogues, I will examine interactions between Hodgkins, an expatriate New Zealand artist, and Morris, as Welsh, in an English art system, and whether their cross-cultural identities, which undoubtedly influenced their work, affected its reception by prominent twentieth-century critics and later by historians. I will reconstruct the history of the curation of Hodgkins's and Morris's Romantic

¹⁶ For example, after thirty years Morris's works have recently received renewed attention due to the estate sale of David Bowie, which included many of Morris's paintings, in 2016. The dispersion of Morris's works has also led to three small exhibitions in the spring of 2018: *Cedric Morris* at Gainsborough's House in Sudbury, Suffolk, the Garden Museum's *Cedric Morris: Artist Plantsman* and Philip Mould & Company's *Cedric Morris: Beyond the Garden Wall*. Although I am pleased for public light to shine again on Morris's paintings, since the majority of his works have since remained in private collections, there is still the need for critical examination of his work. For instance, Mould partnered up with the Garden Museum to collaborate on the exhibitions, which seemed to promote the sales of Morris's work in Mould's Gallery, as the main objective. Also, news coverage on these exhibitions focuses on anecdotal reminiscences of domestic dramas and is riddled with inaccuracies. For instance, Rachel Campbell-Johnston, "Cedric Morris: a forgotten artist with flower power", *The Times* (18 April 2018): pp.8-9. One example of a false statement from this article: 'He [Morris] destroyed his correspondence'. This is untrue, since hundreds of Morris's letters still exist throughout archives across Britain. Campbell-Johnston also wrote that Morris met Lett in Cornwall in 1917, when, in fact, they met at Lett's house, 2 Carlyle Square, Chelsea either on the 11th or 13th of November in 1918, see Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.19. Meanwhile, the Auckland Art Gallery organized an exhibition of Hodgkins's works, *Frances Hodgkins: European Journeys*, along with the publication of an exhibition catalogue.

Modernist art in English exhibiting societies and London institutions by addressing issues of cultural geography and the role of nationality against a backdrop of active ‘cultural imperialism’.¹⁷ Thus, I will expand the discourse on the notion of “Englishness” versus that which is considered “un-Englishness”.¹⁸

Beginning with her first voyage in 1901 from the New to the Old World up until her death in England in 1947, Hodgkins found herself endlessly negotiating between the ‘contending claims of Europe and New Zealand’.¹⁹ Just before the turn of the century, Hodgkins determined, ‘I have only one prominent idea and that is that nothing will interfere between me and my work’.²⁰ Although the Victorian, colonial population recognized Hodgkins for her advanced use of Impressionism, Hodgkins yearned to achieve more than just a reputation as a New Zealand painter. In fact, Hodgkins sought to ‘measure [herself] against the moderns’²¹ of Europe. The initial turning point in Hodgkins’s career as an artist came when she decided to leave for her first of three separate journeys to the Continent and to Britain in 1901 (the second was in 1906 and the third in 1913. A year later England served as a base for the remainder of her life). The first exhibition of Hodgkins’s work in London was in 1902 and was organized by a fellow artist and dealer from New Zealand, John Baillie. In London at this time there was a significant colonial art society, and Hodgkins’s work was included in the show *Colonial Artists*. Upon attending the exhibition, Hodgkins cynically observed, ‘It was odd to find oneself flanked, as in the old Dunedin days by Miss Joel & Annie Black— Miss J. showed some flowers, old friends, & Miss B. a frightening sort of figure thing— quite in her old style’.²² Hodgkins’s letter makes it quite clear that the artist desired to break

¹⁷ Corbett and Perry, *English Art, 1860-1914: Modern Artists and Identity*, p.1.

¹⁸ This framework has been explored with Sickert’s national identity between England and France in Anna Gruetzner Robins, “Walter Sickert and the Language of Art”, in Grace Brockington (ed.), *Internationalism and the arts in Britain and Europe at the Fin de Siècle* (Oxford: Peter Lange, 2009), p.47.

¹⁹ E.H. McCormick, *Works of Frances Hodgkins in New Zealand* (Auckland: Auckland City Art Gallery, 1954), p.62.

²⁰ Frances Hodgkins to Isabel Field, 26 June 1895, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.37.

²¹ Frances Hodgkins quoted by A.G. Stephens, “Frances Hodgkins: A Dunedin Girl who Conquered Paris”, *Otago Daily Times* (3 May 1913): p.5.

²² Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 23 October 1902, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.141.

free from her association with “lady painters” from her Antipodean past. However, Hodgkins continued to associate her art with colonial exhibiting societies and institutions until 1929 both in England and back in New Zealand and Australia.²³ At the same time, her Modernist pictorial language became increasingly disparaged in New Zealand. Upon reviewing her paintings exhibited in the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, Charles Wilson, an art critic from Wellington, wrote, ‘I may be too old fashioned but I regret I fail to understand much of Miss Hodgkins’s present day methods. To me they convey an impression of something like artistic chaos’.²⁴ Despite her determination to pursue a successful international career, Hodgkins admitted, ‘I would hesitate to recommend a New Zealand girl to follow the road I travelled... I feel that if I had known what was before me, I should never have had the courage to begin’.²⁵ Hodgkins made this remark at the peak of her Australasian career, but Europe was where she wished to be recognized for her newly minted Modernist idioms. In fact, her work produced in Europe and in Britain, not in New Zealand, was exceedingly more modern and in 1941 would win Hodgkins recognition as ‘the subtlest and most adventurous colourist in Europe’.²⁶ Though, Hodgkins’s path to this point was wrought with struggles against the safeguard of “Englishness” throughout the twenties and thirties.

Hodgkins faced constant pecuniary troubles, which often came in the way of making and exhibiting her art, while in Europe and in Britain. Alternatively, Morris descended from early Welsh princes before the English conquest and enjoyed an independent and yet unconventional existence.²⁷ Sir John Morris, the first baronet, received the title for raising troops to fight Napoleon in 1809.²⁸ Sir Cedric held the hereditary title as the ninth Baronet of Clasemont upon his father’s death in 1947.

²³ A selection of examples include in 1908 when she won a shared prize in the Australian section of Women’s art at the Franco-British Exhibition in London, the 1918 exhibition in Sydney at Anthony Hordern’s Gallery and in 1919 when works were shown at the Australian exhibition at the Fine Art Society, Melbourne.

²⁴ Charles Wilson, [no title], *The Dominion* (4 October 1928): n.p.

²⁵ A.G. Stephens, “Frances Hodgkins”, Supplement to *The Bookfellow*, Sydney (1 May 1913): p.4.

²⁶ Eric Newton, “Frances Hodgkins”, *Listener* (2 October 1941): p.473.

²⁷ Obituaries, Garden Museum Archive, 2/Doc/1982/116.

²⁸ For a full Morris ancestral tree see the article John Bensusan-Butt, “Baronet with palette”, *Essex County Standard* (16 October 1959): pp.7, 25.

Morris's ancestors rose to prominence in the eighteenth century as founders of the copper and tin industries in South Wales and endowed the area with the family name— Morrystown, which still exists today. Morris, who was given a yearly allowance, expressed conflicting feelings regarding his privileged position in life.²⁹ Similar in a way to Toulouse-Lautrec, Morris sacrificed his aristocratic background for a bohemian way of life. Despite Morris's rejection of his titled upbringing, the less explored question regarding aristocracy posed by Nochlin's seminal essay can very well be applied to Morris as a Modernist: 'Why have there been no great artists from the aristocracy?'³⁰ Morris never had to deal with money himself, so it was only natural that Lett ran the household along with its associated administration. In addition to supervising Morris's finances, Lett managed their East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing and cooked all of the meals, while Morris had the freedom to enjoy his painting and gardening. Thanks to Lett's selflessness and Morris's inheritance, Morris was able to devote time to teach his fellow Welshmen and to also provide the artists of South Wales with financial support.

While Morris always felt more aligned with his native country, it was in England where he lived and spent the majority of his life. At this moment there was a renewed Modernist interest in folklore, legend and myth associated with the Celtic Revival in places such as Cornwall, where Morris was mainly based from 1917 until 1920, and where he continued to visit throughout the twenties. Encouraged by this unfolding attention to Celtic culture, Morris's Celtic origin never escaped his art. The nineteenth-century poet and critic, Matthew Arnold, wrote "The Celtic Element in Literature" in which he declared the distinction between 'the steady-going Saxon temperament and the sentimental Celtic temperament'.³¹ Furthering Arnold's development of Celtic studies, the 'Celtic temperament' continued to be examined during the twentieth century and has been described as:

²⁹ At the age of 21, Morris received £100 a year. Morris stated, 'The thing was what to do. I thought very hard and I thought to myself that I wanted to go to Paris... I went and told my father, whom I was not crazy about. He was a gent, you know. Did nothing.' In "What Makes an Artist", Garden Museum Archive, 1/DOC/100100/829.

³⁰ Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?", *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), p.157.

³¹ Matthew Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1867), p.111.

... distinctive to the Anglo-Saxon temperament... more as an outlook, as the spirit in a work of art, by what it conveys rather than by what is seen. There is, however, that one characteristic which... is definitely conceded to this Celtic outlook— its remoteness, that quality of an outlook which penetrates beyond what is immediately visible... The Celtic vision is a subjective and imaginative vision, and in that way differs to a high degree from the outlook of the Anglo-Saxon.³²

William Butler Yeats published the folklore text *The Celtic Twilight* in 1893 in which he explored the connection between the Irish people and the Fairies whom inhabit their land. The text ‘seeks to assert a native vision of Ireland in which Anglo-Irish Revivalist and Catholic peasant find common cause in a mystical “Unity of Being”’.³³ Yeats’s visionary mediation between two cultural perspectives perhaps inspired Morris to unpeel the layers of the ‘Celtic’ landscape by uncovering the energy or life force within.

Interest in Celtic identities prompted Morris to paint a work entitled *The Celtic Twilight* (Fig. 93) with its enchanted subject of the Celtic spiritual world intermingling with the memories and histories of mortals, who will eventually join them one day. Set in what I believe is Cornwall, the twirling silhouettes of intertwined spirits refer to the layers of memory and history that permeate this remote seascape— both that of the pagan Britons and the later Celtic Christianity. The abstracted figure on the Crucifixion assumes the shape of sparks or even flames of energy, and in the center of the composition a nude stands hiding his loins with his hands like that of Adam, the first mortal body of flesh and blood. Morris’s *The Celtic Twilight* seems to be in the vein of Samuel Palmer with its sense of mysticism and prefigures Neo-Romantic works by Sutherland, Piper and Nash; Morris also nods to Cecil Collins’s use of Surrealism. Since Morris was based in Paris from 1921 until 1926, influences of Henri Rousseau’s mystical, naïve jungle scenes and Paul Gauguin’s Modernist primitivism also emerge in *The Celtic Twilight*.

³² Arthur Howell, “The Celtic Temperament in Our Artists”, *Western Mail (Cardiff)* (1 January 1934): n.p.

³³ Gregory Castle, *Modernism and the Celtic Revival* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.61.

Even though Morris settled in England that did not dissuade the artist from blaming the English for the critical state of unemployment and poverty in South Wales. Given his aristocratic position, Morris felt obligated to 'initiate Welshmen into their countrymen's work. It was felt that the Welsh were not conscious of what Welshmen had done and could do'.³⁴ Finding it necessary to cultivate a cultural renaissance in Wales, Morris became a trustee of Gwernllwyn House in Dowlaid, initiated the major touring exhibition of Welsh Contemporary Art in 1935, became President of the South Wales Art Society and co-founded the Contemporary Art Society for Wales. Morris frequently returned to support the local communities with art classes and lectures. In a letter to Lett, Morris wrote, 'I don't think I can go on living in England... I am ashamed of being an Englishman and I hate England... the sooner this stinking old whore of a country is blown out to sea the better— except that it would dirty the sea'.³⁵ Thus, Morris had to navigate the English art world and win over London critics with his work, despite his blatant resentment and hostility towards them.

Throughout the recession of the interwar period, there was an isolationist-driven, nationalistic or 'little Englandism' sentiment, 'whose key features included the English countryside... rural and small-town life... and an active xenophobia...'³⁶ The creation of a modern English identity depended upon turning to pastoral subjects along with the exclusion of foreign identities. What about the foreign-born artists who produced English landscape paintings with a completely fresh perspective? Why were Hodgkins's and Morris's commemorative Romantic Modernist works not considered equally as celebratory of "Englishness"?³⁷ Upon her first time in the English countryside of the Chiltern Hills, Hodgkins wrote:

... the beauty of the English lanes is beyond all description. We simply don't know what green is out in N.Z. The endless sloping fields with every imaginable & unimaginable shade of green & yellow & over all a wonderful blue haze which mellows all— then to see glorious masses of poppies

³⁴ Clough Williams-Ellis in his speech at the opening of the Welsh Contemporary Art exhibition at Aberystwyth in July 1935 cited in Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.52.

³⁵ Cedric Morris letter to Arthur Lett-Haines, Tate Archive, TGA 8317.1.4.106.

³⁶ Wolff, *AngloModern: Painting and Modernity in Britain and the United States*, p.136.

³⁷ Geoffrey Gorer suggested since Hodgkins was originally a New Zealander, she was 'less saturated in tradition' in "The Art of Frances Hodgkins", *Listener* (17 November 1937): p.1082.

foxgloves & countless red white & yellow wildflowers nodding at you from the side of the road— it was like fairyland to me and I began to wonder if these things really were or whether I was walking in a dream. I really think I came as near being really happy as I can ever hope to be in this world— during that short week in High Wycombe— amidst such beauty one seemed to get more at the heart of things... Certainly my first introduction to English landscape made a very deep impression on me...³⁸

This attempt to reclaim authentic representations of “Englishness” through the rejection of modernity, which I examined in the previous chapter through Hodgkins’s and Morris’s use of Romantic Modernism, has been defined as a ‘defensive turning away from the realities and challenges of the present... that... has been incorporated into a national mythology mobilized... to figure some essence of true Englishness’.³⁹ Yet, unlike the progressive nature of art made in London at this date, Hodgkins’s and Morris’s Romantic Modernist pictorial language was deemed as “backwards”, reflecting the “provincial” character of their New Zealand and Welsh origins. What then exactly could be determined as characteristics of “true Englishness”?

Many of the English avant-garde artists exhibiting with Hodgkins and Morris, especially those in The Seven and Five Society, were influenced by modern art produced in Paris and had lived, worked and studied in the capital for extended periods of time. Yet, their English identity seemingly defined their art, when they returned to England, more than anything else. Alternatively, there were other native factions rooted within the Royal Academy, who were outspoken critics opposed to Modernism and art produced in Paris during this time. Artists such as Sir Alfred Munnings returned to a conservative belief in the “Englishness” of English art. The value of individualism and formalist aesthetics, elements so vital in Modernism, instead were replaced by the continuation of an eighteenth and

³⁸ Frances Hodgkins to Isabel Field, 28 June 1901, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of France Hodgkins*, p.91.

³⁹ Alex Potts, “Constable Country Between the Wars”, in Raphael Samuel (ed.) *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity* (London: Routledge, 1989), p.160 and quoted in Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art*, p.156. The depiction of landscapes seen as a ‘nationalist symbol’ of anti-modernity has also been explored in William Vaughan, “Constable’s Englishness”, *Oxford Art Journal* 19, no. 2 (1996) pp.17-27. Also, see Tim Barringer, “Landscapes of Association”, *Art History* 16, no. 4 (1993): pp.668-772; David Lowenthal, “British National Identity and the English Landscape”, *Rural History* 2, no. 2 (1991): pp.205-30.

nineteenth century 'ambitious collective enterprise to improve and promote indigenous high art, directed to a public in the interest of national and imperial progress, the whole backed but not determined by royal support'.⁴⁰ Hodgkins's and Morris's Romantic Modernism did not fit into either category of art more oriented towards the standard Modernist Parisian model or that of an insular British one.

"Englishness" in visual culture has been defined 'less by its inherent characteristics than by its *exclusions*'.⁴¹ Within the history of art, "Englishness" was initially distinguished in Pevsner's 1995 *The Englishness of English Art* in which the essential elements of English art, such as naturalism, detachment and conservatism, were rooted in the relationship between national character and art as well as England's climate and language.⁴² The nature of English art continued to carry similar nationalistic undertones in David Piper's *The Genius of British Painting* by relating English art in terms of the country's climate: 'Any account of the Englishness of English art must begin with geography'.⁴³ A marked variation to these definitions of "Englishness" came with Robert Colls and Philip Dodd's *Englishness: Politics and Culture, 1880-1920*, in its framing of "Englishness" as having a fluid, open-ended meaning: 'Englishness has had to be made and re-made in and through history, within available practices and relationships, and existing symbols and ideas'.⁴⁴ This theory of mutation is proposed alongside the onset of modernity with its evolving social and political relations. Dodd suggests that within this national culture are two groups, who are, simultaneously, ostracized and yet challenged to contribute. They have been characterized as:

... the working class, and the Celts (Irish, Scots and Welsh). Their colonisation is... founded on an initial positioning of members... as "other" to

⁴⁰ Sarah Monks, "Life Study: Living with the Royal Academy, 1768-1848", in Sarah Monks et al. (eds.) *Royal Academy: Artistic Ideals and Experiences in England, 1768-1848* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2013), p.4.

⁴¹ Janet Wolff, "The 'Jewish mark' in English painting: cultural identity and modern art", in Corbett and Perry (eds.), *English Art, 1860-1914: Modern Artists and Identity*, p.182.

⁴² Pevsner, *The Englishness of English Art*. Pevsner's theories were contested in William Vaughan, "The Englishness of British Art", *Oxford Art Journal* 13, no. 2 (1990): pp.11-23. Also in John Barrell, "Sir Joshua Reynolds and the Englishness of English Art", in Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp.154-76.

⁴³ David Piper, *The Genius of British Painting* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975), p.8.

⁴⁴ Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (eds.), *Englishness: Politics and Culture, 1880-1920* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p. xi.

the dominant culture... the discursive construction of a collective identity by process of exclusion, is absolutely central to the case of the construction of Englishness.⁴⁵

Dodd concludes, 'the definition of the English is inseparable from that of the non-English; Englishness is not so much a category as a relationship'.⁴⁶ The construction of national identification involves a form of abstracted generalizations, where the category of Britishness always involves a conflicted relationship. Therefore, I argue that the "Englishness" of modern art was a misleading construct of an international, cosmopolitan identity veiled by nationalism, which even, at times, continues into the twenty-first century. Can modern British art not be redefined to encompass an international, progressive movement unbounded by geographies, cultural barriers and national schools so exemplified by Romantic Modernism?

In fact, different cultural realities and a synthesis of techniques and styles from various international aesthetic traditions act as the vital force in British Modernism. The complexity of the relationship between Modernism and "Englishness" begins with the understanding that national cultural identity is transcended by Modernism's focus on the Continent. Despite obvious contradictions, certain English critics in the twenties and thirties championed an art with 'a traditional English domesticity'.⁴⁷ Charles Marriott frequently referenced the distinctions between English and French artists where 'the Englishman is a subjective and the Frenchman an objective animal' and if 'the Frenchman tries to be subjective he is generally only sentimental...' and 'if the Englishman tries to be objective he is generally bald'.⁴⁸ Recognizing that many Modernist movements originated in France, Marriott continued with broad generalizations between artists from the two nations. He wrote, 'When the French painter narrows his vision to observation of the facts he is... only following the bent of his mind; but when the English painter does it he is... suppressing his natural instincts; and the

⁴⁵ Corbett and Perry, *English Art, 1860-1914: Modern Artists and Identity*, p.182.

⁴⁶ Colls and Dodd (eds.), *Englishness: Politics and Culture, 1880-1920*, p.12.

⁴⁷ Corbett et al. (eds.), *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past, 1880-1940*, p.242.

⁴⁸ Marriott, *Modern Movements in Painting*, p.73.

consequence is that he loses... more than he gains'.⁴⁹ For according to Marriott, the native English tradition instead relies on a 'combined persistence and flexibility... in other words, its vitality'.⁵⁰ The categorization of "Englishness" was often linked with overused, vague descriptors such as 'genius', 'vision' and 'vitality' in Herbert Read's writings.⁵¹ While few recognized that a purely English modern art could not possibly exist, they, nonetheless, suggested a specifically English perspective. For instance, Read, an important proponent of British Surrealism, stated:

From the moment of its birth Surrealism was an international phenomenon... It would therefore be contrary to the movement to present... a specifically English edition of Surrealism. We who in England have announced our adherence to this movement have no other desire than to pool our resources in the general effort. Nevertheless, there is an English contribution to be made to this effort, and its strength and validity can only be shown by tracing its sources in the native tradition of our art...⁵²

The assertion that "Englishness" and its 'native tradition' is evident, despite Surrealism's identity as an international movement, suggests that the nativist outlook overlooks the transnational interconnections across the Continent and Britain at this time.

However, the popular nationalistic perspective of English art started to shift during the late forties and into the fifties. The exhibition catalogue for the 1953 New Zealand tour of *Twentieth Century Drawings and Watercolours*, featuring three of Hodgkins's watercolors and two drawings, offered an illuminating introduction by Grigson in which he commented on the universality of Modernism. Grigson wrote, 'The individuality of the painting or drawing... is helped into being by a strong and refreshing appetite for an international diversity of influence... the artists of one country are able to feed upon the arts of all... countries, all cultures,

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.74

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.141.

⁵¹ See "English Art", *Burlington Magazine* 63 (December 1933): pp.243-76. *The English Vision: An Anthology* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1993). Also, see *Art in Britain 1930-1940 Centred around Axis, Circle and Unit One* (London: Marlborough Fine Art, 1965).

⁵² Herbert Read, *Surrealism* (London: Faber & Faber Inc.,1936), p.20.

without consideration of time or distance'.⁵³ A review of this British Council exhibition praised the fact that the selection of works presented a

... growing universality of art— the vanishing of the old so-called national schools of art and the emergence of a modern eclecticism which knows no limitations of time or space, in which all artists are free to be influenced by all others wherever they may be, and in which progress, either to futility or new glory, is accelerated accordingly.⁵⁴

Another example is the 1955-1957 Canadian tour of *British Watercolours and Drawings of the Twentieth Century* in which Grigson also wrote:

National characteristics are becoming less important... in the arts... the era of aggressive nationalism is coming to an end... it was in their heyday that we talked so much of French art, Italian art, German art, English art and so much over-emphasized national schools and national differences. English painting, which is both English and European, is blown upon by a universal wind...⁵⁵

Grigson then continued to correct a critical misunderstanding regarding Modernism, which was put forward by earlier critics like Marriott in 1920. Marriott wrote, 'The whole subject of modern movements in England is compromised by the fact that most of them originated in France'.⁵⁶ However, Grigson later correctly clarified, 'We are accustomed to talk of the School of Paris and of French painting. Yet Paris has been less a centre of French art than a place where artists of many nations have worked and flourished and elaborated a twentieth century mode'.⁵⁷ As has been previously addressed, Hodgkins and Morris lived and worked in Paris, and in 1943 Hodgkins herself wrote about the 'universality I ever strive after, apparent between the Ecole de Paris & FH'⁵⁸ in her own work.

Although New Zealand remained close to Hodgkins's heart, as did Wales to Morris's throughout both of their artistic careers, it was Paris that played the most

⁵³ *Exhibition of Twentieth Century Drawings and Watercolours* (New Zealand, 1953), Tate Archive, TGA 9712.2.74.

⁵⁴ "Contemporary Art: British Council Showing", *Manawatu Evening Standard* (16 April 1953).

⁵⁵ Grigson, *British Watercolours and Drawings of the Twentieth Century*, British Council, 1955-57, Tate Archive, TGA 200817.2.81.

⁵⁶ Marriott, *Modern Movements in Painting*, pp.73-74.

⁵⁷ Grigson, *British Watercolours and Drawings of the Twentieth Century*, British Council, 1955-57, Tate Archive, TGA 200817.2.81.

⁵⁸ Frances Hodgkins to Duncan Macdonald, 11 April 1943, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.535.

instrumental role in shaping their pictorial definitions of modernity. The same could be said about several of their English counterparts such as Christopher Wood and Jessica Dismorr. Nevertheless, a notion of nationalism throughout the twenties and thirties, which was largely instigated by English art critics, has repeatedly extended into the twenty-first century as a 'period of retrenchment' or as 'insular, with relatively little exchange between British and foreign artists'.⁵⁹ By examining the origins of Hodgkins's and Morris's non-English nationalities together with their exchange with the Parisian avant-garde, I have demonstrated how art critics and then historians were not prepared to accept Hodgkins's and Morris's Romantic Modernist art as much as their English counterparts throughout the twenties and thirties, due to their nationalistic outlook. Hodgkins's and Morris's art, however, was defined by a complex transnational Modernist context.

II. *Painting Personas: Discrimination on Three Fronts*

Can Hodgkins ever be recognized as a talented artist, not as a talented "woman artist"? One could argue that her feminine perspective and life experiences as a woman shaped her art, but at the same time Hodgkins sought to be acknowledged as an ambitious artist not as an ambitious "woman artist".⁶⁰ In fact, the older Hodgkins grew the more she distanced herself from her sex and arguably "women-related" subjects, while, simultaneously, gaining more accolades. During the years prior to the First World War, before Hodgkins established a home based in England, her studies and watercolors mainly concentrated on sentimental portraits of women and children painted in a subdued Impressionistic manner. An archetypal example can be seen with *Summer* (Fig. 94), a composition centered on a cherub-faced baby, who is embraced by a nursemaid and a young girl. This outdoor sun-filled setting provides a tranquil and optimistic scene similar to works of significant

⁵⁹ Rothenstein, *British Art Since 1900: An Anthology*, p.107.

⁶⁰ My inspiration for framing Hodgkins as a talented artist originates from Brockington's article on Vanessa Bell: Grace Brockington, "A 'Lavender Talent' or 'The Most Important Woman Painter in Europe'?" Reassessing Vanessa Bell", *Art History* 36, no. 1 (17 January 2013): pp.128-53. As cited in Brockington's footnote #2 "The phrase "woman artist" does not describe an artist of the female sex, but a kind of artist that is distinct and clearly different from the great artist.' In Griselda Pollock and Rozsiker Parker, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (London: Pandora Press, 1981), p.114.

women artists in French Impressionist painting such as Berthe Morisot's *Julie Manet and her Nurse* (Fig. 95) or Mary Cassatt's *Sara and Her Mother with the Baby (No.1)* (Fig. 96). Hodgkins, like Cassatt, travelled to Paris, among an increasing number of women artists, in order to participate in the vibrant art scene at the turn of the century. Despite important contributions by women artists at this time, some critics rejected their work as too feminine.⁶¹ To avoid the homogenization of feminine stereotypes, Hodgkins's subjects increasingly circumvented the domestically maternal, even when she did paint mothers with their children. Although *Lancashire Family* (Fig. 97) continues to depict Hodgkins's interest in mothers and children, the subject has now assumed a somewhat religious connotation with a Modernist twist reminiscent of Picasso's *Mother and Child* (Fig. 98). In Hodgkins's *Lancashire Family*, the mother is wrapped in a shroud similar to the mother figure of the Madonna, but the younger child holds not a piece of fruit, which often appeared in conjunction with the Christ Child as in Picasso's *Mother and Child*, but instead proudly presents a toy sailboat. Hodgkins's deliberate use of dominant geometric forms and simplified figures associates *Lancashire Family* with the Neo-Classicist painters such as Picasso and Léger, and, therefore, disassociates her work from the more "feminine" method of representing the same motif in an Impressionist style, for example.

Despite Hodgkins's conscious attempts to integrate more Cubist and Classicist methods of depiction into her work throughout the twenties, the majority of her subjects still fell into clearly defined "feminine-based categories", which have been consistently considered as "decorative" or "lesser" on the art historical hierarchy of painting.⁶² The fact that the Modernist movement has always been wrapped in a Masculinist cocoon has now been well established by feminist art historians such as Carol Duncan's "Virility and Domination in Early Twentieth-Century Vanguard Painting" (1973), Janet Wolff's "The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity" (1985), Andreas Huyssen's "Mass Culture as

⁶¹ For further information on this issue see Pollock and Parker, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, pp.37-49.

⁶² For a feminist reading of this subject see *Ibid.*, pp.50-81.

Woman: Modernism's Other" (1986), Griselda Pollock's "Modernity and the spaces of femininity" (1988), Tamar Garb's "L'art féminin" (1989), Elizabeth Wilson's "The Invisible Flâneur" (1992) and Lisa Tickner's "Men's Work? Masculinity and Modernism" (1992).⁶³ The majority of feminist historians of modernity have concentrated on the marginalization of women in the late nineteenth-century public arena of urban life. Their studies include the limitations women artists faced when living in the metropolis of Paris, their undertakings in politics and endeavors to seek employment, which, consequently, affected their placement in the predominantly male Modernist canon. During this period if women attempted to assume the characteristically male role of modernity, that of the flâneur or dandy, they would then lose their respectability and would be deemed as 'non-respectable or "public" women'.⁶⁴ Hodgkins, however, did not fit into the typical role that women were pigeonholed into during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. For Hodgkins was neither a bourgeois woman, who was confined to a marriage with children, nor was she a working-class woman, who fully integrated into male public spheres outside of the home such as taverns or late night performances. Instead, she was a complex, independent entity, who negotiated between the home and domestic areas into the domain of the globetrotting adventurer. I believe that Hodgkins's colonial background emancipated her from the societal shackles of many English Victorian women and further enabled the artist to actively navigate between spheres meant mainly for male artists at this time.

⁶³ Carol Duncan, "Virility and Domination in Early Twentieth-century Vanguard Painting", in Debbie Lewer (ed.) *Post-Impressionism to World War II* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006): pp.320-36; Janet Wolff, "The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity", *Theory, Culture & Society* 2, no. 3 (1985): pp.37-38; Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other", *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986): pp.44-62; Griselda Pollock, "Modernity and the spaces of femininity", in *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988): pp.50-90; Tamar Garb, "L'art féminin: The Formation of a Critical Category in Late Nineteenth-Century France", *Art History* 12, no. 1 (March 1989): pp.39-65; Elizabeth Wilson, "The Invisible Flâneur", *New Left Review* no. 195 (January- February 1992): pp.90-110; Lisa Tickner, "Men's Work? Masculinity and Modernism", *Differences* 4, no. 5 (1992): pp.1-37. The 'Masculinist discourse' has also been addressed in Wolff, *AngloModern: Painting and Modernity in Britain and the United States*.

⁶⁴ Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p.15.

New Zealand proved to encourage far more progressive social ideals than the Old World possessed. In terms of women's liberation, New Zealand led the world in granting women the right to vote in parliamentary elections in 1893, when English women, instead, had to wait twenty-five years later until 1918 to be granted this same right. In New Zealand it was only two years after women's voting rights were recognized that Hodgkins decided to shift her amateur interest in watercolors into pursuing a career as a professional artist in February 1895. In a letter to her sister, Hodgkins wrote, 'I have commenced at the Art School and am going in for the South Kensington exams so that I can teach properly later on...'⁶⁵ McCormick, claimed that one of the main reasons why Hodgkins probably turned towards a professional career as an artist was because her family's prosperity declined to the point of bankruptcy. Hodgkins understood that she would need to contribute financially to support her family.⁶⁶ In addition to McCormick's conjecture, I would argue that Hodgkins's intuitive need for freedom and her pioneering spirit encouraged the artist to break from the conventional framework of the traditional female role, which she watched her elder sister, Isabel, fall into. Despite exhibiting regularly and establishing herself as a talented watercolorist with a reputation throughout New Zealand, Isabel decided to marry in 1893, settled in Wellington and focused on raising five children.⁶⁷ Instead, Hodgkins would travel from New Zealand to Europe

⁶⁵ Frances Hodgkins to Isabel Field, 18 February 1895, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.34. As noted in Gill's footnote #35, 'In 1895 the Otago School of Art had affiliated with the art department of the South Kensington School of Science and Art, London, and was renamed the Dunedin School of Art and Design. Dunedin students could now send work for assessment to England as well as presenting themselves for internal examinations... In the July exams of 1895 FH gained first class passes in elementary Freehand Drawing, Model Drawing, Drawing in Light and Shade and Geometrical Drawing. In 1896 she gained first class passes in advanced Freehand Drawing, Model Drawing and Drawing in Light and Shade..' Ibid, pp.34-35.

⁶⁶ McCormick, *The Expatriate: A Study of Frances Hodgkins*, p.30.

⁶⁷ When they were younger, Isabel was considered to be the talented painter in the family, while Frances was trained in music. But starting from her childhood, Frances continually painted figure studies unlike her father and sister, who focused on landscapes and flower pieces. Frances was rarely envious of her sister's accomplishments but out of a competitive nature, she was motivated to work harder. See a letter she wrote to Isabel, who was married at this point, 'Father has had a letter from Aunt Bella... in which she says there is a lady who is writing an article on the N.Z. lady artists for an English magazine and she wants some [information] as to your career... Father at once sent off all particulars as to your birth and art education and also I expect if the truth were known a biography of the whole family. I am not mentioned which is a nasty jar for me!' Frances Hodgkins to Isabel Field, 16 December 1894, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, pp.32-33.

on three separate occasions in search of a professional artistic career until the First World War led her to establish a permanent base in England.

The path to Hodgkins's success was certainly not privileged, however. For in the late nineteenth and into the mid-twentieth century, Hodgkins tenaciously persevered in seeking the limelight, despite encountering discrimination on multiple fronts that men never had to endure. Feminist art historian, Griselda Pollock, has defined this unequal treatment women artists struggled against as 'the social construction of sexual difference'.⁶⁸ Pollock further coined this 'historical asymmetry' as 'the product of the social structuration of sexual difference and not imaginary biological distinction— determined both what and how men and women painted'.⁶⁹ In other words, Pollock claimed that from its period of inception Modernism has been inherently prejudiced against women artists because they were never given equal social, economic, ideological and political powers as men artists. Instead, women artists were rarely acknowledged by the predominantly male critics, which left a gaping hole in the history of women Modernists.

If women were remotely recognized they were mainly considered as second-rate artists, who were derivative and simply following in the footsteps of their male "superiors". These misogynistic beliefs, which shockingly continue to exist in contemporary discourse, were evident in twentieth-century art critics' writings and museological perspectives. For example, the entire introductory section of the exhibition catalogue from the *Frances Hodgkins: A Centenary*, organized by the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand, is inexplicably riddled with pejorative dismissals of Hodgkins's work. The catalogue's foreword by G.C. Docking, who was at the time Director of the Auckland City Art Gallery, begins by stating, 'Our aim has been to assemble not necessarily the "best" works but a fully representative selection covering a painting life that lasted half a century'.⁷⁰ Thus, Docking implies that Hodgkins's art was not good enough to be the central focus of a major exhibition, but that the story of her extraordinary life as an artist was, instead, a

⁶⁸ Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and Histories of Art*, p.8.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.55.

⁷⁰ G.C. Docking, "Foreword", in *Frances Hodgkins, 1869-1947: A Centenary*, unpaginated.

more worthwhile one to tell. In the next section of the catalogue, “The Art of Frances Hodgkins”, Ian Roberts and David Armitage, who were at the time Exhibition Officers at the Gallery, wrote that their ‘aim is an assessment of her achievement as a painter in the context of twentieth century European art’.⁷¹ Instead, it turns out that both Roberts’s and Armitage’s appalling ‘aim’ is to unflinchingly destroy Hodgkins’s hard-earned reputation. They begin by refuting previous claims of ‘Frances Hodgkins as a gifted colourist, a magnificent technician and a master of intuitive method’ by writing that these statements ‘now seem difficult to uphold’.⁷² Roberts and Armitage then argue, ‘What Frances Hodgkins succeeded in doing, after twenty years of ceaseless experiment, was... to make out of such things fantasies intimate and lovely’, and that ‘her importance rests on a small number of works’.⁷³ This unconceivable essay is peppered with gender-specific insults, which attempt to defame Hodgkins’s work, such as their insistence on her ‘cosy lyricism’, ‘fey sentimentality’, ‘forced and modish charm’ and her inability ‘to refrain from fussy attention’.⁷⁴ At one point, Roberts and Armitage write that Hodgkins’s *Portrait of Arthur Lett-Haines* (Fig. 99) is ‘in a style clearly indebted to Harold Gilman... with its clear planar divisions...’ as it ‘shows the artist painting a portrait in which the head is subordinate to the conception of the work as a whole’.⁷⁵ While it is true that Lett’s introspective pose in Hodgkins’s portrait can be seen in several of Gilman’s works such as *Meditation* (Fig. 100), Hodgkins’s *Portrait of Arthur Lett-Haines* is still very much a work of her own vision. For instance, Lett’s relaxed, downcast face is the central focus of Hodgkins’s work, whereas Gilman pays equal attention to the domestic interior in which the figure is depicted in full-length. Unsurprisingly, Robert’s and Armitage’s essay concludes with monumental irreverence and inaccuracies:

Frances Hodgkins’s output of major works is small; this exhibition could have been halved without any loss in quality. She can never be classed as a great

⁷¹ Ian Roberts and David Armitage, “The Art of Frances Hodgkins”, in *Frances Hodgkins, 1869-1947: A Centenary Exhibition*, unpaginated.

⁷² *Ibid.*, n.p.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, n.p.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, n.p.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, n.p.

or even a major artist; an assessment which, with remarkably few exceptions, can be made of most of her English contemporaries. In many of her works the oppressive dictates of the subject and her incomplete realization of pictorial space place severe limits on her achievement. At her best Frances Hodgkins's inherent delight in intimate and homely detail finds enduring expression.⁷⁶

This exhibition catalogue from 1969, the centenary of Hodgkins's birth, proves that the negative assessment of a woman artist's work by museum directors and curators, for example, can negatively condition her reception and positioning as an "outsider" of the art historical canon for generations to come.

In "Modernity and the spaces of femininity", Pollock explores not only the domestic sphere and bourgeois recreational public spaces, which were the only socially acceptable environments for women artists to exist in during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but also the way in which women Modernists depicted these places using specific spatial arrangements to convey feelings of entrapment such as 'proximity and compression'.⁷⁷ Hodgkins, too, painted still lifes in dining rooms, portraits in parlors and in enchanted gardens, but she also was able to break free from the patriarchal bourgeois nineteenth-century constraints by searching for inspiration through her peripatetic travels, which translated into otherworldly Romantic Modernist landscapes. In *Spring in the Ravine* (Fig. 101), for example, Hodgkins incorporates a form of neo-primitivism seen in the other works of The Seven and Five Society artists, but the surreal color arrangements, emphasis on design and free treatment of anthropomorphically shaped mountains, river and trees prefigure the works of the male Neo-Romantic artists.

By the early twentieth century, avant-garde artists began to blur boundaries between women's and men's relationships to modernity, and Hodgkins's artistic practice and production attest to the importance of women's work in the Modernist movement. Artists such as Graham Sutherland, who ventured on painting excursions to Wales with Hodgkins, expressed gratitude towards the artist stating, 'she had, without question, a moral effect on artists of that day, far more than any

⁷⁶ Ibid., n.p.

⁷⁷ Griselda Pollock, "Modernity and the spaces of femininity", in *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and Histories of Art*, p.63.

other woman artist, she was virtually the only one who was artistically emancipated and was already speaking the language which gradually spelt freedom in art'.⁷⁸ Yet other Modernists continued to deny women their equitable place in a male-dominated world. When Hodgkins and Barbara Hepworth were asked to join the new avant-garde group founded by Paul Nash called Unit 1, architect, Wells Coates, was dismayed by the acceptance of women artists into an otherwise all-male exhibiting group including Colin Lucas, Henry Moore, Edward Wadsworth, Ben Nicholson, Edward Burra, John Bigge, John Armstrong and Paul Nash. Coates expressed his preference when writing to Nash, 'I favor a "Male" group, at any rate for a start'.⁷⁹ Hodgkins had the last word, however, when the artist decided against exhibiting with the group for their first and only exhibition, since she no longer wanted her art to be restrained by any external doctrines or tyrannical figureheads.

I believe Hodgkins was a rare example who contributed to a new meaning of the "woman artist" by reconciling her existence as a woman unencumbered by traditional nineteenth-and twentieth-century values to be a maternal, domestic figure but instead identified as a free-spirited, avant-garde artist. Gwen John has been highlighted as an 'artist' who 'became increasingly associated with everything that was anti-domestic, outsidersness, anti-social...' while 'femininity was to be lived out in the fulfillment of socially ordained domestic and reproductive roles...'⁸⁰ But unlike John, Hodgkins did not withdraw from society into a completely solitary existence; she proved that it was possible for a woman artist to interact within a lively, Bohemian social existence surrounding Morris, while simultaneously maintaining authority as an independent artist exhibiting and selling works.⁸¹ At

⁷⁸ Opie, "The Quest for Frances Hodgkins", *Ascent*, p.61.

⁷⁹ Wells Coates to Paul Nash, 29 January 1933, cited in Buchanan et al., *Frances Hodgkins: Paintings and Drawings*, p.60.

⁸⁰ Parker and Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, p.99. Gwen John's domestic interiors and her 'spaces of femininity' were explored in Wolff, *AngloModern: Painting and Modernity in Britain and the United States*, p.104.

⁸¹ It should be noted, though, that Hodgkins never married or had children, which was considered to be the normality for women at this time. As Myfanwy Evans wrote, 'Many women who are creative artists of any kind manage to achieve their work in spite of the fact that they also live normal (if nerve wracked) lives as women with husband, home, children, clothes, servants and so on... A few take the difficult way and, remaining solitary, live or die by their work. Frances Hodgkins was one of

the same time, Hodgkins's use of Romantic Modernism, conveyed not just a typical Modernist interest in abstraction but also highlighted an interconnection between decoration and European Modernism through her incorporation of a unique perspective shaped by her life experiences as a woman. This unification of inner spontaneous sensibilities with abstracted decorative arrangements, which I will soon address with her self-portraits, attest to the importance of art made by women artists at this time. What is particularly revolutionary about Hodgkins's work in the context of other Modernists is her negotiation between her identity as a woman and the form her art assumed. Hodgkins's salient self-understanding enabled her to work in a dissimilar way to the aesthetic practices of most women artists in twentieth-century Britain, since she never resisted decorative imagery and typically feminine tropes. Thus, Hodgkins's practice, alongside Morris's, contributed to major liberations and, consequently, developments within the British Modernist context through their use of Romantic Modernism.

Beyond the challenges Hodgkins faced as a woman artist, she also encountered inherent "ageism" in the art industry as the years progressed. In this section I will also examine how the artist managed to conquer the unrelenting progression of time with a characteristically inventive flair connected to her physical appearance as well as to her art.⁸² At an early age of 26 years, Hodgkins, resigned herself to 'slowly settling down to an oldmaidship [sic]...' and claimed that 'nothing will interfere between me and my work'.⁸³ That same year, in 1895, Hodgkins conveyed what was perhaps an early fixation with growing older in *Head of an Old Woman* (Fig. 102), a work which was awarded a prize by the New Zealand

these.' In Evans, "Frances Hodgkins: An Appreciation of a Great Painter and a Great Personality", *Vogue* (August 1947): p.91.

⁸² The term 'age-ism' was coined in 1969 by the American psychiatrist Robert Butler, who argued that discrimination against the elderly is based on the prejudice of being older, which is rooted in fear of the process and, thus, serves as a denial of death. Recently, 'ageing' has been recognized as a 'contextual, perspective-based term, which is often negatively associated with decline and stereotype.' Unlike the terms "older" or "later life" "ageing" signifies a life-long process and that signs of ageing affect individual women at different stages in the life-course.' '... cultural notions of ageing, such as the "horror of growing old" (de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 587) or the cult of youth, can impact on younger women's self perception.' Footnote #2 in Cathy McGlynn, Margaret O'Neill and Michaela Schrage-Früh (eds.), *Ageing Women in Literature and Visual Culture: Reflections, Refractions, Reimaginings* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017): p.2.

⁸³ Frances Hodgkins to Isabel Field, 19 June 1895, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, pp.36-37.

Academy of Fine Arts, Wellington, for the best study in color from life. Surrounded by her family's reproductions of Rembrandt's self-portraits, Hodgkins may have been influenced by these works, but the fact that the artist chose to portray a woman in her later years rather than a man is an innovative break from the Western art historical canon, which I will consider for the first time in existing art-historical literature. Up until recently, feminist studies have largely marginalized women's ageing experience in a culture, which has been and continues to be built upon the adoration of youth.⁸⁴ However, a thorough literature review of a critical approach to ageing in feminist studies can be found in the "Introduction" of *Ageing Women in Literature and Visual Culture: Reflections, Refractions, Reimaginings*.⁸⁵

In *Head of an Old Woman* Hodgkins disrupts centuries of art historical ageism by embracing an older woman as the subject. I would like to compare Hodgkins's portrait to the work of an early modern women artist, Rosalba Carriera (1673-1757). Although Carriera's *Self-Portrait as Tragedy* (Fig. 103) was painted more than a century earlier and is a self-portrait, the depiction of old age transcends the loss of youthful charms by highlighting the peak of intellectual powers in what has been referred to as an archetypal category of 'heroic old age', usually bestowed upon male subjects.⁸⁶ At approximately seventy years old and nearing the complete loss

⁸⁴ See the discussion on the invisibility of the ageing woman due to the loss of her youth, a 'socially-constructed prized commodity' in Kathleen Woodward (ed.), *Figuring Age: Women, Bodies, Generations* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1999).

⁸⁵ Beginning in 1949 with Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), which comments on the 'sorry tragedy of the aged woman' (pp.587, 603). Critical feminist commentary on ageing then resumes in 1972 with Susan Sontag's "The Double Standard of Aging", *Saturday Review* 55, no. 39 (1972): pp.29-38. Also, see Myrna I. Lewis and Robert N. Butler, "Why is Women's Lib Ignoring Old Women?", *Aging and Human Development* 3, no. 3 (1 August 1972): pp.223-31. Critical literature that bridges the gaps between feminism and gerontology, antisexism and antiageism, gender and age inequality and women's and elder liberation disappears from feminist discourse throughout the 1980s but returns in 1990 with Evelyn Rosenthal, *Women, Aging, and Ageism* (New York: Routledge, 1990). Also, Germaine Greer, *The Change: Women, Ageing and the Menopause* (Minnesota: Fawcett, 2003). However, it was not until 1999 with the publication of Kathleen Woodward, *Figuring Age: Women, Bodies, Generations* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999) did ageing studies receive substantial recognition with multiple publications around the millennium. Thus, the marginalization of ageing in feminist literature still warrants further investigation, since the topic lost momentum up until the last few years of renewed interest. For an extensive literature review, see McGlynn, O'Neill and Schrage-Früh (eds.), *Ageing Women in Literature and Visual Culture: Reflections, Refractions, Reimaginings*, pp.1-22.

⁸⁶ This classification of Carriera's work has been determined by Julia K. Dabbs, "Making the Invisible Visible: The Presence of Older Women Artists in Early Modern Artistic Biography", in McGlynn,

of her vision, Carrieri painted this slightly out of focus and shadowed self-portrait by representing herself as a dignified philosopher wearing a garland of leaves. Despite recognizing the “tragedy” of the aging process in terms of the onset of blindness, Carrieri’s self-portrait has been aptly described as ‘appropriating the masculinized guise of an ancient philosopher to more positively align her old age with the specter of contemplative genius, something rarely associated with the female gender...’⁸⁷ Carrieri bestows *Self-Portrait as a Tragedy* with lasting virtues of intellectual vision rather than focusing on the loss of physical beauty and the ephemeral qualities more typically associated with subjects more related to women. Thus, Carrieri portrays the aging of women equally to that of her male counterparts. I will argue that Hodgkins’s *Head of an Old Woman* reflects Carrieri’s use of the ‘heroic old age’ classification, although perhaps not as overtly. Similar to *Self-Portrait as a Tragedy*, the old woman in Hodgkins’s portrait does not look directly at the viewer but instead seems to be in a more reflective and meditative state of mind as is expressed through her unfocused eyes. A halo of light shines directly onto the thoughtfully rendered woman’s face, which suggests explicit signs of aging as can be seen with her furrowed brow and sagging, wrinkled skin, while the sitter’s bonnet and torso as well as the background are executed in broad, darkened brushstrokes. The intimate manner in which Hodgkins highlights the illuminated details of the sitter’s aging face does not demean her value for the loss of her physical beauty but instead highlights what is perhaps an inner vision and intellect. Hodgkins assumes a decidedly different approach when painting her own self-portraits during her elder years.⁸⁸

O’Neill and Schrage-Früh (eds.), *Ageing Women in Literature and Visual Culture: Reflections, Refractions, Reimaginings*, p.34. Another example of a woman’s self-portrait, which could be in the ‘heroic old age’ category, is eighteenth-century artist Anna Dorothea Lisiewska-Therbush’s *Self-portrait*, 1779, oil on canvas, Staatliche Museen, Berlin.

⁸⁷ Julia K. Dabbs, “Vision and Insight: Portraits of the Aged Woman Artist, 1600-1800”, *Occasion: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities* 4 (31 May 2012): p.11.

⁸⁸ Hodgkins abandoned her initial Impressionist style for a Modernist approach when she left New Zealand for the last time. In 1913, when Hodgkins came across *Head of an Old Woman* for the first time after many years, she stated, ‘It should be burned!’ In McCormick, *Works of Frances Hodgkins in New Zealand*, p.134.

Thirty-two years later in December 1927, Arthur Howell, the director of St George's Gallery, London, became captivated with Hodgkins's work, after encountering a watercolor 'which seemed to stand out from among those surrounding it'⁸⁹ at the New English Art Club Exhibition in the New Burlington Galleries. Despite Howell's disappointment in discovering that a woman executed the watercolors he so admired, his doubts were further reinforced, after discovering Hodgkins, who had never received a contract with a gallery before, was at an advanced age. In his book *Frances Hodgkins: Four Vital Years*, Howell vividly recalls this first encounter:

Towards noon the very next day she appeared, and I was to receive a second shock! She certainly was not what I had imagined her to be. Short and thickset, she was around sixty years of age! This was indeed a blow! How is it possible, I thought, for an artist doing first-rate work to have lived to these years without having been noticed by those around her?⁹⁰

Overcoming his initial hesitations, Howell represented Hodgkins as her first agent in March 1930. Upon their contractual agreement, Hodgkins reluctantly posed for promotional photographs for the opening of her first solo exhibition at Howell's St George's Gallery, even though the artist preferred for her physicality to remain more of an enigma during these mid-to-late years of her life. McCormick succinctly captures the mist of intrigue Hodgkins wished to spread about herself throughout various avant-garde circles, which were primarily composed of younger artists:

The uncertainty of her age, the obscurity of her past, and the display of small eccentricities in costume and person all helped to invest her presence with an atmosphere of mild mystery to which a taste for exotic travel and her frequent absence from England also contributed. The solitary nature of so much of her past life had bred in her a habit of reticence which she was powerless to break, even had she wished to... It is as if some form had emerged from darkness to be caught for a moment in dazzling light before passing on again into the shadows.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Howell, *Frances Hodgkins: Four Vital Years*, p.1.

⁹⁰Ibid., p.2.

⁹¹ McCormick also made clear that she 'was at pains to avoid the press photographer and the interviewer.' McCormick, *The Expatriate: A Study of Frances Hodgkins*, pp.1-2.

In one example of these publicity photographs (**Fig. 104**), Hodgkins sits in profile view coquettishly crossing her ankles, while a hat largely obscures the details of her face. Hodgkins deliberately looks in the direction of her two canvases as if to guide the viewer to look not at the artist but at her art, which signifies a conflict not only between her sex and practice but also in relation to her age. This withdrawn pose is significantly different from a photograph taken more than ten years earlier in which Hodgkins stands frontally with one hand casually placed in her pocket and the other clutching a bundle of paintbrushes as she fixes a direct gaze on the camera, conveying a masterful and professional manner (**Fig. 105**). In this photograph, the younger artist rather than the art is what is being publicized.⁹² Despite Hodgkins's reserved approach to publicity at this later point in her life, her first solo exhibition at the St George's Gallery was deemed a tremendous success and marked a major turning point in the artist's career. However, the analysis of Hodgkins's 61 years of age at this crucial moment in finally gaining recognition as an established artist with a supportive agent has never been addressed at a critical level. This overlooked narrative reveals elusive complexities, which arise when representing an aged women artist, who despite being at the peak of her creativity, was not typically youthful, emerging and fresh.⁹³

During Hodgkins's rise to recognition, the artist inevitably struggled with the fact that she was significantly older than the majority of her fellow Modernist counterparts. That she allowed Morris, who was twenty years her junior, to paint her portrait is a testament to their close friendship, since portraits based on the artist's physical appearance are rare.⁹⁴ Hodgkins is depicted at the age of 59 in *Morris's Portrait of Frances Hodgkins* (**Fig. 106**). Morris's intimate but not

⁹² Similar to this method of portrayal is an earlier photograph from 1903 of Frances Hodgkins painting in her Bowen St Studio.

⁹³ Contrary to art-world habits of thinking, Hodgkins proved that her work became progressively 'fresh' as she grew older: '... the older I grow in Water Colour [sic] I realize the great charm is freshness & lovely colour.' Frances Hodgkins to Hannah Ritchie, August 1917, in Gill, *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.326. In the year before her death, Hodgkins was described as 'the oldest painter of this contemporary British group but in freshness of brushwork, formal balance and musical subtlety of color orchestration, she is as youthful appearing as any.' In Andrew C. Ritchie, *British Contemporary Painters* (Buffalo: The Buffalo Fine Arts Academy, 1946), pp.20-21.

⁹⁴ Refer back to Chapter I, in which I discuss Morris's first two portraits of Hodgkins (Figs. 2 & 3) made during WWI.

particularly flattering portrayal of Hodgkins is in a relatively realistic manner, and her appearance is marked by the inevitable signs of aging— swollen eyes, sagging jowls and her ‘Titian’-colored dark red wig, which she wore to appear younger, as will soon be addressed. Now past her midlife, Hodgkins feared critics would stop considering her work seriously, or that the public would be biased against buying art from an older artist. In order to reconcile the dramatic age difference between herself and her peers, Hodgkins created poignant, age-conscious self-portraits.

Up to this point in her career, Hodgkins never painted a traditional self-portrait but instead the artist experimented with the genre by using personal possessions to serve as a metaphor for self-representation rather than depicting her actual self.⁹⁵ Painted around the same time, Hodgkins’s *Still Life: Self-Portrait* (Fig. 107) and *Self Portrait: Still Life* (Fig. 108) transgress the doctrines of Modernism as masculine. Instead, Hodgkins embeds feminine tropes into her self-portraits with her selection of flattened, intertwined possessions amassed during her extensive travels— a red beret, a handbag, scarves, shoes, belts, brightly-patterned textiles, flowers, vases, a bowl and a reflectionless mirror. Both unconventional self-portraits, which are more aligned to the format of abstracted still lifes than portraiture, are also dominated by feminine colors such as rose, blush and magenta, although the overall color harmonies slightly vary with a warmer saturation in *Still Life: Self-Portrait* and a cooler tone consisting of blues and greens in *Self Portrait: Still Life*. In these self-portraits, Hodgkins reconstructed her experience of womanhood by cultivating a uniquely feminine modern style, far different from ‘the new masculinity’, which ‘continued after 1924 when Nicholson began to produce abstracted works’.⁹⁶ Yet, several critics, such as Clive Bell, dismissed Hodgkins’s radical works as too ‘feminine in character’; upon reviewing one of her exhibitions in 1936, Bell wrote a chauvinistic article, “The Feminine Touch”:

⁹⁵ Mary Kisler, Senior Curator at the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, wrote that these self-portraits ‘were given originally to close friends such as Geoffrey Gorer and Cedric Morris, and so may never have been intended for public display.’ Mary Kisler et al., *Frances Hodgkins: Leitmotif* (Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery, 2005), p.15.

⁹⁶ Steven Adams and Anna Greuzner Robins (eds.), *Gendering landscape art* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), p.112.

Hers [Hodgkins] is essentially feminine painting; gay, intelligent and never pushed beyond her scope... Miss Hodgkins' pictures make us think of those comments on life with which some women often charm us, the least bit artificial maybe, influenced possibly by a man, but illuminating in the exact and best sense of the word. Personally I regret what I take to be the masculine influence of Dufy in some of her pictures, of Paul Nash in others. She is at her best when she is most herself, and therefore most feminine.⁹⁷

Others were outright impressed such as McCormick who noted, 'The so-called self-portrait— a still life of her personal belongings— is a sly evasion, a sophisticated, elegant joke'.⁹⁸

Dating back to the sixteenth century, artists had painted reflective self-portraits using mirrors such as Parmigianino's *Self-portrait in a Convex Mirror* (Fig. 109), and this practice continued up until the twentieth-century as can be seen with Mark Gertler's *Still Life with Self Portrait* (Fig. 110). In these examples, the convex mirrors reflect images of the artists experimenting with concepts of self-distortion. Both artists are presently young, but the effects of aging will inevitably distort their youthful appearance. In Gertler's *Still Life with Self Portrait* the artist juxtaposes his reflection by including a vanitas scene, suggesting the inevitable passing of time. While the pieces of fruit in the foreground are still ripe, the candlestick has burnt low, and the nineteenth-century Japanese print of the samurai is positioned so that his sword is about to swoop down onto Gertler himself. Unlike Gertler's *Still Life with Self Portrait*, the absence of figuration in Hodgkins's *Still Life: Self-Portrait* with its inclusion of a centrally positioned reflectionless mirror, attests to Hodgkins's inextricable link to her paintings through a metaphorical rather than literal association with the intention to direct attention away from the artist and instead to the art.

Around the first decade of the twentieth century, Hodgkins painted a watercolor far from the 'sly evasion' of her later self-portraits but with an equal poignancy. *Untitled [Woman with a mirror]* (Fig. 111) is an intimate scene of a

⁹⁷ Clive Bell, "The Feminine Touch", *The Listener* (18 January 1936). For a further discussion on this topic of women's work overpowered by the masculinity of Modernism see, Griselda Pollock and Rozsiker Parker, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, pp.37-49.

⁹⁸ McCormick, *Portrait of Frances Hodgkins*, p.5.

woman pensively gazing at her reflection in a hand mirror. When considering this unique vanitas motif in Hodgkins's oeuvre, I hesitate to ask whether this is, in fact, Hodgkins herself? Upon comparing the woman in the watercolor to a photograph of the artist from around the same time (**Fig. 112**), when Hodgkins was thirty-five years old, it is impossible not to see similarities between their age, their characteristically coiled dark hair and their somewhat elongated nose. *Untitled [Woman with a mirror]* is a melancholic work as the sitter, who is enveloped in a sea of white punctuated by dramatic swathes of teal and magenta, self-consciously scrutinizes her forlorn face. The brevity of youth and the fragility of life itself developed from the iconography of Western vanitas rhetoric. For instance, a popular motif of Baroque vanitas was painting anxieties over the passing of time implied by women's confrontation with mirrors. Bernardo Strozzi's *Old Woman at the Mirror* (**Fig. 113**) captures this fixation with the effects of time through the pairing of an old woman and a mirror. An unusual image for its period, since these couplings were more often of young women with mirrors, *Old Woman at the Mirror* reveals that no amount of wealth, whether it is in the form of jewelry, flowers, feathers or make-up, can disguise the processes of aging.⁹⁹ Although the woman in Hodgkins's *Untitled [Woman with a mirror]* is not nearly at the end of her life, I would argue that if the woman is, indeed, Hodgkins the painting can be read as her reaction to a failed marriage proposal in 1905 to English writer, Thomas Wilby. Disillusioned by her broken engagement, Hodgkins decided to prioritize her artistic career in Europe above all else, and from this point on she led a 'celibate's life'.¹⁰⁰ *Untitled [Woman with a mirror]* would, therefore, act as a more traditional self-portrait, which would serve as a precursor to her Modernist *Still Life: Self-Portrait* and *Self Portrait: Still Life*. Unlike Strozzi's *Old Woman at the Mirror*, Hodgkins avoids scrutinizing her own deteriorating physicality in order for the artist to maintain a legendary and mythic aura surrounding her identity, and consequently, her art, through these radical fusions of still life and self-portraiture.

⁹⁹ A nineteenth century example following this tradition is Augustus Leopold Egg, *Queen Elizabeth discovers she is no longer young*, 1848, oil on canvas, location unknown.

¹⁰⁰ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 5 December 1907, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.220.

In 1945, two years before Hodgkins's death, the artist demonstrated less emotional vulnerability and distress over her age, since she permitted photographer, Felix H. Man, to capture her holding the insignia of her profession, palette and brush, while surrounded by her art (Figs. 114 & 115).¹⁰¹ These photographs of Hodgkins in her elder years set a precedent for British women Modernists to be photographed late in their career such as Barbara Hepworth, who at an old age was frequently photographed in her studio and amongst her sculptures, years later. Photographs such as Hepworth with *Three Forms Vertical (Offering)* (Fig. 116) show the artist in her mid-sixties proudly standing next to one of her monumental marble works in 1967, twenty-two years after Hodgkins's pioneering photo shoot. In these late photographs, Hodgkins no longer possessed a conflicted sense of identity (refer back to Fig. 104) but allowed herself to be photographed as an artist, albeit not posed as frontally as the shots from her earlier publicity shoots from the twenties (refer back to Fig. 105). While at the same time, aging artists, especially women, faced profound prejudices, which extend back to the early modern era, and still resonate today.¹⁰² Art historical studies of artists working at an old age have minimized, if not completely overlooked, the presence of elder women artists as outsiders to the canon. Instead, male biographers and critics have depicted the "golden years" devoted entirely to male artists such as the Old Masters— Michelangelo, Titian, Poussin and Rembrandt, for example, who all worked until a venerable old age.¹⁰³ Paradoxically, even these revered artists faced criticisms about their later work, which was deemed inappropriate to pursue past a

¹⁰¹Between the years of *Still Life: Self-Portrait* and *Self Portrait: Still Life* (refer back to Figs. 107 & 108) and this last photo shoot, the artist struggled with other consequences of aging. At seventy years old, Hodgkins wrote, 'Of course, I am aging', she wrote to her brother '& find life a strain— or rather the strain is to concentrate....' Frances Hodgkins to William Hodgkins, 22 July 1939, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.486.

¹⁰² To see how Vasari's judgments, which omitted women much less elder women artists, have been perpetuated throughout centuries up until Janson's twentieth-century texts, refer to Nanette Salomon, "The Art Historical Canon: Sins of Omission", in *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, Donald Preziosi (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998): pp.344-55.

¹⁰³ For instance, the representation of old women has been mentioned but certainly not old women as artists in a discourse defined by aging men artists. For a recent text, which only marginally references a select few women artists who worked into their later years, see Philip Sohm, *The Artist Grows Old: The Aging of Art and Artists in Italy, 1500-1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007.)

certain age.¹⁰⁴ In 1699, however, the concept of an artist's 'late style' was developed by Roger de Piles in *L'Abrégé de la vie des peintres*. Although still gender exclusive, the significance of an artist's 'late style' continues to be examined and defined into the twenty-first century—

... the idea that the work of the last few years of truly “great” creative artists is marked by a profound change of style, tone, and content which tends both to look back to the artist's earlier years and forward, beyond his death, to future developments in the field, and which can be seen in certain ways to transcend its immediate context, to mark a moment both within and beyond time and place.¹⁰⁵

Rather than asking 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?'¹⁰⁶, I wonder when will the works of older women artists be acknowledged and rewarded for their greatness? Due to society's persistent preference for structuring the social, including the artistic, realm in favor of artists who are young, emerging but, nevertheless, less experienced, the aged become increasingly marginalized, despite their accumulation of skills, techniques and knowledge, which ironically seem to lose relevance with the passing of time.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the identities of older women artists either become lost by the obsession with youth culture or disguised. Hodgkins attempted to wrap her identity in a cloak of mystery in order to pass as a younger artist.¹⁰⁸ Documentary evidence of Hodgkins camouflaging her age is revealed in a transcript in which June Opie interviews fellow artists and friends of

¹⁰⁴ For example, Vasari deemed painting too physically challenging for the elderly Michelangelo: Queste furono l'ultime pitture condotte da lui d'età d'anni settantacinque, e, secondo che egli mi diceva, con molta sua gran fatica; avvenga ch'è la pittura, passato una certa età, e massimamente il lavorare in fresco, non è arte a vecchi.' ('These scenes, which he painted at the age of seventy-five, were the last pictures he did; and they cost him a great deal of effort, because, painting, especially in fresco, is no work for men who have passed a certain age.') Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, translated by George Bull (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), p.384. Hodgkins painted during the last months up until her death at the age of seventy-eight.

¹⁰⁵ Gordon McMullan and Sam Smiles (eds.), *Late Style and its Discontents: Essays in Art, Literature, and Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p.1.

¹⁰⁶ Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?", *ARTnews* (January 1971): pp.22-39, 67-71.

¹⁰⁷ For instance, the majority of artists in The London Group exhibition in 1914 at the Goupil Gallery were aged between 20-40 years old.

¹⁰⁸ For seminal work on the invisible older woman artist, who masquerades her identity as younger in order to become visible, see the text by Jeannette King, *Discourses of Ageing in Fiction and Feminism: The Invisible Woman* (NYC: Springer, 2013).

Hodgkins, including Morris.¹⁰⁹ One section of the interview addresses Hodgkins's clever use of a wig in order to make the artist seem younger than she really was:

Morris: About 1934 I took her down to West Wales where she did some of her best landscapes. She was by then an old lady.

Opie: What age was she when you took her to Wales?

Morris: Well, she must have been up in her seventies and she had discarded her famous orange-colored wig, [note saying it was not orange but a brilliant dark red: which was called "Titian" at the turn of the century] and she had rather straggly white hair but it gave her a great deal more dignity than she already had in the wig, in fact it suited her, she looked like a nice old lady, until you began to talk to her.

Opie: Nobody's been able to give an explanation for her wearing this wig. As you knew her so intimately, would you know the reason?

Morris: Well, the reason was a little complicated. It was not in order to make herself look younger for the usual reasons that women wear wigs. It was because she had a horror of being thought old because she thought old people wouldn't sell their work, you see, and that if people thought she was younger than she was, they were more likely to buy her work. I don't think she was the least interested in her appearance otherwise.¹¹⁰

When Hodgkins's work was finally recognized during roughly the last decade of her life, the artist discarded her wig because the battle to have her work appreciated was over (refer back to Figs. 114 & 115).

The art historical canon defined within the constructs of socio-cultural, political and religious contexts, has, undoubtedly, undervalued work by older women artists, and this wrong will only begin to be corrected when more retrospective exhibitions and monographic examinations of older women artists' works takes place. My argument that the older woman artist remains largely invisible, or as an outsider, in academic and museological discourses on British Modernism reinforces the importance that Hodgkins exerted as a positive, powerful and productive influence over this multi-faceted movement, particularly in reference to Romantic Modernism. This concept not only dovetails with the ongoing discussion and investigation of the significance of women artists but also unveils an alternative view of older women artists, whose creativity and intellectual authority

¹⁰⁹ Morris, Recording transcript for BBC Documentary of Frances Hodgkins, 1969: Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.12.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.33.

flourished throughout their art later in their lives.

In the year of Hodgkins's death, Myfanwy Evans published an article for *Vogue* in which she wrote, 'the work that she [Hodgkins] was still steadily producing, up to a few months before her death, was ageless; glowing at once with achievement and the possibilities of development'.¹¹¹ In the following year, Hodgkins was to be the only woman artist honored with a book for the *Penguin Modern Painters* series, which ran from April 1944 until January 1959. The series of nineteen volumes was 'designed to bring the work of painters to the wide public outside the art galleries: the public who have perhaps never ventured within because they doubted their ability to appreciate what they would see'.¹¹² Evans, the only woman author in the entire series, wrote the *Modern Painters* book on Hodgkins, and perhaps for this reason Hodgkins's positioning in British Modernism was undervalued compared to the other eighteen male-authored books on the male Modernists in the same series. In this book, Evans wrote:

It would not be true to say that Frances Hodgkins denied either her sex or her age, but she disregarded all their implications and other people disregarded them too. She got her work associated as much as possible with that of younger painters and took care to know about what was going on. And so she was identified with all that was most youthful in painting, yet she never emerged quite clearly as young, old or middle-aged— a confusion that she encouraged rather than elucidated, and that was largely preserved by her absences abroad during the thirties.¹¹³

That same year, Morris observed the discrimination, which Hodgkins faced throughout her career, on the grounds of age:

From her career one may draw a conclusion that will encourage many along a path which their circumstances make difficult; she demonstrated that the old maid on the camp stool is potentially just as capable of achievement in

¹¹¹ Myfanwy Evans, "Frances Hodgkins: An Appreciation of a Great Painter and a Great Personality", *Vogue* (August 1947): p.91.

¹¹² Allen Lane, *Penguin's Progress* (July 1946) quoted by Linda Lloyd Jones in "Fifty years of Penguin Books", *Fifty Penguin Years* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p.40.

¹¹³ Myfanwy Evans, *Frances Hodgkins*, p.15.

the Arts as the lad of 17 who crashes into the firmament of fame, alas, in many cases disastrously too soon.¹¹⁴

Hodgkins's mastery at blurring the boundaries between young and old or traditional and modern is a characteristically unique feature of her Romantic Modernist work.¹¹⁵ Grigson, who was described as one of the most important figures in 'the history of English taste, the history of taste in painting, and in the sense of landscape and history, as well as of taste in poetry'¹¹⁶, finally wrote about Hodgkins's work in a positive light. Grigson wrote:

... Frances Hodgkins knew exactly where delight weakened into prattle, where a painter's wit degenerated into archness; or rather she knew exactly how to realize in pencil or watercolour the unpretentious delight of her old age. She helped to keep the senses open and alive; and to a freedom of the senses, English painters of our time have added a no less human quality of intellectual discipline. Thus the mystical painter William Blake and the nature mystic Samuel Palmer, who found for himself highly personal and lyrical equivalents for landscape and its content, have either or both affected the feeling and the practice of several English artists— Sutherland (who is now held to be the major talent in English painting), Vaughan, Minton, Craxton and others—, enough indeed to make us speak of a new English romanticism.¹¹⁷

But there were still critics who were doubtful of the work created by this sexless, ageless artist such as Eric Newton, who dubbed Hodgkins to be a 'strangely personal and yet strangely limited genius'.¹¹⁸ A critic by the name of M.W. wrote a dismissive article on Hodgkins entitled "The Old Lady"¹¹⁹, and another critic known as D.G. wrote:

¹¹⁴Morris's draft of speech for the opening of Hodgkins's first posthumous exhibition at Bournemouth Art Society in 1948, Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.2.

¹¹⁵ Despite being part of an older generation, Hodgkins rejected the labored academicism of traditionalists associated with the Royal Academy and transformed her still lifes, landscapes and portraits into Modernist myths, which would inspire younger generations of British artists.

¹¹⁶ *The Times Literary Supplement* (12 December 1963): p.1030.

¹¹⁷ Geoffrey Grigson, *British Drawings and Watercolours of the Twentieth Century* (London: British Council, 1953), p.6. Tate Archive, TGA 9712.2.74. This 'new English romanticism', which Grigson refers to, is what I characterize as Romantic Modernism, spearheaded by both Hodgkins and Morris.

¹¹⁸ Eric Newton, "Untitled [review of Frances Hodgkins exhibition, Leicester Galleries]", *Sunday Times* (February 1935), n.p.

¹¹⁹ M.W., "The Old Lady", [no journal title] (June 1952): p.108. Tate Archive, TGA 735.2.

In the case of Frances Hodgkins we are faced with one of those curiously natural geniuses whose work— so translucently pure in feeling and original in conception— seemed so oddly to have stemmed from the homely and seemingly unremarkable person of a rather weatherbeaten [sic] old lady.¹²⁰

Accordingly, one of my intentions for this chapter is to prove that, although these critics were seriously acknowledging Hodgkins's art in multiple reviews, their sexist, ageist criticisms and judgments undermined her work by basing their attention on her gender and age rather than the art itself. This biased filtration caused lasting implications for Hodgkins's legacy in British Modernism as an "outsider". But can these discriminatory cultural stereotypes be reversed into a more impartial and inclusive understanding of Hodgkins not only as a talented artist past the years of her youth but also as an artist whose Romantic Modernist art possessed an ageless authority? One might ask what are the possible alternatives to this reversal— a celebration of femininity and of old age or a complete disregard to both? In fact, what is old age when it no longer fits neatly within a stereotype?

This section will end with the examination of Morris's identity as a homosexual, and how the artist's preferred genre of painting led to dismissals of his "alternative masculinity" in the context of the "'rough and masculine work" of British modernism'.¹²¹ Like women, homosexuals were considered as a threatening minority encroaching on the nature of masculinity at the turn of the century. The definition of masculinity at this time has been widely centered on the rejection and marginalization of femininity.¹²² Thus, the result of misogyny and homophobia further structured what had already been a biased hierarchy within the confines of Modernism's link to maleness as the ideal. Tickner has provided a wide-ranging list of underlying anxieties over perceived masculinity beyond women's increasing

¹²⁰ D.G., "Painter's Private Life", *Sussex Daily News* (March 1952), n.p. Tate Archive, TGA735.2.

¹²¹ This quote comes from an open letter by Wyndham Lewis and others who resigned from the Omega Workshops in 1913. I borrow this quote from Tickner, "Men's Work? Masculinity and Modernism", p.42. The letter is fully quoted in W.K. Rose (ed.), *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis* (London: New Directions, 1963), pp.47-50.

¹²² See Rachel Alsop et al., *Theorizing Gender: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), p.143. Also, R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), p.68. A thorough literature review of masculinity studies can be found in Natalya Lusty and Julian Murphet eds., "Introduction", in *Modernism and Masculinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp.1-18.

emancipation and involvement in the arts. These include claims that 60 percent of Englishmen were unfit for service during the Boer War provided by the 1904 *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration*, an increase in the number of mentally unstable persons highlighted by the 1908 *Report of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded*, a 30 percent drop in the birthrate between the mid 1870s and 1910 and an overall concern over ethical, intellectual and corporeal decline.¹²³ For these reasons and many more contributed to an apprehension that Modernism needed to embody an art composed of a “manly ethos”—virility, strength and masculine bravado.

The 1895 trial and conviction of Oscar Wilde for ‘gross indecency’ ignited challenges to hegemonic masculinity, which no longer simply derived from the women’s movement alone but also came from other men whose gendered behavior and sexuality differed from the patriarchal ideology of the time. Foucault has argued that the classification and identification of homosexuality did not exist before the nineteenth century:

The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form... Nothing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality. It was everywhere present in him: at the root of all his actions... less as a habitual sin than as a singular nature.¹²⁴

A heightened awareness of homosexuality meant that heterosexuality had to be proven; hence, attempts to banish homosexuality from what was deemed as socially acceptable became identified with manliness itself.¹²⁵ Despite the acknowledgment of homosexuality as illegal in early-twentieth-century Britain, members affiliated with the Bloomsbury group symbolized defiance against sexual norms.¹²⁶ Homosexuality in the Bohemian circle surrounding Morris, however, has rarely

¹²³ The complete explanation ranging from ‘Social Darwinism’ to the fear of castration see Tickner, “Men’s Work? Masculinity and Modernism”, pp.48-49.

¹²⁴ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Volume I, translated by Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), p.43.

¹²⁵ Connell, *Masculinities*, p.196.

¹²⁶ See Christopher Reed, “Bloomsbury as Queer Subculture”, in Victoria Rosner (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to The Bloomsbury Group* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp.71-92.

been examined, even though he was a key figure in the development of Romantic Modernism. I argue here that Morris's homosexual relationship with his life-long partner, Lett, had negative consequences for the overall reception of the artist and his work and positioned him as an "outsider".

The last line of Morris's obituary states, 'He was unmarried'.¹²⁷ It is true that Morris was unmarried, although he fell in love with Lett in 1918 and lived with him for the following sixty years until Lett's death.¹²⁸ Soon after Morris and Lett met, the two men bought their first home, The Bowgie, together in Cornwall. The Bowgie would act as the first of many gathering places for a Bohemian entourage, which included Hodgkins throughout the First World War and into the thirties. Morris and Lett were known to be conspicuous in Cornwall and, in fact, wherever they went, since they were described as a couple who knew how to make 'an art out of living'.¹²⁹ A friend and art critic, Archibald Gordon wrote:

Together [Lett and Cedric] inspired whole generations of aspiring and established artists and art teachers, none of whom could come away from a short visit to their informal ménage at Benton End without the better being able to practice their art or ply their profession. Persons brought up within the accepted bounds of bourgeois behavior, high, middle or low, soon found the atmosphere and the lusty quarreling, stimulating and liberating.¹³⁰

Did Morris's lifelong relationship with Lett frame and shape the artist's identity, and if so, did his homosexuality undercut Morris's reputation as a significant artist? Certainly with the rise of Modernism came a growing awareness of other sexualities, which contributed to a subordination of masculinity, and these alternative masculinities did garner criticisms from fellow artists and critics alike.

¹²⁷ "Obituary: Sir Cedric Morris, painter and horticulturalist", *The Times* (10 February 1982): p.12.

¹²⁸ Even though Morris and Lett had an open relationship, the two remained dedicated to one another for the rest of their lives. One of Morris's affairs was with Paul Odo Cross, an American artist, in 1925. Cross later helped Morris and Lett buy the premises for what would become their East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing, and Morris painted a portrait of Cross in the year that they met. The portrait is in the National Museum of Wales, NMW A29293. This would be a fruitful field of further research that lies outside of this thesis.

¹²⁹ Gwynneth Reynolds and Diana Grace, *Benton End Remembered: Cedric Morris, Arthur Lett-Haines and the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing* (London: Unicorn, 2003), p.75.

¹³⁰ Gordon, A., "Haines and Morris", *Spectator* (13 March 1982): p.20.

Despite an increasing number of twentieth-century male artists shifting to flower painting such as Sir Matthew Smith and those by Scottish Colorists, much of Morris's Romantic Modernist art, which lacked typically "masculine" attributes and instead embodied a celebration of "feminine" forms, automatically gendering his work. In their manifesto *Vital English Art*, artists Filippo Marinetti and Christopher Nevinson condemned 'the effeminacy of [English] art' and demanded 'that English artists strengthen their Art by a recuperative optimism, a fearless desire of adventure, a heroic instinct of discovery, a worship of strength and a physical and moral courage...'¹³¹ Marinetti's and Nevinson's particular vocabulary including words such as 'strengthen', 'fearless', 'heroic' and 'moral courage' demonstrates an obsession with the need to express a specifically masculine identity. The radical Vorticists were also fixated on an energetic, virile masculinity, declaring that 'the artist of the modern movement is a savage... this enormous, jangling, journalistic, fairy desert of modern life serves him as Nature did more technically primitive man'.¹³² Machines were the favored subject for Modernists like the Vorticists, yet, at the same time, Morris's preferred subject of flowers, that which was intended for the domain of "lady painters", meant that the artist relinquished and even refused his rights in the context of modernity's hegemonic masculinity.

In an atmosphere filled with contempt for femininity and effeminacy, Morris's depictions of flower still lifes were a reaction against radical avant-garde theories, hierarchies and subjects and instead honored his own personal Romantic Modernist methods of expression. An example can be seen with Morris's *Flowers in a vase* (Fig. 117) and John Piper's *Abstract I* (Fig. 118), both painted during the thirties. The two compositions are filled with a riot of colors, but Morris's painting assumes subtle, curving forms of a traditional arrangement of flowers, while Piper interweaves planes of hard-edged, straight lines through his use of abstraction and references to Picasso's *papiers collés*. From the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, flower painting developed out of the still life genre, and throughout the

¹³¹ This manifesto is reproduced in C.R.W. Nevinson, *Paint and Prejudice* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938), pp.58-60.

¹³² Wyndham Lewis ed., "Manifesto II", *Blast 1: Review of the Great English Vortex* (20 June 1914), p.30.

subsequent centuries artists, many of which were women, turned to the subject not only for its complex range of iconography but also for its inclination towards expressive subjectivity.¹³³ Yet the devaluation of flower paintings was common throughout the twentieth century; ‘flower painting demands no genius of a mental or spiritual kind, but only the genius of taking pains and supreme craftsmanship’.¹³⁴ This, however, did not deter Morris from delighting in the decorative of flower paintings unlike the majority of his male Modernist counterparts, who navigated towards more masculine Modernist methods of expression.

III. *Veiled Recognition: Hodgkins’s and Morris’s Subversion of English Art Establishments through their Radical Teaching*

Was Hodgkins’s and Morris’s art evaluated differently because they were considered as unconventional “outsiders” to the English art establishment? If British Modernists rejected the Royal Academy or any other art educational institutions during the twentieth century, did the establishment then, in turn, reject those who were subversive, by obscuring their place in the canon of art history? In this section, I will propose that Hodgkins’s and Morris’s true unconventionality limited their recognition during their lifetimes and, thus, negatively affected their artistic legacies.

Art education, distinct from craft or studio training, began in Italy during the sixteenth century, while the first British art academy was founded with the Royal Academy of Arts in London in 1768.¹³⁵ The Royal Academy, along with later-

¹³³ The subject of Victorian flower painting and the metaphorical meanings behind flowers has been addressed in Chapter II section III.

¹³⁴ This quote is borrowed from Pollock and Parker, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, p.54. The original source is M.H. Grant, *Flower Paintings Through Four Centuries* (England: Leigh-on-Sea, 1952), p.21.

¹³⁵ The literature on the Royal Academy and the history of British art education is vast. See Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Seven Discourses Delivered in the Royal Academy by the President* (London, 1778) published in Edmond Malone (ed.), *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* (London, 1797). Its modern edition Robert W. Wark (ed.), *Discourses on Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975); William Sandby, *The History of The Royal Academy of Arts* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1862); James Fenton, *School of Genius: A History of the Royal Academy of Arts* (London: Royal Academy of the Arts, 2006); Sarah Monks, John Barrell and Mark Hallett (eds.), *Living with the Royal Academy: Artistic ideals and Experiences in England, 1768-1848* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013); Matthew C. Potter (ed.), *The Concept of the ‘Master’ in Art Education in Britain and Ireland*,

established English art institutions such as the Slade School of Fine Art and the Royal College of Art, initiated a formal training scheme in 1852 known as the National Course of Art Instruction, which focused on technical applicability with an emphasis on copying rather than imaginative creations.¹³⁶ A guiding principle of this national system was that ‘a master must use those examples of study, and teach according to the principles that are sanctioned by the Department, which retains the entire control over the system of instruction to be followed’.¹³⁷ Thus, a wide-ranging utilitarian uniformity across public art education was ensured meaning that ‘no examination could be passed, no prize won, no grants made, nor certificate obtained, except in specified stages of this course’.¹³⁸ However, this rigid formula to achieve artistic success greatly conflicted with Hodgkins’s and Morris’s truly avant-garde beliefs, which opposed the academicism of art. In fact, Hodgkins and Morris both taught art classes themselves, but the ways in which they imparted their knowledge was far different than the concept of the “master” in London’s art institutes.

The majority of Hodgkins’s and Morris’s contemporaries, who were considered as part of the avant-garde, nevertheless, participated in the rigid doctrines of academic institutional life and set themselves apart within their own networks. Because Hodgkins and Morris did not train within the English system of academic art, I believe they were recognized as inferior and as “outsiders”, possessing less authority than their Modernist counterparts who did. Twentieth-century art academies did not exist within an isolated world. In fact, these authoritative institutions held a sort of monopoly over the extensive fabric of modern art in England, influencing dealers, art critics, galleries and museums. Those who were disinterested in joining the academies were often refused

1770 to the Present (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013); Nigel Llewellyn, *London Art Schools* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2016); Robin Simon and Maryanne Stevens, *The Royal Academy of Arts: History and Collections* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2017).

¹³⁶ Stuart Macdonald, *A Century of Art and Design Education: From Arts and Crafts to Conceptual Art* (Cambridge: the Lutterworth Press, 2005), p.204.

¹³⁷ *Department of Practical Art*, Form 132 quoted in Stuart Macdonald, *A History and Philosophy of Art Education* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1970), p.188.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.188.

themselves, whether it was an unconscious or conscious bias. For instance, it was not until the end of Hodgkins's career, when her placement in British Modernism was officially confirmed, that the Tate purchased the first work by Hodgkins, *Loveday and Ann: Two Women with a Basket of Flowers* (refer back to Fig. 5), in 1945 for their collection.¹³⁹

Because Hodgkins was constantly struggling to keep her own artistic career afloat due to her limited finances, she found teaching necessary until she finally received some financial security past the age of 60 with Arthur Howell's contract in 1930. After Hodgkins gained first-class passes in the South Kensington examinations at the Dunedin School of Art, she opened up her own art studio in Wellington in 1896 and began classes in 'Painting from the Life and Sketching from Nature'.¹⁴⁰ At the turn of the century on the Continent, avant-garde Modernists overthrew the doctrines of academic traditions in theory and practice.¹⁴¹ During the winters of 1909 and 1910, Hodgkins was the first woman instructor invited to teach a watercolor class at the Académie Colarossi in Paris. The Colarossi rivaled the popular Académie Julian by lowering its fees and providing greater flexibility.¹⁴² But by the following year, Hodgkins started her own studio for women only on 21 Avenue du Maine. During this year, Hodgkins revealed her unconventional teaching strategy: 'here my students work out their own ego, I hope; for where original talent shows itself it should be nursed, not stamped out, as often happens from the teacher insisting on all work being more or less an imitation of his own'.¹⁴³ The artist often extended these lessons beyond her studio walls, since working *en plein air* was a vital characteristic of her own creativity. During one summer, for instance, Hodgkins orchestrated a painting excursion to the fishing harbour of Concarneau in

¹³⁹ Upon Tate's acquisition, Hodgkins wrote, 'It gives me intense pleasure to know that my picture is enshrined in glory at Millbank.' Frances Hodgkins to John Rothenstein, 7 October 1945, in Gill (ed.), *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, p.563.

¹⁴⁰ *Evening Star (Dunedin)* (26 August 1896): p.1.

¹⁴¹ For an overview on this topic see George Heard Hamilton, *Painting and Sculpture in Europe, 1880-1940* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1993), pp.7-184.

¹⁴² For further information see Barbara H. Weinberg, *The Lure of Paris: 19th Century American Painters and Their French Teachers* (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1991), p.279.

¹⁴³ Hay C. Thomson, "An Artist of the Moderns", *Everylady's Journal* (Melbourne) (6 January 1913): p.12.

Brittany. One of her pupils on this trip, who would later forge a distinguished career as a Canadian Modernist, was Emily Carr. Carr recalled:

As a teacher she was “stimulating”, some found her “daring and courageous.” She would seize a large brush and standing well away from the student’s easel, lash out with big decisive sweeps, working from the shoulder with her whole arm... She insisted on only one thing: that her pupils work in watercolour.¹⁴⁴

Hodgkins’s lively spirit and technique not only left lasting impressions on many of her pupils but also produced quite effective results. Kathleen O’Connor, another New Zealander, who studied at Hodgkins’s Atelier, recalled that Hodgkins’s instructions enabled her to ‘get me my first exhibit in the Salon Français. (Which was rare in those days)’.¹⁴⁵ While New Zealander Cora Wilding stated,

The first lesson Miss Hodgkins gave was certainly stimulating... She pounced upon my watercolour box containing yellow ochre, alizarin crimson and French blue and said it must be increased. She introduced me to vert emeraude and cadmium and keyed up my palette.¹⁴⁶

Hodgkins’s riotous use of color continued her rejection of the Academy, which privileged the work of Old Masters, characterized by their dark, saturated color schemes and their characteristic use of black.

Even if Hodgkins mainly took up teaching to supplement her income, the artist affected many of her students with her spontaneous, lively methods; techniques which shaped her Romantic Modernist language. Later in the summer of 1920 during a sketching class at St Ives, an Australian pupil, Vida Lahey, claimed that Hodgkins’s influence was one of the three ‘most important things’ that influenced her alongside the works of Michelangelo and Rembrandt.¹⁴⁷ Jane Saunders, an English pupil who would go on to help Hodgkins secure employment at the Calico Printers Association, reflected on Hodgkins’s revelatory approach to teaching:

¹⁴⁴ Maria Tippett, *Emily Carr: a Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p.95.

¹⁴⁵ Patrick Hutchings and Julie Lewis, *Kathleen O’Connor: Artist in Exile* (Fremantle, Australia: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1987), p.42.

¹⁴⁶ McCormick, *The Expatriate: A Study of Frances Hodgkins*, p.141.

¹⁴⁷ Hazel de Berg, Transcript of an interview with Vida Lahey 26 November 1965, A.C.T. National Gallery archives quoted in Avenal McKinnon, *Frances Hodgkins 1869-1947* (London: Whitford & Hughes Gallery, 1990), unpaginated.

A few slashes of the brush across my effort and all was transformed. It is true that I did not immediately understand the destruction of my morning's work, but I did realise that here was someone that could teach me something—new and real. It was a revelation to me, not only of a teaching method but of my own lack of real vision. I was painting what was a preconceived idea—not a creative sketch. Of course, I now think that the real value of Frances' teaching lay in the stimulus of her vitality which forced one continually to revalue experiences.¹⁴⁸

Although Hodgkins's extensive career as a teacher provided her with a small income, her obligations to her pupils began to transform into somewhat of a burden, which interfered with her own productivity as an artist. In 1927 when Hodgkins was on a painting excursion with Morris and Lett in Tréboul, she decided to give up teaching entirely, so that she could concentrate on working towards establishing a permanent place for herself in London's art scene.

Morris also found himself in a position to bestow his avant-garde techniques and knowledge onto eager pupils but not out of the necessity of earning an income like Hodgkins. Founded in 1937, the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing was a joint venture where both Morris and Lett taught along their own methods of painting, while Morris served as Principal and Lett as the administrator. First located in the center of Dedham, Essex, only a few miles from their estate, The Pound, Morris's and Lett's School became an immediate success with nearly sixty students enrolled by the end of its first term.¹⁴⁹ Beyond a surprisingly conventional framework of painting classes, life classes and design classes, the atmosphere in which the students worked was thoroughly unconventional and similar to an artistic community, so that the pupils could flourish amongst a spirit of camaraderie. Unlike the traditional art establishments in London, Morris's and Lett's School admitted a higher percentage of women students, and they vehemently opposed discrimination on grounds of age. Similar to earlier independent organizations such as the Herkomer Art School, which lasted from 1883 until 1904, or the 1910 Byam Shaw School of Art, the overall mission of the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing aimed to provide a freedom reflecting avant-garde artistic perspectives, which were

¹⁴⁸ Transcript of an interview with Jane Saunders, 1969, Tate Archive, TGA 8210.

¹⁴⁹ Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.55.

unavailable in the art establishment in London at this time. Indeed, Morris's and Lett's School was founded on 'Instruction in the new forms and their recent development,' while their teaching philosophy stated:

The object of the school is to provide an environment where students can work together with more experienced artists in a common endeavor to produce sincere painting. We want... to provide the student with a place where he can work in freedom with every opportunity and encouragement to find his particular form of expression and incidentally to give him an opportunity of creating the atmosphere of enthusiasm and enjoyment which we feel is essential to the development of his perceptions and the production of good work. The attitude of the student should be that he believes himself to have a clear idea of creative work and requires only help in its production. We propose to work on this assumption, and not on the idea current in the schools that the student is a depository for the theories of the master and guilty of impertinence in thinking otherwise. We do not believe that there are "artists" and "students": there are degrees of proficiency...¹⁵⁰

The East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing exchanged the rigid tradition of copying based on the 'theories of the master' with a Romantic Modernist emphasis on 'sincere painting' and the ability to 'work in freedom'. Morris's and Lett's approach enabled their students to feel as though they had more agency over their own artistic decisions and, consequently, more confidence to work independently. Upon reflecting on Morris's teaching methods, Glyn Morgan recalled that Cedric:

... never told anyone what technique to use. His criticisms were confined to the colour, balance and other basic formal qualities of the painting, so that while you wondered why you had not seen the solution before, the work remained your picture.¹⁵¹

Only two years later in 1939 the School was accidentally set on fire. While it went up in flames, local resident Sir Alfred Munnings, who was an outspoken critic of Modernism and later elected as President of the Royal Academy, allegedly drove by shouting, 'Down with Modern Art!'¹⁵² Undeterred, Morris brought his students to the School's remains the next day and painted *Gutted Art School, Dedham* (Fig. 119). The charred leftovers of the School with its crumbling façade and structure did not

¹⁵⁰ East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing prospectus, Tate Archive, TGA 8317.

¹⁵¹ Glyn Morgan unpublished memoir quoted in Tufnell et al., *Cedric Morris and Lett-Haines: Teaching Art and Life*, p.18.

¹⁵² Andrew Lambirth, *Cedric Morris: Artist Plantsman* (London: The Garden Museum, 2018), p.27.

leave Morris and Lett much option for rebuilding, and their home at The Pound proved to be too small to hold classes and also house their students. With that, they decided to move their home and their School to a larger sixteenth-century estate called Benton End in Hadleigh, Suffolk. The grounds of Benton End were large enough to provide studios for both Morris and Lett as well as accommodations for almost a dozen students, while others were able to live in the nearby town. Morris often felt as though it was impossible to teach art, but he was able to provide necessary encouragement and direction throughout his students' artistic processes:

You can't really teach painting but you can certainly encourage the talent, if any that is there. A pupil is like a reel of cotton. You get hold of the end, and pull it out. And you can do a lot by starting from weakness... you can, by making them peg away at it, sometimes turn their weakness into their strongest feature.¹⁵³

Morris's methods of teaching did influence several students, who would later forge significant artistic careers of their own. An example of one of Morris's most prominent pupils was Lucian Freud, who studied at the East Anglian School from 1939 until 1942. Freud found the School to be 'marvelously anarchic' and 'complex', and Morris's direct way of painting made a lasting impression on Freud's technique for his portraiture.¹⁵⁴ Without any preparation, Morris's idiosyncratic practice by starting in a corner and continuing until the whole surface was covered, 'as if knitting or unrolling a carpet' left a mark on the way in which Freud painted.¹⁵⁵ Freud admired Morris's unconventional technique likening it to that of 'a tapestry maker' who 'gave a feeling of sureness'.¹⁵⁶ Another close similarity can be traced when viewing Freud's portraits alongside those by Morris. Painted at the same time, Freud's portrait *Sir Cedric Morris* (**Fig. 120**) and Morris's portrait *Lucian Freud* (**Fig. 121**) share an almost uncomfortable closeness related to the directness of their sitters. However, Freud paints Morris in a rough and slightly subversive manner with his teacher's right eye mysteriously blackened as his tightly-pursed lips enclose

¹⁵³ Bensusan-Butt, "Baronet with palette", p.7.

¹⁵⁴ Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.57.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.32.

¹⁵⁶ Phoebe Hoban, *Lucian Freud: Eyes Wide Open* (Boston and New York: Amazon Publishing, 2014), p.18.

around his ubiquitous pipe, while Morris's portrait of Freud is instead flattering and rather sensuous. Characteristic of Romantic Modernism, neither portrait attempts a photographic likeness but exposes the spirit, whether exaggerated or simplified, of the sitter.

Besides teaching at his East Anglian School, Morris also taught in Wales at places like the Pontypridd Settlement and at the Gwernllwyn House in Dowlaid.¹⁵⁷ Concerned about high unemployment rates and the depressive state of much of the population in South Wales, Morris sought to organize contemporary art societies and to provide art education, since he believed that 'Man shall not live on bread alone... and it is essential that more of us should take heed of our racial immortality'.¹⁵⁸ In 1939 he wrote to Lett,

I am starting evening classes for various kinds of design and handicraft— 2 nights a week and every afternoon... We start with wallpaper, some Woolworth colours, brushes, pencils and some very good clay off the mountains— they are all young or youngish— I shall stay on some weeks to get this going. I expect you will think it mad and probably there's no talent, but perhaps there is...¹⁵⁹

Later in 1950, Morris was invited to teach as a Lecturer in Design at the Royal College of Art. The Principal, Robert Darwin, entreated Morris to join the faculty for his being '... a really fine painter with a natural sense of free design' as well as possessing 'an essential love and appreciation of flowers who cannot help spotting and smelling out the conventional pastiche' and 'someone who will not mind teaching people without experience in painting'.¹⁶⁰ Morris, not surprisingly, found his experience within the systematized establishment to be unpleasant, as he stated in a letter to Lett:

I did my 2 days teaching this week and nearly died of boredom. These smug mediocrities not a spark so far— I don't think I can teach them anything— I have no interest in what they want to learn— if only the whole set up was a little more fantastic it would be amusing— as it is it's just dull. All the staff

¹⁵⁷ For information on the development of these Educational Settlements of South Wales see footnote #13 in Tufnell et al., *Cedric Morris and Lett-Haines: Teaching Art and Life*, p.37.

¹⁵⁸ Tate Archive, TGA 8317.1.2.11.

¹⁵⁹ Tate Archive, TGA 8317.1.4.52.

¹⁶⁰ Letter of 20 December 1950, footnote #11 in Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p.94.

are most friendly in a slightly defensive way— but to me it's not real— like a very dull musical comedy without any music.¹⁶¹

After spending time within the London art system as a teacher, Morris found himself displeased and wondered, 'why don't they just whip out the people with talent and teach those? It would be so much more rewarding'.¹⁶²

Despite Morris's aristocratic background, he displayed a great concern for dissolving barriers and divisions between classes through his rejection of dogmatic theories taught at exclusive art schools. Morris conveyed his progressive beliefs by admitting non-professional artists as students in his East Anglian School: "It is hoped that this scheme may help... to decrease the division that has grown up between the creative artists and the general public, due largely to the system of trading and insincerity of criticism".¹⁶³ Morris's own privileged circumstances afforded him a certain independence from London's established system, and enabled him to be less distressed about the increasing negligence of his work in national institutions. When it came to following conventional trends or choosing artistic freedom and control, Morris, like Hodgkins, always embraced the latter— no matter the consequences. Morris's and Hodgkins's withdrawal from exhibiting societies such as from The Seven and Five, due to Ben Nicholson's ruling that artists in the Society should only produce non-representational work, left far-reaching repercussions on their reputations. While both Morris and Hodgkins consciously chose to remain geographically isolated from London's dealers, galleries and institutions, Hodgkins, however, was not in Morris's elevated position and needed to earn money from the sales of her work. She depended upon commercial, critical and institutional support in order to receive the recognition required to continue her career by selling her art.

Both Morris and Hodgkins lived unconventionally and, at times, their unusual career choices seemed irrevocably to taint the artists as eccentrics. Morris was deeply discouraged over the neglect that Hodgkins, such an original and important

¹⁶¹ Letter of 3 February 1951, footnote #11 Ibid., p.94.

¹⁶² "What Makes an Artist", The Garden Museum Archive, 1/DOC/100100/829.

¹⁶³ East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing prospectus, Tate Archive, TGA 8317.

artist, faced throughout her career as well as in its aftermath. After Hodgkins's death, Morris wrote a biting opening for her first posthumous exhibition: 'the façade she erected, which was... as much one of her own fantasy as any of her works of Art,' was, in fact, 'her defense against overwhelming hostility to her work, her appearance and her mode of living'.¹⁶⁴ Without British academic training and dwindling connections to mainstream London artistic circles, Hodgkins's and Morris's "outsider" positions left their undeniably unique Romantic Modernist voices to be analyzed at a "lesser" position than their English counterparts. Hodgkins's and Morris's liberation from convention, both in their way of life and in their art, challenged the institutional authorities, who ultimately judged them for it in return; proving that those who thwart the rule-bound establishment face a high price to pay.

¹⁶⁴ Draft of speech by Morris for opening of Hodgkins's posthumous exhibition in 1948. Tate Archive, TGA 8317.6.4.2.

Conclusion

This thesis has evolved around two main areas of investigation. The process of critically tracing the artistic friendship between Hodgkins and Morris from around 1917 until the early forties for the first time not only led to the identification of significant biographical connections but also opened up a new category for twentieth-century British Art— Romantic Modernism. In view of the lack of research and publications on these two artists together, this thesis has uncovered a previously unexplored narrative in British Modernism that will hopefully become a source of reference for future scholars interested in examining and positioning additional relevant British artists within the Romantic Modernist context. A fundamental aspect of this thesis has been to reconstruct Hodgkins's and Morris's lost friendship in order to provide meaningful and illuminating examples of how these two artists engaged with issues surrounding the Modernist pictorial language of Romantic Modernism. Both artists shared recognizable and distinctive elements of their pictorial practices and aligned strategies in order to work through methods of depicting modernity by means of abstraction, which Hodgkins referred to as 'the modern problem'. Overall, the spirituality of Hodgkins's and Morris's subject matter through the interwar period presents a thematic framework that many avant-garde artists and networks, including those in The Seven and Five Society, aimed to achieve and, thus, requires a more nuanced approach and understanding.

This thesis has engaged with discourse and debates surrounding the canon formation of British Modernism through a critical biographical approach along with a feminist perspective. In existing art-historical literature there has been a great divide between the use of a mainly Masculinist Modernism by the Vorticists, for instance, during the First World War and the nostalgic reinterpretations of lost landscapes exemplified by the later Neo-Romantics during the Second World War. The interwar years in Britain, however, have remained largely unexplored, despite being a complex period of multiple Modernist movements. In this thesis, my research isolated and highlighted specific and recurring characteristics between Hodgkins's and Morris's paintings, which serve as a possibility to redraw

boundaries around divisions in order to make space for an unexplored twentieth-century movement that could be interpreted as a national intermediary and as the foundation for later Neo-Romanticism. Therefore, by investigating the connections between the development of Hodgkins's and Morris's joint stylistic visualizations, my research extended and reshaped the determined canon of twentieth-century modern British art.

My research began by exploring the platonic friendship between two overlooked twentieth-century British Modernists. This methodology brought to light joint Modernist idioms that came about by remaining true to themselves and their independence rather than blindly following contemporary artistic theories and trends. I have argued that the artistic and personal relationship between Hodgkins and Morris was completely unique in that there were many more differences than similarities between the two— one was an aging, woman artist and the other a younger homosexual male. It was, in fact, these identity variances that offered dynamic processes of significant social consequences, which helped each artist to shape a united Romantic Modernist response to modernity in Britain. Beyond the invaluable support system that the two artists offered one another, I have demonstrated how Hodgkins's and Morris's particular friendship was an enabling one. The fact that both artists taught most likely aided one another to provide useful encouragement and critical evaluations of each other's work without a patronizing or condescending manner. At the same time, though, Hodgkins and Morris shared an intuitive friendship in relation to aesthetic and creative dimensions as well as aligned ethics and an interest in constant self-development.

Although Hodgkins and Morris were central players to British Modernism, they often operated from the margins of the established London art scene. Neither artist was English nor did they want to be considered as such, even though this limited their reception by many critics and historians during their careers in Britain. Both artists were geographically positioned in countryside locations, away from the art establishment and vital institutions. Yet it was due to this sense of "otherness" that Hodgkins and Morris were able to gain insight in order to create fresh and individual artistic perspectives. Indeed, by remaining independent of cultural and

artistic pressures, both artists were able to not only be critical of stylistic trends but also managed to influence generations of artists through their alternative pedagogical practices. Thus, even though Hodgkins's and Morris's friendship existed on the peripheries of artistic circles in London, it, nevertheless, provides noteworthy examples of links between aesthetic practices in addition to connections between unexpected persons.

I would argue that in keeping with my methodology in demonstrating the cause and effect results after exploring an unanticipated friendship between two marginalized artists, future scholars would benefit from investigating a variety of concepts relating to artistic friendships. For instance, are there examples of cross-sex friendships that are non-romantic relationships between heterosexual people of different genders, in the history of modern art in twentieth-century Britain? If so, what compelling cases arise when understanding these relationships in terms of hierarchy, for example? What are the virtues of a non-romantic relationship between a male and female artist? Is it possible for two artists of a similar age to share perspectives, practices and appreciation for one another's work without a destructive rivalry? By embracing the construct of an underexplored angle, friendships between artists can continue to demonstrate creative and philosophical dialogues, which will not only reveal parallels in each other's work but will also offer further understanding into more lateral circumstances, which may have served as inspiration for creative practices.

In regards to Romantic Modernism, this thesis explores a completely new twentieth-century British art movement, which is both backward-and forward-looking in time. My research demonstrates a more complex prehistory for Neo-Romanticism by clarifying the emergence of a specific Romantic Modernist pictorial language, which I propose was largely established and developed by both Hodgkins and Morris during the First World War, while, simultaneously, reinstating their overlooked roles and positions in British Modernism. One of the impacts of defining Romantic Modernism is the uncoupling of certain elements, such as the recurring nostalgia trope, of Neo-Romanticism from the Second World War. This thesis argues that the identification of Romantic Modernism dismantles this notion in that

nostalgia goes back further in history and can equally be associated with the First World War. Critics and historians interpreted Hodgkins's late paintings as fitting within the confines of the Neo-Romantic movement, but Morris's works completely fell out of favor by the forties. By challenging the origins of a nostalgic modernity mainly linked to the Second World War, my research not only reinserts Morris back into the British Modernist discourse but also solidifies the major contributions these two artists implemented decades before their later Neo-Romantic counterparts. Future scholars will hopefully consider other British modern twentieth-century artists, whose work can be better understood in relation to this newly defined category.

I have argued that the reception of Hodgkins's and Morris's art during their careers and after their death was limited due to a variety of "disadvantageous" factors. At the same time, these "disadvantages" helped to set their artistic practice apart from their English counterparts as completely ground breaking and distinctive. During Hodgkins's lifetime, New Zealand did not appreciate the artist's shift away from Impressionism towards Modernism, as Paris and Britain eventually came to recognize. Soon after her death, the artist's work was again obscured and undervalued on a global level until quite recently. Morris frequently visited his home country on painting excursions and continued to support the artistic and cultural realms in Wales throughout his life. Yet the National Museum of Wales has never put on a major exhibition of Morris's art, despite having one of the largest public collections of his works. It was not until 1984, two years after his death, that Morris finally received his first major retrospective at the Tate. Neither country cared to claim this artist, and his paintings still largely remain in private collections.¹ Even today the question of Hodgkins's and Morris's originality and their roles in British Modernism has not been adequately addressed in England. In *Adventures in Art*, Lucy Wertheim, gallery owner and dealer, quoted the words of her friend Sophie Thomson in 1947: 'I'm afraid things have gone hardly with her [Frances], her

¹ However, one recent bequest of 63 works on paper and 52 oil paintings by Morris has been gifted to Gainsborough's House.

vision having become rather too individual to be much liked in England...'² This thesis has proved that Hodgkins, as well as Morris, were most definitely independent both in their way of life and in their artistic practice, and this may indicate why these two artists and their work have been and continue to be overlooked in England. Future scholars can explore similar case studies involving the reception of non-native artists working in England during these decades in order to determine whether their foreign nationality was, indeed, why their art was so often excluded from surveys, exhibitions and books on English art.

Hodgkins and Morris never masked their true identities; no matter how it would impact the reception of their art. Hodgkins's gender and Morris's sexuality did not stop these artists from exploring modernity through still lifes imbued with spirituality or typically feminine tropes. Instead, Hodgkins and Morris sought to depict an alternative understanding of modernity during a period first embodied by an "anti-feminist" aesthetic of Vorticism and later by a nationalistic remembrance of bygone times. Despite limitations based on their identities, both artists were determined for their work to be regarded on the professional level. Early on Hodgkins wrote to her mother back in New Zealand: '... I am coming out merely to see you and Sis and the children to be with you for a while and then to return to my work like any man of business.'³ By identifying herself as 'any man of business', Hodgkins reveals the struggles she endured to be taken seriously as a professional painter. Yet, as Piper rightly acknowledged: 'she has been serious and tenacious. And most important of all, she has never pretended that she was not a woman.'⁴ A man's professional purpose can also be considered in the context of Morris, who ultimately retreated to the countryside and spent the majority of his time painting, teaching and tending to his garden. Lett, instead, dealt with all the bills, household and School administration, in addition to managing Morris's professional career and

² Lucy Carrington Wertheim, *Adventure in Art* (London: Ivor Nicholson & Watson Ltd., 1947), p.8.

³ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 27 November 1911, Correspondence of Frances Hodgkins and family / collected by Isabel Field. Ref: MS-Papers-0085-24. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

⁴ John Piper, "Frances Hodgkins", *Horizon* 4, no. 24 (December 1941): p.416.

representation. Meanwhile, both at the Pound Farm and Benton End, Morris and Lett promoted and encouraged a queer lifestyle, despite homophobic attitudes in early-to mid-twentieth-century England.

Long respected by their peers, Hodgkins's and Morris's artistic achievements were certainly not recognized to the extent that they deserved in their lifetimes and in their legacies. The singular purity and originality of their art may have resulted due to remaining authentic in spite of the hardships they faced on a personal level. Another possibility could have been the lack of institutional interest in their work. By remaining as "outsiders", sometimes even defiantly so, Hodgkins and Morris were able to escape the pressures of artistic trends, prejudices and demands. Both artists continually challenged themselves and were able to overcome a variety of obstacles in pursuit of a more sincere and spiritual art.

By exploring the artistic friendship between Hodgkins and Morris and their works together for the first time, this thesis reveals how these two artists were able to create a completely new Romantic Modernist pictorial language, all while being implicated in the effects of remaining as "outsiders" throughout their careers in England. Each artist came to terms with an increasingly modernized world and the rise of abstraction through their own individuality and the development of their aesthetic perspectives, which I argued resulted in Romantic Modernism. Both Hodgkins and Morris preferred to remain in the countryside, whether in England, Wales or abroad, rather than compete for the spotlight in the London arena. Additionally, they lived and worked during a time in which discrimination against foreigners, women, the aging process and homosexuality was deeply embedded into the fabric of everyday life. However, this thesis demonstrates that although neither artist gained the recognition that they both deserved, Hodgkins and Morris did succeed at creating their own characteristic aesthetic voices when exploring similar subjects— still lifes, landscapes and still life-landscapes. Hodgkins's and Morris's role in British Modernism has not yet been adequately addressed, but this thesis aims to re-position these undervalued artists from their past and present overlooked position to one of deserved recognition.

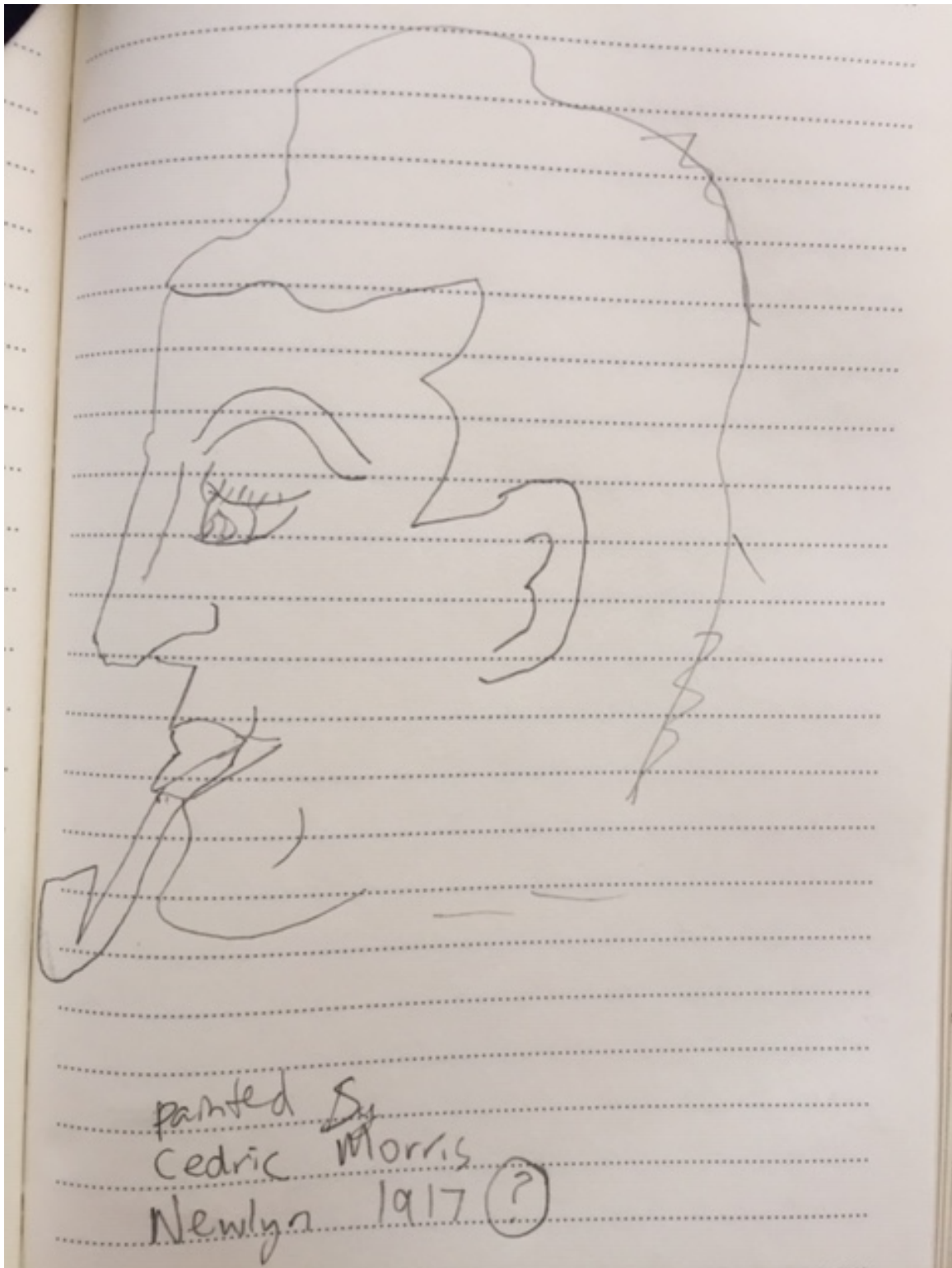


Figure 1: Samantha Niederman, rendering of Frances Hodgkins's drawing of Cedric Morris and inscription, c. 1917, pencil drawing, 24.2 x 16.2 cm, reverse side of Cedric Morris, *Frances Hodgkins*, Tate, T03831



Figure 2: Cedric Morris, *Frances Hodgkins*, 1919, watercolor, 30.5 x 24 cm, location unknown



Figure 3: Cedric Morris, *Frances Hodgkins*, c. 1917, gouache on paper, 24.2 x 16.2 cm, Tate, T03831



Figure 4: Walter Sickert, *Ennui*, c. 1914, oil on canvas, 152.4 x 112.4 cm, Tate, N03846



Figure 5: Frances Hodgkins, *Loveday and Ann: Two Women with a Basket of Flowers*, 1915, oil on canvas, 67.3 x 67.3 cm, Tate, N05456



Figure 6: Vanessa Bell, *Virginia Woolf*, 1912, oil on board, 40 x 34 cm, National Portrait Gallery, NPG 5933



Figure 7: Edward Wadsworth, *Ladle Slag*, 1919, watercolor and ink, dimensions unknown location unknown



Figure 8: Frances Hodgkins, *Houses and Outhouses, Purbeck*, 1938, oil on canvas, 85 x 111.5 cm, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puno O Waiwhetu, P75



Figure 9: C.R.W. Nevinson, *English Landscape in Winter*, c. 1925-26, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Walker Art Gallery, WAG 3151



Figure 10: Cedric Morris, *Flowers and Butterflies*, 1926, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Private Collection



Figure 11: Hannah Richie, Frances Hodgkins, and Jane Saunders seated in a garden., c. 1925, photographic print, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, PAColl-5467-03



Figure 12: Frances Hodgkins, *Double Portrait*, 1922, oil on canvas, 61.0 x 77.0 cm, Hocken Collections, Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago, 73/169



Figure 13: Cedric Morris, *The Dancing Sailor*, 1925, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Collection Miss Mary Rose Wakefield



Figure 14: Frances Hodgkins in Morocco, 1913, 25.4 x 20.6 cm, E.H. McCormick Papers, E. H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, RC2001/22/27



Figure 15: Frances Hodgkins in the Wharf Studio, St Ives, 1918, 6.4 x 9.8 cm, E.H. McCormick Papers, E. H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, RC2015/4/4/42



Figure 16: Frances Hodgkins, *Baby with Abacus*, c. 1918, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Private Collection



Figure 17: Frances Hodgkins, *Child Study*, c. 1918, watercolor and charcoal on paper, 33.7 x 35.3 cm, Queensland Art Gallery, 1:1101



Figure 18: Frances Hodgkins, *Sleeping Child*, c. 1918, watercolor on paper, dimensions unknown, Private Collection



Figure 19: Frances Hodgkins, *Unshatterable (Belgian Refugees)*, c. 1919, oil on canvas, 87.5 x 95 cm, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, 80/80



Figure 20: Cedric Morris, *Refugee*, c. 1919, 74.0 x 61.0 cm, Gainsborough's House, 2017.016



Figure 21: Frank Brangwyn, *Belgian & Allies Aid League*. *Will you help these sufferers from the war to start a new home. Help is better than sympathy*, 1915, poster, 101 x 76 cm, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., 20540



Figure 22: Arthur Lett-Haines, *Frances Hodgkins*, 1919-20, charcoal, 32.4 x 20.4 cm, National Portrait Gallery, NPG 6686



Figure 23: Frances Hodgkins, *Cassis*, 1920, chalk on paper, 33.7 x 38.2 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 1972/6



Figure 24: Cedric Morris, *Les Ponts de Céret*, 1923, oil on canvas, 65.1 x 81 cm, Tate, T07784

Figure 25: Frances Hodgkins, *Café Les Martigues*, c. 1921, pencil on paper, 25 x 32.5 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 1954/10/3



Figure 26: Cedric Morris, *Café Rotonde, Paris*, 1921, pencil and ink on paper, dimensions unknown, Gainsborough's House, 2017.076

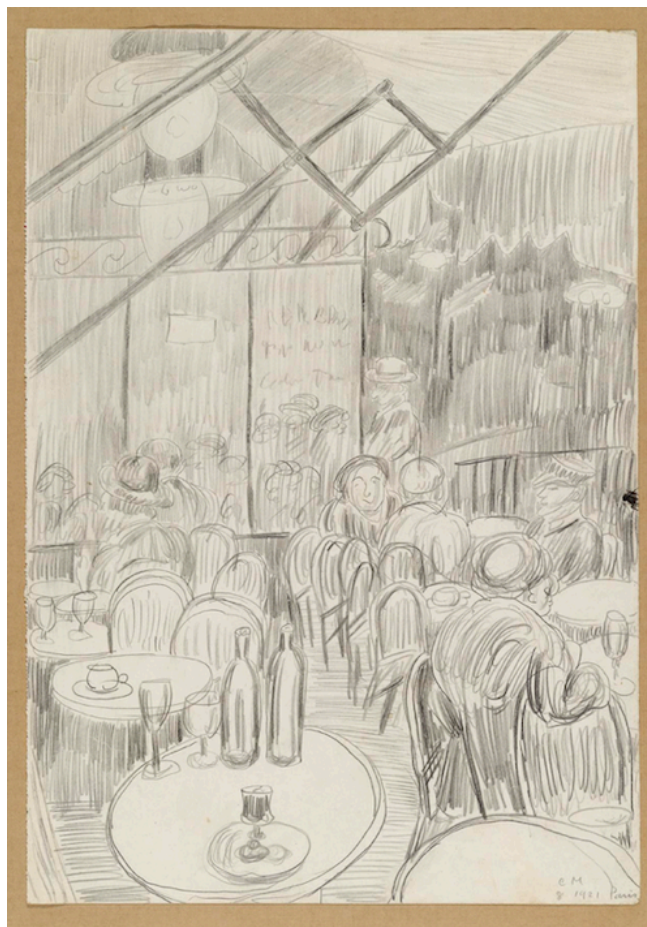


Figure 27:
Frances Hodgkins,
Red Cockerel,
1924, oil on
canvas, 70.7 x
91.4 cm, Dunedin
Public Art Gallery,
42-1957



Figure 28: Cedric
Morris, *Caterpillar
of the Euphorbia
Moth,* 1927, oil on
board, 25.2 x 25.0
cm, Gainsborough's
House, 2017.082





Figure 29: Cedric Morris, *Corner in Tréboul*, 1927, oil on canvas, 54 x 65.5 cm, Private Collection



Figure 30:
Frances
Hodgkins,
Tréboul, 1927,
watercolor, 53.7
x 43.8 cm,
Auckland Art
Gallery Toi o
Tāmaki, 1954/9/5

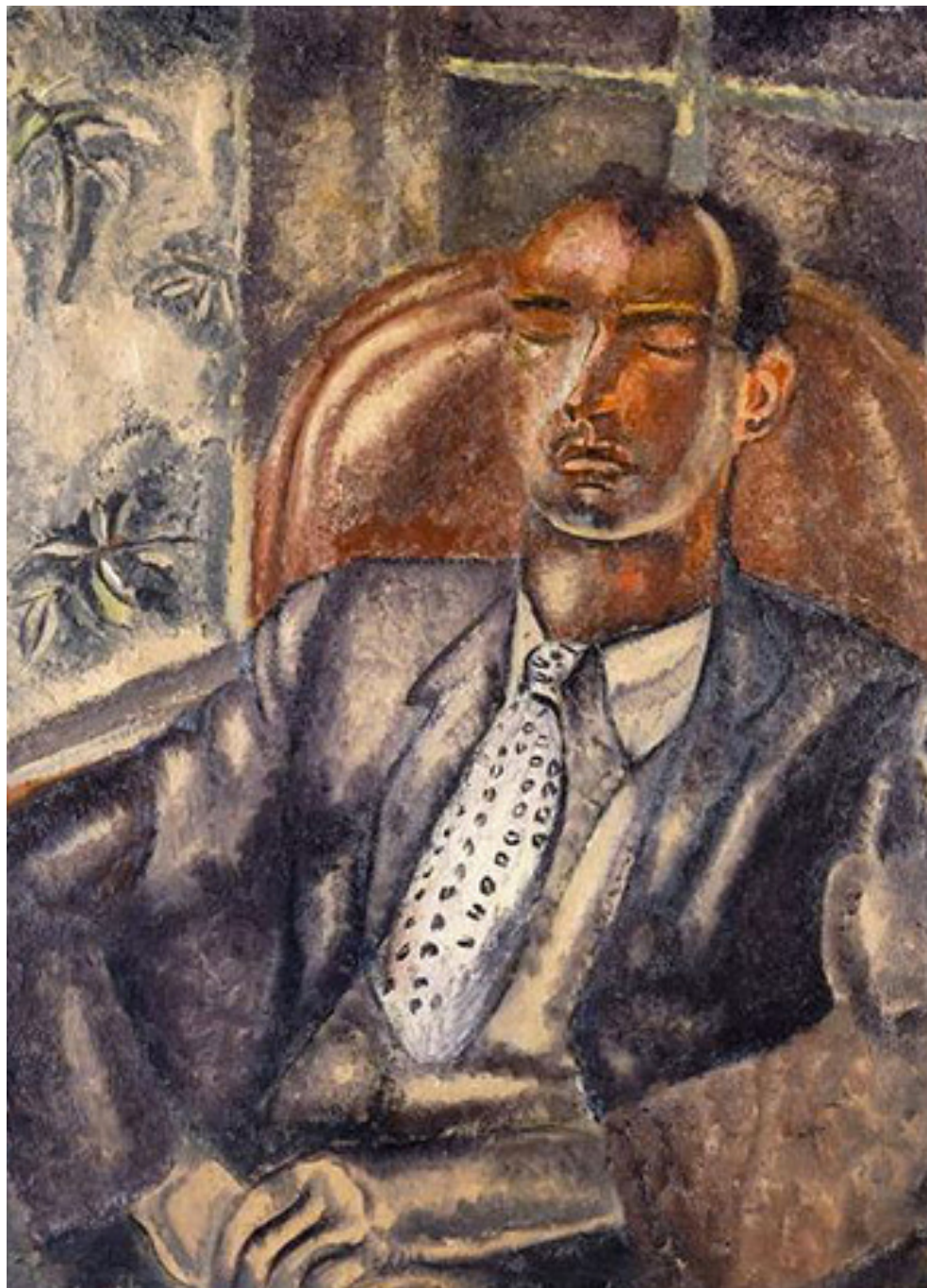


Figure 31: Frances Hodgkins, *Portrait of Arthur Lett-Haines*, 1927, oil on canvas, 61.0 x 49.0 cm, Private Collection

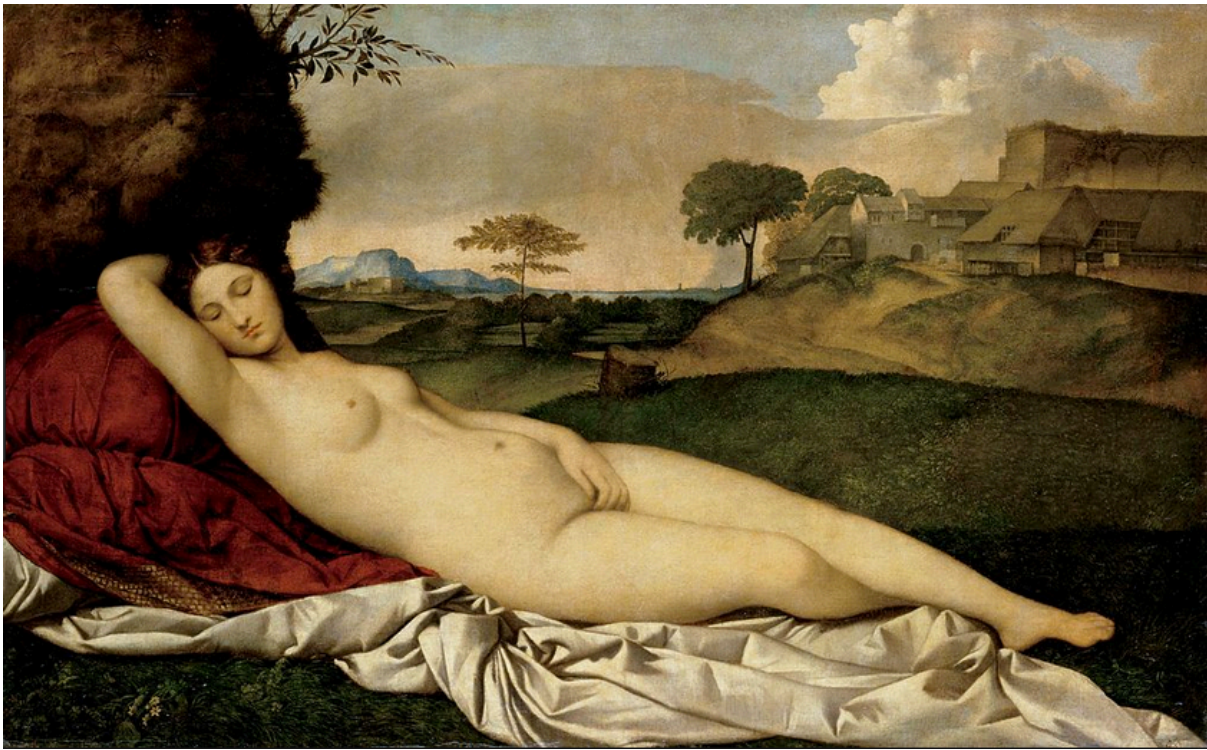


Figure 32: Giorgione completed by Titian, *Sleeping Venus*, 1508-1510, oil on canvas, 175.0 x 108.5 cm, Old Masters Picture Gallery, Dresden State Art Museums



Figure 33: Wyndham Lewis, *Ezra Pound*, 1939, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 101.6 cm, Tate, N05042



Figure 34: Frances Hodgkins, *Portrait of Cedric Morris (Man with Macaw)*, c. 1930, oil on canvas, 63.5 x 52.5 cm, Towner Art Gallery, EASTG 1262



Figure 35: Frances Hodgkins, *Still Life*, 1929, oil on canvas, 73 x 60cm, The Fletcher Trust Collection



Figure 36: Cedric Morris, *Poppies*, 1926, oil on canvas, 61 x 50.8 cm, Private Collection



Figure 37: Frances Hodgkins, *Still Life*, c. 1937, oil on canvas, 64.0 x 52.8 cm, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 6-1949



Figure 38: Cedric Morris, *The Iron Birds*, 1942, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Private Collection

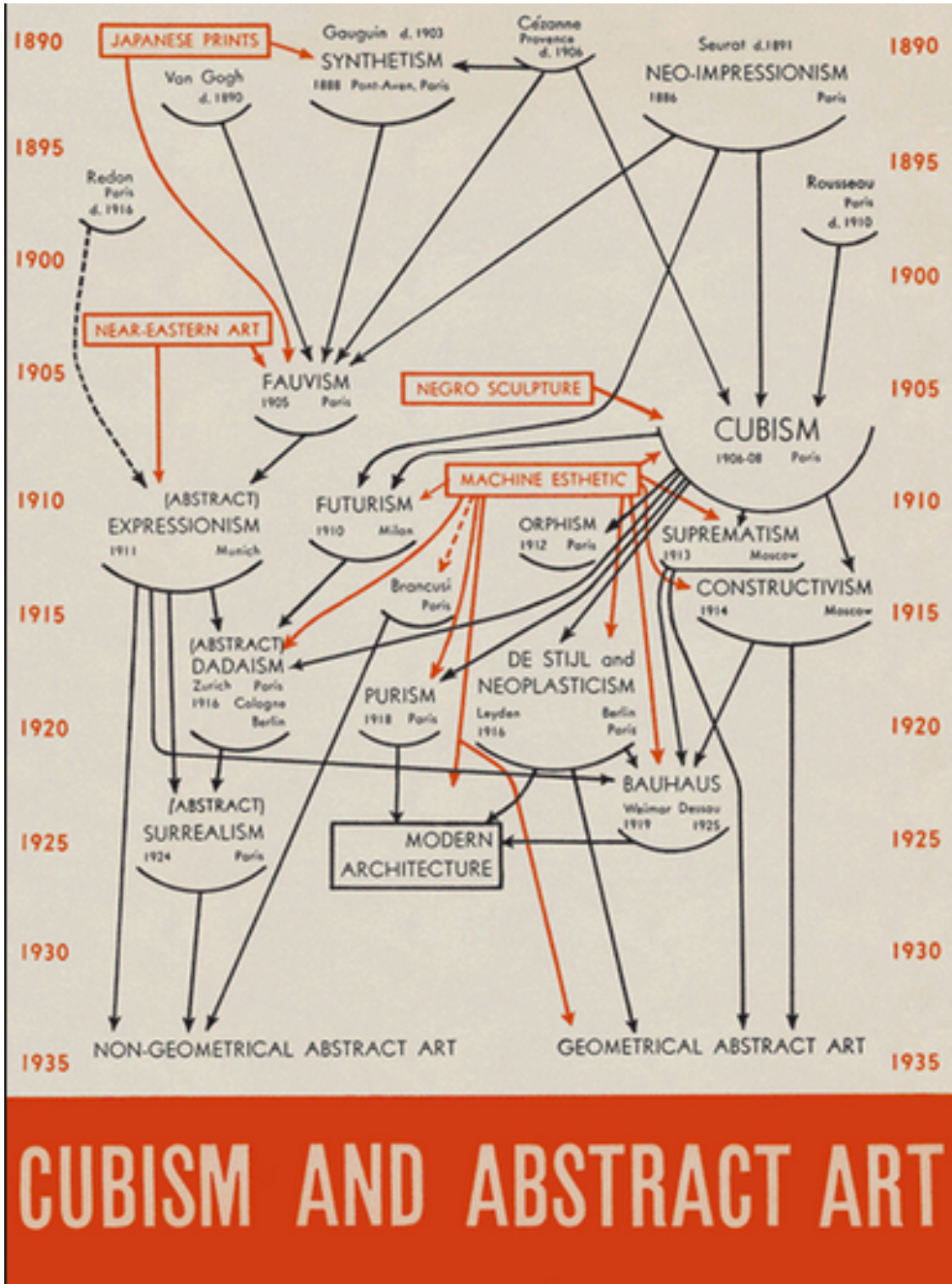


Figure 39: Alfred H. Barr, Jr., 'Flow chart' diagram of art movements, 1936, from the jacket of the catalogue for the 1936 exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art* at The Museum of Modern Art, New York



Figure 40:
Frances Hodgkins,
Untitled (Textile design, no. I), c.
1925, gouache on
paper, 41.8 x 50
cm, Museum of
New Zealand Te
Papa Tongarewa,
1998-0006-5



Figure 41: Frances Hodgkins, *Untitled (Textile design, no. IV)*, c. 1925, gouache on paper, 29.2 x 20.7 cm, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 1998-0006-8

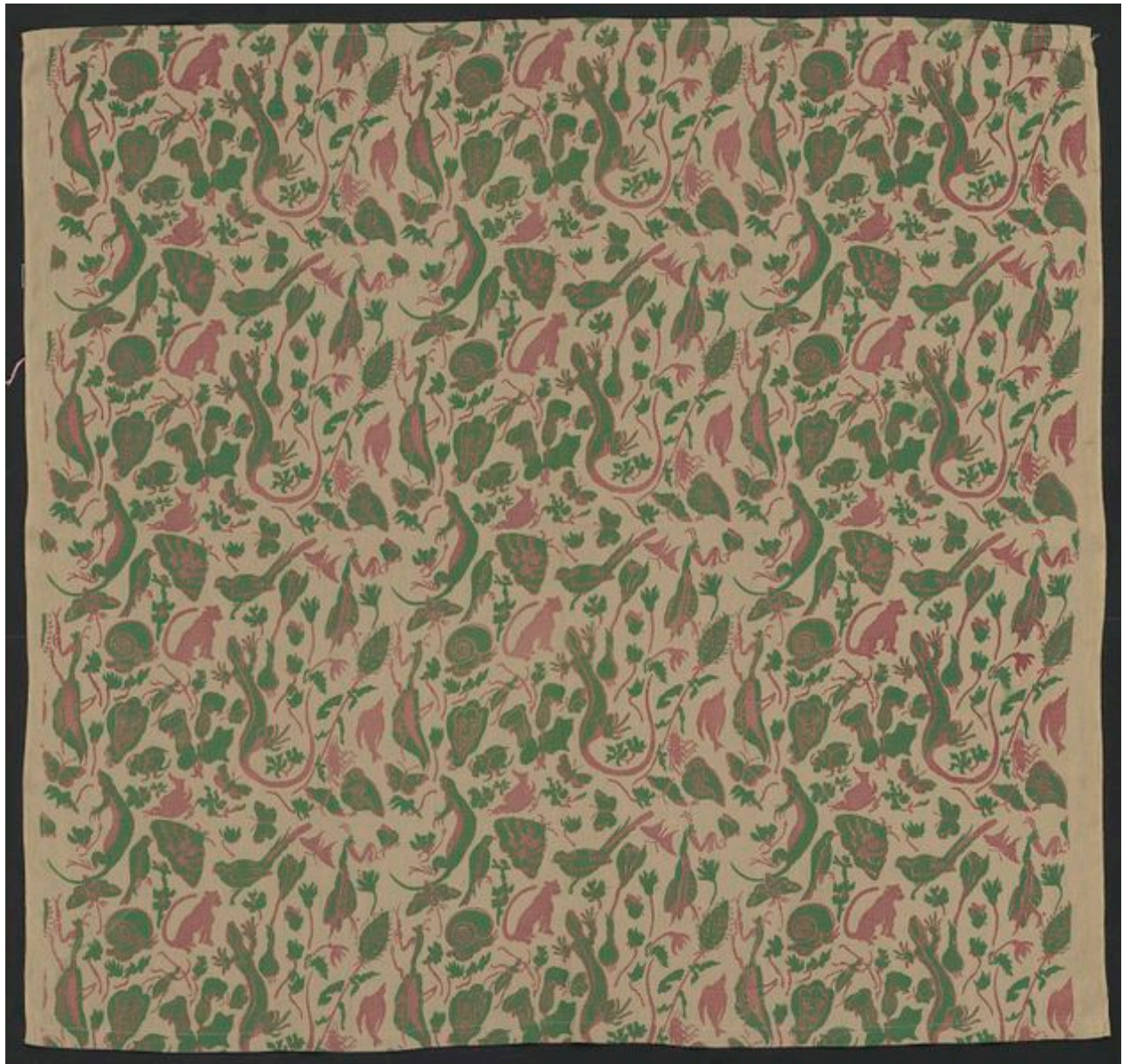


Figure 42: Cedric Morris, *Untitled* (Furnishing fabric), 1940, screen-printed linen, 182.88 x 121.92 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, CIRC.37-1940



Figure 43: Cedric Morris, *Iris*, 1934, printed cotton and rayon, dimensions unknown, Victoria and Albert Museum, T.6-1981



Figure 44: Frances Hodgkins, *Wings over Water*, c. 1931-2, oil on canvas, 71.1 x 91.4 cm, Tate, N06237



Figure 45: Pierre Bonnard, *The Window*, 1925, oil on canvas, 108.6 x 88.6 cm, Tate, N04494



Figure 46: Cedric Morris, *Iris Seedlings*, 1943, oil on canvas, 121.9 x 91.8 cm, Tate, T03230



Figure 47: Raoul Dufy, *Open Window at Saint- Jeannet*, c. 1926-27, gouache on paper, 65.6 x 50.7 cm, Tate, T03565



Figure 48: Cedric Morris, *Floreat*, 1933, oil on canvas, 140 x 109.5 cm, Cyfarthfa Castle Museum & Art Gallery, CCM.41.992



Figure 49: Frances Hodgkins, *Still Life with Lilies*, c. 1929, watercolor, 41 x 54.6 cm, Private Collection, New Zealand



Figure 50: Frances Hodgkins working outdoors at Flatford Mill, 1930, 21.6 x 25.4 cm, E.H. McCormick Archive of Frances Hodgkins Photographs, E H McCormick Research Library Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, RC2001/22/53



Figure 51: Cedric Morris painting in the garden at Benton End, Photograph © John Norris Wood



Figure 52: Cedric Morris, *The Pound*, 1933, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Christchurch Mansion



Figure 53: Postcard of Flatford, Constable's Mill from Hodgkins to Howell, Tate Archives, 735.1



Figure 54: Frances Hodgkins, untitled drawing of a seated man outdoors wearing a coat and hat, smoking a pipe and painting, undated, Tate, TGA 846/29



Figure 55: Cedric Morris, 1920s, © National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG x 128725

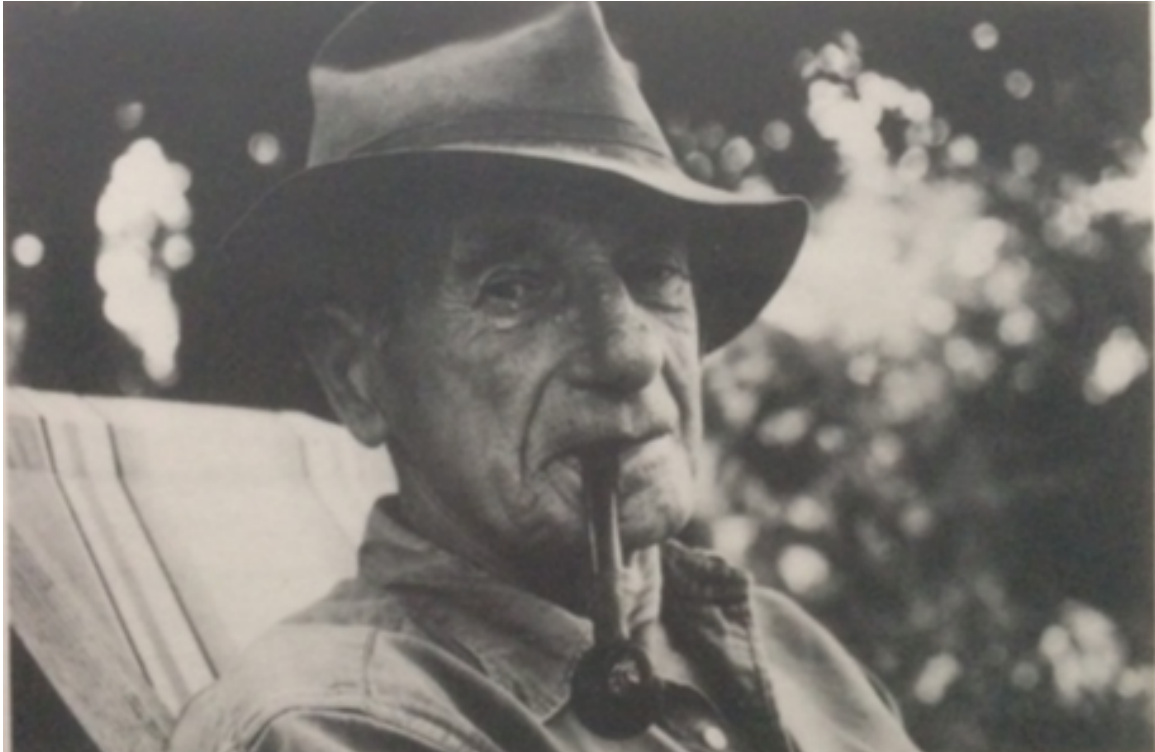


Figure 56: Cedric Morris in the garden at Benton End, 1975, Photograph © John Norris Wood



Figure 57: Frances Hodgkins, *Study for Pembrokeshire Landscape*, 1938, gouache, 52.7 x 77.5 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 1956/20/1



Figure 58: Photograph of Benton End from Tony Venison, 'The Painter's Living Legacy', *Country Life*, 50 (9 February 2006), p. 52



Figure 59: William Henry Hunt, *Primroses and Bird's Nest*, watercolor on paper, 18.4 x 27.3 cm, Tate, N03564



Figure 60: Frances Hodgkins, *Still Life in a Garden*, 1929, watercolor, dimensions unknown, Private Collection



Figure 61: Frances Hodgkins, *Eggs and Ferns*, c. 1931, watercolor, 53 x 45.8 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 1954/9/3



Figure 62: Frances Hodgkins, *Still Life with Eggs and Willow*, 1929-1930, watercolor with pencil, 57.2 x 49 cm, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2000-0007-6



Figure 63: Frances Hodgkins, *Still Life: Eggs, Tomatoes and Mushrooms*, c. 1929, oil on canvas, 64 x 53 cm, Royal Pavilion & Museum, Brighton & Hove

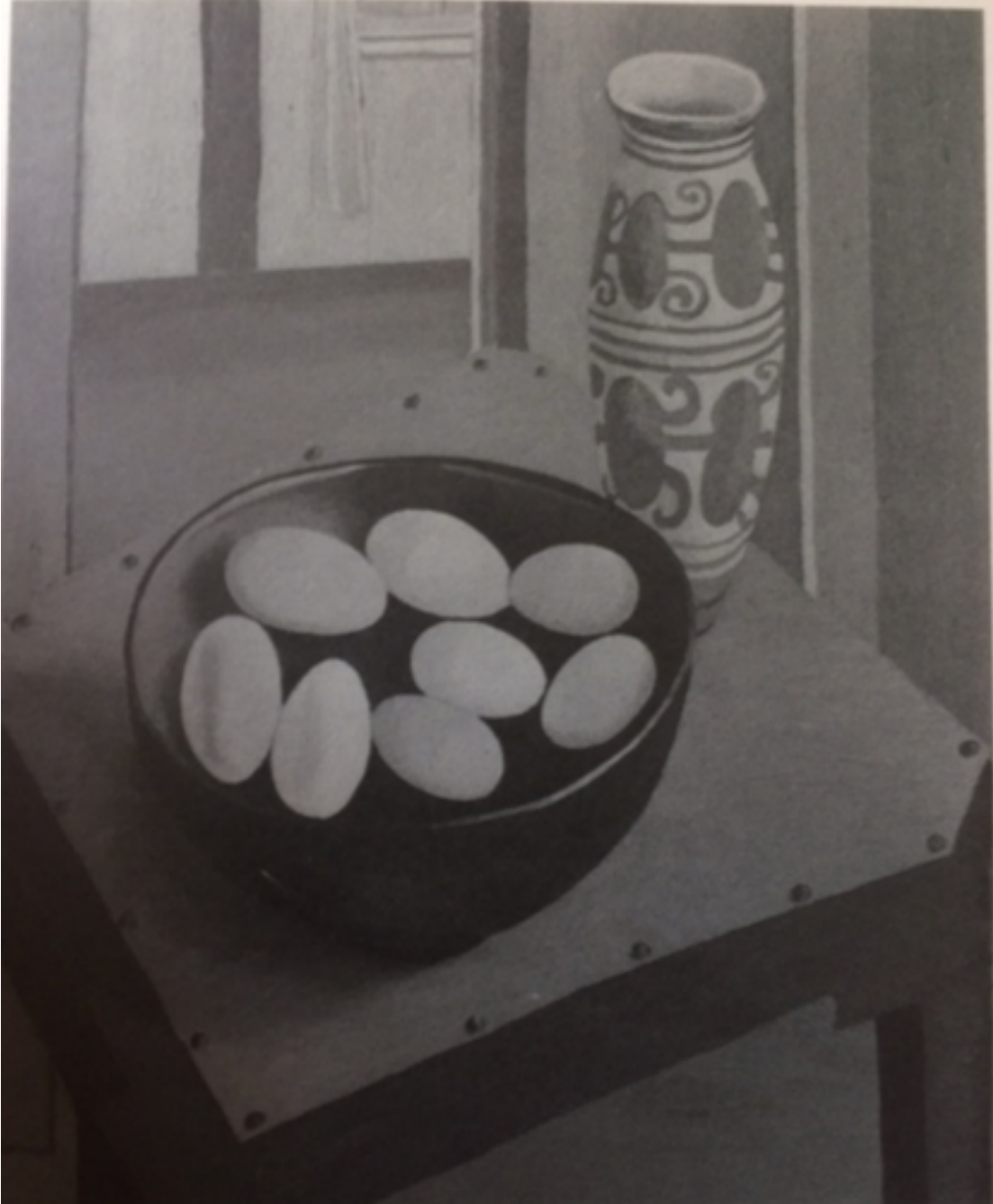


Figure 64: Cedric Morris, *Unstill Life*, 1943, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, location unknown



Figure 65: Cedric Morris, *Cotyledon & Eggs*, 1944, oil on canvas, 58.42 x 48.26 cm, Colchester Art Society

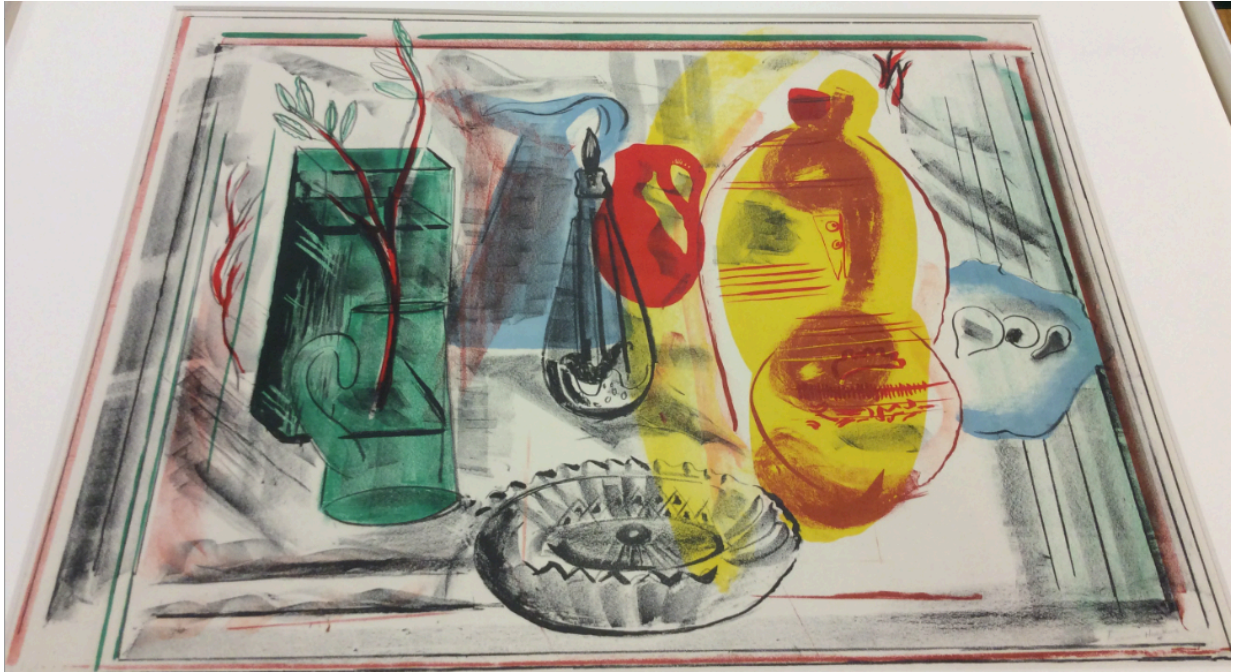


Figure 66: Frances Hodgkins, *Arrangement of Jugs*, 1938, watercolor, Tate Archives, TGA 846.5



Figure 67: Cedric Morris, *The Eggs*, 1944, oil on canvas, 61.5 x 43.2 cm, Tate, T06522



Figure 68: Henri Fantin-Latour, *Summer Flowers*, 1880, oil on canvas, 50.8 x 61.9 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997.347

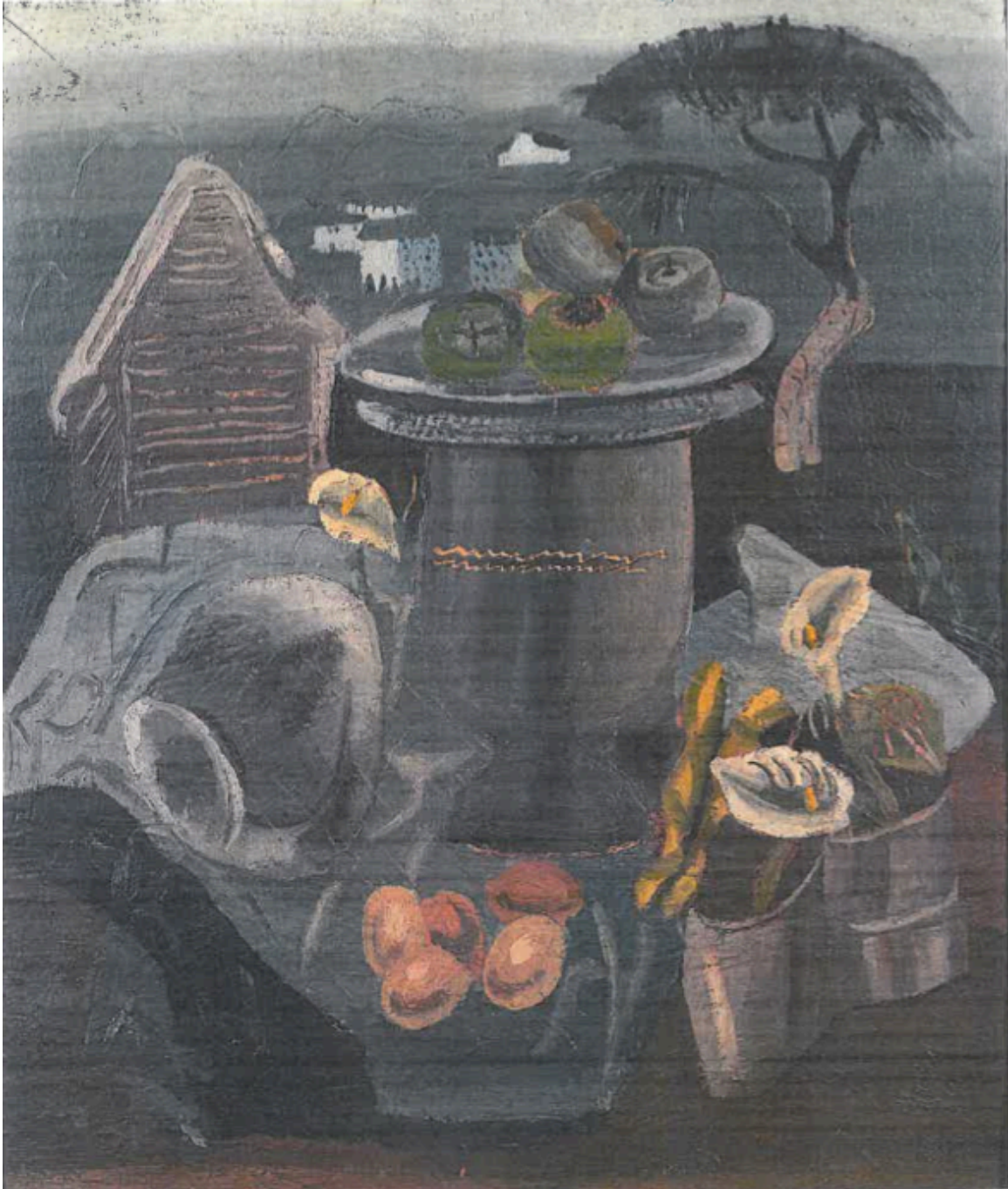


Figure 69: Frances Hodgkins, *Arum Lilies*, c. 1931, oil on board, 64 x 54 cm, Private Collection, United Kingdom

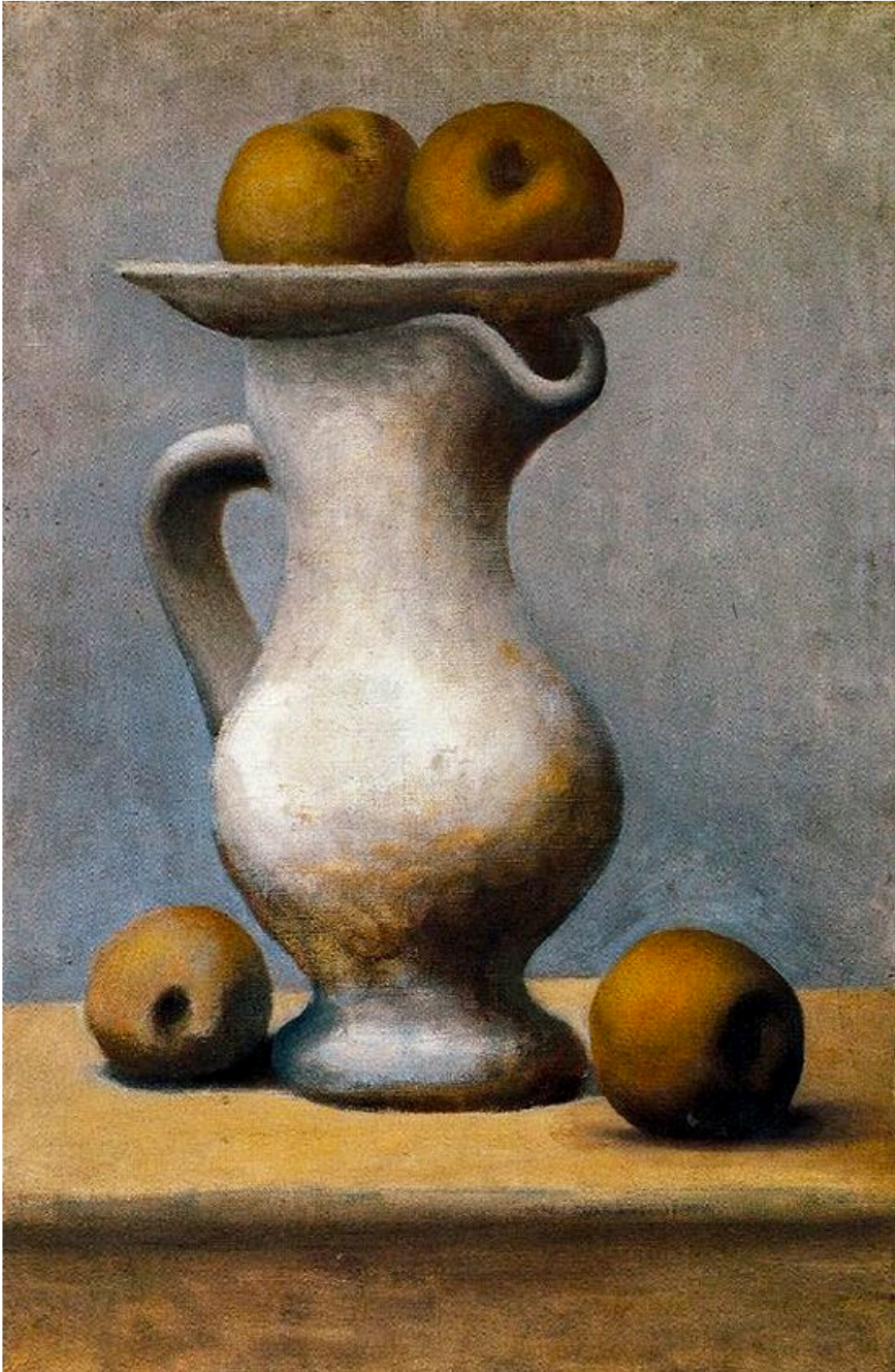


Figure 70: Pablo Picasso, *Still Life with Pitcher and Apples*, 1919, oil on canvas, 65 x 43 cm, Musée National Picasso, Paris



Figure 71: Frances Hodgkins, *Flowers in a Vase*, c. 1928-30, oil on canvas, 88 x 70 cm, Government Art Collection, United Kingdom, GAC 4513



Figure 72: Frances Hodgkins, *Flowers and a Cat*, 1941, gouache on paper, 30.5 x 41 cm, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 231-1982



Figure 73: Cedric Morris, *Summer Garden Flowers*, c. 1930s, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Private Collection



Figure 74: Cedric Morris, *Easter Bouquet*, 1934, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Private Collection © the artist's estate, photo credit: Philip Mould & Co.



Figure 75: Cedric Morris, *Hey-Day*, 1931, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, location unknown



Figure 76: Cedric Morris, *Irises*, 1941, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, location unknown



Figure 77: Frances Hodgkins, *Houses and Outhouses, Purbeck*, c. 1938, oil on canvas, 80 x 115 cm, Private Collection, New Zealand

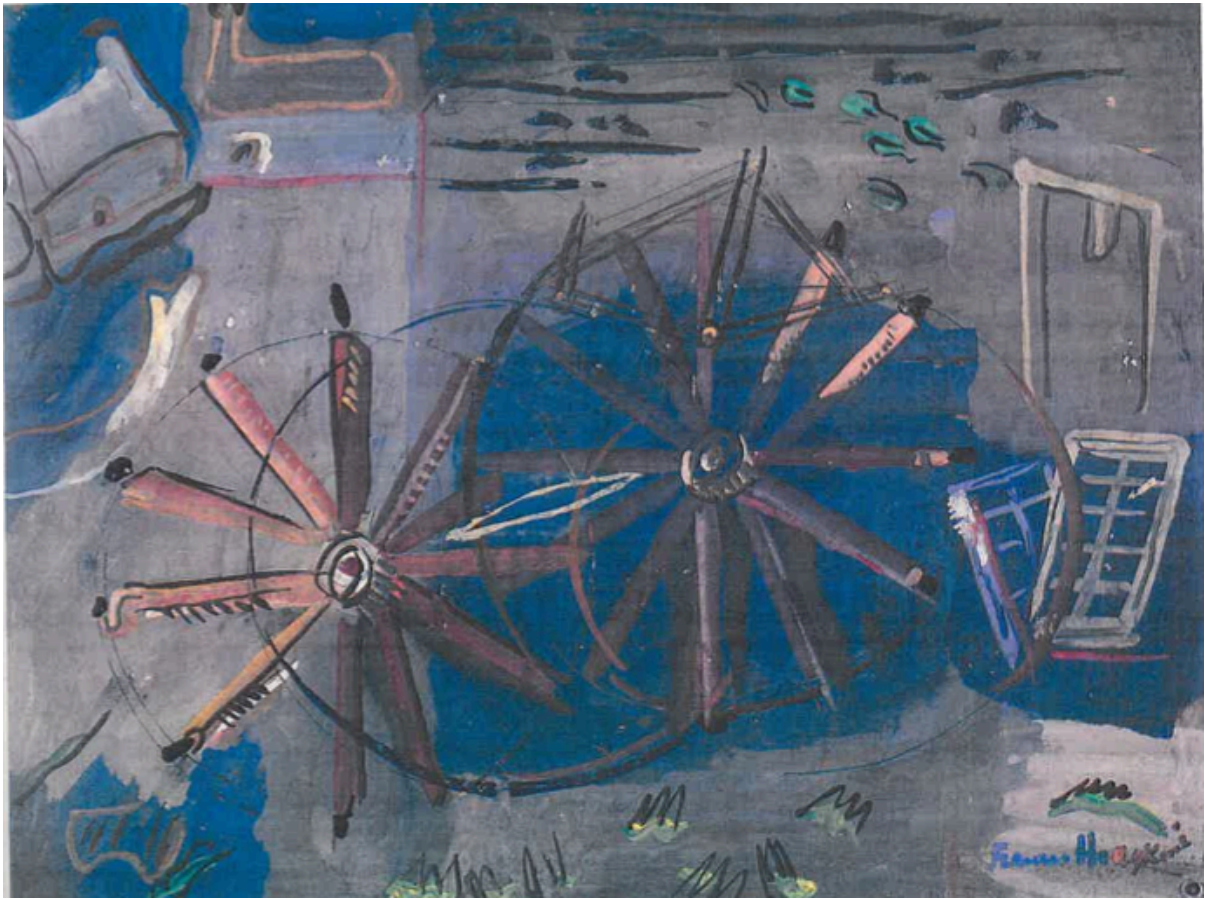


Figure 78: Frances Hodgkins, *Smithy*, c. 1940, gouache on paper, 49.5 x 65 cm, Private Collection, New Zealand



Figure 79: Paul Nash, *Totes Meer (Dead Sea)*, 1940-41, oil on canvas, 102 x 152.4 cm, Tate, N05717



Figure 80: Frances Hodgkins, *Broken Tractor*, 1942, gouache on paper, 38.1 x 57.1 cm, Tate, N05406



Figure 81: John Piper, *All Saints Chapel, Bath*, 1942, ink, chalk, gouache and watercolor on paper, 42.5 x 55.9 cm, Tate, N05719



Figure 82: Michael Rothenstein, *Tractor and Plough*, 1947, oil on canvas, 154.9 x 233.7 cm, location unknown

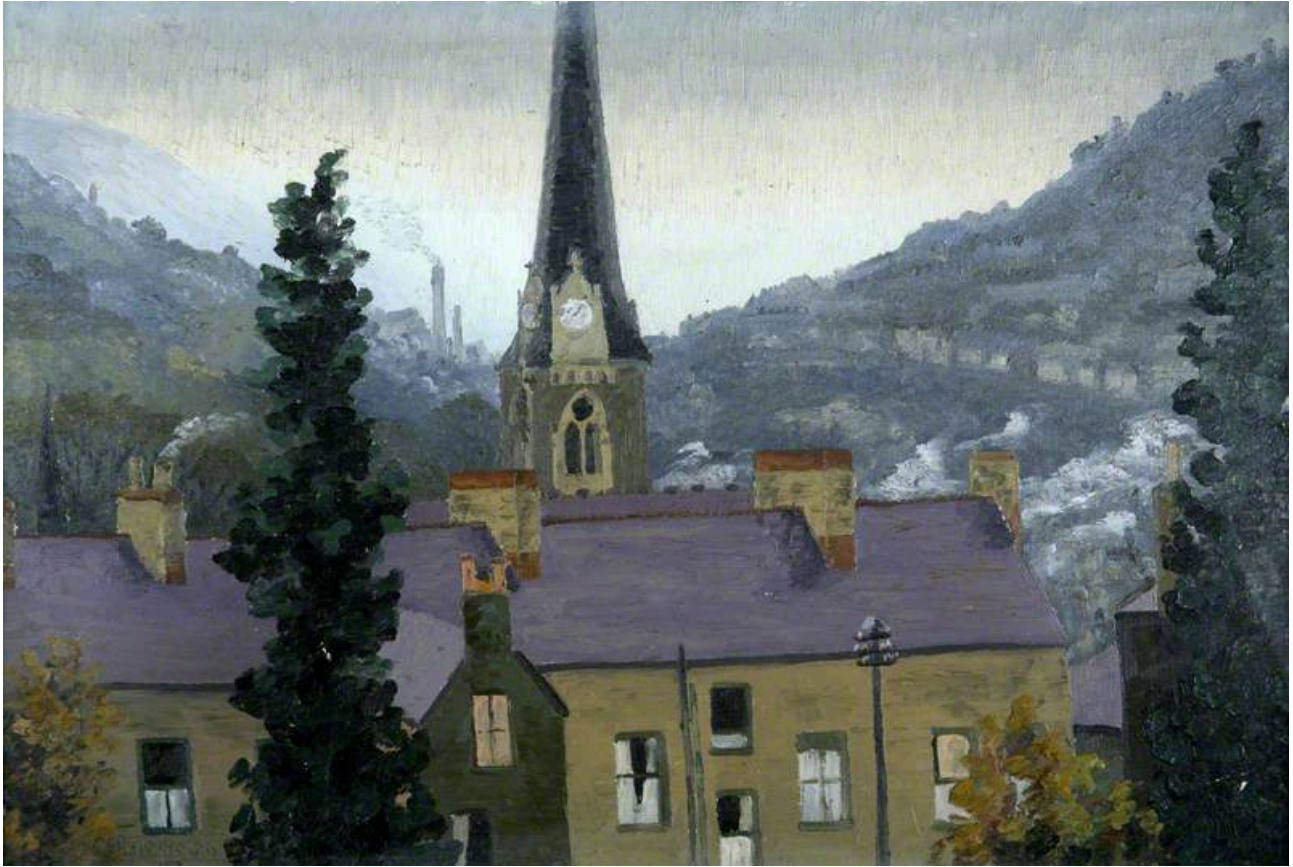


Figure 83: Cedric Morris, *Pontypridd*, 1945, oil on canvas, 51 x 76.2 cm, Glynn Vivian Art Gallery



Figure 84: St. Catherine's Church, Pontypridd, South Wales, © Durbin Photography

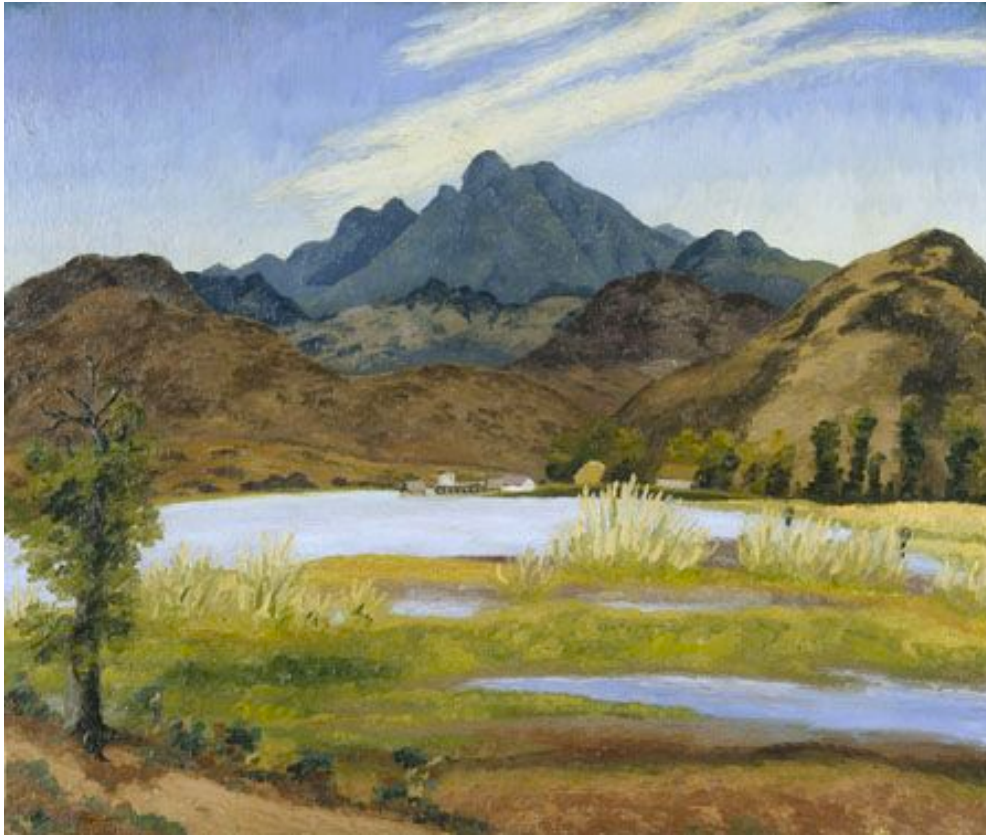


Figure 85: Cedric Morris, *Lake Patzcuaro, Mexico*, 1939, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 91.4 cm, National Museum Wales, NMW A 4987



Figure 86: James Dickson Innes, *Arenig, North Wales*, 1913, oil on plywood, 85.7 x 113.7 cm, Tate, N04385



Figure 87: John Piper, *The Rise of the Dovey*, 1943-44, oil on canvas on board, 69.3 x 87 cm, National Museum Wales, NMW A 24736



Figure 88: Cedric Morris, *Shags*, 1938, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 122 cm, National Museum Wales, NMW A 16938



Figure 89: Cedric Morris, *Heron*, 1941, oil on canvas, 50 x 75 cm, Tameside Museums and Galleries Service: The Astley Cheetham Art Collection, ASTAC1946.2



Figure 90: Attributed to Xu Daoning, *An Autumn Scene with Birds*, 10-13th century, album leaf, ink and color on silk, 25.7 x 25 cm, Yale University Art Gallery, 1952.52.25.3



Figure 91: Leng Mei, *Nine White Egrets*, 1725, ink and color on silk, hanging scroll, 165.3 x 96.5 cm, Private Collection



Figure 92: John Craxton, *Bird Among Rocks*, 1942, pen and ink, 15 x 23 cm, Christopher Hull Gallery, London

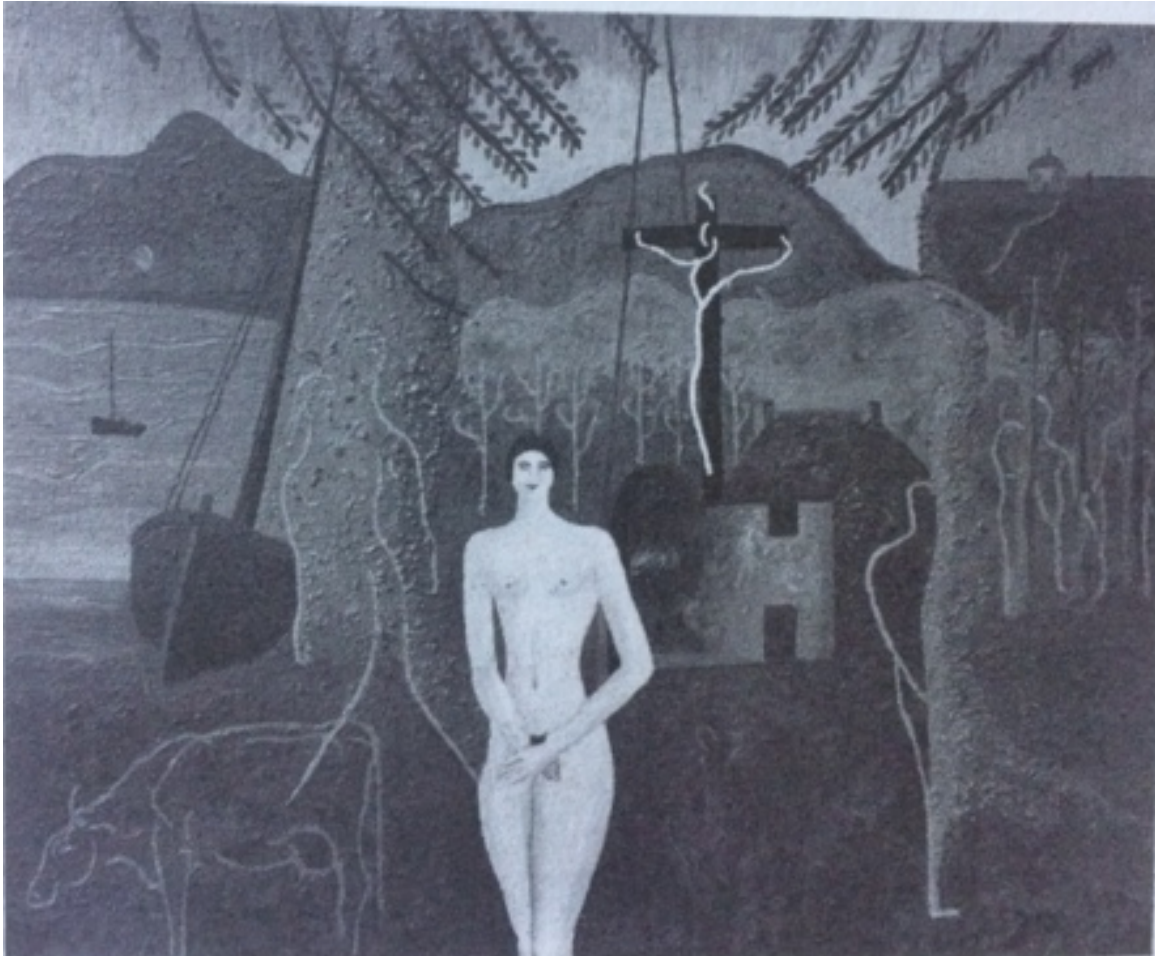


Figure 93: Cedric Morris, *The Celtic Twilight*, 1924, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Private Collection



Figure 94: Frances Hodgkins, *Summer*, c. 1912, watercolor and charcoal, 58.6 x 49.8 cm, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 3-1913



Figure 95: Berthe Morisot, *Julie Manet and her Nurse*, 1880, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen

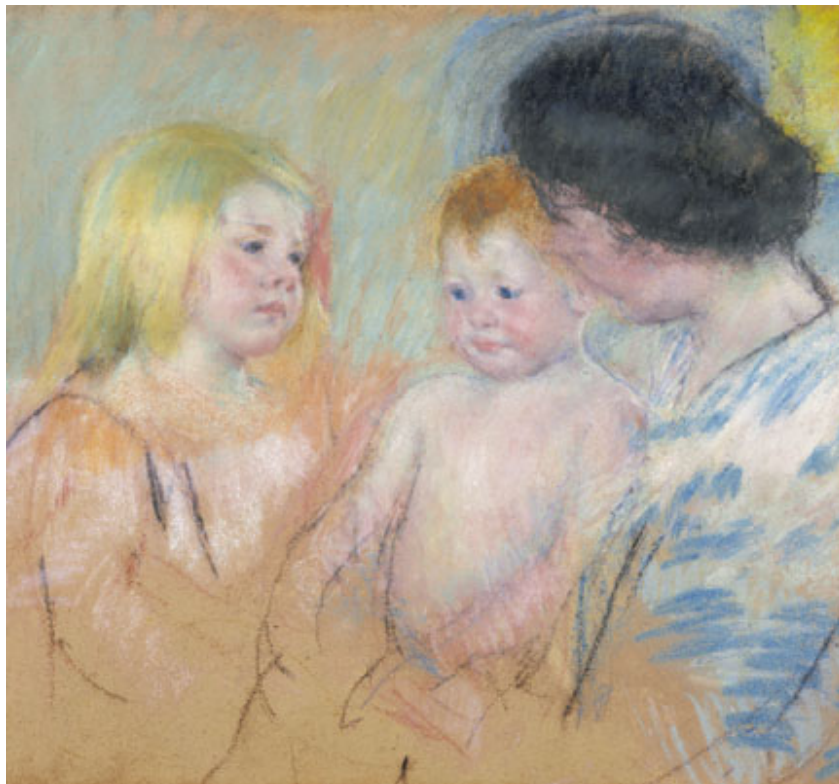


Figure 96: Mary Cassatt, *Sara and Her Mother with Baby (No. 1)*, c. 1901, pastel on paper, 57.78 x 60 cm, The Columbus Museum, Georgia, G.2005.14



Figure 97: Frances Hodgkins, *Lancashire Family*, 1927, oil on canvas, 68.5 x 70.5 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 1963/11/1



Figure 98: Pablo Picasso, *Mother and Child*, 1901, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Private Collection



Figure 99: Frances Hodgkins, *Portrait of Arthur Lett-Haines*, 1920, oil on canvas, 38.2 x 43.7 cm, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2006-0030-1



Figure 100: Harold Gilman, *Meditation*, 1910-11, oil on canvas, 62 x 46.5 cm, Leicester Arts and Museums Service



Figure 101: Frances Hodgkins, *Spring in the Ravine*, c. 1933, oil on canvas, 62.6 x 76.1 cm, National Gallery of Canada, NGC_4772



Figure 102: Frances Hodgkins, *Head of an Old Woman*, 1895, watercolor on paper, 49.2 x 37.1 cm, Theomin Gallery, Olveston Historic Home, Dunedin

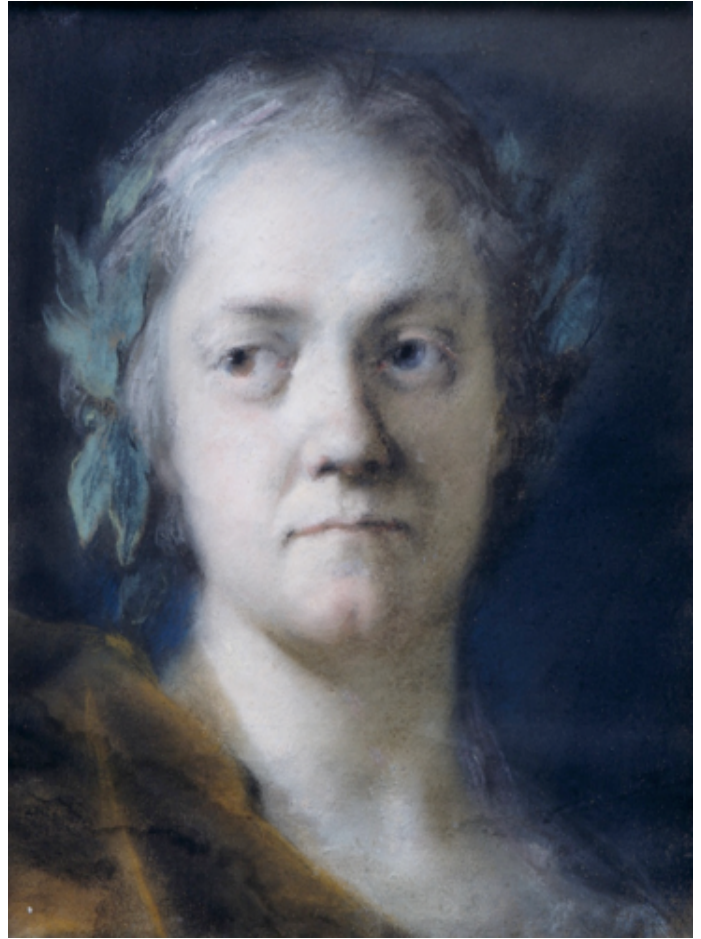


Figure 103: Rosalba Carriera, *Self-Portrait as Tragedy*, c. 1746, pastel, dimensions unknown, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice

Figure 104: Frances Hodgkins at Flatford Mill, Suffolk, 1930, 11.6 x 18.9 cm, E.H. McCormick Papers, E. H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Linda Gill, 2015, RC2015/4/4/117



Figure 105: Frances Hodgkins when at the Hampstead Gallery, London, held an exhibition of her work, 1920, photographic print, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, PAColl-5567





Figure 106: Cedric Morris, *Portrait of Frances Hodgkins*, 1928, oil on canvas, 73.6 x 60.3 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 1954/5



Figure 107: Frances Hodgkins, *Still Life: Self-Portrait*, c. 1935, oil on panel, 97.5 x 62.4 cm, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 1999-0017-1



Figure 108: Frances Hodgkins, *Self Portrait: Still Life*, c. 1935, oil on cardboard, 76.2 x 63.5 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 1963/11/2



Figure 109: Parmigianino, *Self-portrait in a Convex Mirror*, c. 1524, oil on convex panel, 24.4 cm diameter, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, GG_286

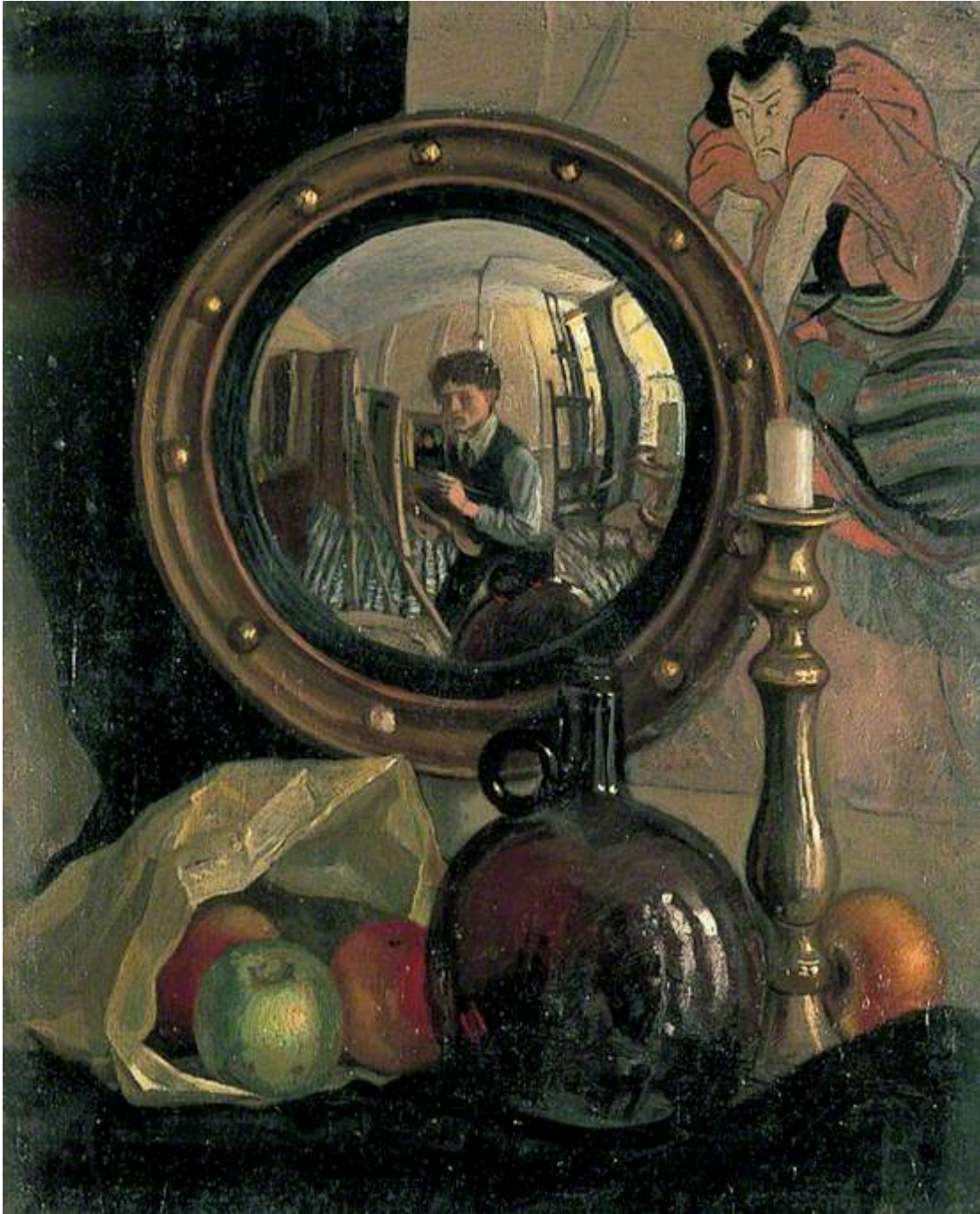


Figure 110: Mark Gertler, *Still Life with Self Portrait*, 1918, oil on canvas, 50.8 x 40.6 cm, Leeds Art Gallery, LEEAG.PA.1956.0001,0003



Figure 111: Frances Hodgkins, *Untitled [Woman with a mirror]*, c. 1912, watercolor and charcoal, 54.8 x 42.5 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2007/8/16



Figure 112: Formal head and shoulders portrait of Frances Hodgkins, 1912, photographic print, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington



Figure 113: Bernardo Strozzi, *Old Woman at the Mirror*, 1615, oil on canvas, 132 x 108 cm, Pushkin Museum, Moscow



Figure 114: Felix H. Man, Frances Hodgkins at her studio in Corfe Castle village, Dorset, 1945, photographic print, National Library of New Zealand, 35mm-00335-A-F

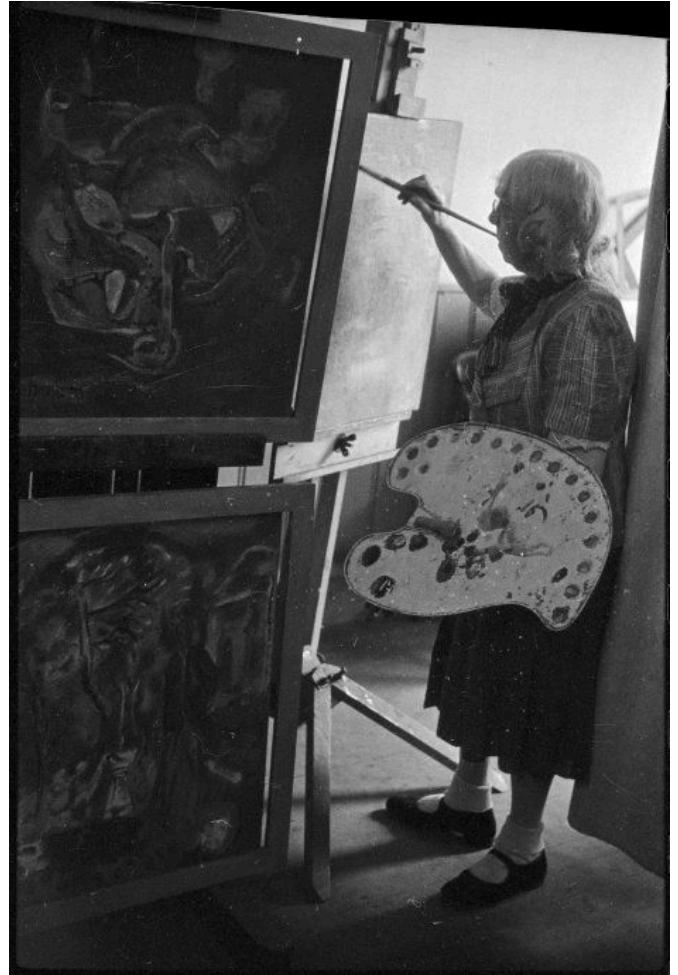


Figure 115: Felix H. Man, Frances Hodgkins painting in her studio, Corfe Castle village, Dorset, 1945, photographic print, National Library of New Zealand, 35mm-00338-E-F



Figure 116: Barbara Hepworth with *Three Forms Vertical (Offering)*, 1967, photographic print, Private Collection



Figure 117: Cedric Morris, *Flowers in a vase*, c. 1930s, oil on panel, dimensions unknown, Private Collection



Figure 118: John Piper, *Abstract I*, 1935, oil on canvas and plywood, 91.7 x 106.5 cm, Tate, N06212



Figure 119: Cedric Morris, *Gutted Art School, Dedham*, 1939, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Private Collection



Figure 120: Lucian Freud, *Sir Cedric Morris*, 1940, oil on canvas, 30.7 x 25.6 cm, National Museum Wales, NMW A12875



Figure 121: Cedric Morris, *Lucian Freud*, 1940, oil on canvas, 73 x 60.3 cm, Tate, T03231

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 - +846.6- Untitled, drawing of a landscape with a cart, n.d.
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 - +846.9- Untitled, drawing of a man, n.d.
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 - +846.14- Untitled drawing of figures leaning in a church with the model of a boat, n.d.
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 - +846.17- Untitled landscape with partial grid, n.d.

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