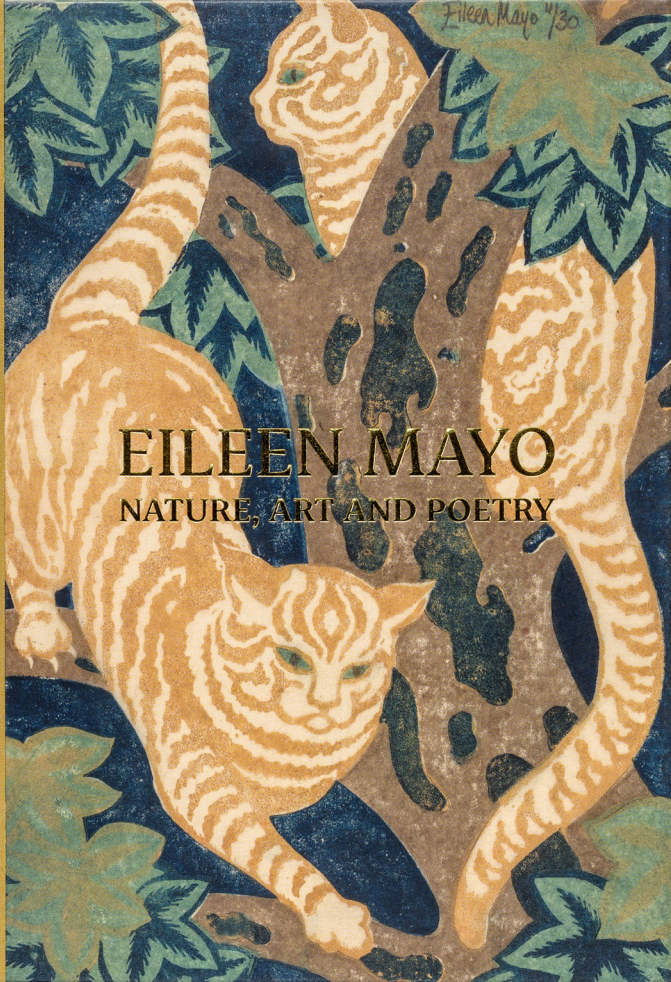


Eileen Mayo '130

EILEEN MAYO  
NATURE, ART AND POETRY



**EILEEN MAYO**  
**NATURE, ART AND POETRY**

Peter Vangioni with Jillian Cassidy

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and *No. 1 Dressing Room* by Laura Knight (1947, page 70).

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Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, presented by Rex Nan Kivell, 1953.

Endpapers: reproduction of endpapers by Eileen Mayo from the book *Shells and How They Live*,  
Pleiades Books, London, 1944. Collection of the Robert and Barbara Stewart Library and Archives,  
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Back cover: Eileen Mayo *Moths at the Window* (detail) 1969. Relief print.  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2005.

Previous page: detail from photograph of Eileen Mayo painting at 33 Royal Avenue, London,  
c. 1948. Tate Archive, presented by Eileen Mayo, via her step-son, John Gainsborough, 1991.  
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## A NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

*Peter Vangioni*

**“Try to walk as much as you can, and keep your love for nature, for that is the true way to learn to understand art. ... I have nature and art and poetry, and if that is not enough, what is?”**—Vincent van Gogh, 1874

This book is long overdue. Eileen Mayo’s artwork has delighted visitors to Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū since we first acquired four wood engravings by the artist in 1972. Over the past ten or so years, we have actively sought her prints for the Gallery’s collection—especially those created during her time in Christchurch. This is the first substantial publication on Mayo, and while it by no means provides a complete overview of her life and work, it does for the first time publish many of the key prints and designs she created during her long and productive career.

Jillian Cassidy and Margaret MacKean-Taylor broke ground with their research and writings on Mayo, in particular for the 1992 retrospective exhibition and publication on her practice. Both were good friends with the artist, and knew her life, her personality and her work intimately. Margaret is to be credited for depositing Mayo’s

archives and work from her estate in appropriate institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia. Jillian was my art history lecturer at the University of Canterbury, and her thesis on Mayo, along with other articles focusing on specific areas of the artist’s oeuvre, is not only the primary source on Mayo’s life and work, but also stands as testament to her dedication to the artist: they were neighbours, friends and fellow printmakers.

While Mayo is perhaps best known in the United Kingdom for her linocuts, wood engravings, lithographs and book illustrations, I hope that this book will also shine light on the art and design work she is best-known for in New Zealand and Australia. In her poster and stamp designs, her printmaking techniques and, always one to try new mediums, her later screenprints, there is a common thread throughout: her undeniable devotion to the natural world.







## DEVOTED TO NATURE

Peter Vangioni



Eileen Mayo, stamp for New Zealand Post Office, released 1970.

There is a generation of New Zealanders who unknowingly came across Eileen Mayo's artwork during the 1970s courtesy of the New Zealand Post Office. Thumbing through my childhood stamp album, the 'New Zealand' section contains several stamps designed by Mayo. Now, these images seem emblematic of my past. Mayo's stamps were seen on a weekly basis on the incoming letters to our household. Looking at them today, they take me back to the Khandallah, Waikanae and Palmerston North locations of my childhood, where, having first been selected as worthy for the album, Mayo's moths, flowers and (my favourite) Chatham Islands mollymawk soaring against a shade of Bill Hammond blue/green were carefully removed from a soggy envelope and earnestly hinged in the album by the fledgling stamp collector.

Mayo was devoted to Nature, in her art and her life.<sup>1</sup> Natural history provided the subject matter for

her linocuts and wood engravings of the 1920s and 30s, book illustrations from the 1940s, the Australian poster and stamp designs of the 1950s, and her work throughout her New Zealand years from the 1960s to her last screenprints in the mid-1980s when, her fingers crippled with arthritis, she produced her last print, *White Cat and Poppies* (1985) featuring her favourite subject, the domesticated cat. Mayo's output was prolific; she was a designer, printmaker, writer, painter, weaver, draughtsperson and illustrator. She excelled in all she tried her hand at, and when looking at her oeuvre I am struck by the care, attention to detail and skill she brought to her work, not only technically but also in her natural sense for compositional balance and harmony of colours.

<sup>1</sup> As Jillian Cassidy notes, from an early age Mayo was taken on nature rambles by her father, generating in her a keen interest in natural science. Cassidy, *Shifting Boundaries: The Art of Eileen Mayo*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 2000, page 25.



## England

Mayo studied at several art schools in London early in her career. Beginning at the Slade School of Art in 1923, she studied the formal basics of drawing and learned about perspective and anatomy. She did not warm to the school or the teachers, however, and found solace at the nearby British Museum where she spent time studying the Greek vases, Egyptian and Syrian treasures, illuminated manuscripts, coins and textiles.

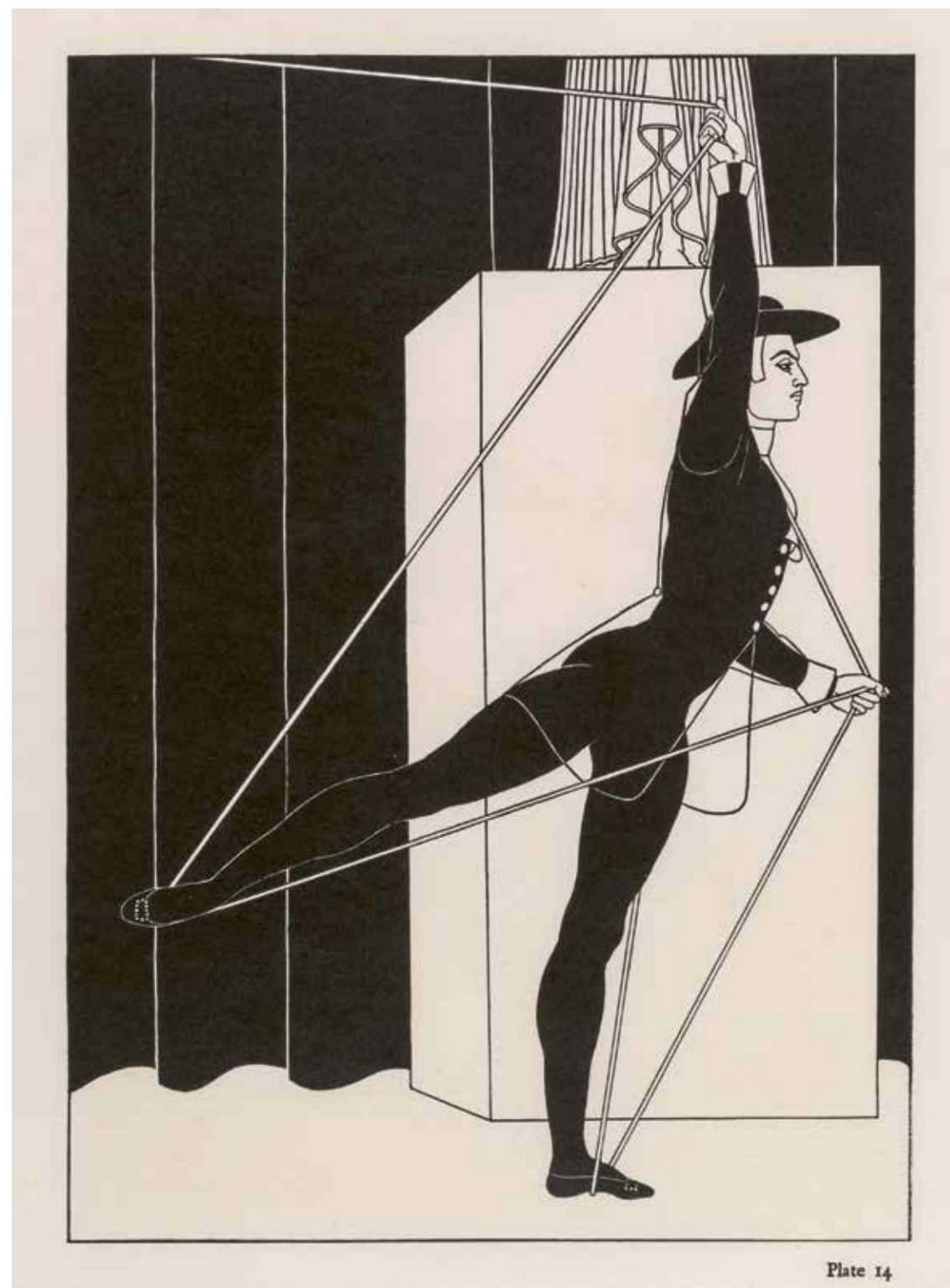
Dissatisfied with the Slade, Mayo enrolled at the Central School of Arts and Crafts where she excelled, relishing the teaching by major printmakers of the time, including Noel Rooke and John Farleigh and the printmaker/illustrator Archibald Hartrick. Here, she studied wood engraving, a medium undergoing a remarkable revival in Britain at the time. Classes in calligraphy, drawing and lithography, all mediums she was to draw on in her work throughout her career, also captivated the artist.

With its more liberal approach, Mayo thrived at the Central School of Arts and was soon one of its most promising students. By 1927, she was producing wood engravings as accomplished and technically proficient as that of many of the established wood engravers she studied under. One of her earliest wood engravings, *Skaters* (1925, see page 39) depicts two ice skaters in full flight. One dressed in white, the other in black, they are opposites connected by their graceful movements, poise and balance. Mayo used similar, clear lines in her illustrations for Beaumont Press's instructional books on ballet during the late 1920s. More interesting, however, was her artist's book

for Beaumont Press titled *Serge Lifar: Sixteen Drawings in Black and White* by Eileen Mayo (1928), for which Mayo completed sixteen drawings of the famous Russian ballet dancer. This was one of Mayo's earliest commissions as an artist/illustrator, and although the finished works are starkly different from her later subjects, the quality of drawing and the beautifully rendered and balanced poses of Lifar signalled an artist of great promise at this early stage in her career.

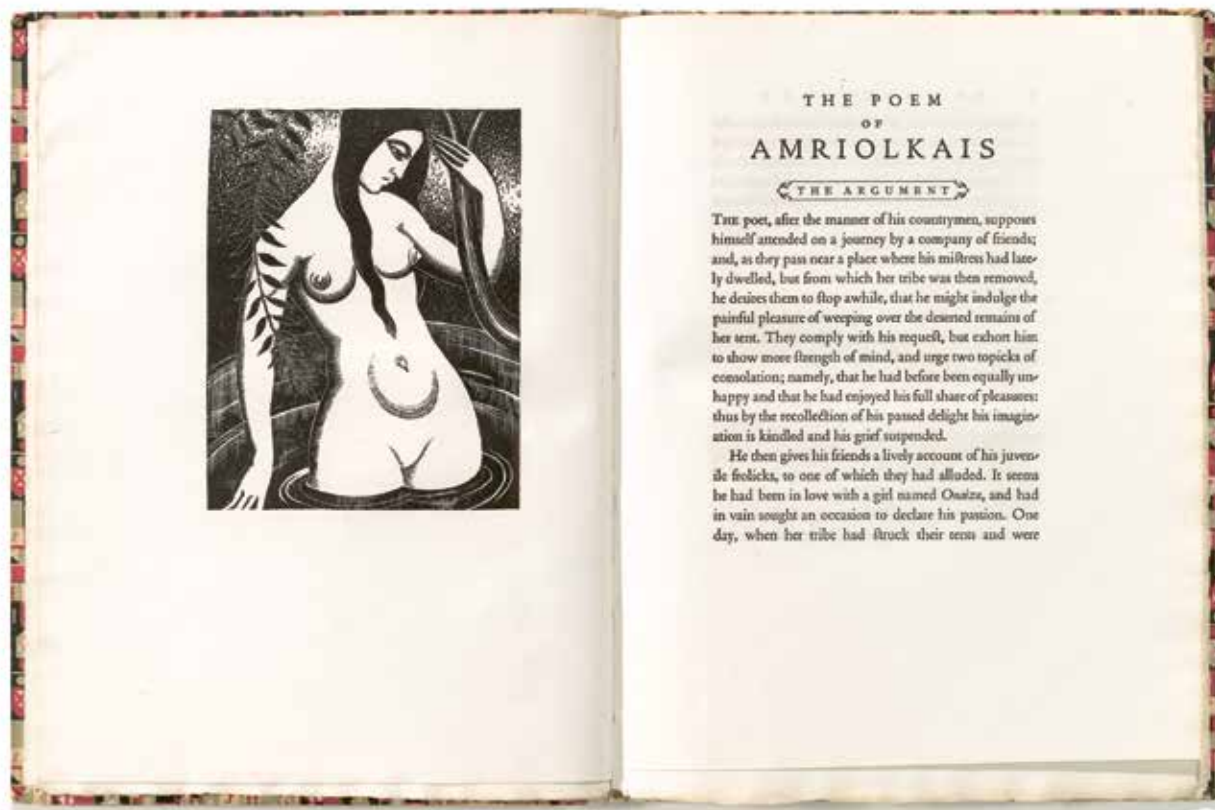
Another book of note from this period is *The Poem of Amriolkais* (see over page), printed and published by High House Press in 1930. Part of the tradition of private press publishing in England from the 1890s through to the 1940s, High House Press prided itself on hand-setting the type before hand-printing on dampened paper using a nineteenth-century Albion press—a very labour-intensive process that had changed little since its invention in the mid-1450s by Johannes Gutenberg. The end result can be spectacularly beautiful on the page, and the process would likely have appealed to Mayo, who contributed four wood engravings illustrating various passages to the book. That Mayo achieved such wonderfully subtle tonal gradations with a notoriously difficult medium at this early stage of her career highlights an exceptional aptitude as a printmaker, something that she was to draw on throughout her career.

In 1930, Mayo began producing linocuts, a relatively new medium that at the time was championed by Claude Flight—a man on a



Eileen Mayo *Ode* 1928. Ink drawing reproduced in *Serge Lifar: Sixteen Drawings in Black and White* by Eileen Mayo, C. W. Beaumont, London, 1928. Collection of the Robert and Barbara Stewart Library and Archives, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū.





THE POEM  
OF  
AMRIOLKAIS

THE ARGUMENT

THE poet, after the manner of his countrymen, supposes himself attended on a journey by a company of friends; and, as they pass near a place where his mistress had lately dwelled, but from which her tribe was then removed, he desires them to stop awhile, that he might indulge the painful pleasure of weeping over the deserted remains of her tent. They comply with his request, but exhort him to show more strength of mind, and urge two topics of consolation; namely, that he had before been equally unhappy and that he had enjoyed his full share of pleasures: thus by the recollection of his passed delight his imagination is kindled and his grief suspended.

He then gives his friends a lively account of his juvenile frolics, so one of which they had alluded. It seems he had been in love with a girl named Onaiza, and had in vain sought an occasion to declare his passion. One day, when her tribe had struck their tents and were

mission promoting the linocut as worthy of sitting alongside more traditional printmaking processes such as wood engraving, etching and lithography. This ruffled a few feathers with more traditional printmakers, including the likes of Frank Morley Fletcher, but Flight was adamant that the linocut, with its distinct lack of tradition, was the perfect print medium for the modern era. A socialist, Flight wanted art to be available to everyone. With no need for the likes of a printing press or expensive zinc, copper or wood-engraving blocks, the linocut could be produced on a kitchen table with a simple engraving tool, an offcut of linoleum and water- or oil-based

paints and printing inks. The actual printing process was simply rubbing a spoon over the back of the paper as it lay face-down on the printing block.

Mayo was famously instructed on the linocut process by Flight over the telephone, and although she was not as prolific as her contemporaries—among them Flight himself, Edith Lawrence, Sybil Andrews, Cyril Power and Lill Tschudi—she produced several linocuts over the next few years, exhibiting alongside these artists. Many artists associated with the linocut movement embraced Flight's call to arms to use the medium to depict futurist-inspired visions of the modern era—racing cars and motorcycles, moving elevators,





industrial scenes of factories, giant cables and the claustrophobic environments of underground tube stations. Mayo, however, focused instead on more naturalistic imagery. *Cats in the Trees* (1931, see page 37) attests to the artist's interest in animals (including her rather obsessive delight in cats) and nature, with two well-fed ginger toms perfectly balanced in a tree, one facing up and the other down to complete a circular composition. Mayo's work made an impression on Flight; not only did he invite her to exhibit at the *British Linocuts* exhibition at London's Redfern Gallery in 1930 but he also included *Cats in the Trees* as the frontispiece for his book *The Art and Craft of Lino Cutting and Printing* (1934). The work was also shown on the inside pages to illustrate how an artist might use form and colour to get the desired effect from several blocks.

*Doric Dairy* (1935, see page 35) is from the same period. In it, a horse and cart are chased along the street by a barking, mischievous dog—probably a daily ritual for the poor old horse and milkman, and perhaps a scene that Mayo herself witnessed. Mayo excels in this print, refining line and pattern and taming the sometimes brutal qualities inherent in the linocut medium. She has registered and printed the blocks with the eye and hand of an expert. The forms of the pink wall with the window and pot plant, the driver's apron and the pollarded tree are simplified, but the horse and its harness, as well as the lettering on the side of the cart, are marked with detail and precision rarely seen in the work of her contemporaries. Mayo's use of subtle cross-hatching on the footpath and the grey wall beyond



Top: Claude Flight *Dirt Track Racing* 1928. Linocut. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased with assistance from the Olive Stirrat bequest, 2008.

Bottom: Sybil Andrews *The Giant Cable* 1931. Linocut. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, presented by Rex Nan Kivell, 1953. © Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, 2012.

the milkcan also breaks away from other linocut artists at the time who tended to favour simpler cutting techniques with solid blocks of colour. The subjects and techniques Mayo selected for her linocuts reflected her interest in nature and the human form, and have more in common with artists such as Alice Coats and Margaret Barnard than some of the more futurist-inspired mechanical themes found in works by Flight or Andrews.

As the 1930s rolled into the 40s, Mayo began to produce lithographs, a perfect medium for capturing the graphic soft lines, tones and shading used in her drawings of the natural world. In 1936, Mayo married Ralph Gainsborough, and in 1937 they moved to a farmhouse near Horsham in West Sussex. This was to be the start of a remarkably productive decade in which Mayo focused on animal and plant subjects, with many of her studies being used as illustrations for several nature books. In 1941, the couple moved to the small village of Fletching in East Sussex where Gainsborough, a doctor, established his general practice. From 1939 until the end of World War II, Mayo's drawings and paintings of the Sussex countryside must have offered a reprieve from the disruptions of war. The Battle of Britain and the Blitz raged in the skies above England, bringing incessant noise day and night from planes overhead, nighttime blackouts and damage to cities and towns. As the war years moved on, Sussex was inundated with troops in preparation for the invasion of France. Fletching became home to many Canadian soldiers based in the area, and the quiet village would have been busy with military activity.<sup>2</sup>

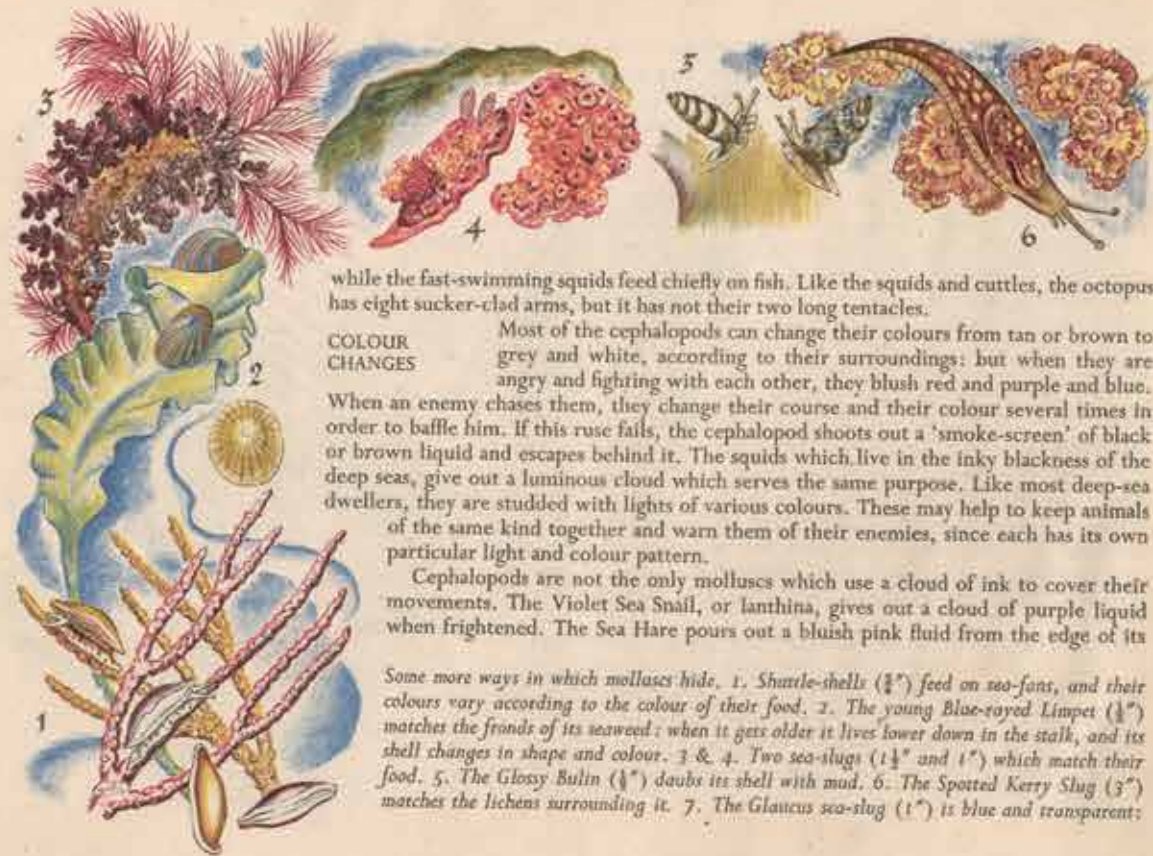
Within all this disruption and devastation, several projects consumed Mayo at this time, including her books *The Story of Living Things and Their Evolution* and *Shells and How They Live*. Both published in 1944, they represent the artist's love for natural history taken to a new level. *The Story of Living Things* is a tremendous achievement by Mayo. One of her most ambitious projects, it is a book that Mayo conceived, researched, wrote and illustrated entirely herself.<sup>3</sup> It contained no fewer than 1000 illustrations accompanied with a mixture of typeset and hand-written text in Mayo's distinctive and elegant handwriting. Given the scale of this book, it must have occupied the artist for much of the preceding year. She produced several illustrations daily as well as hand-written text, yet remarkably she also found the time to write and illustrate *Shells and How They Live* in the same year—more successful in part due to the larger scale of the drawings and the more sensitive commercial lithographic printing techniques employed by the publisher and overseen by Mayo, who had worked as a lithographer. The drawings and text co-exist on the page far more sympathetically, particularly the colour illustrations. Over the next few years, Mayo illustrated several more nature books, including *Nature's ABC* and *Little Animals of the Countryside*.

<sup>2</sup> The war, of course, had a multitude of effects on the production of art in Britain—among them, the surge in interest for art that showed the tranquillity of nature and the English landscape. Mayo spent much of the 1940s living in the countryside, and it is no coincidence that her work from this time onwards became focused on the natural world.

<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately Mayo was not consulted during the publishing process, and as a result she was very unhappy with the layout of several pages as well as the printing process and destroyed all her copies of the book.



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while the fast-swimming squids feed chiefly on fish. Like the squids and cuttles, the octopus has eight sucker-clad arms, but it has not their two long tentacles.

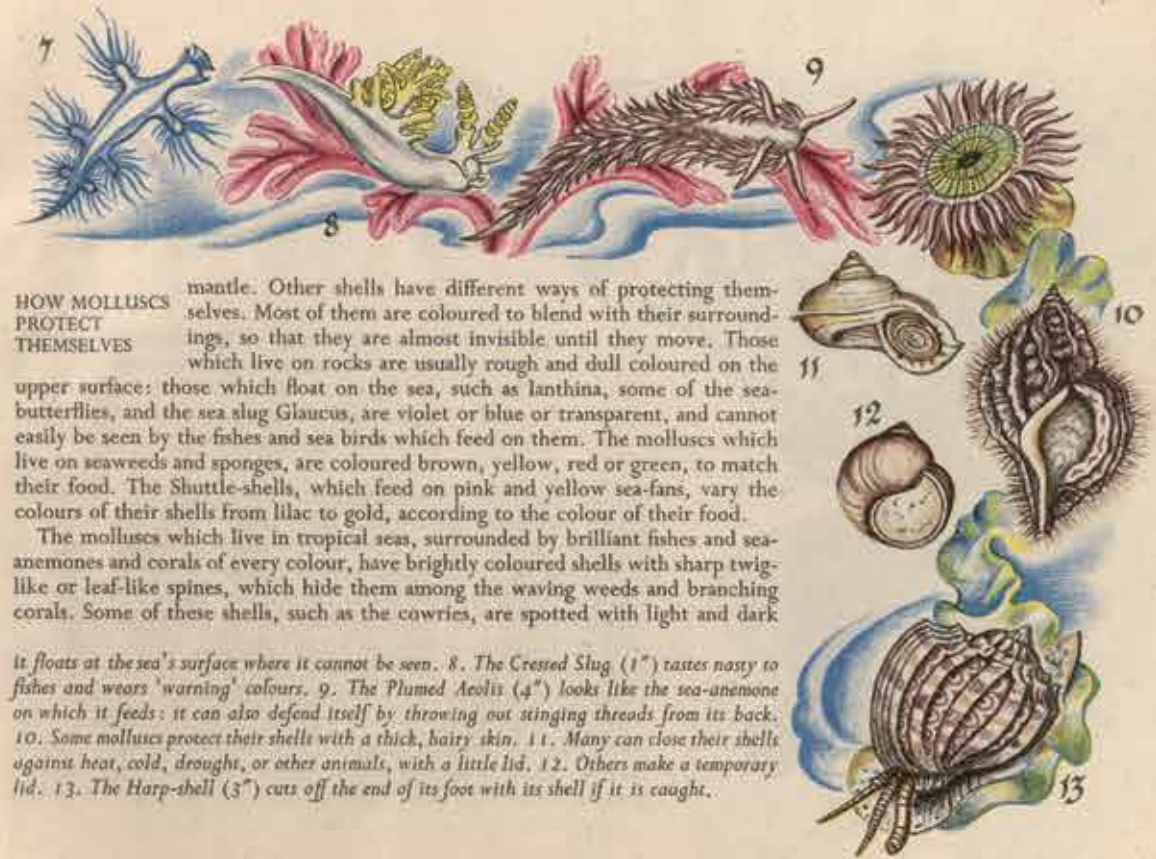
**COLOUR CHANGES**

Most of the cephalopods can change their colours from tan or brown to grey and white, according to their surroundings: but when they are angry and fighting with each other, they blush red and purple and blue. When an enemy chases them, they change their course and their colour several times in order to baffle him. If this ruse fails, the cephalopod shoots out a 'smoke-screen' of black or brown liquid and escapes behind it. The squids which live in the inky blackness of the deep seas, give out a luminous cloud which serves the same purpose. Like most deep-sea dwellers, they are studded with lights of various colours. These may help to keep animals of the same kind together and warn them of their enemies, since each has its own particular light and colour pattern.

Cephalopods are not the only molluscs which use a cloud of ink to cover their movements. The Violet Sea Snail, or *lanthina*, gives out a cloud of purple liquid when frightened. The Sea Hare pours out a bluish pink fluid from the edge of its

Some more ways in which molluscs hide. 1. *Shuttle-shells* ( $\frac{1}{2}$ " feed on sea-fans, and their colours vary according to the colour of their food. 2. The young *Blue-rayed Limpet* ( $\frac{1}{2}$ " matches the fronds of its seaweed: when it gets older it lives lower down in the stalk, and its shell changes in shape and colour. 3 & 4. Two sea-slugs ( $1\frac{1}{2}$ " and 1") which match their food. 5. The *Glossy Bulin* ( $\frac{1}{2}$ " daubs its shell with mud. 6. The *Spotted Kerry Slug* ( $\frac{3}{4}$ " matches the lichens surrounding it. 7. The *Glaucus sea-slug* (1") is blue and transparent:

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**HOW MOLLUSCS PROTECT THEMSELVES**

mantle. Other shells have different ways of protecting themselves. Most of them are coloured to blend with their surroundings, so that they are almost invisible until they move. Those which live on rocks are usually rough and dull coloured on the upper surface: those which float on the sea, such as *lanthina*, some of the sea-butterflies, and the sea slug *Glaucus*, are violet or blue or transparent, and cannot easily be seen by the fishes and sea birds which feed on them. The molluscs which live on seaweeds and sponges, are coloured brown, yellow, red or green, to match their food. The *Shuttle-shells*, which feed on pink and yellow sea-fans, vary the colours of their shells from lilac to gold, according to the colour of their food.

The molluscs which live in tropical seas, surrounded by brilliant fishes and sea-anemones and corals of every colour, have brightly coloured shells with sharp twig-like or leaf-like spines, which hide them among the waving weeds and branching corals. Some of these shells, such as the *cowries*, are spotted with light and dark

it floats at the sea's surface where it cannot be seen. 8. The *Crested Slug* (1") tastes nasty to fishes and wears 'warning' colours. 9. The *Plumed Aeolis* ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ") looks like the sea-anemone on which it feeds: it can also defend itself by throwing out stinging threads from its back. 10. Some molluscs protect their shells with a thick, hairy skin. 11. Many can close their shells against heat, cold, drought, or other animals, with a little lid. 12. Others make a temporary lid. 13. The *Harp-shell* ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ") cuts off the end of its foot with its shell if it is caught.



**Australia**

In 1953, Mayo moved to Sydney, Australia. It was a brave move on her part, having spent the past three decades establishing her career as a printmaker and book illustrator in England.<sup>4</sup> Yet, if anything, the shift to Australia pushed the artist in new directions, including opportunities to develop her skills as a designer. Mayo was drawn to the unique diversity of Australian flora and fauna, with one of her most successful achievements being her set of six stamp designs of Australian mammals issued between 1959 and 1962. These popular designs, including her famous kangaroo and platypus, signalled the beginnings of Mayo's work as a stamp designer—she went on to design more than fifty stamps for Australia, New Zealand and Tokelau.

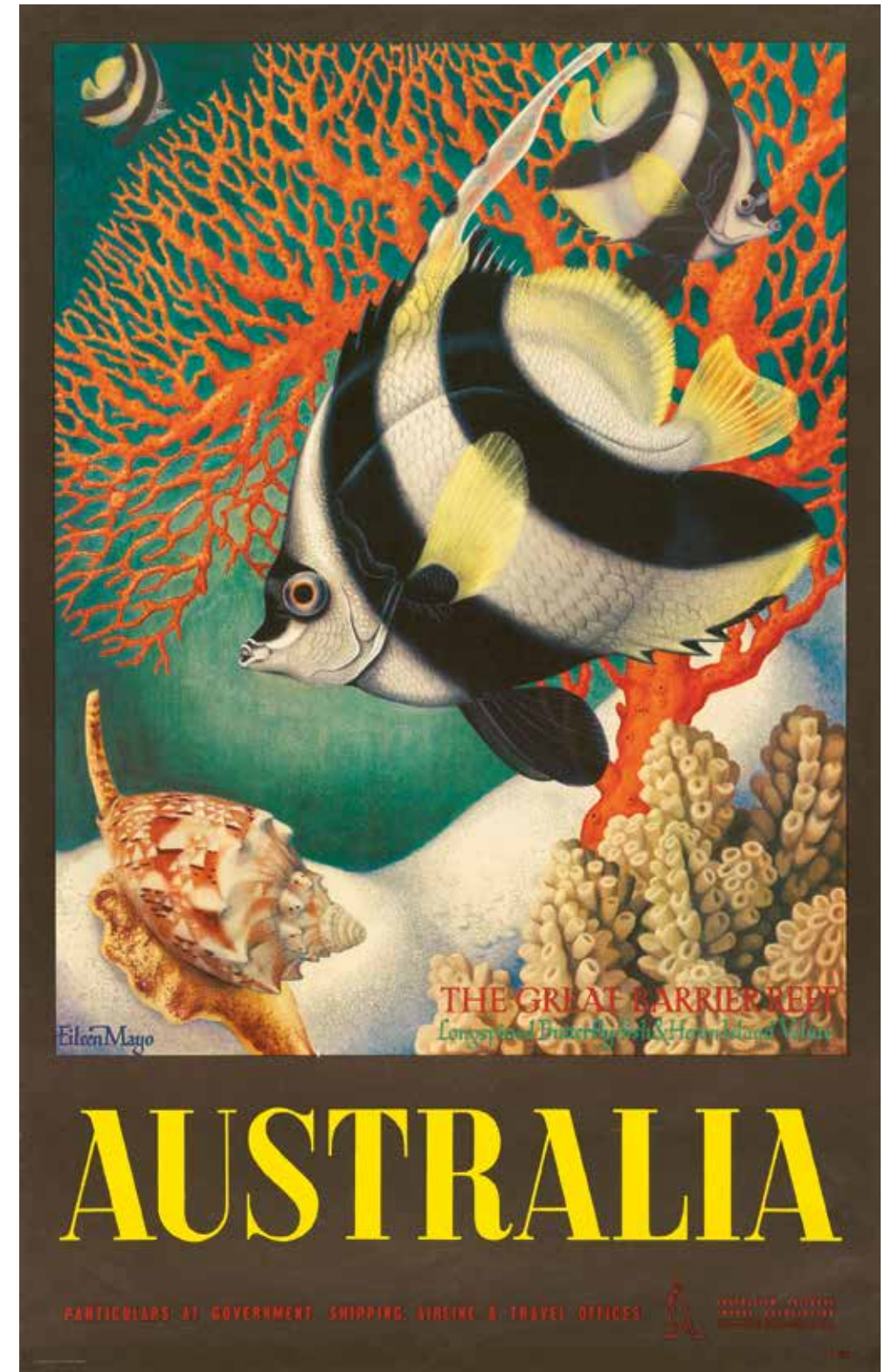
In Australia, Mayo also branched out into coin design and rediscovered the art of poster design, something she had attempted earlier in her career

during the 1930s and 40s with little success. In 1956 and 57, Mayo designed six posters for the Australian National Travel Association, making the most of the opportunities for printing in colour using the offset lithography process. These large, bright and colourful posters were intended to promote tourism to Australia. The designs were very successful, with three of them selected for the international publication *Modern Publicity*, which promoted graphic art design. The posters are now sought-after by collectors and command high prices.

<sup>4</sup> Cassidy notes that, "This radical step was a direct outcome of the dissolution of her marriage. Having rebuilt a reputation as a successful printmaker, and established her worth as a painter, designer, author and illustrator, there was no reason why she could not have continued to live and work as an artist in London. Her work was being shown at the Royal Academy and elsewhere; her publications had proved to be immensely popular. Mayo, however, could not countenance failure of any description." Cassidy, *Shifting Boundaries*, page 82.



Above: Eileen Mayo, first day issue and stamp for the Postmaster General's Department, Australia, released 1959. Facing page: Eileen Mayo *Australia (The Great Barrier Reef)* 1959. Lithograph. Collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; gift of Margaret MacKean-Taylor, 1993.





Although design work provided Mayo with a stable income, printmaking remained important throughout her Sydney years. She produced one of her finest wood engravings, *Mother and Son*, in 1954 (see page 40). Recalling her earlier linocut *Cats in the Trees*, the subject is of two cats, Twinkle and her son Peter, drowsily lazing the day away in the warm sun. Full of the same sense of poise and balance as the earlier work, the intertwined cats form an oval in the centre of the composition, surrounded by foliage. Mayo also produced linocuts and lithographs during this period, but her output was reduced somewhat by her work as a designer. She exhibited with the Macquarie Gallery in Sydney and established herself among the city's art circles. In 1961, she helped to found the Sydney Printmakers Group which provided other opportunities for her to exhibit her work. In 1962, however, just shy of ten years' living and working in Sydney, she once again uprooted herself—this time to the sleepy rural town of Waimate in the South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand.

### New Zealand

Waimate, half a world away from the bright lights and artistic centre of London, was where Mayo's mother, sister and brother-in-law were living, Mayo's mother and sisters having emigrated to New Zealand in 1926. After a short period, Mayo's sister relocated to Christchurch and Mayo followed; apart from a few years in Dunedin during the 1970s, she was to live here for the remainder of her life.

Printmaking continued to be Mayo's primary artistic outlet, but her Christchurch period is

marked as a time of experimentation. Although she continued to use the linocut, her interest in relief printmaking expanded to include the building-up of selected found objects which she would glue onto a surface and print in relief. Objects and materials such as pieces of cardboard and even a crunched up plastic bag were used to create patterns. In *Moths on the Window* (1969, see page 52) she incorporated lace and leaves as printing surfaces to convey the delicate transparent veining in the insects' wings. Mayo's prints from this period are some of her most complicated and ambitious, at times using up to nine separate colours in one screenprint.

While Mayo was experimenting with technique in her later years, her subject matter remained very much centred on nature, with an interest in plants at the forefront. Two of her later screenprints—*A Garden Enclosed* (1980, see page 57) and *Victorian Jug* (1984, see page 65)—were key works from this period. As with so much of her work, *A Garden Enclosed* has a great deal in common with British neo-romanticism. Artists such as Graham Sutherland, Paul Nash, John Nash and John Piper, who were Mayo's peers in many regards, looked back to the bucolic visions of the British landscapes of earlier English romantic artists like William Turner, Samuel Palmer and William Blake. Taking Cuninghame House, the tropical conservatory in Christchurch's Botanic Gardens, as the central element, her vision in *A Garden Enclosed* is of two worlds: bare trees on frost-covered ground beneath a pale blue winter sky provide a stark backdrop to

the lush greenery seen within the glasshouse. The silhouette of a bare-branched tree was a favoured motif of Mayo's, one she repeated in several prints at this time, including *The Tree* (1981, see page 63).

In both prints, Mayo used geometric elements—the rigid architectural geometry of the glasshouse in *A Garden Enclosed*, and the green tartan-like pattern of the tablecloth in *Victorian Jug*—to play against the freer qualities of the plant shapes. The jug bursts with two of her favourite flowers, the cornflower and the passion flower, Mayo delighting in the varieties of shapes, colours and textures and creating a halo effect radiating to the edges of the paper.<sup>5</sup> The stippled shading highlights the artist's experimental approach even at this late stage of her career (*Victorian Jug* was to be the artist's second-to-last print); she covered two screens with an emulsion and stippled the grey of the jug and the background shades. Mayo used seven screens to complete this print, a time-consuming process not only in terms of registration but also in preparing each screen to a state with which she was happy.<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, some of her most complicated and successful work was produced in this period. Her use of screenprinting reflects a trend for the medium throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s, but also the effects of arthritis in her fingers and hands meant she found the process of screenprinting easier than handling engraving tools.

An earlier print, *Winter Sleep* (1964, see page 48), produced shortly after Mayo's arrival in New Zealand, has a similar theme of nature dormant over the cold winter months, but dealt with on an almost abstract level. Here, shapes and forms representing bare tree

branches, red sun, snowflakes, a tightly coiled fern frond and a variety of insects cocooned from the cold are depicted against a cool blue background. She commented on this print, "In mid-winter, lit by a cold, red sun, the promise of new life lies buried in the ground (cicada, sprouting seed, bulb, and hidden in the leaf buds of trees). The two 'figures' can be thought of as Egyptian mummy cases, holding the dead, and at the same time as chrysalises holding the coming butterfly. The falling leaves and snowflakes help to bring about the awaiting Spring. The fern frond is ready to uncoil."<sup>7</sup>

Although baptised an Anglican, Mayo did not practice that faith. She was, however, a committed Christian with aspirations of converting to Roman Catholicism. Aspects of her faith are reflected in her interest in the works of William Blake, whose manuscripts she had researched at the British Museum, and the French philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. The print that perhaps best sums her reverence for nature is *The Tree*. In it, Mayo reproduces a 1799 quote by Blake:

Out of the Ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree that moves some to tears of joy is in the eyes of others just a green thing that stands in the way.

<sup>5</sup> As Cassidy notes in her thesis, "Mayo loved flowers; she cut them reluctantly from her garden and arranged them so that each flower could be seen." *Shifting Boundaries*, page 265.

<sup>6</sup> Despite the impressive technical skill shown in *Victorian Jug*, Mayo wrote in her diary: "[I] can't help thinking (knowing!) that my work isn't as good as it was—dull and flaccid, no guts." 26 October 1984.

<sup>7</sup> Mayo, quoted in Cassidy, *Shifting Boundaries*, page 248.



This print is one of Mayo's most successful. Her beautifully executed, hand-drawn lettering is used to great effect and is sympathetically reinforced by the centrally located silhouette of a bare-branched tree rising up through the centre of the image to dominate the composition.<sup>8</sup>

Another work that provides insight into Mayo's views is an illustration of a New Testament verse quoted in Chardin's *Le Milieu Divin* (1979, see page 60). Jillian Cassidy draws a direct link between this work and that of British artist David Jones, particularly his painting *Ex Devina* (1956). Both artists loved lettering and produced artworks based purely on hand-drawn text. Jones was a close friend and colleague of the renowned English typographer Eric Gill; Mayo was familiar with Gill's typographical designs and had several sample sheets in her collection used as references for her own lettering. Letterforms were used by both artists as the sole basis of their work on several occasions. Mayo had started reading Chardin in 1969 and responded to "his writings both [of] his reverence for the material world and his constant awareness of the spiritual in every aspect of the universe".<sup>9</sup> Mayo wasn't a church-goer in the traditional sense, but she had an undeniable reverence for the natural world.

In 1976, Mayo undertook one of her most ambitious design commissions when she was approached by the Dunedin firm W. Gregg and Co. to produce paintings of thirty-five native birds of New Zealand. Mayo's original paintings were reproduced as small cards included in Gregg's packets of crystal jelly, which could be collected and pasted

into the accompanying album *Rare and Endangered Birds of New Zealand*. Mayo was working as a designer at the Otago Museum in Dunedin at the time and had ready access to many of the birds in the museum's ornithological collections. Over an eight-month period, she made careful studies of the birds with attention also on their natural habitats. Ever the perfectionist, Mayo's eye for detail, colour and composition in these gouache and coloured pencil studies reflects her meticulousness both in researching her subjects as well as executing her designs.

In New Zealand, although Mayo's work was warmly received, opportunities were limited. In the late 1960s she was invited to exhibit with The Group—a collection of some of New Zealand's most progressive contemporary artists across several generations who arranged annual exhibitions in Christchurch as an alternative to the more conservative art societies in the country's main centres.<sup>10</sup> Her work was also admired by the likes of artist Bill Sutton and younger contemporary printmakers Denise Copland and Barry Cleavin.

<sup>8</sup> Mayo's approach to nature resonates strongly with the environmental theologians and poet priests such as Chardin, Thomas Berry and Thomas Merton, but also with the pantheistic views of nineteenth-century painter Petrus van der Velden. Van der Velden said, "I have come to the conclusion that painting or drawing after nature, instead of being luxury, is the most necessary for the education of [humanity] ... The aim of our existence is nothing else than to study nature and with so doing to understand more and more how grand and pure nature is." *Van der Velden: Otira*, Christchurch Art gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2011, page 41.

<sup>9</sup> Cassidy, *Shifting Boundaries*, page 258.

<sup>10</sup> Of the Group Show, Mayo wrote in her diary: "[The Show] depressed me ... I am not going in the prevailing direction anyway. I must be content to potter in my own little backwater and not take it too seriously." 19 November 1970.



Eileen Mayo *Mātuhihi* / *Bush Wren* 1976. Gouache and coloured pencil on paper. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2005.





Ngairé Hewson, who ran the Several Arts gallery in Colombo Street, was supportive both as a dealer, patron and friend. In the North Island, Mayo exhibited with leading contemporary dealers New Vision Gallery and Barry Lett Gallery and was included in Peter Cape's 1974 book *Prints and Printmakers in New Zealand*. Ultimately, however, the New Zealand art circles of the time were dominated by younger male painters with a focus on abstraction and a search for a distinctly New Zealand art idiom. Mayo, the older English printmaker and designer, did not fit comfortably into this scenario—but she held her own and stuck to her art practice, as she had always done, on her own terms.

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Mayo's art endures into the twenty-first century. Her work remains popular and continues to be collected privately and publicly; she is well-represented in public art institutions in New Zealand and Australia. When, in 1953, Mayo left England, she also left behind all that she had worked so hard to establish as an artist over the previous three decades. In London, she rubbed shoulders with the leading artists of the day, including Flight and the linocut artists, Iain McNabb and the wood-engraving artists, as well as those she modelled for such as Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell, Dod Procter and Laura Knight. Her prints were collected by leading galleries. She also left behind the wealth of public collections in England from which she often drew

inspiration. In 2008, her work was included in the exhibition *British Prints from the Machine Age* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, rightly placing her among her British contemporaries Flight, Andrews, Power, Tschudi, Edward Wadsworth and Christopher Nevinson.

Developments in western art throughout the twentieth century provided a startling backdrop to Mayo's career. Avant-garde movements such as cubism, futurism, dadaism, abstract expressionism and pop art pushed boundaries and cast a wide influence over modern art. Mayo, however, stayed her course, pursuing her neo-romantic vision and almost singular focus on nature as her subject. Her work is a truly wonderful combination of this focus, her exceptional talent as a designer and her ability to excel in almost any medium she set her hand to—leading her to produce a body of work that continues to enthral her audience.





## NEW ZEALAND'S GRANDE DAME OF PRINTMAKING

*Jillian Cassidy*

Eileen Mayo arrived in New Zealand from Sydney in 1962—a mature artist with an established international reputation as a printmaker and designer.<sup>1</sup> But despite her achievements, the critics derided her as a mere illustrator-cum-decorative artist. That printmaking was still a young discipline in New Zealand at the time and, in comparison with painting, an unimportant one, worked against her. Also, her nature-based imagery failed to emulate the main preoccupation of artists at the time—the development of abstract painting. Consequently, the art establishment, particularly in Auckland and Wellington, regarded her work as very English and old-fashioned.

Although conventional in her behaviour, Mayo was an original thinker who was never persuaded by the rhetoric, ideas or opinions of others. Nature had always been her constant—its decorative patterning and colour paramount in her work—and she had no intention of changing her preferred medium, subject or style to concur with current trends in New Zealand art.

In 1966, Mayo experienced two professional breakthroughs: Stewart MacLennan, director of the National Art Gallery in Wellington, purchased some of her prints for the gallery's permanent collection; and The Group (an influential collective of artists exhibiting annually in Christchurch in the mid-twentieth century) recognised that she was without equal as a printmaker and designer in both Australia and New Zealand and invited her to become a member.<sup>2</sup> However, Mayo exhibited with The Group just once, in 1968. She was disappointed

by the preponderance of paintings in The Group shows and commented in her diary, "Of the making of pictures [paintings] there is no end."<sup>3</sup> Mayo had always been a solitary artist and preferred to exhibit her prints in small dealer galleries, rather than with large groups.<sup>4</sup>

That same year, having realised how lowly the status of the original print was in New Zealand, she set out to raise its profile in Christchurch. This grande dame of printmaking, who had been a regular exhibitor in print shows in London, Melbourne and Sydney, was well-equipped with the professionalism needed to re-present the original print to a small buying public. In collaboration with Ngaire Hewson, an amateur artist and the then owner of Several Arts, a small craft-shop / gallery at 809 Colombo Street, she set up a much-needed venue for exhibitions by professional women printmakers, insisting that prints shown to the public be of the highest quality. The liveliness and graphic skills apparent in the work exhibited at Several Arts by Mayo, Juliet Peter, Alison Pickmere, Penny Omerod, Gwen Morris, Bonnie Quirk and others promoted a big trade in the original print in Christchurch as well as contributing significantly to its development in the region.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eileen Mayo first settled in Waimate but moved to Christchurch in 1965.

<sup>2</sup> Kees Hos was an established professional printmaker in New Zealand at that time.

<sup>3</sup> Juliet Peter, Roy Cowan, Kees Hos, Pat Hanly, M. Kitson and Barry Cleavin (late 1960s) were the only printmakers to show with The Group during the 1960s. Quote sourced from Mayo's diary, 19 November 1970.

<sup>4</sup> One of her favourite exhibition venues was the Rosslyn Gallery, Dunedin.

<sup>5</sup> Mayo had earlier been a driving force behind printmaking in Sydney and was a founding member of the Sydney Printmakers Group.



In 1969, Mayo bought a printing press and began to fulfil her long-postponed ambition to make prints full-time.<sup>6</sup> Her approach to printmaking was really an expression of her personality; she was never content with simple answers to anything in life and regarded printmaking as an intellectual challenge. As an older and experienced artist, the quality and integrity of her work was very important to her—she noted in her diary, “I have reached the stage where BEST POSSIBLE work is far more important than what I can get for it.”<sup>7</sup> By nature reclusive, insecure and highly self-critical, the satisfactory working out of a design, or part of a design, lifted her from her almost habitual state of depression and self-doubt. Each edition of prints was part of a cycle that related in a curious way to her need for self-acceptance; each offered her a fresh opportunity to prove her creative worth all over again. Her satisfaction came not from having her work acknowledged but from making each print as difficult as possible, challenging her design skills and stretching the possibilities of relief and silkscreen printing techniques.

British precedents define practically all of Mayo's New Zealand artwork, and neo-romanticism is the most appropriate over-arching “ism” or label that can be attached to her oeuvre. Neo-romanticism celebrated the mystery of Nature; regard for the natural world was the dominating concern of the neo-romantic imagination. If a neo-romantic can be described as someone who loves nature, then Mayo was one, even if she didn't realise it.<sup>8</sup> That she was particularly receptive to neo-romanticism is not surprising; her early childhood education had

been based on reverence and respect for nature and it fitted her own philosophy.

While living in London in the 1930s and 40s, Mayo had immersed herself in the art world and would have seen paintings by Paul Nash, John Piper, Graham Sutherland, John Minton and other neo-romantics. Although she was never consciously part of the movement, it was their interest in nature that appealed to her. It is unsurprising, therefore, that during the 1940s she changed from figurative to nature subjects and produced a number of intimate vignettes of country life that could easily be categorised by art historians as belonging to the neo-romantic movement.

Mayo continued this trend in her New Zealand prints and, while it is true to say that she always remained part of the wider sphere of neo-romanticism, like many women artists her imagery was dictated by her gender and circumstances. Author and curator Anne Kirker wrote of the effects of gender on women's imagery: “[W]omen have generally painted from inside their lives, responding to people, places and things that belong to their immediate circumstances.”<sup>9</sup> Mayo was no exception. In fact, the trajectory of her entire career was determined by her gender and circumstances. Like many women artists, she drew inspiration for her prints from a seemingly small landscape: her garden in the Christchurch suburb of Beckenham, her immediate neighbourhood, the Christchurch Botanic Gardens and environmental issues.

Nowhere, however, is her deep reverence for nature more clearly defined than in the work she

made to acknowledge and raise awareness of conservation issues. As early as 1944, in the conclusion to her book *The Story of Living Things*, she voiced her concerns regarding humankind's potential to vandalise the planet. She wrote, “Man's hand has given him power over living things. It may be used to destroy or protect them.”<sup>10</sup> In her works *Humpback and Bottlenose* (1980, see page 58), *The Tree* (1981, see page 63) and *Springing Fern* (1983, see page 64), she used her outstanding ability to find underlying patterns in nature to highlight the plight of endangered species of whales, the vulnerability of trees in the landscape and the interdependence of all living things. These prints, and other conservation-related works she designed between 1973 and 1983, are noteworthy in that they mark a change in her thinking. Before moving to New Zealand, her prints had been apolitical; her main concern was always “to fill a space as fittingly as possible.”<sup>11</sup> But in these works her main preoccupation was with issues of local and national concern.

Both aesthetically and technically, Mayo used each edition of prints to pave the way to a more

6 The benefit paid to superannuitants was increased between 1967 and 1972. This extra income, along with her savings, allowed Mayo to dispense with the commercial commitments that had monopolised her professional career.

7 Mayo's diary, 24 May 1969.

8 In fact, as author and artist Malcolm Yorke pointed out, “The Neo-Romantics ... didn't know who they were until the reviewers told them.” Yorke, *The Spirit of Place*, Constable, London, 1988, page 165.

9 Anne Kirker, *New Zealand Women Artists*, 1986, Reed Methuen, Auckland, page 114.

10 Mayo, *The Story of Living Things and Their Evolution*, Waverley Book Co., London, 1944, page 271.

11 Correspondence, Mayo to Barbara R. Mueller, 15 August 1961. Collection of Jillian Cassidy, Christchurch.



Eileen Mayo Young *Sunflower* 1979. Linocut. Collection of Kate Unger, Christchurch.



resolved next work through the application of the principles of simplification. Her method was to severely critique a finished print and then move on to a new design. This is apparent in her text and image prints in which she moved towards increasingly austere compositions. This paring back is evident, for example, in *Young Sunflower* (1979, see previous page), where she dispensed with extraneous detail and developed the image into an interesting pattern through a process of rigorous schematisation.

The most resolved (and sophisticated) of the artist's prints, *Le Milieu Divin* (1979, see page 60) and *Alphabets* (1982, see page 61), signify a fundamental leap forward in her style.<sup>12</sup> *Le Milieu Divin* is arguably the most stylistically severe of all her compositions. In *Alphabets* she steps outside the neo-romantic frame and dispenses altogether with

imagery. Each design appears deceptively simple: in *Le Milieu Divin*, a text taken from the New Testament (Acts 17:28) is printed around and over a centralised image; *Alphabets* is a seemingly random composition assembled out of an assortment of English and Greek letters. The complexity of the compositions, however, invites the viewer to pause and absorb their expressive graphic qualities.

Mayo was integral to the development of printmaking in New Zealand from the 1960s to the early 1980s, and this was finally acknowledged on 1 January 1994 when, three days before her death, she was made a Dame for her services to art and design in this country.

<sup>12</sup> The artist used the same screens in *Alphabets Two* but a different colourwave.



Facing page: Eileen Mayo rolling up a block from the relief print *Gently Floating Forms* (1970).  
Reproduced from the book *Prints and Printmakers in New Zealand*, Collins, Auckland and London, 1974.







SELECTED WORKS



### Turkish Bath

*Turkish Bath* is evidence of Mayo's enthusiastic response to her first opportunity to exhibit in London with a group of professional printmakers.

The exhibition was avant-garde and, therefore, without expectation; if her work proved unacceptable she would be protected from the scorn of the critics by the sheer number of artists exhibiting—forty-three in all, twenty-seven men and sixteen women. As an unknown artist without an established reputation, Mayo had nothing to lose. Consequently she took more risks at this early stage of her career than at any other time in her life and the vitality captured in her wood engravings of the late 1920s was surpassed by the liveliness and spirit of this, her first linocut.

JC



*Turkish Bath* 1930  
Linocut

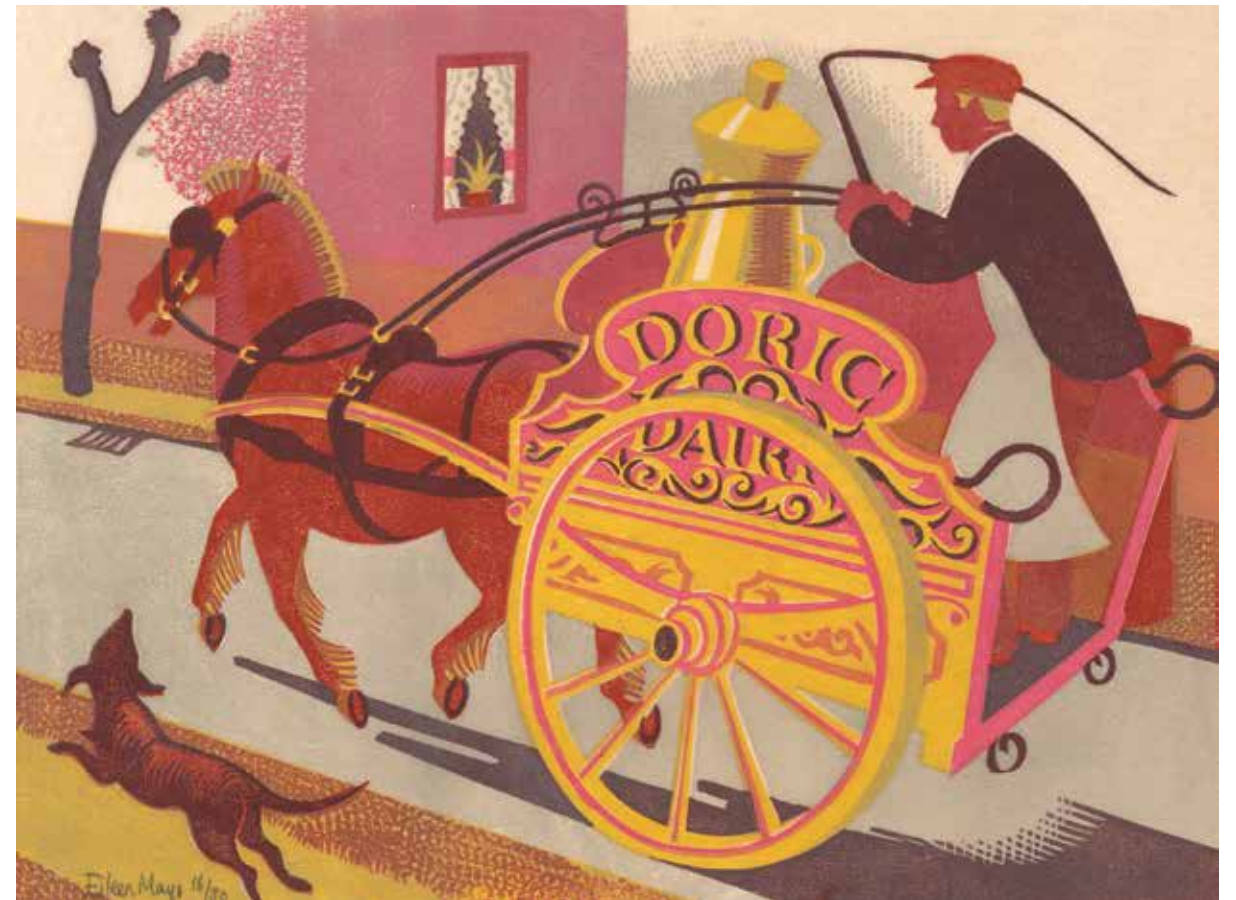
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, presented by Rex Nan Kivell, 1953





*Ice Cream Cart* 1932  
Linocut

Collection of Dunedin Public Art Gallery, given 1953 by Rex Nan Kivell of the Redfern Gallery, London



*Doric Dairy* 1935  
Linocut

Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, presented by Rex Nan Kivell, 1953



### Cats in the Trees

Mayo adored cats. Throughout her life, they were a constant source of delight—and subject matter. Claude Flight, the champion of the linocut medium in the 1920s and 30s, held this linocut, Mayo's first cat print, in high regard, using it as the frontispiece for his acclaimed instructional manual *The Art and Craft of Lino Cutting and Printing* (1934). In it, Flight also reproduced the four linoblocks used to print *Cats in the Trees*, describing Mayo's approach as follows:

“[Mayo] endeavoured to express by means of an arrangement of certain forms and colours, something that interested her; what the something is which is conveyed by the work of art is seldom describable in words.

“The preliminary drawing was made in pencil outline and the four colours: viridian, yellow, brown, and prussian blue, were painted in water-colour on this drawing.

“Each colour in the preliminary drawing was put on separately and allowed to dry, before the next colour was used; by this means a distinct composition in each colour was arranged so that when the four blocks were cut and prints taken from these blocks, each block printing its own colour, the result of the superimposition of the various colours made the final picture, which is a good form and colour composition.”

PV



*Cats in the Trees* 1931  
Linocut

Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, presented by Rex Nan Kivell, 1953



### Skaters

This was probably Mayo's first single print, designed while attending Noel Rooke's evening classes in wood engraving and book illustration at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London. The decorative qualities that became characteristic of her style are seen here in embryo. According to the artist's sisters, Mayo did not skate—in fact, she disliked all recreational sport except walking. The subject of skaters, however, was popular among English artists in the 1920s.

JC



*Skaters* 1925  
Wood engraving  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2012





*Mother and Son* 1954  
 Wood engraving  
 Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1972

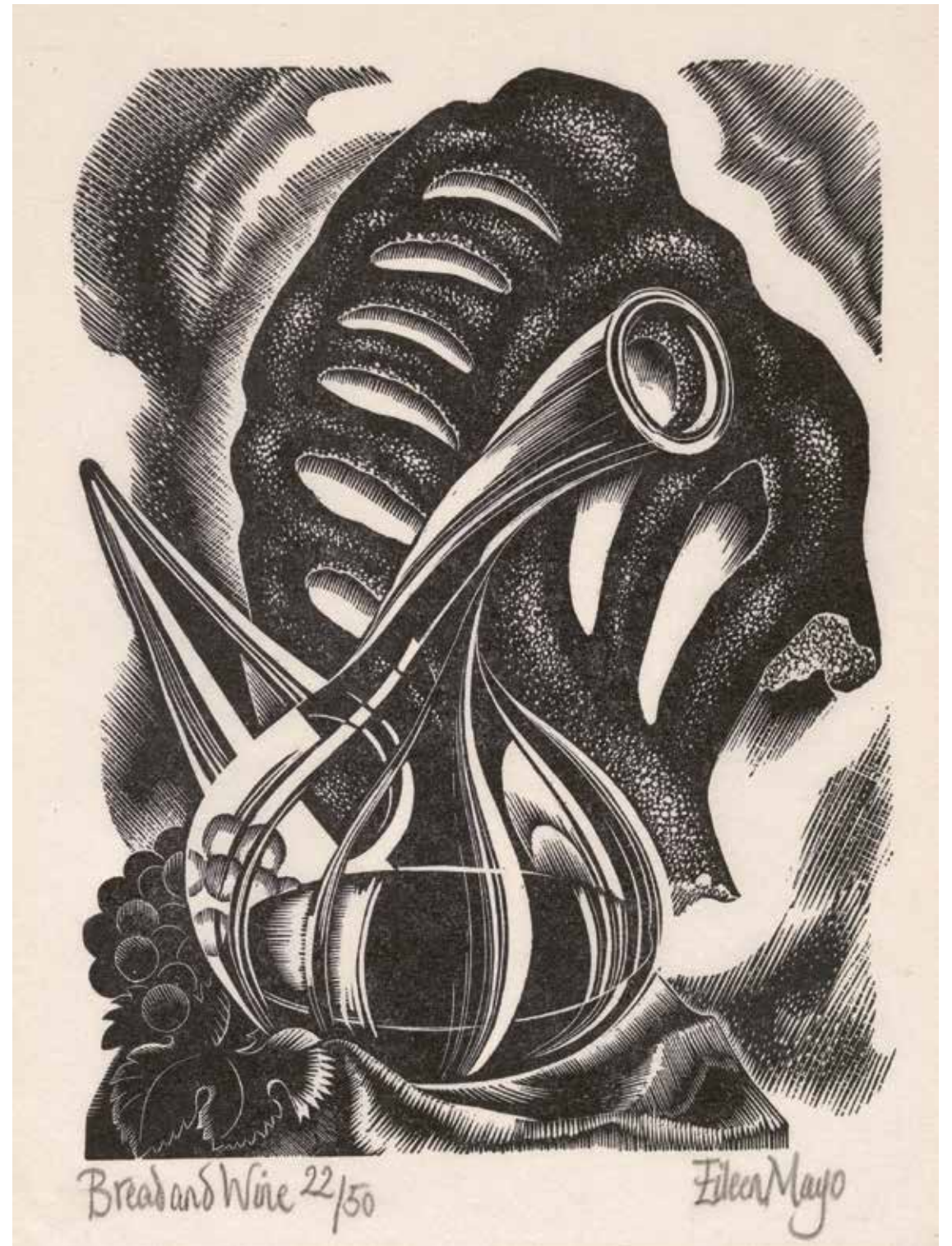


*The Doves* 1948  
 Wood engraving  
 Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1972



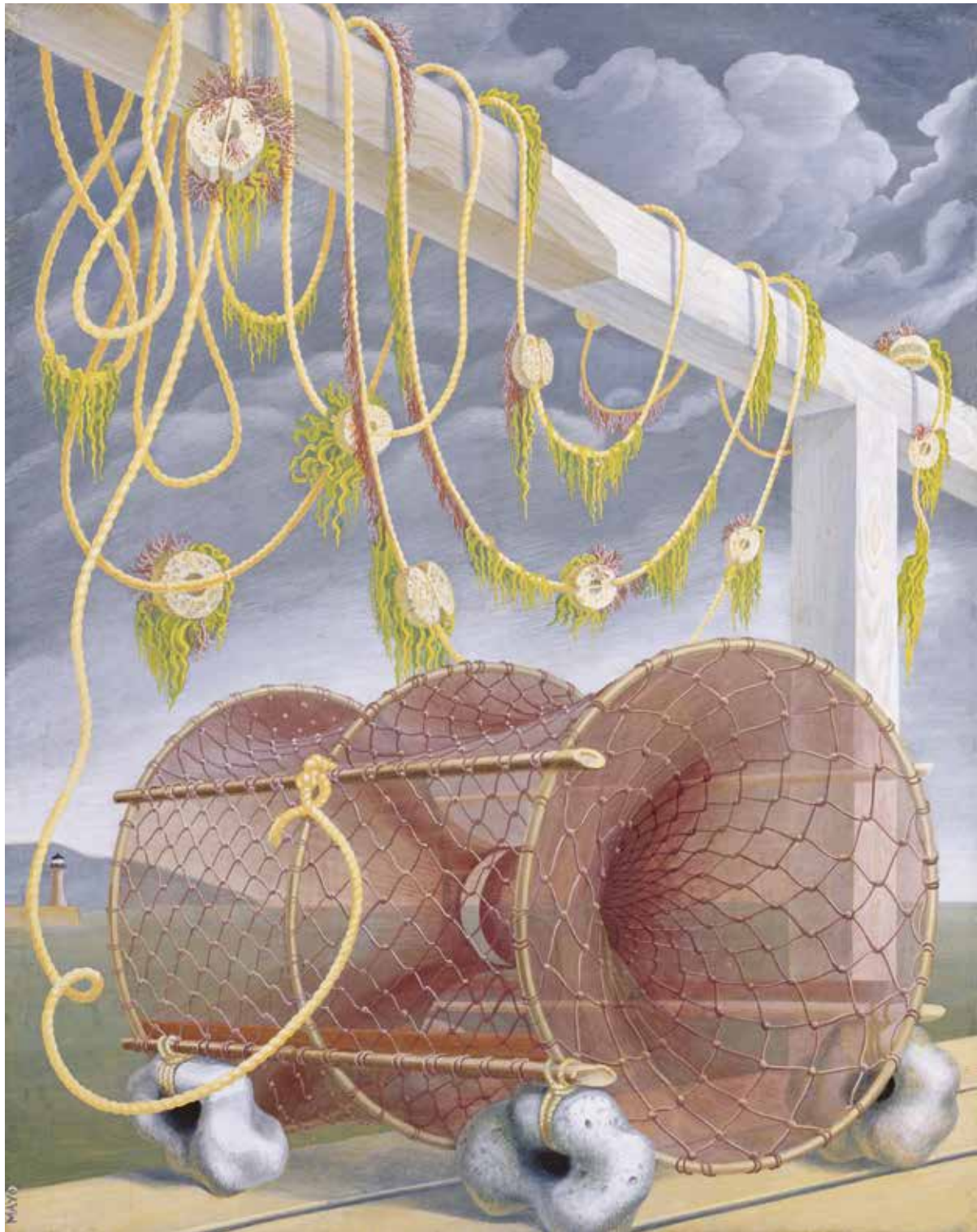


*New Year* 1949  
Wood engraving  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1972



*Bread and Wine* 1952  
Wood engraving  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1972





*The Lobster Pot* c. 1945

Tempera on board

Private collection. Photo © Peter Nahum at The Leicester Galleries, London. Bridgeman Images, London 2018



*Mending the Net* 1949

Lithograph

Collection of Dunedin Public Art Gallery, given 1953 by Rex Nan Kivell of the Redfern Gallery, London



### Wounded bird

Mayo produced her first linocuts, *Turkish Bath* and *The Plunge*, in 1930 having been instructed in the medium by Claude Flight. She contributed linocuts to the exhibition *British Linocuts* at the Redfern Gallery, London in the same year, alongside some of the major exponents of the medium including Flight himself, Sybil Andrews, Cyril Power and Lill Tschudi. Mayo continued to work with linocut throughout her career.

*Wounded Bird* was completed in 1965, the same year she moved from Waimate to Christchurch. Some of the printing in this work is serendipitous; as Jillian Cassidy noted in her thesis, “This was a second, and simpler version of the original design for this print. The textures were arrived at accidentally, the artist having cut out the fingers of the woman by mistake. Having filled the area with epiglass she discovered that by rubbing the repairs down and using agate paint on the tail, she achieved an interesting texture.” Mayo considered this print to be “a bit sentimental”.

PV



*Wounded Bird* 1965  
Linocut

Collection of Dunedin Public Art Gallery, purchased 1965 with funds from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society





*Winter Sleep* 1964  
Screenprint

Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2005



*Summer Evening* 1967  
Linocut

Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, gift of Prof. H. John Simpson and family, in memory of Ming Simpson, 2017



### Mantis in the Sun

*Mantis in the Sun* and its companion print, *Mantis*, from the same year, were both exhibited at the Tokyo International Print Biennale in 1968.

Unlike *Mantis*, in which the background is built up with dense, dark shades of blue and crimson, Mayo decided for this print to leave much of the white paper exposed. A ferocious predator of the insect world, Mayo's praying mantis seems almost robotic with its green and yellow cubist shapes, antennae helmet-head and jagged front legs beginning their grisly dismemberment of its prey.

Mayo has used found objects printed in relief, such as mesh for the insect's wings and a plastic bag for the abstract shape beyond the mantis, to add drama to the composition.

PV

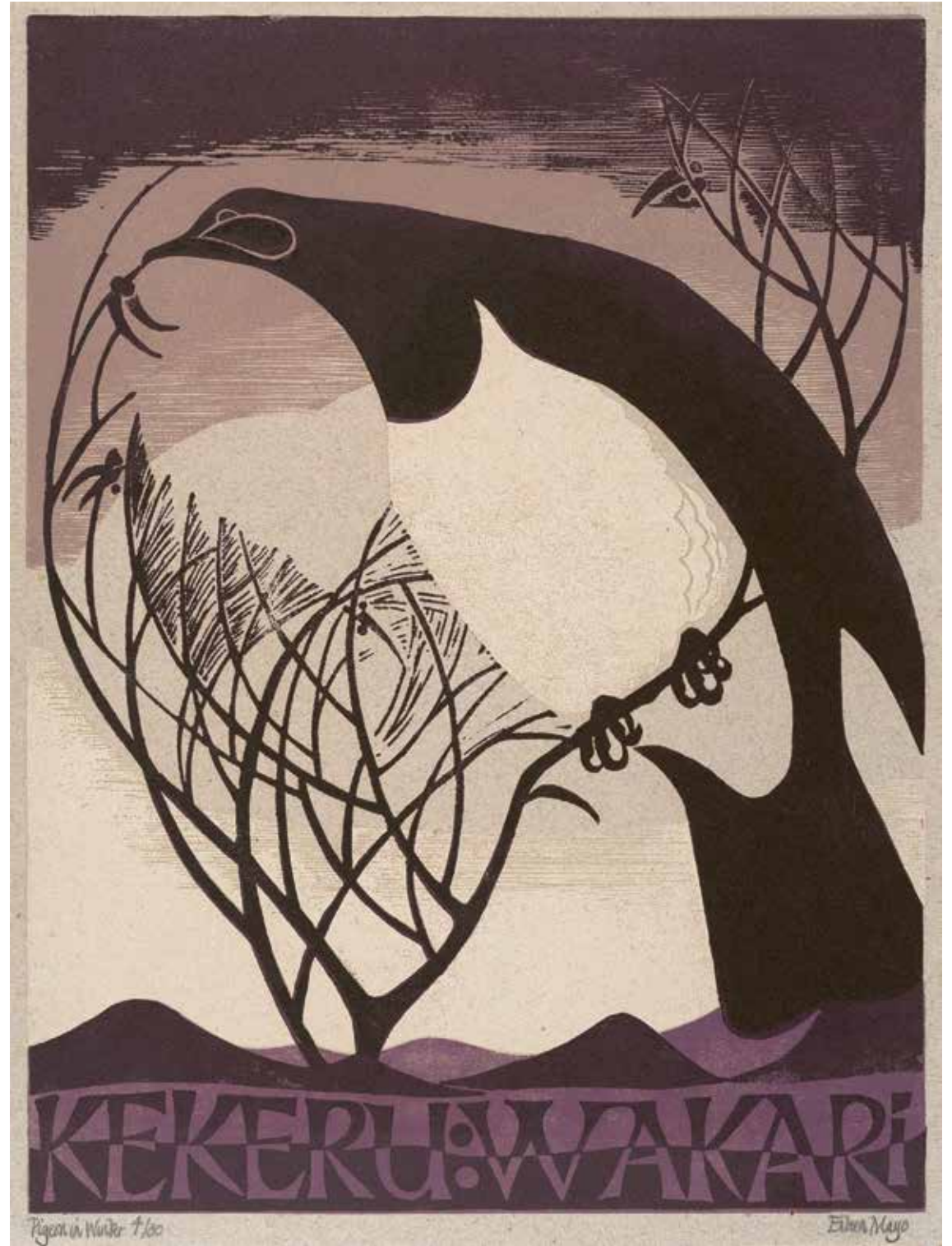


*Mantis in the Sun* 1968  
Relief print  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2008





*Moths on the Window* 1969  
 Relief print  
 Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2005



*Pigeon in Winter* 1974  
 Relief print  
 Hocken Collections Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago





*Homage to Pierre Finch Martineau Burrows 1842–1920* 1977

[The title given to this work by Mayo was based on a misattribution in her source, *Colonial Architecture in New Zealand* (J. Stacpoole, Reed, Wellington, 1977), which named Burrows as the architect of this, the Chief Post Office in Christchurch's Cathedral Square. It was, in fact, designed by W. H. Clayton; Burrows was Clayton's assistant.]

Screenprint and relief print

Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2011



*Rain, Coal and Wood* 1977

Relief print

Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2005



### A Garden Enclosed

The idea for this print occurred to the artist in 1966 while walking in Cuninghame House in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. It was not until 1980, however, that she revisited the idea and developed it into *A Garden Enclosed*.

The problems for Mayo (if they were indeed problems) were what kind of plants to have inside the glasshouse, how to treat them and what scale to use? Many of the plants are identifiable; for example, the Kentia palms, poinsettia and cyclamen.

JC







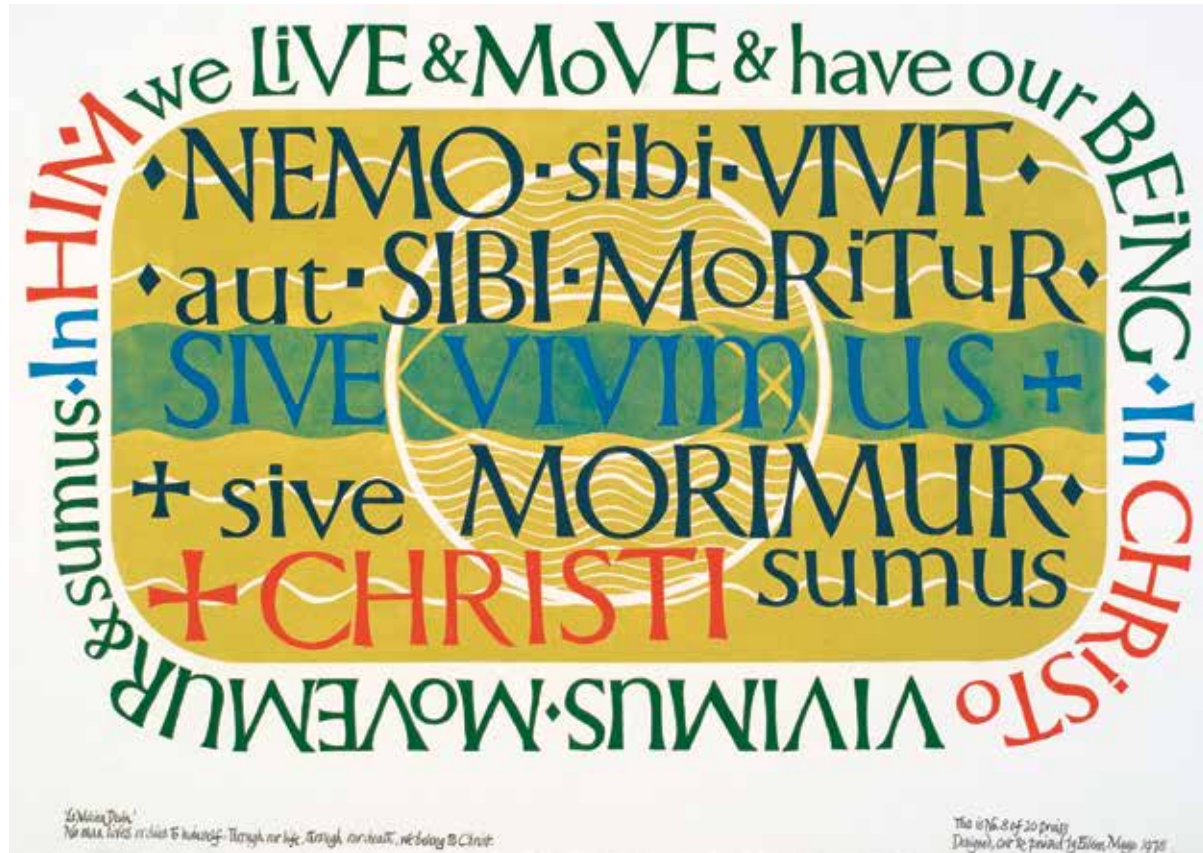
*Humpback and Bottlenose* 1980  
Screenprint

Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased with assistance from the Federation of University Women, 2010



*Black Swans* 1983  
Screenprint  
Ngairi and George Hewson collection



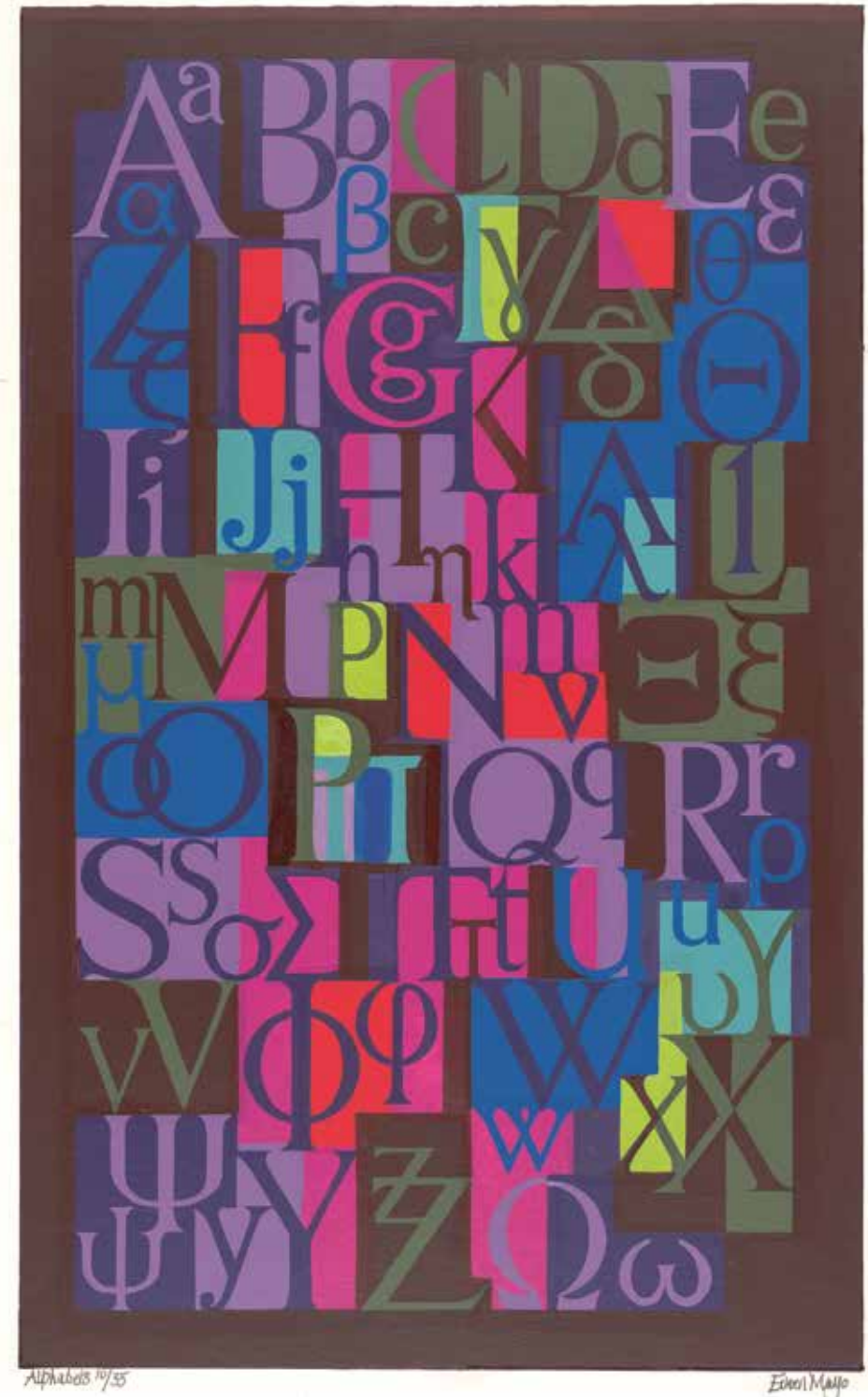


*Le Milieu Divin*  
 The man lives in order to himself - through no life, through no death, no being in Christ.

The 1076-8 of 30 prints  
 Design, cut & printed by Eileen Mayo 1978

*Le Milieu Divin* 1979  
 Linocut

Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2005



*Alphabets* 10/35

Eileen Mayo

*Alphabets* 1982  
 Screenprint

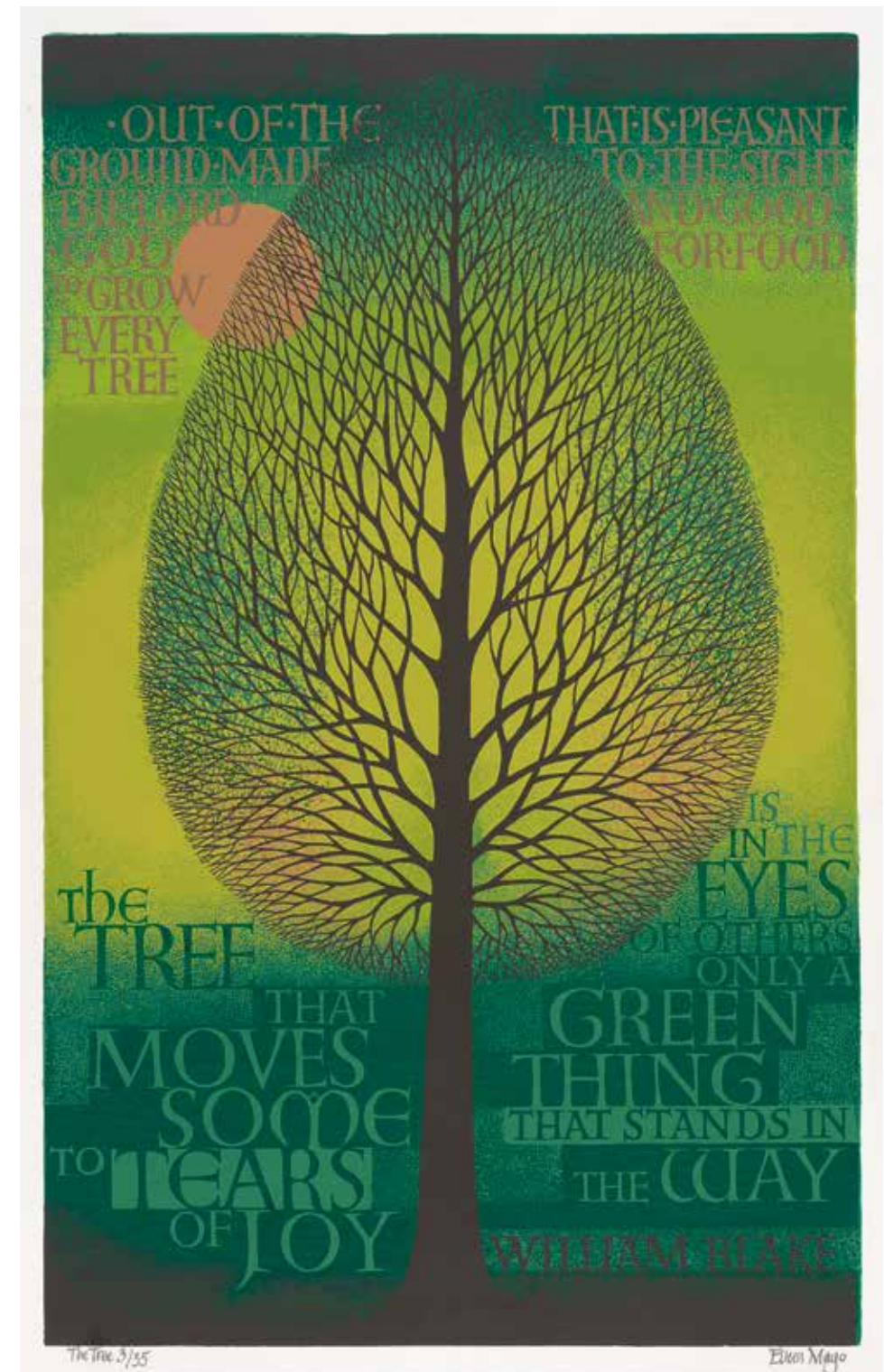
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1987



### The Tree

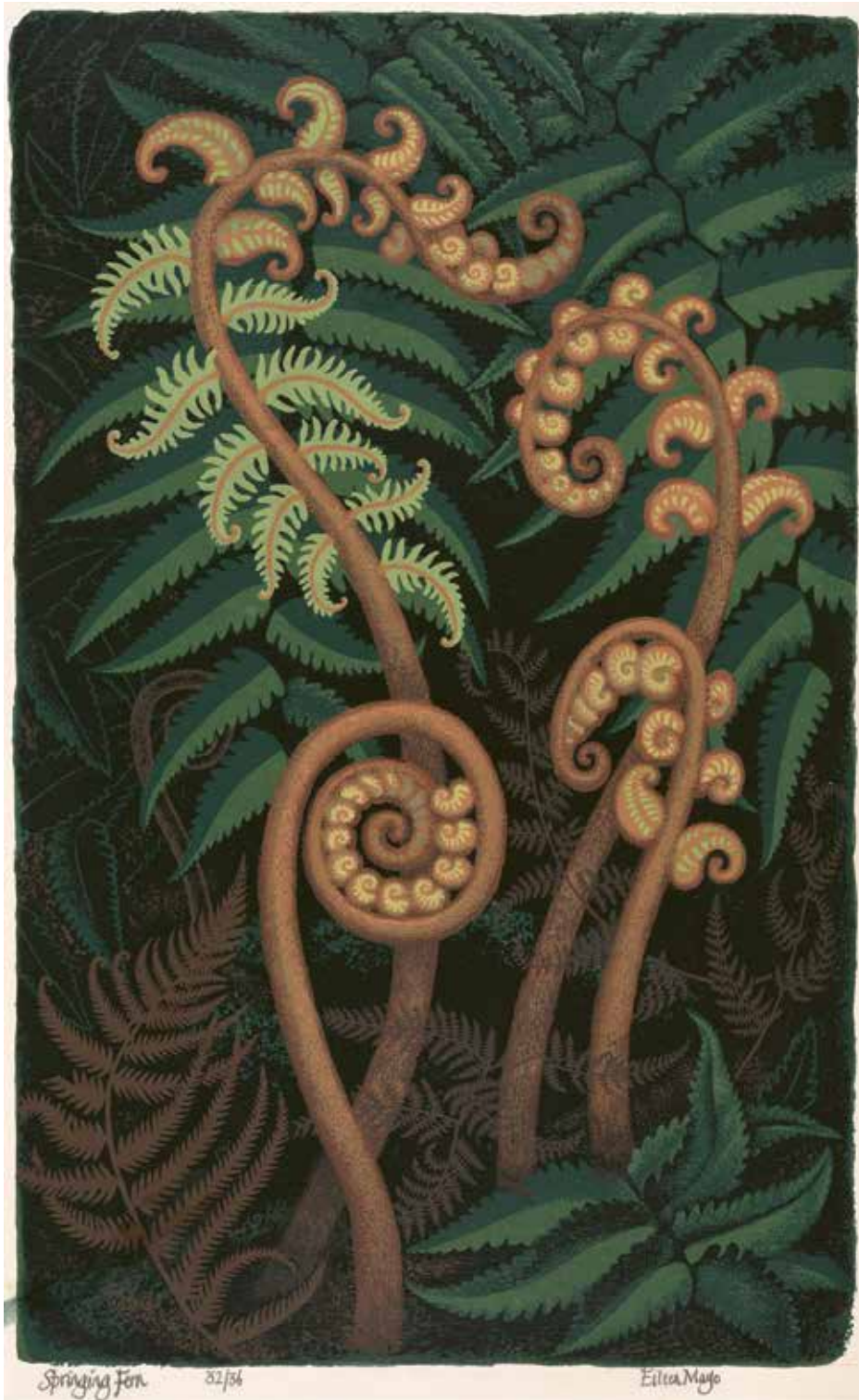
The text on this work is taken from the writings of William Blake, the most celebrated English poet-painter of the romantic movement in Britain. Mayo had made a private study of Blake's manuscripts at the British Museum while she was a student at the Slade School of Art, London.

JC

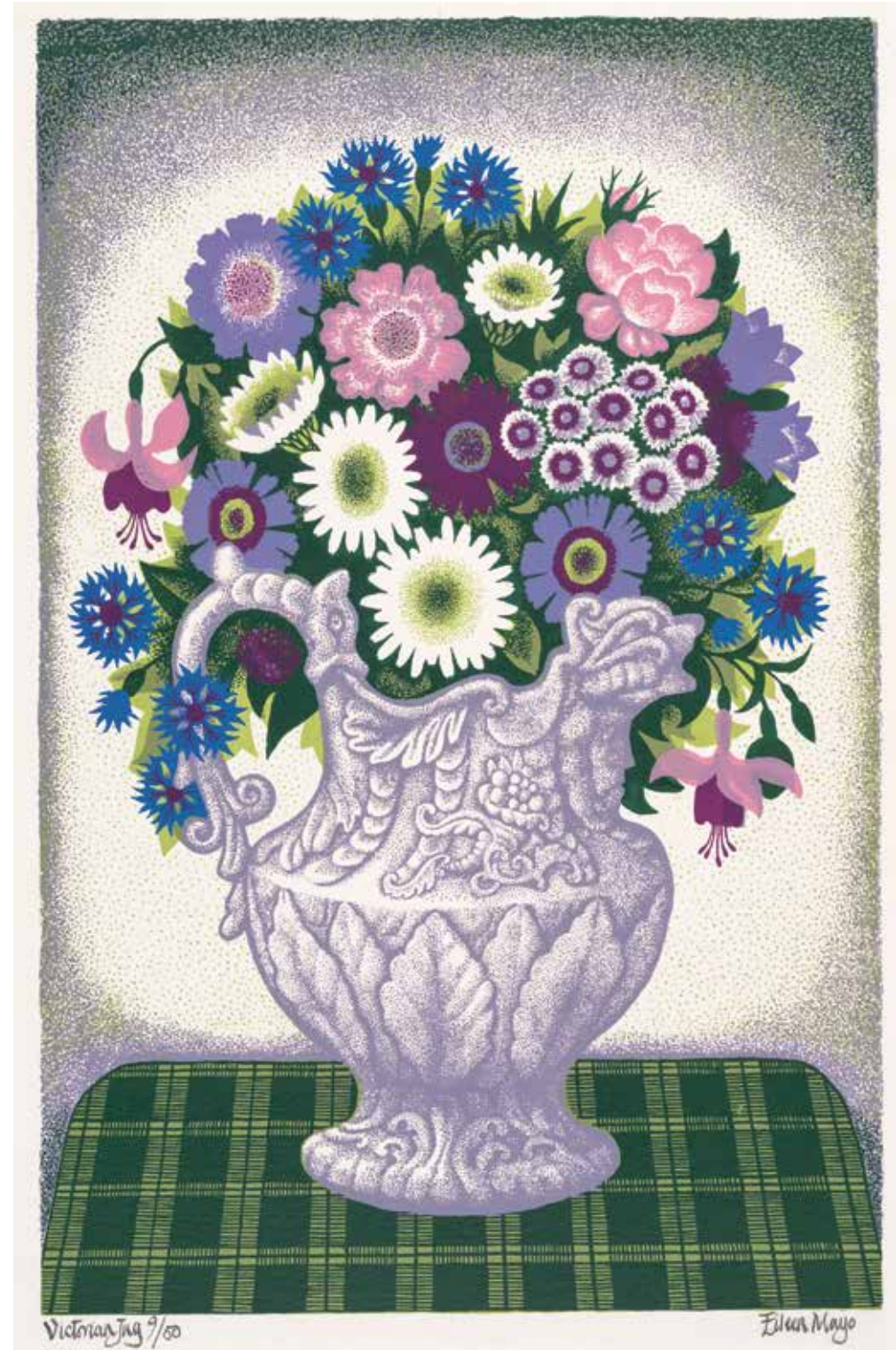


*The Tree* 1981  
Screenprint  
Collection of Te Manawa Art Society Inc.





*Springing Fern* 1983  
 Screenprint  
 Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2011



*Victorian Jug* 1984  
 Screenprint  
 Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1987





*Early Morning* 1981  
 Screenprint  
 Collection of the Aigantighe Art Gallery, Timaru



*White Cat and Poppies* 1985  
 Screenprint  
 Collection of the Aigantighe Art Gallery, Timaru





## CHRONOLOGY OF THE ARTIST'S LIFE

We are grateful to Margaret MacKean-Taylor and Jillian Cassidy for allowing us to revisit their previously published chronologies of Eileen Mayo's life. (See *Selected further reading*.)

**1906** Eileen Rosemary Mayo was born on 11 September in Norwich, England. She was the first child of Violet Elsie Mayo (née Moss) and Hubert Giles Mayo, who was at that time housemaster and head of science at City of Norwich School.

This was a significant time in the history of the education of females in Britain, with radical changes being made in the organisation and administration of schools, giving girls access to a full intellectual life—although they were certainly still expected at some point to exchange intellectual pursuits for domestic preoccupations.

Eileen had two sisters: Margery Alison Mayo was born in 1909; Josephine Audrey Mayo was born in 1913. The family moved to Wakefield, Yorkshire (1913) then Bristol (1918) following Hubert Mayo's teaching appointments.

**1920** The Mayo family moved to Cheshire to accommodate Hubert Mayo's employment as headmaster of Oldershaw School in Wallasey, Cheshire; Eileen remained at Clifton High School in Bristol as a boarder. Between 1 January and 10 October she kept a 'nature diary'. In it, she recorded observations of weather and wildlife, with illustrations of plants and animals at the bottom of most pages. This was the first documentation of her keen eye for the natural world; such recordings of her observations of nature were to become a major resource for her art in the future.

**1921** On 26 December, Hubert Mayo died of a sudden illness aged 41. Violet Mayo remained in Wallasey with her two younger daughters; Eileen returned to Clifton High School to complete school certificate. There she worked as assistant matron in lieu of fees.

The end of World War I in late 1918 brought about a period of unprecedented inflation, which in turn led to a slump in 1921—industries were forced to close and unemployment rose sharply. The 1920s was a decade of critical economic, social and political volatility in England. These were also particularly important years in the social history of women in England, with progress made in recognition of their contribution to the war effort.



Above: Photograph of Eileen Mayo as a child at Eaton Lodge, Norwich, c. 1910. Tate Archive, presented by Eileen Mayo, via her step-son, John Gainsborough, 1991. © Tate, London 2018.

Facing page: Dod Procter (1892–1972) *Eileen Mayo* undated. Oil on canvas. Private collection on loan to Penlee House Gallery & Museum, Penzance, England. © the Artist's Estate / Bridgeman Images, London 2018.



## CHRONOLOGY

**1923** Eileen's academic achievements were outstanding. At 17, Mayo gained school certificate with seven credits and distinction in English—she was named best English scholar in the southwest of England. Encouraged by her art teacher to study painting, Mayo enrolled at the Slade School of Art, University of London. (She chose the Slade over the Royal Academy of Art on account of its reputation as progressive in painting, drawing and printmaking.) She lived with her mother's sister Hilda Shearman and her family in Hammersmith.

**1924** Mayo continued her studies in drawing, anatomy, lettering and perspective at the Slade. Despite its reputation for being the best art school in the country, the Slade did not live up to Mayo's expectations. Her disappointment led her to discover her own resources, and increasingly she began to study independently at the British Museum and the museums in South Kensington.

**1925** Mayo left the Slade and enrolled at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, also in London, attending evening classes in wood engraving, calligraphy, drawing, lithography and historical costume design. She supported herself by working during the day as a freelance designer.

**1926** Violet Mayo and her two younger daughters emigrated to New Zealand, where they had family contacts. Mayo stayed on in London to continue her art education. She was introduced to the artist Laura Knight and began a long association with her as a model and protégé. Each summer from 1926 to 1930, she accompanied Knight and her husband Harold Knight to Newlyn, Cornwall where she modelled for

them. She also posed for Dod Procter, Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and Bernard Meninsky.

**1927** This marked the beginning of several commissions for Beaumont Press in London. The first was a cover for Cyril Beaumont's publication *The First Score*, a history of the Beaumont Press. Laura Knight painted her famous *Dressing for the Ballet* using Mayo as her model. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy that year.



Above: Laura Knight (1877–1970) *No. 1 Dressing Room* 1947 [formerly *Dressing for the Ballet* 1927, repainted and retitled by the artist after the original was damaged]. Oil on canvas. Collection of Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool, England. © reproduced with the permission of The Estate of Dame Laura Knight DBE RA 2019. All rights reserved.

Facing page: Marion Hoppé (1881–1963) *Studio portrait photograph of Eileen Mayo* c. 1929. Photograph. Tate Archive, presented by Eileen Mayo, via her step-son, John Gainsborough, in March 1991. © Tate, London 2018.





**1928–30** Mayo began to develop a reputation as an illustrator, producing work for several limited edition books, including line drawings of the ballet dancer Serge Lifar in Cyril Beaumont's *Serge Lifar* and Edmund Blunden's *Japanese Garland* (both 1928, Beaumont Press) and four wood engravings for *The Poem of Amriolkais* (High House Press).

**1929** To supplement her income, Mayo took up modelling for a life-class at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art, London. There she met Claude Flight, a teacher at the school who was responsible for the rise of the colour linocut in the late 1920s and 30s.

This was the year that all women in Britain gained the right to vote, perhaps the most significant of a series of major changes in the social history of women at that time.

**1930** In response to an invitation from Claude Flight, Mayo designed her first linocut, *Turkish Bath* (see page 33), which was exhibited in *British Linocuts* at the Redfern Gallery, London. Her print was purchased by the Victoria and Albert Museum for their Circulations Department. She received several commissions for book illustrations, and studied modelling and sculpture with Eric Schilsky at the Westminster School of Art.

**1931** Shrinking art opportunities in London saw Mayo travel to Wiesbaden, Germany to broaden her art education by studying in galleries and museums. She supported herself by working as a nanny and tutor and saved sufficient money to travel to Berlin to visit the art galleries there. She continued to exhibit

with the British linocut artists led by Claude Flight at the Redfern Gallery.

**1932/33** Mayo received design commissions from *The Sphere*, *Tatler*, *Radio Times*, Odham's Press, Shell Oil and Jonathan Cape. She also worked as a lithographer for some of the smaller private presses.

**1934** Mayo travelled by cargo ship to Durban in South Africa where she stayed with her cousin May Shearman. She made numerous drawings of the Zulu people and of fauna and flora. However, repelled by the segregation, she returned to England the following year.

**1936** Mayo married Richard (Ralph) Gainsborough, a doctor, and began living with him and his son, John, in London. She resumed her career as a full-time professional artist, using one of the main rooms on the ground floor of their house as her studio.

The 1930s were as turbulent economically, socially and politically as the 1920s had been. As the depression of post-World War I years began to lift in the mid to late 1930s, the threat of a new war dominated the end of the decade. These years saw a general social shift for women as many retreated from the growing freedoms of the 1920s, instead looking for security in the form of husband and home.

**1937–40** Mayo and Gainsborough bought a farmhouse, The Goldings, at Mannings Heath near Horsham in West Sussex. The country house offered a welcome retreat from London. It allowed gardening and domestic pets once more, and many of Mayo's animal and plant studies date from this



period. The intellectual companionship of Ralph Gainsborough was stimulating, especially his interest in the arts and in art publications. Mayo travelled between London and the countryside whenever possible, while studying at Chelsea Polytechnic with Robert Medley, Henry Moore and Harold James. She also studied lithography at Horsham School of Art with Vincent Lines.

By this time, the market for artists' prints was radically reduced and many print galleries closed thanks to the looming threat of war. Mayo needed to think laterally, and during the war years she diversified from printmaking to writing and illustrating books—including her own nature books for the children's educational market.

**1937** Commissioned by Douglas Cleverdon, Mayo illustrated *The Bamboo Dancer and Other African Tales* (Clover Hill Press) with sixteen coloured wood engravings and a title page. Cleverdon published work by some of Britain's leading artists and writers of the time, including Eric Gill, David Jones, Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster and T. S. Elliot. The following year, Mayo produced illustrations, including maps, for *The Story of the World* (Universal Text Books).

Above: Eileen Mayo, illustrations, *The Story of the World*, Universal Text Books, London, 1938. Collection of the Robert and Barbara Stewart Library and Archives, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū.



**1941** With the outbreak of war two years previously, Mayo, her husband and step-son moved to Stroods, a house at Fletching in East Sussex. From there, Ralph Gainsborough operated three medical practices which Mayo assisted in running.

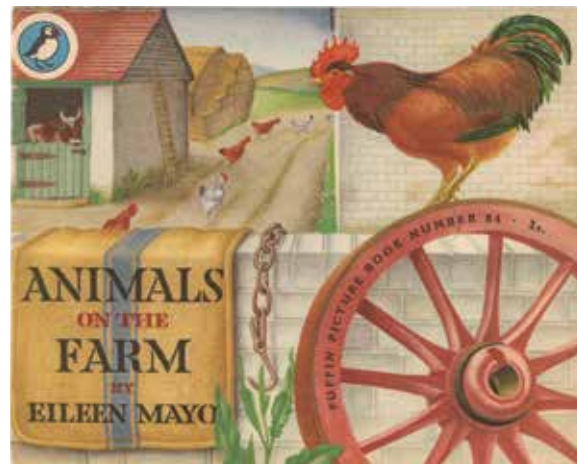
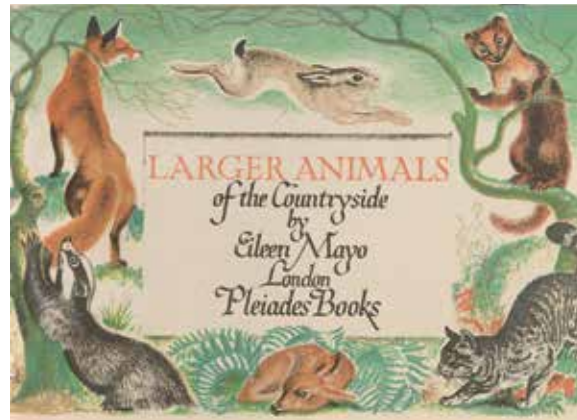
**1944** Mayo was commissioned by the Waverley Book Co. to write and illustrate *The Story of Living Things and Their Evolution*—which featured 300 pages of text and more than 1,000 illustrations. *Shells and How They Live* was published the same year by Pleiades Books. The endpapers in this book are reproductions from *Shells*.

**1945** Mayo wrote and illustrated *Little Animals of the Countryside* (Pleiades Books). She exhibited her work for the first time at the Royal Academy—a lithograph titled *Squirrel*.

**1946** Mayo's prints were included in a tour of loan works by the Arts Council of Great Britain. She illustrated Sally Carrighar's *One Day on Beetle Rock* (Pleiades Books).

**1947** Ralph Gainsborough retired from medicine to pursue his interest in art publications. A house in Chelsea was acquired as a London base. Mayo bought a lithographic press and used the top floor as a studio and living accommodation. The exhibition *Masterpieces of French Tapestry* at the Victoria and Albert Museum had a major impact on Mayo, and she began an extensive study of the medium.

Violet Mayo and Josephine Mayo visited from New Zealand and stayed at Stroods in East Sussex.



Top: Eileen Mayo, title page, *Larger Animals of the Countryside*, Pleiades Books, London, 1949.

Bottom and facing page: Eileen Mayo, cover, illustrations, text and page design, *Animals on the Farm*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, England, 1951.

All collection of the Robert and Barbara Stewart Library and Archives, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū.



**1948** Violet Mayo took on the household duties at Stroods, freeing up Eileen to travel extensively in France where she undertook a study of the historic tapestries at Angers and the Musée de Cluny in Paris. She exhibited her first painting at the Royal Academy (*Stage 17*) and also showed with London's Senefelder Club.

**1949** Mayo returned to France for further studies: she attended life-drawing classes with Fernand Léger and studied tapestry design at the Atelier Tabard at Aubusson and under Jean Lurçat at St Céré. That year she designed her first cartoon for a tapestry, *Royal Avenue, Chelsea*. Back in London, Mayo exhibited at the Royal Academy and with the Royal Society of British Artists, and wrote and illustrated *Larger Animals of the Countryside* (Pleiades Books).

**1950** Mayo studied tapestry-weaving techniques in London with Tadek Beutlich at the Camberwell School of Art. She produced two more cartoons, *Women at Work* and *Echinoderms* (see page 77). Her prints were included in the exhibition *150 Years of Lithography* at the Victoria and Albert Museum from which the museum purchased a print and a stone for its permanent collection. She also exhibited at the Royal Academy and at the Leicester Galleries.

Violet Mayo returned to New Zealand.

**1951** Mayo's *Animals on the Farm* was published by Puffin Books, and she illustrated *Best Cat Stories* for Faber, published the following year. *Echinoderms* was produced as a woven tapestry by the Dovecot Studios and exhibited in the Festival of Britain exhibition *English Tapestries* at Birmingham City Gallery.





Mayo began teaching lithography and illustrations at Sir John Cass College and drawing at St Martin's School of Art. This marked a return to a state of independence, for her marriage was breaking down and would finally end the following year.

**1952** Mayo continued with her teaching and exhibited with the Society of Women Artists at the Royal Institute Gallery and with the Royal British Artists.

The changes in major social trends for women over previous decades saw an increase in the number of divorces—a social shift blamed by conservative critics at the time on the failure of women in their role as wives and mothers. Once married, Mayo had assumed responsibility for the running of her house and the care of her husband's young child from a previous marriage. She was unwilling, however, to sacrifice her career as an artist, and she and Gainsborough eventually divorced. Her marriage over, she left England in December for Sydney, Australia.

**1953** Mayo bought a house in Neutral Bay, Sydney, where her friends Carol and George Foote and her godchild Belinda lived. She exhibited her prints at the Macquarie Gallery, Sydney and worked in the display department at David Jones. She established important contacts with the directors and staff of the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the National Gallery of Victoria, the Australian Museum and the National Art School. Her work continued to be shown in Britain, and *Echinoderms* was exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy.

**1954–56** After training as a teacher, Mayo began teaching illustration and design, part-time, at the National Art School of Sydney. In 1956, she designed posters for the Australian National Travel Association. *Woman with Cat* was selected for inclusion in the Olympic Games exhibition. She was awarded both the Albany Prize for prints and the Ku-ring-gai Prize for printmaking.

**1957** Mayo continued with part-time teaching while designing book-plates, posters and stamps. She also worked for Claude Alcorso of Silk and Textiles, Sydney. Three of her posters were published in the 1955/57 edition of *Modern Publicity*.

**1958** Mayo took up full-time teaching at the National Art School as her main source of income.

**1959** Mayo received a commission from the Australian Museum to contribute fifty-five paintings for a mural called *The Tree of Invertebrates* to commemorate the centenary of the publication of Darwin's book *The Origin of Species*. The same year, she won international recognition for her *Mammal Series* issues of stamps.

**1960** A poster of the Great Barrier Reef (see page 17), chosen as one of the seven best international posters of 1959/60, garnered more international recognition for Mayo. She became a founding member of the Sydney Printmakers Group, and exhibited with them.

**1961** Mayo worked on a mural commissioned by the Commonwealth Institute of Scientific Research Organisation, Sydney.



Top: Eileen Mayo *Echinoderms* 1950. Gouache cartoon for tapestry. Collection of Te Manawa Art Society Inc.

Bottom: Eileen Mayo, untitled tapestry sampler, c. 1966. Woollen sampler section, matted and mounted with a pencil drawing. Collection of Te Manawa Museums Trust.

Facing page: Eileen Mayo, stamps for the Postmaster-General's Department, Australia, released 1959–60.



**1962** Mayo resumed teaching part-time. She won the prestigious Maude Vizard-Wholohan Prize for printmaking before leaving Australia to join her mother Violet Mayo and sister Margery, who were living in Waimate, South Canterbury, New Zealand. Initially, the idea of living in this pretty, rural area appealed to her. She responded to the landscape and enjoyed life in a country town—but Waimate did not allow the access to large libraries, art galleries or museums that was essential for much of her work.

**1963/64** Australian stamp commissions continued. Mayo was invited by the Australian Treasury to submit designs for decimal coinage, and to represent Australia at the International Philatelic Exhibition, Paris.

**1965** Mayo received an invitation to exhibit at the International Print Biennale at Leipzig. She exhibited at the Aigantighe Art Gallery, Timaru and at the Logan Art Gallery and the Rosslyn Gallery, Dunedin. When her sister shifted to Christchurch to resume her career as a teacher, Mayo accompanied her.

**1966** Mayo began to establish herself as a printmaker in Christchurch. Some of her prints were purchased by Stewart MacLennan, the director of the National Art Gallery in Wellington. Her work was exhibited in the International Print Biennale at Lugano; covers for the New Zealand literary journal *Landfall* were commissioned by Charles Brasch; four Great Barrier Reef stamps were issued in Australia; and she submitted designs for decimal coinage and stamp designs to the New Zealand Treasury and the New Zealand Post Office.



**1967–72** In 1967, Mayo began teaching at the Ilam School of Fine Arts at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch. She was awarded a QEII Arts Council fellowship to study contemporary printmaking in Australia, and exhibited widely both nationally and internationally—Lugano in 1968 and Tokyo in 1968 and 1969. Between 1969 and 1985, thirteen sets of her stamps were issued.

**1971** Mayo's work was included in the exhibition *Nine Printmakers Living and Working in Canterbury* at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch (now Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū).

**1972–75** Living in Dunedin, Mayo worked part-time for the Otago Museum where she designed an underwater diorama called *Five Fathoms Deep*

for the new hall of natural history. A retrospective exhibition of her work was shown at the Aigantighe Gallery in Timaru in 1972, and her prints were shown at the Otago Museum in 1973. In 1974 and 75, she taught relief printing at the Kurow summer school.

**1975–1984** On her return to Christchurch in 1975, Mayo drew up plans for a new house and studio and, with these completed, began an intensive period of printmaking and some painting. Relief prints were becoming more difficult for her because of arthritis, so she turned to new methods of silkscreen printing which she used to produce some of her finest prints. In 1976, her painting *Life Dance of Sunflowers* was selected as one of twenty-five works to tour nationally with the Benson and Hedges Art Award



Above: Eileen Mayo, stamps for the New Zealand Post Office, released 1972. Facing page: Eileen Mayo, coin designs, c. 1966. Ink, coloured pencil and gouache on paper. Collection of Te Manawa Museums Trust.



## CHRONOLOGY

exhibition. In 1976, Mayo produced thirty-six paintings over an eight month period for reproduction in an album titled *Rare and Endangered Birds of New Zealand*, published by the Dunedin jelly manufacturer Greggs.

**1985** Mayo designed her last print, *White Cat and Poppies* (see page 67). She also designed the 1985 New Zealand Christmas stamp issue.

**1991** A major archive of Mayo's work was established in the Tate Gallery Archive, London, from material gifted by the artist's step-son, John Gainsborough.

**1992** A major retrospective exhibition, *Eileen Mayo: Designer and Painter*, was mounted by the National Library of New Zealand and toured the country for eighteen months. Unfortunately Mayo was too ill to visit the exhibition.

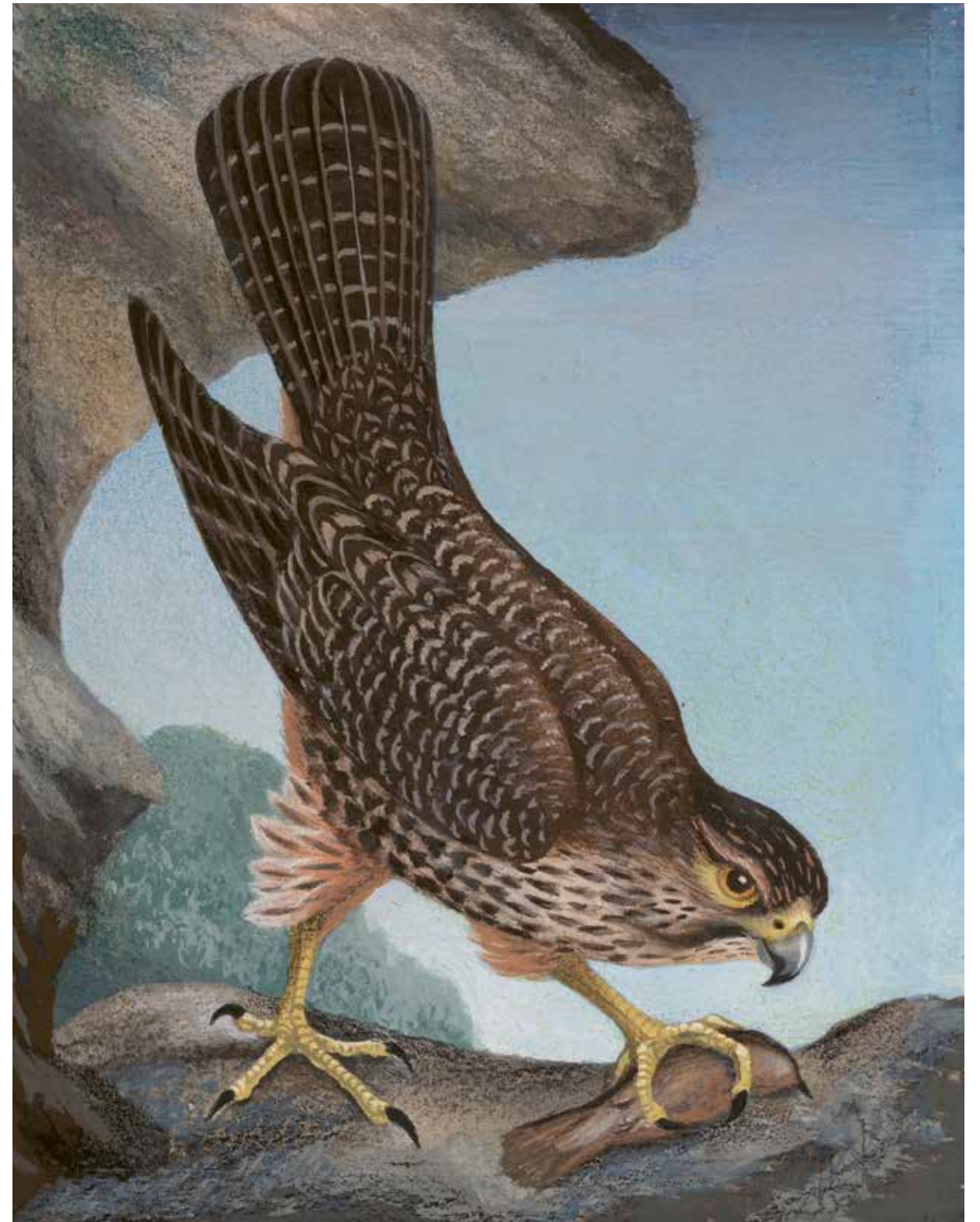
An Eileen Mayo archive was established in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

**1994** Mayo was made Dame Commander of the British Empire in the New Year Honours. She died three days later at Lady King Hospital, Christchurch.



Above: Eileen Mayo, cover of Greggs' *Rare and Endangered Birds of New Zealand*, 1976. Collection of the Robert and Barbara Stewart Library and Archives, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū.

Facing page: Eileen Mayo, *Kārearea / New Zealand Falcon* 1976. Gouache and coloured pencil on paper. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2005.







## LIST OF WORKS

### Eileen Mayo

England / Australia / Aotearoa New Zealand,  
1906–1994

Works are ordered by year. Where there is more than one work in a year, works are listed alphabetically. Measurements are in millimetres, height by width. Measurements of works on paper show the image size and, where possible, the size of the sheet of paper.

### Prints

*Skaters* 1925  
Wood engraving  
113 x 88 mm (image), 205 x 140 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2012  
Page 39

*Turkish Bath* 1930  
Linocut  
330 x 210 mm (image), 355 x 230 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, presented by  
Rex Nan Kivell, 1953  
Page 33

*Cats in the Trees* 1931  
Linocut  
300 x 205 mm (image), 350 x 230 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, presented by  
Rex Nan Kivell, 1953  
Page 37

*Ice Cream Cart* 1932  
Linocut  
307 x 211 mm (image), 510 x 324 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Dunedin Public Art Gallery,  
given 1953 by Rex Nan Kivell of the Redfern  
Gallery, London  
Page 34

*Doric Dairy* 1935  
Linocut  
205 x 275 mm (image), 280 x 310 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, presented by  
Rex Nan Kivell, 1953  
Pages 6 (detail), 35

*The Lobster Pot* c. 1945  
Tempera on board  
410 x 330 mm  
Private collection. Photo © Peter Nahum  
at The Leicester Galleries, London.  
Bridgeman Images, London 2018  
Page 44

*The Doves* 1948  
Wood engraving  
172 x 123 mm (image), 190 x 230 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1972  
Page 41

*Mending the Net* 1949  
Lithograph  
380 x 505 mm (image), 405 x 528 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Dunedin Public Art Gallery,  
given 1953 by Rex Nan Kivell of the  
Redfern Gallery, London  
Page 45

*New Year* 1949  
Wood engraving  
142 x 107 mm (image), 200 x 140 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1972  
Page 42

*Bread and Wine* 1952  
Wood engraving  
170 x 120 mm (image), 250 x 190 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1972  
Page 43

*Mother and Son* 1954  
Wood engraving  
134 x 100 mm (image), 216 x 166 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1972  
Page 40

*Winter Sleep* 1964  
Screenprint  
535 x 330 mm (image), 610 x 380 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2005  
Page 48

*Wounded Bird* 1965  
Linocut  
405 x 303 mm (image), 510 x 324 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Dunedin Public Art Gallery,  
purchased 1965 with funds from the  
Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society  
Page 47

*Summer Evening* 1967  
Linocut  
435 x 330 mm (image), 510 x 380 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, gift of  
Prof. H. John Simpson and family,  
in memory of Ming Simpson, 2017  
Page 49

*Mantis in the Sun* 1968  
Relief print  
535 x 325 mm (image), 615 x 460 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2008  
Page 51

*Moths on the Window* 1969  
Relief print  
535 x 330 mm (image), 625 x 410 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2005  
Page 52



*Pigeon in Winter* 1974  
Relief print  
480 x 360 mm (image)  
Hocken Collections Uare Taoka o Hākēna,  
University of Otago  
Page 53

*Homage to Pierre Finch Martineau Burrows,  
1842–1920* 1977  
Screenprint and relief print  
350 x 535 mm (image)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2011  
Page 54

*Rain, Coal and Wood* 1977  
Relief print  
328 x 530 mm (image), 390 x 600 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2005  
Page 55

*Le Milieu Divin* 1979  
Linocut  
340 x 550 mm (image), 420 x 615 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2005  
Page 60

*Young Sunflower* 1979  
Linocut  
625 x 357 mm (image)  
Collection of Kate Unger, Christchurch  
Page 27

*A Garden Enclosed* 1980  
Screenprint  
325 x 500 mm (image), 365 x 585 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2005  
Pages 4 (detail), 57

*Humpback and Bottlenose* 1980  
Screenprint  
300 x 700 mm (image)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased with  
assistance from the Federation of  
University Women, 2010  
Page 58

*Early Morning* 1981  
Screenprint  
470 x 292 mm (image)  
Collection of the Aigantighe Art Gallery,  
Timaru  
Page 66

*The Tree* 1981  
Screenprint  
469 x 292 mm (image), 597 x 367 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Te Manawa Art Society Inc.  
Page 63

*Alphabets* 1982  
Screenprint  
475 x 285 mm (image), 600 x 365 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1987  
Pages 24 (detail), 61

*Black Swans* 1983  
Screenprint  
290 x 410 mm (image), 366 x 505 mm (sheet)  
Ngaire and George Hewson collection  
Page 59

*Springing Fern* 1983  
Screenprint  
470 x 295 mm (image), 578 x 365 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2011  
Pages 30 (detail), 64

*Victorian Jug* 1984  
Screenprint  
450 x 290 mm (image), 564 x 365 mm (sheet)  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1987  
Page 65, 86 (detail)

*White Cat and Poppies* 1985  
Screenprint  
415 x 270 mm (image)  
Collection of the Aigantighe Art Gallery,  
Timaru  
Page 67

### Commissions

Australia 9d stamp and first day issue  
[kangaroo], Postmaster-General's Department,  
Australia, released 1959  
Page 16

*Australia (The Great Barrier Reef)* 1959  
Lithograph, printed in colour, from  
multiple stones  
1008 x 634 mm  
Collection of the National Gallery of  
Australia, Canberra; gift of Margaret  
MacKean-Taylor, 1993  
Page 17

Australia 8d [tiger cat, released 1960],  
6d [banded anteater, released 1960]  
and 1/ [platypus, released 1959] stamps,  
Postmaster-General's Department, Australia  
Page 76

Designs for New Zealand 1c [blossom and  
bee] and 20c [leaping trout] coins, c. 1966  
Ink, coloured pencil and gouache on paper  
Collection of Te Manawa Museums Trust  
Page 78

New Zealand 2c stamp [Chatham Islands  
mollymawk], New Zealand Post Office,  
released 1970  
Page 7

New Zealand 4c [black scree cotula], 6c  
[North Island edelweiss], 8c [Haast's buttercup]  
and 10c [brown mountain daisy] stamps,  
New Zealand Post Office, released 1972  
Page 79

*Rare and Endangered Birds of New Zealand*  
[set of 35], W. Gregg and Co. [Gregg's], Dunedin  
Page 80 (cover) and:  
*Kākāpō* 1976  
Gouache and coloured pencil on paper  
100 x 125 mm  
Page 22

*Kārearea / New Zealand Falcon* 1976  
Gouache and coloured pencil on paper  
120 x 94 mm  
Page 81

*Kiwi Pukupuku / Little Spotted Kiwi* 1976  
Gouache and coloured pencil on paper  
100 x 125 mm  
Page 22

*Kōtuku / White Heron* 1976  
Gouache and coloured pencil on paper  
94 x 120 mm  
Page 22

*Mātuhituhi / Bush Wren* 1976  
Gouache and coloured pencil on paper  
124 x 98 mm  
Page 21

*South Island Kōkako* 1976  
Gouache and coloured pencil on paper  
100 x 125 mm  
Page 22

*Toroa / Northern Royal Albatross* 1976  
Gouache and coloured pencil on paper  
100 x 124 mm  
Page 22

*Whio / Blue Duck* 1976  
Gouache and coloured pencil on paper  
100 x 125 mm  
Page 22

All collection of Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 2005

### Book Illustrations

*Ode* [reproduction of ink drawing] in  
*Serge Lifar: Sixteen Drawings in Black and  
White* by Eileen Mayo, C. W. Beaumont,  
London, 1928 [unpaginated]  
Page 9

*Onaiza* [wood engraving] and *Deer in  
a Storm* [wood engraving] in *The Poem  
of Amriolkais: One of the Seven Arabian  
Poems or Moallaka Which Were Suspended  
on the Temple at Mecca*, High House Press,  
Shaftesbury, England, 1930 [pages 6, 25]  
Pages 10, 11 respectively

*The Story of the World*, Universal Text Books,  
London, 1938 [unpaginated illustrations]  
Page 73

*Shells and How They Live*, Pleiades Books,  
London, 1944 [illustrations, text and page  
design, pages 20, 21]  
Pages 14, 15

*Larger Animals of the Countryside*, Pleiades  
Books, London, 1949 [illustrations, text and  
title page design]  
Page 74

*Animals on the Farm*, Penguin Books,  
Harmondsworth, England, 1951  
[illustrations, text and page design,  
cover and pages 21 (detail) 28, 29]  
Pages 82, 74, 75 respectively

*Best Cat Stories*, Faber, London, 1952  
[illustrations, pages 16, 34, 240, 266]  
Pages 28, 85, 5, 88 respectively

All collection of the Robert and Barbara  
Stewart Library and Archives, Christchurch  
Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū

### Other

*Echinoderms* 1950  
Gouache cartoon for tapestry  
435 x 595 mm  
Collection of Te Manawa Art Society Inc.  
Page 77

Untitled tapestry sampler, c. 1966  
Woollen sampler section, matted and  
mounted with a pencil drawing  
269 x 200 mm  
Collection of Te Manawa Museums Trust  
Page 77







## SELECTED FURTHER READING

3 *Dunedin Designers: Lily Daff, Rona Dyer, Eileen Mayo* [exhibition catalogue], Hocken Library Gallery, Dunedin, 1999, pages 30–40.

Peter Cape, *Prints and Printmakers in New Zealand*, Collins, Auckland and London, 1974, pages 122–129.

Jillian Cassidy, 'Eileen Mayo and the British Wood Engraving Tradition', *Bulletin of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery*, no. 90, June / July 1994, pages 3–4.

Cassidy, 'Eileen Mayo and the Ballets Russes', *Bulletin of New Zealand Art History*, vol. 17, 1996, pages 41–48.

Cassidy, *Shifting Boundaries: The Art of Eileen Mayo*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 2000 [ir.canterbury.ac.nz/handle/10092/9694, accessed 5 September 2018].

Cassidy, 'Eileen Mayo: Her Prints, Posters and Postage Stamps', *Women's Art Journal*, vol. 24, issue 104/2003, pages 17–22.

Jillian Cassidy and Margaret MacKean-Taylor, *Eileen Mayo: Painter / Designer*, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, 1992.

Stephen Coppel, *Linocuts of the Machine Age*, Scolar Press, Aldershot, 1995.

Claude Flight, *The Art and Craft of Lino Cutting and Printing*, B. T. Batsford, London, 1934, pages iv, 10, 13.

Ken Hall, 'Eileen Mayo's Rare and Endangered Birds of New Zealand', *B.141*, Christchurch Art gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, pages 28–29.

Tony Mackle, 'Turkish Bath', *Art at Te Papa*, Te Papa Press, Wellington, 2009, page 195.

Peter Vangioni, 'New Year', *The Collections*, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2003, page 187.

Vangioni, *Graphica Britannia: The Rex Nan Kivell Gift of British Modernist Prints* [exhibition catalogue], Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2005, pages 61–62.

Vangioni, 'A Garden Enclosed: Eileen Mayo', *101 Works of Art*, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2015, pages 46–47.

### Books by Eileen Mayo

Eileen Mayo, *Shells and How They Live*, Pleiades Books, London, 1944.

Eileen Mayo, *The Story of Living Things and Their Evolution*, Waverley Book Co., London, 1944.

Eileen Mayo, *Little Animals of the Countryside*, Pleiades Books, London, 1945.

Eileen Mayo, *Larger Animals of the Countryside*, Pleiades Books, London, 1949.

Eileen Mayo, *Natures ABC*, Universal Text Books, London, 1949.

Eileen Mayo, *Animals on the Farm*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, England, 1951.

### Books illustrated by Eileen Mayo

Serge Lifar: *Sixteen Drawings in Black and White* by Eileen Mayo, C. W. Beaumont, London, 1928.

*The Children's Circus Book*, illustrated by Eileen Mayo and Wyndham Payne, Associated Newspapers, London, 1935.

Imru' al-Qays, *The Poem of Amriolkais: One of the Seven Arabian Poems or Moallaka Which Were Suspended on the Temple at Mecca*, translated into English by William Jones, illustrated by Eileen Mayo, High House Press, Shaftesbury, England, 1930.

Cyril Beaumont, *The First Score: An Account of the Foundation and Development of the Beaumont Press and its first Twenty Publications*, cover pattern designed by Eileen Mayo, Beaumont Press, London, 1927.

Beaumont, *Toys*, decorations by Eileen Mayo, C. W. Beaumont, London, 1930.

Beaumont, *A Primer of Classical Ballet (Cecchetti Method) for Children*, illustrated by Eileen Mayo, C. W. Beaumont, London, 1933.

Beaumont, *A Second Primer of Classical Ballet (Cecchetti Method) for Children*, illustrated by Eileen Mayo, London, 1938.

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## AUTHOR NOTES

### **Peter Vangioni**

Peter Vangioni is a curator at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū.

His interest in Eileen Mayo began (although he didn't yet know it) when he was introduced to her work as a young stamp collector during the 1970s.

Peter has, over the past decade or so, actively acquired work by Mayo for the Gallery's collection.

### **Jillian Cassidy**

Jillian Cassidy lectured in art History at the University of Canterbury until 2009, specialising in medieval art history and contemporary prints. She wrote her PhD thesis on Eileen Mayo and has published widely on the artist's work.

