

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE26091098

Martin, Florence Beresford

(1908 - 1984)

Born	19080828, Ballarat Victoria Australia
Died	19841220, Darling Point New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Artist, Designer, Painter

Summary

Florence Martin was a theatrical designer and artist known for her fantasy watercolour paintings. She worked as a designer alongside her sister, Kathleen Martin, and exhibited in Australia, London and New York. Her works are held by the National Gallery of Victoria, the National Gallery of Australia and the National Library of Australia.

Details

In 1935, after completing her degree in art in Melbourne, Florence held her first exhibition of watercolour paintings in collaboration with her sister Kathleen, at Margaret Mclean's Gallery in Kodak House in Collins Street, Melbourne. By 1936, the sisters had begun designing for the Dolia Ribush Theatre Company, working on various productions including Maxim Gorky's *The Lower Depths*. In 1937-38 the duo designed for Chekhov and Gorky plays and for the recently published *Murder in the Cathedral* by TS Eliot. The sisters gained further recognition in 1940 as designers for Igor Schwyzoff's production of the ballet *La Lutte Eternelle*, part of the Original Ballet Russe tour in Sydney, and for the Australian ballet *Flagstaff Hill*.

In 1942 the two sisters went to the United States of America, where Florence sought treatment for her paraplegia. In 1945, Florence began to exhibit her paintings with the George Binet Gallery in New York. In America, she continued to design for the theatre alongside her sister and became a member of the United Scenic Artists of America. In 1952, the sisters moved to London where Florence gave up theatre design to focus on her painting practice. Over the next three decades, Florence exhibited regularly in Australia, London and New York. Her works are held by the National Gallery of Victoria, the National Gallery of Australia and the National Library of Australia.

Published resources

Edited Book

Heritage : the national women's art book, 500 works by 500 Australian women artists from colonial times to 1955, Kerr, Joan, 1995

Book

The encyclopaedia of Australian art, McCulloch, Alan, 1994

Ballet Russes: The art of costume, Bell, Robert, 2010,
<https://nga.gov.au/exhibitions/ballet-russes/>

Archival resources

National Gallery of Australia

[James Gleeson interviews Florence Martin](#)

[Papers of Kathleen and Florence Martin](#)

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection

[Florence and Kathleen Martin collection](#)

Author Details

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