This publication has been produced by the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puta o Wānanga to support the exhibition Owen Merton - Expatriate Painter, 11 June - 26 September 2004.

We are grateful to Spicers Portfolio Management Ltd for their sponsorship of this exhibition.

Owen Merton & Catalogue Essay Roger Collins
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Front cover: (1910, English Hill, 1910)
Watercolour
Collection of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puta o Wānanga
Gift of lietl, New Zealand, 1956
OWEN MERTON

EXPATRIATE PAINTER

CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY
Owen Merton was a Canterbury-born artist, and it was in Christchurch that he received his formative education. In 1904, like many New Zealanders prior and since, Merton made a decision to live and study overseas. In doing so, he took the potentially hazardous path that was too often the lot of the expatriate - risking loss of profile at home and struggling for identity abroad. Despite setbacks, his direct experience of modern art movements internationally enabled him to develop a reputation as an accomplished artist, particularly as a landscape watercolurist.

Lack of exposure within New Zealand has meant that Merton has been more neglected than most expatriate painters of his generation. However, recent research on the artist has revealed a rich, complex life and career within the world of New York modernism. This exhibition, Owen Merton - Expatriate Painter, reconsiders a fine artist, too long overlooked.

His son Thomas Merton, the celebrated Trappist monk and writer on Christian spirituality, once wrote of his father:

"His vision of the world was full of balance, full of veneration for structure ... and therefore his paintings were without decoration or superficial comment. My father painted like Cézanne and understood the landscape the way Cézanne did."

Owen Merton - Expatriate Painter is the first significant exhibition of Merton's work since the tour of a private American collection through New Zealand in the late 1970s, and his first comprehensive retrospective. It is an overdue acknowledgement of Merton as a talented landscapist, illustrator, genre, marine and architectural painter.

I would like to thank Ono art historian and our guest curator Dr Roger Collins, whose extensive knowledge of the artist has helped create both the exhibition and this publication. Many private and public lenders, both in New Zealand and overseas, have been generous in providing access to their collections, and their assistance is greatly appreciated.

I commend the Gallery team and all those who have made this publication and exhibition possible, in particular Spicers Portfolio Management Ltd for their very welcome sponsorship.

R. Anthony Preston
Director, Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu
New word

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event was a turning point
in his life. He
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career as a
landscape painter and
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It is an overdue recognition of Merton as a
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P. Anthony Preston
Director, Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Owen Merton, France
1973-74
Photograph
Collection of the Christchurch Art
Gallery, Te Puna o Waiwhetu
Owen Merton
Expatriate Painter

Caricaturist and Illustrator, genre, marine, townscape and architectural painter, landscapist, a conservative Edwardian in his teens and early twenties who metamorphosed into a modernist of the New York School in his thirties – Owen Merton was all of these, yet in the general view he has remained an artist of, at best, two pictures: a genre subject, A second-hand shop, Paris (1910, p. 7), and a landscape, Riwikia (1908, p. 9), both reproduced in major books.

The generous coverage of his work by Art in New Zealand in 1950 is not unusually accentuated, and both a 1952 Auckland exhibition of expatriate painters, in which Merton was represented, and a collection of 45 works from a private American collection toured by the National Art Gallery in 1979, have left only shadowy memories, even though some works from this last show eventually entered New Zealand collections. Merton’s presence on the art market has also been discreet.

Merton’s career parallels those of many of his contemporaries: study in New Zealand and abroad, work in conventional sketching grounds, inclusion in overseas exhibitions, acceptance by dealer galleries, and regular appearances with art societies to maintain a New Zealand link.1 The relationship of these ‘expatriates’ to the development of New Zealand art is ambiguous. Commentators occasionally suggest that they hold no relevance, especially since public acceptance here of their mature work was often fraught. Merton’s story mirrors those of his friends – Francis Hodgkins and Raymond McIntyre became British artists, Maud Sherwood became an Australian painter – and Merton, at the peak of his career, became an American one. Nevertheless, the expatriates as a group are so numerous, the gap created within the New Zealand art establishment by their departures so substantial and the advantages for the artists themselves so profound, that they must be considered a major subset of New Zealand-born artists, however tenuous their ties eventually became.

Christchurch, 1887–1904
Owen Merton was born in Cashel Street, Christchurch, in 1887, into a family active in the church, education and the arts, in a community that admired and honoured musical skill and artistic accomplishment. His father was a musician and a school teacher, but Merton was arguably closer to his mother, who was supportive in both practical and financial, ways, university-educated, widely read and also a teacher. He was educated at Christ’s College, where his father taught.

Aged 16, Merton attended classes at the Canterbury University College School of Art. In the first term, he attended a life class taught by Charles Kidson on Wednesdays, and a drawing and painting class taken by Annie Elizabeth Abbott and Helen F. Gibson on Fridays. In the second, he added instruction in drawing and painting with the same instructor on Mondays, and maintained the same Wednesday and Friday classes. In the third term, the life class was replaced by another drawing and painting class, taught by A.W. Walke. Merton also seems to have spent a brief, unhappy time working in a Christchurch bank, but in 1904 he escaped from New Zealand to study in London, apparently at the invitation of his mother’s sister, Maud Pearce.

London, 1904—07
Aunt Maud and her husband Ben, who had no children of their own, deserve special mention in even a brief outline of Merton’s life. Their successive homes in West London became a stable base in his European life, though he often lived elsewhere in the city and spent much time on the Continent, and enabled him to maintain a

2. Merton exhibited with art societies in Christchurch (1891–7, 1902, 1905), Dunedin (1900–2, 1904–5, 1906–7), Wellington (1907–8, 1909, 1910, 1912–14, 1917, 1920), Auckland (1908, 1910, 1912), Hobart (1911, 1913) and Hamilton (1912). He had three solo exhibitions in Christchurch (1908, 1911, 1913), shared in Wellington, a two-person show with Frenew Hodgkins (1908) and a three-person show with G.K. Richmond, Raymond McIntyre and Percy Hodgkins (1909), and organized an auction of his paintings in Christchurch (1909). His Reminiscences has been found in a solitary solo exhibition in Christchurch in 1904.
3. Records, archives, University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts, 1903, and Canterbury College, Christchurch School of Art (inception for 1903).
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façade of respectability, though his emotional entanglements sometimes reduced him to devious expedients. Merton, and later his elder son, always found a generous welcome with the Peacocks. Aunt Maud also funded Merton's studies, at least from his first visit in 1904 until his marriage in 1914. The Peacocks took him on holiday with them on several occasions, and they gave him a home from the time when ill-health declared itself until he entered hospital in 1929.

Obliquity surrounds Merton's first period of overseas study, and no firm evidence has yet been found to confirm the claim that he studied from 1904 to 1906 at both the New School of Art in the Clarence Cove Galleries, Gloucester Road (under John Hassall and Charles van Havermeest), and the Ealing Art School (under William Mount. Louder).

At the New School of Art, he may have received instruction in Drawing and Painting in Oil and Water-Colour from Life and Still Life; also Poster Design and Black-and-White. The 'serious' watercolours of Hassall (1868–1943) are now largely forgotten, although once upon a time they earned him membership of the Royal Institute of Watercolour Painters, while his 'commercial' work— which included illustrations for children's books, advertisements and posters—has retained a respected place in the History of English art. Van Havermeest (31. 1885–1911), who had left Belgium where his exhibition career had started in 1892 to follow his profession in London, was another of the school's principals. He showed figure and genre paintings at the Royal Academy from 1901 to 1911 and, according to Merton, eventually developed a lucrative line in portraits.

Loudon (1886–1925) had been born of Scottish parents in London and was educated first at Dulwich College and then at the Royal Academy Schools. Loudon was known as both a genre painter and a portraitist, but eventually he devoted himself almost entirely to the latter. Although it could be said that the title of Loudon's Blue and Gold (1909, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa) focuses on the painter's question of colour, the young woman sitting pensively in a shady woodland setting belongs to a Victorian sentimental genre, and the title of a second work in the same collection, 'If no one ever marries me (unmarried), belongs even more emphatically to that aesthetic. Furthermore, we can muse on the iconography of Royal Academy pictures, collections unknown, by van Havermeest such as Sleep and his brother Death (1905), The end of the story (1909) or Something interesting (1911).

If Merton did attend these schools, his two years there did not expose him to any innovative art, but rather confirmed tastes already familiar from his colonial background. He also demonstrated a particular affinity for caricature and illustrations, especially as exemplified in the periodical press. He executed some genre and figure subjects, such as a watercolour of his aunt at a writing desk and a drawing of himself working at the easel (both in private collections, Auckland), pencil studies of buildings and village scenes, as well as caricatures (Canterbury Public Library) and pen and ink scenes of farming life, two of which are explicitly linked to the New Zealand-born writer, Dora Wilcox. To Manchester by Dora Wilcox


To Manchester by Dora Wilcox 1916 [above]

To Manchester by Dora Wilcox 1916 [above]

Collection of the Christchurch Art Gallery; Felicity A Bracken, presented by the artist's family, 1975

Rihotu 1908

Watercolour

Collection of the Auckland City Art Gallery; bequest of the artist, 1969
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(1906, p. 8) and Grass Seedling by Dora Wilcox (1905, Christchurch Art Gallery) were presumably conceived to illustrate two of Wilcox’s poems (“To Manuia” was included in her second collection, Rata and Mistletoe), but no evidence has been found that they, or two other related drawings dated 1905, were ever published. During this time, Merton also travelled to various corners of southern England, and crossed to France at least once.

New Zealand, 1907–1909

Sailing home early in 1907, Merton sketched in Napier, Port Said, Suez, Colombo, Fremantle and Adelaide, and views of these places were eventually exhibited in New Zealand’s four main centres – Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. Among the records of his encounter with the exotic East are a vivid study of a P. E. O. Boat at Suez (1907) and a major watercolour of a Fruit Stall, Port Said (1907, p. 11), painted on his arrival in New Zealand and exhibited in Wellington in October of the same year. In this confident and accomplished picture, a dignified Arab stands in the shade of his stall’s awning, with a group of figures placed in bright light beyond.

In writing of this and similar works, some critics faulted their familiarity with contemporary British painting by suggesting analogies with the work of the orientalist painters Frank Brangwyn (1867–1956) and Arthur Melville (1828–1904)." The most obvious similarity with these artists lies in the choice of subject, but Merton also uses strong chromatics, like Melville, and, on occasion, to enjoy working with the same range of rich colours as Brangwyn. Brangwyn’s Orange Market (1897, collection unknown), which Merton could have known through a reproduction published in 1905, offers disconcerting similarities with Fruit Stall, Port Said. Two figures, partly in sun and partly shaded by an awning, are seated in the foreground with their stock of oranges on which the light falls; the awning of the stall creates a band of shadow through the centre of the picture space, and more figures appear in a sunny open area beyond.

Merton also sketched and worked from the motif (in front of the subject or on-site), but did not paint far: Wellington in the north, Motueka in the north-west, Christchurch in the south, Arthur’s Pass in the west and perhaps Mt Cook in the south-west, define the limits of his travels. Some of these works, such as In Hagley Park, Christchurch (1908) and Wellington from the Botanical Gardens (1908), are rather subdued, but others display a spontaneous joy in bright colour. Motueka, with its large patch of blue-and-white sky and dominant bright gold and tan washes, and Near Motueka (1908) are examples.

Merton’s colour received frequent favourable comment in these years. Works seen in Christchurch in June 1907, including P. E. O. Boat at Suez, showed ‘a fine appreciation of colour,’ according to the Press’s reporter: ‘The colouring is mostly pleasing,’ said an unidentified Wellington newspaper in 1908; and ‘Mr Merton, in the major portion of the collection, has been very effective in his use of colour,’ observed the Lyttelton Times in February 1909. On another occasion, Merton was placed in a group of ‘exponents of the atmospheric school [. . .] who are examples in the strongest way of the movement towards tone and colour.’

Some individual works came in for more detailed comment, including Fruit Stall, Port Said. The New Zealand Times spoke of ‘a bluish note’ while the Evening Post took obvious pleasure in naming the colours: red, black, orange, brown, sapphire, white. Another Wellington newspaper used the same strategy, although in a curiously lower key – red, dark, sapphire, brown, blue, deeper blue: white – but made a perceptive addition to its description by recognizing that the white building was intended to throw ‘the other colours into greater

8. Reproduced in W. D. Spooner’s The South of England.)
10. Thomas Merton Centre (1952), Memoirs of George Allen, p. 3.
11. (Lyttelton Times, 24 March 1907, p. 9.)
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Fruit Stall, Port Said 1907
Watercolour
Collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington

References:
10. Lyttelton Times, 24 March 1909, p. 3.
prominence. In 1908, the Evening Post's writer described another oriental subject, The Stranger, as a "strong note," a sort of chromatic staccato, recognized as one of Merton's traits.13

England, the Netherlands and France, 1909–10

Merton returned to England at the end of May 1909 and resumed study under van Haemstede. In whose house he lived until the following March. He worked hard, even incorporating into his program a little over a month (mid-July to late August) of sketching in the Netherlands, where he revelled in picturesque buildings, sailing craft on the canals and scenes of everyday life.

Back in London, he then spent an extended period working indoors, which allowed him to develop more complex works such as 'a big study of a bit of the Studio.' He was working on an oil painting in mid-September. He also began the first of a series of carefully staged genre compositions for which he collected props and hired an appropriate model. In this instance a study of an old Jewish model in a shop 'full of pots pans, lamps & old pictures, & it ought to be fine, if we have the chance to keep him here.' Neither this work nor its immediate successor, the interior of a sweet shop, can now be located; the same applies to Dutch Toy Shop (date unknown) and Second-hand books shop (date unknown), which were exhibited in London in the spring of 1910. The wherabouts of a further work, At an Auction Sale (1910, p. 13), are unknown. All three were described collectively in the Christchurch Press as belonging to the 8th interior class, in which (Merton) is so successful.14

At an Auction Sale, Merton seems to display the range of his skills. The elderly gentleman's clothing - the sheen of his top hat and the shine of his shoes, and the matt overcoat in a range of tones depending on whether the light falls directly or casts shadows - offers a fundamental contrast with the colours of the rest of the work: in the pictures, the frames and mounts, in some blue and white porcelain vases, and in the multi-coloured, patterned carpet. Merton further shows off his skill with textures by placing the carpet on a highly polished wooden floor that reflects nearby objects. The nervous curves of the vases and the rectilinear rigour of the framed pictures contrast effectively.

These genre compositions doubtless owe something to the example of van Haemstede, who had exhibited paintings titled The charmer (date and collection unknown) and The connoisseur (date and collection unknown) at the Royal Academy in 1909 and 1904 respectively, but they also sit very easily in the general company of Edwardian painting. In 1910, Duncan Grant made a portrait of James Strachey ( Tate Gallery) in which the subject sits cross-legged in a chair with a book on his lap. A folding screen encloses him in a small space created within the larger space of the room, which is alluded to by the pattern on the Persian carpet extending around the screen. For Francis Spalding, this work shows the Edwardian love of elegant restraint. The tonal shading and receding pattern on the Persian carpet help situate the figure within a convincing space. His relaxed pose finds an echo in the positioning of the motif on the screen behind. The apparent informality distracts attention from the careful deliberation that guides the whole.15 There is no 'Vague restraint' in At an Auction Sale - indeed, Merton's virtuosity is almost extroverted - but the painting does fulfil Spalding's other criteria. By March 1910 it was time to move on, and Merton left London for the popular sketching ground of Saint Ives, in Cornwall, where he remained until the end of June. Once he got into his stride, he kept more than one work on the

12 Evening Post, 21 September 1910, p. 3.
14 His line was linked to membership of the Royal Society of British Artists. In March 1910, was represented in her second exhibition (1910–11), and resigned in March 1912.
15 Ayes, 4 May 1910, p. 4.
13. New Zealand Times, 15 October 1910, p. 7; Evening Star, 15 October 1910, p. 2; unnumbered clipping, 30 October 1910, TMC.
12. Evening Post, 28 September 1910, p. 3.
11. Queen [Merton] [Handwritten]: G. H. & Mrs. Gertrude Merton [as Merton], 17/11 Xmas 1979, Humanities Research Centre (HRC), Texas.
10. Merton was elected to membership of the Royal Society of British Artists in March 1910, was represented in her successive exhibitions (1910–11), and resigned in March 1912. (See No. 6, p. 4.)

At an Auction Sale in 1910
Watercolour
In private collection of the Merton family, Auckland
go simultaneously—the outside view of a particular shop on grey days, for instance, and something else for sunny afternoons. His practice included drawing, working in oils and taking photographs, despite the incongruity this involved. I must say it looks extremely bad for a man who is supposed to be painting to be seen snapshotting the boats coming in in the evening sunlight. However, he is faced with enough to do it. It is impossible to assess how important photographs were to his work, but it is possible that his facelessness may have extended to the careful copying of his own, or others', images. Several of Merton's watercolours of St Ives, including The Beach, St Ives, Cornwall (1910) and St Ives, Bannow Hill (1910, p. 15), correspond closely to early photographs of the town. The angles from which the subjects are taken, the masting of volumes and even the fall of shadow are the same in each.

In July, he travelled to the Breton fishing town of Concarneau—like St Ives, a place much frequented by artists—to join a class taken by Francis Hodgkins. She now became his ideal model of professional achievement and generosity as a teacher. Several of his Concarneau paintings were exhibited in New Zealand in the following years—one of them was even reproduced in a Canterbury Society of Arts catalogue—but none can now be located. Here, too, he was fascinated by the local fishing boats, the colours of their sails, the geometry of the buildings around the port and the challenge of capturing the effects of light on the water.

France, Spain, England and Italy, 1910–14

These weeks in Brittany, and a breathless holiday he took travelling in western France in August, converted Merton to the idea of formal study in one of the Parian art schools. He settled in Paris in mid-September 1910, working first of all (1910–11) in the well-known Académie Colarossi (where Hodgkins had taught the previous winter) and then (1911–13) under Canadian-born painter Percy Tudor-Hart. The handful of paintings recorded from these years includes some townscapes, among them Rue des Carmes (1911, p. 17), which continues his exploration of three-dimensional space constructed by rigid architectural geometry, and three genre subjects that extend the theme of a carefully defined interior space inhabited by a single figure. In mid-November 1910, Merton was sweating over a "shop" painting, "trying fearfully hard to make a good thing out of it" and "praying for sense to see straight." Rather unconventionally, he worked on a preliminary study in oil, before tackling the final version in watercolour, but things did not go easily. "I am puzzling my brains over this last shop, I am at it—It is a problem to work at a thing like that in oil, full of small things, and anyhow it is only as a study for a watercolour." In the first days of December he went around "all the low shops [...] getting things for my old man's shop" by the 12th of that month, his oil study was well advanced and he also had "an elaborate drawing all ready for the watercolour", and on that day he had his models for the first time. This became the work exhibited as A second-hand shop, Paris. Another subject he was working on in the same winter, and which he completed at about the same time, became the oil Brittany-piscine (1910, private collection, New Zealand). Hodgkins believed that Merton 'went off' as a painter after he switched from Colarossi's to Tudor-Hart's school. Nevertheless, Tudor-Hart was a charismatic teacher who would remain an influential figure through much of Merton's life. Merton followed him to London at the end of 1913, again working under his guidance in the late 1910s. In 1918, Tudor-Hart offered Merton a fixed annual payment in exchange for a selection of his output.
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St Ives, Barnecon Hill 1910
Watercolour
Collection of the Chiswick Art Gallery and Museum, gift of James M. Innes, 1992
Merton spent the summer of 1911 in a group led by Tudor-Hart, painting in the Spanish Basque country where he continued to study architectural forms, usually, but not exclusively, expressed in a bright palette. In the coastal town of Pasajes, for instance, he was attracted to "Victor Hugo's house", as it was called. The French writer had once stayed there and a commemorative plaque recorded the fact. "Victor Hugo's house is a delight in itself," Merton told his mother. "Quite apart from its sentimental interest, every stone in it is charming. I don't believe there is a house in Fontainebleau as beautiful, and I hope I shall have at least one thing of it done." He then confessed that he was inclined to "lose horror" but, with an active professional conscience, admitted that "the sight of some old houses or other [would] be sufficient to get [his] blood up." These statements are consistent with the watercolours from this summer's sketching that have been located—all are studies of buildings—although there is evidence that he painted some landscapes too. The "architectural" theme had occupied an important place in Merton's work up to this point, not simply as an excuse for more or less exotic or romantic meditations, but as one way of structuring experience, of finding order in the wider world. In the summer of 1912, Merton accompanied Tudor-Hart to two sketching grounds in England, producing, among other things, studies of farm buildings and haystacks, and some moody landscapes. Udoroni, Suzzex (1912), in which Merton’s preoccupation with the construction of objects in space addresses the awkward elongation of a windmill, exemplifies the best of his work from this summer. Meanwhile, during the Spanish interlude, Merton had met an American art student named Ruth Jenkins, whom he would later marry. The pair spent from early April to late June 1913 together, travelling, painting and studying art in the south of France and Italy—mostly south of Naples on the Amalfi coast. Merton stayed on after Ruth travelled to New York in June, returning to London only in early October.

He needed to produce a substantial body of salable work in these months, as a preparation for his future professional life, but first he had to adapt his vision to the light in this unfamiliar landscape. The difficulty of tuning one’s eyes to the new light is quite enough to make one weep six or eight weeks. By July, his eyes were "burned" and he realized how much he felt at home in this environment—"I am a good man when I am down in the South in the strong light & colour, & the air & the sea bathing keep me fresh." Merton was already a spontaneous colourist, as both Klee and Van Gogh demonstrate, and his studies with Tudor-Hart had made him very conscious of the scientific side of his craft. Too conscious perhaps, for he seems to have become engrossed in ideas and hampered in his painting by earnest attempts to master theoretical issues. Nevertheless, he was slowly working through this problem: "I think I am learning a lot about colour. The theory that I have driven into my head actually simplifies things enormously." But he was more than a conscientious student: unpicking ideas. He saw the world as a highly coloured place, and when he took the time he could paint a word-picture every bit as rich and sensual as those he made in watercolours.

Rue des Canonici, Paris 1911
Watercolour
Art Resource, NY
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and when he took the time he could paint a word-
picture every bit as rich and sensuous as those he made
in watercolour.

[], when I climb any height at all, I believe I am looking
at the most wonderful landscape I have ever seen.
The rock of the hills, on which it is all built up, is red,
and orange, and neutral colours, that is set down on
a wonderful smooth plain of blue violet & grey, &
all upon the hills which are scarred by yellow & red
bunds of roads & walls, and the thickest green foliage,
& growths of plants, (the way the lemons grow so
upright, & strong pushing, was new to me) cover tightly everything over, & solid houses stand everywhere they can manage to in the crush. Green here is wonderful because it is in the midst of so much of the opposite colours [...]

The solitary Italian watercolour that has been located, a view of Amalfi (1915, p. 10), seems to arise logically from preceding works, although the architectural components are here subsumed to the forceful landscape. The artist's reflective processes are revealed by a delicate infrastructural of pencil lines that is sharpened by contrasting flat washes of strong colour and a network of nervous calligraphic lines. Areas of orange and the touches of intense red acknowledge the Mediterranean sun and heat.

Meanwhile, in New York where she was spending the winter with her family, Ruth organized an informal (and unsuccessful) exhibition of her fiancé's watercolours at her parents' home on Long Island, in December 1913.

South of France and New York, 1914–21

The young couple married in London in April 1914 and settled in Paris, in the French Pyrenees, where they lived until poverty forced them to retreat to the United States in mid-1916. By this time, their family had grown: their first son, Tom, was born in January 1913 (Tom later redefined himself as Thomas in the 1930s). A small number of Merton's paintings dating from this period were subsequently exhibited in the United States and New Zealand.

Life in the United States was difficult. There were tensions between the Merlins and Ruth's parents: the couple was unwilling to accept money from their parents, who, in turn, felt frustrated. Ruth wrote articles on domestic architecture and interior design; they both worked as farm labourers for a time; Owen played the piano in a local cinema and the organ in a local church, even himself up in business as a landscape gardener and designer; and of course painted. Within a short time of reaching New York, he had joined one artists' organisation, and from 1917 to 1925 exhibited his works at least twenty-five times in group and solo exhibitions, with artists' groups and in dealer galleries, sometimes in prestigious curated shows alongside the leading American modernists. However, although numerous works from this period are known by their titles as reported in exhibition catalogues and press reports, only one can now be located.

A second son, John Paul, was born in 1919. A short time later in 1920, Ruth fell gravely ill and was diagnosed as having cancers of the stomach and colon. It is clear that Tom returned to live with his grandparents in New York around this time, and likely John Paul too. It is plausible that Owen, and perhaps Ruth for a short time before she was finally admitted to Bellevue, the major public hospital in Manhattan's Lower East Side, also moved with their children. Ruth died in October 1921, after which it seems Merton was there in his movements, although he remained aware of his responsibilities to his sons.

Bermuda, 1921–23

In the winter of 1921/22 Merton left Tom and John Paul with their grandparents and travelled to Bermuda to paint. While there, he formed a friendship with an American couple – the modernist poet and novelist Evelyn Scott and her husband, Cyril Kay Scott.

Merton returned to the United States in the summer of 1922, part of which he spent at Cape Cod with one of his sisters, visiting from New Zealand, and his son Tom. At just age three, John Paul remained with his grandparents when Merton went back to Bermuda in October 1922; this time accompanied by Tom, and painted watercolours original in their composition and remarkable for
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Anrell 1913

Pencil and watercolour

Private collection, Canada.
their intense colours. During this time, Merton became Evelyn Scott's lover. They were to live together until mid-1925, in a passionate but tempestuous relationship they contemplated marriage but Tom's antagonism to his de facto stepmother scotched that possibility.

In general, Merton's surviving works from the years before 1914 demonstrate a concern with the construction of three-dimensional objects in space — mostly buildings but sometimes landscapes; however, from then to the early 1920s, too few works have been located to allow close examination of the development of his work. When the sequence of evidence resumes, with a group of major, innovative works painted in Bermuda, Merton has undergone a profound transformation. His colour is now incandescent (as it had been in Amalfi), but the picture space is compressed and the surface of the sheet is emphasised by occasional patches of uncoloured paper. Everything contributes to a modernist concern with the picture plane. He had spent several years away from Tudor Hart's influence; he had been living and painting on the fringes of the New York School, sharing exhibitions with painters such as John Marin (with whom he seems to have most affinity), Charles Demuth and Marsden Hartley, and he had met Scott, whose ideas and example must have contributed to his evolution.

Merton's constant concern had been to find a firm structure for his pictures, and most of the island paintings feature a straight horizon, sometimes interrupted by low hills, usually placed about halfway up the picture. The broad skies are pulled down vertically, the fore- and middle-ground are stacked up in bands, and three-dimensional illusion is sacrificed to an emphatic flat picture plane. It is almost as if, especially in paintings such as Burning Fields and Cold Motion of Stillness (1922-23), p. 23), he were trying to illustrate the following description in Scott's autobiographical memoir. Escapade, completed in Bermuda and published in July 1923.

The sky, without a sun, is a formless solution of light, and the horizon rises against it and is flat like a wall with a deep-colored steel edge. Straight up over the house, clouds, dull purple, move across the zenith with vast unhampered rapidity. The sun bursts open the sky. On the cold ocean it makes a pool of hot glass. The horizon line, momentarily illuminated, is thin like white-hot wire stretched taut.31

Indeed, Scott would later make the plausible claim that she had influenced Merton's art. Actually the constant contact with my much clearer mentality has given continuity [sic] to his intuitions and sharpened his own mental sense in art.32

Some of the Bermuda paintings have the matter-of-fact titles indicating place that Merton used throughout his career. Others, however, are composed in a poetic style quite unlike his standard practice: the instances in this exhibition are Burning Fields and Cold Motion of Stillness, The Road of Sky — Laughter passing below (1922-23) and Ascension of the day with assailing trees (1923).

The genesis of the titles may lie in Merton's association with Scott, for they are similar to descriptions in her novel The Golden Door (1925), also written in Bermuda. One of the book's striking features is Scott's use of incoherence or paradox in her landscape descriptions, what another writer would one day call 'extraordinary marriages between words that [are] for apart'.33 She writes of a 'glimmering silvered' silence, conveying 'eyes of silence', the roar of the wind (sweeping) through the bright silence of the fields, clouds sweeping by in 'static haste', wet fields of a 'cold burning green' colour, lights burning 'with a glowing stilledness' and twilight rising 'in a cold grey stillness'.34 The title Burning Fields and Cold Motion of Stillness combines several of these descriptive details. Scott's description of 'light (rushing) down from the sky [...] with a roar of darkness' echoes The Road of Sky — Laughter passing below.35

33 Evelyn Scott, The Golden Door. New York: Harcourt, 1923, p. 80, 81, 103, 104 and 107, respectively.
During this time, Merton became very much interested in the relationship between the earth and the heavens, a relationship that he believed was expressed in the paintings of his friend, the American artist, Edward Hopper. Merton was deeply impressed by Hopper's ability to capture the mood of a place, and he longed to create similar works of art.

The sky, without a sun, is a formless solution of light, and the horizon rises against it and is flat like a wall, with a deep-colored steel edge. Straight up over the house, clouds, dull purple, move across the zenith with vast, unwhirled rapidity. The sun bursts open the sky, on the cold ocean it makes a pool of hot glass. The horizon line, momentarily illuminated, is thin like white-hot wire stretched taut. 21

Indeed, Scott would later make the plausible claim that the main influence of Merton's art was an appreciation of the powerful nature of the land and the sky. Scott's works often depicted the beauty of the natural world, and he used his art to celebrate the beauty of the land and the sky. Scott's works also often featured a sense of movement and change, which was characteristic of Scott's own life and his love of the land and the sky.

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32. Evelyn Scott to her friend, the writer Elsa Littleg, [New York], 31 July 1923, Littleg Papers (1953), Massachusetts.
35. ibid., p. 37.

Burning Fields and Cold Motion of Stillness 1922–23

Watercolor
Collection: J. A. E. Morgan, Christchurch.
France and Algeria, 1923–25

In mid-1923, Merton left Bermuda in the company of the Scotts and another friend for the south of France. Later that year, Merton and the Scotts journeyed to Algeria, returning to France in April of the following year, at which time Cyril Scott left. The rugged Algerian landscape, echoed in hard-edged fortifications and stone embankments, inspired one approach in which he used strong, ready-made forms as the basis of his pictures — for example, a view in Laghouat uses a stone wall passing along one side of the picture space. At his most audacious, in works such as Village Pool with Palms (1924, p. 23), the emphasis given to diverging lines in the landscape recalls the feverish dynamism John Marin made visible in some of his New York cityscapes. The tranquil inertia of a classic tourist view is transformed into an explosion of energy made even more dramatic by the contrasting peaceful sensuality of graceful, almost calligraphic date palms. He also continued to emphasize the picture plane by leaving areas of white paper, in pictures such as Street scene and figures (1924).

Painting in the southern French city of Béziers in the winner of 1924/25, Merton at first continued to explore his lyrical manner, as demonstrated in Cathedral from the River, Béziers (1924–25, p. 26). This work, with a geometric infrastructure deftly painted in brush, also foreshadows an evolution towards a more cerebral approach. Drawings of Béziers cathedral and of a view down a steeply plunging street present precisely drawn three-dimensional townscapes, and two finished versions of the street-scape built on their grid-like base with careful patches of color. This Cézanne-esque approach would reappear in views painted in central France in 1927.

In May and June 1925, Merton had the first of two solo exhibitions at London’s Leicester Galleries. In June he was included in a group show at New York’s New Gallery; and in November he had a second solo exhibition in New York’s Daniel Galleries. He made a brief visit to New York, before returning to Europe in August 1925, again accompanied by his son Tom, who had been living with his grandparents since 1923.

France and England, 1925–31

They settled in the small town of Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val in south-west France where Tom attended primary school until he had learned enough French, and then went as a boarder to the secondary school in the regional centre, Montauban. Merton painted in various parts of southern France, and made short visits to London and Paris, but anchored himself in Saint-Antonin by buying two pieces of land on which he built a house.

In the winter of 1926/27, part of which was spent in the mountains of central France, Merton was still wrestling with an approach to landscape derived from the work of Cézanne. Convert in Snow, Murat, France (1926, p. 25) shows a street curving down and to the right between buildings represented by simple, two-dimensional geometrical shapes. The picture space is compressed by a cluster of buildings in the centre of the image, which culminates in a church tower rising above the village and cutting the horizon-line of a hill in the middle distance. In a similar way, Cézanne’s Bihéme Quercy (1908, Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania) leads the viewer's eye down a foreground slope into a small valley that runs to the right, while a rocky hillside opposite closes the picture space. In the centre, a tall tree rises above the crest of the further hill, but Cézanne’s oil affirms the picture plane and denies illusionistic space in a way that Merton’s watercolour does not.

However schematically they are presented, Merton places his buildings in a three-dimensional space, in
In 1923-25 he was in Bermuda in the company of the British Consul for the south of France. Later he settled in Algiers, settled in the following year at Sidi-bel-Abbès, in the area of Casablanca.

The paintings were inspired by the strong, ready-made forms and colors of the landscape, such as those seen in the coast of southern France. The emphasis in the landscapes recalls the work of Pierre Bonnard, 1867-1947, a impressionist painter known for his use of bold color and light. Merton's paintings of southern France are characterized by a strong sense of place and a focus on the natural environment.

France and England, 1925-31

They settled in the small town of Saint-Antoine-Noblesse, near the mouth of the Rhône, where Merton attended primary school until he had learned enough French. Then he went to the St. Sardos, a boarding school in the regional centre of Toulouse. Merton painted in various parts of southern France, and made short visits to London and Paris, but anchored himself in St. Antonin by buying two pieces of land on which he built a house.

In the winter of 1926/27, part of which was spent in the mountains of central France, Merton was still wrestling with an approach to landscape derived from the work of Cézanne. "Cézanne in Snow, Montor, France (1926, p. 29)" shows a street curving down and to the right between buildings represented by simple, two-dimensional geometrical shapes. The picture space is compressed by a cluster of buildings in the center of the image, which culminates in a church tower rising above the village and cutting the horizon-line of a hill in the middle distance. In a similar way, Cézanne's "Abbeys in Normandy" (1900) shows the viewer's eye drawn into a foreground slope into a small valley that runs to the right, while a rocky ridge opposite closes the picture space. In the centre, a tall tree rises above the crest of the further hill, but Cézanne's effect is different. The picture plane does not suggest a three-dimensional space, but a flat surface. However, in Merton's watercolor, the buildings are placed in a three-dimensional space, in the foreground. The sky is divided into sections by the trees, which are painted with a strong sense of form and color. The buildings in the middle distance are seen as small, simplified shapes, while those in the foreground are depicted as large, detailed structures.
Street in Snow, Mougins, France (1927). Merton has used the same simplification of forms in a composition that focuses on a single building set in a well-defined space. In comparison, Cézanne had pulled the building in La Cabane de Jourdan (1906, private collection, Milan) much closer to the picture plane and made it impossible for the viewer to perceive it in three-dimensional terms. By August 1927, Merton was defiantly aware that his New York contacts would not approve of the stylistic shift he was making: "I am equally sure that Daniel etc will think [my work] has gone off — and I am glad they will — because I have [jelly well outgrown their] "pepper in the eyes" school." Most dramatically, he reverted from an audacious emphasis on the picture surface to an illusionistic picture space, and from fluid, exuberant calligraphy to meticulous draughtsmanship, with extensive, sometimes even monochrome washes, perhaps the "economy of [...] colour" noticed by the Christchurch Press in 1928. One such work is the view of the Vieux Port in Marseilles (1927).

There are two possible (and simultaneous) explanations for this change. On the one hand, he had moved away from the stimulus of the New York art world and Evelyn Scott's challenging intellect, and on the other had renewed contact with Tudor-Hart and conservative trends in contemporary British painting. This about-turn may also explain why Merton had works exhibited in New Zealand in 1927, after a five-year gap, although financial desperation must not be ruled out as another explanation. The Little Shop of Concarnac (1910) (which had, in fact, already been shown in Wellington in 1913 and Christchurch in 1922) and a new drawing of Chartres Cathedral may have appealed to the New Zealand public in a way that the Bermudian, Algerian and Beziéres works would not.

After 1928, Merton's movements became even more erratic as he crossed the Channel several times, taking Tom with him to England where he lived in boarding schools and with the Peacocks in London. In June 1929, he returned to Saint-Antonin to sell his house—a transaction which was concluded a year later. During this time, his painting suffered from what were probably the advancing symptoms of a terminal brain tumour. After an increasingly desolate journey back to England in early July, followed by periods of convalescence in London and Scotland, he was admitted to London's Middlesex Hospital in August or September 1929. He died there in January 1931.

Roger Collins

A Note on Sources
Apart from biographical details implied by the works themselves, the principal sources for Merton's life are:
Catalogues of New Zealand, British, French and American art societies, art galleries and dealer galleries with which he exhibited, and press notices;
Archives of Christ's College, the Canterbury University College School of Art, and the Royal Society of British Artists (Tate Gallery, London);
Letters to, and from his family and friends, and letters between Ni Riain's (Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, Houston, Texas) (MHC), Beziéres Collection, Massachusetts Museum, Beziéres Collection (University of Kentucky (HMC)); Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC (AAA); Lulu Ridgway papers, Sophie Smith Collection (Smith College, Massachusetts (AIP)).

Street in Snow, Mougins, France (1927)
Watercolour
Collection of the Christchurch Art Gallery, bequeathed by the citizens of Christchurch, 1957

Parvis of Cathedral from the River, Beziéres (1904–21) [p. 26]
Watercolour
Collection of the Danish Public Art Gallery

Convent in Snow, Myvatn, Iceland (1925)
Watercolour
Collection of the Christchurch Art Gallery, bequeathed by the citizens of Christchurch, 1957

Street with the Bullring, Beziéres (1905) [p. 27]
Pencil and watercolour
Collection of the American Legacy (1933) (MHC), University of Oregon, Portland.
France (1927). Morton has used this technique to create a painting that is both light and shadow. He has used a soft brush to create images that are still visible.

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Agnes Collins

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Letters to and from his family and friends, and letters between his friends (Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, Houston, Texas [HRC], Lassett Collection, Massachusetts; Thomas Morton Center, Louisville, Kentucky [TMC]; Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC [AAAI]; Lila Rice Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Massachusetts [LSP]).

Convent in Snow, Murrai, France 1926
Watercolour
Collection of the Christchurch Art Gallery. A private collection, presented by the artist to the gallery, 1947

Cathedral from the River, Béziers 1914–15 (pp. 95, 106)
Watercolour
Collection of the Donohue Public Art Gallery

Street with the Bull-ring, Béziers (dated) 1925 (p. 97)
Pastel and watercolour
Collection of the British Library

Listed (dubious) in different collections

25
List of Works

The list of works reflects their grouping in the exhibition.

Early Works, 1905–12

Bringing Out The Seed 1905
Pen and ink, 297 x 252 mm
Collection of the Christchurch Art Gallery To Aunau in Wanganui, presented by the Morton family, 1975
To Mortimer by Dr Tillaas Wilson 1906
Pen and ink, 252 x 204 mm
Collection of the Christchurch Art Gallery To Aunau in Wanganui, presented by the Morton family, 1975
Noise Wilkins’s Waterhouse Man was published in London by George Allen in 1905.

E. W. Beckett et c/o Jones 1907
Watercolour: 310 x 240 mm
Private collection, Auckland

Fruit Stall, Port Said 1907
Watercolour: 540 x 330 mm
Collection of The Museum of New Zealand To Pape Tongariki, Wellington

Notes: Exhibited, Wellington 1907

In the "Fruit Stall, Port Said" (1907) the artist is almost complete in conception, colour and design. The fruit is a still life in the Suna and the background is a study of the painting over the sea, with waves. A little, but a little, brown and from one of the rock foreground’s glistening it caught the sapphire sea, flecked with white wake, and the apples and light over all.

Drawing done, 15 October 1907, p. 2

The Studio, West Kensington 1909–10
Watercolour: 395 x 238 mm
Private collection, New Zealand

At an Auction Sale 1910
[Also known as "The Connoisseur"
Watercolour: 386 x 332 mm
Private collection, family, Auckland
Notes: Exhibited London 1910, Auckland and Wellington 1912.

The special quality of Morton’s work has always been its simplicity. This is again specially pronounced in this "old Gentleman at an Auction Sale" (1910). There is here a far away suggestion of Walter Cope interior but at the same time the composition would probably also be enhanced by the drawing. Are the ceramic treasures on which the venerable connoisseur is sitting as his treasure? It is difficult to be sure how the fall of the camera is handled, or whether he is on a chair or at a table. There is something radiating wrong in this picture.

New Zealand Times, 13 October 1910, p. 2

A second-hand shop, Paris 1910
[Also known as "The Old Antiquity Shop"
Watercolour: 530 x 462 mm
Collection of the National Bank, Wellington
Notes: Exhibited London 1911, Auckland and Wellington 1912.

"Mme. I am not going to bring this over this shop I am at. It is a problem to work at this little thing. Just a few small things, and anything it is only to study for a water colour."


"I have been round at the old shop [ ] getting things for my old man’s shop."
Dorothy Morton to Gertrude Morton, Paris, 4 December 1913.

"I met my old model this morning and am well on with an old study of the thing s as I have an elaborate drawing all ready for a water colour and I am going to get something done at all."
Dorothy Morton to Gertrude Morton, Paris, 12 December 1910


Note to the subject, having the usual association with the New Zealand Times, 13 October 1910.

The "Palace Curiosity" is an immense amount of general effect. It seems to be so in the light, but in the dark it is not.

The only New Zealand’s Royal Society of British Artists T.X.R.A., and it is a clever young Christchurch and Wellington artist, who has just been in Paris, and the effect here is seen in the after the large exhibition of the French painters.

Among the artists who were largely represented by his contribution to this year’s exhibition, only, "Shop, Consolled, well-paid work, and full of fine quality."

New Zealand, 190

In Hogarth Park, Christchurch Watercolours: 300 x 245 mm
Collection of the Hon. Mrs. D. R. New Zealand University of New Zealand

Wellington in the 1910s, 380 x 327 mm
Collection of the Hon. Mrs. D. R. New Zealand University of New Zealand.
List of Works

The list of works reflects their grouping in the exhibition.

Early Works, 1905–12

- Watercolour, 20 x 15 cm. 1905
  Collection of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna Waiwhetu, presented by the Henare Family, 1975

To Maoriart by Dorothea Mackellar 1906

- Watercolour, 20 x 15 cm. 1906
  Collection of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna Waiwhetu, presented by the Henare Family, 1975

- Private collection, New Zealand

- Watercolour, 25 x 30 cm. 1907
  Private collection, New Zealand

To: "The Passenger" by Dorothea Mackellar 1907

- Watercolour, 50 x 35 cm. 1907
  Collection of the Museums of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington

Notes: Exhibited Christchurch 1907, Wellington 1908.

- Watercolour, 40 x 30 cm. 1907
  Collection of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna Waiwhetu, presented by the Henare Family, 1975

The studio, West Kensington 1904–10

- Watercolour, 35 x 25 cm. 1904
  Private collection, New Zealand

- Watercolour, 40 x 30 cm. 1905
  Private collection, New Zealand

- Watercolour, 50 x 35 cm. 1906
  Private collection, New Zealand

- Watercolour, 20 x 15 cm. 1907
  Private collection, New Zealand

- Watercolour, 50 x 35 cm. 1907
  Private collection, New Zealand

- Watercolour, 25 x 30 cm. 1907
  Private collection, New Zealand

- Watercolour, 35 x 25 cm. 1904
  Private collection, New Zealand

Notes: Exhibited London 1911, Christchurch 1922 and Auckland 1927.

The only New Zealand artist in the exhibition of the Royal Society of British Artists this year are Mr. G. H. Christchurch B.A. and Mr. E. Evans, B.A., the clever young Christchurch painter. Mr. Henare's pictures are both French scenes, one a shop interior (his special form) in Paris, and the other in Bruges. Gipping from unidentified newspaper.

Among the artists whom one would gladly see more frequently are Mr. Owen Morton, whose contribution to this year's exhibition consists of one picture only, "Shop, Piccadilly, London" (10), a low-toned, well-painted work reminiscent of Van der Velde, and full of fine quality. Aves, 9 April 1926, p. 9

New Zealand, 1907–09

In Hagley Park, Christchurch 1908

Watercolour, 30 x 20 cm. 1908
  Collection of the Fowler Library, University of Otago, Dunedin

Wellington from the Botanical Gardens 1908

Watercolour, 25 x 20 cm. 1908
  Collection of the Fowler Library, University of Otago, Dunedin
Gallagher House 1973
Watercolours 20x25 cm
Collection of the late Trevor & Hilda Jackson, Nelson

Lindeman, Susan 1972
Watercolours 20x25 cm
Private collection, Auckland

Note: A variant of this composition is held in another private New Zealand collection.

Avery 1973
Pen and watercolours 36x22 cm
Private collection, Dunedin

Ash Island Landscape 1973
Watercolour 24x34 cm (framed)
Collection of the Thomas Martin Centre, Ballarat (University of Louisville), Kentucky, USA

Bermuda, 1972-73
Surfing Field and Cold-Weather Skiing 1962-63
Watercolours 20x25 cm
Collection of J. S. M. Wakefield, Christchurch

Bermuda 1972
Watercolour 52x74 cm
Collection of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, New York, USA

Note: Exhibited New York 1972 and 1984

Bermuda 1972-73
Watercolour 72x108 cm (framed)
Collection of the Thomas Martin Centre, Ballarat (University of Louisville), Kentucky, USA

Berg 1973
Watercolour 80x60 cm
Private collection, Dunedin

The Road to Sky - Laughter passing by 1982-83
Watercolour
Private collection, Auckland

Reconstruction of the day with amusing trees 1923
Watercolour 42x64 cm
Collection of Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington

Untitled (House, Trees and Red Bark, Bermuda) 1923
Watercolour 46x57 cm
The Asher R. Street Collection, Auckland

Winter 1922-23
Watercolour 41x55 cm
Saxton Collection, Auckland

Note: The decorative panel hanging above the fireplace is a leatherwork panel in the patchwork hanging conceived by Evelyn Scott.

I have done, with Morton's cooperation, the most I can (I can never say I designed it myself) but helped me in the planning of a lamp shade, a water color panel on the wall, and the designing of a patchwork hanging which I have conceived but was finding most easily to execute.

Evelyn Scott to Lola Ridge, Bermuda, 1922-23 (Lola Ridge Papers, Smith College, Massachusetts, USA)

France and Algeria, 1921-31
 Algerian Landscape with trees 1923
Watercolour 56x42 cm (framed)
Collection of T. and Rosemary C. Ame, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Village Pool with Paddles 1924
Watercolour 31x41 cm
Private collection, Dunedin

Street scene and figures 1924
Watercolour 31x22 cm
Private collection, Dunedin

Street scene and figures 1924
Watercolour 31x22 cm
Private collection, Dunedin

Village ensemble - Bangalala-sub-mar 1924
Watercolour 31x42 cm
Collection of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington

Note: Probably exhibited London 1924.

Cathedral from the River, Bledisloe 1924-25
Watercolour 52x65 cm
Gift from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery

Cathedral formerly in the collection of Sir Michael Sadler, Exhibited in London 1925

The composition is in a New Zealand private collection.

The effectiveness of the series of "Cathedral from the River, Bledisloe" [4], proves that the severe economy of treatment is well instrumented with an appreciation of volumes, design and construction.

Frank Rutter, Sunday Times, 31 May 1979, p. 5

Cathedral, Bledisloe 1924-25
Pencil, 53x45 cm (framed)
Collection of Dr Paul M. Pearson, USA

Note: The contrasting view of the same subject, which 1924-25

I have conformed the line of Turner's composition. The most bold [6] in this respect. You may see me (I designed it myself) but helped me in planning of a lamp shade, a water color panel on the wall, and the designing of a patchwork hanging which I have conceived but was finding most easily to execute.

Evelyn Scott to Lola Ridge, Bermuda, 1922-23 (Lola Ridge Papers, Smith College, Massachusetts, USA)

Streets in Snow, Mural, France 1927
Watercolour 36x244 cm
Private collection, Auckland

Note: Possibly exhibited London 1926; exhibited Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington 1929.

Marseilles 1927
Drawing and watercolours, 40x34 cm
Collection of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Papa Tongarewa, presented by Mrs M. L. Oggy, 1926

Notes: Possibly exhibited London 1926.

The Marseilles picture was the view from the room in a little hotel we stayed at the Haux, Paris, and I remember lying around reading Keating and getting up and walking by the window.

Thomas Mann to his sister, Theodor, 20 December 1954, in Robert L. Doggett (ed.), The Road to Light. The Letters of Thomas Mann to His and His Friends, New York, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1959, p. 218
This full colour publication has been produced by the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū to support the exhibition Owen Merton – Expatriate Painter, the first comprehensive retrospective exhibition of paintings by landscape watercolourist Owen Merton (1887–1931), revealing the rich and complex career of an accomplished painter.