

Raymond McIntyre

New Zealander/British, 1879-1933

London Street with Shadows

c.1919, oil on canvas, 60.0x50.5 cm
Presented by the McIntyre Family 1951



About the work

This is a Post-Impressionist work, one of a series of London street scenes from a high viewpoint that Raymond McIntyre painted between 1911 and 1926. It is possible it is a street in Chelsea where McIntyre had a studio flat. Chelsea was a popular district for people with an interest in the arts but could not be described as bohemian as it was also quite a wealthy district. The figures and the small shops capture this sense of fashionable elegance.

Interested in contemporary developments in the use of line and space, McIntyre has built up the image with separated coloured brushstrokes. The figures and buildings in the distance are given equal weight along the curving axis of the street. The open, negative space of the empty street curving down the centre reflects the traditional Japanese composition. The power of a virtually empty street is well recognised and *London Street with Shadows* is also rather similar to some of the works by James Whistler (1834 -1903) who said that it was what was left out that was important.

McIntyre's use of colour also shows the influence of Whistler, who commented, "It seems to me that colour ought to be, as it were embroidered on the canvas, that is to say the same colour ought to appear in the picture continually here and there, in the same way a thread appears in embroidery... Look

how well the Japanese understand this. They never look for contrast, on the contrary, they're after repetition." (*Raymond McIntyre, A New Zealand Painter*, Auckland City Art Gallery, 1984, pp. 21-22)

Overall the painting has a rather subdued tonality, with a careful balance between the warm browns and oranges and the cooler strong blues of the calligraphic lines. The scene is infused with a sense of a soft warm light, which is hinted at by the shadows that break up the road surface and assist with establishing a retreating sense of perspective.

McIntyre has realised the forms with a minimum number of freely painted calligraphic lines. He has used a very fluid paint, which captures the rhythms of the brush, and creates a sense of immediacy with the sketched forms and blocked areas of rapidly and loosely applied colour.

The balcony railing in the right foreground shows the decorative flourish of Art Nouveau or a Matisse-inspired arabesque. McIntyre's earlier style was indebted to Whistler. However, after 1909, when he travelled to Britain, his work became influenced by the Fauve artists Raoul Dufy (1877-1953) and Henri Matisse (1869 -1954).

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About the artist

McIntyre was born in Christchurch in 1879. He began his studies in 1894 at the Canterbury College School of Art under George Elliott and Alfred Walsh and was awarded a bronze medal for a life study. During the mid 1890s, McIntyre also studied as a private pupil under Petrus van der Velden (1837-1913). He left the School of Art in 1900 for a period of five years, during which he continued to paint. He took up study again part-time in 1906. In 1908 McIntyre assisted the staff at the School of Art with still life and figure drawing classes.

McIntyre began exhibiting at the Canterbury Society of Arts in 1899 and continued to exhibit there until 1908. He became a member of the Christchurch Sketch Club, which was established by Sydney Lough Thompson (1877-1973) in 1905 and also included William Menzies Gibb (1859-1916), Leonard Booth (1879-1974) and Alfred Walsh (1859-1916). McIntyre exhibited at the 'New Zealand International Exhibition', Christchurch, 1905/07, and late in 1908 he held an exhibition of his work at the Canterbury Society of Arts.

McIntyre arrived in London in February 1909. There he briefly studied at the London City Council Central School of Arts and Crafts under William Nicholson (1872-1949), George Lambert (1873-1930) and Walter Sickert (1860-1942). He gave an interesting response to his father's advice that he study art under some well-known man. McIntyre replied, "Who are the eminent men anyway? A man who looks big from New Zealand ain't so very big in London. When you come up against a man he doesn't seem so great as when you are a long way off him ... One's only chance is to be oneself." (Letter to his father, 3 June, 1910.)

In 1910 McIntyre initially exhibited with the Thames Valley Art Club, which closely followed the Post-Impressionist movement with an interest in Japanese art. In 1911 he began to exhibit with the Goupil Gallery, which was the leading international contemporary art gallery in London at the time. He continued to exhibit at the Goupil Gallery Salon annually from 1919 to 1926. McIntyre also exhibited with the New English Art Club, the Grosvenor Gallery and with the 'London Group' exhibitions in 1916, 1917 and 1918.

During the First World War McIntyre worked as a lorry driver, as he was physically unfit for active service. He held a large solo show at the Eldar Gallery in 1918 and the Royal Academy in 1924. From 1923 to 1930 McIntyre wrote reviews of art exhibitions for the *Architectural Review*. He died suddenly in London in September 1933, aged 54.

Other works by the artist in the Collection

There are 10 works by the artist in the Collection, including:

Meditation

1905, oil on canvas
Purchased with assistance from the Olive Stirrat Bequest 1984

Portrait Sketch of James Jamieson

1906, oil on canvas
Purchased 1985

Self Portrait

c. 1912, oil on canvas
Purchased 1996

Ruth

c. 1914, oil on panel
Presented by the McIntyre Family 1938

Suzette

c. 1914, oil on panel
Presented by Mrs Mary Good 1975

Further reading

Raymond McIntyre, A New Zealand Painter, Auckland City Art Gallery, 1984.

