

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki and Karen Walker to launch collaboration inspired by pioneering artist Frances Hodgkins



Image: Fashion designer Karen Walker and Mary Kiser, Senior Curator, International Art, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, view paintings by Frances Hodgkins

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki and leading fashion designer Karen Walker are working in partnership on a new artwork-inspired range of collectable accessories, *Frances Hodgkins: Framed by Karen Walker*.

In celebration of the Gallery's forthcoming major exhibition, *Frances Hodgkins: Her European Journeys*, Karen's designs draw upon the modernist works of New Zealand artist Frances Hodgkins – one of the early 20th-century's trailblazers and recently included, alongside Karen, in the *NZ Herald's* list of 'Trailblazers: 125 Kiwi Women Who Changed the World'.

To create the range, over the past four months, Karen Walker has been granted exclusive access to the Gallery's collection of Hodgkins' artwork: the largest collection of the artist's work in the world. From these paintings, Karen has produced exclusive travel-inspired accessories, reflecting Hodgkins' nomadic and adventurous lifestyle, which was ground-breaking for New Zealand women at that time.

'Frances Hodgkins was the original "Runaway Girl"', Karen says. 'Her life was full of purpose, adventure and independence. Our work has always been inspired by strong female stories and women with outsider points of view and adventurous spirits.'

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'It's been an honour to be invited by the Gallery to get up-close with Frances Hodgkins' work and reinterpret some of her most-beloved pieces through our own lens,' Karen says.

Mary Kiser, Senior Curator, International Art at Auckland Art Gallery and curator of *Frances Hodgkins: Her European Journeys* said, 'Throughout her life Frances Hodgkins was extremely interested in fashion. Her letters to her family in New Zealand kept them up to date with the latest styles, and she worked in 1926 as a fabric designer in Manchester. Her most radical paintings are fashion-focused self-portraits combined with still-life in which she intertwines favourite fabrics, hats, shoes and objects.'

'It's especially rewarding to see the Gallery's superb collection of Hodgkins' work activated through this collaboration with Karen, and to know they have the same visual appeal now as they did when they were created,' Mary says.

The exhibition, *Frances Hodgkins: Her European Journeys*, will open Saturday 4 May 2019 and trace Hodgkins' creative and peripatetic life, from her upbringing in Dunedin, and travels through France, Morocco and Spain to England. It will examine the influence of location on her development as a modernist painter and the notion of travel and journeying as a source of artistic inspiration.

Frances Hodgkins: Framed by Karen Walker will be available from May 2019.

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Notes to editors

About Karen Walker



Image: Fashion designer Karen Walker views paintings by Frances Hodgkins at Auckland Art Gallery

Auckland-born designer Karen Walker has established a cult international following.

Karen's signature energy and optimism define her label. Her designs cleverly play with cultural subtext, juxtaposing luxe and street, masculine and feminine, folk and utility, creating pieces that are both directional and wearable.

Karen's influence has seen her consistently ranked for the past six years in The Business of Fashion's powerhouse BoF 500, reflecting her position as a global industry figure shaping the future.

About Frances Hodgkins



Image: Frances Hodgkins (right)
Courtesy of E H McCormick Research Library
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
gift of Linda Gill, 2015

Frances Hodgkins (1869–1947) was born in Dunedin.

She left New Zealand for Europe in 1901, and travelled extensively throughout the continent, Britain and Morocco. She made two visits back to New Zealand, but she intended France as her home until war made her settle in England where she spent the latter part of her long and highly productive working life. Combining natural talent, a unique vision and sheer determination, she established a successful career and became one of the most influential painters of her generation.

With a professional life that spanned almost six decades, two world wars, and periods of massive social and cultural change, Hodgkins caught the spirit of a new age. Hodgkins was a trailblazer whose legacy lives on today both in the Antipodes and in Europe.

Exhibition details

Frances Hodgkins: Her European Journeys

Sat 4 May 2019–Sun 1 Sep 2019

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

Frances Hodgkins: Her European Journeys brings together works from New Zealand and around the globe to explore the artist's place in 20th-century European art. The exhibition traces Hodgkins' creative and peripatetic life, from her upbringing in Dunedin, through France, Morocco and Spain to her final days in England, examining the influence of location on her development as a modernist painter and the notion of travel and journeying as a source of artistic inspiration.