

To Market:

Representations of the Marketplace by New

Zealand Expatriate Artists

1900 -1939

A thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts in Art History at the University of Canterbury

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2012

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Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have assisted me in this project. Firstly I would like to make a special mention of the support and guidance of my supervisors, Dr Emilie Sitzia and Dr Ian Lochhead. In her role as my senior supervisor, I thank Dr Sitzia, for her ongoing enthusiasm, encouragement and supervision throughout this year. I would also like to thank Dr Lochhead for his valuable feedback and assistance.

I wish to express my appreciation to the librarians who assisted me in my research, in particular, Victoria Boyack at the Te Aka Matua Research Library, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, the staff at the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Max Podstolski at the University of Canterbury, Caroline McBride at the E. H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, and Tim Jones at the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu. I owe a debt of gratitude to the interloan team at the University of Canterbury. Their assistance has been crucial in this year of earthquake disruptions. I also wish to acknowledge the research material on Maude Burge supplied by Jane Vial.

I would like to express my appreciation towards the various gallery staff who assisted me, in particular, Tony Mackle at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Anne-Marie White at The Suter Te Aratoi o Whakatu, Genevieve Webb at Dunedin Public Art Gallery and Frances Husband at the Aigantighe Art Gallery, Timaru.

I wish to acknowledge the financial support of the University of Canterbury through the post-graduate Restart Travel Grant and Judy Robinson for her help in organising this. To my friend and museum professional, Celia Thompson, I wish to express my gratitude for her years of support, encouragement and the many discussions we had about potential topics. Finally, thank you to Frances Caldwell for her proofreading assistance.

This thesis is dedicated to my father, Hugh Dempsey, who passed away before its completion.

Abstract

New Zealand expatriate artists working in England, Europe and North Africa in the early twentieth century painted a wide variety of market scenes. The subject features in the oeuvre of Frances Hodgkins, Maud Sherwood, Sydney Lough Thompson, Maude Burge, Owen Merton, Robert Procter and John Weeks and made a significant contribution to their artistic development. Like their contemporaries in the artists' colonies and sketching grounds of England and Europe, New Zealand artists were often drawn to traditional rural and fishing villages and sought to capture the nostalgia of the 'old world.'

Early exploratory works by New Zealand expatriates have often been dismissed merely as nostalgic visions of colonials, without any real artistic merit. This research offers a re-evaluation of these works, recognising their value as transitional works which illustrate New Zealand expatriate artists experimenting with early modernist trends, as well as revealing prevalent contemporary tastes among the New Zealand public. This study offers a comprehensive examination of the market theme and highlights the aspirations and achievements of New Zealand expatriate artists. This is reflected in both their choice of subjects and in the way in which these were depicted. A key finding of this research is that New Zealand expatriate artists developed a distinctive response towards the market subject.

The vibrant atmosphere and activity of the market and colourful views of canvas booths, awnings and costume provided the perfect means of expression for these artists to explore a variety of painterly concerns and techniques, among them *plein-air* and impressionist painting, watercolour techniques and a modern treatment of colour and light. The hypothesis of a 'female gaze' is explored with specific reference to depiction of the market subjects by Frances Hodgkins and Maud Sherwood. Placed within a wider art historical context of images of female market vendors, their market works offer an original interpretation of the female milieu of the European market. Finally, the expatriates' vision of the exotic and colourful markets in North Africa and Egypt is investigated. They offered an alternative response to more traditional Orientalist interpretations and their Maghrebian explorations were the catalyst for key stylistic developments in colour and form.

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Introduction

To market to market to buy a fat pig....

While the New Zealand expatriate artists who visited the markets of Europe and North Africa during the first half of the twentieth century did not necessarily flock to buy the wares on sale, they certainly flocked to paint them. The subject of the marketplace was one which holds a significant place in the overseas oeuvre of Frances Hodgkins, Maud Sherwood, Sydney Lough Thompson, Maude Burge, Robert Procter, John Weeks and Owen Merton. It was a subject which remained a constant during their travels abroad, to which they returned again and again, and which offered all the painterly elements they were seeking overseas. Why was the subject of the marketplace such a compelling theme for the New Zealand expatriate artists who travelled to Europe and North Africa during the early twentieth century and how did they portray it? Did the interpretation of the subject by female artists differ from that of their male counterparts? What was the appeal of the Oriental market? Could it be argued that there was a particular colonial interpretation of the subject? This thesis seeks to investigate these topics.

Whereas numerous studies have been completed on Frances Hodgkins' experiences abroad, as well as those of other members of her expatriate circle, few have focused on how these artists approached a single theme. Recently art historians have acknowledged the place of market scenes within wider studies of these artists' body of overseas works. Leo King's study on Robert Procter¹ recognises the importance of the market subject in providing Procter with the opportunity to explore such genre scenes in Italy. Joanne Drayton's exploration of Frances Hodgkins' career² identifies several key market scenes within Hodgkins' oeuvre and Alexa Johnston considers Hodgkins' treatment of the theme in her book on the works of Frances Hodgkins held in the Dunedin Public Art Gallery's collection.³ Furthermore, Christina Barton places the theme within the wider context of Frances Hodgkins' expatriate experience and points to Hodgkins' depiction of market scenes 'as evidence of her unconscious

¹ Leo King, *Robert Field Procter New Zealand Artist: 1879-1931*, Auckland, 2002, pp. 7-8, 20-24

² Joanne Drayton, *Frances Hodgkins: A Private Viewing*, Auckland, 2005

³ Alexa Johnston, *Frances Hodgkins: Femme du monde*, Dunedin, 2009, pp. 58-60, 64

negotiation of modernism's imperatives.'⁴ However, the early market works by New Zealand artists have often been dismissed in this country's art history as being of lesser importance due their very place as early overseas works. In the case of Frances Hodgkins, her early market scenes have frequently been overshadowed by her later more *avant-garde* works, and in a comparison between the two, they have been found lacking. In 1954, E. H. McCormick wrote:

Today, at a distance of half a century, it is not at all easy to enter into the feeling of either the admirers or the detractors of Miss Hodgkins' European sketches...As one sifts through the glimpses of old houses, picturesque streets, ancient chateaux, the sketches of peasant women and gipsies...and the market scenes innumerable, one is driven to ask what all the fuss was about...neither in subject nor in colour do they seem to merit lengthy comment, much less ecstatic praise...they are all so much of a muchness.⁵

To this we can further add the comments of Colin McCahon and Gil Docking, in 1962 and 1971 respectively, who both considered the mark of a less successful New Zealand expatriate artist to be one who returned from abroad with 'little else to show except, perhaps, a folio of pink-and-blue Venetian scenes and some flower stalls in a Paris market.'⁶

Julie King has stated that 'by upholding modernist values, inappropriate to the cultural climate of New Zealand, art history has devalued the work of New Zealand artists of the early twentieth century.'⁷ This is, in effect, what the above writers have done through their dismissal of the fledgling work of New Zealand expatriate artists. However, a century after their creation, these works lend themselves to further investigation and analysis, and a study of these early market works is enlightening, both for what they can divulge of stylistic concerns, as well as what they reveal of the attitudes of the colonial milieu in which these artists existed. Julie King's

⁴ Christina Barton, *The Expatriates: Frances Hodgkins*, Wellington, 2005, p. 16

⁵ E. H. McCormick, *The Expatriate: a study of Frances Hodgkins*, Wellington, 1954, p. 76

Furthermore, referring to the body of work Hodgkins exhibited in New Zealand in 1904, McCormick wrote: 'The collection taken as a whole is so uniformly competent – and so uniformly common place – that it offers little scope for censure or praise or, indeed, for comment of any kind. Market scenes of Caudebec and Arles are succeeded by market scenes of San Remo and Dinan and these in turn by market scenes of Tangier and Bruges.' [*The Expatriate*, p. 70]

⁶ Gill Docking, *Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting*, Auckland, 1990, p. 96

The same sentiment is expressed by Colin McCahon in the catalogue essay in *Six New Zealand Expatriate: Grace Joel, Rhona Haszard, Frances Hodgkins, Francis McCracken, Raymond McIntyre, Owen Merton*, 1962. [p. 6]

⁷ Julie King, *Sydney Lough Thompson - At Home and Abroad*, Christchurch, 1990, p. 77

groundbreaking study on Sydney Lough Thompson has paved the way for further reinterpretation of the work of New Zealand's expatriate artists of the early twentieth century. Consideration of the time and context in which the works were produced, as well as their early popularity is, in King's view, 'revealing in elucidating cultural values within a society.'⁸ Similarly, a study of the market scenes and their popularity can shed light on the conventional tastes of colonial New Zealand in the early twentieth century. Christina Barton has further maintained that art historians have chosen to focus on an image of Frances Hodgkins' heroic journey towards modernism, 'relegating her early work as merely stages on a journey towards personal vision, which is only accomplished in the works produced after 1930.'⁹ Yet these transitional works are also telling, reflecting stylistic trends from overseas and early experimentation. The pictorial language employed in this endeavour involved sketchy 'impressionist' brushwork, touches of vibrant colour, applied either loosely (as in the case of Frances Hodgkins, Maude Burge and Sydney Lough Thompson), or in flatter blocks of colour (as in the Japanese print and Post-Impressionist inspired works of Maud Sherwood). Frances Hodgkins and Sydney Lough Thompson both returned to the subject over several decades. Hodgkins continued to depict market scenes into the 1920s and Thompson was still producing experimental market scenes in the 1930s. By examining their development of the theme, their progressive responses to the Impressionist, Post-Impressionist and, in the case of Frances Hodgkins, Cubist movements are well high-lighted. The exploration of the theme by Robert Procter displayed a lightening of palette and dramatic light effects in order to capture the impression of the scene. It should be also noted that Hodgkins, Merton, Procter and Weeks all continued to produce European or North African market scenes even after they had returned to New Zealand. Therefore, for the artists in this study the subject of the market was a valid means by which to explore stylistic and painterly concerns.

In terms of quantity the subject of the market also features noticeably in the work of these expatriate artists. In his catalogue in *Works of Frances Hodgkins in New Zealand*, E. H. McCormick identified thirty-two market works by the artist,¹⁰ and Suzanne Sherwood identified fifty-five market works in her preliminary catalogue of

⁸ Ibid., p. 8

⁹ Barton, p. 8

¹⁰ E. H. McCormick, *Works of Frances Hodgkins in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1954, catalogue of works

Maud Sherwood's oeuvre.¹¹ Leo King has identified at least ten market subjects within Robert Procter's group of Italian works¹² and it is also likely, given his generally prolific output, that Sydney Thompson also depicted numerous scenes on the subject. Within the scope of this study I have identified sixty-three works by the New Zealand expatriate artists. Of these, thirty are in public collections in New Zealand or Australia, with the remainder being located at one time or another in the private art market in New Zealand. This is, perhaps, only the beginning of an investigation into the theme, as it is likely that many more market scenes are extant in private collections, both in New Zealand, as well as abroad. As this study is concerned in particular with the context of the colonial milieu and art public, I have focused on the works of these artists in New Zealand.

Two important sources have been Julie Heraud's *Maud Sherwood New Zealand Artist, 1880-1956: A Biography*, 1992 and Linda Gill's *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, 1993. The correspondence and diaries reproduced in these works have provided an invaluable insight into the attitudes and experiences of these female artists abroad and wherever possible I have used primary accounts for all the artists in this study. This has influenced the direction that my research has taken and has, I believe, allowed the artists and their works speak for themselves. The enthusiasm the expatriates felt for the markets of Europe and North Africa and their colourful appeal is clearly evident in their written and recorded words. Given the emphasis that I have placed on the mindset of the expatriates, it also seems fitting to investigate the attitudes of their fellow colonial milieu. The positive reception that the works received in the early years of the twentieth century reveals the popular taste at this time for exotic and picturesque images from abroad.

The period chosen, from 1900 to 1939, is a significant one in terms of developments within New Zealand's art history. The 1890s witnessed major changes in the New Zealand art climate with the arrival of three professional artists who were to exert a significant influence over the young artists of this country: the Scotsman, James Nairn, the Dutchman, Petrus van der Velden and the Italian, Girolamo Pieri Nerli.

¹¹ Suzanne Bronwyn Sherwood, "The Contribution of Maud Sherwood to the Sydney Art Scene 1914-1956," MA Thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 2003, Appendix 10

¹² King, *Robert Procter*, pp. 41-42

Based in Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin respectively, the influence of these artists was considerable, for as well as introducing new stylistic trends, they also provided a model of professional artists who committed themselves fully to their art for New Zealand's aspiring artists. Nairn, one of the so-called Glasgow Boys, and Nerli, connected to the Macchiaioli, were both proponents of *plein-air* painting, showing a concern for light and colour effects. The oft-quoted statement by Nairn, from a presentation to the Wellington Art Club in 1892, sums up well his views on the importance of painting from nature and the role of the artist. 'There is nothing which I believe tends more to advance art than young, vigorous, and healthy painting outside....Now, let the public accept it or not, let them call it what they like, but I uphold that they have no right to judge.'¹³ In Christchurch, van der Velden introduced artists to the darker palette characteristic of Dutch art, emphasising vigorous sketching and expressive brushwork. His influence on pupils at the Christchurch Art School during his tenure there was recorded in a publication of the school in 1932.

The gifts which he gave to the school were twofold. In the first place he formed a link between the students of his day and the tradition of the Dutch school of painting, in which he had won distinction before he emigrated to New Zealand. Second, in virtue of his genius he lit the spark of a noble ambition in those of the young New Zealand artists who have the courage to develop their individuality and to plunge boldly into the world of experiment in art which the modern development of painting opened up to them.¹⁴

The arrival of Nairn, van der Velden and Nerli influenced, in part, the mass exodus of New Zealand's young artists, eager to experience the European traditions of painting that had been introduced to them, first hand. The majority of the expatriates in this study came under their influence: Maud Sherwood and, possibly, Maude Burge¹⁵ were taught by Nairn, Frances Hodgkins by Nerli and Sydney Lough Thompson and Robert Procter by van der Velden. Sydney Lough Thompson recalled that 'Van's studio was a sanctuary into which we entered with great reverence...one seemed to

¹³ Quoted in Gordon H. Brown and Hamish Keith, *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting 1839-1980*, New and revised ed., Auckland, 1988, pp. 56, 58

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 58-59

¹⁵ Una Platts states that Maude Burge was taught by Nairn in *Nineteenth Century New Zealand Artists: A Guide and Handbook*, Christchurch 1980, p. 57
However, recent research conducted by Jane Vial suggests that Burge was taught by Riley. [Jane Vial personal research files]

step from the streets of Christchurch into another world.¹⁶ This other world was what New Zealand's expatriate artists flocked abroad to seek from the beginning of the twentieth century, starting with the 'old world' and 'home'.

The skills that the young artists acquired from their mentors were to stand them in good stead in the sketching grounds of Europe and North Africa, especially the *plein-air* approach advocated by Nairn and Nerli and the sketching work demanded by van der Velden's of his pupils. Maud Sherwood later acknowledged the lesson she had learned from Nairn. 'He used to tell us to "dash it in, slash it in. Don't be afraid of it. Let the world stare,"'¹⁷ a rapid and vigorous approach which would be needed to capture the movement and colour of the marketplace.¹⁸ Sydney Lough Thompson's formative training under van der Velden would also enable him to later become a proficient sketcher in oil of the markets at Concarneau and Hodgkins' painting skills, which had developed under Nerli's tutelage, would be used to capture her impressions of a bustling market scene. Also in terms of subject matter the expatriates owed a debt to their foreign teachers in New Zealand. Although stylistically very different, van der Velden and Nerli were both exponents of genre painting and encouraged their students in this direction. The significance of this is that, as well as challenging the prevalence for landscape scenes in a Romantic British fashion noticeable in New Zealand's Art Societies during this period, their pupils were already predisposed to the genre scenes that they would execute in overseas. Both artists had completed market scenes, so it is tempting to surmise that their students may have seen and been influenced by these.

The journeys of the expatriates in this study followed a classic pattern: art studies in New Zealand and then further study in one of the artistic centres abroad (typically either the Académie Julian or Académie Colarossi in Paris), to be followed by a stint in one or more of the established artists' colonies in England or Europe. There are

¹⁶ Quoted in Evan Webb, "Thompson's French influence once frowned upon," *Dominion Sunday Times*, 27 January 1991, non paginated article in the Sydney Lough Thompson artist files, Te Aka Matua Research Library, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

¹⁷ Quoted in Julie Heraud, *Maud Sherwood New Zealand Artist 1880-1956: A Biography*, Whitianga, 1991, p. 9

¹⁸ Her ability to do this is reflected in comments made by the critic for the Melbourne paper, *The Argus*. 'Mrs Sherwood's work is virile and brisk, giving that spontaneity so desirable and necessary in watercolour technique. Her work is tremendously gallant in its attack. She tackles the almost impossible – and succeeds...[Her] quick perception of characters and postures stand her in good stead in groups of figures in market scenes....' [*The Argus*, 12 September 1939, quoted in Heraud, pp. 91-92]

noteworthy connections between several of the expatriates in this study. Frances Hodgkins and Owen Merton met in Paris in 1909 when Merton arrived as a student and Hodgkins was a tutor at the Académie Colarossi. They spent a summer painting together in Concarneau in 1911, and in 1912 were joined in Paris by Maud Sherwood. Following Hodgkins and Merton's example, Sherwood was also to venture to Concarneau, where she visited Sydney Lough Thompson, who was based there. Sherwood and Merton initially followed a similar pattern in Paris, beginning their studies briefly at the Académie Colarossi before joining the studio of Percyval Tudor-Hart and both were members of his summer sketching trip in the Southwest of England in 1912. In the early 1930s Hodgkins and Maud Burge worked together in Montreuil-sur-Mer, St Tropez and Ibiza.¹⁹

These working relations resulted in a vital exchange of ideas and practices and it is therefore not surprising that these artists often worked in the same locations and depicted the same subject matter, and this is also true of the subject of the market. Given Frances Hodgkins and Maud Sherwood's enthusiastic descriptions of the market in letters to family members back home, it would indeed be unusual if they had not shared these sentiments with their fellow artists, especially as a key feature of artists' colonies and sketching grounds was the degree of collegial support and critique that existed. Frances Hodgkins wrote of the shared frustration felt by her and fellow artists when sketching at the market during her first sketching tour in Caudebec-en-Caux in 1901, conducted by Norman Garstin.²⁰ We can imagine the scene; the clamour of the complaints of the frustrated artists to their tutor, who 'mildly suggested that [they] should cease wrestling with it.'²¹ Of course, Hodgkins did not turn her back on the on the subject of the market, despite its difficulties, and neither did the other expatriates.

¹⁹ Both Sydney Lough Thompson and Robert Procter studied at the Académie Julian, although at different times, Thompson studying there in 1901 and Procter 1904 or 1905. Weeks' path differed from the others as his Parisian studies began in the Cubist studio of André Lhote in 1926 and he does not seem to have worked or met with the other artists in this group.

²⁰ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 26 August 1901, in Linda Gill, *Letters of Frances Hodgkins*, Auckland, 1993, p. 97

²¹ *Ibid.*

When Eugène Fromentin wrote from Algeria in the 1850s ‘that the myth making of travel had disappeared,’²² he was referring to the greater ease of travel that was opening up the world to travellers and artists, so that places previously only imagined, could now be experienced in reality. With the addition of new train and shipping routes, more areas became accessible to artists and a characteristic of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was the changes effected to the more traditional eighteenth-century Grand Tour. While some of the more classic locations remained popular, such as Italy, there were distinct differences in the regions and the subject matter that artists were drawn to. For the New Zealand expatriates, the new grand tour of the twentieth century wove its way into the small fishing and agricultural villages of England, France, Italy and Spain, and then over the seas into North Africa. A number of these artists demonstrated what could, in fact, be considered quite an adventurous colonial spirit for the time; Maud Sherwood favoured the isolated villages of Italy and Spain, while John Weeks traversed the ‘uncivilised’ regions of the North African Maghreb. Hodgkins, too, experienced camping Moroccan style, about which she writes with far more enthusiasm than the disdain she shows towards the ‘villa-dom’ of wealthy San Remo in Italy. Somewhat of an exception was Robert Procter who continued to favour the grand tour Italian cities Rome and Venice and their stunning architecture features noticeably in his work. However, in general we witness a distinct shift in focus from place towards inhabitants; picturesque elements of architecture merely become a backdrop for the activities of the peasant subjects, the real protagonists of the scene. The popularity of peasant images was at its height in Europe and audiences back in New Zealand also hankered for the nostalgia of the ‘old world’ from which they had come and this is what our artists aimed to provide with their representations of life in the agricultural and fishing villages of Europe.

In essence, this thesis is concerned with the popular tastes prevalent in New Zealand over a relatively short period of time. The 1930s and 1940s saw the emergence of a Nationalist movement in New Zealand, as key questions were asked about what it meant to be an inhabitant of this country and nostalgic ties with Britain were challenged. Images of Europe were to be replaced by images of New Zealand, with its distinct landscape, light and man-made structures which attempted to stamp an

²² Eugène Fromentin, *Between Sea and Sahara: An Orientalist Adventure*, London, 2004, p. 4

identity on the new country. It was now one hundred years after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, which had marked New Zealand's official existence as a British colony. Therefore, it is at this point that it would seem fitting to leave our market scenes, which were not to play a key role in this new phase of New Zealand's art history.

However, a brief mention should be made of how the market works of the New Zealand expatriates fit within the wider art historical discourse of the depiction of the marketplace. A full discussion of the theme throughout art history is well beyond the scope of this thesis, yet a few points of comparison are pertinent and where appropriate comparisons will be made throughout. The depiction of market scenes has a long history and was particularly popular with Dutch and Flemish artists during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Artists such as Pieter Aertsen, Joachim Beuckelaer and Gabriel Metsu depicted the market but their focus and use of iconography resulted in very different representations to those of New Zealand expatriate artists two centuries later. Art historians consider Aertsen and Beuckelaer's market scenes forerunners to still life and genre scenes and over subsequent centuries market scenes continued to be generally depicted in a realist manner with a detailed and naturalistic rendering of produce. An extreme example of such realism is seen in Aertsen's first foray into the representation of comestibles, *Meat Stall with the Flight into Egypt*, c. 1551. The image is laden with meat: cow's and pig's heads, trotters, sausages, a carcass, fowl and fish and the viewer is assailed with the bloody produce. The divergence between the New Zealand expatriate artists' interpretation of the market and that by the Dutch Realists is clear from a comment made by Frances Hodgkins in a letter to her mother dated 26 August 1901, from Caudebec-en-Caux. What Hodgkins would have thought of Aertsen's representation is, I think, obvious:

...a rather distinguished French artist has just come & gone. He brought his work up to the Hotel one day and all he had to show...after a fortnight's stay was a dead pig in a butcher's shop painted with a sickening regard to detail – curious perversion [sic.] of the mind don't you think that prompts a man to overlook such beauties as the Cathedral & the market place & the quaint old streets & paint instead a faithful portrait of a dead cochon – ...quite incomprehensible.²³

²³ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 26 August 1901, in Gill, p. 95

It is interesting to note that while the market was not a subject popularly taken up by French Impressionists, (Camille Pissarro's *Poultry Market at Pontoise*, 1882 being a rare exception), it was widely used by the New Zealand expatriates as a vehicle in which to explore both Impressionist and Post-Impressionist styles. Indeed, it provided the perfect vehicle to do so, with its vibrant colours and bustling ambience and these aspects will be explored in the chapters that follow.

Compelling Viewing: The Appeal of the Marketplace

Writing from the port of Marseilles in 1901, Frances Hodgkins recorded her first impressions of the European sights that would become so familiar to her:

I began to understand the witchery an old continental town must have for artists...I loved the steep, uneven, badly paved streets plentifully strewn with every kind of rubbish and the quaint, dingy, discoloured buildings with emerald green latticed shutters and dark haired women hanging over the balconies and the orange stalls making vivid blots of colour at the street corners.²⁴

Tellingly, even at this early stage, Hodgkins refers to the market stalls to which she and her fellow New Zealand expatriates would turn again and again as subject matter. For Frances Hodgkins, as well as Maud Sherwood, Sydney Lough Thompson, Robert Procter and Maude Burge,²⁵ the markets of Europe proved to be a compelling subject and the attractions were many. The market was a vibrant and colourful location, making it a perfect vehicle in which to experiment with painting techniques and style. It was an ideal 'old world' subject, offering a glimpse of a traditional way of life, of peasants in their natural environment with a continental twist and it appealed widely to a middle-class audience.

To fully comprehend the attraction of the market as a painting subject for New Zealand expatriate artists, it is useful to consider the nature of the artists' colonies and sketching grounds in which they worked in England and Europe and the prevalent attitudes towards the depiction of peasants that existed at the time among both artists and their art public. The development of artists' colonies in England and Europe was a rapid phenomenon throughout the early nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. Nina Lübbren has maintained that during the period 1830 to 1910 over three thousand artists were working in artists' colonies in Europe, with the number of artists' colonies peaking in the 1880s. She places the colonies within a wider context of the cultural development of 'a growing mood of nostalgic longing for the countryside as

²⁴ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 4 April 1901, in Gill, p. 77

²⁵ While newspaper reviews indicate that Owen Merton also painted European market scenes, I have not been able to locate any examples of these.

compensation for accelerated industrialisation and urbanisation.²⁶ The resulting art works embodied an idyllic agrarian vision, and were careful constructs of life in these villages. Artists aimed to capture a way of life which they felt was in danger of becoming obsolete, as increasing modernisation and industrialisation threatened to encroach on a more traditional bucolic existence. This ideal governed the types of subjects that were painted, the manner in which they were painted, which details of life in the village were included and which were left out. This portrayal of village life embodies the discourse of what Bernard Deacon has identified as the ‘painterly gaze’.²⁷ Looking specifically at the artists’ colony at Cornwall, Deacon outlines the construction of the fishing village as ‘primitive’. He cites scholars, such as Jules Vernon, who described the artists as constructing ‘a picturesque paradise where the landscape and people remained untainted’.²⁸ To this end, the images produced in artists’ colonies were representations of ‘peasant’ life; their home and work regimes, as well as aspects of their costume, all of which could point to a traditional existence, unsullied by modernisation. As Lübbren has claimed, these images were not just depictions of peasants per se, but symbols of artists’ resistance to modernisation.²⁹

Running parallel to the artistic development and popularity of the colonies is the development of tourism, and it can be maintained that the viewpoints of tourists are indicative of those held by artists working abroad during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Interestingly, Deacon outlines the development of the concept of places such as Cornwall as ‘picturesque’, a term first included in the language of travellers in the 1780s. In the 1860s, the American traveller Elihu Burritt described St. Ives as seeming to have ‘drifted in here whole, from some portion of an older world’,³⁰ and by the 1900s, fishing villages of England were becoming more commonly denoted in terms such as ‘charming, old-world, quaint and picturesque’.³¹ This is the language also commonly used by the artists working abroad – they were, after all, tourists themselves – and such language is also indicative of the type of images they wished to construct, often consisting of representations of working-class

²⁶ Nina Lübbren, *Rural Artists’ Colonies in Europe 1870-1910*, Manchester, 1981, pp. 2-3

²⁷ Bernard Deacon, “Imagining the Fishing: Artists and Fishermen in Late Nineteenth Century Cornwall”, *Rural History* 12, 2, 2001, United Kingdom, p. 159

²⁸ Jules Vernon, quoted in Deacon, p. 161

²⁹ Lübbren, p. 39

³⁰ Elihu Burritt, quoted in Deacon, p. 163

³¹ Deacon, p. 38

villagers and peasant women in traditional dress. The expectations of the art public were in accord with this myth of peasant life. Depictions of the peasantry were popular subjects with bourgeois audiences at the Salons and such attitudes even found their way into popular literature of the time. Blanche Willis Howard's 1883 novel *Guenn: a wave on the Breton coast* accurately reflects the prevalent views of the Breton people held by the bourgeoisie. The work is set in an artists' colony at Plouvenec,³² Brittany, a place where artists created '...innumerable peasant-studies which find their way to Paris, to sell well and adorn the walls of luxurious houses, where peasants are myths.'³³ The display of the Pardon is described by middle-class spectators in the novel. 'For us these attitudes, for us these colors, for us this naïve display of the habits of a primitive people. How picturesquely historic, how vividly antique!'³⁴ The result of such bourgeois attitudes was that artists had a potentially receptive audience, willing to purchase their images of peasant life.

How then do the New Zealand expatriate artists fit into this discourse? While not all the New Zealand artists in this study were frequent members of artists' colonies, the majority worked in established sketching grounds of Europe. In her formative years abroad Frances Hodgkins was a member of several of Norman Garstin's sketching groups, among them excursions to Caudebec-en-Caux, France in 1901 and Penzance, Cornwall in 1902. In Cornwall she also met Stanhope Forbes and other key members of the Newlyn School, chief proponents of peasant imagery at the well-established artists' colony. Another important port of call on the sketching ground route for the expatriates was Concarneau, Brittany, a fishing village in the north-west of France. Concarneau was famous as an artists' haunt and Sydney Lough Thompson first visited there in 1902, returning frequently throughout his life. When in France, he adopted the practice of living in Concarneau throughout the majority of the year while spending periods in other favourite painting spots in the south of France such as Bormes-des-Mimosas, St Jeannet and Grasse. Following Thompson's example Frances Hodgkins, Owen Merton and Maud Sherwood also painted at Concarneau. After a period of initial study, Sherwood and Merton joined sketching tours led by

³² In reality the novel is set in Concarneau and features one of the hotels favoured by artists, the Hôtel des Voyageurs, from where Hodgkins painted *Market at Concarneau from a window of the Hôtel des Voyageurs*, 1927. Blanche Willis Howard had spent several months in the fishing village.

³³ Blanche Willis Howard, *Guenn: a wave on the Breton coast*, London, 2011 (1883), pp. 235-236

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 293-294

their tutor, Percyval Tudor Hart. Merton went on sketching tours with Hart to the Southwest of England, in particular to St Ives and in 1912 both Sherwood and Merton joined Hart's summer sketching class painting the 'villages of England.'³⁵ Less is known of the working patterns of Maude Burge and Robert Procter abroad, but Burge did complete works in Brittany and Procter is thought to have worked in Dordrecht, which was also a common painting spot and was where Frances Hodgkins had a studio and taught in 1907. The following year Hodgkins moved on to Laren in the north of Holland, a 'little colony...in the wilds' where 'artists have been coming...for many years, ever since Mauve lived & painted & died here 49 years ago. Nearly every farmhouse has an artist in it either painting in it or hiring a room where he sleeps & works for the summer months.'³⁶ The New Zealand artists were therefore fully aware of the current interest in peasant imagery. By referring to Josef Israels, known as 'the Dutch Millet' and painter of peasant subjects, and later recognising a debt to the Maris brothers and Mauve of the Hague School, Hodgkins aligned herself within this cohort of peasant painters. Like artists from other parts of the world, New Zealand artists working in artists' colonies and sketching grounds shared in the quest to depict the picturesque elements of life in the villages. It was, indeed, this shared goal which united all artists in these colonies and gave them their special character.

New Zealand artists also decried the encroaching elements of modernisation which threatened to destroy the picturesque nature of European villages, such as changes in fishing methods, motorised boats, new methods of farming and equipment and modern buildings. Frances Hodgkins vehemently complained of such developments at Laren:

The simple primitive charm of the place however is fast disappearing & the rich people from Amsterdam have found out that the air here is bracing & fresh & they have come along with their ugly villas & hotels & all the other sinful outrages of Arcady...& the artist is wrath & sore & presently will trek off elsewhere in search of some unspoilt corner he can call his own...Artists do not destroy & knock down & build up in sacrilegious fashion – this is a terribly hideous & progressive age & soon there will be a dead level of vulgar smugness over the land & one place will be exactly like another....³⁷

³⁵ Maud Sherwood, quoted in Heraud, p. 30

³⁶ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 29 July 1908, in Gill, p. 234

³⁷ Ibid.

Frances Hodgkins was anxious that the Arcadian ideal that she sought to paint would vanish before she had had the chance to capture it. Conveniently perhaps, she forgot that as a traveller in a foreign country, she too was part of the touristic enterprise which affected changes to the older way of life in the villages, that not only the ‘rich people from Amsterdam’, but also poor artists of the world required accommodation and put isolated villages ‘on the map’ through their paintings of them exhibited at the Salons. Sydney Lough Thompson also lamented modern developments at his beloved Concarneau. In 1938 he wrote to his family that ‘Concarneau is a little uglier than last autumn as they have build a huge criée on the Quai Carnot, a perfect horror,’³⁸ and when he returned to New Zealand later in life, he stated that ‘...now that the fishing boats are motorised there are no coloured sails and I do not find it interesting anymore.’³⁹ This loss of the picturesque was noted in Provence, too, where he witnessed the undesired signs of modernisation, and noted that ‘all along the coast from Menton to Nice and to Cannes is simply ruined for a painter.’⁴⁰ Both Frances Hodgkins and Sydney Lough Thompson spent long enough periods abroad to be aware of the transformations to a traditional existence that were happening in Europe and for them such changes would have caused alarm. To come so far in search of the ‘old world’ of their grandparents on which they had been raised, only to find the picturesque elements they looked for disappearing with great alacrity must have been equally disappointing. Added to this was the potential loss of a subject matter which proved popular within the prevailing art market.

New Zealand expatriate artists did not only work in the popular artists colonies, however, but also in lesser-known villages and even the larger cities in England and Europe. Therefore, it is also necessary to consider the particular cultural background which defined the New Zealand artists’ attitudes and approach to depicting the life they found in England and Europe in the early twentieth century. The wave of New Zealand artists going abroad at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries consisted in the main of first-generation New Zealanders, the sons and daughters of colonials, who had been brought up hearing fond stories of ‘home’

³⁸ Quoted in King, *Sydney Lough Thompson*, p. 56

Note: A criée is an auction house.

³⁹ Quoted in Marie Scott, “Brilliant New Zealand Artist comes back from France,” *The Evening Post*, 28 June, 1952, non paginated article in the Sydney Lough Thompson artist files, E.H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery Toi O Tāmaki

⁴⁰ Letter to family, 31 December 1938, quoted in King, *Sydney Lough Thompson*, p. 60

and wanted to experience the ‘old world’ for themselves. As E. H. McCormick succinctly stated in his study on Frances Hodgkins, *The Expatriate*: ‘Frances Hodgkins thus grew up in a country which was still a colony in something more than a political sense. The New Zealand of her youth was also a colony of the mind and the spirit.’⁴¹ Nostalgic recollections influenced the images that New Zealand artists produced and their predilection for subjects from the small fishing and agricultural villages of Europe. They were also experiencing these places as colonial tourists, and aimed to paint, (again in the words of E. H. McCormick), ‘the Europe of legend and story book, the Europe pursued with watercolour and sketching book by countless tourists of Anglo-Saxon origin.’⁴² Therefore, as well as being nostalgic constructions which would appeal to the art public, their paintings were also visual records of their travels and the sights they experienced abroad.

The first appeal of the marketplace as a subject, therefore, was as its appropriateness as a ‘Continental’ subject. While the marketplace represented an element of traditional life in the fishing and agricultural villages and as such was the perfect setting in which to observe the local villagers, it was also a very lively and social environment. In the first instance, New Zealand expatriate artists were drawn to the marketplace as a vibrant location, full of colour, movement and noise. During her first trip abroad in 1913, Maud Sherwood wrote of her impressions of the market at Concarneau, and her enthusiasm for the subject was obvious:

...Crowds of Breton women, all in their Breton costumes, and the men in lovely brown and blue clothes the colour of the sails of the fishing boats, were buying and selling and strolling and talking, and the sun shone. I worked like the very dickens to the accompaniment of the chatter of children talking to me....⁴³

Frances Hodgkins’ initial description of the marketplace is found in a letter to her mother from Caudebec-en-Caux, in 1901, four months after her arrival abroad: ‘...the whole town is covered with little canvas booths and with the different goods displayed and the babel of noise that goes on, each stallholder crying up their own

⁴¹ E. H. McCormick, *The Expatriate*, p. 8

⁴² E. H. McCormick, *Works of Frances Hodgkins*, p. 70

⁴³ Maud Sherwood Correspondence, 7 June 1913, quoted in Heraud, p. 31

particular wares.⁴⁴ As any tourist's would, their first sentiments relate to the general atmosphere of the market and the assault on all their senses, and in fact Henry Blackburn also records such impressions in *Breton Folk: An Artistic Tour in Brittany*:

...It is market morning, and the open square in the centre of the town is filling fast with arrivals from the country. Everything is fresh from the late rains, and the air is laden with the scent of flowers, butter, and milk. On every side carts are fitting up stalls for the sale of provisions and goods. There are rows of stalls for sale of cloth stuffs, shoes and wooden sabots, for pots and pans, and for innumerable trinkets of small value to tempt the peasantry....⁴⁵

Therefore, on one level, the works that New Zealand expatriate artists produced embody the visual elements that they witnessed and which were unique to them as colonial tourists. Frances Hodgkins' early European works were often sketches, aiming to capture a slice of Continental life. Her watercolour, *Village Market*, 1902, [fig. 1] is just that. Hodgkins portrays a street market stall, sketchily rendered in muted tones. In the work, several female figures stand around baskets, next to a cart with produce, while another figure stands apart in the doorway. The work employs a distant viewpoint, and as such, the viewer does not engage in the work, but like Hodgkins herself, seems to stand apart as an observer. Hodgkins executed other works in this vein, such as *Shop with Church behind [Village Street Scene]*, c. 1901-03, which also presents a simple snapshot of a Continental street, with conversing figures placed against a shop front. They are the type of works that E. H. McCormick may have been thinking of when he wrote, 'they are then seen to be the "impressions" of an observant colonial, entranced by the picturesqueness and age and colour of the old world; they are the illustrations to her travel diary, lacking the humour and the spontaneity of the diary itself.'⁴⁶ Maud Sherwood was to execute a similar scene during her second trip abroad, in *Fruit Shop, Capri*, 1926,⁴⁷ [fig. 2] albeit a more vibrant and finished example of the theme. It depicts a sundrenched Mediterranean scene, with vivid yellows and reds and clusters of figures laughing and conversing against the background of the fruit shop. It contains all the elements which Sherwood

⁴⁴ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 26 August 1901, in Gill, p. 95

⁴⁵ Henry Blackburn, *Breton Folk: An Artistic Tour in Brittany*, London, 1880, p. 27

⁴⁶ McCormick, *The Expatriate*, p. 76

⁴⁷ Sherwood's second trip was from 1926-1933 and during this time she was to spend a considerable portion of her time abroad in Capri, after befriending Anita Vedder, who had a villa on the island.

enthused over in the marketplace; the hustle and bustle and the vibrant colours displayed in the clothing, awnings and produce.

Frances Hodgkins' watercolour, *The Market Place, San Remo, Italy*, 1902, [fig. 3] also illustrates these elements. Here the marketplace is depicted as a venue for social interaction. Well-dressed men, women and children are clustered around a sunlit piazza, the emphasis being on the crowd enjoying a sunny *passeggiata* around the marketplace. There is very little sign of a market itself, no displays of produce and wares or market vendors and the awnings covering the stalls are the only indication of what the event is. The scene is framed by picturesque Mediterranean styled architecture, rendered in an impressionist style emphasising movement, light and atmosphere. Frances Hodgkins said of the Riviera:

...the houses here are painted to represent palaces and the spaces between the windows are often filled in with life sized figures of madonnas, old masters, sculptors & poets – there is too much Villa-dom for my taste, and the gay Casinos palm trees and all the continental riff-raff you meet with in every town helps the illusion of a bright colored scene painting....⁴⁸

This is just the impression that *The Market Place, San Remo, Italy* conveys. The emphasis on the recreational nature of the market makes this work unique among Hodgkins' market scenes and differentiates it from the types of works produced in the artists' colonies. This is not a work which aims to convey the ideal of noble labour or a primitive lifestyle. It is not located in a fishing or agricultural village in which its inhabitants are struggling for economic survival. Instead, it simply presents a slice of Continental life.

Robert Procter's depictions of the marketplaces of Italy also demonstrate this emphasis on the social aspect of the market. His market works are sundrenched scenes in which jovial and lively Italians, in colourful attire, are engaged in purchasing produce and in conversation. *In Sunny Italy* [fig. 4] conveys a vivid sense of life and movement, the foreground of the work bathed in sunlight, giving prominence to the tableau of three conversing women who surround the male market vendor at his stall of colourful produce. The multi-coloured dress of the women is echoed in the vivid

⁴⁸ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 2 December 1901, in Gill, p. 108

garments and parasols of the milling crowd in the middle ground and the awnings throw shadows to the side, further emphasising the central figures. The scene is completed by the sunlit Mediterranean buildings behind, all of these elements coming together to form a picture-perfect postcard image of life in the Italian village.

Other works executed by the New Zealand expatriates fit better within the discourse of the artists' colonies, focusing more on traditional elements of rural life. One type of market that illustrated well the agrarian endeavour was the animal market. Henry Blackburn commented from Carhaix, Brittany:

Let us follow...to a large square where the fair is held, and there are wonderful sights and sounds; under the trees a crowd of men and women, in the dust and heat, horses, cattle, and pigs, in perpetual movement...The pig market is more active, as every Breton peasant likes to possess a pig, and the noises proceeding from this part of the square are deafening....⁴⁹

The expatriates were well aware of the artistic possibilities of the pig market. Writing from Dinan, Frances Hodgkins commented, 'I have got a big thing on at present of the pig market (my swinish tendency is considered low) with pink & black satin piglets wallowing happily in a sea of straw – they make a good picture....'⁵⁰ Maude Burge and Sydney Lough Thompson were also drawn to the subject; Burge's *The Pig Market, Montreuil*, c. 1912, [fig. 5] and Thompson's *Pig Market, Brittany* [fig. 6] illustrating well their treatment of the subject. Like Blackburn, these artists were interested in the atmosphere of the market, the hustle and bustle, running swine and clusters of figures, and it is these elements that they aimed to capture. The focus is on the liveliness of the scene and this is particularly true of Burge's image in which she creates a strong sense of vibrancy and movement. The gestural brushwork, the swarming figures in a range of dynamic poses and the running swine in the foreground fill the work with the hustle and bustle typical of a noisy pig market. While both Thompson and Burge lived in and spent a significant amount of time in these regions, they are looking at the scene through the eyes of outsiders. The faceless crowd represents archetypical village inhabitants; women in traditional costume, bonneted and aproned, with the sun highlighting the action and adding to the atmosphere of the scene.

⁴⁹ Blackburn, *Breton Folk*, p. 64

⁵⁰ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 28 July 1902, in Gill, p. 134

Brittany, as a separate cultural region in France, lent itself particularly well to such depictions. It offered agricultural villages, as well as fishing ports, and provided artists with the opportunity to glimpse what they considered a ‘primitive’ lifestyle, untainted by modernisation. In his travel guide of 1880, *Breton Folk: An Artistic Tour in Brittany*, Henry Blackburn stated:

Brittany is essentially the land of the painter. It would be strange indeed if a country sprinkled with white caps...should not attract artists in search of picturesque costume and scenes of pastoral life...Nowhere in France are there finer peasantry; nowhere do we see more dignity of aspect in field labour, more nobility of feature amongst men and women; nowhere more picturesque ruins; nowhere such primitive habitations....⁵¹

Frank L. Emanuel agreed. Writing for *The Studio* in 1894 he stated that, ‘you cannot possibly do better than choose Concarneau in Brittany as a pitch for your easel.’⁵² It would seem that the New Zealand expatriate artists also believed this, with Sydney Lough Thompson referring to it as “the town of 30 studios and 30 sardine factories”.⁵³ As noted earlier, the majority of the artists in this study worked there at some point during their sojourns abroad. Sydney Lough Thompson, in fact, spent half his life working there and Maud Sherwood wrote of meeting him there in 1913. Frances Hodgkins and Owen Merton were there together in 1910,⁵⁴ and at some point Maude Burge was also working in the region, if not in Concarneau, then certainly in some locale in Brittany.

The traditional costume of Breton women, in particular the white cap or coif, became symbolic of the primitive and the picturesque for artists. It is unlikely that any artist travelling to Brittany throughout the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries was oblivious of their picturesque effect and they feature prominently in photographs of market scenes. They are a dominant aspect, for example, in the photograph of a market at Concarneau, found in the album of Hannah Ritchie, a student of Frances Hodgkins [fig. 7]. In 1895, Arthur Hoeber described the effect of witnessing them as

⁵¹ Blackburn, *Breton Folk*, p. 3

⁵² Frank. L Emanuel, “Letters to Artists. Concarneau, Brittany, as a Sketching Ground,” *The Studio*, Vol. 4 (24), 1894, p180

⁵³ Sydney Lough Thompson, quoted in “Sydney Lough Thompson (1877-1973),” *Survey*, February 1976, Number Fourteen, Christchurch, p.5

⁵⁴ Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate any market scenes by Owen Merton completed at Concarneau or any of the other European places he visited.

follows: 'I think the great white coifs and collars of the women impressed us then more than all else...the picture was so impressive, so characteristic of the country and the people, and it was our first intimate glimpse of a corner of France almost forgotten at that time.'⁵⁵

For the New Zealand expatriate artists they also held great appeal. Maud Sherwood enthused about the Breton caps she saw at the market of Concarneau, Frances Hodgkins depicted them on her market women and, above all, a market scene by Sydney Lough Thompson would not be complete without a cluster of bonneted women huddled together over market wares. In Hodgkins' *Marketing in Dinan (France)*, c. 1902, (Aigantighe Art Gallery, Timaru) the protagonist, an older Breton woman is depicted striding away from the market in full black dress with white cap. It is clear that the artist was struck by the effect created by the subject's costume against the more colourful background of the market scene. In *A Market Place, Concarneau, Brittany*, [fig. 8] Sydney Lough Thompson also exploits traditional costume to create a sense of contrast. The scene is bathed in strong light, with a predominance of white tones. The black dresses of the women in the middle of the picture plane provide a stark contrast to the white building behind. Even the stall of wares in front of them is rendered in white tones, with only a few subtle touches of colour, therefore further differentiating the women. In these works, Hodgkins and Thompson are employing traditional dress to add a picturesque touch to their market scenes, as well as allude to older established customs. Both artists were aware of changes being made to the traditional way of life in such places as Concarneau, which would destroy such picturesque elements for the painter, and they were not alone in their concern. Describing the scene at a religious occasion, a 'pardon', Emanuel commented that '...such processions of quaint Breton costumes will, I fear, not survive many years, for now that travelling is so easy the discarded fashions of Paris creep in, and the Breton national costumes are dying out.'⁵⁶ Artists therefore were keen to capture such elements while they could and were aware that the bourgeois audiences they targeted were receptive to purchasing images of this disappearing way of life.

⁵⁵ Arthur Hoeber and Willard L. Metcalf, "A Summer in Brittany," *The Monthly Illustrator*, Vol. 4, No. 12 Apr., 1895, p. 75

⁵⁶ Emanuel, p. 184

Lübbren has pointed out that, in utilising the customary dress of the local inhabitants in artists' colonies for picturesque means, artists often manipulated the meaning of dress and combined items that did not relate.⁵⁷ Blackburn differentiated the various caps for each region of Brittany, yet for the majority of artists they were a homogeneous entity with little difference no matter the location in which they were painted. These artists were not interested in ethnographical accuracy, and in the case of Hodgkins and Thompson, their impressionistic rendering of the coifs indicates a greater concern to convey an overall sense of the effect created by the Breton's costume, rather than attention to authentic detail. Not all artists were fully enamoured by Breton costume, however. Hoeber qualified his description of the coif, 'we came to know these wretched things later on, and to learn the difficulties they presented to the painter, with their stiff outline and graceless shape,'⁵⁸ and Stanhope Forbes complained, 'if a woman had an attractive figure it was not apparent because she was always wearing heavy clothing....'⁵⁹ For Hodgkins and Thompson, however, their impressionist treatment of the coif limited such challenges and they were never concerned with showing the attractiveness of a female Breton's figure, but rather responded to the voluminous nature of their dress.

Subjects at the market, therefore, also offered an excellent vehicle for New Zealand expatriate artists to explore a variety of painterly concerns and techniques, and this was a further reason for its appeal. As with the general situation of artists working in artist colonies in England and Europe, there was no one uniform style developed by the expatriates, although they shared some commonalities in approach. By and large New Zealand artists showed a concern for working *en plein air*, which was an appropriate method in which to capture the atmosphere of the market and light effects. Sydney Lough Thompson always worked in situ at the marketplace and Frances Hodgkins for the most part did, however she sometimes also worked from photographs or reworked earlier market scenes. Maud Sherwood completed many market studies *en plein air*, although naturally her market prints were based on studies she had done in situ. To this end, watercolour was a favourite medium, especially of Maude Burge and Frances Hodgkins. The exceptions were Sydney Lough Thompson

⁵⁷ Lübbren, p. 45

⁵⁸ Hoeber and Metcalf, p. 75

⁵⁹ Tim Cross, *The Shining Sands: Artists in Newlyn and St. Ives 1880-1930*, Devon and Cambridge, 1994, p. 24

and Robert Procter who preferred to work in oil paint, while Maud Sherwood liked to carry both watercolours and oils so that she would have the option of using either. The New Zealand artists experimented with an impressionist style of painting, among others, and showed an interest in using simplified forms and varied colour effects. A comparison of the work and practice of the New Zealand expatriates highlights some of these concerns.

Sydney Lough Thompson made his first trip abroad in 1900. While he also visited Rome, Florence, Venice, Milan and Pisa, it was his first trip to Concarneau, Brittany in the summer of 1902 that was pivotal to his career. He went on to spend half of his life painting the *Concarnoi* and in this endeavour he was extremely prolific. Maud Sherwood recalled visiting him and seeing ‘hundreds’ of his sketches.⁶⁰ Thompson was particularly attracted to the fishing port, with its bustle of fishermen and the vibrant colours of the sails. He said of Concarneau that the ‘chief characteristic of this place, and the one that most interests me, is movement.’⁶¹ He also turned to the marketplace for inspiration, for it also provided a sense of vibrancy, movement and colour. He completed numerous market studies which highlight different stylistic treatments of the subject and which confirm his interest in ‘recording his impressions’.⁶² As the Impressionists did before him, Thompson aimed to capture changing light, colour and atmospheric effects and so completed rapid sketches in oil of the marketplace at various times of the day. He described his practice as follows:

I always paint at the scene of the subject and not in the studio. I like to get the colour of the day. Each day has its own colouring. It may be a blue day or there may be a little rose in the sky. I painted a ‘*contre jour*’ or looking into the light. This is very hard on the eyes, of course, but very interesting.⁶³

Morning Market, Brittany, 1913 [fig. 9] and *Afternoon Market, Concarneau, Brittany* (Aigantighe Art Gallery, Timaru) work together well as companion pieces and illustrate well how Thompson was able to capture the changing colour effects throughout the day. *Morning Market, Brittany* is bathed in the strong morning light,

⁶⁰ Maud Sherwood Correspondence, 21 August 1913, quoted in Heraud, p. 42

⁶¹ Quoted in “A Painter of Movement,” Art News and Comment, *The Christian Science Monitor*, Boston, Monday, October 22, 1923, in Thompson, A. papers, Alexander Turnbull Library Manuscripts Collection, MS-Papers-3912

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Quoted in Scott. Interestingly Scott also reports in the article that Thompson could complete a whole harbour scene in two hours.

with a predominance of orange and golden tones. The vibrant green and yellow awning of the stall is particularly noticeable. The cluster of female figures in the foreground is a typical motif repeated in Thompson's work, their faces generally indistinguishable in a flurry of white bonnets and movement as they forage amongst the goods for sale. In the background a similar cluster of male figures are engaged in the same process. *Afternoon Market, Concarneau, Brittany*, on the other hand, captures the colour effects of the late setting sun, and employs cool blue shadows and patches of falling light. The works also highlight the varying colour effects of the changing seasons, the vibrant dark foliage in the morning work replaced by sparse autumnal leaves in the afternoon study.

A further work which illustrated Thompson's interest in colour is *The Mauve Umbrella* [fig.10]. Thompson commented that '...the peasants of Brittany are veritable poets with their great love of colour sentiment,'⁶⁴ and this is particularly evident in the vibrant purple umbrella which is further emphasised by the complementary yellows of the table, awning and top of the umbrella. In Thompson's market scenes, the colourful awnings and umbrellas form the pictorial equivalent to the vivid sails that he and many other artists responded to. The clothing of the figures is more subdued, being that of traditional Breton costume. As with numerous other artists, Thompson was drawn to these elements of tradition. He in particular lamented the modernisation of the life in the village and eventually ceased to paint it when it no longer offered him glimpses of this nostalgic existence. The colour is applied in broad brushstrokes, in heavy impasto showing a greater debt to the influence of the Post-Impressionists, in particular Cézanne. In a talk to the Wellington Sketch Club in 1939, entitled "Art in the Twentieth Century," Thompson stated that 'French Art has dominated the whole world during the last 100 years, and I think that everyone will admit that modern art is derived from three men's work – Cézanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh. Especially Cézanne's.'⁶⁵

Although some elements of Thompson's market scenes remained essentially the same, for example a focus on colour and light and certain compositional devices such

⁶⁴ Quoted in "A Painter of Movement"

⁶⁵ Sydney Lough Thompson, "Art in the Twentieth Century," extract from *Art in New Zealand, A Quarterly Magazine*, September, 1939, reproduced in *Survey*, February 1976, Number Fourteen, Christchurch, p. 7

as clusters of figures flanked by trees, key stylistic developments are found in his response to the work of the Post-Impressionists. A comparison of two works, *Earthenware Market, Concarneau* c. 1916 [fig. 11] and the aforementioned *A Market Place Concarneau, Brittany*, [fig. 8] demonstrate well the changes in Thompson's style. Both works illustrate a concern with depicting the clear light that Thompson particularly responded to at Concarneau and feature strong white tones. The former work is impressionistic in that it conveys a general sense of movement, with the facial features of the market goers rendered indistinctly. As opposed to the latter work, however, there is a greater sense of realism. The light has a natural glow and tonal modelling is apparent in the dress of the figures and the pile of goods in the middle ground. In *A Market Place Concarneau, Brittany*, however, the forms of the figures, trees and table of wares are more simplified and rendered in solid blocks of colour. Compared to the earlier work, the colour palette is more exaggerated; the cream tones replaced by stark white, and the trees a patchwork of vibrant greens and blues. The brushwork is broader and there is a more structural feel to the work as Thompson starts to apply a Cézanne-like grid to the composition through the introduction of strong horizontal and vertical forms created by the trees, houses and awning of the market stall.

The faceting of forms is also found in the more structured work, *French Market Scene* [fig. 12]. In this work, the wooden boxes and baskets of market wares and surrounding buildings lend themselves to a simplified grid-like treatment. Faceting in the dresses of the broadly rendered figures adds to the sense of movement of the scene. A further Post-Impressionist influence is noticeable in the work *Flemish Market Scene II* [fig. 13]. Here Thompson seems to be responding to the work of van Gogh in the way forms are constructed through colour definition. Patches of varied colour differentiate the trees, awnings and market goers and Thompson has applied a further touch of colour in the female costume, seen particularly in the blue highlights added to the dresses of the second cluster of figures to the rear. While the construction of these scenes is different from Thompson's earlier market works, in intent they are the same. The focus on colour, vibrancy, light and movement is still evidence of Thompson's aim to convey his impressions of the scene and the essence of the market subject is never lost.

Maude Burge's *Market Place [Market Scene at Brittany]* [fig. 14] offers a different stylistic interpretation of the market from Sydney Lough Thompson. To all intents and purposes, however, their aims are the same; to capture a sense of the 'old world' and the essence of the market. Working in watercolour, Burge's painting of the market has the appearance of a quick sketch, and is rendered in what could be considered her more 'unfinished' style. The forms of the figures and objects are worked in simple outlines, their faces featureless as they peruse the goods for sale. It is not a study of individuals, but rather conveys a general sense of the market. The viewer's attention is drawn to the large gathering of figures to the left of the picture plane as they are engaged in examining the items. There is an overall sense of lightness, aided by the whitewashed buildings which form a backdrop to the scene and the colours of the unidentifiable goods contrast with the dark seated vendor to the left of the foreground.

A companion piece to *Market Place*, which offers a different view of the market, is the work *Fish Market, Brittany* [fig. 15]. Whereas the former is a study of women at market, the latter is a study of predominantly male figures. Rather than the more common depiction of an outside market bathed in the strong sunlight, *Fish Market, Brittany* is an indoor scene and is depicted in cool blue and muted tones. The figures take up a greater amount of space in the middle ground and clusters of them are placed around baskets of fish scattered around the room, as they engage in conversation, negotiation or inspection. The fish market made a definite impression on the expatriates and Maud Sherwood wrote of her experience at the 'delightful fish market' in Concarneau, full of 'interesting subjects',⁶⁶ where she painted fishwives selling the produce. Burge and Sherwood seem to have been drawn mainly to the noise and activity of the fish market, and Burge's work creates an impression of this. However, in Thompson's oeuvre, it is in his harbour scenes that he focuses on the main occupation of the fishing village, the men with their catch. He described how '...sometimes in one day 2 or 300 tunny boats would arrive and that meant between 1400 and 2000 fishermen from all parts of the coast living crowded on wharfs and in the cafés. Men excited by having made a big catch or by not having caught

⁶⁶ Maud Sherwood Correspondence, 18 June 1913, quoted in Heraud, p. 35

anything.⁶⁷ This indicates a varied approach by the expatriates towards depicting the life of the fishing village, focusing on those elements to which they were most strongly drawn. Burge's *Fish Market, Brittany* also contrasts considerably in style and intention with a work such as Stanhope Forbes' *A Fish Sale on a Cornish Beach*, 1885 [fig. 16] and its 'unflinching realism.'⁶⁸ Depicting the moment when the catch is unloaded and offered for sale at auction, the Stanhope Forbes work aims to capture a sense of timelessness in its focus on the act of commerce essential to the survival of the fisherfolk in the village. A key member of the Newlyn artists' colony, Forbes and his fellow artists emphasised the hardships faced by those in the village, instilling a sense of pathos in their works. The Burge work instead conveys the sense of movement and activity surrounding the selling of the fish, removed from the actual scene of the catch. As such, the scene is rendered in an impressionist, sketchy style in order to reflect the movement and fleeting nature of the scene.

Details of Maude Burge's movements abroad are uncertain, but it is thought that she may have studied under Frank Brangwyn when in Europe.⁶⁹ Certainly both artists depicted market scenes at Montreuil in northern France. It is thought that Burge studied in Montreuil, circa 1905-07, under Frank Mayor,⁷⁰ who himself had studied under Brangwyn. Therefore, she could have come under Brangwyn's influence either at first or second-hand. Later Burge returned to Montreuil with her husband, George Burge, where Frances Hodgkins reported meeting her.⁷¹ Brangwyn's influence can be seen in the muted palette found in works such as *The Pig Market, Montreuil*, c. 1912, [fig. 5] and *Market Scene, Belgium*, [fig. 17] as well as the more solid forms of the figures. Maud Sherwood and Frances Hodgkins also responded to Brangwyn's broad handling of form. Brangwyn's *The Market Place Montreuil*, [fig. 18] employs a darkened palette, with a predominance of browns and blues, as are also found in the two Burge works mentioned above. In Burge's work, however, there is a greater feeling of movement. In *The Pig Market, Montreuil* there is a sense of the figures moving among the livestock and in *Market Scene, Belgium*, the impressionist nature of the brushwork implies movement of the figures and in the foliage of the trees.

⁶⁷ S. L. Thompson, "Artists in Brittany," undated manuscript in possession of Mme. Y. A. Thompson, quoted in King, *Sydney Lough Thompson*, p. 53

⁶⁸ Stanhope Forbes, quoted in Deacon, p. 164

⁶⁹ Una Platts, p. 57

⁷⁰ Maude Burge biographical notes, compiled by Jane Vial. [Jane Vial's personal research notes]

⁷¹ Frances Hodgkins to William Hodgkins, 25 September 1924, in Gill, p. 382

Burge also used the subject of the market in order to convey a sense of life in a Mediterranean village based on her observations. Two such works are *Market Day, St Remy, Provence* [fig. 19] and *Near Tropez*. Stylistically they are sketchy works with a predominance of golden tones, reflected in the colourful produce. In *Market Day, St Remy, Provence*, the tower of fruit dominates the work, taking up half of the middle ground in the picture plane. There are fewer figures in the works and there is certainly less of the bustle of Burge's other works. It is possible that it is works of this style that Frances Hodgkins rather critically referred to as looking 'rather washed out'⁷² when she worked with Maude and her husband in St Tropez in 1931, before they started 'taking up art seriously & from a most advanced angle.'⁷³ This is despite the fact that Burge had been sending work to the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts since 1920 and had proven herself more than capable of handling the challenging nature of the market scene in works such as *The Pig Market Montreuil*. By this time St Tropez was 'one of the less fashionable of the Riviera resorts'⁷⁴ and as such, did not lend itself to depictions of aspects of traditional rural life.

Robert Procter's market scenes also focus on the picturesque. His market scenes of Rome, in particular, focus on the liveliness of the scene and convey a slice of life in an Italian town. In his stylistic treatment of the marketplace Procter responded to the vibrant Mediterranean sun and architecture and the vivid colours of the awnings and clothes of the market goers and his depictions show an increased use of colour and light for dramatic effect. *In the Campo del Fiore*⁷⁵ [fig. 20] is bathed in strong light and framed by Mediterranean styled architecture, a feature found in all of Procter's market scenes. Although not dated, it is probable that it is an earlier European work, based on the colour palette he has employed. While there are some hints of colour in the dresses of the female market goers, in the main the scene is worked in muted brown tones. In all likelihood this reflects the influence of his Dutch teacher van der Velden, who taught him in Christchurch before he studied abroad in Paris, Antwerp and Italy. The women add to the sense of the picturesque in the work, dressed in long flowing skirts, colourful aprons and black bodices. The woman carrying a laden basket on her head alludes to a traditional way of life while the little girl and dog add

⁷² Frances Hodgkins to William Hodgkins, 12 November 1931, in Gill, p. 444

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 443

⁷⁵ The correct name of Rome's famous piazza is Campo dei Fiori.

a quaint touch. Interestingly, the figure of the woman in the right foreground is identical in pose and manner to that found in another work by Procter, *A Belgium Market* [fig47]. While the latter is a more colourful version, the almost identical repetition of the figure illustrates the elements of the market to which Procter was most drawn, namely traditional dress which was very different to that seen in New Zealand at the time.

Maud Sherwood was also keenly observant of the dress of Italian women, describing their attire as being very different from her own and ‘mostly blouses, a very full and voluminous skirt, a big apron and handkerchief over the head – if anything.’⁷⁶ These garments become the standard attire in Procter’s works, with the vividness of the dress adding to the overall sense of colourfulness of the market. While both Sydney Lough Thompson and Robert Procter focused on female dress in their works, their approaches to the depiction of this differed considerably. Interestingly, despite Thompson’s obvious colour interests, he still depicted the costume of Breton women in darkened tones. Although in some later works it is possible to observe the addition of colour highlights in their attire, Thompson never truly depicts their costume in the same vibrant way he does the awnings, umbrellas and produce, thus retaining an element of tradition. For Procter, however, the colour possibilities of female costume are fully explored and are often the most vibrant element of his works. Therefore we see two different interpretations of the picturesque, no doubt influenced to some degree by the locale in which the works were created.

Compared to *In the Campo del Fiore*, Procter’s *In Sunny Italy* [fig. 4] is a brighter and more vibrant depiction of the market. It employs a heightened use of colour, and the noise and atmosphere of the market is reflected in the dramatic colour and the large crowd milling around in the middle ground. Contrast is created between the shadows of the awnings and the sunlit figures, and Procter takes this further in, *The Market*, c. 1905 [fig. 21]. In this work there is a dramatic use of chiaroscuro, used to highlight the figure of the solitary woman in the middle ground, surrounded by pigeons, contrasting strongly with the darkened buildings in the background and shadows in the foreground. The protagonist is dressed in a vibrant yellow blouse and red

⁷⁶ Maud Sherwood Notebook, 1930, quoted in Heraud, p. 143

headscarf, and further colour additions are made in the orange and blue awnings behind her. It is in *The Sunlit market, Rome*, [fig. 22] however, that a change of style is apparent which aims to capture the atmosphere of the market. The overall appearance of the work is a study of light and colour and Procter employs a more impressionistic use of brushwork than in the other works discussed. While retaining a dramatic use of shadow and light which serves to spotlight the crowd of market goers in the middle ground, Procter uses a lighter palette, in which white and pinks feature predominantly in the women's dress. This creates a sense of liveliness in the work, reflecting the liveliness of the market itself. One of the highlighted women carries her basket and another to the right lifts a water jug onto her shoulder. Sherwood also referred to Italian women carrying loads on their heads in her writing and obviously it was these details that were keenly noticed by the expatriate artists and used to suggest a more traditional and 'primitive' way of life, quite distinct from that experienced in New Zealand.

Like Sydney Lough Thompson and Robert Procter, Maud Sherwood also responded to the picturesque elements of the marketplace and developed an appropriate style with which to represent the liveliness of the scene, as well as focusing, in particular, on the character of the people. She made two trips abroad to Europe, the first from 1912-13, where she took up the scholarship she had won in 1902 after winning the prestigious South Kensington bronze medal for painting when she was a student of the Wellington Technical College. The second was from 1926-33 after her marriage had dissolved. Encouraged to work boldly with brush and colour by her teacher in New Zealand, James Nairn, and further equipped with knowledge of colour theory after studying under Tudor Hart in Paris, Sherwood was an excellent colourist and draftsman. While assimilating and responding to artistic stimulus abroad, Sherwood still maintained an independent attitude towards her art, stating that, 'I think myself that one can have too much training. The great thing in art is to have something to say, and to say it in your own way...'⁷⁷ In an address at Sherwood's exhibition of work at the Macquarie Galleries, Sydney after her return to Australia in 1933, Mr Alfred Collins stated:

⁷⁷ Maud Sherwood, quoted in "A Distinguished New Zealand Artist Maud Sherwood," in *Australian Handbook*, Sydney, December, 1937, p. 11

To an artist of Mrs. Sherwood's type, subject matter is all-important, I cannot imagine her as happy in the Australian bush as she is in the Italian Market Place. Her love of colour; her appreciation of design, and pattern; her appreciation of the contrast of architectural form with its natural surroundings; her love of movement – of people doing ordinary things; her sensitiveness to costume in relation to character; her subtle sense of humour, all find vent in the continental subjects she handles so well.⁷⁸

These comments sum up the key aspects of Sherwood's art and her approach to depicting market scenes well. She was struck by the atmosphere, colour and movement of the market and was experimental in her use of composition and viewpoint. Unique for its composition, Sherwood's watercolour *The Italian Boot Market*, c. 1930, [fig. 23] employs a high viewpoint in order to observe more of the action of the market. The composition is based on two circular groups of market goers, the central circle depicting a large clamouring cluster of customers surrounding the boot seller who holds up and touts his wares. The outer circle contains other sellers of wares and customers also engaged in conversation or the buying of goods. The overall impression created is one of movement and noise. The most prominent use of colour is in the headscarves of the women, and the market enabled Sherwood to depict these *en masse*. As previously noted, Sherwood was drawn to the picturesque aspects of female dress, whether it was the caps of the Breton women at the market at Concarneau, or the voluminous skirts, aprons and headscarves of the Italian peasants or Spanish market vendors, and it is this feature that dominates in her images of market life.

Sherwood worked in a variety of media and her sense of design and simplification of form suited the medium of print well. She had tuition in woodcut technique in Venice with a Miss Boyd in 1926, after seeing her work while in Capri, describing it as 'charming, most exquisite colour and feeling. Woodcuts beautiful. Arranged for her to give me some lessons....'⁷⁹ Sherwood had by that time been in Italy since March so had ample sketches on which to base her prints and she was also to employ the use of linocut. One example of the latter is *Market place*, 1928 [fig. 24]. In this work Sherwood focuses on the subject of women at the market, with a possible vendor and customer depicted in the foreground of the work. The scene is colourful, with the

⁷⁸ Albert Collins, "The Water-colours of Maud Sherwood," extract from an address at the Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, reproduced in *Manuscripts, A Miscellany of Art and Letters*, No. 7, November 1933, p.50

⁷⁹ Maud Sherwood Notebook, 16 September 1926, quoted in Héraud, p. 114

blues of the women's dress, the green awning, yellow baskets and red produce. As in *The Italian boot market*, Sherwood is drawn to the picturesqueness of the female attire and the colour value they add. The forms of the figure are simplified and rendered in solid blocks of colour. Back in Australia, Sherwood acknowledged the influence of the Moderns and the Primitives, although not identifying any specific artists. However her work can be seen as a response to the Post-Impressionists and Japanese prints, reflected in the simplified forms and outlines. In the print, *Spanish market woman*, also of 1938, [fig. 25] a possible influence of van Gogh is seen in the gnarled hands of the woman. In this work, forms are again simplified and heavily outlined and it is likely a result of such characteristics that critics saw something of the influence of Gauguin in her work. In an interview in the early 1930s Sherwood aligned herself with 'the Modern School', stating, 'they have broken away from old traditions...I think the moderns have tried for the spirit of the thing, more than the outline. They are more direct in their treatment.'⁸⁰

The New Zealand expatriate artist to experiment the most stylistically with the subject of the market was Frances Hodgkins. In her depiction of the market she worked through a range of styles, from Impressionism to Post-Impressionism to Cubism. Early representations of street vendors and market scenes are in a similar style to that which Hodgkins was working in while in New Zealand. Works such as *Mother and daughter preparing flowers*, c. 1901 [fig. 26] and *The water-melon seller*, c. 1903, [fig. 27] employ the wet-on-wet technique learnt from her teacher Girolamo Pieri Nerli in Dunedin and capture a colourful slice of Continental life. Both works focus on family groups, the mother and daughter working together and the family buying watermelon from the heavily-moustached vendor. There is an emphasis on their picturesque dress, the colourful skirts, aprons and shawls and the reds in the latter work contrast with the bright green melons.

Two works of 1902, the afore-mentioned *The Market Place, San Remo, Italy*, and *Untitled: French Market Scene*, 1902 [fig. 28] seem to show a more confident approach to depicting the subject. Hodgkins is painting in an impressionist style in order to further capture a sense of the light and atmosphere of the market scene. In

⁸⁰ Maud Sherwood, quoted in Suzanne Bronwyn Sherwood, "The Contribution of Maud Sherwood to the Sydney Art Scene", p. 26

these works the brushwork is loose and rapid, creating a sense of movement in the trees and among the figures. The latter work employs a closer viewpoint so the features of the figures in the foreground are distinguishable, whereas in the faceless crowd they are implied and there is a general sense of a mass. Both works exhibit muted palettes, especially *Market Scene* which is predominantly executed in blue, ochre and brown tones and this is generally the case of Hodgkins' early market scenes. In *Women in a French Market*, c. 1903, [fig. 29] the brush work is more rapid, with the features of the women indistinguishable, and the scene is evidence of a greater animation. In these works Hodgkins was concerned with capturing an impression of what she was seeing and is painting in a style suited to a *plein-air* approach. Hodgkins was aware of Impressionism; she had visited the galleries in Paris in 1901 on her arrival and had been exposed to a form of it while still in New Zealand, through the influence of her Italian teacher Nerli. At this stage, however, her work remained untouched by Post-Impressionism or any of the other more challenging *avant-garde* art movements, such as Fauvism or Cubism. While in Paris she wrote to her sister that she had found the art work there 'far less degrading than I was led to believe,' and emphatically announced, 'I have not had *one single shock* since I came to Paris.'⁸¹ Then again, like many of the New Zealand expatriates, Hodgkins did not travel in the *avant-garde* circles so was not exposed to the more innovative and provocative forms of art prevalent at this time. This is also reflected also in a comment that Thompson had made on the subject of Parisian galleries: 'Of course there is another salon, that of the Independents but no self respecting person would have much to do with it.'⁸²

It was during the post-war years, in what she referred to as her 'experimental days,' that Hodgkins was to engage with some of the more progressive styles from earlier in the century. *Normandy Vegetable Market*, 1920, [fig. 30] saw her experimenting with a Cubist use of space. A stylistic reworking of an earlier work, *Vegetable Stall, France*, c. 1906⁸³, [fig. 46] *Normandy Vegetable Market* is clearly an exercise in experimentation, using a subject that was familiar to Hodgkins and which she had depicted on numerous previous occasions. The main developments can be seen in the

⁸¹ Frances Hodgkins to Isabel Field, 15 September 1901, in Gill, p 98

⁸² Sydney Lough Thompson, quoted in Webb

⁸³ Frances Hodgkins to William John Parker Hodgkins, 22 October 1942, quoted in McCormick, *Works of Frances Hodgkins*, p. 98

simplification of forms and the faceting of the background. In essence the subject remains the same, the point of transaction between the market vendor and her customer, but Hodgkins has stripped back some of the superfluous detail and taken a closer viewpoint. The buildings and awning in the background have been reduced to geometric shapes, such as cubes and arcs, and the river of produce in the foreground has become more stylised and suggestive of a tilted picture plane, as do the stall tables. Frances Hodgkins herself was well aware of the potential problems for audiences of the more modern outlook of her work, explaining to her mother from Martigues in early 1921, that ‘...the reason I don’t send out more work to NZ. is that it has become a bit too modern & I find it very difficult to return to my earlier & more easily selling style....’⁸⁴

Despite the knowledge that her work was not finding favour with audiences back home, Hodgkins continued to explore the possibilities of her new style. A month later found her ‘on the tramp for nearly a month exploring Brittany....We are now settled at this place – not many miles from Concarneau where I lived for so long....’⁸⁵ ‘This place’ was Douarnenez, where Hodgkins completed several images of the market, among them, *Women at Market [Market Scene six women]* [fig. 31] and *Strawberries, Douarnenez Market* [fig. 32]. Executed in gouache, these works demonstrate an increasing simplification and stylisation of form and tilted picture plane. The market women are rendered in simple outlines and blocks of solid colour and the produce is a series of swirls and shapes. In *Women at Market*, the features of the women are almost like caricatures of her earlier market vendors, with exaggeration of the shape of the coifs and the elongated face of the woman seated in the right middle ground. In *Strawberries, Douarnenez Market* there is less of a caricature but rather repetition in the pose and shape of the figures. No longer merely representations of a slice of village life, these later market works employ simplification as a means of capturing the essence of the market. Frances Hodgkins rather imploringly wrote to her sister, ‘...I wonder if the sketches have turned up safely & [if] there will be any sale for them....Do be very frank & honest with me & tell me what people say about them. It is best to know what is being said & I am strong enough to hear the *truth*.’⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 14 April 1921 in Gill, p. 353

⁸⁵ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 19 May 1921, in Gill, *ibid*.

⁸⁶ Frances Hodgkins to Isabel Field, 23 September 1921, in Gill, p. 354

The answer to whether Frances Hodgkins' new style of depicting the market was well received by the New Zealand public was an emphatic no. She later regretted sending them at all, exclaiming; 'Now I know! I hesitated to send & in an unguarded moment let them go....'⁸⁷ *Women at Market* formed part of a group of five works that did not sell in New Zealand, despite low prices put on them. Further challenges were posed by Hodgkins' work *A Market Scene (The Market)*, [fig. 33] which demonstrates even greater fragmentation. The elements of previous market scenes, the customers, the umbrella, the wares, are not depicted as a cohesive whole, but rather as elements that exist separately. Hodgkins' art was moving beyond the descriptive and this had ramifications on the response of a New Zealand audience towards her work.

An examination of the New Zealand audience for the work of the expatriates is crucial to understanding the varying reception their market scenes received. Referring to the artists at Cornwall, Marion Whybrow has claimed that the figure and landscapes of West Cornwall provided 'romance and reality to a hypnotic degree for people who could observe from the safe divide of a different class and culture,'⁸⁸ and the same could be said to be true of the middle-class audiences that their works were targeted towards. Lübbren noted that 'the practices and images of rural artists articulated central concerns of middle-class audiences, in particular the yearning for a life that was authentic, pre-modern and immersed in nature.'⁸⁹ This was true also applicable to a middle-class New Zealand audience, with their colonial nostalgic viewpoint. With regard to Sydney Lough Thompson's work, Julie King has commented, '...the perception of Europe which Thompson inherited and the myths constructed in his painting had a powerful reality for many New Zealanders educated within a European tradition.'⁹⁰

To this end, the early market scenes of the expatriates found a receptive and willing market in New Zealand. In 1900 critics were calling for more work from 'English and

⁸⁷ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 27 December 1921, quoted in McCormick, *The Expatriate*, pp. 189-190

⁸⁸ Marion Whybrow, quoted in Deacon, p. 169

⁸⁹ Lübbren, p. 2

⁹⁰ Julie King, quoted in Adrienne Rewi, "Sydney Thompson: time for reassessment," *The Press*, 9 January 1991, non paginated article in the Sydney Lough Thompson artist files, E. H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery Toi O Tāmaki

Continental artists'⁹¹ and such works were considered to add 'that foreign element of colour and atmosphere so dear to those who, unable to travel may thus enjoy at second-hand the delights of a new experience.'⁹² One example of an English artist who found favour in New Zealand, exhibiting continental scenes at the art society exhibitions, was Charles Worsley. He provides an exemplar of what type of continental work was considered acceptable to New Zealand's art critics and public in the early twentieth century. Worsley first exhibited with the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts in 1898 and then with the Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch societies until the early 1920s.⁹³ Favourite subject matter depicted by Worsley included street and market scenes from Europe, such as *A Sunlit Street in Spain* [fig. 34] and *Market Place, Lake Maggio, Italy*. Both works display views of gaily dressed people, framed against Mediterranean architecture in sunny continental climes. The *Evening Post* critic wrote of Worsley's work in 1908:

...he, no doubt, knows his Seville, his Granada, his Cordova, his Salamanca. He has made thousands (in New Zealand at any rate) familiar with the noonday glare on high, white Spanish walls and the deep shadows in the narrow calles; also with his people who dress in diverse bright colours...⁹⁴

Of his most striking work in the exhibition it was noted that, 'the picture is true in colour, excellent in composition, and tender in expression. One feels, on seeing it, that he has been there.' As well as responding to the anecdotal and romantic nature of work, this comment also suggests that the New Zealand public also responded to a perceived sense of the authenticity of the works. By being created *en locale*, they were imbued with a certain authority as true representations.

The preference for continental scenes can also be applied to the work completed by New Zealand expatriates working abroad which was sent home for exhibition. It accounts also for the positive response of the New Zealand public to the exhibition of Frances Hodgkins' early European work in 1902. In response to the first exhibition of her overseas work, in August 1902, the *Wellington Post* commented that, 'this

⁹¹ Mr Leaflet, *N.Z. Illustrated Magazine*, July 1900, p. 789, quoted in G. H. Brown, *New Zealand Painting 1900-1920: Traditions and Departures*, Wellington, 1972, p. 10

⁹² *Otago Daily Times*, 7 November 1903, p. 2, quoted in Brown, p. 11

⁹³ Platts, p. 261

⁹⁴ "Academy of Arts. A Credible Display. Predominance of Good Work," *Evening Post*, 28 September 1908, p. 3

talented artist's work shows a distinct and unmistakable advance in technique, and fortunately her individuality has been strengthened rather than weakened by association with the artists of the Old World....'⁹⁵ D. K. Richmond's sister, Anne Atkinson, waxed lyrical over the works, claiming that she was 'in a state of excited intoxication'⁹⁶ over them. The final proof that the New Zealand public responded favourably towards these 'old world' subjects was, indeed, in the selling, with fifteen of the thirty-seven works selling on the opening day of the exhibition.⁹⁷ Complimentary reviews were received for a further collection of work sent out later that year and exhibited with the Otago Art Society. The *Otago Daily Times* critic wrote that Hodgkins had found 'a happy hunting ground' in the Old French villages and done 'full justice to the many quaint and curious subjects to be found there,' and her skill in capturing the bustle of the market was specifically mentioned.⁹⁸ This would have been the response to works in the vein of *Market Scene*, 1902, and in 1904 works such *Marketing in Dinan, (France)*, c. 1902 were still finding favour. The critic for the *Otago Witness* wrote of "Market Day, Dinan" that it was 'one of the most attractive of these continental studies, the old woman with the basket in the foreground being most natural....'⁹⁹

These works found favour with a New Zealand audience because they fitted into the discourse of the 'place myth',¹⁰⁰ depicting aspects of continental Europe that fulfilled both artists' and audiences' nostalgic vision. While it has been noted what aspects of the market New Zealand expatriate artists included in their works, it is also worth considering what aspects of the market these artists did not include. As accomplices in the creation of the 'place myths', the artists were involved in presenting an idealised image of life in the villages and artists' colonies of Europe, one which often contradicted the written accounts of their experiences. There is no sense of the pungent smell of the fish or pig markets, nor of the other difficulties that were often experienced by 'cunning' children who pestered artists begging for money. Nor was there mention of fearsome fishwives, such as the one who so intimidated Sherwood

⁹⁵ *Post*, 27 August 1902, p. 4, quoted in McCormick, *Works of Frances Hodgkins*, p. 65

⁹⁶ Letter from Anne Elizabeth Atkinson to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 26 August 1902, quoted in McCormick, *Works of Frances Hodgkins*, p. 66

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Otago Daily Times*, 15 November 1902, p. 3 and 20 November, 1902, p. 8, quoted in McCormick, *Works of Frances Hodgkins*, p. 67

⁹⁹ "The Art Society's Exhibition. Among the Pictures," *Otago Witness*, 9 November 1904, p. 81

¹⁰⁰ This is term used by Nina Lübbren to refer to the pictorial constructions by artists in artists' colonies.

that she was 'too absolutely frightened...to go near' the fish market.¹⁰¹ Hodgkins refers to the cruelty of Bretons to their animals, and talks of the violence of her favourite Arlesian poulterer, but there is no indication of these feelings in the works she produced. A parallel situation was also found in the artists' colonies, exemplified by the fact that paintings presented a 'cleaned-up' image of peasants, in comparison to Lübbren's comment of how 'textually-described locals were frequently dirty.'¹⁰² In the same way, images of villagers presented by the expatriates showed them leading lives untainted by modernity, with quaint touches such as the image of the older Breton woman in *Marketing in Dinan (France)* with her basket.

The New Zealand public was initially positively inclined towards market scenes which fitted and reflected the discourse of the 'place myth'. It could be argued that New Zealand at this time had its own 'peasant' subject in the form of the Maori, with the myths of noble savage and dying race. It is no coincidence that the majority of the expatriate artists examined in this study also executed images of Maori. In these, as with their images of European peasants, they focused on aspects of tradition and elements that were different from a Colonial Pakeha way of life. At any rate, the New Zealand public were definitely interested in images from distant continental Europe, a place to where they could not easily physically travel, but to where they had nostalgic yearnings. It was, however, the degree of progressive artistic style in which the artists worked which presented problems for a conservative New Zealand art public. In Concarneau in 1913, Maud Sherwood made this comment regarding the negative reception Sydney Lough Thompson's work had received in New Zealand:

...Mr Thompson said the last things he sent out, the press gave an awful drubbing, and I must agree with Miss Hodgkins that good modern art would be as high above the heads of 999 out of 1,000 New Zealanders as the stars; they would not understand or appreciate it...¹⁰³

Thompson's work of that period was of a broad impressionistic style, and it was during this time also that Hodgkins' freer impressionist style fell out of favour with a New Zealand audience, as witnessed by an incident in 1913. A 1901 market scene painted at Caudebec was included in the Otago Art Society's 1913 exhibition and

¹⁰¹ Maud Sherwood Correspondence, 18 June 1913, quoted in Heraud, p. 35

¹⁰² Lübbren, p. 59

¹⁰³ Maud Sherwood Correspondence, 25 June 1913, quoted in Heraud, p. 42

critics' comments clearly point to a preference for work of that vein. The *Evening Star* commented:

Those of our fellow citizens who waxed enthusiastic about the water colours that Miss F. Hodgkins exhibited here a few months ago may be thinking, as they now look on "The Market Place", that they would have acted wisely to delay their purchases. In this charming sunny scene we see the realisation of ideas that were but foretold in earlier exhibits.¹⁰⁴

As McCormick notes, the taste of art circles in New Zealand was firmly 'fixed at 1901' and their preference was for 'the colourful, the picturesque, the anecdotal.'¹⁰⁵ In the 1920s Thompson's Post-Impressionist market works and Hodgkins pared-down, stylised Douarnenez market works proved even more of a challenge. In 1924 Hodgkins' brother, Willie Hodgkins voiced doubts of Frances being able to return to New Zealand unless she was 'prepared to submit to colonial ways and conditions,'¹⁰⁶ saying 'I can't think that Auckland is very artistic. Sydney Thompson from London had a show last month & I understand sold two pictures.'¹⁰⁷ Further evidence of the challenge that more progressive styles posed for the New Zealand art public is found by the response of Thompson's former teacher, van der Velden, towards Thompson's bold colouring and brushwork: 'Why for dese French tricks?'¹⁰⁸ Thompson had advanced well beyond the more realist Dutch style in which he had been formerly schooled and this confronted the conservative tastes of a New Zealand audience. By the 1930s, as art critics called for a New Zealand Nationalist identity with related motifs, even Thompson's position as a New Zealand artist was questioned.¹⁰⁹ Reflecting what she knew to be the prevalent tastes of the New Zealand public in the 1920s, in preparation for the possible return to New Zealand, Frances Hodgkins decided 'to spend the summer making attractive and best-selling pictures – such as flower markets & red sails & blue Mediterranean – they used to lap up this sort of thing in the good old times.'¹¹⁰ By this stage, however, she had advanced too far towards modernism and the picturesque market scenes were now a thing of the past.

¹⁰⁴ *Evening Star*, 19 November 1913, p. 5, quoted in McCormick, *Works of Frances Hodgkins*, pp. 88-89

¹⁰⁵ McCormick, *Works of Frances Hodgkins*, p. 89

¹⁰⁶ William John Parker Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 6 December 1924, in McCormick, *The Expatriate*, p. 205

¹⁰⁷ William John Parker Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 9 June 1924, in *Ibid.*, p. 199

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in "Artists Back in N.Z. After Years Abroad," *The Christchurch Star*, 21 February 1967

¹⁰⁹ King, *Sydney Lough Thompson*, p. 75

¹¹⁰ Frances Hodgkins to Hannah Ritchie, circa 17 April 1924, quoted in McCormick, *The Expatriate*, p. 198

The response to Maud Sherwood's European work in Australia, however, was markedly different to that received by the expatriates in New Zealand. Critics responded favourably to her simplified forms, sense of design and heightened colour and they recognised and respected the characterisation apparent in her depictions of market scenes. Suzanne Sherwood attributes Maud Sherwood as being instrumental in introducing Modernist influences into the Sydney art scene,¹¹¹ and it would seem that an Australian art public were more receptive to change, albeit two decades after the negative response Sydney Lough Thompson and Frances Hodgkins received in New Zealand. This, perhaps, influenced Sherwood's decision not to return to her land of birth and its more conservative art audience; a decision which certainly proved to be fruitful for a successful artistic career in Australia.

The marketplace was a lively location and representative of all that the New Zealand expatriates were seeking in a subject abroad. It offered a glimpse of the old world; images of villagers *en masse*, especially Breton women in their traditional costumes and white coifs. It was an ideal *plein-air* subject, providing a sense of colour and movement and atmosphere, which artists responded to by executing colourful and vibrant works. They focused on creating light and colour effects and experimented with brushwork and style in order to capture a sense of the animation of the scene. The marketplace, therefore, provided stimulus as a subject. It also proved somewhat of a challenge. Not long in Europe Frances Hodgkins had written of the difficulty of painting at the market. 'It is useless trying to paint a market scene, we have all tried and then sadly turned our backs on its fascinations. We always found that we always came home so cross & irritable after a morning spent in the market....'¹¹² Yet she returned to the subject repeatedly. Maud Sherwood 'positively gloated' over it and wished 'that every day was a market day',¹¹³ and Sydney Lough Thompson completed numerous studies of it. Although a study of the market scenes by these expatriate artists demonstrates a considerable amount of diversity in style, they did share some commonalities in approach, in particular the wish to record their impressions. By choosing the marketplace as a subject, the New Zealand expatriate artists were aligning their interests in the anecdotal and the nostalgic, aware that such

¹¹¹ For a full discussion, see Suzanne Bronwyn Sherwood's "The Contribution of Maud Sherwood to the Sydney Art Scene 1914-1956," MA Thesis, Australian National University, 2003.

¹¹² Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 26 August 1901, in Gill, p. 97

¹¹³ Maud Sherwood Correspondence, 7 June 1913, quoted in Heraud, p. 31

images would appeal to a New Zealand audience. The fact that they were initially successful supports the premise that they were ‘expressions of a period which looked back nostalgically at the ‘old world’ and which sought to sustain links with home.’¹¹⁴ By experimenting stylistically with the subject of the market, Frances Hodgkins severed such links, and this proved to be too challenging for a conservative New Zealand art public.

Within the oeuvre of the New Zealand expatriates examined in this study, the subject of the marketplace holds an important place. It is illustrative of their aims and attitudes as colonial artists and was one which they responded to by producing vibrant and varied works of art which embody the atmosphere of the market. Therefore, whether providing stimulus or a means to stylistic experimentation, the attractions of the marketplace were indeed numerous.

¹¹⁴ King, quoted in Webb

Intimate Views - Frances Hodgkins and Maud Sherwood's Interpretations of Women at the Market

I have been revelling in the subjects here and feel more in a painting mood than I have for weeks...On Monday there was a market and it was splendid. I wish every day was a market day. Subjects simply tumbled over one another...I did a group of Breton women selling baskets. The women wear all kinds of white caps and they launder them beautifully.¹¹⁵

Written from Concarneau in 1913, during Maud Sherwood's first trip abroad, this was the beginning of her fascination with the depiction of female figures in the marketplace. Although she also depicted general scenes of the hustle and bustle of this environment, it was in the depiction of market women that she showed a particular insight into the character of her subjects. Frances Hodgkins was also drawn to the subject, depicting studies of individual female vendors, studies of vendors and customers and their different relationships, as well as mother and daughter scenes at the market. As such, the market scenes of Frances Hodgkins and Maud Sherwood embody a different interpretation of the subject. Of the New Zealand expatriates depicting the theme, it is these two female artists who show us the most intimate views of the market. They executed sensitive and varied studies of women and market life and several key foci are identifiable in their work, such as relationships between women at the market and the diverse roles they played in this environment.

The marketplaces of England and Europe as depicted by the New Zealand expatriates can be seen to some extent as neutral spaces; a place where both men and women could interact and participate equally in different roles, whether that of vendor or customer. In the works examined in the previous chapter it is possible to see both men and women as customers and vendors, with no specific gender roles with regard to the produce of the stalls. There are female flower vendors as well as female poulterers and butchers. The picturesque elements relating to both male and female subjects were well recognised by the expatriates. In her initial impressions of Caudebec-en-Caux in 1901, Frances Hodgkins wrote that the 'old men wear such beautiful blue corduroy bags that make me ache to paint them, it is a great sight to see them on

¹¹⁵ Maud Sherwood Correspondence, 7 June 1913, quoted in Heraud, p. 31

Market day'.¹¹⁶ Maud Sherwood expressed a similar sentiment,¹¹⁷ but it was primarily the traditional clothing of female subjects that artists were drawn to again and again. In the European works of the New Zealand expatriates looked at in this study, it is the female subject that dominates the images as more picturesque elements were exploited, in particular the flowing dresses and white coif.¹¹⁸

Hodgkins and Sherwood's depictions of the markets of England and Europe would suggest that here the marketplace was strongly the domain of women, and their written accounts support this premise. Who then were these women of the market? They were vendors, selling all variety of comestibles and wares; from flowers and fruit and vegetables, to meat and poultry, through to pottery, shoes and jewellery. They were customers, actively engaged in foraging for bargains and purchasing goods, and they were mothers and daughters, shopping, or working together on their stalls. Moreover, as is typical of such an environment, they were engaged in chatting, gossiping, laughing, bartering and arguing; and right in the middle of this milieu we can place our two artists. As Maud Sherwood commented from Viterbo, Italy in 1930; 'Twice a week there is the big market in the Piazza. This morning I settled myself down right in the midst of the sellers of fruit and vegetables and pottery and lace and...shoes and cheap jewelry [sic]....'¹¹⁹ As well as being a place of work, the market was a social environment, both for Hodgkins and Sherwood and their market subjects. Hodgkins wrote from Arles in 1901:

Two days ago we made our farewells to our beautiful Arlesian friends – in the market where we paint nearly every day. We had a touching and imposing scene. To the poulterer who was our best & most intimate friend we presented a photo of ourselves with a suitable inscription. She was a nice woman and we were grateful for little attentions in the way of chauffettes to keep our feet warm, cups of black coffee on cold days & various little kindnesses....¹²⁰

The written accounts by Sherwood also refer to the support and assistance from her dear 'old fisher friends', and we can imagine both women, especially as vibrant

¹¹⁶ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 26 August 1901, in Gill, p. 97

Hodgkins is referring here to the baggy breeches worn by Breton men, the *bragoù-bras*.

¹¹⁷ Maud Sherwood Correspondence, 7 June 1913, quoted in Heraud, p. 31

¹¹⁸ The appeal and treatment of female costume is discussed in the previous chapter.

¹¹⁹ Maud Sherwood Notebook, August 1930, quoted in Heraud, p. 51

¹²⁰ Frances Hodgkins to Isabel Field, 6 November 1901, in Gill, p. 105. E.H. McCormick in *Works of Frances Hodgkins*, p.162, makes reference to a work of this subject, *The Poulterers' Corner*, Arles.

personalities, fitting in well with the milieu that surrounded them. As artists, they were well aware of the picturesque aspects of female subjects, yet it is clear that they could relate to their subjects on a personal level as well, even beyond the cultural and class differences that existed between them.

The artists also partook in the market as consumers and like some of their painting subjects were involved in the perusal and admiration of market wares. Both women made reference to items of pottery they saw and purchased at the market, and like any other tourists they were particularly enamoured with items which were unique to the regions they visited. From Concarneau, Sherwood wrote:

I bought a most lovely jug at the market the other day for 7c. and a large brown water or wine carrier for 10c...I would love to bring out heaps of pottery as it is so cheap here and so beautiful and picturesque – unobtainable in N.Z.. I see so many things that I can hardly resist buying....¹²¹

Hodgkins also praised the quality of produce at the market, as well as flowers, ‘...you get such jolly big mixed bunches in the market for a few sous, & pot plants too – Gloxinias – begonias etc – real beauties – so cheap – it is a wonderful place for flowers.’¹²² This is indicative of the dual role they played; as artists they were receptive observers of the market milieu, whereas as consumers they were active participants and interacted with their subjects in the typical commercial relationship that existed in this setting. These comments are further suggestive of their familiarity with this environment and their acute interest in the people as well as the wares of the market. Both these elements are central to their market works, the former adding a sense of the picturesque and ‘old world’ and the latter further adding touches of vibrant colour to their works and symbolising the mercantile activity.

After the disappointing sale of her Penzance “Susan” market work, Frances Hodgkins reproached her sister for the low value she had placed on them, bemoaning, ‘those market scenes are the outcome of great mental strain, with nerves at a tension & eyes

¹²¹ Maud Sherwood Correspondence, 18 June 1913, quoted in Heraud, pp. 36-37

On the same subject Hodgkins wrote from Arles: ‘Then there is a corner given up to pottery & earthenware of many colours & shapes. These are a great temptation to my purse, but I have learnt to deny myself...’ [Frances Hodgkins to Isabel Field, 6 November 1901, in Gill, p. 105] Felix Man’s photograph of Hodgkins at Corfe Castle, taken in 1945, of Hodgkins perusing pottery at a market stall would suggest that this interest continued throughout her life abroad.

¹²² Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 25 August 1924, in Gill, p. 380

bewildered with an ever moving crowd & ones senses all alert & linc eyed for effects & relations one thing to another.¹²³ Perhaps it was one consequence of this difficulty of trying to capture the moving mass of the market that Hodgkins started focusing on a more intimate view. If we examine Frances Hodgkins' watercolour *Untitled: French Market Scene*, 1902, [fig. 28] we can clearly witness the more intimate direction in which her market scenes quickly developed. In the vein of another scene from the previous year, *The Market Place, San Remo, Italy*, [fig. 3] the market is depicted as a bustling venue of social interaction, as witnessed by the milling crowds of the participants. The focus of this work, however, is on the three figures in the central foreground; an old market vendor and her two customers. The interaction between the figures is relatively minimal; the two customers inspect the wares while the vendor looks on, seemingly waiting patiently to secure a sale. Nonetheless, the focal point of the work has shifted from that of a general view to that of a more intimate tableau, existing in isolation within the general confusion of the market.

Frances Hodgkins and Maud Sherwood were clearly responding to the environment that they found themselves participants in and depicting those aspects of the market which particularly struck them. From Arles, Hodgkins described in great detail the market in which different 'tradeswomen' sold their wares at various stalls. Of these 'Arlesian friends' mentioned are the butcher, Hodgkins' favourite poulterer and 'the green grocer with her two pretty daughters, always beaming from behind a barricade of pumpkins, melons, pomegranates, figs and green stuff...'¹²⁴ A key response of these two artists was to focus on the relationships that existed within the marketplace. Taking Maud Sherwood's, *Market Place*, 1928 [fig. 24] as a case in point, it is evident that the focus is firmly on the interaction between the female subjects. A colour linocut, the work illustrates both Sherwood's thematic and stylistic concerns during this period.¹²⁵ Here the simplified forms focus the viewer on the main aspect of the image; the two women engaged in conversation at the market. Sherwood was influenced by Japanese prints and the Post-Impressionists, in this instance possibly Gauguin, and these influences can be seen in the execution of the figures. They are rendered as outlined forms, with flat areas of vibrant colour in their clothing. The

¹²³ Frances Hodgkins to Isabel Field, 30 September 1902, in Gill, p. 138

¹²⁴ Frances Hodgkins to Isabel Field, 6 November 1901, in Gill, p. 105

¹²⁵ During her second trip abroad, Sherwood began experimenting with linocuts and demonstrated her ability as a strong colourist in this medium.

facial features which Sherwood favoured are found on the profile of the woman to the right, the prominent nose and long chin, and her hair is covered by a headscarf. Although other figures can be seen in the background, such as the male vendor with his produce scales and the cluster of figures to the rear left, the intimate scene of the two women conversing draws the viewer into the picture. While the figure on the left is likely to be a shopper at the market (indicated by the basket of vegetables and loaf of bread she carries) she does not seem to be an actual customer of the vendor, the forgotten garment on the latter's arm more suggestive of a tête-à-tête. The influence of Japanese prints also makes the work reminiscent in style of the Japanese-inspired works of Mary Cassatt, such as *Afternoon Tea Party*, 1890-91, with its flattened outlined forms and decorative use of colour. It is interesting to note that although the setting and protagonists of the Cassatt work could not be further removed from those in Sherwood's (Cassatt's work being an indoor scene of haute-bourgeois women having tea) both artists capture central moments in the interaction that allude to the nature of the relationship between the figures. In the Sherwood work we witness an open exchange of conversation suggesting kinship, whereas in Cassatt's the offering of refreshments, which seem somewhat reluctantly taken, seems to suggest a more formal relationship between the participants.

Sherwood further explores the dynamics of female interaction in the linocut, *Place St. Nicholas, Sospic, France*, c.1930,¹²⁶ [fig. 35] employing a similar motif to that found in *Market Place*. More animated than the latter work, it depicts two women dressed in headscarves, shawls and long dresses, carrying baskets of shopping on their arms. It is an engaging image, portraying a moment of shared mirth as the two women throw their heads back in laughter. The rapport between the two is obvious, as is the enjoyment of their conversation. While not a market work, it is nonetheless pertinent towards appreciating Sherwood's skill in capturing such pivotal and intimate moments of communication in a commercial setting. It is also illustrative of her continuing interest in capturing the dynamics of female relations. In both *Market Place* and *Place St. Nicholas, Sospic, France*, Sherwood uses various compositional devices to focus on the central relationship between the two women. In the former work, the two women dominate in scale and are placed in the foreground of the work,

¹²⁶ Another edition of this print is held in the collection of the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki entitled, *Café du Pont*.

framed by the awning above. In the latter the women are placed in a middle ground, the bright light and uncluttered square distinguishing the figures from the shadowed buildings surrounding them. In either case, the focus is on the social facet of shopping, exploiting the picturesque possibilities of the costume and personalities of the subjects.

An important early example in Hodgkins' exploration of the interaction and relationships of women at the market is *The Market Place, France, 1903* [fig. 36]. Still demonstrating a relatively distant viewpoint, the scene depicts a group of women in their typical dress of bonnets and aprons, engaged in buying their provisions from the market. It is executed in a muted palette of ochre, browns and blues, but there is a hint of colour in the brighter produce strewn in the foreground. It is not an overtly social occasion when compared to Hodgkins' *The Market Place, San Remo, Italy*, however, there is nevertheless a strong sense of social interaction as the women go about a daily task. We can see them chatting and engaging with one another as they examine produce on wooden tables. Gone are the crowd milling around in the background, as is seen in the earlier *Untitled: French Market Scene*, thus ensuring the viewer's attention is focused on the group of female participants. Of particular note is the woman to the left of the middle ground laughing and talking to an unseen figure, adding a particularly naturalistic touch. The market vendor is off to the right, isolated in a space by herself, almost a study on her own. Hodgkins' did in fact complete studies of lone market women, as did Maud Sherwood. In this instance, however, she is not alone, and on closer inspection, it is apparent that she is communicating with a woman who faces her. Seated behind her produce stall, she anchors the composition. She is a pivotal figure, and the one that Hodgkins would have been most able to observe in the ever-moving throng of market goers, all of whom would have reason to converse with her as they made their purchases. Just as the communicative element was a dominant feature of the market, so too was it a key facet in Hodgkins' market scenes. These touches of naturalism demonstrate Hodgkins' careful observation of the market milieu, as well as being indicative of her fascination with the social aspect of the market. The 'babel of noise' was one of the first elements of the market that she noted and it is this she aims to capture through the cluster of animated women.

In the above works, Hodgkins and Sherwood were capturing an essential part of market life, namely that of the social world of women. Contemporaneous photographs of the market, including those taken by Hodgkins and her students, [fig. 37 and fig. 38] also focus on this element of the market. Images of clusters of peasant women in traditional dress with obligatory baskets, conversing and laughing at the marketplace, convey this facet well. Hodgkins' photograph of street holders in Bruges, 1903, illustrates comparable features to those she included in her work. Parallels between this photograph and her watercolours are apparent and would suggest that she may have referred closely to them when executing some of her market scenes. In the photograph it is possible to identify some of the archetypal figures found in many of her market works, such as the seated stall holder and conversing customers and in the watercolour, *Women in a French Market*, c.1903, the seated figure to the far right is strongly reminiscent of the seated stall holder in Hodgkins' photograph. Other quintessential market elements, such as costume, wares, tables and baskets are also included in both watercolour and photograph. On the subject of purchasing the camera, Hodgkins had written to her mother, 'I feel that my Art requires all the extraneous help that these things give.'¹²⁷ Considering earlier comments she had made on the difficulty of painting at the market due to its ever-changing views, it is likely that Hodgkins used photography to help her capture this environment and to record the visual elements which appealed to her for later reference. Nevertheless, Hodgkins still largely worked from the motif and had clear opinions on to what extent the camera should aid her art, as suggested by her response to hearing of a female artist who painted over blown-up negatives: 'Such moral laxity is appalling!'¹²⁸

Women in a French Market is an intimate scene of market women engaged in making goods to sell. To the right is a woman, working solitarily. This figure contrasts vividly with the cluster of figures to the left employed in their task as they are watched by a young girl. The features of these women are indistinct and the fluid brushwork conveys a sense of liveliness and movement as they chat to one another, seen particularly in the figure of the woman to the far left. She appears almost to have two heads; such is the animation of her conversation. A comparison between the watercolour and Gustave Caillebotte's Impressionist work, *Portraits in the Country*,

¹²⁷ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 29 March 1906, in Gill, p. 185

¹²⁸ Ibid.

1877, [fig. 39] indicates certain similarities. At first glance they could both be taken to be images of woman engaged in a leisurely pastime, working at needlepoint or another form of craft. Parallels exist in the dominant compositional motif, in particular the image of seated women, in profile, bent over their work. On closer inspection, however, the settings of the works highlight their differences. Caillebotte's scene is situated in the domestic domain, whereas Hodgkins' work depicts an image of life in the public sphere. The market site of Hodgkins' painting results in an interpretational shift from a scene of leisure to one of work, whereas the manicured grounds of the country seating and elegant dress of Caillebotte's figures, as well as the presence of the reader, all allude to genteel pursuits of the wealthy. Caillebotte's image seems to fit into the prevalent nineteenth-century French thought on what was appropriate work for women, such as Jules Simon's famous adage that a working woman was no longer a woman.¹²⁹ While there are examples of Impressionist works that explored the theme of work, in the main Impressionist artists depicted images of bourgeoisie at leisure. Therefore, it is interesting to note that while Hodgkins was working within the pictorial language of Impressionist style, her market subject matter was not influenced by the group. The difference in the classes depicted in the two paintings are further emphasised by their deportment. Caillebotte's figures sit demurely, each focused on their individual activity; behaviour appropriate to the middle-class. Hodgkins' working-class figures, however, are engaged in lively conversation.

We also see something of this social focus in the work of Frances Hodgkins' teacher, Girolamo Pieri Nerli. His *Old Venezia, Leghorn*, c. 1905 [fig. 40] is a classic sunlit Italian market scene which presents a convivial view of market women, chatting as they work. The focus is on the two elderly women preparing produce for sale at a market stall with a cluster of women and children around them. By this time Nerli had returned to his Italian homeland and executed several outdoor market scenes, continuing his long interest in depicting everyday genre scenes. Unlike the expatriates, for whom the markets of Europe were novel, such scenes would have been familiar to Nerli.¹³⁰ As an Italian artist he was depicting a common sight in his

¹²⁹ Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, feminism and histories of art*, London and New York, 1988, p. 68

¹³⁰ Michael Dunn, *An Italian Painter in the South Pacific*, Auckland, 2005, p.132

native country and the region itself was well-known to him as he had family connections at Leghorn (Livorno). No doubt he was influenced in his choice of subject by his association with the Florentine Macchiaioli, Italy's answer to the French Impressionists. This group represented scenes of everyday Italian life and one of its members, Telemaco Signorini, depicted numerous market scenes to great success. In 1884 Signorini related the news that 'twenty canvases, depicting twenty motifs drawn from our *Mercato Vecchio*, were exhibited privately in Hanover Square in the home of a Mr. Lucas, and all had the good fortune of being sold.'¹³¹ The work of Nerli, therefore, can be aligned to the work of the modernist Macchiaioli; commonalities existing in choice of genre subjects and the use of dramatic light effects. A New Zealand audience also responded to such 'old world' scenes, with the critic for the *Triad* writing of *Old Venezia, Leghorn* that 'the lighting of the picture and the animation of the figures are alike superb.'¹³²

Conversely a consideration of the treatment of the female market subject by Sydney Lough Thompson highlights a different approach to the theme than Hodgkins and Sherwood's. Thompson showed a predilection for depicting clusters of market goers and in his market scenes it is usual to find the same motif of a group of picturesque female figures huddled over tables of market goods. In *Women in Market Place, Brittany*, [fig. 41] the focal point of the work is a group of female market goers, clustered together around a table of wares. While there is a sense that they interact as they forage amongst the wares, they are essentially anonymous figures. They are dressed identically in dark dresses and white coifs and collars and their features are indistinguishable. Sydney Lough Thompson's key concerns here are the depiction of movement and the elements of traditional Breton life he so admired, such as the traditional costume of the women. Although Julie King has maintained that Thompson was struck by the hardships that the people of Concarneau endured,¹³³ there is a sense, however, that he was perhaps not quite as involved in the milieu of the market as Sherwood and Hodgkins were. For one, he was financially better off, whereas for both female artists diminishing funds were always a concern, and as such

¹³¹ Quoted in Norma Broude, *The Macchiaioli: Italian Painters of the Nineteenth Century*, New Haven and London, 1987, p. 145

¹³² Quoted in Dunn, p. 132

¹³³ King, *Sydney Lough Thompson*, p. 32

King suggests that it was common of painting during this period that it did not deal with distasteful subjects such as poverty.

they shared the commonality of daily financial hardship with their subjects. What is more, in his descriptions of the life and people of Brittany and France, Thompson seems somewhat distanced from the life of the working-class Breton who worked in and frequented the market. In a radio talk in Christchurch in 1942, in which he recalls his life in Brittany, he said that he would ‘try to give...some idea of the Bourgeois life of France – for instance how the average bourgeois, that is to say the average middle-class woman spends her mornings....’¹³⁴ In a further talk, in which he states that, ‘I want to tell you something about this old world harbour & towns & its people, most of whom we had known for about a quarter of a century’, he refers solely to his friend, the Mayor of Concarneau.¹³⁵ This is perhaps surprising, considering his lifelong interest in depicting the working-class *Concarnoi*, and contrasts considerably with Sherwood and Hodgkins whose correspondence and diaries contain numerous accounts of stall holders, lace makers, net menders and the like. Despite their own financial hardships they were still well aware that they were financially better off than many of the peasant class that they met. Frances Hodgkins noted that the lacemakers of Dinan received ‘8d a day & can make no more no matter how hard they work – compare this wage with a colonial sewing girl who gets 4/- & her keep’.¹³⁶ Maud Sherwood also commented, ‘...they work hard these people in the country and life is hard and [has] no comforts as we know them....’¹³⁷

Within this context, then, it is perhaps not surprising that the subject matter of market vendors received particular attention from Hodgkins and Sherwood. While streams of customers would have come and gone in the marketplace during the day, it was in the company of the stall holders that these two artists spent most of their time. Consequently they would have been familiar with them, and completed numerous studies on them. The depiction of working-class subjects has a long precedence and was a favourite among the artists’ colonies of Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The bourgeois buyers of such works also responded to the depiction of such ‘agrarian idylls,’¹³⁸ harking back as they did to a pre-modern time of traditional values. The market vendors of Sherwood and Hodgkins fit into this

¹³⁴ “An Artist Abroad”, First talk, National Broadcasting Service, Christchurch, 1942 (transcript). Sydney Lough Thompson papers – Alexander Turnbull Library Manuscripts Collection, MS-Papers-3841

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, Second talk

¹³⁶ Letter to Rachel Hodgkins, 2 December 1901, in Gill, p. 108. Note: 8d equals 8 pence and 4/- is 4 shilling.

¹³⁷ Maud Sherwood Notebook, 30 June 1930, quoted in Heraud, p. 146

¹³⁸ Lübbren, p. 13

discourse, and both artists completed individual studies of female market vendors, no doubt like Sydney Lough Thompson and Robert Procter attracted to the traditional costume of the women. Bonnets, headscarves, long flowing skirts and aprons allowed artists to utilize such picturesque elements, but there is a sense that Hodgkins and Sherwood were almost depicting portraits of these women at work, albeit portraits that represented a generalised ideal of an idyllic peasant existence. These studies move beyond a common depiction of a bustling market scene by focusing on one of the key individuals at the market, and as such, we can see in these images something of the attitude of the vendor in pose and guise. The fact that Hodgkins informally refers to one of her market scenes as 'Suzanne' suggests that on some level at least she associated the work with an actual person, and referring to the tradeswoman at the market as Arles as friends also suggests a genuine regard for them as individuals. Furthermore, as noted previously, Sherwood responded to the difficult living conditions of the working-class people she met while working and living in small European villages. In Filettino, Italy in 1930, she remarked on a group of three females she met every morning on her way to paint - a small girl, an adolescent girl and an older woman, all carrying loads of wood on their heads:

...We greet each other and they tell me that every day except when the ground is under snow in winter they walk for 2 hours over rough tracks, mostly loose stones on top that slip as one walks on them, over high hills and down into valleys, in and out, up and down, carrying these loads...to sell at Filettino...and after disposing of their wares they walk the 2 hours back to their homes....¹³⁹

This image of the hard lives of the working women of the villages and countryside is also reflected in other writing of the time. Henry Blackburn in his 1880 travel guide, *Breton Folk: An Artistic Tour*, also noted:

The strong individuality, industry, and force of character of the women make themselves felt wherever we go. Whilst the men slumber and smoke, the women are building little fortunes or propping up old ones. All through the land, in the houses, in the factories and in the fields, the strong, firm hand and arm of a woman does the work.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Maud Sherwood Notebook, 30 June 1930, quoted in Heraud, p. 151

¹⁴⁰ Blackburn, *Breton Folk*, p. 141

Sherwood in particular seemed to respond to the working life of the market vendor. Her *Fruit Sellers*, [fig. 42] a watercolour and pencil work, is a study of two individual female figures engaged in their separate tasks. Gone is the earlier focus of the social activity of the market. Instead, the vendor has her back to us, (and indeed to her companion), enabling Sherwood to execute a study of the falling drapery of the woman's clothes as she is employed in sorting out her produce, surrounded by rustic baskets. While allowing the artist to focus on picturesque elements, it is nonetheless the study of a woman at work, as suggested by the lack of surrounding detail and the woman's absorption in her task. The other figure offers a profile view and displays the features that Sherwood was drawn to. She is certainly no beauty with her dominant nose and chin, features which Sherwood highlights in order to focus on the character of the subject. This lack of idealisation added a degree of realism and may have conveyed a sense of authenticity for its potential audience. But more than this the selection of this unattractive subject and her depiction in this manner also suggested a traditional way of life, a down-to-earth peasant existence where hard work was valued over mere beauty. Linda Nochlin identifies a lack of such realism in Jules Breton's nineteenth-century images of female peasants.¹⁴¹ She refers to popular sayings of the day which contrasted with the sexualised and comely figures presented in Breton's work, such as 'Beauty won't put food on the table.'¹⁴² Also in contrast to Breton's images of peasant women, Sherwood's images suggest something of the reality of the women's existence.

In a further work, *Woman Fruit Seller in Market*, [fig. 43] executed in watercolour and Indian ink, Sherwood portrays a woman at work in the market, standing in profile as she sorts through the produce. Again there is a lack of beauty in her countenance and her facial features are blunt and coarse. Although she is surrounded by several figures she gives the impression of being in isolation as she concentrates on her task. In the more distant viewpoint taken of the same subject in *Market Women, Fruit Market, Tunis*, [fig. 44] she appears even more isolated and vulnerable, standing alone in the wider expanse of the market ground. In these works Sherwood produces images which convey a simple, hardworking life. They are depicted outdoors in a transient and makeshift work environment, consisting simply of wooden table and baskets of

¹⁴¹ Linda Nochlin, *Representing Women*, London, 1999, p. 94

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

wares, with shelter from the elements, if any, provided by an umbrella. There is a sense of seriousness in the works, with none of the gaiety that exists in the more general market views of the expatriates. Stylistically this is reflected in the medium and the colouring of the work, which is more subdued, with only tints in the produce and dress.

The theme of the working woman is further explored by Sherwood and Hodgkins in depictions of the solitary market vendor. In her portrayal of the subject in the linocut *Spanish market woman*, 1928, [fig. 25] both Sherwood's art and written accounts are in accord. As well as remarking on the hardships that the *contadini*¹⁴³ endured, Sherwood also made reference to the 'monotony' of their lives,¹⁴⁴ and in the linocut this aspect of the life of a market vendor is made obvious. Rather than the activity shown in such works as *Fruit Sellers* and *Woman Fruit Seller in Market*, this is a study of an old woman, head covered in a shawl, as she sits motionless amongst her baskets of produce. The forms are heavily outlined and the treatment of the hands and baskets is reminiscent of van Gogh's images of peasants. The woman is dressed simply in black and white, contrasting with the red and green of the produce and rustic browns of the baskets. Her pose conveys a sense of tedium; she leans forward and rests her elbow on her leg and chin on her hand, awaiting a sale. Frances Hodgkins executed a similar study in the watercolour, charcoal and gouache work, *Peasant Woman at Market*, 1921 [fig. 45]. Here too a solitary market woman sits surrounded by baskets laden with colourful produce which seemingly threaten to engulf her. Rather than tedium, her guise is one of resigned patience, as she also waits for custom during a quiet loll in business. In essence these two works are anonymous portraits of working women, depicted with the items which symbolise their employment. As well as adding touches of colour to the composition, the inclusion of the produce indicates their commercial role as sellers, locating them in the public sphere. In both images the depiction of the produce is significantly large in scale, perhaps alluding to the extent of the task. There is no sense of the buzz of bustling market scene; there are no customers in sight, nor any fellow vendors, just the women

¹⁴³ Note: *Contadini* is the Italian work for peasants.

¹⁴⁴ Maud Sherwood Notebook, 1930, quoted in Heraud, p. 146

Sherwood makes this comment as explanation for the unwanted attentions she had received from schoolchildren, but she expresses a similar sentiment several times in her writings. "The interest that people take is nerve racking – I expect it is because so little that is different happens in their lives and a painter is like a circus to them." [Maud Sherwood Notebook, n.d., quoted in Heraud, p. 139]

involved in their solitary task. It would be wrong, however, to suppose that they are overtly political works, but rather they are images of peasant women which reflected the ideals of the picturesque at the time. These images could be of the same woman described in Blackburn's *Breton Folk*. "There is an old woman who sits in the market-place surrounded by earthenware pots, rather disconsolately, for trade is bad; but who, facing the last rays of the setting sun, unconsciously makes a picture which for colour is a delight to the eye...."¹⁴⁵ While being aware of the hardships that their subjects endured to some extent, Sherwood and Hodgkins were not concerned with changing the plight of these working-class women. In fact, the opposite could be said to be true, as these artists believed in the myth of an idyllic traditional rural existence and indeed, hoped to capture it while it lasted.

An interesting dichotomy, therefore, is evident in Sherwood and Hodgkins' depiction of market vendors. On the one hand they collude in the discourse of the 'picturesque peasant', focusing on aspects of dress and costume which would appeal to their potential audience, while on the other they offer a genuine insight into the life of women in the marketplace. Something of this dichotomy is alluded to in a quote by Sherwood in which both aspects of the female *contadina* are identified:

The contadine [sic.] begin work at five or ½ past, and both men and women work in the fields until seven P.M. at this period of the year. The women appear to be strong like men, and on returning at the end of the day they carry the heavy loads well balanced on their heads always, and use their heavily laden donkeys. Such picturesque beings they all are. Some of the women wear large and quaint earrings and all wear *chausse* made of something resembling a portion of a tyre and well strapped round their ankles, and black corsets outside their dresses....¹⁴⁶

As part of an agrarian environment, female market vendors and stallholders would also have partaken in quite strenuous manual labour. As well as assisting in the fields in some locations, they would also have been responsible for the selling of produce at markets. Therefore these hardy women were key participants in the public sphere and played a crucial role in the social and economic life of their villages. Two works by Frances Hodgkins, *Vegetable Stall*, c. 1906 [fig. 46] and *Normandy Vegetable Market*, 1920 [fig. 30] depict another common encounter at the market, that of the financial

¹⁴⁵ Blackburn, *Breton Folk*, p. 25

¹⁴⁶ Maud Sherwood Notebook, 1930, quoted in Héraud, p. 145. Note: *Chausse* are leggings.

relationship between vendor and customer, specifically, the purchasing of goods. The latter work is clearly a reinterpretation in style of the earlier, and demonstrates a slightly closer viewpoint and more simplified, faceted background, thus focusing the viewer's attention even more closely on the two figures depicted. In essence, however, the significance remains the same. In these works Hodgkins depicts a market vendor and customer reaching out to each other, exchanging goods and payment, an interaction which she would have witnessed on numerous occasions and in fact would have taken part in herself. Rather than just a simple snapshot of a typical market activity, however, if we consider the nostalgic feelings of the expatriates, it presents a glimpse of a lifestyle that was endangered by the increasing modernisation of the time. As Christina Barton has written, these markets 'were perhaps the last vestiges of an older economic order,' where vendors sold their produce directly to customers at a modest cost and links were maintained between the site of produce and site of sale, thus ensuring an older order continued to exist in harmony.¹⁴⁷ In both works the produce is still a strong feature of the work, spilling towards the viewer in the foreground of the picture plane, although in the latter indicating a more surreal sense of space.

It is perhaps significant that Hodgkins portrays women in the two key roles of the market, specifically that of vendor and customer. Here there are allusions to both the private and public sphere of women's work. The market vendor represents a commercial role of women, engaging in a mercantile activity important to the economic order of village life. The customer is also part of this economic order, as well as representing the domestic sphere. The woman is engaged in a daily task and traditional female nurturing role, namely that of securing comestibles in order to provide for her family. A work which relates to this nurturing role is Hodgkins' watercolour *Marketing in Dinan (France)*, c. 1902. In this portrayal of shopping at the market, Hodgkins has chosen an elderly Breton woman as her subject. She is seen carrying a large basket, that mandatory accessory of Breton female market goers, and is dressed in the traditional dark garb and white coif and collar. She provides a stark contrast to the lighter palette of the market scene behind her, with its brightly-coloured vegetables and figures in more colourful dress. She represents a slice of

¹⁴⁷ Barton, p. 16

traditional Breton life, the daily ritual of the market in which fresh produce is procured. Parallels can be drawn between Hodgkins' *Marketing in Dinan, (France)* and Robert Procter's work on the same theme, *A Belgium Market* [fig. 47]. Procter also depicts a woman leaving the market with her basket of produce, albeit with a more comely and youthful figure. Procter is clearly interested in the picturesque possibilities of the subject, the figure is bathed in light, ensuring that she stands out from the darkly lit market scene behind and grabs the viewer's attention. Her costume is all vibrant reds and white, the vividness of which is reinforced in the produce in the basket. She makes an interesting contrast when compared to Hodgkins' Dinan market goer in her dark shapeless garb, illustrating the fact that for the New Zealand expatriate artists the picturesque appeal of female subject matter was well utilised, whether for their youthful beauty or the character of age. Moreover, these snapshots of village life had great appeal to both artists and the middle-class audiences to whom their work was targeted.

A further treatment of the theme of women at the market by Frances Hodgkins consists of mother and child images, which could be interpreted as alluding to the potential socialisation of daughters to the roles indicated above. Given Hodgkins' later development of the mother and child theme, it is perhaps not surprising that she delves into this aspect of market life. She had written of mothers and daughters who worked on their market stalls together and the representation of this is found in the watercolour *Mother and Daughter Preparing Flowers*, c. 1901 [fig. 26]. The inclusion of a child is also found in *Women in a French Market*, referred to earlier.¹⁴⁸ *Mother and Daughter Preparing Flowers* is a sketchy work, the forms loosely rendered in a wet-on-wet watercolour technique in which the scene is suggested rather than clearly defined. The two figures are shown from the side rear as they busy themselves amongst the produce, the actions of the young girl mimicking those of her mother as the pair work side by side in unison. Hodgkins was not alone in depicting a mother and child market image and Stanhope Forbes also explored the theme in *Preparations for Market, Quimperle, Brittany* [fig. 48]. Hodgkins, however, presents a more realistic portrayal of the subject. In *Preparations for Market, Quimperle, Brittany*, there is in fact little evidence of the 'preparations' of the title. It is a posed

¹⁴⁸ Two other works on this theme are described in the catalogue of E.H. McCormick's *Works of Frances Hodgkins*. These are: *In the Meat Market, Dinan* and *Vegetable Market, Venice*.

scene in which an older woman is shown kneeling, holding a hen on her lap, with a basket of hens on the ground next to her. Her daughter sits nearby on a cage with a basket of eggs loosely held in her arms. As such, it is a picturesque study of Bretons in traditional costume in which the poultry are symbols of their rural existence. Hodgkins, on the other hand, has managed to capture the fundamental nature of the mother and child at work. Both figures are absorbed in their task, to which we (and Hodgkins) are observers. It is a scene of active learning, as by following the actions of her mother, the daughter learns the trade. As with *Women in a French Market*, the daughter is being socialised into the world of her mother's work, learning by example.

In Hodgkins' *Market Scene, Dordrecht*, c. 1907, [fig. 49] we see a different form of socialisation at work. Hodgkins has depicted a Dutch mother and her two young daughters on their way to shop at the market and has captured a poignant moment when the mother turns back to wait for her daughter. Even at her tender age the daughter holds a shopping basket, preparing her for her future role as consumer and securer of household provisions. Photographs of the market also illustrate this socialisation, as in the photograph *The Market, Concarneau* [fig. 50] in which several young girls can be observed shopping with their mothers, including the central figure which faces the viewer. A further example of Hodgkins' interest in this aspect of the mother and daughter relationship is found in a work that received mention in the *Otago Witness* in 1904, *Her First Marketing*, depicting 'a wee Dutch lassie being led by two of her elders to market.'¹⁴⁹ The title also alludes to this event as a milestone in the young girl's life, as she enters the world of the market which will become such an integral part of her daily life when she is older.

It would be worthwhile to consider how the images of market women by Frances Hodgkins and Maud Sherwood fit into a wider art historical discourse of female market sellers. Images of female market vendors were a popular subject for Dutch and Flemish artists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and in particular, Pieter Aertsen, Joachim Beuckelaer and Gabriel Metsu were drawn to the theme. The female fruit and vegetable sellers portrayed by Aertsen and Beuckelaer are swamped by towering piles of produce and are depicted in motionless, stock poses, their arms

¹⁴⁹ "The Art Society's Exhibition Among the Pictures," *Otago Witness*, 9 November 1904, p. 81

either resting on or gesturing towards the abundance of produce surrounding them. In Pieter Aertsen's *Market Woman with Vegetable Stall*, [fig. 51] for example, the composition is diagonally sliced in two, the right hand side taken up by a towering mass of the produce which encroaches on the space of the female vendor to the left. Her arms are outstretched as she points to the produce, depicting a vast array of different fruit and vegetables, offering it to the potential customer (in this case the viewer of the work). Aertsen's student, Joachim Beuckelaer takes this pictorial arrangement further in *The Market Woman with Fruit, Vegetables and Poultry*, 1564 [fig. 52]. Here the vendor is again relegated to the left of the image, with the majority of the picture plane taken up by a soaring display of produce that reaches to the top of the picture plane. In these images the focus is firmly placed on the produce for sale, the female vendors functioning as compositional devices in order to draw the viewer's attention towards it. This reflects the increased interest in the depiction of secular elements which Aertsen and Beuckelaer demonstrated, a focus which has led scholars to position them as forerunners to Dutch and Flemish still life scenes of the seventeenth century.

These works are noticeably different from Hodgkins and Sherwood's images of working women at the market in several ways. In Aertsen and Beuckelaer's works, there is no real sense that these Dutch vendors are women at work, their inert poses conveying little appreciation of the true nature of their exertion. Sherwood and Hodgkins' working women, on the other hand, busy themselves amongst their produce stalls, sorting and selling their goods, and even their motionless solitary market women convey a sense of the tedium that often falls to their lot, thus adding a touch of realism. The abundant produce can be seen to symbolise the subjects' employment, but while in Aertsen and Beuckelaer's scenes the vendors are dominated by the yield, in those of Sherwood and Hodgkins it adds a picturesque touch of colour, generally safely strewn along the ground or on tables, rather than rising above in a unnatural-looking tower. Aertsen and Beuckelaer's works convey minimal interaction between vendor and customers, the vendors retain their inert poses, pointing to the produce, but looking away from their potential buyers. Conversely, in Sherwood and Hodgkins' works there is a strong focus on the interaction between all the subjects depicted, be they vendor or customer. In the Aertsen and Beuckelaer works the stallholders are depicted as youthful and comely, their traditional dress

emphasising the shape of their figures. Sherwood and Hodgkins, on the other hand, favoured older subjects, their stout figures lost in the voluminous mass of their clothing.

This highlights another perceptible difference between the work of Dutch and Flemish artists and our two female expatriates, namely the sexualisation of the market vendor. In Beuckelaer's *The Market Scene* [fig. 53] and *Woman Selling Vegetables*, [fig. 54] both c.1560, there are clear allusions to the sexuality of the female market vendor. Rather strangely, the female figures are still depicted in the stock poses we have become accustomed to, however, this time there is the addition of a male protagonist. In the former work his arms are placed possessively around the woman's shoulder and waist and in the latter work, his hands are placed down the woman's bodice, while she passively stands by. In other works, such as Gabriel Metsu's *An Old Man Selling Poultry and Game*, 1662, [fig. 55] the sexual allusions are less certain. Some scholars (Adriaan Waiboer, Eddy de Jongh) suggest that there is a possible sexual reference in the depiction of the man proffering a bird to the young woman, as by the seventeenth century this motif was used by Dutch artists to refer to the verb *vogelen* (to bird) which was understood as a synonym for copulation.¹⁵⁰ The sexuality of female market vendors was not an aspect explored by either Hodgkins or Sherwood in their depictions of market women. Their images of female figures consist primarily of older women and their sexuality is removed through the traditional clothing of the figures. The traditional clothing of Breton women, especially the coif, was believed to reflect their inherent piety and modesty, and as such, depictions of a corporeal nature would perhaps have been considered inappropriate. In a work such as Robert Procter's *A Belgium Market*, there is an allusion to the youthful women's attractiveness and this, too, contrasts with the manner in which Hodgkins and Sherwood chose to portray their market vendors and their preference for the old and, sometimes, ugly.

¹⁵⁰ Adriaan E. Waiboer, "Gabriel Metsu's Life Work and Reputation" in Adriaan E. Waiboer [et al], *Gabriel Metsu*, New Haven, c. 2010, p.18

In another chapter in the same text, "Gabriel Metsu's Street Vendors: Shopping for Values in the Dutch Neighbourhood", Linda Stone-Ferrier suggest that the coarse association of 'birding' may have been superseded by Metsu's treatment of the figures, in which they have an aura of elegance, reserve and presence and therefore could have been interpreted by some viewers as an appropriate market scene.

There are, however, some points of commonality between the market scenes of Gabriel Metsu and Sherwood and Hodgkins in that all artists focused on an intimate view of the market. Contemporaries of Metsu employed an aerial or general viewpoint of the market as they wanted to convey the hustle and bustle, but Metsu chose to position his market scenes in a ‘site of domestic morality’ in ‘the urban public sphere,’¹⁵¹ that is, in the urban streets of the artist’s own locale. Of Metsu’s group of urban market scenes, he depicts a female vendor in all but one work, and they are depicted as respectable in attire and demeanour, such as seen in his *An Old Woman Selling Fish and Vegetables*, 1656-8 [fig. 56]. Stone-Ferrier points out that Dutch street vendors during this time were usually reasonably affluent women, either married or unmarried, and as such, the images fit into a discourse of the social unit of the Dutch neighbourhood, which had its own governance and sense of moral regulations.¹⁵² The market scenes of French still life painter Louise Moillon also convey a sense of decorum; of particular note are her works which depict a tableau of elegantly dressed female fruit and vegetable sellers and their female clientele. Three such examples are: *The Fruit and Vegetable Costermonger*, [fig. 57] *At the Market Stall* [fig. 58] and *Market Scene with Pickpocket* [fig. 59]. In accord with her still life concerns, the produce is artfully staged against a black background and the static elements are reinforced through the inert poses of the figures. Although their gestures suggest interaction, for example through the passing of fruit or the younger woman receiving produce from the older woman in *At the Market Stall*, the figures look away from each other and do not make eye contact. The inclusion of the youthful thief in *Market Scene with Pickpocket* perhaps alludes to the more base elements of the market, yet still does not take away from the overall respectability of the stall holder’s profession.

Sherwood and Hodgkins also embody their subjects with a sense of respectability and virtue in their work, albeit depicting a different class of market woman and positioning them in the locale of agricultural and fish markets. As Metsu’s depictions of market vendors contradict accounts of actual market sellers as being loud, coarse

¹⁵¹ Elizabeth Honig, cited by Linda Stone-Ferrier in “Gabriel Metsu’s Street Vendors: Shopping for Values in the Dutch Neighbourhood”, in Waiboer [et al], p. 86

¹⁵² Linda Stone-Ferrier, in Waiboer [et al] pp. 77 and 87

and offensive,¹⁵³ so too are Sherwood and Hodgkin's representations in a variance with some of their own written accounts of market vendors. Maud Sherwood's description of an altercation with one of the fishwives at Concarneau has elements of a comic farce and embodies all that is stereotypical of the fishwife. She wrote, 'I have heard the tongue of the fishwife, and today I met it...As we entered the market they all crowded round us and wanted us to paint them, and one old woman, more persistent than the others sat down near her basket of fish and began to pose for us...' ¹⁵⁴ She continued: 'I told you last week about our painting old Louise at the fish market. Our joy was shortlived and we are now afraid to meet Louise for her tongue is so dreadful and her attitude so threatening.' ¹⁵⁵ Apparently after sitting very unsatisfactorily for an hour (moving and talking incessantly, leaving to get food and bid on fish at the market) 'old Louise' demanded extra payment to what had been promised and a heated debate ensued.

Needless to say, this was not the image of the fishwife contained in the works that Sherwood produced of the subject. Her images of market women continued to convey a sense of the picturesque that would appeal to her audience. In her images of a vendor surrounded by her baskets of wares, the woman's demeanour may be calm or bored but certainly not aggressive. Through this selective process, such images played into the myth of idealised life in the villages, rather than necessarily focusing on the individual character of the sitter. Hodgkins, too, did not always display her true opinions in paint, although she had no such qualms with the written word. She described the violence of her favourite Arlesian poulterer, stating that she was 'always in a cloud of feathers and distressed cackling & gurgling from the strangling victims.' ¹⁵⁶ Yet the image she chose to portray in a work such as *The Poulterers' Corner, Arles*, was that of a seated peasant woman surrounded by crates, baskets, a crowd behind her and ducks in the foreground. ¹⁵⁷ As previously noted, Nina Lübbren offers many accounts of where artists' written accounts were in variance of their paintings and undesirable elements were cleaned-up in order to meet the expectations

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 73

¹⁵⁴ Maud Sherwood Correspondence, 7 June 1913, quoted in Heraud, pp. 33-4

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 18 June 1913, p. 34

¹⁵⁶ Frances Hodgkins to Isabel Field, 6 November 1901, in Gill, p. 105

¹⁵⁷ Description from McCormick in *Works of Frances Hodgkins*, p. 162

of the art public. In this way too, Hodgkins and Sherwood leave out the less desirable elements of their fishmonger and poulterer subjects.

Both Sherwood and Hodgkins refer to differing responses they received from the villagers towards their artist gaze. While clamouring in order to be painted on some occasions, on others the villagers resented this invasion into their privacy. Writing from Deft, Holland, Frances Hodgkins recalled, 'I sat down in front of a fish stall this morning to paint & the old fishwife came up & shook her fist at me & said "You don't paint me, you Englander" & she collected such a crowd I thought it wiser to move on.'¹⁵⁸ Sherwood also wrote of the 'varied moods' of the villagers. 'The women of the marketplace were sometimes delighted to see themselves in pictures, crowding round the artist pointing out each other. "Look, that's Bella and Maria' they would cry excitedly. Yet in other places they would resent the artist's intentions.'¹⁵⁹ The life of an artist working in isolated villages, and a female artist at that, was not always easy. Of the 3000 artists cited by Lübbren as working in European artists' colonies between 1830 and 1910, 400 were women¹⁶⁰ and as such would have proved to be a relatively common sight. Hodgkins and Sherwood, however, also painted in remote areas in which there was neither artist colony, nor a strong foreign presence and often the local inhabitants did not speak any English. As such they were objects of interest themselves, as artists and as women, and often the gaze was reversed and they were on the receiving end of scrutiny. Maud Sherwood wrote of the village inhabitants that they 'take stock of one from hat down to shoes, commenting to each other meanwhile on each detail of one's personal appearance, as the style of clothing is so different... to what they are always accustomed to see...'¹⁶¹

They were also on the receiving end of other types of attention and it is interesting to consider how much more interest these female artists attracted when compared to their male counterparts. Male artists also complained of the disruption caused by that 'arch enemy' of painters, 'the small boy',¹⁶² but were perhaps not subject to quite the same judgement that Sherwood describes the Spanish villagers passing on her and her

¹⁵⁸ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 23 September 1903, in Gill, p.172

¹⁵⁹ Maud Sherwood Notebook, 1930, quoted in Heraud, p. 145

¹⁶⁰ Lübbren, p. 2

¹⁶¹ Maud Sherwood Notebook, 1930, quoted in Heraud, p. 143

¹⁶² Hoeber and Metcalf, "A Summer in Brittany," *The Monthly Illustrator*, Vol. 4, No. 12 (Apr. 1895), p. 78

female painting companions; ‘As one passes they will stop and stare and turn round and watch one out of sight, very frequently making remarks such as – “What a fine looking woman.” They have been known to say “How beautiful you are.”’¹⁶³ Or indeed, on one instance to Sherwood’s companion, ‘Oh how ugly you are!’¹⁶⁴ The artists may have thought they were the observers, but they were also being observed. While artists were scrutinising and judging their subjects, so their subjects were scrutinising and judging them. The villagers stared, they gathered around, they questioned. Both parties were curious about each other’s strange attire. The practice of painting itself seemed bizarre to the villagers. Perplexed boys often studied Sherwood at work in the market and asked what it was she was selling. Despite such ‘nerve racking’¹⁶⁵ interest, however, both Sherwood and Hodgkins persevered in their quest to capture life in the villages and markets of Europe. Both women demonstrated a colonial grit that stood them well in the new environment they found themselves. Frances Hodgkins scornfully commented from Dordrecht in 1907 that ‘lady artists are the feeblish people on earth – the ground in Dordrecht is simply strewn with them mostly painting insipid watercolours under the protection of a large policeman.’¹⁶⁶ Both Frances Hodgkins and Maud Sherwood certainly expressed what we would consider today feminist sentiments with regard to their work and practice and how they viewed the role of women. This is indicated in Hodgkins’ comment above and Sherwood’s comment regarding the treatment of women in Trevi, Italy: ‘...I have sometimes seen the Lord of Creation riding home on the donkey with his women folk walking behind.’¹⁶⁷ Can their images of market women, therefore, also be seen in a feminist vein?

The images of women at the market that Hodgkins and Sherwood produced were certainly unique among those of the other expatriate New Zealand artists, so it is important to consider why this is so. Both women were working with a target audience in mind and were reliant on selling their work in order to continue in their pursuit to work as professional artists. Their works were not political images of a downtrodden sector of society intended to rouse pity. They were not interested in

¹⁶³ Maud Sherwood Notebook, 8 July 1927, quoted in Heraud, p. 131

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Maud Sherwood Notebook., n.d., quoted in Heraud, p. 139

¹⁶⁶ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 20 August 1907, in Gill, p. 212

¹⁶⁷ Maud Sherwood Notebook, 1930, quoted in Heraud, p. 143

changing the lives or the political or economic status of their subjects. They were interested, however, in depicting the interesting and ‘picturesque’ people that they met on their travels abroad, and as women, they often found themselves in the company of other women, and nowhere does this seem more so than at the market, where they painted ‘nearly every day’. As part of this milieu they responded to their subject matter on both a professional and personal level and this is reflected in the sensitive studies they made of women at the market and is the reason, I believe, for their novel treatment of the subject among the New Zealand expatriates. On the one hand Frances Hodgkins could coldly assess the potential of the village women as subject matter, including them in a list of picturesque subjects to paint: ‘Dinan is a first rate place – a variety of everything – old streets, peasant women, fruit stalls, river scenery, feudal castles & 2 “dashing” cavalry regiments.’¹⁶⁸ On the other hand, she demonstrated genuine regard for her subjects in her description of the ‘touching scene’ of farewell from her Arlesian market friends.

Maud Sherwood and Frances Hodgkins focused in particular on the relationships that existed between the women at the market and this added both a picturesque element to their work as well as touch of reality. The different influences at play on the images of the market they produced results in works to which in a variety of readings can be applied. Their colonial vision, cloaked in a veil of nostalgia, provides a reading of the picturesque, an emphasis on portraying a rural idyll and a way of life that was vastly different to what Hodgkins and Sherwood had experienced in New Zealand. Their position as woman and as astute observers, on the other hand, enabled them to produce insightful studies of female market vendors in their work environment.

The subject of women at the market was one in which these two artists returned on numerous occasions. One of Frances Hodgkins’ later market images, *Women at Market*, 1921 (figure 33), is rendered in a stylized and simplified manner, indicating her new stylistic and painterly concerns at this time. During a period when a distinguishable subject matter was no longer as important, we are still, however, offered a clear glimpse of aspects of the lives of Breton market women. The seated figure bent over her work and the clusters of women perusing goods allude to the

¹⁶⁸ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 28 July 1902, in Gill, p. 133

market as a social as well as a work environment. The appeal of the female village subject for these artists cannot, in fact, be overestimated. As Maud Sherwood wrote from Concarneau, referring to the 'old women' who were posing for her; '...I simply go crazy over the models here.'¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ Maud Sherwood Correspondence, 25 June 1913, quoted in Heraud, p. 39

Markets of the Orient

‘Come to Tetuan – come – catch the next steamer, cancel all engagements, chuck the studio let everything go to the winds only come without a moments delay & realise for yourself all your dreams of beauty color & sunshine.’¹⁷⁰ With these words to her friend and fellow artist Dorothy Kate Richmond, Frances Hodgkins summed up the appeal of the Orient. For artists, North Africa provided a wealth of colour, light and the exotic, and subsequent to their artistic tours of Europe many New Zealand expatriate artists found themselves in a ‘land of sunshine.’¹⁷¹ Frances Hodgkins, Maud Sherwood, Maude Burge, Owen Merton, Sydney Lough Thompson¹⁷² and John Weeks all painted in the Maghreb¹⁷³ and as such followed in a long tradition of artists working in the Orient, a trend that was popularised after Delacroix’s expedition there in 1832 ‘became the archetype of the Orientalist experience.’¹⁷⁴

Writing from Meknès, where he was the official artist to the Comte de Mornay on a diplomatic mission to the Sultan of Morocco, Eugène Delacroix had proclaimed: ‘The picturesque here is in abundance. At every step one sees ready-made pictures, which would bring fame and fortune to twenty generations of artists.’¹⁷⁵ Delacroix’s prophecy proved true and his foray into North Africa set a precedent which was to be followed by a multitude of artists. A long line of French artists, including Fromentin, Gérôme, Dinet, Renoir and Matisse, as well as numerous British Orientalist artists, travelled throughout the Orient during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries attracted to the exotic, the bizarre and the violent aspects of life in North Africa, Egypt and Turkey. These regions provided the setting for the depiction of a variety of exotic subject matter: battle scenes, lion hunts, Arab horsemen, slave markets, Turkish baths, snake charmers and the like. For artists of the Orientalist movement of the nineteenth century, this was an Orient either real or imagined, based on direct observation and experience or literature and myth.

¹⁷⁰ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 23 March 1903, in Gill, p. 157

¹⁷¹ This is an expression commonly used by artists when referring to North Africa.

¹⁷² With regards to this study, I have not been able to locate any relevant examples of Sydney Lough Thompson’s work from North Africa.

¹⁷³ This is a term used to denote the geographical and cultural region of Northwest Africa and includes Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.

¹⁷⁴ Roger Benjamin, *Orientalism: Delacroix to Klee*, Sydney, 1997, p. 7

¹⁷⁵ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 8

Delacroix's journey throughout Morocco in 1832 was, in fact, extraordinary for that time. Prior to the nineteenth century the countries of the Maghreb had been inaccessible to Europeans and the usual haunts for seekers of the exotic in the 1830s and 1840s were Turkey and Egypt.¹⁷⁶ The French capture of northern Algeria in 1830, however, paved the way for European occupancy of North Africa, for wherever the French military went, colonisers, artists and tourists were to follow. From 1830 the French sought to govern Algeria as part of France, finally succeeding in controlling the whole of Algeria by 1914. From the outset French and other European groups settled in Algeria and by the time of Renoir's visit in 1881 and 1882, Europeans outnumbered Algerians by more than three to one.¹⁷⁷ The strong French presence in the country went largely undepicted by artists and unremarked upon by most travel writers. One exception among the latter was the British writer and artist, Henry Blackburn. As well as commenting on the vast 'conflict of races' and 'motley throng' that existed in Algeria, Blackburn also noted the presence of the country's colonisers:

The most dignified and picturesque figures are the tall Arabs and the Kabyles, remarkable for their independent, noble bearing, their flowing white boumouses, [sic.] and their turbans of camel's hair. Here we see them walking side by side with their conquerors in full military uniform and with their conqueror's wives in the uniform of *Le Follet*....¹⁷⁸

From as early as 1830 France had also showed an interest in the affairs of Morocco and by the early 1900's both France and Spain had established control over the economic and political affairs of Morocco, with France formally designating Morocco as one of its protectorates in the Treaty of Fez, signed in 1912. Tunisia had earlier been made a French protectorate in 1881. As Edward W. Said noted, 'The Orient was Orientalized not only because it was discovered to be "Oriental" in all those ways considered commonplace by an average nineteenth-century European, but also because it *could be* – that is, submitted to being – *made* Oriental.'¹⁷⁹

This was the colonised status of these three Maghrebian countries when Frances Hodgkins visited Morocco in 1902-3, Maud Sherwood travelled to Morocco, Algeria

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 10-11

¹⁷⁷ David Prochaska, "The Other Algeria: Beyond Renoir's Algiers," in Roger Benjamin, *Renoir and Algeria*, New Haven and London, 2004, p. 122

¹⁷⁸ Henry Blackburn, *Artists and Arabs, or Sketching in Sunshine*, Boston, 1878, pp. 29-31

¹⁷⁹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, London, 1995, pp. 5-6

and Tunisia in 1927-8, and Owen Merton, John Weeks and Maude Burge visited Morocco and Algeria in 1925, 1926-7 and 1930 respectively. From Morocco Frances Hodgkins commented that ‘the English Colony was there in full force – a well dressed smart looking crowd – of the ping-ponging bridge-playing sort.’¹⁸⁰ Maud Sherwood talked of Kairouan being less full of tourists than Tunis, indicating that this was a dominant characteristic of the latter. However, like numerous artists who had travelled to North Africa before them,¹⁸¹ there is little evidence in the expatriates’ work of a colonial presence. Why would there be, when they had a wealth of subjects to choose from that embodied the exotic, from dark-skinned figures, traditional dress, vibrant colours and light and the sheer masses of people they came across? It was in fact the ‘other’ or sense of difference that they were seeking, and this could not be found through depicting pictures of fellow colonials which would sully the romantic Oriental view. Of course the European presence could be safely dispensed with, as Robert E. Groves recommended in 1908:

In Tangier my wife and I felt the irritation of too much that was European; but this is one of the instances...where the artist with his brush or pencil scores over the photographer. Discordant and disturbing European notes are eliminated from the otherwise harmonious Eastern picture, by the discerning eye and discriminating hand of the wielder of the pencil.¹⁸²

It could also be assumed that, as products of a colonial regime themselves, the New Zealand expatriates were more than comfortable with the colonised status of indigenous people, the equivalent of New Zealand’s Maori, who had also proved to be a lucrative subject for artists back home. The proposition of Frances Hodgkins’ companion in Morocco, Mrs Ashington, to take their young Moroccan guide back to England with her because ‘life would be an insupportable blank without Absolon and a donkey,’ and having him decked out in Moorish clothes ‘like a young prince,’¹⁸³ would indicate the degree to which colonials viewed the North Africans as objects of difference and curiosity. Although Hodgkins herself did perhaps indicate a greater degree of interest in the people and their culture, ‘...I grow more and more fascinated

¹⁸⁰ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 7 December 1902, E. H. McCormick transcripts, letter 123, E. H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery Toi O Tāmaki

¹⁸¹ Prochaska, in Benjamin, *Renoir and Algeria*, p. 142 and Nochlin, “The Imaginary Orient,” *Art in America*, Vol. 71, May 1983, p. 122

Both writers note the lack of depiction of colonisers in Orientalist works.

¹⁸² Robert E. Groves, “Morocco as a Winter Sketching Ground,” *Studio*, Vol. 45, 1908-09, p. 25

¹⁸³ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 23 March 1903, in Gill, p. 160

with [the Moors] and their wonderful religion,'¹⁸⁴ she too could see their value as art subjects because of the differences which existed between their cultures.

As with the artists' colonies in Europe, tourism played a key role in establishing the Orient as a prime sketching ground. Unlike many other Orientalists, who had only a fleeting encounter with the Orient, the French writer and artist, Eugène Fromentin, (1820-1976) based himself in Algeria for extended periods, in 1846, 1847-8 and 1852, in order to 'try to be at home on this bit of foreign soil.'¹⁸⁵ Fromentin may have wanted to distinguish himself from the average clichéd tourist, avoiding 'Baedeker sights' and other 'tourist traps',¹⁸⁶ but he was the forerunner to a touristic phenomenon which opened up the Islamic Middle East to travellers, artists and their audiences back home. In the nineteenth century the genre of the Oriental travel guide found a ready market, as did Fromentin's Algerian literary works.¹⁸⁷ By the time Pierre-Auguste Renoir visited Algeria in 1881 and 1882 there were a range of travel guides to choose from, including Piesse's edition in the popular *Guide Joanne* series (first published in 1862 and modified in 1879 to cover the whole Maghreb), Dalle's *Alger* (1879) and Desprez's *L'Hiver à Alger* (1881).¹⁸⁸ Such guide books outlined the main tourist sights and 'must sees' and emphasised the exotic: Arab festivals, (complete with trances, walking on coals and the swallowing of live insects), Ottoman puppet theatre and snake charmers. These were subjects which frequently found their way into the works of artists visiting the Orient and as David Prochaska points out in the case of Renoir, his *Algiers* was 'informed in equal parts by contemporary French colonist views and standard tourist guidebooks'.¹⁸⁹ The same could be said of many other Orientalist artists and as such colonialism and the expansion of tourism were two key factors in the development of Orientalism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Innovations in transportation further influenced the growth of Orientalism. The mere logistics of travelling to and throughout the Maghreb became easier during the course

¹⁸⁴ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 24 January 1903, in Gill, p. 154

¹⁸⁵ Eugène Fromentin, p. 4

¹⁸⁶ Sarah Anderson, Introduction, Fromentin, p. xiv

¹⁸⁷ Particularly influential works by Fromentin were *A Year in the Sahel* and *A Summer in the Sahara* and *Between Sea and Sahara: An Orientalist Adventure*.

¹⁸⁸ Prochaska, in Benjamin, *Renoir and Algeria*, p. 140

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 141

of the nineteenth century and by 1889 Pierre Loti was writing of Morocco in his travel book *Au Maroc*:

It is very close to our Europe...In three or four hours steamships arrive there, and a great quantity of tourists is disgorged each winter. Today it has become truly banal, and the sultan of Morocco has made a point of half abandoning it to foreign visitors....¹⁹⁰

As such, a journey to the Orient became a relatively simple and popular extension of the traditional artist's tour throughout Europe. French novelist and art critic, Théophile Gautier, an ardent supporter of Orientalism and traveller himself, considered the advent of *La Vapeur* (steam power) pivotal to the development of the Orientalist movement in France. The power of steam propelled French artists across the waves and by train into North Africa, with 'the voyage to Algiers...becoming as indispensable for painters as the pilgrimage to Italy; they go there to learn of the sun, to study light, to seek out unseen types, and manners and postures that are primitive and biblical.'¹⁹¹ Interestingly Frances Hodgkins, too, drew a biblical analogy on her arrival in Tangiers, 'Abraham...arose & scourged the crowd in fine style with a leathern thong & scattered them to right and left, just as the buyers & sellers might have been driven out of the Temple....'¹⁹² This imagery is further supported by comments she made to a reporter on her return to New Zealand in 1903, describing the experience as being 'like stepping from modern civilisation into the times of the Old Testament. Everything is so primitive, and the people are so quaint.'¹⁹³

A further insight into the appeal of the Orient for artists can be found in the writings of Fromentin, who considered Africa '...a magic word that lends itself to suppositions and sets amateur explorers dreaming.'¹⁹⁴ He also recognised the wealth that the Orient provided in terms of subject matter:

[The Orient] is exceptional...it escapes general laws...This is an order of beauty which, having no precedents in either ancient literature or art, immediately strikes us as appearing bizarre. All its features appear at once: the

¹⁹⁰ Quoted in Roger Benjamin, *Orientalist Aesthetics: Art, Colonialism, and French North Africa, 1880-1950*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 2003, p.169

¹⁹¹ Quoted in Benjamin, *Orientalism*, p. 14

¹⁹² Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 3 December 1902, in Gill, p. 150

¹⁹³ Quoted in William McAloon (ed.), *Art at Te Papa*, Wellington, 2008, p. 118

¹⁹⁴ Fromentin, p. 4

novelty of its aspects, the singularity of its costumes, the originality of its types, the toughness of its effects, the particular rhythm of its lines, the unaccustomed scale of its colours.¹⁹⁵

These two writers encapsulate the attraction of the Orient for artists. What the artists' colonies of London and Europe had offered artists in ways of light, atmosphere, costume and the picturesque was provided tenfold by the Maghreb. The flowing *haik* worn by women and the hooded *bournoose* and *jelleba*, turbans and fez of men, the opulent luxury of the silk robes worn by Jewesses and the mix of races had artists racing to their palettes in order to capture this novel new world. As well as the language of the picturesque, now there was also added the language of 'types'. The term created a sense of the 'other' and reflected the curiosity towards the difference of the Maghrebian races. It was common to find tourist postcards denoting the different racial groups, especially in Algeria where there was a greater racial mix, and stock tourist photographs were given titles such as 'An Arab man' and 'A Kabyle woman'. The use of such terms also gave a certain ethnographic authenticity, reducing the individuality of colonised indigenous populations. Terms such as Moor and Arab were also used to denote anyone of dark skin, regardless of tribe or origin.

It was within this context and with an aim to represent this exotic milieu that New Zealand expatriate artists travelled to North Africa and Egypt in the early twentieth century. For these Antipodean adventurers, simply being in such a far-away locale, which had been prohibited to Westerners just one century prior, was cause for celebration. The added bonus in the form of vibrant colourful subjects, African figures, traditional dress and Oriental architecture was truly a cause for jubilation. Nearing the end of her initial trip abroad, Frances Hodgkins was the first of the expatriates in this study to venture into the Orient, travelling to Tangier and Tetuan in Morocco in 1902-03. Something of the sense of her colonial naivety and excitement can be felt in her fanciful comments to her mother, embodying stereotypical notions of Arabic races; 'There are plenty of English people so don't be frightened that I shall be carried off into the heart of Africa by some dusky Arab sheik,'¹⁹⁶ and 'shall you

¹⁹⁵ Quoted in Benjamin, *Orientalism*, pp. 12-13

¹⁹⁶ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 23 October 1902, in Gill, p. 142

mind if I join a harem?’¹⁹⁷ Playfulness and stereotypes aside, there is a sense that Hodgkins realised that this journey was going to be significantly different from those of her ‘jaunts’ around France, Germany and Italy. ‘...I have been very busy arranging about the Tangier trip – it is not quite like taking an ordinary journey. It is a primitive sort of place & we must stock for the summer....’¹⁹⁸ Whereas the fishing and agricultural villages of Europe had previously been deemed primitive for their traditional existence, in North Africa Hodgkins and her fellow expatriates witnessed and, to some extent experienced, a world which differed vastly from civilisation as they knew it. Rather than encountering French or Breton peasantry, Frances Hodgkins was met at the port of Tangier by:

...a thousand or so Moors [who] hurled themselves on deck & began fighting violently over our baggage – some of them such magnificent looking men, bronze giants, others wizened up, wicked looking little brigands and a few coal black Nubians with plunging eyes. It was the first day of the Ramadhan...& they were fiercely peevish with long fasting....¹⁹⁹

Instead of travelling by train as was usual on her trips throughout Europe, Hodgkins travelled from Tangier to Tetuan by donkey, slept in basic travellers’ rooms and sat ‘Moorish fashion round a brown earthen-ware pot’.²⁰⁰ This sense of an uncivilised world was reflected in other writers of the time. Reflecting on his travels to Morocco, the year before Hodgkins’ journey, Budgett Meakin wrote, ‘...I seem to be again transported to another world, to live another life, as was my continual feeling at the time. Everything around me was so different, my very actions and thoughts so complete a change from what they were under civilization.’²⁰¹ A foray into the Maghreb thus offered a glimpse into a very different existence. Although women travelling through North Africa at this time were by no means unheard of, Hodgkins’ readiness to travel rough was indicative of her sense of adventure and determination to reach a prime painting location. Travel to these regions also held an element of danger, perhaps even adding to the appeal. (This would seem to be the case with John Weeks, who deliberately sought remote, unwesternised areas of the Maghreb). Hodgkins was in Tangier at a time when tribal conflict had erupted into fighting

¹⁹⁷ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 14 November 1902, in Gill, p. 143

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 3 December 1902, in Gill, p. 149

²⁰⁰ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 23 March 1903, in Gill, p. 159

²⁰¹ Budgett Meakin, *The Land of the Moors*, London, 1902, p. 425

nearby, at one point prompting her to seriously consider leaving the city. Despite allusions to this fear, the tone of her letters to her confidante Dorothy Kate Richmond hold an air of excitement and escapade, and her letters to her mother downplay any risk she may have been under. Sherwood and Burge were also in Tunisia when the independence movement was reaching its peak and this situation, too, may have posed some risk.

Any risk, however, was outweighed by the rewards. From the outset Morocco provided a wealth of experience which would provide the stimulus for the oeuvre of the New Zealand expatriates and did not disappoint in the subjects it offered. In her very first letter from Morocco, Hodgkins entreated Dorothy Richmond to ‘...tell Mr. Garstin Tangier is a pearl of a place & I am borne down with the responsibility I have taken on myself of trying to represent ever so feebly its wondrous charm & beauty.’²⁰² Interestingly, this fervour contrasts somewhat with the man himself, who casually sums up Tangier with ‘Oh, a jolly place, lots of stunning stuff about.’²⁰³ With the zeal of those from the colonial antipodes, however, the New Zealand expatriates continued to wax lyrical. Hodgkins reproached Richmond with an exaggerated:

...here we are in this wondrous land of delight – Heavens! how beautiful it is! Why aren’t you here you foolish and misguided woman – We are sorry for you! I am never going back to New Zealand – I am going to turn Moslem – I am going to wear a haik – I am going to lie on a divan for the rest of my days with a handmaiden called Fatima to wait on me....²⁰⁴

Maud Sherwood travelled through Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia for three months from December 1927 and also enthused that ‘...northern Africa is fascinating – such colour, such vivid contrast.’²⁰⁵ Like their predecessors the allure of the Orient for the New Zealand expatriates lay in its colour and its very difference. Unlike the French and British Orientalists of the nineteenth century, however, the New Zealand artists were not drawn to overly exotic or violent subject matter; instead preferring the typical everyday life of the Maghrebian region. Favoured subjects included architectural structures such as mosques and archways, Arab cafés, dye yards, shops,

²⁰² Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 7 December 1902, in Gill, p. 151

²⁰³ Norman Garstin, “Tangier as a Sketching Ground,” *The Studio*, 11, (Aug) 1897, p. 177

²⁰⁴ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 2 December 1902, E.H. McCormick transcripts, letter 123

²⁰⁵ Quoted in “‘Seeing’ the World. From the Artist’s Viewpoint,” *BP Magazine*, 1 December, 1938, p. 80

local children and inhabitants and the market. In a newspaper interview Sydney Lough Thompson's view on the opportunities afforded the artist in the Maghreb were reported:

The French North African possessions have much to attract the painter, he said, for there is so much in the way of colour. A mule outside a mosque, an old archway which carries one back several centuries; a native boy, on his way to baptism, his blackened hand thrust before him; bearers of brushwood, natives at prayers. Every turn presented its own picture, visualised to the painter, amid patches of burning sunlight.²⁰⁶

The vast gap between the subject matter of the nineteenth-century Orientalists and the New Zealand expatriates is well illustrated if we compare a work such Jean-Léon Gérôme's *The Snake Charmer*, c. late 1860s, [fig. 60] to Frances Hodgkins' *The Dye Yards*, 1903 [fig. 61]. Both works depict youthful Arabic figures but the treatment of the subject is vastly different. Gérôme's work embodies a sense of sexual ambiguity and mysticism, cited by Linda Nochlin as 'a standard *topos* of Orientalist ideology'²⁰⁷ All the elements of a nineteenth-century French Orientalist's oeuvre are there: the naked buttocks of the boyish figure, his back to the viewer tempting speculation and surmise, the opulently decorated tiles in the background, Arabic 'types', wizened and young, and a touch of danger and the exotic in the form of the serpent. Hodgkins, on the other hand, selects a slice of everyday life in *The Dye Yards*, a view of picturesque Moroccan children in traditional dress working at a tannery. Painted in Tetuan, the work incorporates the aspects of the city that attracted Hodgkins: 'vine pergolas supported by long spidery props' and 'little junior moors'.²⁰⁸ Rather than the theatrical use of chiaroscuro employed by Gérôme to heighten the sense of drama, Hodgkins instead creates an Impressionist sense of light and brushwork to reflect the sunny, white-washed setting of the scene. Hodgkins certainly had the opportunity to witness the exotic spectacle of the snake charmer:

Saturday morning we started to paint in the market & entered into competition with a snake charmer beating a tom-tom & doing his best to collect a crowd –

²⁰⁶ "Distinguished Painter. The Art of Sydney Thompson. Fortune Smiles on Artist in Quaint Old Brittany Town," [undated, unsourced article], MS-Papers-3912, Alexander Turnbull Library Manuscripts Collection

²⁰⁷ Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," p. 119

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

we completely spoilt his show & in five minutes had a crowd round us that he would have given his eyes to possess....²⁰⁹

However, her subject matter of choice was aligned to a more 'ordinary' view of Moroccan life. Rather than a voyeuristic sexually charged gaze, it is a scene that could be witnessed through curious tourist eyes. The dye yards depicted show one of Tetuan's commercial enterprises but rather than focusing on the more unpleasant elements of this work, such as the smell and heavy labour, Hodgkins depicts a more pleasing scene situated in the courtyard. This interest in the picturesque perhaps suggests why she has chosen children as the subjects of the work. While the figure in the foreground is engaged in some form of work, carrying a pitcher to a dye pot, it does not seem too taxing a task and he is walking freely and looking curiously towards the viewer (and Hodgkins). Behind him, the other children seem to be at play which adds a naturalistic touch to the work. The inclusion of a lone boy, staring out of the picture and directly towards the viewer is a motif also found in several market works by Hodgkins and Maude Burge.²¹⁰ They are noticeable because often they are the only figure to directly face the viewer. In reality, it is not some unobserved viewer that they are looking at, but rather their interest is directed at the artists. Particularly as females, it would seem likely that Hodgkins and Burge would have been objects of great curiosity, sat behind easels in their western dress. Just as the children in the villages of Europe showed a fascination towards artists it would seem natural that this was also the case in North Africa. In fact, this is likely to be doubly so given the status of women in the Muslim Maghreb and the roles it was considered acceptable for them to fulfil. This reversal of gaze, however, is incorporated into the works as a further element of pictorial interest, as with the other picturesque elements in Hodgkins work, such as the dark-skinned 'junior moors' in traditional dress and the sun-bleached ground. In the above work Hodgkins produces a snap shot of a daily activity. This typical scene of everyday life in Tetuan, however, would have presented a charming and exotic picture for the New Zealand public and one which was immensely different from their own daily existence.

²⁰⁹ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 23 March 1903, in Gill, p. 159

²¹⁰ E. M. McCormick also identifies a similar image by Hodgkins, *Children, Tetuan, Morocco, 1903* in *The Works of Frances Hodgkins*, p. 172: 'Child in hooded cloak standing under pegola in foreground, with building and other children in background.' McCormick refers to six works completed in Morocco which predominantly feature children, suggesting that Hodgkins was interested in their potential as subject matter, in all likelihood because of their picturesque appeal.

It was the interest in the everyday world of Morocco that drew Hodgkins and her fellow expatriates again to the market. The *souk* or bazaar was a pivotal part of Arab life. It was a commercial hub as well as the centre of social interaction and many artists and travellers responded to its vibrant atmosphere, colour, liveliness and movement. The central place of the market in Moroccan life was reflected in Budgett Meakin's travel guide, *Land of the Moors*, which describes in detail the various markets, big and small, and the produce and wares sold at them, in every town on his journey. Take Tangier: 'If it be Thursday or Sunday, when markets or sôks are held...our path must be threaded through densely packed crowds of country people, surging and shouting, an experience never forgotten.'²¹¹ The atmosphere, hustle and bustle, colour, figures and costume all had much to recommend the subject to the artist. Writing of the market in Algiers, Henry Blackburn described its charms as such:

Do our figure painters want a subject, with variety of color and character in one canvas? They need not go to the bazaars of Constantinople, or to the markets of the East. Let them follow us here...Look at the colors, at the folds of their cloaks, bournouses, and yachmahs, - purple, deep red, and spotless white, all crushed together, - with their rich transparent shadows, as the sun streams across them, reflected from the walls; whilst the heavy awning throws a curious glow over the figures, and sometimes almost conceals their features with a dazzle of reflected light.²¹²

As the market had been a staple in the oeuvre of the New Zealand expatriates during their travels throughout Europe, so again they were drawn to it as a preferred subject. The initial impression of the Oriental market on Frances Hodgkins was strongly marked:

...At first we felt bewildered & a trifle nervous at the crowds of lean, brown fierce looking men but they are so busy coming & going & farthing splitting in the market that they never turn a head to look at us. The Soko is a wonderful place, indescribably dirty & thro' which a ceaseless human tide flows all day long – from a distance, for all the world like a hive of bees, but the humming & the yelling & the unholy din would make any self-respecting bee blush. It is on the hillside just outside the walls & the principal street leads out of it right thro' the town down the hill to the sea...Apparently there is no method in the

²¹¹ Meakin, p. 90 and 93

²¹² Blackburn, *Artists and Arabs*, p. 103

market – donkeys saddled & unsaddled are ubiquitous & anyone with anything to sell sits down & sells it....²¹³

It is the people of the market that Hodgkins responds to, the sense of chaos and of difference. These traits are also seen in the work of Hodgkins' fellow expatriate, Maude Burge, whose watercolour *Market, Tunis*, [fig. 62] conveys the atmosphere of the market, the colour and bustle. The figures in the work are executed in simple outlines and blocks of colour and are peppered throughout the composition as they go about their shopping and trading. A flurry of movement is created through the blurred forms and indistinct features. The only figure whose features can be discerned are those of the boy standing in the central foreground gazing directly at the viewer. Like Hodgkins, Burge has chosen to include a curious child as a picturesque touch, here dressed in a long white *bournoose* and contrasting red fez. Behind him lies colourful produce in baskets, a sea of orange and yellow and green which sweeps through the centre of the composition towards the narrow streets behind winding off into space. It is as if Burge has depicted a typical Tunisian market scene as described by Maud Sherwood:

In Tunis the native and the European sections are quite separate: in the former are narrow, picturesque streets, sometimes unpaved, along which are crowded innumerable *souks* (bazaars) piled with Oriental goods and fruits. The *souks* are intriguing in their variety but one would not care to get lost in such labyrinthine quarters....²¹⁴

Maud Sherwood was attracted to the colourful spectacle the market presented, in particular the vivid array of produce:

But it was Kairouan, the sacred city, I found interesting. It is not so frequented by tourists, and for that reason perhaps more attractive. Everything is full of colour and movement – a kaleidoscopic picture of native markets and camels laden with merchandise for distant places inland....²¹⁵

A definite response to this 'kaleidoscopic' colour, Sherwood's *The Chilli Market, Tunis*, 1927-28, [fig. 63] is a vibrant display of people and produce, seeming to

²¹³ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 3 December 1902, in Gill, p. 151; E. H. McCormick transcripts, letter 123

²¹⁴ Quoted in "'Seeing' the World. From the Artist's Viewpoint," *BP Magazine*, 1 December, 1938, p. 80

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

jumble into each other in show of confusion. The viewer's eyes are lead around the composition as pattern and colour vie for attention, creating a sense of the hustle and bustle of the market. In the work Sherwood has limited the number of main figures and employs a high viewpoint in order to focus on the essence of the market scene; the vendors and the decorative display of colour and pattern which envelops them. The focal point of the composition centres on the two male vendors surrounded by their colourful produce. The central figure sits on the ground, his striped garment creating a contrast of pattern to the swirl of bright red, green and yellow chillies behind him. Behind him another fellow worker squats as they prepare the produce for sale and crouching, cut-off figures are visible to the rear of the picture plane, suggestive of the presence of a crowd.

In capturing the essence of the market and exploiting the decorative aspect of the colour spectrum, Sherwood was working within a modernist tradition and she had aligned herself within 'the Modernist School'. Modernist artists who had earlier visited Tunisia, in particular Paul Klee, had also responded to the region's vibrant colour display and used it as inspiration for brilliantly patterned works. Writing from Tunisia in 1914 Klee stated that, 'colour possesses me. I don't have to pursue it. It will possess me always, I know it. That is the meaning of this happy hour: Colour and I are one....'²¹⁶ In his Oriental works Klee depicted abstracted architectural forms and vegetations and applied the heightened palette of Robert Delaunay's Orphist work. This is seen in *St. Germain near Tunis, (midday, with the young palm in the foreground)*, 1914, [fig. 64] a patterned show of flattened areas of brilliant colour. In particular, the blocks of vibrant colour which define the buildings are responsive to the colours of the Orient. Although Sherwood's work does not reach the same level of abstraction as Klee's, she shows a similar concern for using colour to define her image. She responds to the distinctive characteristic of the region and uses colour and pattern to convey the atmosphere of the market. *Chilli Market, Tunis*, also highlights several key features found in the expatriates' market scenes of North Africa, in particular, the squatting male figures, traditional dress, heightened colour and light.²¹⁷

²¹⁶ Quoted in Benjamin, *Orientalism*, p. 180

²¹⁷ Interestingly though, the sunny scene did not reflect Sherwood's general experience of 'the land of sun' as her only surviving diary entry from the trip noted: '...during all our stay in Africa we had not more than 8 or 10 sunny days – continual greyness and rain.' [Diary entry, [undated], quoted in Julie Heraud, *Maud Sherwood New Zealand Artist, 1880-1956: A Biography*, Whitianga, 1992, p. 127] This echoes the Africa

John Weeks also responded to the attractions of the Oriental market, in particular its colour, pattern and sense of chaos. Following in the footsteps of such adventurers as Fromentin and Meakin, Weeks attempted to live among his subjects. He began his travels through the Maghreb in 1926, spending fifteen months in Morocco with the Scottish painter Graham Munro. They adopted local dress, complete with beards, travelling to remote villages near the edge of the Sahara and the unwesternised Animeter Valley.²¹⁸ Sydney Thompson described his friend's adventures as such: '...[he] spent time in northern Africa, where he & a friend went on a painting trip into some the wildest countries of Morocco. Here the Arabs are, as yet, scarcely subdued & J.W. & his friend met with many adventures.'²¹⁹ Weeks' trip to North Africa directly followed his initial training at André Lhote's studio in Paris in 1927. Here he was introduced to Lhote's highly coloured style of Cubism, with an emphasis on vibrant colours, abstracted faceted forms, and harmonious compositions. In Paris Weeks was also able to witness firsthand the work of key modernist artists such as Picasso, Derain, Matisse, Braque and Léger. Weeks' Oriental works, therefore, can be considered experimentations of his newly acquired knowledge of modernist stylistic language, applied to familiar Orientalist imagery.

It is clear that Weeks was enamoured with the light and colour effects afforded by the Maghreb. Writing from Marrakesh in December 1927, he waxed lyrical about '...the deep rich red, the olive green in and around Demnot area [which were]...a wonder of richness and beauty.'²²⁰ In *Untitled (Moroccan Street Vendor)*, c. 1930, [fig. 65] Weeks demonstrates an interest in portraying a sense of the colour and light of the Orient. The work captures the golden hues of the city, with the flattened areas of colour creating a patterned display of complementary colour. Working within a modernist pictorial analysis, the forms of the buildings and figures are simplified but are still clearly recognisable. To the right the vendor of the title, a rather lonely looking soul, crouches under the warmth of the sun, idly toying with two jugs, while his table of pottery lies in the shadows. The commercial element of the work,

that Renoir found on his arrival in Algeria; 'I wanted to see what the land of the sun was like. I have missed out as there is hardly any of it at the moment. But it is exquisite all the same, an extraordinary richness of nature.' [Quoted in Benjamin, *Renoir and Algeria*, p. 40]

²¹⁸ Docking, p. 132

²¹⁹ "An Artist Abroad," First talk, National Broadcasting Service, Christchurch, 1942 (transcript). Sydney Lough Thompson papers – Alexander Turnbull Library Manuscripts Collection, MS-Papers-3841

²²⁰ Docking, p. 132

however, is overshadowed by the predominant sense of sunlight. The towering buildings are bathed in a golden yellow radiance, contrasting with the purple shadows. The figures of the women going towards the arched doorway are highlighted in a golden glow or accented by shadow. It was for such colour qualities that Sydney Lough Thompson praised Weeks' Oriental works, saying 'the pictures he brought back are intensely interesting especially those which seem to grow out of precipitous mountain slopes, those glow with colour.'²²¹ Following Lhote's colour theory,²²² Weeks has restricted the number of colours in a work to two main shades, the dominant lighter golden yellow and deeper ochre, with touches of sage green, cerise, and purple, the effect of which was to create a decorative and harmonious design.

In *An Eastern Market Scene, Morocco*, c. 1927, [fig. 66] there is a greater emphasis on structure and form and Weeks works within a Cubist idiom to create a sense of chaos and disorder at the market. While the background of the work is rendered quite naturalistically and the trees and buildings are easily recognisable, the muddled jumble of produce and people are broken up into faceted forms which blend into each other into each other to convey the vibrancy and movement of the market. The flattened space, tilted picture plane and multiple viewpoints (typical Cubist devices) emphasise the sense of disorder. The clothing of the figures is simplified into geometric shapes, in particular the conical hat of the men (which replaces the more usual turban or fez of the city) and the triangular form of the headdress of women. The pottery for sale tips at precarious angles on the ground where it lays, while market goers rummage among it. The Cubist influence is clearly marked in this work with an emphasis on form, pattern and capturing the essence of the subject.

Another noticeable feature of the New Zealand expatriates' market scenes was an increased emphasis on the produce of the market, in particular the colourful fruit and vegetables of the region. Budgett Meakin had observed, that 'at the head of the garden fruit of Morocco stands the orange,'²²³ and it this golden citrus which found its way into many of the market scenes by New Zealand artists. The orange was a fruit that

²²¹ Thompson, "An Artist Abroad," First talk

²²² Lhote maintained: 'Two main colours usually suffice, often a cool and a warm, one more violent than the other...the other colours, diminished as much as possible, will gain liveliness in contrast to the main colours....', [quoted in Linda Tyler, *John Weeks: Figure Composition I: manufacturing meaning, the University of Wellington art collection in context*, Wellington, 1999, p. 10]

²²³ Meakin, p. 48

epitomised the Orient, from its place in myth and for its colour, aroma and the sunny climes it thrived in. As such, one of the stock subjects of the Orient was that of the orange seller, ‘celebrating as it does a citrus fruit grown locally and sold on the street and Maghrebian markets in abundance astonishing to travellers from...colder parts...’²²⁴ so it is unsurprising that it would become a subject which artists would return to again and again.

Maude Burge’s portrayal of the subject is atypical in *Fruit Stall, Algiers* [fig. 67]. The work is unusually devoid of a strong human presence and it is the fruit itself that is left to stand alone as the subject of the work. The male fruit vendor is hidden in shadowy obscurity of the doorway and it is the golden produce which dominates the composition, spilling over the table, shelves and hanging in clusters. The orange globes and lime accents provide the perfect decorative element for the backdrop of ochre arch, recesses and walls, lifting the monochrome tone of the work. In effect, the subject is treated in the manner of a still life. As sixteenth and seventeenth-century Dutch works focused on the produce of the market stall, in the Orient New Zealand artists also explored the painterly elements of the produce in a way that they had not done when depicting the markets of Europe and exploited for their ability to enliven a painting. The circular forms of the oranges is a motif seen in the orange stall paintings of Maude Burge, Frances Hodgkins and Owen Merton, and points to a possible Art Nouveau influence in their work in their clusters of circular forms.²²⁵ This decorative feature is also found in the work of Frank Brangwyn, seen in the cluster of oranges in *Orange Market*, 1887 [fig. 81]. Brangwyn had had contact with the French Art Nouveau movement, and as Hodgkins, Merton and Burge drew on Brangwyn’s influence, it would seem that his work would be the likely precedent for their treatment of produce in their Oriental market scenes. Although somewhat unusual for its lack of human inhabitation, Burge’s still-life display of oranges highlights a key motif that was also incorporated into the market scenes of Hodgkins and Merton. The depiction of masses of produce was also likely to be in part a response to the reality of what the artists saw, as vibrant displays of produce were a dominant feature of the markets in North Africa, as in fact they still are today. Of the streams of onions she

²²⁴ Benjamin, *Renoir and Algeria*, p. 100

²²⁵ With reference in particular to the clusters of oranges in Hodgkins and Merton’s works, G. H. Brown has suggested that this form is a simple reworking of the curve device commonly found in Art Nouveau design. [Brown, *New Zealand Painting 1900-1920: Traditions and Departures*, Wellington, 1972, p. 27]

commonly depicted in her market scenes, Frances Hodgkins wrote: ‘judging from the numbers that are consumed in Tangier I should imagine the Moors make apple pies of them.’²²⁶ Rather than the more ornate Islamic patterns preferred by nineteenth-century Orientalist, it is a particular feature of the New Zealand expatriate’s works that they employ colourful masses of produce and architectural arches to embellish their works.

It was also the subject of the orange seller that Hodgkins turned to when commissioned by fellow New Zealander David Theomin ‘for a Tangier picture.’²²⁷ In *Orange Sellers, Tangier*, 1903, [fig. 68] the focus is on the produce. The river of golden oranges and rosy hued onions spill from the middle of the composition and almost fall at the feet of the viewer, so immediate is the impression of the abundance of produce. This burst of colour contrasts with the remainder of the work, which is rendered in various shades of white, creams and beige. This bleached effect conveys the strong light of this land of the sun. The orange sellers of the title squat in a typical fashion among the produce, the one facing towards us is readying the purchase of the stately figure that looks directly towards him. A further cluster of figures in white robes and the covered stalls in the background indicate the general bustle and hub of the market. Hodgkins’ enthusiasm for these market subjects, her ‘poems in onions & oranges & succulent raddishes’²²⁸ and her particular pride in this work were reflected in her comments to Dorothy Richmond:

I wish I could have sent you my large picture of the market – it is the apple or rather onion of my eye – much the same sort of subject of a jumble of onions melons & oranges. It is going tomorrow to Mr. Theomin – I am going to eschew vegetables after this with a comfortable feeling I have done my duty by them – I have got rather into the way of thinking that I cant paint a picture without an onion in it, quite forgetting they are things not quite to everyone’s taste – but they do wake a picture up a bit don’t they? You see great shining pink satin masses of them with a row of feminine haiks with one eye apiece sitting behind them....²²⁹

Hodgkins did not ‘eschew’ produce, however, and *Orange Sellers, Tangier*, 1905, [fig. 69] painted when she was back in New Zealand, reinforces her regard for the subject. Executed in darker tones than its predecessor, and more fully worked, it is a

²²⁶ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 7 March 1903, E. H. McCormick transcripts, letter 129

²²⁷ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 3 December 1902, in Gill, p. 151

²²⁸ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 7 March 1903, E. H. McCormick transcripts, letter 129

²²⁹ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 7 March 1903, in Gill, p. 156

composite work of the Moroccan elements that Hodgkins preferred: the strewn produce, the huddled figures, the ‘spidery props’ of the pergola, arches and whitewashed walls. In this work there is a sense of an attempt at characterisation, seen in particular in the intimate tableaux of the figure that turns to another with a hand cupped around his face, almost as if he is sharing a secret. The lone youthful figure in the right foreground of the work stares directly at the viewer (reminiscent of the boy in *The Dye Yards*) while the other figures are engaged in the preparation, barter and perusal of the produce. The men are dressed in more colourful garments, *jellaba* and turbans, possibly indicating a degree of artistic licence as Hodgkins had complained of the lack of colour she found in Tangier, with ‘no oriental riot of color – all browns & whites & muddy creams with here & there a splash of crimson & orange & the better class of Moors making blots of indigo in their handsome blue cloaks.’²³⁰ Hodgkins had written to her mother that she had been ‘gathering a rich harvest of material for future use,’²³¹ and she was by no means alone in working up Oriental images in the studio that were based on sketches and memories, as this had been standard practice with most Orientalists of the nineteenth century.²³² In this case it allowed Hodgkins to bring together the most quintessential elements of Moroccan life.

Owen Merton also completed his best-known Orientalist work, *Fruit Stall, Port Said*, 1907, [fig. 70] when back in New Zealand after a trip abroad to London. One of several port towns he visited and sketched in on his way back to New Zealand, the Egyptian port offered Merton his first taste of the Orient and, once again, it is the ubiquitous orange stall that features in the work. The market stall that takes up half the composition is laden with the colourful citrus. The golden glow of the oranges and the lighter sand behind, contrast with the vibrant blue sea in the distance and the whole scene is framed by the awning of the stall and the sun drenched building behind. Merton’s colouring of this Oriental scene, in particular, drew favourable comment in New Zealand. Two Wellington papers named in detail the colours contained in the work, with one adding that the white of the buildings was employed

²³⁰ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 3 December 1902, in Gill, p. 151

²³¹ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 4 March 1902, E. H. McCormick transcripts, letter 128

²³² A key proponent of practice was Delacroix, who completed at least seven notebooks of pencil and pen drawings, which he then used to complete Oriental works throughout his career. This became standard practice for Orientalists of the nineteenth century.

in order to set ‘the other colours into greater prominence.’²³³ Indicating a change in direction in Merton’s oeuvre towards the use of a more colourful palette, the painting was still having an impact on Merton’s reputation in New Zealand four years after it had first been exhibited. According to the *Evening Post*, ‘Owen Merton will be remembered as a young artist who preferred a full brush with plenty of colour to anything else; given an orange-stall or the tattered hangings of a bazaar and he would produce a pleasing sketch.’²³⁴ Unusually, the only allusion to the typical noise and trade of the market is indicated by the cluster of huddled figures in the background. Instead, the prominent feature of the work is the lone market vendor, situated in the right foreground. He is a static, almost regal figure as he stands under the shade of his market stall, isolated from the huddled group behind by spatial distance as well as his demeanour. Particularly striking is the way he stares directly at the viewer, his face dark and inscrutable. He is a study of a type, his dark skin embodying notions of the exotic Oriental, and his bearing alluding to the ideal of the noble savage. Rather than the open curiosity of the boy figures in Burge and Hodgkins’ market works, he is an atypical example of an adult figure confronting the viewer. He is also distinguished by not being portrayed in the crouching pose in which vendors of the Maghreb were commonly depicted. Hodgkins had described the shops ‘with an inscrutable Moor sitting, either tucked up on a shelf, or squatting on the floor,’²³⁵ and it is usual to observe male market vendors depicted crouching or cross legged. Merton’s choice of pose instils the work with a majestic air that seems far removed from the barter and dealings of the marketplace. It is possible to observe similarities between Merton’s depiction of the orange vendor in *Fruit Stall, Port Said* and Frank Brangwyn’s treatment of the subject in *Orange Market*, 1897. Brangwyn’s figure also depicts an exotic type, seen in the dark skin and traditional clothes. Although not standing, he is seated while at his feet another figure sits cross legged, which could be read as allusions to status and seems suggestive of a stately ruler and his subject.

A further trait of the expatriates’ depiction of the markets of the Orient is that of the predominance of male subjects. Whereas the markets of Europe were a female domain, their North African counterparts appear more the realms of men. In works

²³³ Unsourced clipping, October 1907, quoted in Roger Collins, *Owen Merton – Expatriate Painter*, Christchurch, 2004, pp. 10-11

²³⁴ “Art Exhibition. Some Oils and Water Colours,” *Evening Post*, 11 October 1911, p. 4

²³⁵ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Richmond, 3 December 1902, E. H. McCormick transcripts, letter 123

such as Maud Sherwood's *Chilli Market, Tunis* and Frances Hodgkins' *Orange Sellers, Tangier*, this difference is marked, and rather than the clusters of female figures as seen in the European works, now we observe groups of male figures clustered around produce strewn on the ground. It is likely that this reflected the reality of what the New Zealanders generally saw and the Muslim culture of the Maghreb. In Algeria, for example, Islamic law decreed the segregation of sexes so that generally public spaces, such as streets and squares, were designated as male areas, while residences, courtyards and private spaces were reserved for women.²³⁶ This could be supposed to have been the general rule of all the Maghrebian countries guided by Islam and could account for the predominant presence of men in areas of the public sphere, such as cafés, the streets, squares and the marketplace. Both the writings of travellers and the images of artists reflect this facet of Muslim culture. Frances Hodgkins had observed the 'crowds of lean, brown fierce looking men,' which she had found somewhat intimidating on her arrival in Tangier. In their most extreme form, the image of the mass of male figures was construed, or indeed constructed, as a culture of idleness. Nochlin notes 'an absence of scenes of work and industry' in the Orientalist repertoire, sending the message that Muslim races are 'lazy, slothful and childlike, if colorful.'²³⁷ One such example of this view is provided by Henry Blackburn. With reference to the sights afforded the artist he wrote: 'He [sic.] may go...into the streets...where the old merchant traders, whose occupation is nearly gone, sit smoking out their lazy, uncommercial lives.'²³⁸ While the market scenes of the New Zealand expatriates certainly reflected its role as a prominent scene of male socialisation, they fall far short of conveying such an unflattering view as posed by Blackburn.

Maud Sherwood, in particular, was a keen observer of the male mass of humanity so prevalent in the Maghrebian region, both in the marketplace as well as in that other key location of male socialisation, the 'Arab' café. The latter was an important meeting place for Arabic residents and written of by Henry Blackburn as a key location for male artists in Algeria to visit on their 'picturesque tour of inspection.'²³⁹ Sherwood's *At a Café, Tunis*, [fig. 71] displays her penchant for intimate views and

²³⁶ Prochaska, in Benjamin, *Renoir and Algeria*, p. 132

²³⁷ Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," p. 123

²³⁸ Blackburn, *Artists and Arabs*, pp. 53-54

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 51

characterisation. In the foreground two Tunisian men are depicted in long flowing *jellaba* and red turbans, animatedly conversing across a table. The speaker leans forward in order to emphasise his point, seeming to provide amusement for the fellow behind in the shadows, who leans on his arm as he listens to the encounter. While not a scene of industry, it is not a scene of idleness, but rather one of animation.

In *Market Scene, Tunisia* [fig. 72] and *Wet Day in Tunis, 1927*, [fig. 73] Sherwood again alludes to the market as a male domain. In *Market Scene, Tunisia* an archway frames a picturesque scene of makeshift stalls behind. There is a general sense of the business of a market, vendors selling produce and wares and figures are scattered around, engaged in selling, buying and making goods. This forms a backdrop for the main focus of the work. In the right frame of the archway, a lone figure sits, anonymous under his hooded blue cloak as he produces items to sell. Overall there is a sense of calm and of a moment caught in time. This contrasts strongly with *Wet Day in Tunis*, in which a mass of figures is milling in the middle ground of the picture plane surrounded by awnings around the edge of the market square. In the latter work it is the general atmosphere of the scene, the buzz of conversation and mass of figures that Sherwood captures, rendered in an impressionist way. The swelling crowds at the marketplaces must have made a strong impact on the New Zealand artists. During her first visit abroad, Sherwood wrote of the great impression the crowds of Paris had made on her musing, ‘I wondered if it were possible that such another crowd existed anywhere else...When I return to N.Z. I am going to look round and wonder where all the people are. I know I am.’²⁴⁰ In the Maghreb Sherwood would have indeed witnessed such crowds and her impression would have been intensified by the vastly different appearance of the people and strange languages that she was surrounded by. In *Wet Day in Tunis*, a range of attire adds touches of colour to the overall blue tone of the work: turbans, *jelleba* and even what appears to be European-styled dress and umbrellas are apparent. A lone marketer is seated in the foreground with his baskets of produce, his isolation emphasised by the contrast with the groups of figures behind and he adds a further disconsolate air to the dreary day. Sherwood’s studies of male Tunisian subjects offer a glimpse into both their work and social lives, offering varying countenances based on observation of an outsider. The difference of

²⁴⁰ Correspondence, 3 March, 1913, quoted in Heraud, p. 27

circumstance is suggested through the different figures she portrays (as New Zealand artists, too, worked within the discourse of types) from darkened African vendors selling paltry goods, to affluent men spending time relaxing at a café, to those who frequented the market for socialisation.

Despite this general sense of the market as a male domain in the works of the New Zealand expatriates, there are exceptions in which women feature. In photographs of Moroccan markets taken by Budgett Meakin [fig. 74] at the end of the nineteenth century, it is possible to note the presence of both men and women, which suggests that the market was not wholly prohibited to women. Robert E. Groves, an artist travelling to Morocco in the first decade of the twentieth century wrote of ‘a women’s market, where women wrapped in voluminous haiks are seen selling flour and other useful commodities.’²⁴¹ However, Groves being there would suggest that a male presence was not precluded. Frances Hodgkins described ‘a row of feminine haiks’ behind the pink masses of onions, although they do not feature in either of her aforementioned *Orange Seller, Tangier* works. At the market she also noted that ‘there is a row of Arab women squatting like Sybills with their impenetrable leathern looking faces peering out of their white burnous – they sell pottery & I hope to get some pictures here if I have any luck.’²⁴² Whether Hodgkins managed to paint her Sybils is uncertain, but E. H. McCormick does refer to two works in which women in Moorish costume feature, *In An Eastern Market*, depicting ‘Moorish women seated on a rug containing melon and fruit’ and *Market, Tangier*, showing ‘two women in Moorish costume facing a fruit vendor’.²⁴³ The presence of women in this situation may be determined in part by social class and status. Frances Hodgkins’ view on Morocco’s ‘wrong & iniquitous system of treating their womenkind’²⁴⁴ was deeply critical but does highlight something of the varying status of women in the Maghreb. Despite finding the chance to visit the harem of her guide’s uncle ‘a most delightfully quaint & picturesque experience,’²⁴⁵ the actual existence of women in the harem she condemned:

²⁴¹ Groves, p. 30

²⁴² Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 7 December 1902, in Gill, p. 151

²⁴³ E. H. McCormick, *Works of Frances Hodgkins*, pp. 194 and 194

²⁴⁴ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond 11 April 1903, in Gill, p. 163

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 162

This is the kind of life that all women in Morocco lead who are not toilers & workers in the field – they are quite ignorant & untaught with nothing to occupy their minds but intrigue & dress – they can neither read or write & the better class ones never go outside their garden walls.²⁴⁶

Perhaps her scathing regard for such a lifestyle was one reason that Hodgkins seemed to eschew depictions of the harem in favour of everyday scenes, despite the fact that as a female artist she had access to this environment, whereas for the male artist it was prohibited. Artists working in the Maghreb had to work within the restrictions imposed on their gender by Islamic law, so, just as the Harem was an environment forbidden to men, the Arab Café was an environment prohibited to women. Maud Sherwood may have been able to depict this subject in *At a Café, Tunis*, but she witnessed the scene from the position of an outsider, not a participant, as her viewpoint in the image clearly suggests. Of course restrictions to the harem and other specifically female areas had not prevented male artists drawing on their imaginations, as clearly witnessed by such works as John Frederick Lewis' *The hhareem*, 1849 or Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres', *Turkish Bath*, 1862. As such, there was an extensive and well-established practice of male Orientalist artists presenting prohibited female imagery in a sexualised manner. These works often depicted naked or half-dressed women, reclining in a languid, sensual manner or in guises of servitude and as such clearly contravened the mores of Islamic society. There was, however, an alternative reading of the harem to these male sexual-fantastical images, as offered by the British painter Henriette Browne's *A visit (harem interior; Constantinople)*, 1860 [fig. 75]. Browne's portrayal of the women of the harem as demure figures, dressed in long simple robes, without a hint of decoration or naked flesh, led the French critic and romantic novelist, Théophile Gautier to observe, 'only women should travel to Turkey. *A visit* indeed shows us the interior of a harem by someone who has seen it, a rare if not unique thing, for although male painters often do odalisques, not a single one can boast of having worked before the model.'²⁴⁷

It is significant that the New Zealand expatriates did not depict sexualised images of the Orient. One possible reason for this is the potential reaction of the audience towards their work. Edward Said said of the renowned anthropologist Edward Lane,

²⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 163

²⁴⁷ Quoted in Benjamin, *Orientalism*, p. 15

whose famous *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* was published in 1836, ‘...that in Orientalizing the Orient, Lane not only defined it but edited it; he excised from it what, in addition to his own human sympathies, might have ruffled the European sensibility removed material which would offend European sensibilities....’²⁴⁸ In this regard the expatriates may also have been conscious of what imagery would be considered acceptable to their public, in particular the colonial audience back home in New Zealand. The work of Frances Hodgkins that was hung on line at the Royal Academy in 1903, a depiction of an Arab girl, would suggest the form of Orientalism that found favour in England at the turn of the century. Its whereabouts unknown, Hodgkins describes it as more ‘elaborate’ than her previous work and it is possible that it is similar in treatment to her painting of a ‘Jewess’. Rather a departure from her usual European peasant women or Arab children and market vendors, Hodgkins enthusiastically described the work to her mother:

I am painting a beautiful Jewess in full dress – wonderful coif of pearls & emeralds & massive ear-rings reaching to her shoulders – dress of cloth of gold & black velvet with all sorts of barbaric jewels & ornaments & ropes of pearls & unset emeralds hung about her neck – it makes a splendid study & I am delighted to get such a chance....²⁴⁹

This was perhaps as close as Hodgkins got to customary nineteenth-century Orientalist imagery. In terms of a New Zealand audience, it was work in the vein of *Orange Sellers*, *Tangier* that found favour amongst the public. It could be argued that for the colonial audience back home, the peasants of Europe had been an exotic entity. Consequently, the mysterious dark-skinned inhabitants of the Maghreb would have been doubly so, seeming so far-away and inaccessible. Even if not concerned with sensibilities, the expatriate artists were certainly mindful of what elements would appeal to their art public, and this would seem to have been more in the direction of the picturesque than the sensual.

Finding female sitters, too, proved a problem, with most artists lamenting the fact that they could not get Muslim women to sit (disrobed of their *haiks*) as this contravened Islamic law. The frustration of the artist at this situation was perhaps most strongly expressed in Renoir’s comments that ‘the women up to now are unapproachable, I

²⁴⁸ Said, p. 167

²⁴⁹ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 31 March 1903, in Gill, p. 161

don't understand their jabber and they are very unreliable. I am dead scared of starting something again and not finishing it. It's unfortunate as there are some pretty ones, but they do not want to pose.'²⁵⁰ It was because of the lack of female Muslim artists that many artists used Jewish models or, in some cases, prostitutes. It could be considered, therefore, that depicting Arabic women in public spaces, such as the market, presented a useful alternative. As some artists had lamented the Breton coif and heavy dress at hiding the female figure, while others had happily incorporated them into their work, again a similar situation arose in the Maghreb. Blackburn complained that 'veiled beauties are interesting, sometimes more interesting for being veiled, but it does not serve our artistic purposes much to see two splendid black eyes and a few white robes.'²⁵¹ However, other artists were more than happy to employ this traditional dress as a symbol of traditional Arabic culture and the decorative element it could provide in the way of shape and form. John Weeks, in particular, used the *haik* as basis for a Cubist analysis of form and pattern, seen in *Figures in a Market Place, Algiers* [fig. 76]. In the work the two women in *haiks* are the centre of attention as they examine pottery for sale at a stall. Perhaps this is more for their attire than their sex, as Weeks exploits their flowing haiks for the interest they add in terms of shape, rendering them in an arch which covers their bodies from head to toe. The female vendor is dressed in simple skirt and blouse, as she bends over her goods, surrounded by two prancing dogs. (In Algeria it was usual to find such a melting pot of cultures and races). The forms are simplified and monumental, the male companion executed in an array of simplified blocks of colour and vibrant pattern. The abstraction of form into geometric shapes, faceting of forms, tilted picture plane and emphasis on two-dimensional space illustrate Weeks' application of a modernist Cubist idiom. There is a strong design element in to the work, reflecting Weeks' philosophy 'that the ideal to work for is noble design, which implies mass arrangements, with rhythm, incorporated with fine colour orchestration and great draughtsmanship.'²⁵² The work signals the abstraction that would reach fruition in Weeks' abstract works of his later career, such as *Figure Composition I* (1950s).

²⁵⁰ Quoted in Benjamin, *Renoir and Algeria*, p. 82

²⁵¹ Blackburn, *Artists and Arabs*, p. 74

²⁵² John Weeks, "Ideas on Art," published in *Year Book of the Arts*, 1947, p. 30

The decorative possibilities of the *haik* were also employed by contemporaneous Australian artist, Hilda Rix Nicholas. In her works, women feature both as market goers and vendors. In *The Mottled Crowd, Tangier, 1912-14*, [fig.77] Rix Nicholas focuses on a lone market woman seated cross-legged on a blanket at the market, surrounded by produce, baskets and pots and a small assortment of produce is placed in front of her. She takes up the middle ground of the picture, drawing attention due her size and the whiteness of her *haik* which contrasts with the patches of colour around her. Unlike the solid geometric abstraction in Weeks' work, the robe is rendered in flowing folds. The yellow of citrus fruit and the colourful robes of the crowd in the distance add accents of colour to the scene, suggestive of the vibrancy of the market, rather than overpowering the figure who remains the focus of the composition. It is evident that Rix Nicholas was much taken with the dress of Muslim women she saw in Tangier; she collected several costumes and even sometimes wore these when working in the market to hide her identity.

Female figures are also present in Maude Burge's *Market Place, North Africa* [fig. 78]. Rather than standing alone as the subject of the work, however, they blend within what appears a family group of different members. The figures in the work are not depicted as individuals and their features are indistinct as they are captured quickly, *en plein air*. As Frances Hodgkins noted of the market, 'anyone with anything to sell sits down and sells it,' and so it appears here. This is no major bazaar, but a small assortment of unidentifiable wares. The two women kneel to the right of the foreground in their *haiks*, members of the wider group, their heads lowered as they work at their tasks. Behind them, two men crouch over goods, in a typical 'Oriental pose', while the rest of the figures span out in an arch formation, displaying robes, hoods and turbans of differing colour and pattern. To the left a small boy curiously faces the viewer, again reminiscent of the boys in Hodgkins' works and Burge's own and adding to the variety of figure types, as in fact does the inclusion of the women. As Burge's work illustrates, whether depicting male or female figures, New Zealand artists were in fact working within the discourse of types. Not in an ethnographical sense of the word, but in an artistic sense. The flowing *haik* and *bournoose*, as well as being the attire of an 'uncivilised' race, could add an artistic touch in terms of flowing folds, colour accents and pattern and, in the case of the *haik*, add a sense of mystery and allusion to a different religious belief. Studies executed *en plein air* were often

devoid of detail and lack of facial features or expressions, therefore further give the feeling of wanting to capture an exotic type, different from one's own culture and race.

In this regard the New Zealand artists share much with other Orientalist artists. If we were to consider the place of the New Zealand expatriates within the wider art tradition of Orientalism, however, we would find that their Oriental market works do not fit well within a discourse of nineteenth-century French Orientalism. Their lack of the overtly dramatic, sexual or violent subject matter results in quite a different interpretation of 'exotic'. For the New Zealand artists the heightened sense of colour and light, the darkened figures and their traditional dress were more than exotic enough for them and their audiences back home. Their Orientalist oeuvre did not rely on the bizarre or unusual, (such as snake charmers or fire walkers), sexually charged images, (the harem) or the questionable (the slave market). The fact remains that the New Zealand artists were not Orientalists in the dedicated sense of the term. In this they can be compared to Renoir, who has been denoted by Roger Benjamin as a 'port of call' painter drawn 'to the calling of Orientalism'.²⁵³ Thus for the expatriates, Africa was sketching ground like any other, offering up its charms and this is supported by Frances Hodgkins' description of Tetuan that, 'it seems...as near perfection as needs be for a sketching ground...'²⁵⁴

While not influenced to any degree by the dedicated Orientalists of French tradition, the New Zealand expatriates do, however, owe something to the influence of the Orientalist works of Frank Brangwyn and Arthur Melville, in subject matter as well as in style. During her first view of the art in the galleries of London, Frances Hodgkins noted her admiration for the work of Arthur Melville and Frank Brangwyn. It should come as no surprise then, given the latter's Oriental market works, that Hodgkins should make reference to them while in Morocco, saying 'we have our east winds too...but thank goodness, they don't last long, and the rain comes and gives us fresh energy and clear skies once more, and with them the great longing to rise early and paint Brangwyn pictures in the market....'²⁵⁵ Hodgkins clearly aligns herself with

²⁵³ Benjamin, *Renior and Algeria*, p. 12

²⁵⁴ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Richmond, 23 March 1903, E. H McCormick transcripts, letter 130

²⁵⁵ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Kate Richmond, 24 January 1903, in Gill, p. 154

Brangwyn in terms of subject matter. Both Frank Brangwyn and Arthur Melville had travelled widely in search of exotic subjects. Brangwyn journeyed to Tunis (1887), Jaffa (1888), Algeria (1889) and Morocco (1889 and 1894) and from 1880 Melville spent two years travelling to Egypt, as well as Istanbul, Muscat and Bagdad. The ‘delicious subject of the bazaar’²⁵⁶ became a subject of choice for both artists. There, as Blackburn had also noted, it was possible to find all the key elements in the one place and Melville was particularly drawn to the people for their sense of difference and appearance. From Muscat, Melville enthused:

Went out into the bazaars before tiffin, found them wonderfully picturesque, more so than anything I have yet seen. The Arabs with their pistols, spears and swords, dark skins and supple drapery were a feast for the Gods. Nothing could be more striking. How I should like to make a study of their heads. Wild scenes of the desert they looked. Made a sketch of bazaar, natives very good natured....²⁵⁷

The resulting work was *The Grand Bazaar, Muscat*, [fig. 79] a crowded scene of an indoor market, with a blur of figures suggestive of the liveliness and chaos within. Rendered in generally dark tones of ochre and brown, there are splashes of vibrant blue, red, orange and green to reflect the colourful subject and the figures are dressed in an array of white and patterned robes. While such works did not find favour among critics due to their style, its execution being criticised for being ‘singularly loose blottesque and stinky; indeed rather too oblivious of detail,’²⁵⁸ it would seem that Frances Hodgkins looked upon Melville’s work with greater favour saying, ‘Arthur Melville...is a strong painter, at first sight you laugh, then out of a chaos of blots comes wonderful form & colour & you finally end by admiring very much indeed.’²⁵⁹

Owen Merton was also widely influenced by the two artists. Much was made of Brangwyn and Melville’s influence on Merton’s *Fruit Stall, Port Said* by New Zealand critics after its exhibition in New Zealand.²⁶⁰ As well as likeness in terms of subject matter, when compared with a work such as Brangwyn’s *Orange Market*, 1897, [fig. 81] parallels can be drawn in the broad handling of paint and general

²⁵⁶ Arthur Melville, Journal entry, 1 March 1882, in Agnes Ethel Mackay, *Arthur Melville: Scottish Impressionist (1855-1904)*, Leigh-on-Sea [England], 1951, p. 32

²⁵⁷ Arthur Melville, Journal entry, 5 April 1882, *Ibid.* p. 38

²⁵⁸ *Magazine of Art*, June 183, *Ibid.*, p. 61

²⁵⁹ Frances Hodgkins to Isabel Field, 28 June 1901, in Gill, p. 90

²⁶⁰ Collins, *Owen Merton*, p. 10

darkness of tone accented by vibrant displays of colour, especially in the fruit itself. Melville's influence is keenly felt in Merton's *Moroccan Market* [fig. 80]. Like Melville's *The Grand Bazaar, Muscat*, it creates a sense of the movement and colour of the market through dabs and patches of colour, although employing a lighter palette. Form is created through the use of white spaces, reflecting the bright light of an outdoor Moroccan scene.

Definite parallels can also be drawn between the Orientalist developments of New Zealand artists and their Australian counterparts. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw Australian artists following the same trend as New Zealand artists, namely that of leaving the antipodes in search of the artistic stimulus offered abroad in London and Paris. Australian artists also frequented the sketching grounds of the Orient, like New Zealand artists favouring the immediacy of working *en plein air*. For the Australian artists, however, an added impetus came in the form of two works purchased for the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Etienne Dinet's *The snake charmer*, 1889, [fig. 82] and Edward Poynter's *The visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon*, purchased in 1890 and 1892 respectively. Public response to the works was largely favourable and Tom Roberts, one of the first artists of the 'Impressionist' Heidelberg School to travel to the Orient, commented after viewing Dinet's work in the gallery:

It is a peep into the East itself – and every figure and head impresses with its truth and character. There is a certain apparently haphazard arrangement, which at first strikes one as a defect, but looking from it to a lot of neighboring works in which there is certainly 'composition', it is curious how trite they look, and we come back to this Eastern piece, as from a dull common room to a brilliant open air, with a sense of freshness and healthfulness.²⁶¹

Interestingly though, it was not subjects in the vein of the snake charmer that the Australian artists depicted. Like their New Zealander counterparts, they depicted the mosques, street vendors and the bazaars, as well as also showing a penchant for processions and women in Muslim dress. Arthur Streeton, Hilda Rix Nicholas and Ethel Carrick, in particular drew on the colourful spectacle of the market and its

²⁶¹ Ursula Prunster, "From Empire's End: Australians as Orientalists, 1880-1920," in Benjamin, *Orientalism*, p. 44

figures. Streeton, based in Cairo for several weeks in 1897, wrote of the Egyptian market:

T'is a wonderful land this Egypt; I've been time after time through the slipper, brass and bronze, jewellery, perfume, silks, ring, curio bazaars – and yesterday with another artists I did a quick sketch of a spice bazaar' and the alley was choc-a-block all the time...All are orientals here – Arabs and Copts with many a grand old face. Princely looking chaps a few of them....²⁶²

Streeton's *The Spice Bazaar* was shown at the 1898 exhibition of the Art Society of New South Wales and his interest in the different figure types he witnessed is evident in a series of three street vendors also exhibited there. Rather than a condensed scene of the mass of the market, in *Street Scene, Cairo, 1897*, [fig. 83] Streeton carefully selects a few key motifs in order to create a typical view of the city in a realist manner. The archway frames a tableau of two turbaned figures, conversing in front of a cluttered pottery stall. They are vividly dressed in bright green and cobalt blue robes, forming a contrast with the understated ochre tones of the pottery and buildings. In the distance is the approaching crowd as they make their way past stalls and shops under covered archways.

Of the second wave of Heidelberg School artists to paint in the Orient, two of its female artists, in particular, were attracted to the marketplace. Hilda Rix Nicholas and Ethel Carrick were both attracted to the vibrant display of the market, its vivid colour, costume and atmosphere. Like Hodgkins, Rix Nicholas, was staying at a hotel near the Grand Soko at Tangier and was also drawn to this bubbling sea of humanity that could be witnessed there. Rix Nicholas wrote to a friend from Tangier that the market was 'so much like an extraordinary beautiful dream that [she was] afraid to wake up in the morning and find it all gone.'²⁶³ In *Arab Marketplace, Morocco, 1914*, [fig. 84] Rix Nicholas focuses on the decorative element of the costume and milling throng of market goers. The foreground is empty and the mass of figures is squashed into the middle of the picture plane, emphasising the swelling crowd. A few seated female figures are identifiable in the front of the crowd, surrounded by a blur of orange produce. The other figures are anonymous – merely a sea of form in light garments, sprinkled with accents of colour throughout. Rix Nicholas often worked from a

²⁶² Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 47

²⁶³ Hilda Rix Nicholas to a friend, Tangier, 5 February 1912, quoted Benjamin, *Orientalism*, p. 141

composite of sketches in order to capture a sense of the movement of the crowd, as her 'game' were frequently on the move and impossible to catch for a prolonged stretch of time. The work is bathed in a golden glow, from the sandy foreground, to the figures' garments to the highlighted buildings in the background. Rix Nicholas's sister, Elsie Rix admired the work's 'perfect shimmer' and the 'feeling of the heat making the colours vibrate.'²⁶⁴

Carrick shows the same interest in capturing a sense of the movement of the crowd and atmosphere of the market and harsh light conditions of the Maghreb. *North African Market*, c.1921, [fig. 85] was painted in Kairouan, Tunisia, during Carrick's second trip to North Africa, the same region of the Maghreb painted by Maud Sherwood. The composition is split diagonally. The upper part is bathed in strong white light, which is reflected off the white walls of the buildings and highlights the colourful milling crowd and covered market stalls in the wide street. In the shadows of the bottom section is a colourful stall of fruit and vegetables. Against the harsh white building, a scatter of colour is provided through the robes and fez of the figures below. For many Australian artists, the harsh light of the Orient reminded them of similar light conditions to be found in parts of Australia, and in this they were different from their New Zealand counterparts. Ursula Prunster has maintained that working in the Maghreb and Egypt had a significant impact on their future careers as artists. It offered the freedom to experiment stylistically and the setting for some of their most adventurous and decorative works, as well as providing them with the tools with which tackle the visual conditions of Australia.²⁶⁵ Conversely, they also had the advantage of being familiar with depicting the arid conditions found in Australian desert areas.²⁶⁶

It could be argued that working in the Orient also had a significant impact on the work of some of the New Zealand expatriates. Maude Burge's Orientalist works could be considered some of the more interesting in her oeuvre. While Maud Sherwood was always something of a colourist, Suzanne Sherwood suggests that after her Oriental exploration, her colouring was more intense and she produced some of her more

²⁶⁴ Elsie Rix to her mother, Tangier, 1914, quoted in *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ Prunster, in *Ibid.*, pp. 45, 52

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 52

stylistically bold works.²⁶⁷ She also points to a significant contribution made by Maud Sherwood to the Australian art scene in the manner of her depiction of Oriental subjects, in particular her intimate views of life in the Maghrebian marketplaces and streets.²⁶⁸ A period working in the sunny and vividly colourful climes of Egypt and North Africa also stimulated a brighter palette in the cases of Owen Merton and John Weeks. Moreover, in Weeks' case, it provided the catalyst to explore the new modernist imagery he had acquired during his Cubist training in Paris. Frances Hodgkins also referred to a change in technique with her Oriental-inspired works. Referring to her first painting to be hung 'on line' at the Royal Academy, she wrote to her mother: '...the one on line is a ¾ length figure of an arab girl more elaborate & more highly finished than my usual work.'²⁶⁹ While still working within an Impressionist idiom, Hodgkins' Moroccan works are more accomplished images and finished to a higher degree, and in part this could be a result of the fact that she generally reduced the number of figures in her work.²⁷⁰ Her more vibrant colouring was a clear response to the environment of the Maghreb and its produce. This more highly-worked style is also evident in two 'Moroccan' works completed when Hodgkins was back in New Zealand, *Ayesha*, 1904, and *Orange Sellers, Tangier*, 1905. The former work, submitted for exhibition at the Otago Art Society received glowing praise from the reviewer for the *Otago Witness*:

The two large figure studies forwarded by Miss Hodgkins show an advance in many respects on even her previous excellent work, and they stand quite by themselves in this department alike as to type of subject and broad, successful treatment. Miss Hodgkins's use of water-colours as a medium is unusually vigorous, and colouring has been always one of her strong points as an artists. The first of the pictures referred to is entitled "Ayesha," and depicts a little more than the half-length figure of a maiden of the Oriental type and raiment, and some brilliant yet exceedingly effective and harmonious colouring has been worked into the background, drapery, and the complexion of the lady, while the subtle piquant expression of the girl's features adds not a little to the general suggestiveness and success of the picture....²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ Suzanne Bronwyn Sherwood, "The Contribution of Maud Sherwood to the Sydney Art Scene", p. 20

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 1 May 1903, in Gill, p. 164

²⁷⁰ Frances Hodgkins to Dorothy Richmond, 23 March 1903, p. 160. Hodgkins commented that '...the subjects fascinate me – & don't demand many figures....'

²⁷¹ "The Art Society's Exhibition. Among the Pictures," *Otago Witness*, 9 November 1904, p. 81

Frances Hodgkins' success at the Royal Academy also indicates another point of commonality between the New Zealand and Australian 'Orientalists', namely the favourable response their Orientalist works received, both at home and abroad. The Royal Academy's acceptance of Hodgkins' Moroccan work indicates that there was a market for Orientalist works at the turn of the century in London. Likewise Hilda Rix Nicholas's Moroccan works found favour with critics in Paris during the next decade, with one critic describing her as 'an Orientalist and an impressionist by natural vocation and by love of light.'²⁷² Both artists made an impact on their respective art establishments back home in the Antipodes. When Rix Nicholas's work was exhibited in Sydney in 1919 her contemporary, the Post-Impressionist artist Grace Cossington Smith, enthused:

There has been a very stunning exhibition here, which created quite a furore...I went to see it three or four times and any other picture seems very dull after seeing these...very coloured – scenes of Morocco – and people, dresses – all sunny – but the most astonishing thing was the life in them, the people really had expressions, not just a painted thing, it was the real person.²⁷³

Frances Hodgkins' Orientalist work found favour with the New Zealand public on her return to New Zealand, and had in fact already had a receptive audience willing to think positively of the work. Hodgkins' stalwart supporter, Dorothy Kate Richmond, all but promised to like the work. 'You write in the same style as you paint, with brilliant patches of colour and any amount of snap and go, your descriptions of the Moors, and the oranges and the onions made my mouth water, so will your pictures when I see them.'²⁷⁴ The second version of *The Orange Sellers, Tangier* was well received and was presented to the National Art Gallery by the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts. The critic for the *Evening Post* had this to say about the work:

"The Orange Sellers" (F. M. Hodgkins) [sic]. is...a very pleasing specimen of this artist's work – rich in colour and light, broad in style, and though very bright in tints and contrasts, yet well harmonised. The figures of the fruit vendors are naturally grouped, and there is a touch of genius in the movement

²⁷² Quoted by Prunster, in Benjamin, *Orientalism: Delacroix to Klee*, p. 50

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 51

²⁷⁴ Dorothy Kate Richmond to Frances Hodgkins, 18 January 1903, Eric H. McCormick transcripts, quoted in Drayton, p. 22.

It is tempting to see something of Hodgkins' Orientalising influence in Richmond's *Potato Peelers*, 1905, with its crouching figure and stream of produce.

of the fruit-seller, who is whispering to his companion. This is a good specimen of this artist's work and style — the spirit of the country and the people is faithfully presented.²⁷⁵

This success of the work continued on the favourable reception that Hodgkins' Moroccan work had received when first exhibited in New Zealand and illustrated well the market for Orientalist work in the antipodes:

Miss Frances Hodgkins, a New Zealand artist who lately had a picture hung in the Paris Salon, [sic.] is exhibiting several water-colour studies of Algerian life [sic.] at the English Fine Art Society's rooms...running through her studies there is undoubtedly a certain amount of originality of treatment...“The Orange-Seller, Tangien [sic.] Market,” one of Miss Hodgkins' largest sketches, had breadth and richness of colour.²⁷⁶

Owen Merton's early Oriental scenes were praised for their ‘dazzling colours’ and after a further trip to the South of France and Algiers in 1923-25, critics were again finding favour with his latter style. Comments made by the critic for the *Evening Post* were suggestive of work in the vein of *Moroccan Market*, commenting ‘...he has been able to make much of the high lights and sunshine of those parts of the world. In his work he makes full use of the white of the paper he paints on. There are large spaces on which he has not placed his brush, but they are wonderfully significant.’²⁷⁷ Maud Sherwood's Tunisian market works also found favour in Australia, both on their first exhibition in 1928 and twenty years later when exhibited again at the Moreton Galleries in Brisbane. The Brisbane press praised them for their figurative skill and colour and light effects, commending the ‘splendid characterisation and gorgeous colour...vigorously caught in “Chili Market At Tunis,”’ and further stating that ‘this is a vital joyous thing of patterning and arrangement and reveals the artist's pleasure in painting light and rich accessories.’²⁷⁸

The sympathetic reception to the Orientalist works of the expatriates suggests a New Zealand public ready to embrace this rather downplayed version of the exotic. Although the prevalence of artists and, in particular, Australian artists travelling to the

²⁷⁵ “Academy of Fine Arts,” *Evening Post*, 19 October 1905, p. 5

²⁷⁶ “A New Zealand Artist,” *Star*, 2 September 1903, p. 2

²⁷⁷ “A New Zealand Artist: Landscape and Impressionism,” *Evening Post*, 11 August 1925, p. 10

²⁷⁸ “One-Woman Exhibition,” James, Wieneke, *Brisbane Telegraph*, 10 May 1950, unpaginated article, Maud Sherwood artist files, Te Aka Matua Research Library, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

Orient has led Ruth Zubans to suggest that ‘by 1911 a trip to the Near East was no longer an exotic event,’²⁷⁹ this could not be applied to either New Zealand artists or their audience. While the majority of New Zealand’s first-generation colonials had come from England or other parts of the United Kingdom, it is highly unlikely that many could claim to have traversed the African continent. Therefore the expatriates’ New Zealand public would have drawn their views of the Orient from romantic novels of the Rudyard Kipling or Arabian Nights type or other common preconceptions of the uncivilised state of the Maghreb and Egypt. The images of these regions that the expatriates presented struck a chord with viewers, as they presented an image of a sunny and vibrant land, pulsating with energy, colour and people – very different from life at home. The darkened skins, colourful robes, and crouching figures conjured up biblical images. The works were also praised for their artistic technique; the colour harmonies, patterning and decorative elements all appealed to the art public and critics alike and attempts at characterisation and faithfully reproducing the people of the Maghreb also were extolled.

Norman Garstin had made this warning for artists contemplating North Africa as a sketching ground:

...when he [sic.] goes to the East he is apt to mistake the freshness of his surroundings for something fresh and striking in itself, forgetting that it is only fresh to him, and the original treatment of a rag-fair in the East end of London would be more interesting than the commonplace rendering of harems and bazaars in the gorgeous east of the world. But given that you come with perceptions that are fresh and individual you cannot help being charmed with what you see in a place like Tangier.²⁸⁰

Perhaps in the final analysis, the success of the expatriates’ depiction of the Oriental market lies in their ‘freshness’ of approach and ‘original treatment.’ While the subject of the souk or bazaar was by no means new, the light, colourful and Impressionist treatment that the New Zealand expatriates generally gave it resulted in works that were new, vibrant and fascinating to their colonial audience. This is confirmed by the Wellington *Post* critic’s description of *The Onion-Seller, Tangier* as ‘rich and soft in

²⁷⁹ Quoted by Prunster in Benjamin, *Orientalism*, p. 48

²⁸⁰ Garstin, p. 177

colouring, and delicate in drawing.’²⁸¹ For the New Zealand audience these works did in fact convey some of the ‘charm’ of the Orient, in particular, its colour, light and vibrancy. The choice of a subject so pivotal to Maghrebian and Egyptian culture, namely that of the market, allowed the New Zealand expatriate artists to depict the essence of its existence and capture a typical slice of life. By eschewing subjects which would prove overly bizarre and unusual for their Antipodean audience in favour of such an everyday happening in the Maghreb, the expatriates were presenting a view of the Orient that was credible. They created scenes of life that audiences would feel that they, too, could witness were they to travel there. Considering the relatively short periods of time that the New Zealand artists spent in Africa, (with the exception of Weeks) the impact that the experience had on their work was great indeed. After only a few short months in Morocco, the impression the country left on Frances Hodgkins was marked and on leaving Tangier for good she wrote that ‘it was a great wrench & uprooting saying goodbye to that dear country...and all that remains of Morocco for me is in my portfolio precious shreds & remnants that must suffice....’²⁸² It was to be hoped, perhaps, that such ‘remnants’ would leave a similar impression on their audience.

²⁸¹ *Post*, 24 February 1904, p. 11, quoted in McCormick, *Works of Frances Hodgkins*, p. 70

²⁸² Frances Hodgkins to Rachel Hodgkins, 19 April, 1903, in Gill, p. 164

Conclusion

This investigation has highlighted a distinctive approach to the depiction of the marketplace by New Zealand expatriate artists during the period 1900-1939. In their choice of subject the expatriates were working within a well-established theme. However, the market works of the New Zealand expatriates could not be further removed from those of their Dutch and Flemish predecessors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The expatriates' market scenes are animated and colourful interpretations, focusing on the inhabitants of the market. The darkened palette, realist treatment and static mass of produce favoured by the Dutch and Flemish painters was replaced by scenes that were vigorous in their use of colour and light effects and expressive in their brushwork. This was a definite response to the vibrant atmosphere of the market, with its clamour, movement and pulsating mass of people.

A comparison between the New Zealand artists and their contemporaries also highlights a different approach towards the depiction of the subject. While expatriates working in the sketching grounds and artists' colonies of England and Europe shared in the quest to capture the pre-modern and picturesque aspects of rural and fishing villages, their stylistic treatment differed considerably. There were several reasons for this difference. First and foremost, it was the exploration of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist styles which provided the New Zealand expatriate artists with the pictorial language in which to capture the essence of the market and their impressions of these scenes. This in itself resulted in representations of the market that were different from, for example, the realist works of the Newlyn School. The Newlyn artists instilled in their works a sense of pathos at a declining existence. While New Zealand expatriates drew on traditional elements of dress and lifestyle, at the same time they sought to exploit the colourful displays and ambience of the market. The prevalent tastes of New Zealand audiences also determined their approach. The nostalgic longing felt for the 'old world' by New Zealand's colonials ensured that it was picturesque, slice-of-life, continental scenes that appealed to them.

The potential of the subject was reflected in the enthusiasm the expatriates showed towards the subject, succinctly summed up by Maud Sherwood's wish 'that every day was a market day.' The works in this study illustrate well the diverse treatment of the

market theme by New Zealand expatriate artists, both stylistically and thematically. A comparison of Robert Procter's Roman market scenes with Frances Hodgkins' French ones, or Sydney Lough Thompson's Breton markets with John Weeks' Oriental markets, demonstrates the great variance that exists within this body of works. Frances Hodgkins and Maud Sherwood's images of female market vendors and customers, with their dynamics of communication and socialisation, also offered a fresh approach to the theme. As well as being different from more traditional representations of market vendors, their works also differed from their New Zealand male counterparts. They present a realistic view of the life of market women, based on close observations and imbued with touches of the picturesque. The analysis of the expatriates' images of the markets of North Africa and Egypt has also revealed a distinctive interpretation. Rather than overly exotic, sexually-charged, violent or ornate work, common characteristics of a nineteenth-century Orientalist idiom, the expatriates again focused on the picturesque, with an added sense of 'other'.

This research has demonstrated that for New Zealand artists working abroad in the early twentieth century, the depiction of the marketplace offered a means of expression in which to experiment stylistically, as well as the opportunity to cement their success as professional artists with their New Zealand public. The critical reception of this body of works, both at the time of their creation and in ensuing years, reveals much about changing artistic tastes. That the early market works of Europe and North Africa found favour among the New Zealand public and critics alike reveals that at the time of their creation, the preference was for the anecdotal and the picturesque. It was precisely these traits that resulted in this early experimental work being overshadowed by later more *avant-garde* work. Half a century after their creation, Frances Hodgkins' biographer, E. H. McCormick dismissed such work as being 'much of a muchness.' Into the 1960s and 70s, writers such as Colin McCahon and Gil Docking considered early overseas sketches, including those of market stalls, as the sign of a commonplace artist. However, by considering these market works within the context of the time in which they were made, this study has increased our understanding of their significance within of the oeuvres of New Zealand artists and demonstrated why the marketplace became a subject of compelling interest.

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Illustrations, pages 127-155, available in the print copy of this thesis.