

Exhibition overview

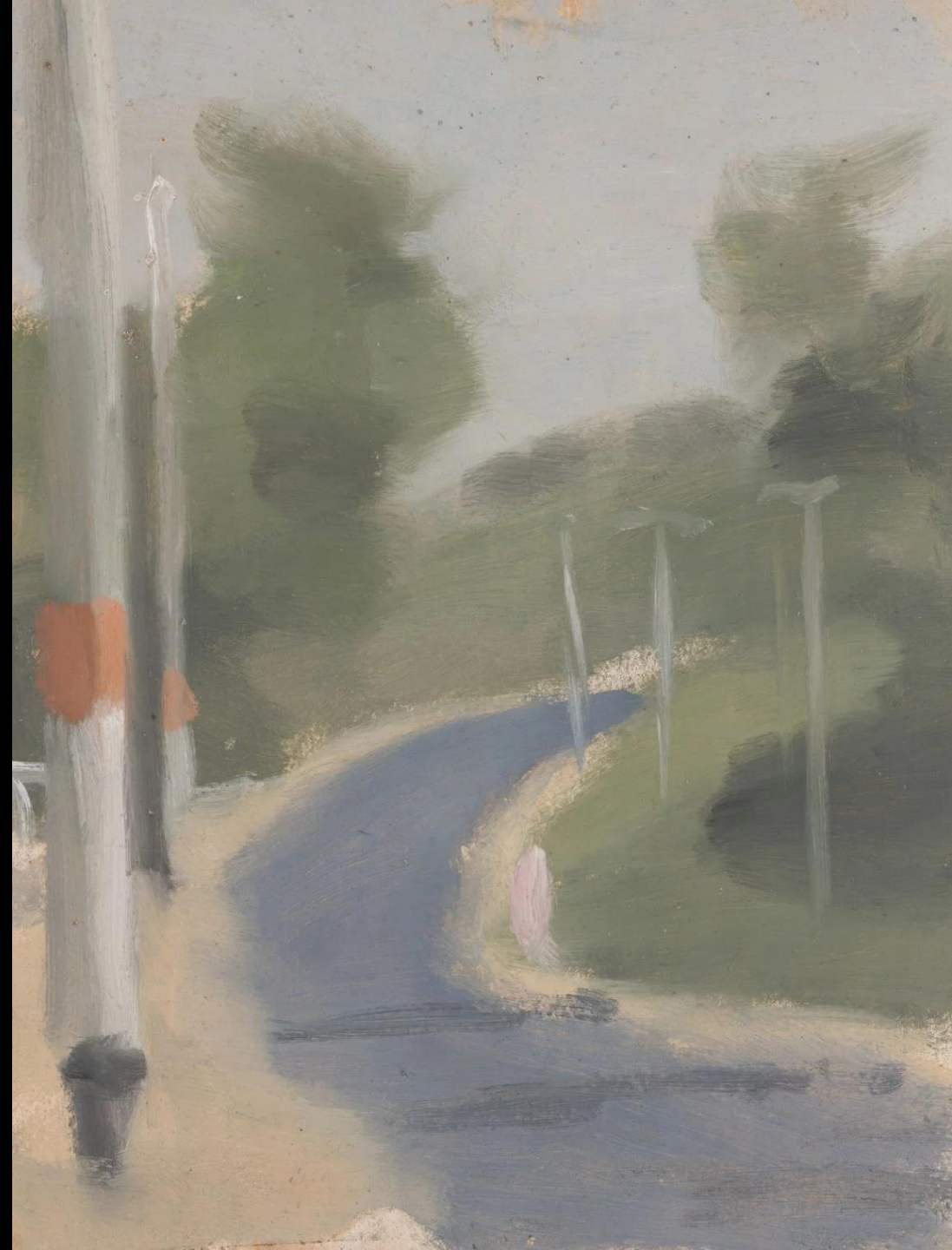
Deeply sensitive to the effects of colour, light and atmosphere, Clarice Beckett was among the most original artists of early twentieth century Australia. The National Gallery was the first Australian gallery to purchase Beckett's work, its inaugural director James Mollison acquiring eight paintings from the artist's first posthumous exhibition in 1971. In recognition of this appreciation for Beckett's artistic talent, her sister, Hilda Mangan, donated a group of paintings to the National Gallery the following year. It is this collection of intimate works that are on view for the first time, their freshness and vitality recently restored by extensive conservation treatment.

Clarice Beckett painted the everyday life and scenery of Naarm/Melbourne and surrounds with an eye for the overlooked, commonplace and fleeting. Her works captured a world on the cusp of modernisation, evoking both the natural environment and simple pleasures of suburban existence, with a uniquely pared back sensibility. This group of paintings illustrates Beckett's subtle and revelatory style, in which she employs nuanced tonal relationships and an idiosyncratic perception of space to create representations of the world as she saw and experienced it.

Clarice Beckett: Paintings from the National Collection is a Know My Name project and National Gallery Touring Exhibition supported by the Australian Government through Visions of Australia.



Clarice Beckett
Not titled (Road with telegraph poles), (detail) c 1932
National Gallery of Australia, Kamberri/Canberra
gift of Mrs Hilda Mangan 1972



About the artist

Clarice Beckett was among the most original artists of early twentieth century Australia. Deeply sensitive to the effects of colour, light and atmosphere, she painted the life and scenery of her coastal home in south-east Naarm/Melbourne with an eye for the commonplace and fleeting. Her work captured a world on the cusp of modernisation, evoking both the natural environment and simple pleasures of suburbia.

Despite spending her entire life in the state of Victoria, Beckett engaged with the wider creative world through her interests in the visual arts, literature, music, and belief systems including Spiritualism and Theosophy. While her painting was contemporaneously appreciated in some circles, its significance in the public consciousness diminished after her premature death in 1935. The quiet strength of her art, however, and its relationship to international forms of modernism, began to be better appreciated following the efforts of gallerist Rosalind Hollinrake and feminist art historians including Janine Burke from the 1970s.

The National Gallery was the first Australian public gallery to purchase Beckett's work, with inaugural director James Mollison acquiring eight paintings from her 1971 posthumous exhibition. In recognition of this, Beckett's sister, Hilda Mangan, donated a group of paintings to the National Gallery in 1972. Following extensive conservation treatment, this collection of works is now displayed for the first time alongside a selection of the gallery's first acquisitions.



Clarice Beckett painting in the garden of her Beaumaris home.
From Rosalind Hollinrake,
The Artist and her circle,
Melbourne: Macmillan, 1979.



About the Curators

Elsbeth Pitt

Senior Curator, Australian Art

Elsbeth Pitt is Senior Curator, Australian Art, at the National Gallery of Australia, Kamberri/Canberra. She specialises in modern and contemporary art, including performance, conceptualism and visual poetry. She has held curatorial, honorary research and academic roles at the Australian National University, University of Adelaide, Art Gallery of South Australia, British Museum and Victoria & Albert Museum.

Deirdre Cannon

Associate Curator, Australian Art

Deirdre Cannon is Assistant Curator, Australian Art at the National Gallery and is co-curator of the *Know My Name: Australian Women Artists* and *Clarice Beckett: paintings from the national collection* travelling exhibitions. Recent and forthcoming projects include *Making it Modern* (2023), *A Sun Dance* (2024), *Lindy Lee* (2024) and *Cézanne to Giacometti: Highlights from Museum Berggruen / Neue National Galerie* (2025). Prior to joining the National Gallery Deirdre held curatorial roles in regional and commercial galleries, where she delivered exhibitions locally and overseas.



Tour information

Medium & format

23 framed paintings on board with four unframed works in two showcases.

Size

Approximately 30 lineal metres

Inclusions

Dedicated project manager, installation support, education resources, digital content, imagery and assets, marketing and communications support, programming support, labels, logos and wall text.

Exhibition fee

\$6,500 (ex. GST)



Clarice Beckett
Sandringham Beach, (detail) c 1933,
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
purchased 1971



Dates & Venues

Tour available

From June 2025

Itinerary

Art Gallery of Ballarat, VIC 24 Aug – 24 Nov 2024

Orange Regional Gallery, NSW 6 Dec 2024 – 9 Mar 2025

Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, TAS 19 Apr – 25 May 2025



Clarice Beckett
Bay Road, (detail) 1930
National Gallery of Australia,
Kamberri/Canberra
purchased 1971



Apply now

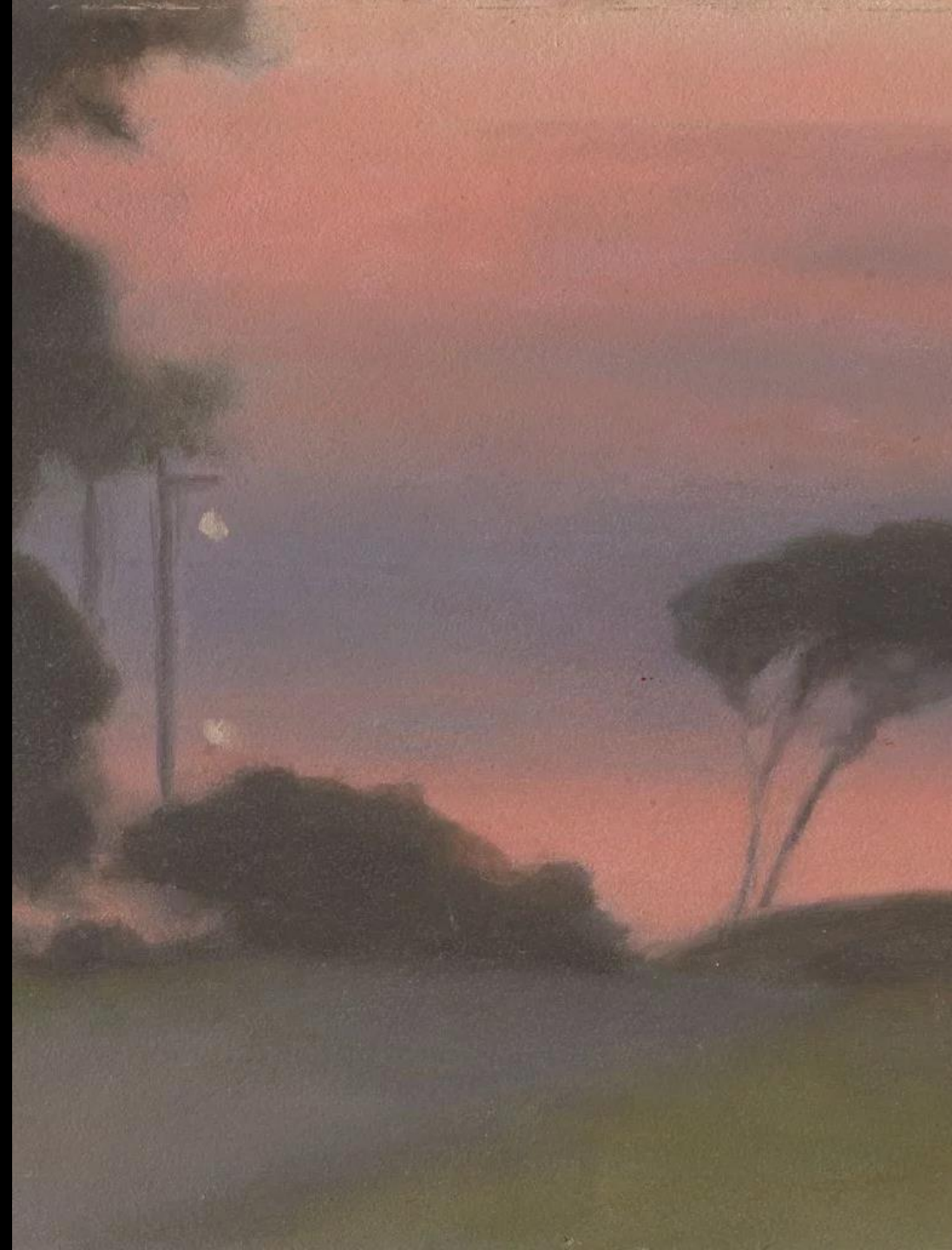
Apply to host this touring exhibition by completing and submitting this [form](#).

Questions?

For more information, please email touringexhibitions@nga.gov.au



Clarice Beckett
Evening landscape, (detail) c 1925
National Gallery of Australia, Kamberrri/Canberra
purchased 1974





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