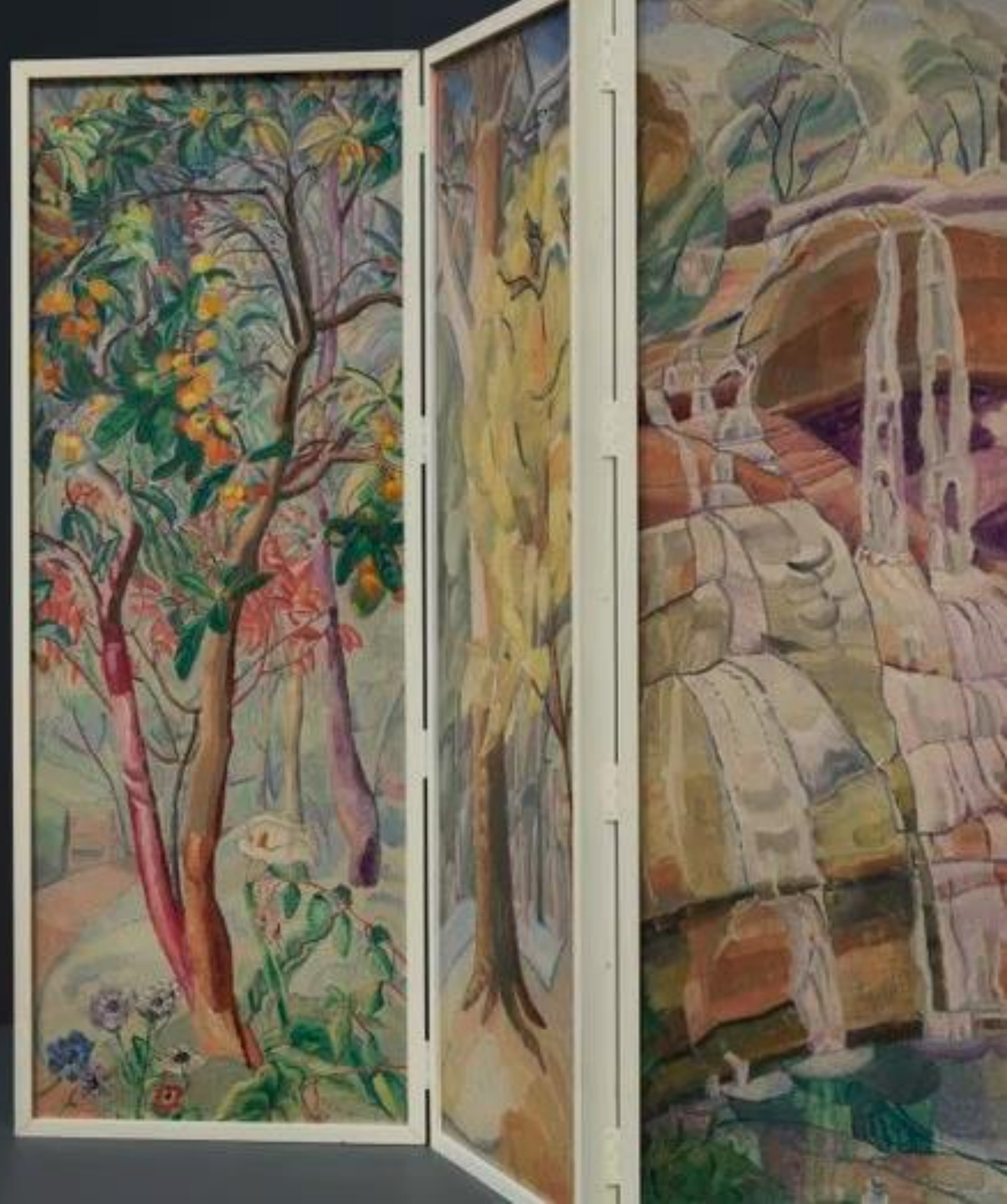


Grace Cossington Smith



Exhibition overview

Grace Cossington Smith presents insights into the art and working methods of one of Australia's most significant and beloved modernists. This exhibition explores intersections between private and public sites through a selection of the Gallery's remarkable holdings of Cossington Smith's sketchbooks and paintings.

Within the sketchbooks, we discover her keen drawing abilities and experimentations with colour: from finely rendered sketches of familial scenes, household objects and interiors; to lively pages of pastel, coloured pencil and watercolour tests; through to documenting her travels to England and Europe. The depth of material allows us to gain insight into her artistic practice, life and character.

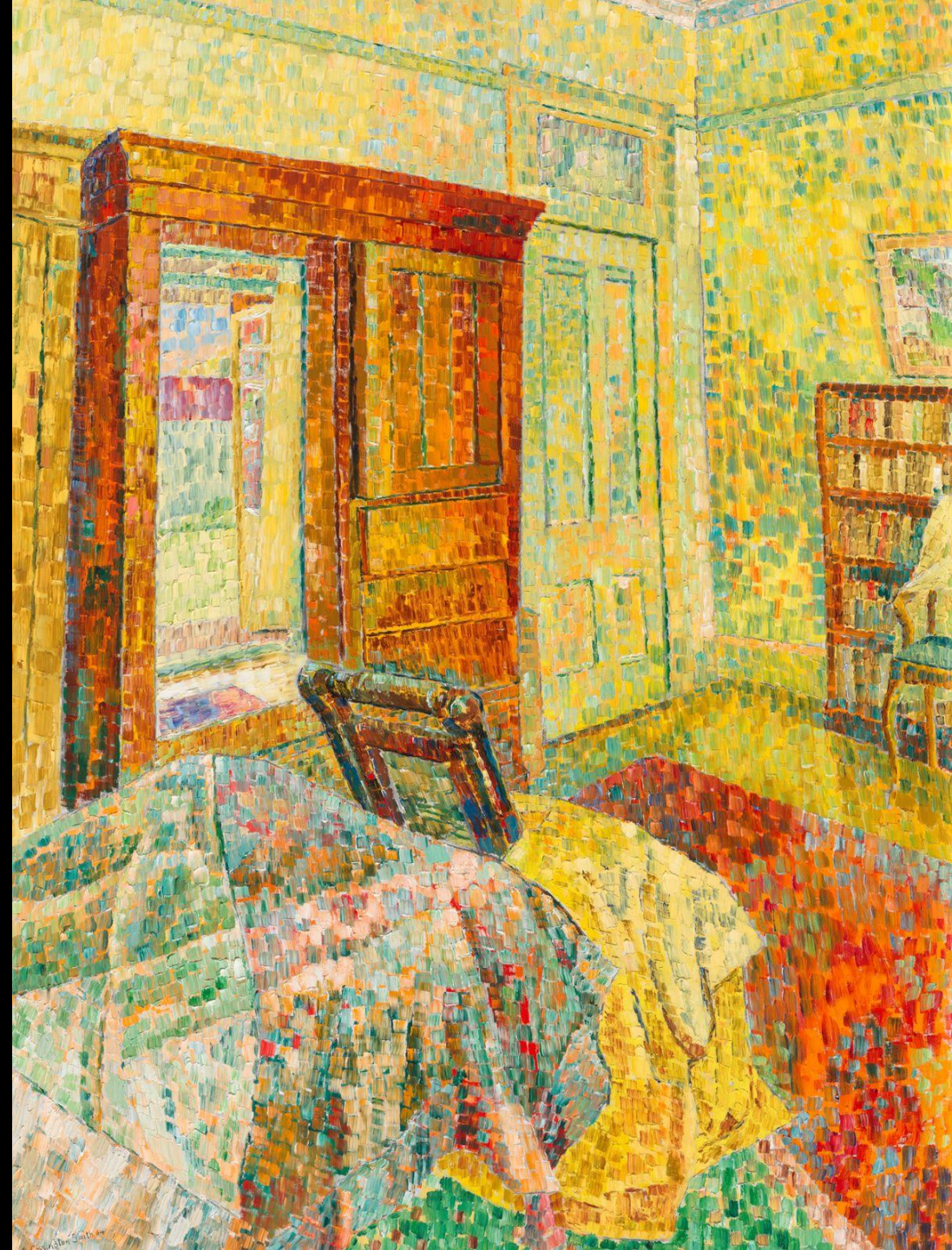
These focussed works will be complemented by some of Cossington Smith's most important paintings from the national collection, including *Study of a head: Self-portrait* (1916), *The Bridge in building* (1929) and *Interior in yellow* (1962–64).

Available

From February 2027



Grace Cossington Smith
Interior in yellow, 1962-64
National Gallery of Australia, Kamberri/Canberra
purchased 1965

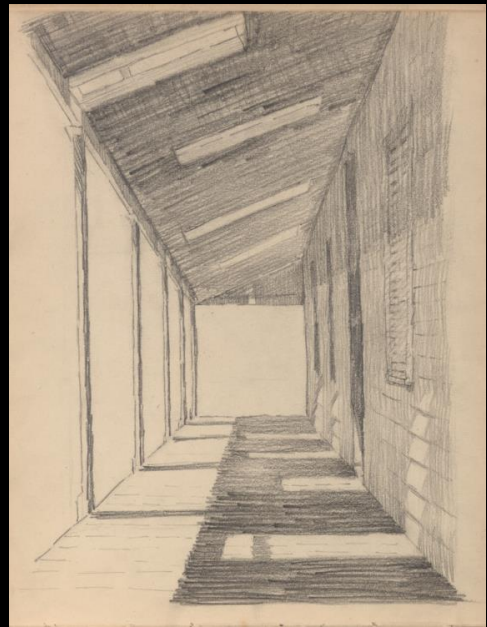




Colour tests c. 1927



The "garage" – it was an old stable',
Cossington, Turramurra' c. 1923, in Sketchbook
[12] People, scenes and a religious theme.
Australia, 1924, 1930-1931 and 1952



'Verandah of Church Cottage, Bowral' 1911, in
Sketchbook [11] of gardens, houses, interiors, flowers
and animals. Australia, 1911



not titled [Figures on footbridge above road with horse-drawn
vehicles] between 1923 and 1928



The Bridge from Crane Place, Bellevue Hill 1937 or 1938

“All form – landscape, interiors, still life, flowers, animals, people – has an inarticulate grace and beauty; painting to me is expressing this form in colour – colour vibrant with light – but containing this other, silent quality which is unconscious, and belongs to all things created.”

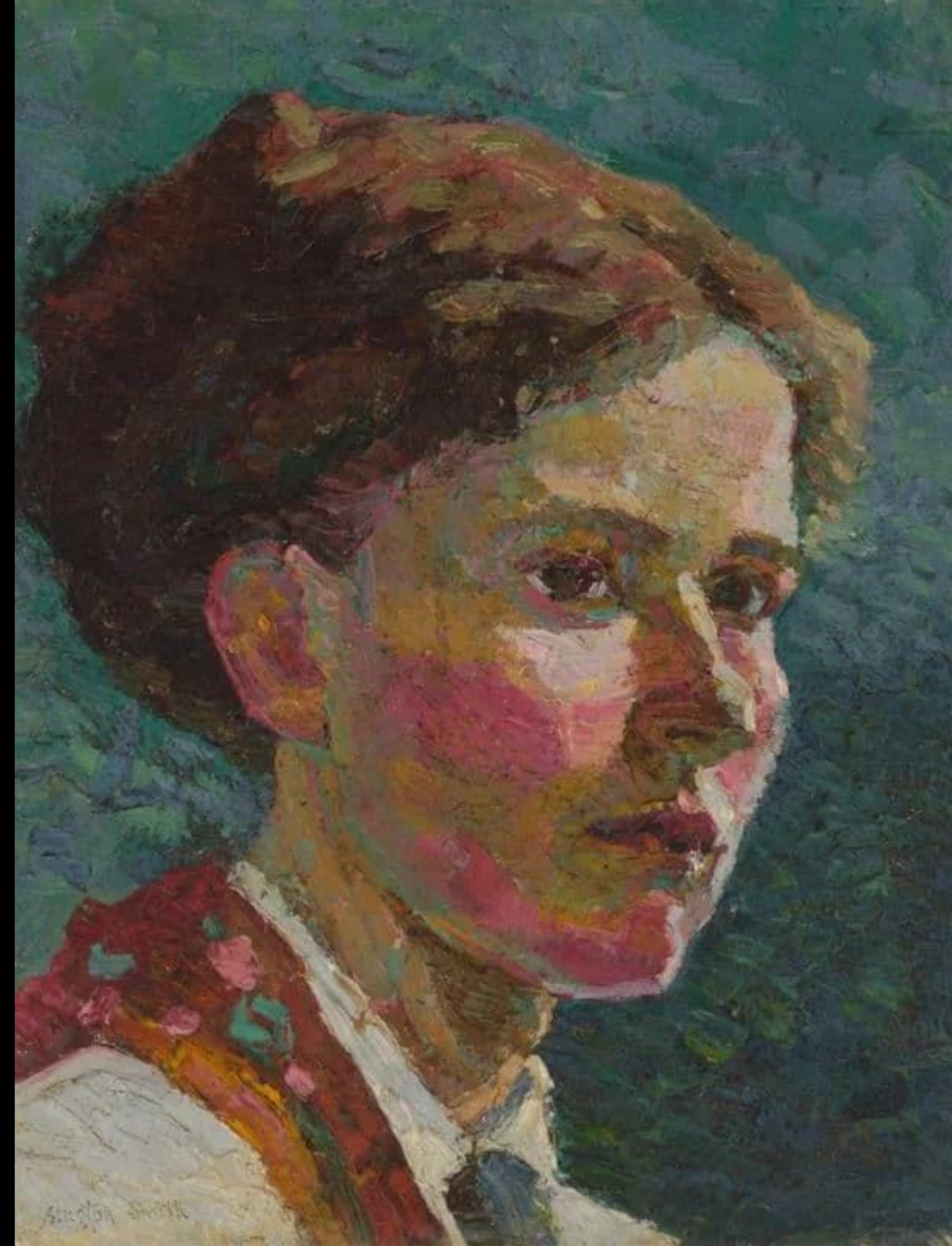
– Grace Cossington Smith

About the artist

Grace Cossington Smith (1892–1984) was a key figure in early expressions of Modernism in Australia. Her art is informed by her keen interest in European and British Post-Impressionism. A brilliant colourist, she famously noted: 'My chief interest ... has always been colour, but ... it must be colour within colour, it has to shine, light must be in it.'

Over a large part of her artistic career, between 1910 and the early 1950s, Grace Cossington Smith filled 51 sketchbooks with nearly 1400 drawings. Drawing for Cossington Smith was a highly prized medium and embedded in her practice. In fact, during her first two years in art school she did not paint, later reflecting 'because I was so set, you see, on drawing. I loved drawing.'

Even as she transitioned into painting, drawing continued to be significant for Cossington Smith to capture and plan her compositions. Held at the National Gallery of Australia in its entirety, Cossington Smith's corpus of sketchbooks tells a valuable part of her story as an artist.



Grace Cossington Smith
Study of a head: self-portrait, 1916,
National Gallery of Australia, Kamberrri/Canberra
purchased with funds from the Marie and Vida Breckenridge bequest 2010

About the Curators

Deborah Hart **Head Curator, Australian Art**

Dr Deborah Hart is a widely published art historian who has written several acclaimed monographs. Commencing her career as an education officer at the Queensland Art Gallery (now QAGOMA), she has worked across a wide range of contexts, including for state and regional galleries and as guest curator on projects nationally and internationally. Since her appointment at the Gallery as a Senior Curator in 2000, Hart has curated numerous exhibitions, including *Joy Hester and friends*; *Grace Cossington Smith: a retrospective*; *Andy and Oz: parallel visions* (shown at the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh); *Fred Williams: infinite horizons* and *Hugh Ramsay*. She was also a co-curator of significant shows such as *Know My Name: Australian Women Artists 1900 to Now*; *Jeffrey Smart and Know My Name: Making it Modern*. Hart has recommended key works for acquisition into the national collection, including by Cossington Smith.

Alice Rezende **Curatorial Assistant, Australian Art**

Alice Rezende is an emerging curator and researcher. Previously, she held the role of Assistant Curator at the Meanjin/Brisbane arts organisation Outer Space, as well as working as a Registration Assistant at QAGOMA. She curated Outer Space's first public art exhibition, *Location, Location, Location* (2021-22), and its subsequent digital projection program until early 2023. In support of the National Gallery's *Know My Name: Making it Modern* exhibition 2023, Alice researched and published new scholarship on Grace Cossington Smith's sketchbook annotations.



Express interest

As this touring exhibition is currently in development, you can share your thoughts and express your interest in hosting it at your venue via this [form](#).

Questions?

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



Grace Cossington Smith
The Bridge in building, 1929,
National Gallery of Australia, Kamberri/Canberra
Gift of Ellen Waugh 2005





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