


BOOK REVIEW

LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS OF NEW ZEALAND: A JOURNEY FROM NORTH TO SOUTH

Christopher Johnstone

Godwit Publishing, 2006

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This book is about landscape paintings of New Zealand. It explains the history of it. The book contains one hundred thirty- five paintings from early colonial art to the work of the latest contemporary painters of New Zealand. There are well-known artists like Colin McCahon, Peter Siddell, Dick Frizzell, Doris Lusk, Rita Angus, John Gully, and lots of more new names from New Zealand like Archibald Nicholl, Max Walker, Cedric Savage and Politico Mac Diarmid. In each part of the book, a new painter is mentioned with his or her biography, artistic style and samples of their works. Each painter helped to shape painting art of New Zealand up to now.

It is an academic book for everybody, especially those interested in painting in New Zealand. It shows New Zealand art history through painters and painting samples with words and thoughts of all of the artists written about in the book by themselves. Moreover, it gives the psychology behind an artist's response to the land and an interweaving history by new information on the art and New Zealand culture. It also presents the social, cultural, historical aspects of New Zealand through art. Johnstone is searching hardships first artists experienced in actually reflecting the landscape, and how the Depression and war years meant many artists continued to use watercolours while quality canvases and paper proved hard to obtain in the book.

Furthermore, the book says before British colonization started in 1840, nomadic artists had travelled to New Zealand sea shorelines and recorded their impressions in sketches to take home. Artists surveyed their country, recording its features, locating land appropriate for agreement and inspiring emigration. Often those works had been despatched lower back to Britain as exposure approximately to New Zealand.

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The book also explains that travel, unique cultures and exclusive lands attracted different artists to New Zealand. As Britain has become greater business and urban, a few human beings followed nostalgia emotions for locations untouched with the financial modifications of the time. Faraway New Zealand, and mainly its mountains, attracted new people. These journeys or wandering artists recorded what they noticed and frequently published books about their observations and experiences. According to their observations, they also explain how they produced their paintings in the book. Besides, we learn that New Zealand fashion of portraying started to emerge in the 1930s and 40s. There has been a growing call for by critics like James Shelley (1884–1961) and A.R.D. Fairburn (1904–57) for painters to pay extra interest to neighbourhood subjects. What advanced become a New Zealand fashion of regionalism this is characterized through a preoccupation with region and neighbourhood identity in the country.

The book continues with a panorama tradition that means most artwork produced in nineteenth and early twentieth-century New Zealand had been landscaped. The primary purpose became now no longer always to create works of artwork; however, as an alternative to offer records approximately the locations depicted.

Lastly, the book summarizes travelling, and settler artists added to New Zealand European theories and practices and superimposed those at the New Zealand panorama. Well into the 20th century, artwork made in New Zealand became slightly awesome from that of Europe simplest the problem relies of human beings and area differed. Furthermore, paintings are composed of factors touching on primary categories in New Zealand like topographical, the romantic or sublime, picturesque, and the ideal. The book is a journey on New Zealand painting from past to contemporary painters with famous and infamous painters with historical information of the development of New Zealand painting as well.

