From the collection

Described as “a woman of mettle and sparkling personality, with passionate intellectual and philosophical interests”, Gabrielle Hope had a career as a painter that lasted just two short decades.

Enrolling in classes at the Elam School of Fine Arts the day after her younger child began school in 1946, she said she chose watercolour as her medium because it dried quickly, meaning she could get her work cleared off the kitchen table before the family came home. Stylistically, her approach to painting wavered between Fauvism, Surrealism and Cubism before settling into a gestural Expressionist course.

Motifs and composition came from her surroundings. Absorbing lessons in paint from Frances Hodgkins, she loosened her brushwork and dissolved still life into landscape. Dreams surfaced in her work. She studied Chinese calligraphy, the Tao of painting, the poetry of W.B. Yeats, Buddhism and the mystic teachings of George Gurdjieff, and she went on painting excursions around Auckland with Robert Nettleton Field, Geoffrey Fairburn and Lincoln Lee.

By 1955, her work had been collected by the influential patron, Charles Brasch, and published by him in Landfall, as well as being acquired for public collections from the Auckland Society of Arts and from her dealer, Peter Webb.

Her inclusion in Colin McCahon’s nationally touring exhibition of five watercolour painters, which began at the Auckland Art Gallery in 1958, indicates how well-regarded her painting was in its time.

With her older friend, the painter Peggy Spicer, she set up camp at Mt Tauhara near Taupo, in 1962. Captured by the spectre of the dormant volcano – its Māori name translates as “lonely mountain” – which rises to a height of over a thousand metres on the eastern side of Lake Taupo, both artists painted many versions of the subject. Milled in the early twentieth century, Mt Tauhara’s second generation forest cover of kanuka, kamahi and broken fern had been regenerating until a disastrous fire wiped out the regrowth.

This devastation is recorded here in one of the artist’s last works, with a palette of Burnt Sienna, Burnt Umber and Lamp Black used to reveal the structure and colour of the volcanic landscape.

It has been suggested that Gabrielle Hope’s early death at the age of 46 years has led to her becoming one of the most unjustly neglected painters of her generation.

This work is included in the exhibition Lyric Watercolours: Gabrielle Hope (1916-1962) which will be on display at the Gus Fisher Gallery until 7 April.

Linda Tyler

Gabrielle Hope, Mount Tauhara after fire, 1962
Gouache on paper, 440 x 565mm
The University of Auckland Art Collection.

Book brings together huge team

Entitled Ngā Kaupapa Here: Connections and Contradictions in Education, this book was published by CENGAGE Learning and edited by four of the faculty staff: Dr Vicki Carpenter, Dr Jace Jesson, Associate Professor Peter Roberts and Dr Maxine Stephenson (all from the School of Critical Studies in Education).

"This book," said John Langley, "contributes to the process of nationhood, our understanding of each other, who we are, what we are and what we stand for."

Head of School, Dr Airini, in introducing the speakers for the evening, spoke of the considerable effort required to bring together such a huge team. She gave tribute not only to the editors but also to the contributors, many of whom were drawn from within the Faculty of Education. Chapters were also contributed by academics from Bristol, Monash, and Massey Universities, and Eastern Institute of Technology.

Guest speaker was Emeritus Professor Ivan Snook, former Dean of Education at Massey University. He discussed chapter content, and signalled the importance of the book, and the teacher education courses the book is intended to inform.

Ngā Kaupapa Here encourages students and practising teachers to analyse and critique the political and professional contexts that impact on their work and on students’ learning.

Its comprehensive text provides students with a contemporary and historical view of the relationship between educators, teachers and the state. It addresses questions of class, culture, ethnicity and gender. Contributors examine local and global influences on education in New Zealand, and show that social and economic trends affect the nature and direction of educational change. They also focus on the history of education, deeper philosophical and sociological questions, and theory-informed teacher practice.

Unique to this publication is the chapter written in Te Reo. This chapter explores the economic and political dimensions of education in indigenous cultures.