



Joan Eardley
Technical Art
History

Joan Eardley - Provenance, Display and Varnishes

Introduction

In this work placement, the study traced the provenance of the paintings in the exhibition from when Joan Eardley painted them either in Glasgow or Catterline. The paintings were thought to have varnish that shouldn't be there. So the aim is to trace back if the artist, conservators, dealers or owners applied varnishes or coatings at any stage.

Use of varnish in modern paintings

The study tried to read through previous technical examination reports and archival provenance research to get a clearer understanding of how Eardley intended these paintings to appear will be gained and will inform future interpretation and display of her works. For an artist in the 20th century, it is a common thing that rejects varnish on their paintings like other impressionism and modernism artists. Some previous visual studies also proved that Joan Eardley also did not use varnish frequently.



Technical examination of Joan Eardley's paintings

The result of technical examinations conducted by Amy Johnstone shows that unusual/uneven varnishes were detected on some of Joan Eardley's paintings surfaces. Joan Eardley's relatives and some historians think that the coating was not done by Joan herself, which means the varnishing was probably added by owners or during the conservation process in the gallery.

Tracing the provenance of Joan Eardley's paintings

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Girl with baby in blue (Pastel)

Purchased for £70 by Prof. Macfie Presented by Emeritus Professor A.L. Macfie

Glasgow Close (Oil Painting)

Purchased £45 by Macfie from Aikman Dost & Son

Acquired by donation from Macfie Exhibited in Hunterian Art Gallery

Salmon Net and The Sea (Oil Painting)

Purchased £20 by Macfie

Creating timelines and difficulties in tracing the provenance

Then timelines of each painting were created by the study to show the sequence of events that happened to her paintings. Most of her works have undergone at least four transactions, and some of her works have also been exhibited in different galleries. Some museums and institutions no longer exist or have been renamed, and most of the previous owners and conservators of works from half a century ago are also dead, which makes it extremely difficult to trace the conservation reports of works.