

**Frances Hodgkins (1869-1947)***Corfe Castle*

gouache on paper

signed and dated 'Frances Hodgkins 1942'

(lower left)

41.5 x 56cm

\$100,000 - \$160,000

## PROVENANCE

Mrs W J Turner, 1942

Redfern Gallery, London, England, c. 1955

Mr &amp; Mrs F H Corner, Wellington

Sale, Art + Object, The Collection of Frank

and Lyn Corner, 18 March 2018 (lot 67)

## EXHIBITED

London, Leicester Galleries, Exhibition of *Works by Artists of Fame & Promise*, August - September 1948, cat. no. 139. (original exhibition label to reverse)

London, St George's Gallery, *Homage to Frances Hodgkins*, 10 March - 14 April 1949 (original exhibition label to reverse)

Wellington, Kirkcaldie and Stains, *Frances Hodgkins: works from private collections* 1-21 August 1989, cat no. 42.

Wellington, *Manufacturing Meaning: the Victoria University of Wellington art collection in context*, 22 September 1999 - 31 January 2000

Waikanae, Mahara Gallery, *Frances Hodgkins: Kapiti Treasures*, 28 February - 2 May 2010

## LITERATURE

Janet Bayley, *Frances Hodgkins - Kapiti Treasures* (Mahara Gallery 2010) p. 41.

Iain Buchanan, Michael Dunn, Elizabeth Eastmond, *Frances Hodgkins: Paintings and Drawings* (Auckland University Press 1994) p. 162.

The Complete Frances Hodgkins Database cat no. FH1213

*Corfe Castle* is one of a group of gouaches painted during 1942 and 1943 inspired by Corfe Castle, Dorset where Hodgkins was based for most of the duration of the Second World War. Probably exhibited with other similarly titled works in an exhibition at Lefevre Galleries, London in March 1943. As was usual Hodgkins mined the area on her doorstep using any objects, buildings or forms which attracted her, altered and manipulated them to suit her particular vision and created a visual treat of shapes and colours with great verve and originality. The use of gouache encouraged a lighter palette with an abundant use of white in particular which helps to take the viewer into a dreamy, fantastic world. The presentation is in the English Neo Romantic vein reminiscent of the work of John Piper. This approach became more intense during the war years – almost as a reaction to the resulting privations and strictures inflicted on her and her valued friends and family.

In this image Hodgkins uses motifs and objects such as the Castle itself and her studio in an approach which is both complex and mysterious though the results are superbly balanced. Some motifs and objects are at times only just discernible and never completely defined. There is a delicious ebb and flow of brushwork anchored in a stable composition which is balanced in terms of colour, form and shape from which Hodgkins weaves an organic unity. The dominant structure of the old barn is not permitted to do so because it is surrounded by a host of other equally interesting shapes and forms – Corfe Castle itself appearing in the background. The title of work teases the viewer into searching for it. *Corfe Castle* is one of the gems from this period and demonstrates Hodgkins undiminished powers even in this last decade of her life. She retained the ability to surprise and delight - the eye is constantly active finding something new and intriguing to contemplate.

Tony Mackle

