

The Scotsman

Obituary: Anne McGregor Scott, artist



Anne Scott, artist known for her colourful nature paintings and unusual dolls. Picture: Contributed

Born: November 1919, in Edinburgh. Died: 15 September, 2015, in Dunbar, East Lothian, aged 95.

Anne Scott was an artist based in the Scottish Borders and painting under her maiden name of Anne Carrick. She was well known for her bold, colourful oil paintings, mainly of flower compositions, and of the Scottish countryside both of which gave her immense joy. She was also and perhaps more so known for her talent in making unique scaled-down, minutely detailed, historical figures she called her “dolls”.

Anne was born in Edinburgh, a second daughter to sculptor Alexander Carrick and his wife Jenny. She attended the Mary Erskine School for Girls where she excelled at art and enjoyed English and history.

On leaving school, she spent a year abroad with a family in Switzerland, where she became fluent in French and enjoyed skiing and skating.

She continued her education at the Edinburgh College of Art, where her father was the then head of sculpture, and after gaining her diploma, went on to study theatre in Northampton for two years. She got her first job as wardrobe mistress at Perth Theatre, where she was able to build on her love for the theatre and costume.

During the war she toured with the Perth Theatre around the Scottish west coast and islands, entertaining the troops stationed there.

From a very young age Anne was interested in costume, and as a child she would make dolls so that she could dress them in the clothes she had made. She was undoubtedly influenced by her grandmother, a dressmaker from Orkney, and her father's skills as a sculptor. She developed her own method for making her dolls, resulting in the unique, detailed works of art that are known and admired today.

It was at the art college that she met a postgraduate student Donald Scott and, in 1943, while Donald was home on leave, that they were married at the Carricks' home in Midlem in the Scottish Borders. After the war Donald joined her in Perth, where he worked as a set designer, also at Perth Theatre.

Anne and Donald both wanted to set up their own craft workshop and studio and after a lot of searching eventually found a suitable building in Melrose, which they converted to a house, a studio and art gallery. The Pendstead was established and was to be the family home and workplace for 30 years. She

loved her garden, where the flowers were a real pleasure to her as well as being the inspiration to so many of her fabulous flower paintings.

In 1979 Anne and Donald found a Georgian house in Kelso which they fell in love with, mainly for its wonderful setting overlooking the Tweed and the large terraced garden with potential to create something special.

This they did, and Walton Hall became a very special home, complete with studio, gallery and garden, where they lived and worked happily for more than 20 years. Anne moved into Lammermuir House care home in Dunbar for the last three years of her life. She never lost her good nature, her sense of fun and her familiar, welcoming smile.

During her life she must have made more than 2,000 dolls, a remarkable achievement in itself, but particularly so when at the same time she was painting, running a household and bringing up a family.

She always maintained that she could never have done this without the help and support she received from her husband Donald. Along with some of Donald's tapestries, there is a magnificent collection of Anne's dolls portraying scenes from the Border Ballads on display in Smailholm Tower and a further collection is on display in Melrose abbey.

In the 1950s Anne and Donald became founding members of the Scottish Crafts Centre in Edinburgh, a group of craftsmen and women who joined together to support one another and to promote and sell their own particular crafts. She was also an active member of the Scottish Costume Society.

Anne was a prolific painter and from leaving art college until she was well into her 80s she created an astonishing number of paintings, which reflected her love of flowers and of the Scottish countryside.

Anne would exhibit regularly, very often with her fellow Border artists in exhibitions at home or in local galleries and also in the annual Women

Artists show in the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh, where her bold paintings could well match those of her contemporaries.

Anne led an extremely busy, and a very creative and productive life, and of course a very happy one. She gave her children and her grand and great-grandchildren a wonderful and inspirational start in their lives, giving endless encouragement throughout.

Anne leaves behind a wonderful legacy in her dolls and paintings, which have been and will continue to be admired for a long time to come.

She is survived by four children, ten grandchildren and ten great grandchildren.