

Attachment C: Robert Field background supplied by Applicant (City Life Developments Ltd)

Robert N. Field (1899 - 1987) came to New Zealand in 1925 having received five years' training at Bromley and other Schools of Art in England, and a further five years' at the Royal College of Art. He gained the Diploma of the Royal College of Art in both painting and sculpture. His work included portraits and landscapes as well as modelling and carving. Field worked as an art teacher at the Dunedin Technical College. The significance of Field's sculpture and painting was first publicly stated by Christchurch art critic James Shelley in 1928. Field made his most widely reviewed impact on the contemporary art scene as a guest exhibitor with *The Group* in Christchurch in 1931, when critics found his experimental paintings and sculpture the most challenging part of the show. As a result of seeing such paintings as 'Christ at the well of Samaria' and 'Miss Kelsey', Tossill Woollaston resolved to become Field's student and found Dunedin under Field's leadership in 1932 the most artistically enlightened city in New Zealand.

In 1945 Field finally received due recognition of his outstanding qualifications and gained the opportunity to develop pottery more fully as an art form in schools. He moved to Auckland with his family to become head of the Art Department at Avondale College and there created the first ceramic training centre in New Zealand. His pupils constituted a new generation of leading potters including Barry Brickell, Len Castle, Patricia Perrin and Peter Stichbury.

Field was also an influential teacher of Colin McCahon who was especially interested in Field's idea of finding one's 'direction' as an artist and once wrote "The painter's life to me was exemplified by the life and work of R.N. Field" and Field's paintings were described by Toss Woollaston in glowing terms "His pictures, brilliant and heady, were painted with jewel like, full-sized brush strokes, or with rainbow-like spots and scales of pure paint shimmering on unpainted backgrounds of wood or canvas."

Field continued painting and sculpting in his retirement in 1960 and until his death (at his King Edward Ave, Epsom home) on 18 February 1987.

Field's achievements as an artist were somewhat overlooked during the latter half of his life, partly because many of his best works remained in private collections. However, a resurgence of interest since the early 1980s has seen him generally recognised as a vital conveyor of modern European ideas on art and art education to New Zealand.

Source: Dictionary of New Zealand: <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4f10/field-robert-nettleton>

Examples of Robert Field's works can be found in the Auckland Art Gallery, Te Papa, The Christchurch Art Gallery, the Dunedin Art Gallery and the Hockin Library, Dunedin. His sculpture of Christ can be found above the entry to the Anglican Cathedral in Parnell.



Sculpture above west entrance to Holy Trinity Cathedral Parnell.