

KATHARINE EMMA MALTWOOD
ARTIST
1878-1961

Rosemary Alicia Brown

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The Thatch, Royal Oak, B.C.
exterior view

The Thatch, Royal Oak, B.C.
great hall



The Thatch, Royal Oak, B.C.
great hall



VII

Retirement Life in Victoria

In the gracious comfort of “The Thatch” the Maltwoods settled down to quietly live out the remainder of their lives. Katharine Maltwood enjoyed inviting local friends to tea, showing off her art treasures and explaining her discovery of the Somerset Zodiac. In addition, she was keen to continue her own artistic pursuits. For this purpose a north upper “studio room” was added to “The Thatch”, recreating the artist’s beloved retreat, the west tower of Chilton Priority. In this new workshop she produced several small sculptural pieces and experimented with local materials.

One of the first was *The Hand of God* which commemorated George VI’s words “put your hand into the hand of God” in the Christmas Day speech of 1939. The clasped hands were modelled from those of Katharine Maltwood’s god-daughter, Diana Holland, and emerge from an archaic, temple like form.” Alabaster was one of her favourite mediums due to its translucent qualities and this work was carved from that of a local quarry at Falkland.⁷⁴ It appears the sculptress also brought some alabaster with her from England. This was used in the shallow relief portrait, *Vivat Rex*, a profile of King George VI set off by shafts of sunlight.

Katharine Maltwood was naturally interested in the art and culture of the northwest coast Indians. A small alabaster, *Indian Head*, dates from her early years in Victoria. This interest may also be the source of inspiration of *The Fox Dance*, a small relief carved in black slate from the Queen Charlotte Islands. The rough carvings of a primitive head and face show her experiments with soapstone as a possible mode of expression. Being now in her sixties, she had not the same strength in her hands as when younger as the modified technique of her Victoria works reveal. They tend to be smaller in scale, with fairly shallow carving and a preference for softer stones that allowed her to use her wood-carving tools.

During these years she turned increasingly to landscape sketching. The Maltwoods were particularly fond of country retreats. They purchased a small cottage at Cowichan Bay and also “Treetops”, a property covering a high promontary in Cordova Bay, which they wished to preserve in its natural state. Here Katharine Maltwood loved to walk and sketch, being captivated by the views across the Strait of Georgia to the Coast Mountains of British Columbia,

to the San Juan Islands with Mount Baker beyond, or south to the Olympic Mountains of Washington. Her pastel sketch series, *Treetops*, is filled with snow-capped peaks, standing silent and stark, beyond calm coastal waters. She sought to capture the dramatic atmospheric effects, the opaque reflections and the ever changing light, often giving a mystical, otherworldly impression. Colour was used sparingly; misty greys and blues are favoured highlighted with a suggestion of yellow, green or red.

In contrast her tree studies are ablaze with rich fall colours, radiating with an inexplicable interior light that suggests her knowledge of Emily Carr’s work. The forms are drawn sculpturally as though twisting with energy and movement. Katharine Maltwood’s absorbing interest in the changing seasons and the rhythms of life made the arbutus tree especially intriguing. Among her forest interiors the arbutus predominates in burning colours and romantically noble forms such as “Victory for the Arbutus” and “Mists clothe the arbutus stems in Enchantments.”

That her sculptures were as much concerned with the essence of nature as her landscape sketches is displayed in two unusual mountain scenes where an archaic head emerges from the face of a mountain. The features resemble precisely those of her alabaster carving, *Indian Head*. In her vision of this primitive face, moulded as if asleep for eternity in the rock, she implies the ultimate unity of all creation.

The sketch books present an interesting reflection of Katharine Maltwood’s feelings towards nature. She was inspired by the vastness, solitude and crystalline purity of the rugged British Columbia landscape. Her knowledge of Oriental thought and Theosophy gave her a deep sensitivity to nature’s power and moral virtues. She believed that nature revealed the laws of God and, like the character Brynhild Ingmar, sought spiritual fulfilment through immersion in the vital forces of the land. Out in the wilds it seems she had a feeling of exaltation and freedom of the senses; a pantheistic identity of spirit with nature and the universe.

In addition to sketching and absorbing the beauties of the local environment, Katharine Maltwood patronized several well-known landscape artists working in the Province. Their works, among the Maltwood art treasures, are a further indication of the artist’s empathy with her new surroundings. She was

especially drawn to the work of Emily Carr in its close involvement with the land and interest in the esoteric meaning of Indian art. Katharine Maltwood occasionally visited Emily Carr at her studio or at summer sketching locations in the environs of Victoria. It was in this period, 1938-42, that the two Emily Carr's in the Maltwood Collection were purchased. Both are in the thinned down oil on paper sketching technique Carr developed in the early 1930's. *Windswept Trees* is a rough sketch with loose brushwork and free flowing colours. The swirling organic forms are full of energy and intense with the spirit of nature. *Chill Day in June*,⁷⁵ a more fully finished work, shows the dense blue-green forests of the West Coast set beyond the reeling airy images of single trees in a logger's clearing. The sky is particularly dramatic, pulsating with a hallucinatory, cool white heat. Throughout sweeping rhythmic lines suggest the infinite depths of nature.

By the 1930's Emily Carr had given up her Indian themes and turned deep into the land itself to search life's rhythms. "Painting was her way of worshipping God. She equated movement with spirit and among the cedars and on the beaches of Southern Vancouver Island, she found such animation that her paintings rock and sway in joyous celebration."⁷⁶ It was this search to reveal glimpses of the inner life of natural forms and her intense realization of the fundamental unity of all life that made Emily Carr's work so appealing to Katharine Maltwood.

Through her interest in local artists she also came to know and appreciate the work of W. P. Weston, a painter noted for his strong and direct interpretation of the British Columbia landscape. Trained in London, William Percy Weston came to Vancouver in 1909 to fill the position of art teacher at the King Edward High School. He soon became involved in what little artistic life there was in Vancouver, exhibiting with the B.C. Society of Fine Arts which he joined in 1910. In 1914 Weston moved to the new Provincial Normal School where he taught until his retirement in 1946. His early works were essentially conservative and owed much to the English Romantic landscape tradition. However, he soon realized the Canadian landscape demanded a new strength and vigour to express "its epic quality, its grandeur, its natural beauty."⁷⁷ By the 1920's he began to capture the vital forces of nature in a new linear, spatial and decorative style. Compositions were simplified, detail was reduced, and solidly moulded and sculpted forms were introduced. This strong sense of design in his mature style was influenced by the motifs of Art Nouveau, more contemporary Art Deco trends and Japanese pattern.

Katharine Maltwood acquired two works by Weston

dating from the period after his retirement when the range of his sketching trips had broadened to include the Okanagan Valley, the Kootenays and the Yukon. In *Arbutus Tree*, from 1947, a single clawing tree spreads out in rich glowing tones above a cool blue sea and faint mountain skyline beyond. With a linear decorative design and bold clarity of form he creates a striking image of coastal trees. Five years later the landscape *Slocan Lake, Cascade Mountains near Denver, B.C.*⁷⁸ was purchased. The lofty mountains, depicted in icy luminous tones, show Weston's reverence for "the overwhelming preponderance of nature" which he felt so outscaled the human element.⁷⁹ He was particularly fond of studying the sculptural forms and snow patterns of mountains peaks and would often use binoculars to help him clearly define the terrain.⁸⁰ Although not interested in the theosophy of his contemporaries, Weston's direct manner successfully captured the rugged splendour and the awesome lonely spirit of the Province's scenery.

The Maltwood Collection also contains two watercolours by Charles John Collings which, procured in London in 1918, further indicate the early date of the couple's links with Canada. Originally from Devon, Collings worked for twenty years in a solicitor's office before deciding to pursue art more seriously. The turning point in his career was marked by the friendship and influence of Frank Brangwyn. In the early 1900's Collings began exhibiting landscapes in the London galleries where he won praise for a similarity in style to Turner's work. He disliked the comparison and sought to escape the interference of critics and the influence of other artists by withdrawing from city life. This led to his self-chosen exile to Shuswap Lake in British Columbia in 1910, where he found a peace and solitude well suited to his temperament. He kept to himself and rarely exhibited with the Vancouver and Victoria art societies, preferring to sell largely through the Carroll Gallery in London. Here his dramatic paintings of the uninhabited regions of the Rockies were hailed as outstanding and his romantic retirement from the scenes of civilization won him the title "Recluse of the Rockies."⁸¹

Among his most treasured possessions was a fine collection of Oriental paintings and woodcuts. These appear to have influenced his style which shows a feeling for design and colour that subtly blends the Japanese school and English landscape traditions. As a member of the English Alpine Club and an ardent climber he was also able to capture unusually spectacular aspects of the mountain terrain in British Columbia.



Indian Head held by Katharine Emma Maltwood

M964.1.450-19
Treetops Sketch
by Katharine Emma Maltwood



M964.1.366
The Hand of God
by Katharine Emma Maltwood

M964.1.110
Windswept Trees
by Emily Carr



The paintings acquired by the Maltwoods are a good example of Collings' method of interpreting rather than realistically portraying what he saw. In *Nearing the Glacier* the landscape is delicately expressed in opaque pools of wash. He uses no standard perspective or sense of mass and space and little detail. With forms related to nature and only a few colours he creates "an ambience revealing that there is much behind and beyond the ordinary vision."⁸² The other work, *Mountain Stream in Winter*,⁸³ displays Collings' distinguished sense of colour and instinct for decorative pattern. The technique he used involved paper soaked in water and laid on glass or cork to remain moist. He then mixed the colours directly on the paper; a method which freed his imagination and left little time for hampering details.

Collings always reacted with great emotional intensity to the grandeur of his surroundings. Yet although ascetic and austere in spirit, from primeval forests, frozen lakes and mountains towering to the sky, he created works delicate and light in quality. He was described by London critics as having an Olympian detachment and as possessing a mystical understanding of the earth force, attributes Katharine Maltwood would undoubtedly have appreciated.

In addition to patronizing local artists the English sculptress soon became well acquainted with several very active members of the Victoria art scene. Among her closest friends were Ina Uhthoff and Hildegard Wyllie, both of whom made a major contribution to the development of the arts in Victoria and were particularly forceful in the drive to establish a city art gallery. She shared their concern to win a more sympathetic understanding towards the visual arts and to encourage the talents of younger artists.

In her deep dedication to art Ina D. D. Uhthoff possessed an outspoken enthusiasm and stamina that Katharine Maltwood greatly respected. Their friendship in particular brought the latter into close contact with Victoria's artistic community and its endeavours. Ina Uhthoff's career spans an era of critical awakening in the Victoria art scene. She had received her formal art training at the Glasgow School of Art under the instruction of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Maurice Grieffenhagen. When she settled in Victoria in 1926 she found the artistic environment conservative to say the least. Other than Emily Carr's work, painting had changed little since the Edwardian era and there was a serious lack of public interest in the visual arts. Mrs. Uhthoff proceeded to open an art school and studio on Wharf Street and later, in 1929 and 1930, joined with Emily Carr to sponsor classes given by the American artist Mark Tobey.

The quality of Ina Uhthoff's teaching soon became well-known and her classes eventually led to the formation of the Victoria School of Art in 1937 under the direction of the Provincial Department of Education.⁸⁴ The school prospered but due to the Second World War Mrs. Uhthoff was forced to return to private teaching, an activity she continued until 1951.

During this time Ina Uhthoff was also instrumental in the development of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.⁸⁵ In addition her columns of art criticism appeared in the *Daily Colonist* for many years and as a member of the British Columbia Society of Artists she exhibited regularly at the Vancouver Art Gallery.⁸⁶

Ina Uhthoff's work reflects the great technical versatility of her teaching. She produced some very fine portraits and a long series of landscapes which capture the moods and rhythms of her physical surroundings. Her watercolour and oil impressions of the West Coast often possess a silent, bleak and powerful atmosphere suggesting primeval nature. This can be seen in *Mount Temple*,⁸⁷ an oil painting, the Maltwoods selected in 1942. Here rugged and angular mountains are boldly carved in a free palette-knife technique. Using pure colours and little medium the cool, icy blues of the mountain heights are skillfully set off by a splash of orange and red undergrowth far below. *Mountain Shadows*, a later watercolour in the Maltwood Collection, is more abstract in conception. Simple, lucid washes, in varying tones of blue, are used to create the stark monumental forms. Although Katharine Maltwood had little time for abstract art she admired the dramatic impression of soaring height and otherworldly solitude suggested in this severe and reduced style.

Katharine Maltwood's friendship with Hildegard Wyllie, as with Ina Uhthoff, was one of mutual admiration. Hildegard Wyllie came from a social background similar to her own. She was born in London into a great family of painters and her artistic outlook was largely formed by her upbringing on the Richmond estate. Her grandfather was Sir William Richmond, R. A., and her great-grandfather George Richmond, R. A., was a well known portrait-painter who formed a group with Samuel Palmer, Edward Calvert and other William Blake devotees.⁸⁸ She was thus absorbed in art from an early age and as a child received a gift of two watercolours from John Ruskin, the great apostle of Arts and Crafts Movement.⁸⁹

When Mrs. Wyllie settled in Vancouver and later Victoria she became very active in art circles both as a painter and in the fight to establish a city art gallery. In 1951 she served a term as president

of the Arts Centre of Greater Victoria and later worked as organizing secretary. Like Katharine Maltwood, she was particularly drawn to Oriental art as a great school of poetic interpretation. Her home in Saanich was called “Omeishan” meaning “Sacred Mountain”, and its character was enhanced by fine old paintings and art treasures.

Hildegard Wyllie was one of a number of Katharine Maltwood’s local friends who was interested in the Glastonbury Zodiac. On visiting Glastonbury in 1950 she thoroughly explored the effigies and wrote: “We are now situated at the point where Hercules’ foot touches the ram’s head.”⁹⁰ She also painted an oil sketch of the mysterious Glastonbury Tor which, towering six hundred feet out of the marshes, was identified with the celebrated Island of Avalon and the Phoenix of the Zodiac. The work, now among the Maltwood paintings, is traditional in style like the majority of Hildegard Wyllie’s landscapes.

Together with Ina Uhthoff and Mrs. Wyllie, Katharine Maltwood supported the Island Arts and Crafts Society. They were interested in Bessie Fitzgerald’s establishment of “The Wagon Wheel” in 1949, a fascinating craft store set up in an old barn at Prospect Lake. Three years later “The Quest for Handcrafts” was opened on Government Street in Victoria. These were the first all-Canadian handcraft shops in British Columbia. Here the pottery of Daisy Rebecca Swayne and Emily May Schofield was sold, both of whom Katharine Maltwood befriended.

Daisy Rebecca Swayne was the daughter of the Empire-famed architect Richard Roskell-Bayne, designer of Calcutta’s post office and a dozen similar public buildings. She studied under Ina Uhthoff and later went to Camberwell Art School in London to specialize in pottery.⁹¹ Both she and Emily Schofield, widow of Bishop Schofield, were very energetic in the Victoria Pottery Club and enjoyed experimenting in numerous glaze techniques. When Ina Uhthoff had taken over the Pottery School on Kingston Street, glazes were more or less restricted to the “Brown Betty” type and realism was widespread. She encouraged the making of glazes and tried to convince students pure form was something to be desired. As a result Rebecca Swayne and Mrs. Schofield went on to create some exquisite colours, a particular favourite being a subtle blue green shade they named “west wind”. In keeping with Ina Uhthoff and Katharine Maltwood’s taste, their bowls, pots and tiles show pure lines of shape, ornaments being naturally integrated with the design.

The local craft stores also sold the brushwork of Elizabeth Duer, Katharine Maltwood’s artist-cousin from Japan. A large number of her flower

and bird studies remain among the Maltwood treasures including a series of botanical paintings recording local flora and fauna throughout the seasons, commissioned by Katharine Maltwood in 1941. Delicate and intimate, they seem to breathe the freshness of life and reveal the latter’s sensitivity to the Oriental floral tradition and its ideals.

Elizabeth Duer was brought up and educated in the stately atmosphere and ritual of the Japanese Imperial Court. Her English father served as an adviser to the Emperor, while her mother, an amateur painter, was a member of a prominent Japanese family. Elizabeth Duer was honoured by receiving the art name of “Gyokushi” from her famous art teacher Gihoshi Atomi, painter for the Japanese Imperial family.⁹² In her style Madame Atomi and her pupils followed the School of Shijoha which was founded by Maryama Okyo in the eighteenth century. The latter was one of the first to break away from the old method of learning by copying a teacher’s work and instead advocated a direct contemplation of nature. Flower, bird and animal studies were a speciality and in the Japanese tradition of humility before nature such works became philosophical and poetic experiences.

After a grounding in Oriental art Elizabeth Duer turned to Western culture, studying oils, pastels, charcoal and watercolour at the Slade in London. Having absorbed a comprehensive curriculum she then returned to her favourite medium of expression, watercolour on silk in the Japanese fashion. At the outbreak of the Second World War, due to their pro-British sympathies, several members of the Duer family were interned in Japan. Elizabeth managed to escape and chose to join her cousin in Victoria.

Wild Flowers Around Victoria were ideal subjects for the interpretation of Elizabeth Duer style. They are executed in watercolour on silk and are delicately handled using the single stroke method with soft pure colours. The flowers are usually grouped as they grow together in nature and are elegantly arranged in a single spray or two with utmost care to detail, texture and balance. Works such as “Snowberry, Bramble and Wild Rose” display the artist’s subtle sense of colour and decorative design. In their meticulous observation of nature the long series naturally has a documentary character and yet is pervaded by a charming quality of delicate, transient reality.

Yet another aspect of Katharine Maltwood’s appreciation of nature is reflected in her friendship with Barbara Woodward, a fellow world traveller and well-known wild-life artist. After her initial training at Doncaster Art School Barbara Woodward began

exhibiting landscapes and animal studies at both English and French galleries. A desire to specialize in animal portraiture led her to study animal anatomy at London Zoo and she later became a Fellow of the Zoological Society in London.

Wishing to see wild nature ("the wilder the better," she said) Mrs. Woodward became an ardent traveller.⁹³ On safaris through the steamy heat of central Africa's jungle she sketched all manner of wild-life. The cat tribe were a particular favourite; she found them "slinking noble beasts, smooth and sinuous."⁹⁴ A tiger sketch in the Maltwood Collection reveals how she could swiftly capture the character of the beast. Barbara Woodward's exotic travels also drew her to the frozen reaches of Europe's Arctic wastelands. On trips to Iceland and Spitzbergen in Norway she painted arctic birds and bleak, icy landscapes. With the knowledge she gained from these travels she not only illustrated commercially but became a respected authority on wild-life, lecturing and writing on bird and animal behaviour.

After she and her husband settled at Royal Oak, Victoria, in 1935 she did little sketching, preferring to breed animals. When she resumed her career in commercial art, some ten years later, she received numerous commissions from the Provincial Museum and from both local and national firms. She painted the canvases of big game animals which decorated the Princess Patricia and the Princess Marguerite.⁹⁵ A pencil sketch of a stag given to Katharine Maltwood at this time reveals Barbara Woodward's drawing skill and expert knowledge of anatomy. It was this aspect of her work that the former particularly respected. She disliked modern abstractions, always preferring artists "trained in the hard school which considered anatomy, drawing, construction, composition and technique as essential as art."⁹⁶

In her involvement and patronage of local artists, Katharine Maltwood was not only seeking to encourage but continuing her personal quest for beauty and truth through art. Whether in the lonely dramatic mountains of C.J. Colling's, the intense forests of Emily Carr or Elizabeth Duer's intimate contemplation of flowers and wild life, it was the artist's search for spirituality that the English sculptress admired. In this respect the artist Stella Langdale, a great friend from the days of Katharine Maltwood's London studio, came closest of all in artistic spirit to her pantheistic outlook. Both their works are preoccupied with "moods of remoteness; either the ephemeral world of myth and fantasy, the spiritual or the calm, aloof dignity of nature its more sombre and majestic manifestations."⁹⁷

Born in Staines, Middlesex, Stella Langdale attended the school of art at Brighton for several years, followed by a period of study under Frank Newbury and Maurice Grieffenhagen at the Glasgow School of Art. This sound technical training allowed her to experiment in oils, watercolour, charcoal, pastels, etching techniques and sculpture. In inspiration she followed the sublime landscapes of the British Romantic tradition and the visionary works of William Blake, John Martin and Samuel Palmer. For subject matter Stella Langdale preferred to travel abroad wandering from place to place sketching and absorbing the history, poetic beauty and mystery of remote areas in North Africa, Italy and France. In this wanderlust and love of adventure she found a freedom and a different interpretation of life which is reflected in all her imaginative work.

Stella Langdale liked to use charcoal for drawing; seeing things in simple tone and mass. This led to her interest in the tonal possibilities of etching and aquatint which became her favourite medium after 1915.⁹⁸ In the next few years she produced a large number of small aquatint plates. Several were of Italian and African subjects while others were imaginative and musical such as *The Incarnation of the Snow*, *Moonlight Sonata*, *The Dream Garden* and *Nocturne*. The latter is among the Maltwood art treasures and shows a solitary statue set in a dark garden pond among sombre groups of cypresses. It is typical of Stella Langdale's fascination with atmospheric effects. The ghostly reflections, dusky shadows and silhouettes of moonlight are used to create a dreamy, mystical quality. As in the symbolism of James McNeill Whistler, her pictures frequently took musical forms — Sonata, Symphony, Harmony, Nocturne — translating the spiritual evocations of music into art.

Of Stella Langdale's desert themes, taken from her sojourns in North Africa, the Maltwoods purchased *Arab Tents of the Desert*, *Biskra*, *The Garden of Allah*. Silhouetted against a deep, star-lit, tropical night a few motionless figures stand with camels and tents amid a vast expanse of desert. In her diary Stella Langdale described the spectacular beauty of such desert evenings where sand hills "blossom like a rose" as the sun sets and how "suddenly the piercing cry of a muezzin breaks the extraordinary silence of the North African night, 'Allah is Allah' . . ." This last call to prayer at dusk explains her title in this piece, "The Garden of Allah".

Stella Langdale won her first public recognition in art as an illustrator of books. She was associated



M964.1.111
Chill Day in June
 by Emily Carr



M964.1.101
Slocan Lake, Cascade Mountains
 by W.P. Weston



M964.1.115
Nearing the Glacier,
 by C.J. Collings



M964.1.114
Mountain Stream in Winter
 by C.J. Collings

with the John Lane Publishing Co. and Dodd, Mead & Co. for nearly twenty five years producing drawings for Edmund John's *Symphonie Symbolique*, John Henry Newman's *Dream of Gerontius* and Stephen Phillips' *Christ in Hades*.⁹⁹ Her illustrations to the 1922 edition of Francis Thompson's *Hound of Heaven* were particularly praised for the way she captured the spirit of the poem putting "into concrete form the wonderful visions of the poet, without losing anything of the grandeur or vastness."¹⁰⁰ Francis Thompson's (1859-1907) mystical catholic philosophy was well suited to Stella's own moral preoccupations and melodramatic imagination. The drawings are dramatically dark and fantastic with a broad treatment of shadows and silhouettes. They show silent, veiled figures, great monolithic forms, star-lit skies streaming with light, figures diving through space or rising in swirling clouds and horse-drawn chariots struggling skyward from thundering sea-storms. As in the works of John Martin the settings are often vast, giving a sense of cosmic scale, and dwarfing humanity to insignificance. In all the awesome forces of nature are suggested expressing the poem's preoccupation with the intense energy of divine creation.

Several of the drawings show remarkable similarities to Katharine Maltwood's sculptural forms. The archaic qualities of *The Holy Grail* are recalled for instance, in the priestly figures of archangels illustrating "I shook the pillaring hours and pulled my life upon me." The Maltwoods acquired a charcoal drawing by Stella Langdale which is also notably close in style to these illuminations. Here a huge megalithic monument towers above a small group of pre-historic worshippers silhouetted far below in the evening sky. In its awe-inspiring, super-human air it is typical of the artist's apocalyptic visions of great ancient civilizations, shadowy and immense. Such dreams dominated her prose descriptions like that of "Lost Atlantis" where she writes: "It makes one think of pagan priests and astrologers consulting the stars, sacrifices and huge banquetting halls where harpists sang of death, love and battle, processions and wild music on conch shells. The distant roll of thunder echoes among the hills, the world grows dark, the sea rises, 'wine dark'. It is a cyclopaean saga."

As an artist Stella Langdale was always intensely preoccupied with the past. She imagined a vital and exciting era, a golden age, which due to evil and moral decay was lost forever in some catastrophic disaster. She had little time for the present age and hoped, like Katharine Maltwood, that the spiritual message and wisdom embodied in the Glastonbury

Zodiac would revitalize society. Such romantic longings pervade her writings, in prose and poetry, which describes her favourite sketching retreats abroad.

In particular she was captivated by Italy's by-gone eras and adds nostalgia and hallucinatory intensity to her accounts of the ancient architecture and legends surrounding Naples, Rome, Venice, Viareggio, Assisi and San Vigilio. These reveal her constant enchantment with the sea, moonlight, intangible shadows, ancient mysteries and cataclysmic events. While sketching the evening shadows on ancient byways and lonely deserted ruins, she tells how she found "staring at them one becomes a ghost oneself looking into the past." Old monastery churches were a favourite theme as a charcoal in the Maltwood Collection reveals. Like Samuel Palmer, she sought to enrich the actual present by a reference to the past and by expressing the mystery which dwells in the nature of things in a serene and intimate harmony.

In later years Stella Langdale exhibited regularly at the foremost British galleries and the Paris Salon and continued to travel, visiting Italy annually for almost twenty years. She came to Victoria in 1940 with her great companion Florence Bayham, a noted pianist. In the next few years while staying at The Empress Hotel or on extensive sketching trips throughout the Province Stella Langdale produced numerous oil and watercolour sketches. Many were seascapes and views of Victoria harbour where she found the clear, bright sunset similar to that in Venice. She had always been enchanted by the power of the sea and the great sailing ships of old. In Victoria she sketched and wrote romantically of the old clipper hulls since converted into barges by Island Tug Co.: "In such ships lies romance, at night they seem to edge closer together for company... they change into phantom ships with clouds of sail set and leaning on the wind. Legions of ghosts surely haunt these once tall ships... they carry imperishable memories."

Many of her British Columbia works together with a few European scenes were exhibited at the Little Centre in Victoria in 1946. The titles reflect her continued obsession with the shadows of dusk and moonlight impressions — *Silent Hour*; *Evening Glow*, *Olympics*; *Rising Moon*; *Blue Night*, *Victoria*; *Low fog, midnight*, *Victoria*; *The Last Gleam*; *Moonlight sky over Cathedral*, *Victoria*. In pursuit of such images she often used a technique involving a small plate of darkened glass which gave daylight scenes a

glimmering moonlight effect.

Stella Langdale, like her friend Katharine Maltwood, was inspired by the spiritualizing force of the forests and mountains of British Columbia which she found “full of savage primeval subjects.”¹⁰¹ A small landscape in the Maltwood Collection dates from this period and makes a marked contrast to her dark aquatints and watercolours. Working in oils the palette is bright, the colours luminous and the brushwork broad and simple. Her African themes were also not all sombre as can be seen in *The Roofs of Tunis*, a small oil purchased by the Maltwoods from the 1946 exhibition. Here the vibration of heat and light is suggested with cool blue shadows cast from dense yellowish domes and roof tops.

Stella Langdale suffered from severe arthritis and was continually hampered by its crippling effects. Around 1950 she moved south to Santa Barbara, California where she continued to sketch and correspond with the Maltwoods until her death in the late 1950's.

That she and Katharine Maltwood shared similar aims is displayed even more clearly in “An Appreciation” written by the latter for Stella Langdale's exhibition in Victoria in 1946. Here Katharine Maltwood extolled the artist's sound technical training and continued in words which could well describe her own career: “She is also a visionary. Even if ‘subject’ is nothing to art — as had been so ably demonstrated by Lawren Harris recently — to Stella Langdale every bush is a ‘burning bush of God’ and light — the ‘light of the Holy Grail’; her ultimate desire is to translate the divine dream behind the veil: a land of tender and delicate solitudes. She has reached out above scholasticism to something of the spirit beyond.”

Katharine Maltwood was always a very vital and active personality and remained so even in her old age. However, in the 1950's she suffered the increasing disability of Parkinson's disease. She faced this distressing illness with great courage but was eventually forced to give up all her artistic pursuits. After a long and harrowing illness she died on July 29, 1961, leaving her work and collection to the people of British Columbia.

In 1964 “The Thatch”, its contents and an endowment were officially bequeathed to the University of Victoria. John Maltwood outlived his wife by several years, dying in his hundred and first year on June 18, 1967. The Maltwood Collection was moved from “The Thatch” to the University of Victoria in 1977. The move was granted after a hearing on a petition under the Administration Act to alter the Trust created in

Katharine Maltwood's will.

In the establishment of a museum the artist wished to provide a place “for the encouragement of the study of the arts” and to perpetuate the ideals she had sought to fulfil in her own lifetime. Her quest was one of spiritual evolution and harmony with “higher, hidden realities”. In this she remained very much a child of the Victorian era seeing modern society as being in a state of spiritual crisis and moral decline brought on by the trivialities of materialism, the “soulless mechanism” of technology and the decay of cultural traditions. As a result she sought a return to truth and beauty through art, surrounding herself with a nostalgically gracious and exotic environment that was distant from the prosaic experience of daily life.

Although she appeared aloof and distant to lesser known acquaintances, to her closer friends she was a genius, kind, modest and noble in character. To John Maltwood, her devoted companion, “She was a remarkable, creative genius, perpetually young and vigorous, everything she did was perfect — she was a goddess.”¹⁰²

In her sculptural aspirations, philosophical leanings and in the immense significance she attached to her discovery of a pre-historic zodiac Katharine Maltwood took on the role of a visionary and an evangelist. Although her views and life-style appear somewhat remote from the commonplace, we can understand her concerns in that the crisis of man versus technology still remains, creating a common vein of idealism which links nineteenth and twentieth-century philosophies.



M964.1.118
Mount Temple
by Ina Uhthoff



M964.1.459-2
Wildflowers
by Elizabeth Duer, 1941

M964.1.129
Nocturne
by Stella Langdale



M964.1.132
Charcoal drawing (Untitled)
by Stella Langdale



Footnotes

- ¹ Gillian Naylor, *The Arts and Crafts Movement* (London, Studio Vista, 1971), p. 12.
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- ³ Maltwood Museum and Gallery, *The Maltwood Collection opening exhibition*, Introduction by Martin Segger (University of Victoria, Maltwood Museum and Gallery, 1978), p. 5.
- ⁴ Katharine Maltwood's copy of William Morris, *The Earthly Paradise* (London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1907), is now in the Maltwood Collection.
- ⁵ A detailed discussion of Peladan and his activities is given by Robert Pincus-Witten, *Occult Symbolism in France* (New York, Garland Publishing Inc., 1976).
- ⁶ Chris Mullen, *G.F. Watts: A Nineteenth Century Phenomenon* (London, The Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1974) Illus. 41.
- ⁷ Harold Begbie, "Master Workers: George Frederick Watts, O.M.," *Pall Mall Magazine*, Feb. 1904, pp. 165-71.
- ⁸ Gillian Naylor, p. 117.
- ⁹ Walter Crane, "On revival of design and handicraft with notes of the work of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society," *Arts and Crafts Essays* (London, Garland Publishing Inc., 1977), p. 12.
- ¹⁰ *The Maltwood Arts and Crafts collection*, catalogue for an exhibition (University of Victoria, 1978), p. 4.
- ¹¹ Alphonse Legros was Slade Professor of drawing at University College, London, 1876-92. Jules Dalou was teacher of modelling at South Kensington School of Art, 1877-80.
- ¹² Edmond Gosse, "The New Sculpture, 1879-1894," *Art Journal*, 1894, p. 138ff.
- ¹³ Charles B. Ingham, *Education in Accordance with Natural Law* (London and New York, Novello and Co. 1902), p. x.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- ¹⁶ Gertrude A. Ingham, *Spiritual Law and Human Response* (London, John M. Watkins, 1953).
- ¹⁷ D.J. Foxon, *History of Moira House, a Progressive School* (Sidney, Webb College), p. 10.
- ¹⁸ *The Shuttle, Centenary Number 1875-1975* (Eastbourne, Moira House, Spring 1975), p. 11.
- ¹⁹ Stuart Macdonald, *History and Philosophy of Art Education* (London, University of London Press, 1970), p. 269.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 270.
- ²¹ Auguste Rodin, *Art by Auguste Rodin*, Trans. Romilly Feddon (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), p. 47. Katharine Maltwood's annotated edition is now in the Maltwood Collection as is her copy of Camille Maclair's popular book on Rodin of 1905.
- ²² The Maltwood Papers, Letter from John Maltwood to Janet Jackson, Aug. 12, 1962.
- ²³ Critical reviews of Mrs. Maltwood's sculpture are among the clippings in the Maltwood Papers which are housed in the Special Collections Section, McPherson Library, University of Victoria.
- ²⁴ Freeman Champney, *Art and Glory: the Study of Elbert Hubbard* (New York, Garland Publishers, 1968), p. 153.
- ²⁵ *The Maltwood Papers*.
- ²⁶ *The Maltwood Papers*, Letter from John Maltwood to Mary Caine, 26 June, 1962.
- ²⁷ Richard Buckle, *Jacob Epstein: Sculptor* (London, Faber and Faber Ltd., 1963), p. 63.
- ²⁸ Eric Gill, *Eric Gill: Autobiography* (New York, Biblo and Tanner, 1968), p. 262.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 179.
- ³⁰ Katharine Maltwood owned a copy of H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* (Los Angeles, The Theosophical Co., 1925).
- ³¹ The annotated edition in the Maltwood Collection is Edward Schuré, *The Great Initiates; Sketch of the Secret History of Religions*, Trans. by Fred Rothwell (London, Rider, 1912).
- ³² Among the numerous books are:
Sir Rabindranath Tagore, *Fruit-Gathering* (London, MacMillan, 1916).
Lewis Spence, *An Encyclopaedia of Occultism; A compendium of information on the Occult Sciences, Occult Personalities, Psychic Science, Magic, Demonology, Spiritualism and Mysticism* (London, G. Rutledge, 1920).
William W. Atkinson, *A series of Lessons in Raja Yoga by Yogi Ramacharada* (London, L. N. Fowler, 1917).
Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *The Philosophy of the Upanisads* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1924).
Margaret E. Noble, *Myths of Hindus and Buddhists* (London, Harrap, 1913).
The periodicals include:
The Modern Mystic and Monthly Science Review; The Occult Review; Theosophia; The Theosophical Forum; The Theosophical Movement; Buddhism in England.
- ³³ Philippe Jullian, *Dreamers of Decadence* (London, Pall Mall Press Ltd., 1971), p. 30.
- ³⁴ Harold Speed, *The Practice and Science of Drawing* (London, Seeley, Service & Co., Ltd., 1913), p. 22.
- ³⁵ Sir William M. F. Petrie, *The Arts and Crafts of Ancient Egypt* (London, T. N. Foulis Ltd., 1923), p. 8.
- ³⁶ H. Fechheimer, *Die Plastik der Agypter* (Berlin, Bruno Cassier Verlag, 1920), rear cover.
- ³⁷ Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (London, Luzac & Co., 1927), p. 110.
- ³⁸ Lily Adams Beck, *The House of Fulfilment* (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1927), pp. 41-42.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 58.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 81.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 110.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 110.
- ⁴⁵ The Maltwood Collection contains copies of all the Lily Adams Beck novels.
- ⁴⁶ W. M. Fawcett, "Who's Who in Canadian Literature: Mrs. L. Adams Beck," *Canadian Bookman*, IX, 12 (December 1929), pp. 276-77. J. Kunitz and H. Haycroft, eds. *Twentieth Century Authors: A Bibliographical Dictionary of Modern Literature* (New York, H. W. Wilson Co., 1942), p. 27.
- ⁴⁷ George Doran, *Chronicles of Barabbas* (New York, Harcourt, Bruce & Co., 1935), pp. 314-15.
- ⁴⁸ Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *The Idylls of the King, The Holy Grail*, 1870.
- ⁴⁹ David Cecil, *Visionary and Dreamer. Two Poetic Painters: Samuel Palmer and Edward Burne-Jones* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 109.

- ⁵⁰ Katharine Maltwood, *The Enchantments of Britain or King Arthur's Round Table of the Stars* (Victoria, Victoria Printing and Publishing Co., 1944), p. 81.
- ⁵¹ Katharine Maltwood, "The Discovery of a prehistoric zodiac in England." *The Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada* (Sept. 1943), p. 272.
- ⁵² There are almost one hundred ordinance survey and other maps remaining in the Maltwood collection along with illustrations of the Dendarah zodiac from Egypt, the Javanese zodiac and several other ancient and modern astrological charts.
- ⁵³ Katharine Maltwood, "The Discovery of a Prehistoric Zodiac in England.", pp. 273-274.
- ⁵⁴ Harwood Steele, "The Somerset Giants." *Country Life* (Jan 11, 1946), p. 67.
- ⁵⁵ In Freemasonry it is believed that God vouchsafed their Grand Master and Archangel, King Solomon, with a knowledge of forms in their original perfection, so that his Temple was the Temple of God. It resembled more the work of the supreme architect of the universe than the labour of mankind.
- ⁵⁶ Katharine Maltwood, *King Arthur's Round Table of the Zodiac* (Victoria, Victoria Printing and Publishing Co., 1946), p. 34.
- ⁵⁷ Katharine Maltwood, *The Enchantments of Britain or King Arthur's Round Table of the Stars*, p. 96.
- ⁵⁸ In addition to those already cited Mrs. Maltwood produced the following books:
A guide to Glastonbury's temple of the stars: their giant effigies described from air views, maps, and from "The High History of the Holy Grail" (London, The Women's Printing Society Ltd, 1934).
 A revised edition of the above was published by Victoria Printing and Publishing Co. in 1950. It was also published posthumously in 1964 by James Clarke and Co. Ltd., London.
Air view Supplement to a guide to Glastonbury's temple of the Stars (London, John M. Watkins, 1937).
Itinerary of "The Somerset Giants" abridged from King Arthur's Round Table of the Zodiac (Victoria, Victoria Printing and Publishing Co., updated).
- ⁵⁹ For instance, she tried in vain to enlist the support of members of The National Trust, The Royal Astronomical Association and The Royal Society of Arts.
- ⁶⁰ See for instance:
 Anthony Roberts, ed. *Glastonbury, Ancient Avalon, New Jerusalem* (London, Rider & Co., 1978). This book contains twelve articles by various authors. Colin Wilson in the "Afterward" writes: "As the reader will have discovered, the majority of contributors to this book accept Mrs. Maltwood's ideas."
 Oliver Reiser, *This Holyest Erthe* (London, Perennial Books, 1974). Reiser discusses Mrs. Maltwood's theories and feels they require further investigation and substantiation but that for the present she has "lifted the mantle of invisibility."
 John Michell, *The View over Atlantis* (London, Sphere Books Ltd., 1973). Michell believes that for many people the Glastonbury zodiac is "aesthetically correct" but that for the time being it must be accepted as "a poetic rather than a scientific truth."
 Mary Caine, *The Glastonbury Zodiac, Key to the Mysteries of Britain* (Devon, Torquay, Graef Communications, 1978). Mrs. Caine follows Mrs. Maltwood's ideas closely and adds several elaborations and refinements of her own.
- ⁶¹ Among the books on Freemasonry consulted by Mrs. Maltwood are:
 Douglas Knoop, *The Genesis of Freemasonry* (Manchester, University Press, 1947).
 Manly Palmer Hall, *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry* (New York, Macoy Pub. and Masonic Supply Co., 1924).
 George E. Robuck, *An introduction to Royal Arch Masonry* (London, Rider & Co., 1931).
 John S.M. Ward, *An Outline History of Freemasonry* (London, Baskerville Press, 1974).
 Periodicals include: *Freemasonry Universal* and *The Speculative Mason*.
⁶² William Stradling, *A Description of The Priory of Chilton-Super-Polden and its Contents* (Bridgewater, Geo. Awbrey, 1839), p. 1.
⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.
⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
⁶⁵ Mary Caine, *The Glastonbury Zodiac, Key to the Mysteries of Britain* (Devon, Torquay, Graef Communications, 1978), p.5.
⁶⁶ The portrait appeared in *Studio Magazine*, Vol. 39 (1907), p. 157.
⁶⁷ *The Maltwood Papers*, Letter from John Maltwood to Mary Caine, June 26, 1962.
⁶⁸ *Ibid.*
⁶⁹ For instance among her book on furniture she referred to: George O. Wheeler, *Old English Furniture from the 16th to the 19th Centuries: A Guide for the Collector* (London, L. U. Gill, 1909).
 Percy Macquoid, *A History of English Furniture* (London, Collins, 1919).
 John Gloag, *British Furniture Makers* (London, Collins, 1946).
⁷⁰ *The Maltwood Collection Opening Exhibition*, p. 13.
⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.
⁷² "The Thatch was a dream," *The Daily Colonist*, July 4, 1965, p. 3.
⁷³ Katharine Maltwood was great friend of Diana's father, Bob Drabble and his sister and frequently visited them at their family home in Derbyshire. When Bob married and moved to British Columbia Katharine became a god-mother to his daughter, Diana.
⁷⁴ Many of the stones Katharine Maltwood used in her Victoria works were acquired for her by Diana's husband, Stuart S. Holland, Chief geologist for the Department of Mines, Victoria.
⁷⁵ *The Maltwood Collection Opening Exhibition*, p. 11.
⁷⁶ "Emily Carr", *Coasts, the Sea and Canadian Art* (The Gallery Stratford, 1978), n. pag.
⁷⁷ Ian M. Thom, *W. P. Weston* (Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1980), p. 12.
⁷⁸ *The Maltwood Collection Opening Exhibition*, p. 9.
⁷⁹ Ian M. Thom, op. cit., p. 12.
⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.
⁸¹ P.G. Konody, "C.J. Collings," *Apollo* Vol. I (June 1925), p. 345-49.
⁸² M. Tippet and D. Cole, *From Desolation to Splendour* (Toronto, Clarke Irwin, 1977), p. 74.
⁸³ *The Maltwood Collection Opening Exhibition*, p. 11.
⁸⁴ Here, aside from traditional painting and drawing courses, a wide variety of subjects were offered including clay modelling, pottery, design, illustration and nature form.
⁸⁵ She took on many of the burdens of operation in the early days of the Little Centre and the Arts Centre. Later with the gift of the Spencer Mansion in 1951 and the establishment of the present gallery she helped, with Hildegard Wyllie, by serving on the board of directors and as a member of the accessions committee.
⁸⁶ Colin D. Graham, *Ina D. D. Uthoff* (Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1972).
⁸⁷ *The Maltwood Collection Opening Exhibition*, p. 12.
⁸⁸ "Hildegard Wyllie of Victoria Art Centre would interest Victorians in Gallery," *Victoria Times*, May 12, 1951.
⁸⁹ Mrs. Wyllie later donated these works to the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.
⁹⁰ *The Maltwood Papers*, Letter from Hildegard Wyllie to Katharine Maltwood, July 16, 1950.

- ⁹¹ "Witch at Wheel Performs White Magic with her touch," *Vancouver Sun*, July 18, 1953, p. 19.
- ⁹² "Paints Island wild flowers in Oriental style." *Victoria Times*, March 27, 1943, p. 5, mag. sec.
- ⁹³ "Woman Paints Wild Life from jungle to Arctic Wastes", *Vancouver Sun*, April 11, 1947, p. 16.
- ⁹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁵ "Personality of the Week", *The Daily Colonist*, Feb. 11, 1951, p. 15.
- ⁹⁶ K. E. Maltwood, "An Appreciation", Show of Stella Langdale's work at The Little Centre, Victoria, Nov. 19-Dec. 1, 1946.
- ⁹⁷ "Pure Lyricism Features Stella Langdale", Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Clippings File, April 1951.
- ⁹⁸ Kineton Parkes, "The Aquatints of Stella Langdale", *Drawing and Design*, No. 31 (November 1922), pp. 227-229.
- ⁹⁹ "Studio-talk", *Studio Magazine*, Vol. 65 (Sept. 1918), p. 95.
- ¹⁰⁰ "Artist comes to stay", *The Daily Colonist*, Jan. 28, 1940, p. 3.
- ¹⁰¹ *The Maltwood Papers*, Letter from Stella Langdale to Katharine Maltwood, undated.
- ¹⁰² *The Maltwood Papers*, Letter from John Maltwood to Janette Jackson, Aug. 12, 1962.

Photo Credits

- p.13 *The Wedding of St. George and Princess Sabra* by D.G. Rossetti, The Tate Gallery, London.
- p.18 *Guinevere's Redeeming* by W.R. Reynolds-Stevens. Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston.
Mysteriarch by G. Frampton, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.
- p.28 *Wind Figure* by Eric Gill, London Transport Authority.
Night by Jacob Epstein, London Transport Authority.
Caryatid or *Angel* by Ivan Mestrovic, Musée National de Belgrade.

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