

# Emma Fordyce MacRae - Biography

Emma Fordyce MacRae was born in 1887 in Vienna, Austria of American parents who returned to New York in 1888. MacRae started to draw early illustrating her letters to her mother with flowers and later studied art at the New York School of Art before enrolling at the Art Students League of New York in 1911 following her husband leaving her and their daughter.

On 29 March, 1920 her marriage to Thomas MacRae was dissolved and annulled leaving both parties restored to the status of single person with liberty to marry after the expiration of twelve months. Two years later she married Dr Homer Fordyce Swift a member of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research in Greenwich, Connecticut on 24 April.

In her youth she travelled annually to Europe. While her father Dr Fordyce spoke before medical societies the family visited museums and galleries and no doubt these European travels influenced her as well as her studies and Arthur Dow's book on composition which was in her library.

MacRae opened her studio at 12 West 69th Street in New York and exhibited in December 1914 at the Anderson Gallery. Although her style would evolve, the catalogue for the show indicates that MacRae had already established the subjects she would work with landscape, floral still life and figurative compositions.

Later MacRae opened a summer studio in Gloucester, Massachusetts and her choice of subjects distanced her from what was then being produced by painters on Cape Ann preferring as she did for her landscapes the stretch of beaches and coves along Ipswich Bay such as *August in New England* as well as the views from her garden and the flowers themselves.

## Literature

Cape Ann Museum, *Emma Fordyce MacRae, N.A., 1887 - 1974*, exhibition catalogue, Gloucester, Massachusetts, 2008, K.E. Quinn, "Paintings of Emma Fordyce MacRae, N.A. (1887-1974)," *American Art Review*, vol. XX, no. 2, March 2008, p. 75, illustrated.

## Provenance

The artist.  
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