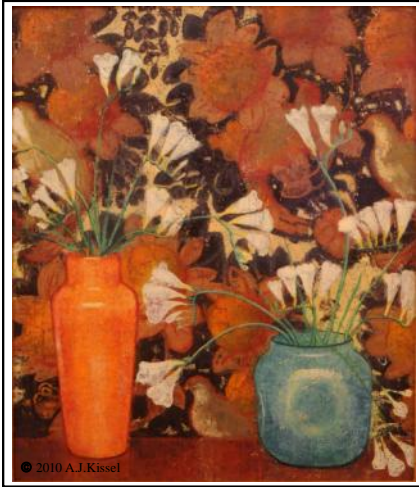


# Emma Fordyce MacRae N.A.



Orange White and Green  
25 x 30 inches



Before the Song - 32 x 40 inches



Dogwood  
30 x 25 inches

## Exhibition and Sale

**November 1 to December 23, 2010**

Morgan Manhattan

16 Bruce Park Avenue

Greenwich, CT 06830



St Mark's Square  
16 x 20 inches



Fishermen at Pigeon Cove  
25 x 30 inches

View Monday through Friday

9am to 4pm

**Phone : Brian Clark - 203 869 8700 Ext 225**

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Web : [www.morganmanhattan.com/efm](http://www.morganmanhattan.com/efm)



Pigeon Cove  
14 x 17 inches



Head of a Child  
20 x 16 inches



Lilies with Bookshelf  
23 x 16 inches



Central Park Bridge - 18 x 26 inches



Zinnias with Vermeer Print  
30 x 25 inches

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# Before the Song



Painted in 1930 with its elegant linear flat forms *Before the Song* exemplifies MacRae's most beautiful works. MacRae was fortunate to have the freedom to paint as she wanted and developed a distinct and singular style of painting that was wholly her own and which the Boston Globe critic in April 1935 described as "a sort of trademark of Emma Fordyce MacRae". The critic was writing about small areas within a composition where MacRae had taken back the paint to an underpaint or the gesso mistaken by some as areas of paint loss rather than a deliberate act by the artist and likened to old murals. Patricia Sydney writing about MacRae in "*The Philadelphia Ten. A Women's Artist Group 1917 – 1945*" mentions MacRae's trip to the southern coast of Italy in April 1928 and that she was impressed by the wall paintings. On top of the gesso ground, MacRae sketched in her composition using chalk or pencil and these underdrawings are sometimes visible as outlines in the final painting, often even reinforced, as in *Before the Song*.

MacRae placed the three women preparing to sing across the canvas blending them into a figured background reminiscent of a fresco of paler colors showing the underpaint or gesso and treating other parts of the composition with additional layers of thin paint as in the hair of the woman on the right in which a lighter tone has been applied on top of the rich rust color.

This quiet moment is poignantly recorded as MacRae successfully creates an image that embraces the scene in its most beautiful and picturesque form. The colors and patterns of *Before the Song* make this a masterpiece of her work. As many of her paintings *Before the Song* is not varnished.

*Exhibited: 1930 - Roerich Museum; 1931 - National Academy; 1931 - Grand Central Art Galleries; 1935 - Currier Museum; 1935 - Boston Art Club; 2008 - Cape Ann Museum.*

Before the Song  
Oil and pencil on canvas on board    Signed    Framed  
32 x 40 inches  
Emma Fordyce MacRae 1887 – 1974



# Central Park Bridge



*Central Park Bridge* painted in 1946 was not exhibited at the Cape Ann Museum Exhibition in 2009 which concentrated on her landscapes of Cape Ann.

MacRae's parents returned to New York in 1888. Her early schooling was at the Brearley School for Girls in New York City and later at the Ingleside School, New Milford in Connecticut. It is not known why or when she became interested in art or made the decision to study at the Art Students' League.

MacRae moved back to her parent's home when her husband left her and rented a studio at 12 West 69<sup>th</sup> Street which she kept on following her marriage to Homer Swift for most of her life daily walking across Central Park from her new home on the east side.

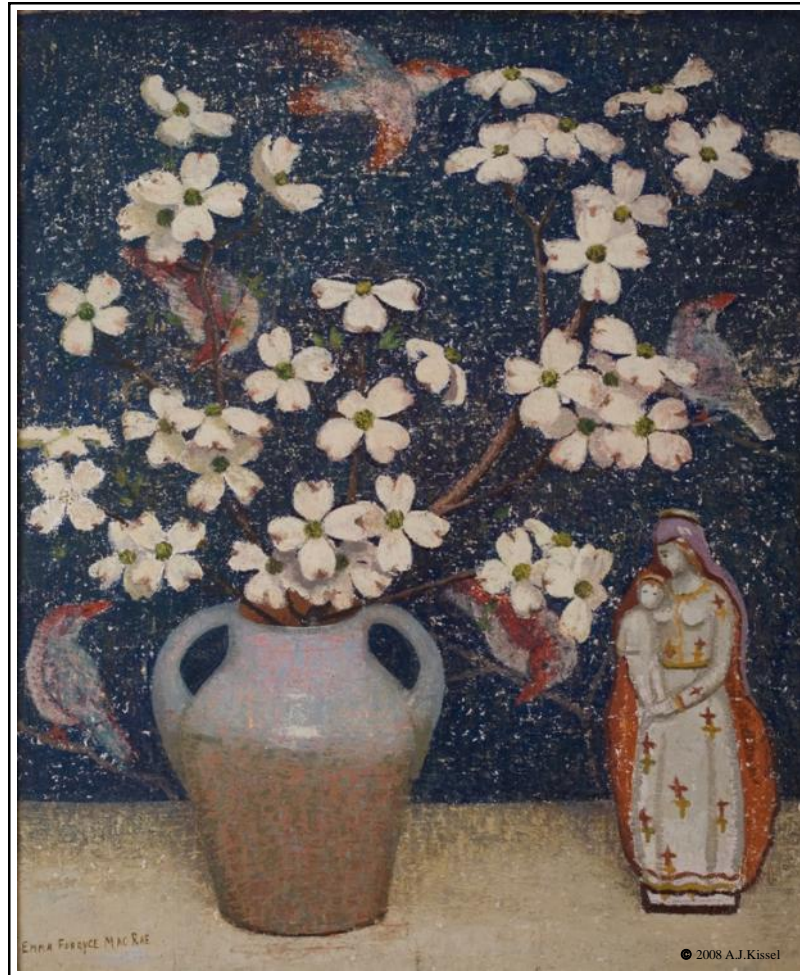
In *Central Park Bridge* MacRae has employed a subdued palette and has focused on the shape of the granite wall of the bridge, the water and the path following the curve of the bank in the foreground under the bridge and beyond applying the paint sparingly to achieve the reflections of the trees, rocks and boys in the water.

MacRae was given a licence to set up her easel on the grass in Central Park at a time when it was forbidden to walk on the grass and she painted several scenes including *Central Park Bridge* in the 1940's.

*Exhibited: 1949 – National Academy; 1950 – Pen and Brush Club - first prize;  
1950 – National Arts Club Non Members; 1953 – Knickerbocker Artists;  
1955 – American Artists Professional League; 1959 – Allied Artists of America;  
1968 – Pen and Brush; 1969 – Brearley School.*

Central Park Bridge  
Oil on board Signed Framed  
18 x 26 inches  
Emma Fordyce MacRae 1887 - 1974

# Dogwood



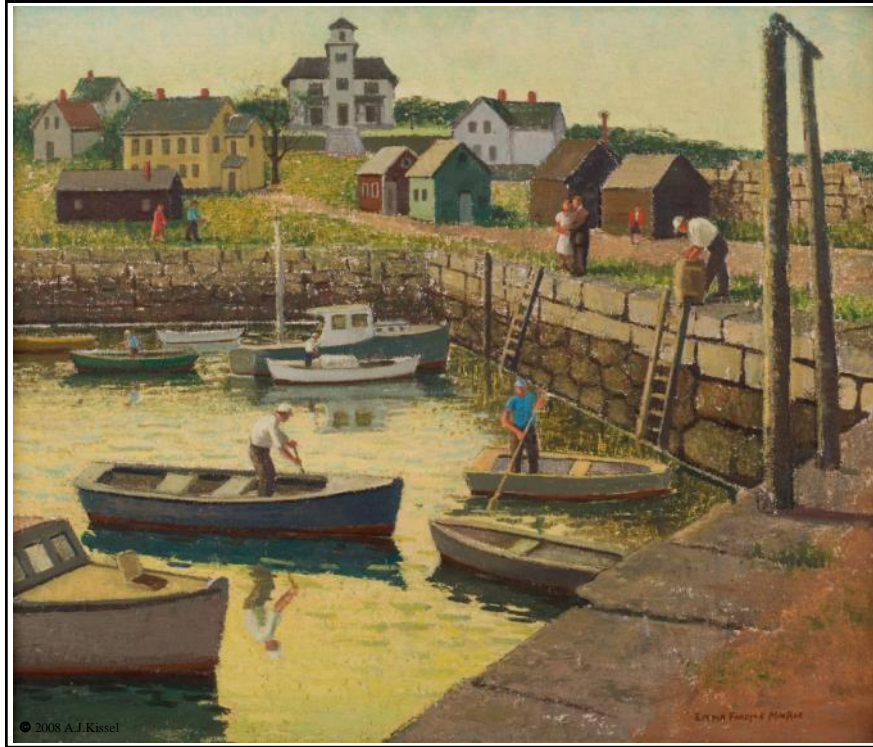
MacRae developed a complex method for preparing her supports and for building up the paint in her compositions by using a technique of scraping the paint with a palette knife to flatten brush strokes, revealing lower colors and the white ground, adding additional layers of paint and producing a mottled appearance when viewed close up but which lightened the work when view from afar.

Each object in a still life is artfully placed, and her compositions reflect a sense of tranquil, subdued color while also dazzling the viewer with an extraordinary sense of pattern and surface texture. In her still lifes she creates a visual relationship between her objects as seen in *Dogwood* where MacRae chose a plain background in a strong color. She introduced movement with the birds in the blue flaked with green and white background to tie in the elements of this composition - the arrangement of the still blossoms of the dogwood, the simple shape of the vase with its crazed glaze, the almost rust color repeated in the garment of the figure, the vase and the beaks and wings of the birds.

*Exhibited: 1969 - Allied Artists of America; 2008 – Cape Ann Museum.*

Dogwood  
Oil on canvas on board    Signed    Framed  
30 x 25 inches  
Emma Fordyce MacRae 1887 – 1974

# Fishermen at Pigeon Cove



Following the successful exhibition at the Anderson Galleries in 1914 in New York MacRae continued to exhibit landscape paintings of Cape Ann.at the City Art Museum in St. Louis, Goupil and Co of Paris in 1917, Italian Fishing Boats at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1918 and other galleries until 1961.

MacRae often came to Pigeon Cove harbor. A large warehouse built at the entrance after MacRae left obscuring the view of the harbor was torn down in around 2008 and today two fishermen's huts on the dock with the granite blocks piled high behind them remain and can be seen in her *Fishermen at Pigeon Cove* painted in the evening with the boats returning at low tide. MacRae set up her easel on the dock and the landscape looks back along the dock and includes boats, the two fishermen's huts and the house without the widow's walk which can be seen today.

From her years at art school Emma learned a love of the mechanics of painting, the importance of preparing a canvas or board for oil painting, the choice of texture and the role of the brush and palette knife. In *Fishermen at Pigeon Cove* Emma's reflections in the water reflect the sky and the under painting is a yellow tone with other colors built up with a brush or palette knife one on top of another to create the depth and dimension of what seems at first glance to be a twilight tranquil scene but which is, in fact, bustling with activity. In this landscape painting once again can be seen the white under painting used to good effect to highlight around roofs and people and even the stones forming the dock.

*Exhibited: 2008 – Cape Ann Museum*

Fishermen at Pigeon Cove

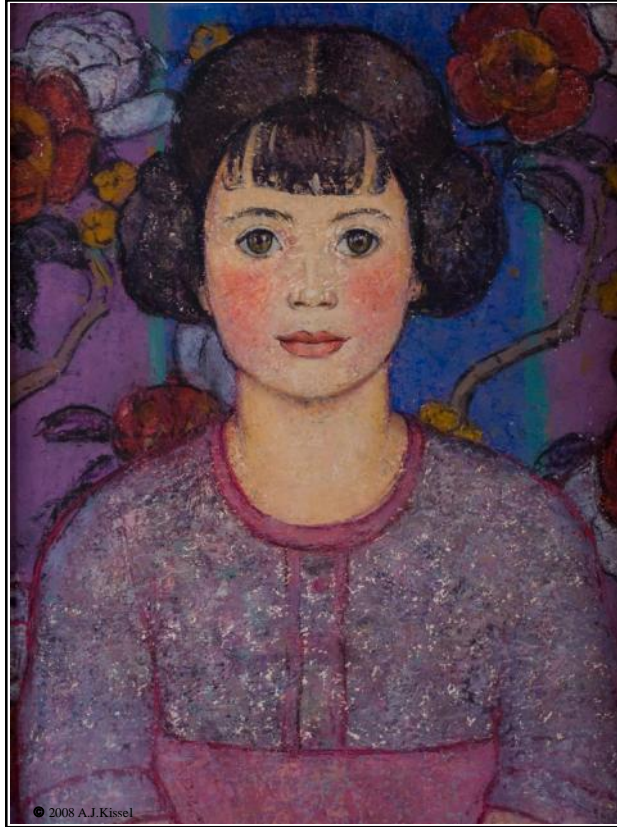
Oil on board Signed Framed

25 x 30 inches

Emma Fordyce MacRae 1887 - 1974



# Head of a Child



MacRae understood the importance of preparing a canvas or board for oil painting and often recorded the number of coats used on the reverse. She was careful with her choice of background texture.

The reviewer for the “Main Line Times” in Philadelphia wrote: “MacRae’s portraits are arresting, not because of the people, but because of the extraordinary sense of pattern and harmony of tone. They are simple and forceful compositions”.

Patricia Sydney in the “Philadelphia Ten. A Women’s Artist Group 1917 – 1945” refers to the Art Students League and Kenneth Hayes Miller’s encouragement of MacRae’s strong sense of design and use of simplified form as well as the Impressionist Robert Reid who stressed the decorative potential of the two-dimensional surface.

*Head of a Child* displays this extraordinary sense of pattern and harmony of tone with the interworking of shape and pattern. The child sits gazing at the viewer in front of a flat decorative patterned material background similar in design to the background in William McGregor Paxton’s *La Russe*. Paxton is not recorded as teaching MacRae but she may have come across his work when visiting Boston.

*Exhibited: 1930 – Roerich Museum, New York - Solo exhibition; 2008 - Cape Ann Museum..*

Head of a Child  
Oil on board Signed Framed  
20 x 16 inches  
Emma Fordyce MacRae 1887 – 1974

# Lilies with Bookshelf



MacRae inherited Atlantic Highlands her summer home on the death of her father in 1925 and a studio was added. She painted her still lives in both New York and Gloucester and her husband, Homer Swift, spent the winters in New York pouring over seed catalogues and tended the Atlantic Highlands garden providing her with flowers to paint until his death. Occasionally, the interior is recognizable.

Atlantic Highlands was sold and no longer painting large works MacRae made use of her world around her in her apartment in New York. In *Lilies with Bookshelf* MacRae uses the books in the bookshelf in the hallway of the apartment as the background applying the paint sparingly to them and the oriental rug so that the arrangement of lilies in the Chinese vase is set against it.

In 1951 MacRae was elected to full National Academy membership.

*Lilies with Bookshelf*  
Oil on board Unsigned Unframed  
23 x 16 inches  
Emma Fordyce MacRae 1887 - 1974

# Orange White and Green



MacRae was not a prolific painter and records she spent two months painting *Orange White and Green* in 1923. *Orange White and Green* is an example of MacRae's early balanced and symmetrical compositions, emphasized by the flower vases of orange and green and painted before MacRae perfected her distinct style of scraping back and adding layers of paint sparingly. *Orange White and Green* is a floral arrangement of freesias set against a tapestry background with the flowers merging and contrasting with the textile behind.

MacRae exhibited extensively throughout most of her lifetime in the United States and her work was regularly displayed in solo and group exhibitions.

Exhibited: 1923 *National Academy*; 1923 *Milch Gallery*; 1923 *Chicago Art Institute*; 1923 *John Herron Institute*; 1924 *City Art Museum, St Louis*; 1924 *Syracuse Museum*; 1925 *National Association of Women Artists*; 1925 *Rotary Show*; 1925 *Peabody Institute (Baltimore museum of art)*; 1925 *State Fair Texas*; 1928 *Grand Central Galleries*; 1930 *Roerich Museum, New York*

Orange White and Green  
Oil on canvas Unsigned Framed  
30 x 25 inches  
Emma Fordyce MacRae 1887 – 1974



# Pigeon Cove



In 1911 MacRae attended the Art Students' League of New York where she studied with Frank Vincent DuMond, F Luis Mora, Kenneth Hayes Miller, Ernest Blumenschein and Robert Reid. Arthur Dow's book on composition was in her library.

In June 1915 MacRae took up residence in Gloucester, Massachusetts six months before her first exhibition in December at the Anderson Galleries in New York of 29 paintings including paintings of Bournemouth, England, an Old Lane in Brittany as well as paintings of Gloucester, Massachusetts, West Virginia, landscapes, still lifes and portraits with Dorothea M Litzinger.

There is no exhibition history for this painting. In 1937 *Pigeon Cove 1* and *Pigeon Cove 2* were exhibited at a solo exhibition at The Boston Art Club. A similar painting illustrated in The Art Digest of July 1938 was shown at the Second Annual Revolving exhibition set up by Studio Guild Galleries in New York. This show was open to all artists and the works of art shown changed or revolved every two weeks.

Pigeon Cove  
Oil on board Signed Framed  
14 x 17 inches  
Emma Fordyce MacRae 1887 – 1974

# St Mark's Square



Emma Fordyce MacRae was born in Vienna, Austria on April 27, 1887, the daughter of John Addison and Alice Dean Fordyce. Dr Fordyce, an American dermatologist and later professor of dermatology and social diseases at Columbia University was studying in Europe at the time.

The family travelled to Europe annually where Dr Fordyce spoke before medical societies and they visited museums and galleries.

January 18, 1910 married Dr Thomas MacRae. By September Thomas MacRae had left and their daughter Alice was born on December 1.

Emma's marriage to Thomas MacRae was eventually annulled after 10 years and she married Homer Swift two years later in 1922. The next year she had a solo exhibition at the Ainslie Galleries in New York.

In 1928 she visited Venice and painted this *St Marks Square* and other Venice landscapes exhibited in her solo exhibition at the Roerich Museum in 1930.

*Exhibited: 1930 - Roerich Museum, New York - Solo exhibition;  
1935 - Doll & Richards, Boston - Solo Exhibition (a St. Mark's Square listed)*

St Mark's Square  
Oil and pencil on board Unsigned Framed  
16 x 20 inches  
Emma Fordyce MacRae 1887 – 1974



# Zinnias with Vermeer Print



MacRae often condensed the space in her still lifes, bringing foreground and background together and making the specific identification of the place irrelevant. For backgrounds, she mostly used wallpaper and textiles in a variety of historic styles or even, occasionally, another work of art as in *Zinnias with Vermeer Print*.

Painted in 1954 *Zinnias with Vermeer Print* is another of MacRae's accomplished interworking of shape and pattern. MacRae had a collection of Japanese and European prints that she used as props in her paintings and it takes a moment to realise the print of the *Procuress* by Vermeer is hung on the wall behind an arrangement of zinnias with their yellows, whites and pinks. The strong bright colors of the perfectly painted blooms pick up the colors in the *Procuress* giving a decorative quality to the composition.

*Exhibited: 1958 – Allied Artists of America; 1959 – North Shore Arts Association;  
2008 – Cape Ann Museum.*

Zinnias with Vermeer Print  
Oil on board Signed Framed  
30 x 25 inches  
Emma Fordyce MacRae 1887 - 1974