



## Clarice Beckett—Atmosphere

A Geelong Gallery ticketed exhibition  
1 April to 9 July 2023



Clarice Beckett  
*Rainy day* 1930  
oil on canvas on board  
Geelong Gallery  
Purchased 1973  
Photographer: Andrew Curtis



Clarice Beckett  
*Evening light, Beaumaris c. 1925*  
oil on canvas on cardboard  
National Gallery of Victoria  
Presented by the National Gallery Society of  
Victoria to mark the retirement of Paton Forster,  
General Secretary of the Society (1968-1989),  
1989

Opening on 1 April 2023, Geelong Gallery presents its next major ticketed exhibition: *Clarice Beckett—Atmosphere*, to be shown exclusively in Geelong.

This much anticipated thematic survey of the work of beloved Australian artist Clarice Beckett (1887–1935) has been curated by Geelong Gallery and will present over sixty exceptional paintings dating from 1919 to the early 1930s. The exhibition will provide a critically focussed representation of this enduringly enigmatic modernist artist's atmospheric depictions of light, climate, and bayside Melbourne. Beckett's mesmerising paintings are revered for the ways in which they captured the essence of her local Beaumaris foreshore and streetscapes, and Melbourne city, Yarra River, and Port Phillip Bay views in varying light and weather.

Beckett also worked in the Geelong region—on the Surf Coast and in the Western District—and the resulting works provide an important local context for Geelong Gallery's exhibition. For a period of six months in 1926, Beckett left the familiar environment of her Beaumaris home to stay with the brother of her good friend Maud Rowe on his Western District sheep station, 'Naringal'. It was in this new environment that she produced some of her most experimental landscapes, capturing the radiating heat of the afternoon sun, or the muted light of dusk, across wide panoramic farming country. In addition, Beckett also frequented the beaches of Anglesea and Lorne.

This Geelong Gallery exhibition will offer new perspectives on the imagery of this intriguing and increasingly popular artist through major works borrowed from Australian public galleries including the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Art Gallery of South Australia, National

Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, State Library of Victoria, McClelland Gallery, and regional gallery collections including Ballarat, Benalla, Bendigo, and Castlemaine, alongside rarely seen private collection works.

**Geelong Gallery Director & CEO and co-Exhibition Curator Jason Smith** said, '*Clarice Beckett—Atmosphere* will extend our presentation of Geelong-curated scholarly and highly successful exhibitions that have striking local specificity: *Land of the Golden Fleece—Arthur Streeton in the Western District* (2016); *Fred Williams in the You Yangs* (2017); and *Frederick McCubbin—Whisperings in Wattle Boughs* (2021). It will also place into a wider context one of the Gallery's most popular works: Beckett's 1930 painting *Rainy day*.'

**City of Greater Geelong Mayor, Trent Sullivan** said, 'The exhibition is forecast to attract at least 20,000 visitors to the Greater Geelong region. It will support initiatives to bring visitors from across Victoria and interstate, and further strengthen the Gallery's reputation for creating high quality cultural experiences that deliver wider benefits to the region. Council is pleased to support this exhibition through Geelong Major Events funding.'

**Senior Curator and co-Exhibition Curator Lisa Sullivan** said, 'This exhibition will present refined thematic parameters encompassing Beckett's singular modernist painting of the fleeting effects of atmosphere, as she saw and felt them at the water's edge, on the street and in the landscape.'

The exhibition will be accompanied by an illustrated catalogue.



# Media Release

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Clarice Beckett  
*Boatshed, Beaumaris c. 1928*  
oil on cardboard  
Castlemaine Art Museum  
Maud Rowe Bequest, 1937



Clarice Beckett  
*Across the Yarra c. 1931*  
oil on cardboard  
National Gallery of Victoria  
Bequest of Harriet Minnie Rosebud Salier, 1984

### About Clarice Beckett

Clarice Beckett had a relatively short life but was a singularly minded and prolific artist. She studied at the National Gallery School under Frederick McCubbin before becoming a pupil at Max Meldrum's art school where tonal principles were championed.

Beckett preferred to work *en plein air*—wheeling a cart packed with paints and easel about the streets of her bayside home in Beaumaris—to capture the modern world. She developed a distinctly atmospheric style, rendering seemingly everyday scenes in a loose painterly style and reduced tonal palette.

In her mid-thirties, Beckett articulated her artistic aims in the catalogue accompanying the sixth annual exhibition of the 'Twenty Melbourne Painters' in 1924:

To give a sincere and truthful representation of a portion of the beauty of Nature, and to show the charm of light and shade, which I try to give forth in correct tones so as to give as nearly as possible an exact illusion of reality.

Her commitment to her painting practice sadly had a significant impact on her health. While painting outdoors in Beaumaris in a storm in 1935, she developed pneumonia and passed away four days later, aged only 48.

### Clarice Beckett—Atmosphere

Geelong presenting partner



Major partners



Indemnification for the exhibition is provided by the Victorian Government

Exhibition partners



Ruth Fagg Foundation Trust

Dimmick Charitable Trust



This ambitious exhibition is proudly supported by a collective of Geelong Gallery donors from our 2022 Annual Giving program

Publication partner



### Ticket prices

Adult	\$20.00
Concession	\$15.00
Members	\$12.50
Children (5–15 years)	\$9.00
Children under 5	Free
Family (2 adults and 2 children)	\$50.00
Group (over 10)	\$17.50
Companion Card holders	Free

### Tickets on sale now:

<https://www.geelonggallery.org.au/claricebeckettatmosphere>



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