

## HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE



### **MERCY HUNTER (1910-1989): Artist, Calligrapher and Teacher**

Mercy Hunter was born in Belfast on 22 January 1910. Her mother was Russian. When she was four years old, she travelled on the Trans-Siberian Railway, to China, where she spent her childhood in Manchuria.

She was educated in Toronto and the Belfast Royal Academy. From 1927 to 1929 she studied art at the Belfast College of Art, and at the Royal College of Art, London from 1930 to 1933. Her special interest was calligraphy, and in London she met other Ulster artists including William Scott and F. E. McWilliam.

She returned to Belfast in 1937 and married George MacCann, the sculptor. She taught art in Dungannon High School for Girls, County Tyrone, Banbridge Academy, County Down, Armagh High School and Victoria College, Belfast, where she was head of the art department from 1947 until her retirement in 1970.

As well as illuminated addresses and other calligraphic commissions, she lectured and broadcast extensively on art. She also designed costumes for the theatre, opera and ballet, and illustrated books. She was a member of the Royal Ulster Academy, and served as its president, and was a founder member of the Ulster Society of Women Artists. She was awarded the MBE in 1970. Her work is in the Ulster Museum collection. She died on 20 July 1989.