

## Marion Nicoll

“Nobody in his right mind would be a painter. I wouldn’t be anything else.”

Despite the obstacles that Marion Nicoll encountered as an artist, she never regretted her profession. She looked beneath Alberta’s outward beauty to its bones. Painting variations on landscape and character, she abstracted the mountains, winter mornings, and the Bowness neighbourhood where she lived. The small cigars that she smoked were always close at hand, and she used a squirt gun to keep her animals and her husband in line.

Nicoll fought hard for her art. Despite negative criticism she persisted, painting at the Banff Summer School and studying design in London, England. In order to raise money to work with influential American artist Will Barnet in New York, she pragmatically held an art yard sale. Barnet suggested she stay in New York, and she was offered a teaching post there, but her husband, Jim Nicoll, despised the city and they hightailed it home to Calgary.



Marion Nicoll, Calgary, Alberta  
Glenbow Archives PB-599-2

Calgary was not initially kind to Nicoll’s art, but slowly she gained respect. She was the first female instructor at the Banff School of Fine Arts, and the first woman artist in Alberta elected to the Royal Canadian Academy.

Born: April 11, 1909 – Died: March 6, 1985

### Additional Resources

- **Her Art Story**  
<http://www.herartstory.com/marion-nicoll/>



## **Our Collections**

### **Glenbow Museum**

<https://www.glenbow.org>

### **Glenbow Western Research Centre | Glenbow Library and Archives**

<https://libguides.ucalgary.ca/glenbowlibraryandarchives>

### **Glenbow Library and Archives | Digital Collection**

<https://digitalcollections.ucalgary.ca/asset-management/2R340826N9XM?WS=PackagePres&Flat=1>

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