



Christchurch City Council

## Bulletin

## The Robert McDougall Art Gallery

A bi-monthly publication containing news, views and reviews of activities at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

Number 2

March/April 1979

### Membership

Members will have noted our membership drive in the last number of '*Bulletin*'. We have had a good response to date, but we still have a very long way to go before the Society's membership reaches the level we are aiming for.

May we appeal to you to enter the names and addresses of as many of your neighbours, friends and family as you can think of who might be interested in becoming members of our society on the back of the enclosed form. We shall then mail them membership application forms and this copy of the '*Bulletin*'.

*If you haven't yet renewed your own membership for the 1979-80 financial year we appeal to you to do so now.*

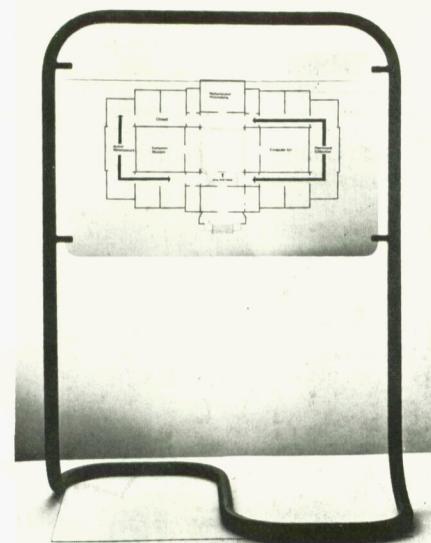
Subscriptions are due and we are sure that you will not want to miss receiving the '*Bulletin*' and participating in the programme being developed for members.

### Gallery guides

We are investigating the possibility of establishing regular guided tours of the Gallery's collection and Exhibitions. To this end we are interested in establishing a group of *Volunteer Gallery Guides* who would assume responsibility for this function under the general direction of the Education Officer. If you are interested in becoming part of the gallery team by offering your services to this project we will be delighted to hear from you. This service has proved very popular overseas with both guides and the public deriving considerable pleasure and satisfaction from it.

Many members of the Friends Society will already have seen some of the fruits of our various special summer work projects. The more obvious include the Gallery map, new signs outside and in the Gallery and foyer, and the new shop fittings installed in the foyer. A low pipe and perspex partition wall has yet to be installed there and some seating provided before that area is completed. At this stage, however, new display racks for catalogues and postcards, a small selection of books, the poster (reproduction) racks and drum, and self-timing slide viewing cabinet are completed.

The major construction project, the creation of the new basement storage depot, is now complete except for the top-hung storage racks which we hope can be proceeded with in the new financial year. This has provided us with a generous amount of extra service space and has eased the critical space shortage. It has not, however, eliminated the problem, and more office space, two more storage depots, a conservation studio, a photographic studio, a library/archive, a design studio and recording room etc. in addition to much extended gallery space are still desperately needed. In order to ease the congestion of the workshop a 32m<sup>2</sup> storage shelf, fitted with a goods hoist, is being constructed at present. The new Works on Paper Gallery to the east of the Centre Court, previously a very shabby space and seldom used, has been opened with an exhibition of Dutch and Flemish prints from our own collection.



*The newly constructed gallery map on which visitors can see at a glance the location of exhibitions and the collection.*

We are justifiably proud of this new facility, believing it to be very crisp in design and of suitably intimate proportions for the showing of small works. The check-accessioning and photographing of the collection project is proceeding well and although this will require many months yet before it has been completed we are making excellent progress.



*A view of the recently refurbished 'Works on Paper' gallery showing the current exhibition of Dutch and Flemish etchings and engravings.*

Now that the worst of the disruption is behind us we hope that you might consider joining us for an informal tour of the gallery — both in front of and behind the scenes — to see the progress, talk about our aspirations and meet and talk with staff. To this end we have set aside two dates and will arrange other times in addition if this seems to be necessary. If you are a member of a group or society and would like to bring your fellow members we would be pleased to arrange a special time outside of these hours for you.

The two tours for 'Friends' are:

**Tuesday, March 27 10.00 a.m.**

(This will coincide with the 'English Watercolours' exhibition)

**Tuesday, April 17 2.00 p.m.**

(This will coincide with Neil Dawson's 'Seascape' installation)

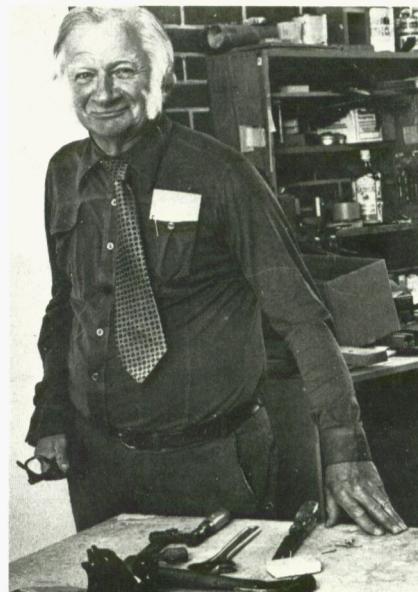
We would ask 'Friends' intending to participate in this tour to gather in the Centre Court where you will be met by the Director, Rodney Wilson. We hope that you can attend.

### Christchurch Central City Architecture Walking Tour

A walking tour of some of the city's most precious architectural monuments is planned for Saturday March 31 starting at 10.00 a.m. at the Gallery. Mr Jonathon Mané, Lecturer in Art History at the University of Canterbury, who has a profound knowledge of Victorian architecture, has kindly agreed to lead this tour and arrangements have been made to allow the party special access to Christ's College, The Christchurch Arts Centre (Old University) Provincial Council Buildings and State Trinity Church (the refurbished Trinity Congregational Church). Several other buildings will be included and the duration of the tour will be approximately two hours. This tour is restricted to members of the Friends' Society. If wet a cancellation will be broadcast on 3ZB after the 9.00 a.m. news.

### Gallery staff

Members will have read in the newspapers of the Christchurch City Council's decision to increase the staffing of this Gallery by a further four positions. Together with an existing vacancy and a vacancy as a result of Mr Tom Gordon's imminent retirement, we have been able to advertise six positions; those of Conservator, Curator, Custodian, Education Officer, Exhibitions Officer, and Technician. We are confident that all of these positions will be filled shortly after this number of the 'Bulletin' goes to press and that the successful applicants will become valuable members of staff extending and strengthening the service of this Gallery to the public of Christchurch. There can be no doubt that the quality and variety of our programme and the accompanying educative programmes, together with the routine maintenance, research and security afforded the Collection will improve as a result of the new impetus provided by these appointments. A further four temporary Employment Programme people will continue to work with us to bring the full complement up to a total of 13. In the next issue we hope to introduce you to the new staff members and we trust that, thereafter, they will become regular contributors to the 'Bulletin'. Tom Gordon has reached that time in life when his home workshop will replace that of the Gallery which he has served selflessly for the past eight years. We will all miss Tom's cheerful presence, and so too will many of our visitors. To many he is synonymous with the Gallery: they will be pleased to know that while he leaves the permanent staff, he, and his no less dedicated wife Jean, will continue to assist on weekends and public holidays. To Tom from all the staff — past, present and future — and from the Friends Society: enjoy a happy and well deserved retirement.

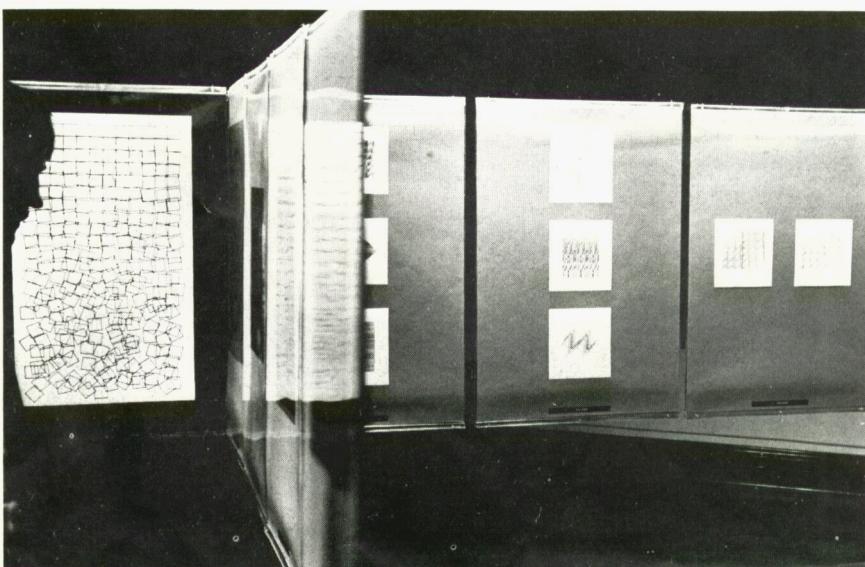


Tom Gordon, retiring gallery custodian.

### German Computer Graphics February 20—March 19



The paper tape reader, mini-computer and graphic plotter installed by the University of Canterbury for the duration of the 'German Computer Graphics' exhibition.



A view of the 'German Computer Graphics' exhibition, currently showing.

## Forthcoming Exhibitions Works on paper gallery

The inaugural exhibition in this Gallery, showing 27 sixteenth, and seventeenth century Dutch and Flemish etchings and engravings from the City Collection, will continue until the end of March. Works by Lucas van Leyden, Rembrandt, Jacob Jordaens, Jan Both, Count Hendrick Goudt, Jan van de Velde II, David Teniers, and numerous others combine to demonstrate that, as in the painting collection we have in the Works on Paper collection a comparatively strong Netherlandish holding. Much of the vitality of the Dutch painter/etchers from this, their 'golden century' is to be experienced here: from the open, airy, linear technique of Jan van de Velde to the vigorous richly worked surfaces of Rembrandt's *Portrait of Jan Asselyn* and deep chiaroscuro of Goudt's *Tobias and the Angel* after Elsheimer or of Aert van der Neer's *Nocturnal Canalscape*, to the spiky Seuniger forest view by Roelandt

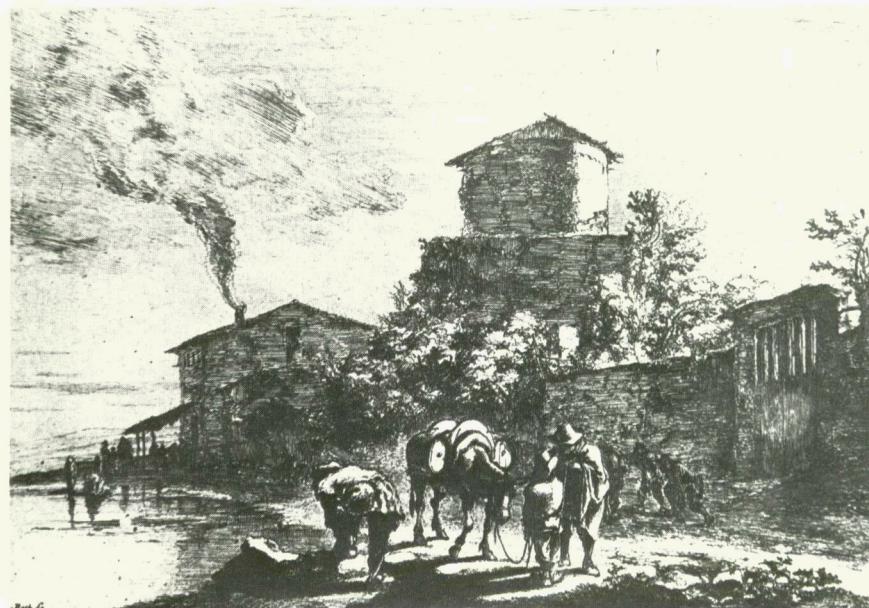
Roghman and the pithy line and spirited characterisation of David Teniers and Cornelis Bega.

Following this exhibition, another of prints from the Collection, seldom, indeed mostly never seen before will be installed. Opening on April 1 will be a collection of works by the two giants of English printmaking in the eighteenth century, William Hogarth (1697–1764) and Thomas Rowlandson (1756–1827). Eight works by Hogarth will be included – among them the *Tavern Scene* from the *'Rake's Progress'*, *Paul before Felix Burlesqued*, *The Fellow Prentices at their Looms* from *'Industry and Idleness'*, *The Bench*, *The Farmer's Return*, and *The Bruiser C. Churchill*.

Rowlandson will be represented by sixteen prints, among them the delightful cycle of twelve watercolour tinted etchings, *Horse Accomplishments*.



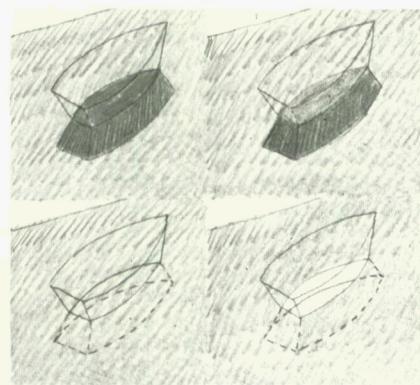
Thomas Rowlandson (1756–1827), 'Horse Accomplishments. Sketch 5 A Politician', etching, watercolour.



Jan Both (c. 1618–52), 'The Muleteer', etching, Kinsey coll. One of the collection of Dutch etchings from the City's collection showing until the end of the month.

## Neil Dawson, 'Seascape'. April 1–30

'Seascape' is the first of what will become a regular series of small exhibitions in which artists are invited to exhibit in one or other of the Gallery's spaces. These exhibitions will be non-commercial in nature allowing the artists to exhibit works, or prepare installations which might not readily find a suitable place in an art dealer's programme. They will also frequently be accompanied by didactic material, especially when the exhibition confronts the public with new and difficult ideas. Neil Dawson's 'Seascape' will be installed in one gallery with a collection of drawings and related material and a tape/slide interview, in the adjoining gallery.



An early preparatory drawing for the forthcoming Neil Dawson installation 'Seascape' in which the sculptor explores the negative/positive, solid/transparent effects of light and water and light on water.

Of the exhibition the sculptor writes:

'Seascape' is to be an installation work based on a continuing theme in my sculpture of light and water. The work will consist of inferred areas of illumination on water, boat forms and effects of transparency, reflection and shadow. The materials used will involve the use of painted wood, wire and fine mesh, used in recent small sculptures, but on a larger scale. Some other recent areas of investigation developed in the work include –

The translation of drawing approaches to 3 dimensional form.

The illusory possibilities of materials and scale.

The perceptual effects of altered alignment and balance.

Documentation of observational sources, working processes, idea development and previous related work will be on display in drawings and coloured slides.'

Other sculpture exhibitions for 1979 include the 'Carl Sydow (1940–1975) Memorial Exhibition' in May, 'New Zealand Sculptors at Mildura' in August and September, followed by 'Mat Pine', the 1979 Frances Hodgkins Fellow, in the second half of September. Other small installations will include an exhibition of drawings by Barry Cleavin towards the end of the year, and, possibly, recent Auckland paintings by Alan Pearson.

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**Carl Sydow (1940-1975) Memorial  
Exhibit May 1-31**

It is now more than three years since that tragic Christmas when, after an eminently successful exhibition of drawings at the Brooke/Gifford Gallery, Carl Sydow quite unexpectedly died. With him went a respected colleague and friend for many, and an important sculptor. Although Carl's own sculpture had perhaps only reached the genesis of full maturity, he is most important pioneer of the new generation of New Zealand sculptors. The ideas intended for his sculpture found their most perfect realisation in the various series of drawings completed in the last four or five years of his life. By good fortune a substantial number of these have been preserved and a representative selection of 44 works has been made for inclusion in the exhibition. Unfortunately it is a somewhat different story regarding the sculpture. Many works have been destroyed and yet others were recycled as materials for later pieces. Consequently only some dozen works of various sizes and from various stages in the artist's development have been selected, restored (even in one case reconstructed) for inclusion. A catalogue, poster and reproduction will be provided for this important exhibition; students of Carl's old teaching institution, the Technical Institute, are designing informative panels and it is hoped to project a series of colour slides illustrating past pieces and installations which sadly are no longer preserved.

The catalogue will provide a very complete documentation of Carl's life and work and will include additional essays by Barry Cleavin, a colleague at the Technical Institute and close friend, and Tom Taylor, his tutor and later friend and colleague. Furthermore Tom Taylor, himself a major catalyst in New Zealand contemporary sculpture, has kindly consented to open the exhibition (invitation enclosed).

Carl Sydow was born May 9, 1940, at Takapau, received his post-primary education in Palmerston North and arrived in Christchurch to study Fine Arts in 1959. In 1962 he completed a post-primary teachers' college course and followed that the year after with an Honours year course at Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland. His first public exhibition 'Painters and Sculptors of Promise' was with the Auckland Society of Arts in 1963.

Thereafter he received an award from the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand and travelled in 1964 to Britain, remaining there for two years.

For two years after his return, the only indication we can detect of the direction his work was subsequently to take is confined to his drawings. But after 1967 he steadily and progressively developed a 'constructed' sculpture, utilising the most mundane industrial materials — steel, perspex, pipe, hose, plastic, perforated zinc and springs — exploiting them to the full in the pursuit of a chastened beauty. With them he created a vocabulary of undulating forms in space, of effects of transparency and density, of the moiré patterns resulting from overlays of mesh, of gentle kinetic rhythms — physical and optical.

This exhibition reviews the state of his sculpture and drawing at the time of his death.



A visitor in the McLeavey Gallery Sydow Exhibition in August 1973

Robert McDougall Art Gallery  
P.O. Box 237  
Christchurch  
New Zealand

Location  
Botanical Gardens  
Rolleston Avenue  
  
Telephone 791660