

## Bulletin

## The Robert McDougall Art Gallery

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

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### Art Review Awards

A new approach to art education, the Art Review Awards, jointly sponsored by this Gallery and The Star, will be launched on the morning of Saturday, April 30. These awards aim to identify and encourage future art journalists and to provide experience and training in art reviewing and appreciation.

They offer \$300 in cash prizes, plus art books and honorary memberships in the Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery Inc for the best writing about works of art or artists exhibiting at the Gallery between May 1 and October 31 1983. The adult winner receives \$200, and the secondary school winner receives \$100.

"The shortage of people able to translate into language the ideas carried in works of art and to communicate an informed viewpoint may be because encouragement and experience has not been provided in this field," says Gallery director John Coley.

"With the increasing interest in art and the large numbers undertaking art studies, there could well be an untapped reservoir of talented art communicators," he says.

Leading art critics Brett Riley and John Hurrell will introduce their personal approach to reviewing at the opening symposium at the Gallery, which will be addressed by John Coley on the responsibilities of the art critic.

A.K. Grant, the well known journalist and social commentator, will take part in the following panel discussion.

Full details of the Awards are available from the Gallery, and Bulletin readers are urged to help by mentioning these Awards to all interested young writers in their acquaintance.

### Picture of the Month

In May a column entitled *Picture of the Month* will appear in *The Press* on Saturday morning. It will feature a painting from the McDougall's collection with information about the artist, the subject and style of the painting, the sources of influence and details such as how the Gallery acquired the painting and whether there are more works by the artist in the McDougall and other galleries throughout the country. The paintings chosen represent a wide variety of styles from 17th century Dutch genre to 20th century New Zealand abstract.

The painting will be on display in the

gallery for one month and copies of the text will be available for those interested.

Later on in the year the gallery plans to produce a Bulletin supplement containing the first ten Pictures of the Month. This will enable Friends to make up their own file of information on some of the paintings in the Gallery.

It is hoped that this column will not only tempt more people to come and view the art at the Gallery but also with the additional information about the work and the artist, will increase their pleasure in the works.



Picture of the Month for May. *The Lacemakers* by Henry La Thanque.

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## New Reception/Information Officer appointed

The Gallery is pleased to welcome Miss Deborah Shepard to the staff as the Reception/Information Officer, and wishes her every success with her new and demanding position. Miss Shepard is a graduate of the University of Canterbury, where she majored in Art History, and we are certain she will be of considerable assistance to the many Gallery visitors who pause at the desk for help and information.



*Deborah Shepard.*

## Gift by Mrs Vy Elsom of a Portrait of Dame Ngaio Marsh

The Art Gallery Director has accepted for the City collection a portrait of the late Dame Ngaio Marsh, a gift of the artist Mrs Vy Elsom. The portrait was begun some years before the last year of Dame Ngaio's life and completed following her death. Mrs Elsom was for many years a close friend of Dame Ngaio's.

Mrs Elsom was born in Melbourne and studied art in London receiving the Diploma in Painting from the Camberwell School of Art and Craft. She pursued a career as an illustrator and fashion artist between 1930-1938 and taught portraiture and figure drawing in Canterbury from 1950. She was awarded the Kelliher Portrait Award in 1969 and the Redcliff Prize for watercolour painting. She has held three solo exhibitions. For some years her drawings of people and the world of theatre were published in the Christchurch Press.

Mrs Elsom's portrait is a fine characterisation of one of the city's most distinguished women of letters and represents in the City collection an artist who has been a noted practitioner in the field of portraiture for more than thirty years.

## Contemporary Australian Ceramics May 13-June 12

The McDougall Gallery is delighted to receive, through the services of the N.Z. Art Gallery Directors' Council, a prestige exhibition of the works of 38 leading Australian ceramic artists. Funded and organised by the Crafts Board of the Australia Council in association with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, the exhibition will travel to the U.S.A. and Canada after leaving New Zealand. It will be opened at the McDougall on May 14 at 7.45 p.m. by Christine Ross, executive director of the N.Z. Crafts Council.

The seventy-eight pieces being shown reflect great diversity of technique, imagery, scale and temperature range, and many move out of the realm of craft into that of fine art. The exhibition represents "work that could have been made in no other country and at no other time" according to Kenneth Hood, deputy-director of the National Gallery, Melbourne, who made the selection. The flavour is unmistakably Australian, with the use of Australian

landforms, bird and animal life, and satirical comments on Australian society. It is an important indication of how far Australian ceramicists have gone in the last decade, a decade when Australians have begun to assert their cultural identity.

Names which have been synonymous with Australian ceramics for some time contribute to the exhibition. They include Les Blakebrough, Joan Campbell, Marea Gazzard, Milton Moon and Peter Rushforth. A number of the works by younger ceramicists particularly John Johnston, Maggie May and John Teschendorff are quite outside the normal traditions of working with clay.

Tertiary education courses, Crafts Board grants, journals, exhibitions and conferences have all contributed to the larger number of people involved in Australian ceramics. Its growth since the early seventies has been vigorous, with many highly organised ceramic groups now working throughout the country.



*Music Box 1981 by Stefan Szony.*



### Hot Air Balloon Workshop June 11

The Christchurch winter with its cold still air brings dread and foreboding to many hearts, and so to enliven a cold winter morning the Gallery is again organising a Hot Air Balloon day for Sunday 3 July in Hagley Park near the Armagh Street Bridge.

For the past three winters enthusiastic young ballooners have used this opportunity to fly their colourful and imaginative creations and to provide a great deal of pleasure and fun for all.

If you would like to join them and make a balloon this year a simple pattern and list of instructions is available at the Gallery; or you may like to attend the balloon-making workshop at the Gallery on Saturday 11 June, 9.30am-12 noon.

The materials required are extremely simple and easily purchased — tissue paper, PVA glue, fine wire and cotton wool. All you need is a sense of fun and adventure.

### New Guides Join the Volunteer Team

We are very pleased to welcome a new group of Guides whose enthusiasm and interest in the Gallery exhibitions will add tremendously to the strength of the volunteer team.

The new Guides are Joan Batten, Helen Hallifax, Fleur Lester, Olwyn Loundon, Lady Christina McCombs and Dianne Swainne. We are sure they will enjoy working with us at the Gallery and hope their association with us will be a long and happy one.

### Acquisitions

Gifted by Miss M.K.C. Richard from the estate of Mrs Olive Stirrat.

#### Charles Melville Stirrat

*Tarbot Harbour,*  
Oil on Canvas

#### Vy Elsom,

*Portrait of Dame Ngaio Marsh,*  
Oil on Canvas.  
Gifted by the artist in memory of the subject.

Under the terms of the will of the late Olivia Spencer Bower who died early in 1982 the gallery was bequeathed six works to be selected after the artist's death. Those selected were as follows:

**Olivia Spencer Bower,**  
*Portrait of Alison Pickmore 1943*  
Oil on Board.

### Chance and Inevitability, a work by Richard Killeen June 14-July 22

Richard Killeen has been broadening the boundaries of N.Z. art for the last five years with his painted metal cut-outs with which others participate by arranging as they please. By producing an art form which enables persons other than the painter to participate in the painstaking and often self-conscious task of overall design, Killeen leaves them with the final decisions, while making himself curiously vulnerable in the role of prime originator.

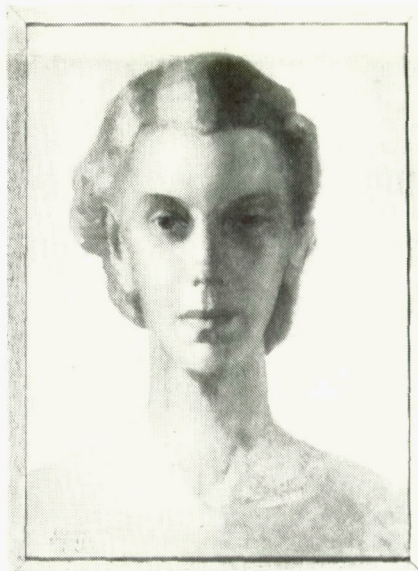
The McDougall opening of *Chance and Inevitability* on June 14 will follow the pattern of other Killeen openings

in that the guests will be invited to install the Killeen work. Those present will take a cut-out, and place it somewhere on a pristine wall. Their placements will be influenced not only by the colour, shape and texture of the pieces, but also by preceding placements and the way in which those that follow after will be affected. The resulting co-operative art work will raise interesting issues.

This promises to be an evening with a difference — chances are the Christchurch Killeen will inevitably be different from all others!



*The installation of a Killeen work.*



*Portrait of Alison Pickmore 1943*  
by Olivia Spencer Bower.

**Olivia Spencer Bower,**  
*Rising Mist Lake Wakatipu,*  
Watercolour.

**Olivia Spencer Bower,**  
*The Shed Enys,*  
Watercolour.

**Olivia Spencer Bower,**  
*Grindstones Queenstown,*  
Watercolour.

**Olivia Spencer Bower,**  
*Portrait,*  
Watercolour.

**Olivia Spencer Bower,**  
*The Grampians,*  
Watercolour.



## English and Italian Prints of the Eighteenth Century

During May the gallery will exhibit in the print-room a small selection of prints by English and Italian artists. The installation is planned to display innovations in technique in printmaking during the eighteenth century.

Works of engraving, mezzotint and etching will predominate, represented by such notable British printmakers as; Ballie, Basire, Earlom, Hogarth, Green, Sandby, Rowlandson, Strange, Wells and Woollett, and the Italians, Bartolozzi, Tiepolo, and Piranesi.

Throughout the course of the 18th

century printmaking underwent considerable change. In Great Britain as with the rest of Europe the reproductive, and interpretative engraver came very much to the fore, utilising newer techniques, such as mezzotint and stipple to serve his purpose, as seen for example in the work of Richard Earlom and Valentine Green. The etchers also made the most of the newer techniques of soft ground and aquatint. The British etchers Laporte and Sandby used them respectively to particular advantage and with much success.

The mania for travel by the English during this age carried most to Italy, providing many Italian printmakers with a new public. Piranesi in

particular had an impressive appeal to such a wide audience. The spin-off from these overseas excursions encouraged a far greater exploration of Britain, particularly rural Britain. Artists ventured onto highways and into by-ways with the result that a whole flood of topographical prints ensued.

This was also undoubtedly an age of strong individualism among artists. Many of the artists represented in this exhibition became known equally well for their infamy as their success as printmakers. Sir Robert Strange for example was very much an adventurer, William Woollett died an ignominious death, and Bartolozzi's hedonistic pursuits became legend.

## European Paintings from the Collection

Recently showing in the south gallery were a selection of works from the European easel painting collection. The installation spans a period from approximately 1660 to 1960 and includes painting of the French, Dutch, and Italian schools, by artists such as Henrietta Browne, Petrus van der Velden Jacopo Amigoni, Carlo Saraceni, Gerard Dou, Othon Friesz, Lucien Simon, Henri Lebasque, Roger Lersey, Jacques Winsberg, and others attributed to Cuyp, Vernet, Van Goyen, Steen, and Wouvermans.

The Gallery's collection of European easel paintings is not large due to the fact that, a preponderance of British works dominated the foundation collection. Two years prior to the Gallery opening, its benefactor expressed publicly his wish that a collection of European works could be started through gifts from private collections. To this purpose in 1930 he presented the Gallery with its first work of European painting, an oil on canvas with the title *La Lecture de la Bible* by Henrietta Browne (Mme de Saux). It may be recalled by many that this work was the subject of a supplement to issue number 21 of Bulletin by Mrs Julie King, lecturer in French Painting at Canterbury University.

Unfortunately for the foundation collection, few citizens were fired with the same enthusiasm as was Robert McDougall. Nevertheless, there were a few exceptions, most notably Mr H.C.P. Van Asch who gifted the now celebrated *Dutch Funeral* by Petrus van der Velden. Also at this time the Neave Family gifted the painting *Bacchus and Ariadne* by the Italian artist Jacopo Amigoni which had been bought from Christies in 1929.

The bulk of the collection during those early years came either from the Canterbury Society of Arts or the James Jamieson Bequest. Both collections included good works of European painting. Amongst those

presented by the Canterbury Society of arts were *A Scene in a tavern* attributed to the School of Jan Steen, *A Cow Drinking* attributed to Aelbert Cuyp, and a landscape by an unknown artist of the seventeenth century Haarlem School. This work had formerly been in the collection of Capt Charles Garcia, the first secretary of the Canterbury Society of Arts. By far the most important oil to come from the Jamieson Collection was *The Cornfield* by the nineteenth century French artist Eugene J. Boudin.



*Actors at a Sideshow* by Lucien Simon.

Few further gifts were forthcoming until 1938 with the death in London of May Schlesinger. Under the terms of her will she bequeathed several hundred pounds to the Gallery for the acquisition of a major work of European painting. Her will was not entirely explicit and the Christchurch City Council asked Sydney Thompson, a former member of the Art Gallery Committee, to act on its behalf in purchasing suitable works of European painting.

Sydney Thompson had recently returned to France. He knew there were fewer paintings of the French School in the Gallery Collection than any other. As there were virtually no

works by early twentieth century French artists he finally decided that this was the gap that should be filled. Four paintings and one lithograph were purchased. Of the paintings, his principal choice was a work by the artist Lucien Simon with whom he had painted for six months during 1911. The painting chosen was *Actors at a Sideshow*, a large canvas full of atmosphere and vitality. The other three paintings were also by contemporary French artists: Maurice Asselin's *A Girl Reading*, Henri Lebasque's *Across the Bay* and *In the Woods* by Othon Friesz, the celebrated Le Havre painter and contributor to the 1906 Fauve exhibition. With these additions the French section of the European painting collection was boosted considerably.

It was almost two more decades before further significant acquisitions were made to the European painting collection.

In 1965, on the death of Heathcote Helmore, the Gallery received a major work *The Alchemist* by the 17th century Dutch master Gerard Dou. This painting had been brought to New Zealand sometime in the 19th century and was for many years in the collection of Mr C.M. Gray, Mayor of Christchurch from 1904-1905. It is today, still the Gallery's finest work of European painting.

During the 1970s brave attempts were made to improve this collection but limited acquisition resources made the purchase of good European works more difficult. Several purchases were made including the flower-piece, *Roses, Honeysuckle and Other Flowers in a Sculptured Vase* by the 17th century Dutch artist Jan Van Son. This painting was purchased in 1973 with assistance from the National Art Collections Fund of Great Britain.

It is unfortunately now no longer realistic for the Gallery to compete for good works of European painting on the international market, and we must continue to rely on the generosity of the public.



### The Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday, March 24 at the McDougall Gallery was attended by seventy members — another excellent A.G.M. attendance!

The business part of the meeting did not take long, as there were no nominations for the executive from the floor, enabling the existing team to be re-elected for a further term.

The executive is (as before): Robert Erwin (president), Pat Unger (secretary), Anne Crighton (treasurer); Barry Wilkie, Vivien Mountfort, Margaret Best, Helen Hood, Mary McAlpine, Julie King, John Hay, Gerrit van der Lingen.

The President raised various items under general business. He outlined the need for this A.G.M. to give the incoming executive the authority to raise subscriptions for the 1984 financial year, should this be necessary. At the same time he emphasised that the committee does not see the Society as a profit-making organisation, and that subscriptions will only be raised if future income does not meet reasonable needs.

It was then proposed and agreed to by the meeting to give the executive the authority to raise the student subscription from \$5 to \$6, the single membership from \$10 to \$12, and the joint membership from \$15 to \$18.

Mr Erwin also outlined a proposed budget for 1983-84 in which a deficit, rather than a surplus is planned. A major item of expenditure this year will be the establishment of a stock of greeting cards displaying four New Zealand works from the Gallery's collection.

In organising this, the committee is responding to requests from members and from the public, and sees this as a service that the Friends can and should offer. In the long term the sales of cards will produce income and so help keep subscriptions at a lower level, but any initial income is likely to be spent in further developing the range of cards available.

Following the business section of the meeting, members settled down to enjoy Gerrit van der Lingen's illustrated talk "The Joys of Travel, Artwise". It was interesting to note that several of those present had heard this talk when it was given at a coffee morning last year, and had come to hear it again.

Dr van der Lingen's profession of geologist has taken him to many fascinating parts of the world and it was abundantly clear that he had taken every opportunity to explore not only the material aspects, but the art of the various places he has visited. His slides and talk communicated so well his own pleasure and enthusiasm for travel, for art, and for photography, that his audience appreciated being both informed and thoroughly entertained.

### Past Coffee Mornings

Coffee Mornings for the year got away to a good start with Fiona Ciaran's illustrated talk on "Stained Glass in New Zealand". It is hoped that we will be able to organise a field-trip later in the year viewing windows of local churches and chapels with Fiona as guide.

The March Coffee Morning had a record attendance of fifty-five members to enjoy Julie King's illustrated talk on Margaret Stoddart. Julie offers the results of thorough research blended with her own critical awareness so that the artist and the works are clearly and warmly illuminated. There will be a further opportunity for members to hear Julie King a little later in the year (see *Footnote*).

### Future Coffee Mornings

Our guest speaker for the Coffee Morning at 10.30 a.m. on Wednesday, May 18 will be the well known Christchurch potter David Brokenshire. The topic will be Porcelain, a medium in which Mr Brokenshire has been working for the

past ten years. He will outline its history from its Chinese beginnings in the Han dynasty to the present day; give brief insights into the techniques of porcelain making, and discuss items selected from the Australian Ceramics Exhibition and McDougall Gallery and Canterbury Museum collection.

On June 15, we will have Jonathan Mané, lecturer in Art History at the University of Canterbury speaking and showing slides relating to "A Year In England 1982".

### New Members

J. Bennett  
Mrs C.C. Clulvers  
E. Coburn  
Mrs M.E. Cooper  
Ms P.J. Dickie  
Martine Eller  
G.N. & E. Ellis  
Mr and Mrs J.H. Gibbons  
Dr J. Herbetko  
Janet Holm  
Paula Hope  
Miss Maisie Kilkelly  
Mrs C. Madden  
John McKelvey  
J.H. Monaghe  
Mrs Janet Moss  
Elizabeth Page  
B. Penny  
E.J. & A.L. Vial  
Mrs K.H. von Tunzelmann  
Dr & Mrs J.W.B. Walshe  
Patricia Weir  
Jennifer Weston

### Footnote

Members of the Friends of the McDougall will be welcome to hear Julie King give an illustrated talk on *Women Artists at the McDougall* on Wednesday, June 15 at 1 p.m. (following our own Coffee Morning). This lunchtime talk at the Stringleman Room, Canterbury Public Library, has been organised by the Regional Women's Decade Committee (chaired by the patron, Lady Hay). Admission \$1; men and women welcome.

P.O. Box 237, Christchurch  
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Secretary — Pat Unger, 487-482  
Treasurer — Anne Crighton, 557-737