



Christchurch City Council



The Robert McDougall Art Gallery

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Robert McDougall Art Gallery
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Artists



Back Alley, Minami Aoyama, *Tadanori Saito, 1983*

TOKYO SYNDROME

Tadanori Saito — Photographs

June 30 - August 2

The Robert McDougall Art Gallery is pleased to have the exclusive opportunity to host an exhibition of the work of Tadanori Saito whose work is having its first exposure in this country.

Mount Fuji probably is photographed more than anything else in Japan, but kabuki actors, sumo wrestlers, geisha and other exotica are pretty near the top of the list too. Just as popular are politicians and scantily dressed women (not necessarily pictured together). What you seldom see are pictures of average people, the scores of Satos, Andos and Matsumotos who keep the place going.

This is precisely what makes the pictures of photographer Tadanori Saito unusual; his subject matter is unabashedly ordinary. In a series of pictures taken over the last five years Mr Saito has captured his countrymen in active pursuit of the quotidian. They snooze in subway cars, wait at train stations, lounge in the park, devour bento lunches.

It took Mr Saito nearly 10 years abroad before he realised that his finest subjects were on his doorstep. After abandoning a mechanical engineering career to take up photography Saito set out for Europe in 1970. He was 26 years old. Eight years later he had visited 50 countries. His pictures of people in India, Malaysia, Afghanistan and Europe appeared regularly in Japanese magazines; his first gallery exhibition in Tokyo in 1973 showed Polish concentration camp ruins.

In 1978 he began to photograph the Japanese, looking at his countrymen much as he had viewed his foreign subjects — through the eyes of an outsider. "I think because I grew up in a rural community I'm interested in the average man, in what he eats, how he lives, what makes him happy." Mr Saito noted "The common man is much the same in Europe, America or Japan." But there was one big difference Mr Saito noticed when he returned to Japan. "It wasn't until I travelled to all those foreign countries that I noticed in Japan people do everything together and

they don't mind it. They enjoy being in crowds, but people from other countries don't."

Shortage of space is a prime reason for Japan's crowds (note the image of a vast tangle of bicycles beside a train station) and the photographs show how the average Japanese adapts from childhood to old age. One charming image shows

an old man seated cross legged on the ground his two travelling cases and shoes set neatly beside him as he awaits his train: another shows a man enjoying a sleep curled into a small ball as he waits.

Mr Saito's pictures also reflect the problem of how to spend leisure time. Many of the subjects are either working or sleeping. "Japanese men don't know

how to enjoy their spare time. To work so hard does not always bring happiness," he adds.

Tokyo Syndrome has been exhibited in Japan and Switzerland before coming to Christchurch.

RIDUAN TOMKINS

June 1 - June 28

Riduan Tomkins has recently been appointed to head the Painting Department at the University of Canterbury for a 3 year tenure. Virtually unknown here, this highly experienced painter has an international reputation.

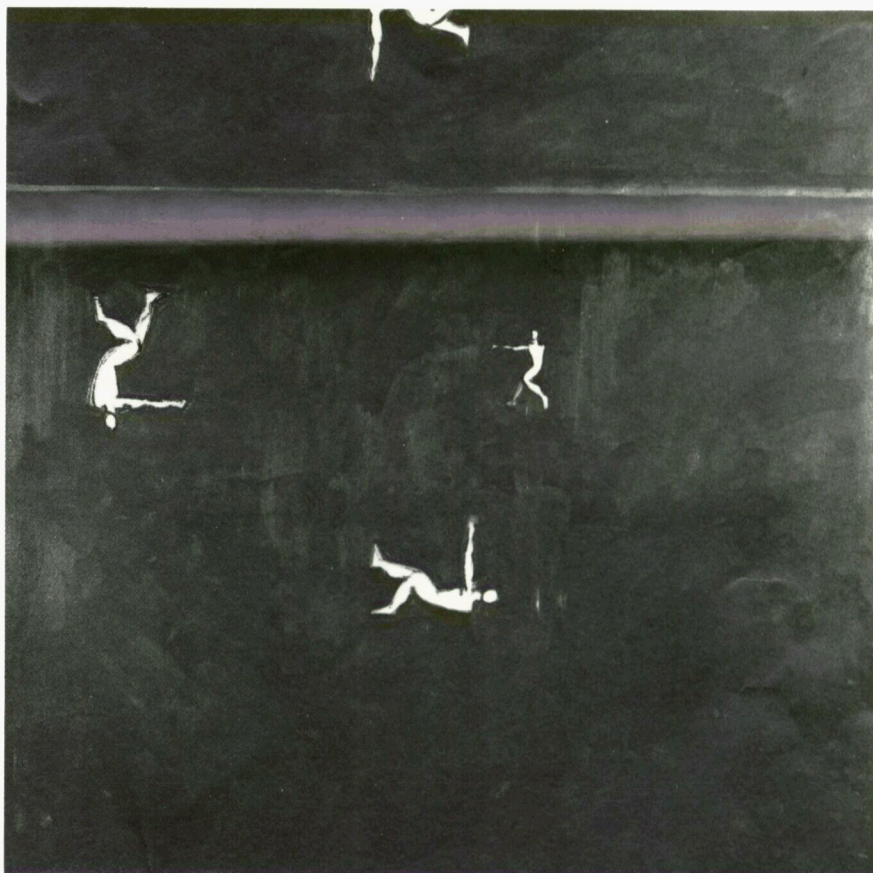
Born in England, graduate of Wimbledon School of Art and the Royal College of Art, London, he has taught in Art Colleges and Schools in England and Canada. His list of solo and group exhibitions reads impressively — London, Toronto, Dublin, New York, Montreal and Nova Scotia, including "An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture" Museum of Modern Art, New York, where he was the only artist from Canada, invited to show.

A prolific worker, he is mounting 5 solo exhibitions in as many months, in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

Riduan Tomkin's paintings are lyrical puzzles. Likened to the freshness of a summer's day, in contrast to the calamity of an emergency ward on Saturday night, they are free of anxiety, if full of uncertain truths. They counterpoise abstraction with figuration, reason with yearning, and theory with dictum.

Tiny figures make statements about existential space, crinolined figurines question the religion of art history, cows imply a generosity of spirit as they circle their square, and Oscars stand as awards to paint in resolution.

These fanciful works are historically conscious, romantic, rational and decorative. After the increasing sterility of Minimalism and Conceptualism, Riduan Tomkins reintroduces a non-Western concern for life into his art. This allows him to combine formal observations with spiritual attitudes, which he paints in reflective dialogue, within each canvas, for enjoyable viewing.



Riduan Tomkins

ART WORKS A CLOSER ACQUAINTANCE

Some time ago we began what became a particularly popular beginners course in basic art appreciation. We called it 'Art Works : A Closer Acquaintance' and still have quite a number of our Friends on the waiting list to do this short programme with us.

The good news for them is that when Te Maori and the 1986 major international touring exhibitions have passed we will be reviving "Art Works : A Closer Acquaintance". Using 4 two hour sessions on either a Saturday morning or

Wednesday afternoon our Gallery Guides will introduce some of the concepts useful for looking perceptively at art works on exhibition in the Gallery. Groups will be kept to around 10 people to facilitate discussion, coffee will be served and the course fee will be \$15.

Those interested in this programme are asked to collect a pamphlet or leave names and addresses at the Gallery Information desk or to contact Ann Betts the Gallery's Education Officer, telephone 50-915.

EION STEVENS

Artists Project

May 29 - June 14

Eion Stevens first began exhibiting in 1979 at the Brooke Gifford Gallery in Christchurch and since that date has shown his work with most of the major New Zealand dealer galleries. As a direct result of this exposure many paintings are now in both public and private collections. Stevens was born in Dunedin in 1952 and graduated in 1973 with an honours diploma in Fine Arts from Otago Polytechnic.

During 1974-75 he attended Exeter College of Art in England where his formal art school training was extended.

The evidence of this is present in much of his work and at times he feels it can be something of an inhibiting force to his creativity. Of his artschool background he says, "My formal art school background is constantly at odds with a desire to paint intuitively".

As an experimenter in paint he considers that his relatively academic technique is driven by an eclectic, and occasionally subversive collage of ideas.

Having a prime interest in content he feels that "his experimentation has to be seen against a backdrop of influences of a more literary character". Over all Stevens feels however that his work is "cyclic" and it is this nature that he has acknowledged in his selection for the artists project exhibition.



Home Comforts, *Eion Stevens, 1983*

COMING EVENTS

- May** Please note that Exhibition Galleries will be closed to the public until 29 May.
- 20 Friends' Coffee Morning** 10.30 a.m. \$1.50
Robert Erwin will speak on Winter in Rome
- 29 Eion Stevens Artist's Project** to 14 June
- June** **Eion Stevens Artist's Project** to 14 June
- 1 Riduan Tomkins** photographs to 28 June
- 6 Saturday Continuing Group** 10.30 a.m.
- 17 Friends' Coffee Morning** 10.30 a.m. \$1.50
Speaker to be announced later
- 18 Kilmarnock Club** 10.30 a.m.
- 30 Tadanori Saito** — Photography to August 2
- 30 Permanent Collection** to 7 February 1988

Exhibition dates and programmes could vary slightly.

Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery Inc.

President — Peter Simpson 842-506
Secretary — Judith Hamilton 515-288
Treasurer — Chris Brocket 557-133



PETER SIMPSON

It is with pleasure that we introduce our new President, Peter Simpson, familiar to many in his capacity as a Senior Lecturer at Canterbury University and to the Friends through four years on the executive committee where he enjoyed his special interest, in purchasing works through the acquisitions sub-committee for donation to the gallery.

Born in Takaka in 1942, he was educated at Nelson College, the University of Canterbury (M.A.) and the University of Toronto (PhD). Now teaching in the English Department, University of Canterbury. A specialist in New Zealand literature, he also lectures on aspects of Australian, Canadian, Pacific, African, West Indian, United States and English literature.

Peter has published a critical book on New Zealand novelist Ronald Hugh Moirrierson (OUP, 1982) plus essays on New Zealand art and literature in *Landfall*, *Islands*, *Untold*, *The Listener*, *The Press* and other journals in New Zealand and overseas. He is Editor of *The Given Condition: Essays on Postcolonial Literatures* (1986) and *Look Back Harder: Allen Curnow's Critical Writings 1935-84*, to be published shortly by Auckland University Press.

He is the immediate past-president of the South Pacific Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (SPACLALS) for whom he edited the journal *Span* (1982-86), an international literary journal with a South Pacific focus.

In 1987 Peter is on leave from university writing a portion (there are several contributors) of a major reference work due for publication in 1990, *The Oxford History of N.Z. Literature*. Later this year he will spend two months in Europe lecturing and giving seminars on New Zealand literature and culture at universities in Italy, France, Germany and Scandinavia.

Peter has a strong interest in all the visual arts and especially the history of New Zealand painting, as expressed in, for example, the essay 'Habitation of the Whole: The Takaka Rock Paintings of Leo Bensemann', published in the Christchurch journal *Untold* (No. 2), also the topic of a talk given to the Friends. He is a collector of art catalogues, painting and other art objects.

He supports the Friends because he believes the Gallery does an excellent job with drastically limited resources and deserves public support. It also deserves expanded resources such as the Friends can provide or at least arouse public interest about. The Gallery is already one of the best things about

Christchurch and it has the potential, with a little help from its Friends, of being even better. Especially once its exhibition space is expanded to allow both touring shows (national and international) and local art to be shown at the same time.



Peter Simpson, *President of Friends of Robert McDougall*

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AT THE A.G.M.

Friday 20 March 1987

<i>President:</i>	Peter Simpson
<i>Vice President:</i>	Grant Banbury
<i>Secretary:</i>	Judith Hamilton
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Chris Brocket
<i>Committee:</i>	Robert Erwin
	Penny Orme
	Alison Ryde
	Hilary Langer
	Geoffrey Clark
	Ian Miles
	Andrew Parker
	Denise Copeland
	John Coley
	(ex-officio)

With the retirement of four foundation members, we warmly welcome the following new people to the executive committee of The Friends of the Robert McDougall:— Judith Hamilton, Denise Copeland, Ian Miles and Andrew Parker. It is hoped this generous support to The Friends will be a rewarding experience from which they and the gallery can benefit.

NEW MEMBERS

Janet Adams
Sarah Anderson
Miss M.C. Harris
Nicola Lusty
Brynn McCauley
Mr A.F. & Mrs R.M. Shaw
K.O. Sullivan