



Christchurch City Council



The Robert McDougall Art Gallery

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Robert McDougall Art Gallery
P.O. Box 2626 Christchurch
Botanic Gardens
Christchurch 1 Telephone 50-915

Artist



Gretchen Albrecht, Untitled Drawing 1964, pencil on paper.

Gretchen Albrecht

After Nature — A Survey 23 Years
March 17-April 24

As Albrecht is frequently seen as one of the major mid-career artists working in New Zealand abstraction this is a timely and interesting 23 year survey of her work. The exhibition was organised by the Sargeant Gallery, Wanganui and tours with the assistance of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council and The N.Z.A.G.D.C.

Gretchen Albrecht was born in Auckland in 1943 and graduated in

painting from Elam in 1964. It is from that year that the first drawings and paintings in this exhibition date. Figurative and broadly autobiographical in content these early works are markedly different from the well-known abstract works of the 70's and 80's.

By then the styles of Morris Lewis and Helen Frankenthaler, while perhaps not direct influences, were certainly reflected in Gretchen Albrecht's work. She was painting with vividly coloured thin acrylic washes on unprimed canvas. Nature was an impetus and, as a metaphor, appeared in these works but

they were focused more directly on the abstract essences and nuances of colour, light movement and rhythm. "Colour concentrates the feeling. Saturated, luminous, mysterious, intense, enigmatic and visual it assails the senses", she said. These are the elements that became paramount in her *Illuminations* series of 1977-78.

In 1979 Gretchen Albrecht travelled to the U.S.A. and Europe where she encountered first hand the works of the early Renaissance painters. Paintings such as Piero della Francesca's *Madonna del Prato* had an intense and long lasting influence on her ideas and her approach and were the main catalyst in a major shift in her painting during the 1980's.

Her new works still made allusion to nature but were also layered with references to the Renaissance painters, to the shapes used by them and to the architectural framework in which their works rest. Arch, vault, dome, cornice, lintel and canopy were referenced by subtle symbol and abstract sign.

In the hemisphere paintings of the 1980's she was "involving art and the body", shaping the canvas and leaving on the semi-circular surface painted trails of her own arm reach; "struggling to unite the inner longing with the outer reality — responding to the mystery and beauty in the act of painting".

"Colour concentrated the feeling", she said. "Saturated luminous mysterious intense enigmatic visual it assails the senses. Contrasts-repose and movement, density and space, energy and quiescence". These works of the 80's are probably those we now most frequently associate with Albrecht's works. This survey allows us to place them chronologically in the context of her personal life and artistic development.

The exhibition comes with a comprehensive catalogue and a video interview with the artist. Members of the Friends of the McDougall Art Gallery are most cordially invited to the exhibition opening on March 17 at 7.30 p.m.

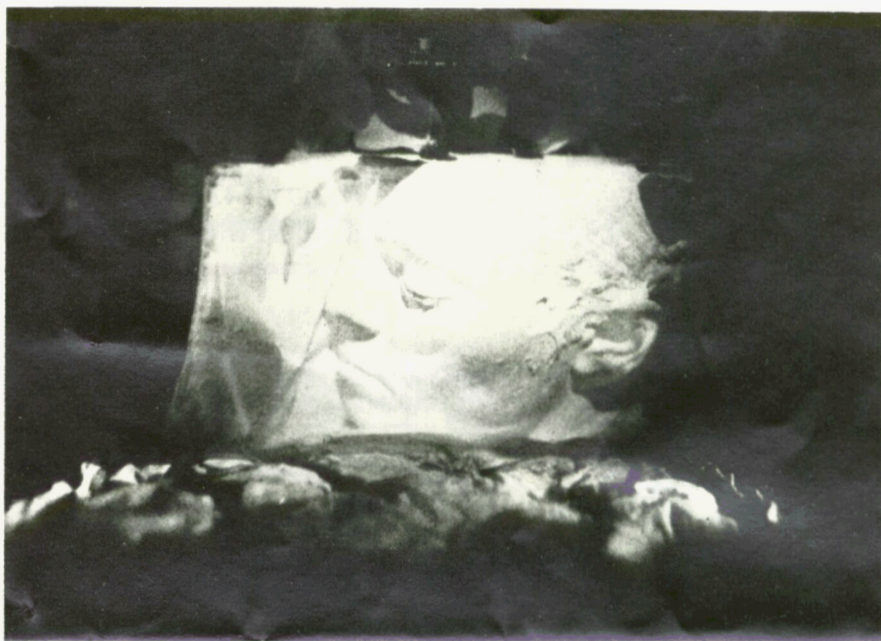
Future Sight

Innovations in art holography

April 2-23

Holograms are created by using a laser and light sensitive material chemically similar to a photographic emulsion. But unlike photography or painting, holography shows the subject with complete dimensional fidelity. A hologram can create everything your eyes see — size, shape, texture and relative position. But if you try to touch a holographic image all you'll find is focused light.

Holography was earlier known as 'lenseless photography' and dates from



Tom Cvetkovitch, *Nocturne. First Variation*, 1984, reflection hologram.

1947 when the Hungarian scientist Dennis Gabor discovered wavefront reconstruction while working on the resolution of the electron microscope. Named from the Greek 'holos' — whole, and 'gamma' — message, it was further developed with the invention of the laser beam.

Its applications in science and technology were immediate and once Dr Stephen Benton of the Polaroid Research Laboratories had discovered a method by which holograms could be illuminated by any type of light source in the 1960's, then it began to come to general attention.

Since then, combined artistic and scientific ventures have been exploring the creative possibilities of the medium and recent exhibitions of their work have been held in the USA, Britain, France, Germany, Venezuela, Israel and now in New Zealand. This show is organised and toured by the Museum of Holography, New York. Twenty-eight contemporary holograms from American, British, Canadian, German, Japanese and Dutch artists will be on exhibition. Accompanying the show is a twenty minute documentary video 'Holography: Memories in Light' which demonstrates several commonly used laboratory methods for producing holograms and looks at the ways holograms are entering our lives.

Future Sight is brought to Christchurch through the assistance of the Electric Corporation of New Zealand Limited. Admission will be \$5.00 adults, \$3.50 Friends and beneficiaries, \$2.00 children and \$10.00 family groups.

A special evening with a guest speaker is planned for members of the Friends of the McDougall on Wednesday April 6, 7.30 p.m. Tickets to this evening will be \$4.00 which covers entry to the

exhibition plus refreshment will be sold at the door. RSVP to 515-288 by March 30 to be included in this evening.

Natalia Gontcharova

March 11-May 5

In 1961, the year prior to the death of Russian born artist Natalia Gontcharova the British Council of Great Britain held a major combined retrospective exhibition of her work and that of her husband Mikhail Larionov.

For decades this artist had lived in relative obscurity, much of her work largely forgotten. In fact until the 1960's Natalia Gontcharova rarely appeared in even dictionaries of world artists then only as a minor figure.

Her contribution with that of her husband to the formative years of the modern movement in Russia, is now fully recognised worldwide. However to date New Zealand has not had the privilege of seeing an exhibition of her work.

The current show curated and toured by the National Gallery has as its focus seven works from its permanent collection of International Painting. In addition there are several loan works on paper from other collections including drawings and prints from the National Gallery of South Australia Adelaide and the National Gallery of Australia Canberra, and Pochoirs and Lithographs from the publication 'L'Art Decoratif Theatral Moderne' 1919 loaned by the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

Natalia Gontcharova was born in Moscow in 1881. At 17 she began to study sculpture at the Moscow Institute of Painting but by 1904 had shifted her interest strongly to painting, and with



Natalia Gontcharova, Un Grime, (An Actor) 1919, stencil print (pochoir).

her husband Mikhail Larionov whom she had met in 1900 she forged the course and promoted the cause of the modern movement in art before the Revolution.

From 1910 to 1914 Moscow was the scene of much experimentation in the arts and a torrent of modern tendencies, which embraced neo-primitivism, cubo-futurism in abstract and non objective art among the stylistic directions.

By 1913 she was also designing for Sergei Diaghilev's Ballet Russe and after moving to Paris in 1917 continued to paint and exhibit her work regularly. Although she still painted up to the late 1950's her work was seldom seen.

This exhibition comprises works that date from as early as 1908 through to 1958 highlighting some of the unique features of this artist's career. The exhibition will be opened on March 11, 6.00 p.m. by Anne Kirker a senior curator at the National Art Gallery, Wellington and will be followed at 7.30 p.m. by a public lecture 'Natalia Gontcharova: the woman, the artist, the exile'.

User Pays

With the bracing winds of Douglasian economics sweeping through the land, art galleries and museums may not be exempt from the chilling scrutiny of user pays advocates.

The arguments for paid entry to galleries and museums are being put forward again. What art lover would begrudge a modest entry charge to a public art gallery? Children will pay \$5.00 to attend the movies, why not \$1.00 to visit the art gallery? People value an experience more if they have to pay for it. Why should a controlling authority be expected to foot the bill for those gallery users who live outside the region and make no contribution towards its costs? There is no such thing as a free visit, somewhere a ratepayer is paying for it. Why should the many pay for the interests of the few?

In today's climate of fiscal reform, where nothing can be guaranteed to be the same tomorrow as it is today and politicians are impatient to create the new economic order, the counter

arguments will be dismissed as archaic and idealistic but they must be stated and advocated.

The tradition New Zealand galleries inherited from Britain was established by Sir Hans Sloane when he bequeathed his collection to found the British Museum in 1753. It was to be "kept for the use and benefit of the public, who might have free access to view and peruse the same".

We believe that free access to the nation's cultural property is the right of every citizen. The images and artefacts in galleries and museums are the symbols of where we have come from, what we have done, what we value, what we believe, what our aspirations are and, in totality, what we are. Museums and galleries, with libraries, universities and schools, are the agencies which record and transmit our cultural values, beliefs and standards. They must be freely accessible to all who wish to visit, enjoy, learn and experience. They are not monuments to the trivial pursuits of an idle elite, but essential emblems of identity for any society which lays claim to being civilised.

These are large claims but sustainable by the evidence of the status given to galleries and museums within the world's progressive communities and by the numbers of visitors who throng them.

Admission charges dramatically change the pattern of visits. Firstly, numbers drop. Earliest to go are the students, beneficiaries, the elderly and the young families at the bottom of the income ladder, for whom a visit to the art gallery is an experience that can be shared at no cost. The regular visitor who comes several times a years comes less frequently. Visits by parties of school children fall away. At present, the combined expense of bus fare and admission is too great for some schools whose teachers are well aware of the economic pressures facing many single parent families.

The question arises as to whether the income generated by admission is worth the cost of getting it. The issue and checking of tickets means staff attending to these tasks seven days a week at no little expense. Add to this the complication of issuing and keeping sight of season tickets, reductions for students and senior citizens, and special rates for gallery supporter groups and we will have further expense of proliferating tasks.

Of most concern when admission is charged is the shift of the public's perception of what an art gallery or museum stands for. From being a public amenity, available to all, an educational facility, in a real sense an extension of the education system, the gallery can become a place welcoming only those

who can afford to visit and support it. In some European and American situations, the ideal of a gallery being for the benefit of the public has been eroded to the extent that they are clearly exclusive clubs for a wealthy, fee-paying clientele.

Galleries are conscious of the need to hold costs and have sought ways to balance the principle of free access with ways of generating revenue. Admission charges to major visiting exhibitions recover their considerable expense. Sponsorship also helps keep costs down on exhibitions and special projects, going some way towards meeting the shortfall.

Who, then, pays? To put this responsibility back to the gallery and its supporters is to abandon civic accountability for the community's cultural heritage and standards.

The problem is surely a political one. It is inequitable that in our own case Christchurch City ratepayers fund a facility used by people living in Waimairi, Riccarton, Heathcote, Paparua, Lyttelton — local authorities which make no contribution to its costs.

If the one city plan eventuates, the cost will be shared more equitably, otherwise the funding of the gallery, museum, parks and libraries is surely a powerful argument for a citizens' tax levied upon all residents of the city, not just those owning property. In this way the cost of the amenities which contribute to the quality of life in Christchurch would be shared among those enjoying it.

John Coley

Gallery Events



Top

Mr J.E. Cook, Corporate Secretary NZI Corporation Ltd, speaking at the official opening of the Munch Exhibition.

Centre

Guests at the media breakfast for the Munch exhibition.

Left

Don Peebles who opened the Clairmont exhibition photographed at the opening.



Acquisitions

The following works have been purchased:

Grahame Sydney
Standing Model 1987
Etching

Matt Pine
Circle Segments No 1 1985
Aluminium/Acrylic

Alister Austen Deans
The Woods Outside Genshagen Camp
1943
Watercolour

Alister Austen Deans
Genshagen Camp 1943
Watercolour

Patrick Hanly
Aldebaran Vacation 1987
Screenprint

Patrick Hanly
Doing It 1987
Screenprint

Information Sought

I am a Master's student at the University of Canterbury currently involved in thesis research on the artist OLIVIA SPENCER BOWER. I would appreciate any information concerning the artist particularly details of works held in private collections. All replies will be treated in confidence. If you are able to assist, please contact:

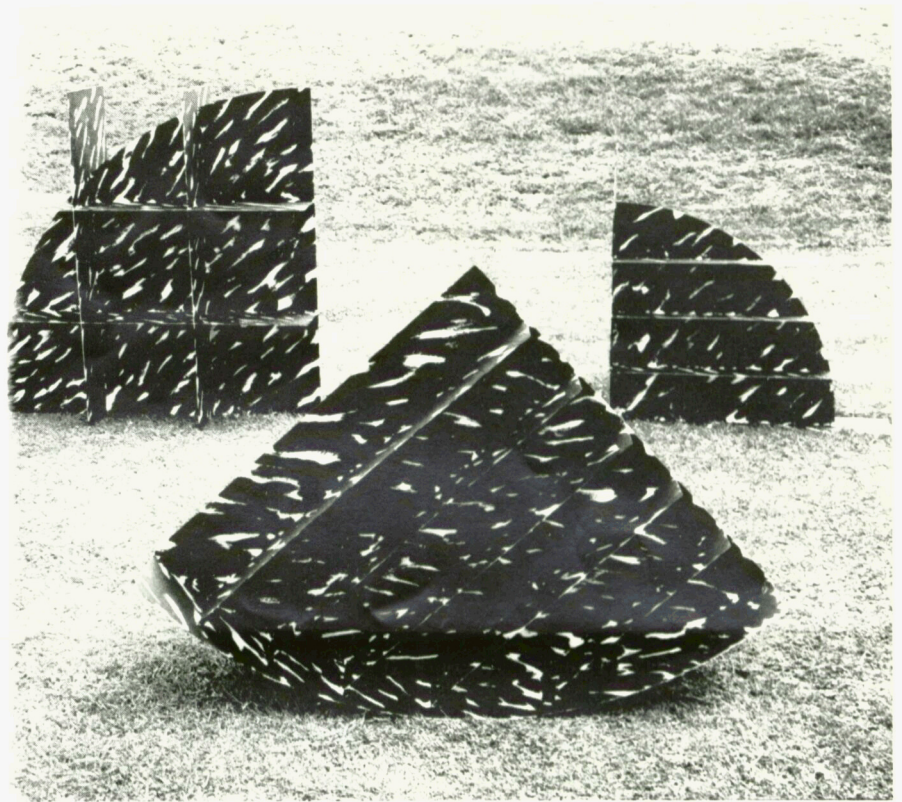
Judith Hamilton
Art History Department
University of Canterbury
Private Bag, Christchurch.

Information about GODFREY CLIVE MILLAR, born 1893 in Wellington died 1964 in Sydney, is currently being sought. People who knew him or hold correspondence and other documentation such as studio notebooks, paintings of all mediums and sculptures in New Zealand collections, that would be available for study are requested to contact:

Ms Ann Wookey
Department of Art History
La Trobe University
Bundoora 3083
Victoria, Australia.

New Guides

Friends interested in becoming Gallery Guides are asked to contact the Education Officer.



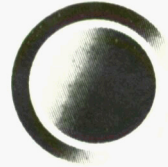
Matt Pine, Circle Segments, 1985.

Coming Events

- March**
- 1 Edwardian paintings** from the Collection — until March 7
 - 1 Recent Print Acquisitions** — until March 30
 - 5 Saturday Club** 10.30 a.m. Art appreciation club for adults.
 - 11 Natalia Gontcharova** — 6.00 p.m. Exhibition Opening 7.30 p.m. Slide Lecture — Anne Kirker, Senior Curator National Art Gallery, will speak on Natalia Gontcharova: the woman, the artist, the exile. Exhibition closes May 1.
 - 12 Continuing Club** 10.30 a.m. Art appreciation club for adults.
 - 14 Friends Annual General Meeting** 7.15 p.m. 8.00 p.m. Public Forum: A New Art Gallery — When, Where, Why and How. \$2.00.
 - 16 Friends Speaker of the Month: Julie King** — Finding Contexts for this Year's Exhibitions 10.30 a.m. Coffee served \$1.50.
 - 17 Gretchen Albrecht** — After Nature — A Survey of 23 years. 7.30 p.m. Exhibition Opening. Exhibition closes April 24.
 - 17 Kilmarnock Club** 10.30 a.m. Gallery club for disabled visitors — all welcome.
 - 27 Concert performances** — Isn't that a seagull? 2.30 p.m.
 - 30 Wednesday Club** 1.30 p.m. Art appreciation club for adults.
- April**
- 1 Gretchen Albrecht** — After Nature — until April 24. **Natalia Gontcharova** — until May 1.
 - 2 Future Sight.** Innovations in art holography from the Museum of Holography, New York — until April 23.
 - 6 Friends Evening for Future Sight,** innovations in holography 7.30 p.m. Tickets available. Guest speaker to be announced.
 - 9 Continuing Club** 10.30 a.m. Art appreciation club for adults.
 - 10 Lecture 3 p.m. John Campbell,** Physics Department University of Canterbury will speak on Holograms.
 - 20 Friends Speaker of the Month** — 10.30 a.m. John Campbell, Physics Department, University of Canterbury, will speak on Holograms. Coffee served \$1.50.
 - 21 Kilmarnock Club** 10.30 a.m. Gallery club for disabled visitors — all welcome.
 - 27 Wednesday Club** — 1.30 p.m. Art appreciation club for adults.
 - 28 Poetry Reading** — 7.30 p.m. Michael Harlow will give a reading of his recent work and discuss experiences as the Katherine Mansfield scholar 1986. Admission \$3.00.

Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery Inc.

President — Peter Simpson 842-506
Vice-President — Grant Banbury 798-578
Secretary — Judith Hamilton 515-288
Treasurer — Chris Brocket 557-133



Notice of Annual General Meeting

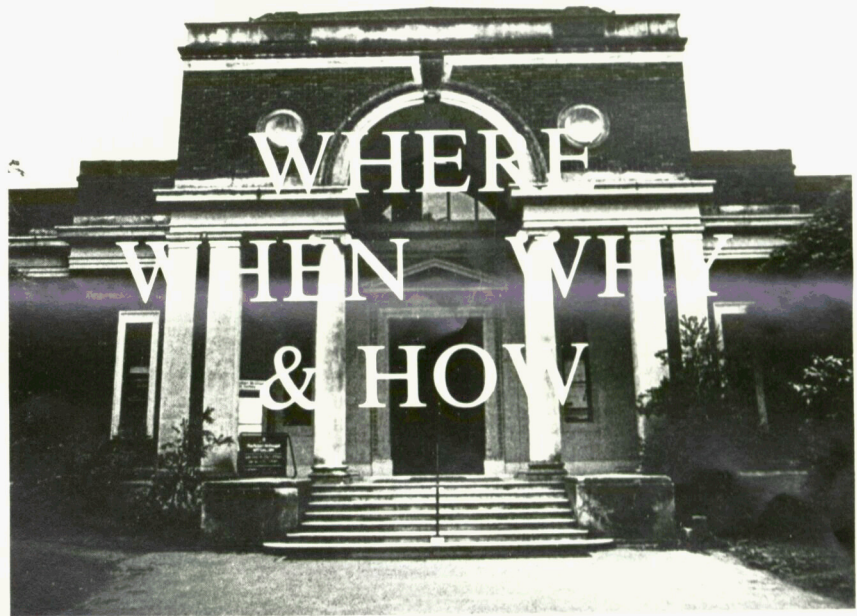
The Annual General Meeting of the Friends will be held in The Robert McDougall Art Gallery on Monday 14 March at 7.15 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of Annual General Meeting of 20 March 1987.
3. Presentation and adoption of Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 1987.
4. Presentation and adoption of Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet for the year ended 31 December 1987.
5. Election of Officers.
6. Any other business.

Copies of the Annual Report and Accounts will be available at the meeting. Nominations are called for the officers of President, Secretary, Treasurer and seven Members of the Executive Committee. Nomination forms, which should be sent to the Secretary by Wednesday 9 March, are available from the Information Desk at the Gallery, or by phoning Judith Hamilton, ph. 515-288.

Following the A.G.M. the Executive Committee of the Friends are holding a Forum on A NEW CITY GALLERY — WHERE, WHEN, WHY, HOW? The speakers will be:



Alister James (Chair)
Ken Gorbey
Peter Simpson
Peter Beaven
John Vial

John Coley
Julie King
Denis Dutton
Penny Orme

We hope you will come along to this stimulating evening. An admission charge of \$2.00 is payable at the door. This forum is open to the general public.

November Speaker of the Month

It seems to be customary to belittle Victorian art and to underestimate its achievements, but after a detailed study of the sculpture of the period Mark Stocker has come to a different conclusion. With the aid of excellent illustrations he convincingly demonstrated a great variety of subjects and expression, ranging from the classic and Renaissance tradition to contemporary portraiture, with a high degree of artistic merit. Christchurch is fortunate in having good examples of Victorian sculpture, such as the 'coat and trouser' realism represented by Godley, Lawson's statue of Moorhouse and the Frampton figures outside the Chamber of Commerce Building. This fascinating survey will have encouraged many of the Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery to look for further evidence of this rich period of art in our city.

Friends Christmas Function

The Friends Christmas Function on Sunday 13 December was a convivial occasion with a good number of our members enjoying wine and Christmas cake to a background of carols sung by the Aeolian Singers.

Our President Peter Simpson addressed those present and summed up another interesting and successful year for The Friends of the McDougall Gallery. He also presented the artist's proof of the special print Sue Cooke has created for the Friends to the Gallery Director, John Coley.

Award

Congratulations go to our Vice-President Grant Banbury on being the recipient of the Olivia Spencer Bower Foundation Art Award for 1988. This annual award gives Grant the opportunity to devote his full time to his painting. We wish him a successful year.

Clairmont Exhibition Opening: 10 December

Quite a large gathering of Friends was present at the opening of the superb survey exhibition of the work of the late Philip Clairmont. Don Peebles spoke about the artist's life and art, recalling his knowledge of Clairmont as an outstanding and talented student at the Canterbury School of Fine Art, and of his contribution to the development of New Zealand painting.

New Members

Bridget Gray (Life)
Jenny Walker
Deborah Walton

Gallery Shop

A reminder to Friends that we have a wide range of cards and reproductions in stock at the moment. Our cards are specially imported from overseas and gathered from producers throughout New Zealand. Ask about the Friends' discount.