



Christchurch City Council



The Robert McDougall Art Gallery

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Robert McDougall Art Gallery
P.O. Box 2626 Christchurch
Botanic Gardens
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Art
Life
Real
People



Duane Hanson, Self Portrait with Model 1979

Real People: Life Like Sculptures by Duane Hanson February 3 - March 19

Although we occasionally get indignant, we all enjoy being deceived by art – well at least, we enjoy the conscious experience of the 'illusion' in the trompe d'oeil piece. And most of us like to surreptitiously 'people-watch'. These fascinations bring large crowds to see Duane Hanson's 'Real People'. Seventeen amazingly realistic life-size sculptures of ordinary American citizens are touring New Zealand in this exhibition sponsored by the N.Z.I. Corporation.

Hanson, who was born in Minnesota in 1925, was impressed as a young artist by the polyester and fibreglass figures of the German sculptor George Gryko whose works he saw in Germany in 1959. Following Hanson's return to America in 1961, he began to make his own polyvinyl/acetate figures taking his subjects from contemporary American society. His subjects were taken from everyday life – the middle-aged jogger whose feet were feeling the strain of pounding the asphalt, the garishly clothed tourists taking in the sights abroad, and the overweight shopper with the loaded supermarket trolley. These he depicted with a remarkable veracity which comes from the fact they are cast from living models, dressed in real clothes and equipped with real accessories. It takes

Hanson 2-4 months to create each figure, painstakingly reproducing the skin tones and hair texture and finding exactly the right costume and stance.

But Hanson's degree of realism has also provoked considerable comment and controversy. Some, like the critic in Time magazine, say Hanson's sculptures are "the most grossly truthful pieces of social observation in American art". Others question the technique of using life casts and ask "is this art or is it merely a mechanical reproduction of life?" In the late 1960's and early 70's when he exhibited *The Bowery Derelicts, Accident and War* Hanson's critics said he was "riding on the back of sensationalism".

The Director and Staff of the Gallery extend warm season's greetings and best wishes for a joyous New Year to all those who have supported the Gallery during 1988.

We look forward to sharing with you the Gallery's exciting 1989 programme.

John Coley

Whether his technique is too closely based on reality to be truly called art is an issue our Gallery visitors will need to consider for themselves. Whichever way they make their decision, they will not fail to be fascinated by the realism.

Hanson depicts people who are bored, fatigued or stressed to exhaustion by modern life. "My sculptures" he says "are about the imperfections of life, the burdens that we all bear". He shows older people whose faces and bodies reflect the complications of their lives. He deals with "people who lead lives of quiet desperation. I show the empty-headedness, the fatigue, the ageing, the frustration" he says. Within each study there is also a strong element of sympathy, understanding and compassion.

Not all his subjects however are depressed or dejected. Hanson also uses the youthful figures of his daughters and the family beagle.

This type of work he says 'takes sculpture off its pedestal'. He says his works are popular because people love to look critically at others but feel guilty about doing it. "With my figures" he says, "they can go up to them, stare at the wrinkles, the hair, the skin tones – something they wouldn't do normally. People are fascinated by how other people look and they seem to approach my figures as people they know". We too, have the chance to get to know Duane Hanson's Real People during their six weeks in Christchurch.

Admission to Real People will be \$6 adults, \$4 Friends of the McDougall, Senior citizens and students, and \$2 children. The exhibition is accompanied by an audio-visual programme and a full catalogue and there will be a special preview to which Friends are invited on Thursday February 2 at 6 p.m. Admission \$6



Duane Hanson at the Gallery, August 1988.



Duane Hanson, Woman with a Child in a Stroller 1985

Novel Works

January 18-March 3

Novel works has been curated by Ewen McDonald of the Mori Gallery Sydney from the work of three women artists – Pauline Thompson from Auckland, Deborah Russell from Sydney and Caroline Williams from Melbourne. They were chosen by McDonald because of the common theme he saw in their work. This theme is the 'absence of narrative' in otherwise literary and clearly figurative works.

He goes on to explain "Novel Works covers not only their recent work, but work that is of the novel – pertaining to the set up or contrivance of narrative. This does not mean that the paintings themselves necessarily illustrate or describe a story, it's more the conjuring of a peculiar, sometimes disturbing atmosphere – the twilight when things do not appear as they seem."

Thus the notion of suspense is paramount in these works. They convey a mysteriousness, a disquiet. When one is searching for the enlightenment of the complete picture – the full story – something is held back, and it is this absence which unsettles and creates an eerie unrest.

Novel works contains 4 or 5 works by each artist and its tour is organised by the N.Z.A.G.D.C.

New Guide Intake for 1989

If you are interested in joining the McDougall's team of Gallery Guides, please leave your name, address and telephone number for the Education Officer, Ann Betts, who will be pleased to discuss the programme with you.

McDOUGALL ART ANNEX

Arts Centre, Worcester Street
P.O. Box 2626 Christchurch
Telephone 650-915

Hours 10 a.m.-1.00 p.m. 1.30 p.m.-4.30 p.m. daily

John Cousins Video Installation February 9-19 1989.

An exhibition by Christchurch artist, John Cousins will open to the public on February 9. Already well known both nationally and internationally for his performance and video installation works, John will combine elements of sculpture, video, projected slide images, sound and performance in this forthcoming exhibition.

We can expect to see an exploration of ideas which highlight the artist's physical presence in, and interaction with, the environment. The video images, for example, are produced by a stationary camera with changes in the composition of

an image achieved either by natural, real time changes or by physical action initiated by the artist. John Cousins looks at the "role of human beings with their capacity for consciousness, imaginative thought and volition; within the implacable matrix of fixed sun, moving earth and inanimate object".

A special concert/preview will be held at 5 p.m. on February 8 at the Annex.

Chain Reaction

February 24-April 2

From February 24 until April 2, 1989, the McDougall Art Annex will house an exhibition called 'Chain Reaction'.

Chain Reaction will bring to fruition a totally new concept in exhibition curation. The chain begins when we invite one artist to participate in the exhibition. That artist then invites another to participate and so on until a total of six artists is reached, thus completing the chain. The artists must be living in Canterbury and each artist may only be asked to contribute once. In order to keep an element of chance and surprise in the chain we have asked that the artists' identity remain 'secret' from the other artists in the exhibition. We hope to have a group show which will be allowed to progress freely, along with any similarities or disparities that may develop as a natural consequence of this 'Chain Reaction'.

A preview for the exhibition will be held at 5 p.m. on February 23, 1989.



Dr Peter Simpson making the opening address at the opening of the McDougall Art Annex in October



Christchurch artists Bill Hammond and Bing Dawe with Duane Hanson at the Gallery reception, August 1988.

Coming Events

- January**
- 1 **Advance Australian Painting**, until January 17
 - Richard Misrach Desert Cantos**, until January 15
 - Canterbury Potters 25th Anniversary Exhibition**, until January 17
 - ANNEX Nicola Robb/Dale Copeland**, until January 29
 - 18 **Novel Works** – Deborah Russell, Pauline Thompson, Caroline Williams, until March 12
- February**
- 1 **Novel Works**, until March 12
 - 2 **Preview Real People** Life-Like Sculptures by Duane Hanson 6.00p.m.-7.30p.m. Admission: \$6.
 - 3 **Real People** – Life Like Sculptures by Duane Hanson, until March 19. Admission: Adults \$6, Friends, Senior Citizens and Students \$4, Children \$2.
 - 4 **Saturday Club** 10.30 a.m. Art Appreciation Club for Adults, \$4. Admission to Real People.
 - 8 **ANNEX** A special concert/preview of John Cousins Video Installation 5 p.m. Exhibition closes February 19.
 - 11 **Continuing Club** 10.30 a.m. Art Appreciation Club for adults, \$4 admission to Real People.
 - 15 **Special General Meeting of Friends of McDougall Art Gallery** 10.15 a.m.
 - Speaker of the Month** – Coffee Morning 10.30 a.m. A taped commentary by Duane Hanson on his works in Real People and a visit to the exhibition. \$4 admission to Real People plus \$1.50 coffee.
 - 16 **Kilmarnock Club** 10.30 a.m. Art appreciation Club for the physically disabled. New members most welcome. \$4 admission to Real People.
 - 22 **Wednesday Club** 1.30 p.m. Art appreciation Club for adults. New members welcome. \$4 admission to Real People.
 - 24 **ANNEX** Preview for **Chain Reaction** 5 p.m., Exhibition closes April 2.

Exhibition times and dates could vary slightly.

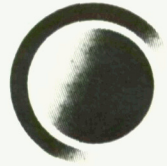
Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery Inc.

President – Ian Miles 519-955

Vice President – Grant Banbury 798-578

Treasurer – Chris Brocket 557-133

Secretary – Gwen Wilton 663-675



October Meeting

A visit to the garden, studio and house of Llew Summers turned out to be a delightful and rewarding experience for the 50 or so members of the Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery who attended the October meeting. Scattered throughout shrubs and foliage were numerous small, rounded figures blessed with smooth and ample proportions, while large statues stood among the trees, quite a magic combination of nature and art. A diversity of techniques and materials were demonstrated, ranging from ceramic glazed and terracotta works to casts in bronze and concrete, and wood carvings of monumental size. The house had great charm and character containing, among very many delightful items, an impressive collection of contemporary New Zealand paintings.

Altogether the visit served as a vivid introduction to a gifted artist who is contributing significantly to modern sculpture in a highly personal manner.



Llewellyn Summers at his studio with the Friends at the October meeting.

Tour Dunedin Art Treasures

November

Following a successful visit to a Christchurch sculptor in October, the Friends of the McDougall Art Gallery went even further afield the following month by travelling to Dunedin to see some of the many art treasures in that city. A most rewarding experience it turned out to be for the 32 members who participated and enjoyed two full days of feasting their eyes.

In the exhibition gallery of the Hocken Library there was a historic display of the Banks *Florilegium*, botanical engravings depicting plants collected during Cook's 1st Voyage and drawn in pen and watercolour by Parkinson. The Hocken 'Stack Collection' itself turned out to be a treasure house of New Zealand art, ranging from William Hodges and Charles Meryon to Rita Angus, Doris Lusk, Sutton, Woollaston and McCahon.

The Carnegie Centre galleries displayed a range of works, but in particular a collection of appealingly grotesque etchings by Jenny Dolezel, a young artist who featured recently in the Listener. 'Olveston', a Jacobean style house, displayed not only the elegance of gracious living early this century, but also a large collection of original paintings and copies of the great masters. Another highlight was the Dunedin Public Art Gallery where the Director introduced some of the masterpieces, notably works by Constable, Turner and Monet, and also the paintings from the De Beer Collection.



Group at the Christchurch Railway Station about to depart on the Dunedin trip.

The final visit was to the Otago Early Settlers Museum, where among a wealth of exhibits of local significance, there was also a show of portraits by the 19th century painter John Irvine.

Altogether a most successful trip which whetted the appetite for more visits to other centres and the presence of Ian Miles, the President, at the station to farewell and welcome home the touring party, was greatly appreciated.

New Members

Mrs P. A. Ballinger	Mrs B. Sullivan
Nicki Edward	J. M. Shadwell
Bruce Finnerty	T. F. Thompson
Penelope Raine	Lindsay Weir
	Hilary Langer (Life)

Notice of Special General Meeting

15 February 1989 at 10.15 a.m.

This meeting is called to introduce the following motion, that the Friends annual subscription for 1989 be increased to the following rates:

Student	\$10
Single	\$20
Joint	\$30
Corporate	\$250
Life	\$250

This review in subscription is a necessity to meet increased costs. Thank you for your past support. We look forward to your continued involvement during 1989.