

Christchurch City Council



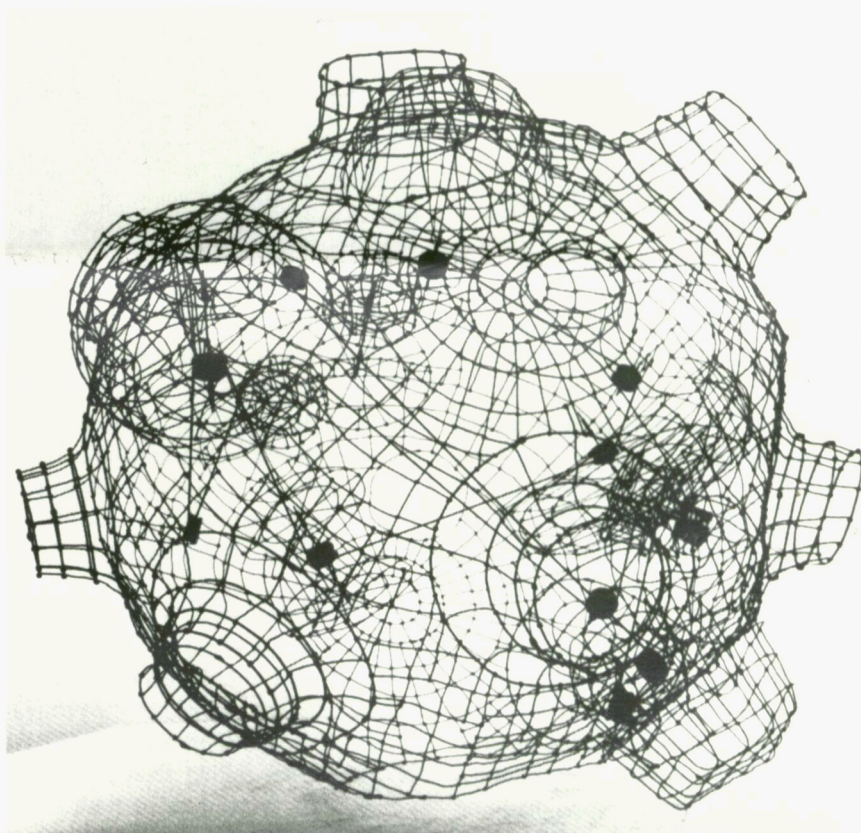
The Robert McDougall Art Gallery

ISSN 0111-1426

Number 69 July/August 1990

Robert McDougall Art Gallery
P.O. Box 2626 Christchurch
Botanic Gardens Fax 653 942
Christchurch 1 Telephone 650-915

Art
is
the
art
of
life



Harry Kramer *Ball* around 1963 Wire, rubber rings and electric motor

Poetry Through Material - Light and Movement

6 July - 19 August

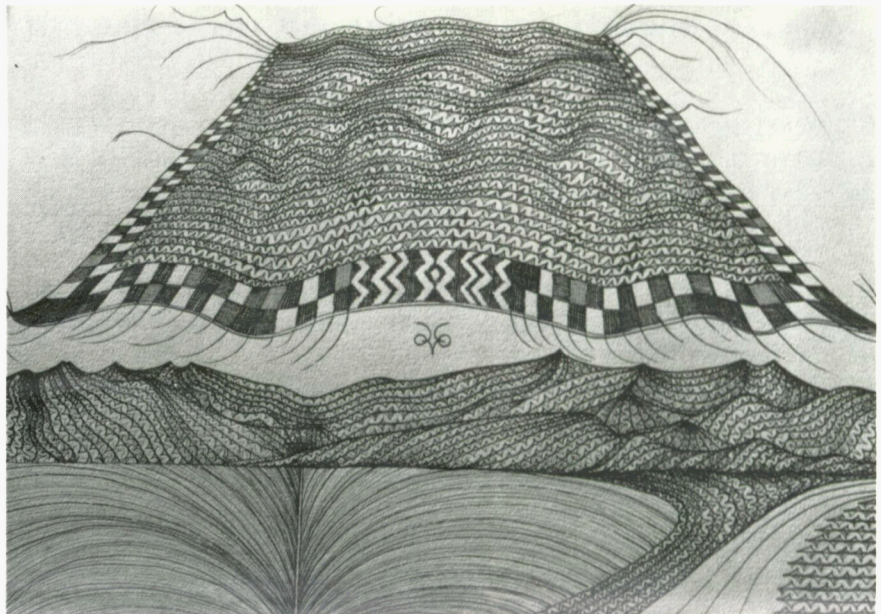
This is an exhibition of German (FDR) Kinetic sculpture from the 1960's and 1970's. It has come to the Robert McDougall Art Gallery courtesy of the Goethe Institute and the New Zealand Art Gallery Directors' Council.

Made up of over 50 sculptures, and executed by some 27 artists, the exhibition is exciting and innovative. The sculptures are in no way static. They take on a variety of movements and changing effects of light. The objects are made from traditional materials such as wood as well as more contemporary materials, such as plastics and foam rubber.

Even though these artists are grouped together as 'Kinetic' artists, and they do have common goals, their works differ greatly. For example, Gunter Haese's 'Eldena, 1972' is a delicate brass wire sculpture that moves with the slightest movement of air. On the other hand, Gunter Weseler's 'Breath Wall 84/72, 1972' is motorised and breathes slowly and uniformly for the viewer.

Optically and acoustically this exhibition should delight the young and old alike!

THE ART ANNEX - WINTER 1990



John Bevan Ford *Te Hono Ki Waihora #1* 1990

Contemporary Maori Artists

Currently on display at the Annex is an exhibition by three contemporary Maori artists - Ngapine Allen, John Bevan Ford, and Darcy Nicholas. John Bevan Ford, who spent his childhood in Canterbury is showing twelve large ink-on-paper works, several of which relate to Canterbury localities. Ngapine Allen's loose canvasses, interwoven with muka fibre to symbolise cloaks, comment on the 1990 celebrations, while Darcy Nicholas is exhibiting several large acrylic paintings on aluminium, some bone carvings and small sculptures.

The catalogue of the exhibition features a thought provoking essay entitled 'Notes Towards a History of contemporary Maori Art' by Jonathan Mane, lecturer in Art History at the University of Canterbury, and exhibitor in one of the first group exhibitions of contemporary Maori art at the Canterbury Museum in 1966.

Three Polynesian Artists

From 26 July until 28 August the Art Annex will be exhibiting work by three Polynesian artists resident in New Zealand - Fatu Feu'u Ioane Ioane and Michel Tuffery.

The three artists share a common association with Auckland's Tautai Gallery, situated in the cultural centre of Samoa House. Tautai was established to feature artists whose work reflects a Pacific or Polynesian (rather than European) perspective. Its approach is multicultural - palagi (European) artists interested in developing their own Pacific identity exhibit side by side with Maori and Pacific Island artists.

Fatu Feu'u is the driving force behind and director of Tautai. He has exhibited widely throughout the North Island (as well as being included in exhibitions in Australia and Belgium), working in lithography, stone carving and recently, acrylic painting. Born and educated in Samoa, Feu'u has spent more than half of his life in Auckland. He is committed to encouraging and supporting young Pacific Islanders starting out on a career in the arts. He was Artist in Residence at Auckland University's Elam School of Fine Arts in 1988 - many of Tautai's emergent artists are recent graduates from the school.

Ioane Ioane was the first Samoan artist to graduate from Elam, holding his first one-person exhibition at Tautai in 1988. His work interweaves elements from

both European and Pacific art heritages, and often incorporates traditional Samoan siapo painting on tapa cloth.

Michel Tuffery graduated with Honours from the Otago Polytechnic school of Art in 1988, exhibiting at Tautai in 1989. He has been awarded the David Con Hutton Award Scholarship to complete his Masters Degree at Manoa University, Hawaii. Born in New Zealand, with a European father and Samoan mother Tuffery aims to explore through the medium of his art the diverse cultures of his parents and how they go towards making up his identity as a "new New Zealander". He will exhibit large multi-coloured woodcuts at the Annex, some of which will examine the theme of "wall of death" driftnet fishing - an issue of concern shared by both New Zealand and Samoa.

Three Polynesian Artists promises to be an exciting and stimulating exhibition of work by artists not often seen in the South Island. The preview is on Wednesday 25 July at 5pm - everyone is welcome.

Doris Holland 1916 - 1990

It seemed that Doris Holland was indestructible. She dealt with illness in a private, no fuss way, never complaining. What we saw was the woman for whom hospitalisation and discomfort were temporary events in a life filled with productive activity. Her death, then, at Christchurch, on 14 April 1990, was a surprise and the sense of losing someone whose presence made a difference in our lives, quite devastating.

The daughter of an architect, Thomas Lusk, Doris was born in Dunedin, raised for a short time in England and later in Hamilton, where, as a child, she showed gifts as an artist. She married Dermot Holland and moved to Christchurch where she raised her family. A woman of exceptional intelligence and liveliness of spirit, she was not daunted by the emotional and physical demands which a woman endures in carrying out the dual tasks of family caregiver and working artist.

She was one of a generation of artists - Bill Sutton, Toss Woollaston, Rita Angus, Colin McCahon, who in the 30's and 40's looked at their situation in New Zealand without the sense of removal from a European culture which had driven artists like Sydney Thompson, Raymond McIntyre and Frances Hodgkins to England and France.

Doris, and those who made up The Group accepted and even rejoiced in their isolation, taking the landscape as a source of imagery that owed little to the received cultural impulses of another hemisphere. Doris Holland's art was informed by great technical command and exceptional vision. She exemplified the artist excited by and moved to communicate the visual experience. Teaching with her and hearing her discuss paintings and offer constructive criticism always led to fresh insights and sharpened perceptions. She could 'read' paintings superbly. Her own works showed that her love of the landscape did not preclude the inclusion of evidence of human construction. It was perhaps the example of her father's profession that sensitised her eye to the strong forms of hydro-electric stations and buildings set against hills. Later her



Doris Holland in her studio

affection for fine old architecture led her to the 'demolition' series which in recording the ruin of once proud buildings, gave them new life as the subject of brilliant paintings. She did not use watercolours until 1960, then found that their fluidity released a new stream of innovation in her. As she grew older, so her confidence and authority increased.

Few exhibition openings, lectures or receptions went unattended. Doris loved to see new work and support ex-students. She was a council member of the Canterbury Society of Arts for many years, for a period serving as its President, and an equally loyal supporter of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

Her funeral, attended by a great number of friends and by well nigh everyone involved in the visual arts in Canterbury, attested to her stature as an artist, and to the strength of character and personal integrity which were the bed-

rock of her personality.

Hers was a truly productive life. She was a distinguished potter, teacher, painter, mother, and grandmother, these latter two roles being pursued as actively when her family had grown as when they were small. In a time when personal beliefs and philosophies are exposed like so many gaudy banners, Doris Holland's reticence was salutary. Those who perhaps thought they had known her quite well, learned at her funeral that she was a committed Christian who attended church regularly. Some parishioners present were equally intrigued to find that their fellow worshipper had such a large, diverse and worldly group of admirers.

Doris was able to offer a pleasant surprise to her friends, even at the moment of leaving them.

John Coley
May 1990

Doris Lusk

The death of the painter Doris Lusk sadly removed from our local community not only one of New Zealand's most talented artists but also a close personal friend.

I met Doris in 1976 in my first year as a student at the School of Fine Arts at Canterbury University. Then as a tutor in drawing she brought sound ethics to a wide range of problems that presented themselves to her students through a thorough programme.

Within a year of this meeting I was invited to join a small informal life drawing group who regularly met in the evenings at her Gloucester Street studio. From this our relationship blossomed and we became friends and I a constant visitor to her home. Seeing virtually all she produced as it freshly appeared on the easel, we shared thoughts and ideas and I assisted in both documenting and presenting a number of solo shows in both Wellington and Christchurch.

Doris' willingness to assist students in dialogue and her astute eye earned respect from all those who came in contact with her teaching over thirteen years at Ilam. I have yet to meet any of her past

students who didn't respond to Doris in this role. They all speak fondly of her. Once they left, Doris often kept her contact alive and she will always be remembered for her commitment in attending openings and taking part in discussion where and whenever it occurred.

Interestingly too, Doris was for many years the only woman on the staff of the Fine Arts School.

Her early reputation is well cemented with a solid body of incisive landscapes produced, whilst raising three children during the 1940's and 1950's. Doris exhibited regularly with the Group from this period onwards. Her sensibility in painting at this time was amongst a wave of significant works produced by a small group of top landscape painters.

Having the ability to take landscape forms from each environment and more importantly 'structures' placed within it, be it Canterbury, Nelson, Otago or Golden Bay, Doris magically transformed them into powerful images. Only reluctantly would she hint at a deeper meaning or analytical understanding. For me the symbolism and imagery of Doris' paintings can be read on many levels.

Although Doris' early paintings are well documented, less is known nationally of

her teaching in pottery, her strong commitment to the local art community here in Christchurch and even less of her painting post 1970. An assessment of her imagery and unusual technique of staining acrylic onto canvas is sadly long overdue - notable are the Tent Series, Benmore, Constructed Demolitions, and Imagined Projects. With constant inventiveness and a diversity of subject, combined with a mastery of technique Doris pushed her work to new heights.

Doris' unique sketch books, numbering nearly fifty form a key to the heart of her vision and are a sheer delight to the eye for anyone lucky enough to see them.

I will always remember those dark toned glasses which formed so much a part of the Doris one greeted. Strangely they seemed to somehow veil and conceal the woman and the artist but they never stopped her 'seeing'.

I know I speak for many in saying how much she will be missed.

Grant Banbury
May 1990.

Recent Acquisitions

The following works have been acquired for the collection

Tom Kreisler

The Window Curtains as Hanging Coats, 1989
Acrylic on Canvas

Neil Frazer

Orion, 1989
Oil on canvas

Michel Tuffery

Turtle, Crab, Crayfish, Shellfish, Clam, Sea Eggs
Print on Tapa Cloth 24/25

Morgan Jones

Flying Apart
Plywood Assemblage

Petrus van der Velden

Charles Bickerton
Oil on canvas

W.A. Sutton

Landscape Elements V, 1970
Oil on board

The following works were generously gifted to the gallery

Michael Eaton

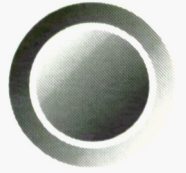
Untitled 1965
Assemblage
Presented by Gloucester Radiology

W.D. Hammond

Radion On, 1985
Enamel on Cotton duck
Presented by the Q E II Arts Council, Wellington.

Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery Inc.

President Ian Miles 519 955
Vice-President Hilary Langer 483 982
Treasurer Chris Brocket 557 133
Secretary Gwen Wilton 663 657



Friends' Coffee Morning 18 April 1990.

Women Painters in 'A Canterbury Perspective'

This date, and even the time, coincided, sadly, with Doris Lusk's funeral. A number of Friends attended the funeral, having rung Hilary Langer to apologise for their absence from the meeting. Nevertheless, the audiovisual room overflowed as some sixty people gathered for the illustrated talk on 'Women Painters in A Canterbury Perspective' by Penelope Jackson, the gallery's Education Officer.

How many works in 'A Canterbury Perspective' were by women? One estimate was that, overall, the proportion was about one quarter though for recent work it was a little lower. In the early period of Canterbury art the contributions of women, Maori and Pakeha alike, were mainly in decorative and domestic arts, especially fibre related activities.

The New Zealand International Exhibition held in Hagley Park in 1906-07 gave a general impetus to art in the province for some years, partly because of some excellent British works displayed there - women's art among them. The number and quality of paintings by Canterbury Women rose markedly, though many spent time overseas seeking further training and recognition. Among the notable ones who did so before 1930 were Margaret Stoddart, Annie Elizabeth Kelly, Rhona Haszard and Evelyn Page.

The last sixty years began with several Canterbury women contributing to the emergence of a distinct national identity in art. A pioneer in this was Rita Angus with her studies of 'Cass' and Rata Lovell-Smith's 'Hawkins' both much criticised at the time. Olivia Spencer-Bower and Ivy Fife were later contributors to this trend.

Penelope then paid special tribute to Doris Lusk, a true Friend of the Gallery and an able artist. Versatile in oils,

acrylic, water-colour and pottery equally competent in landscapes, portraits or works of social comment; an exhibitor at 17 one-woman shows - Doris was as highly praised Auckland and Dunedin as in Christchurch.

In her conclusion Penelope remarked first on the sharp contrasts between the characteristic work of two younger women: Julia Morison's 'Rhombus' and Joanna Braithwaite's 'Animal Fate'. She then commented briefly on how some notable women artists had dealt with the marriage - career issue. And it was noted that Doris Lusk had combined the two.

Friends Visit to Noel Gregg's Studio

Noel Gregg's blacksmithing workshop was the venue for 22 Friends to view the seven iron gates that Noel and Bing Dawe are making, commissioned by the Christchurch City Council. The gates will form a pen or corral for children to play in - but not merely to keep them in. There is also much for them to look at and to explore. Noel expects that children will want to climb over them, and through them, and over and under and around them. The whole work is a marvellous combination of unusual gate forms and mythical figures from various cultures and epochs, all inspired by writings in Marco Polo's times. Most of the figures are humanoids with fantastic features - six arms, feet at odd angles, head and face sited in the chest.

Noel also talked about the international conference of blacksmiths in Cardiff last August and his contribution to a gate of scrolls in Memphis. That city, already connected with Christchurch, will, in May 1991, host a festival of New Zealand arts and crafts and other facets of our culture.

Coffee Morning - May

Mrs Hilary Langer welcomed over 55 members to the Friend's very successful coffee morning at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery Annex, on 16 May.

The speaker was Neil Roberts, the Curator of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, and we are very fortunate in Christchurch to have an Art Historian of his stature and breadth of knowledge, and also his appreciation of the idiosyncrasies in the World of Art.

His talk on "Art Controversies in Canterbury" was fascinating - there is no doubt Canterbury has had its share of colourful characters, and many incidents of an amusing, controversial and even scandalous nature..

An informative background and excellent colour slides accompanied the anecdotes of artists such as Petrus van der Velden and an "Art Union" he ran to lift himself out of his financial misfortunes. Evelyn Page and her wonderful painting of a friend standing nude on a boat, which was forbidden by the friend to be on public view until after her death, and the tragic story of David Blair, who although not found guilty of a particular misdemeanour, was dismissed from his post at the School of Art.

These were but three of the many fascinating tales Neil spun to the intense interest and delight of a rapt audience.

"Over the Hills...."

A day trip to Akaroa with the Friends to see the Charles Meryon Exhibition at the Akaroa Museum.

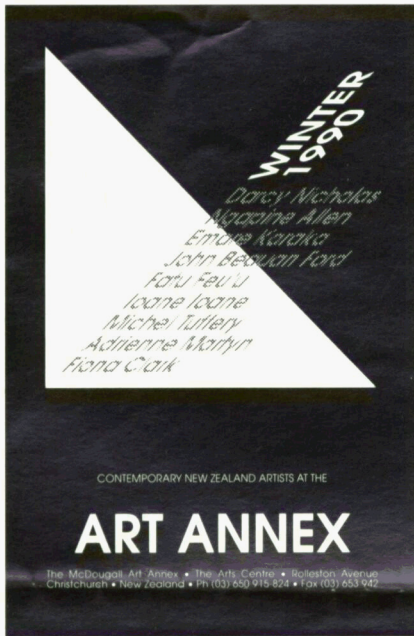
Sunday August 19, leaving outside the Museum at 9.30am, returning at 4.30pm, travelling by luxury coach. Includes a lecture on Meryon by Steve Lowndes, a visit to The Gallery and other interesting stops. Bring your own lunch or buy it there.

Cost per person is \$18. Bookings by mail only to The Friends, P O Box 2626 Christchurch. Limited numbers so please pay by August 10.



New Members

N.J. & H.K. Blair
 S.I. Caddick
 Suzanne Cooper
 Mr Newton Dodge (life)
 M.A. Fox
 Noel Gregg
 Neil Barry Johnson
 Sandra Johnson
 Shirley Jordan
 George & Roberta Hill
 M.S. Hurrell
 Natasha McMillan
 Nellie Meager
 Mr and Mrs J. K. Moir
 Ursula J Rose
 G. & M. Ward
 Martin Whitworth
 Ewa Wojtkowiak-Ayton



Hundertwasser Reception Doris Holland (nee Lusk)

On 15 May a large group of Friends and Canterbury artists attended a reception in the Gallery in honour of Friedrich Hundertwasser, one of New Zealand's 1990 Living Treasures. Master Hundertwasser, a noted Viennese artist and architect now living in North Auckland, is best known in this country for his flag.

Interest in his unusual design has prompted many people to suggest that our national flag be replaced by something more distinctive of New Zealand.

During his visit, his flag was prominently displayed not only in the Gallery but also in a number of places in the city - a response that naturally delighted him.

Addressing the gathering in a wide-ranging talk, Master Hundertwasser explained that his purpose was to design for New Zealanders a flag that was beautiful, meaningful, and unique. "The Southern Cross is not unique to this country," he pointed out, adding that in his design is something that is truly indigenous, pre-dating all human settlement. He drew attention to the way he had symbolised both the masculine and the feminine principle, the former by the vertical black panel, and the latter by the green enveloping curves of the koru.

Also displayed at the reception was a painting of Master Hundertwasser's unusual apartment building owned by the city of Vienna. The variations of colour, surfaces, and levels, not to mention his startling use of plants and trees, attracted a good deal of interest.

We feel a deep sense of loss of our dear friend Doris, a long and most loyal Friend of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, and past member of the Friends Committee.

Having known Doris for the last 20 years or so, my family personally feels the loss of a wonderful friend - a woman of immense integrity, wisdom, strength and courage. She was a source of inspiration as an artist, a teacher, and as a person with family and the usual everyday challenges of life. She had an enormous breadth of vision and consistent, all-encompassing love of art, yet was also supremely practical and down-to-earth.

We had many memorable trips together, from day or week excursions in the South Island, to our several weeks (and thousands of kilometres) in Europe in 1988.

Certain parts of the country 'belong' to Doris - Onekaka and Kurow, to name but two. Overseas, Doris was a delightful companion, a single-minded, tireless, and knowledgeable guide in art museums, especially great Spanish and Italian galleries.

It was magical to witness the bundle of stubby coloured pencils bring forth enchanting sketches to the pages of her sketchbook, even in moving car or train.

She was always so versatile, energetic, and dedicated. It was a rare privilege to share in the life of Doris Lusk.

Alison Ryde.

Coming Events

July

- 4 Wednesday Club, 10.30am.
Art Appreciation for Adults
- 5 'Poetry Through Material' opening for Friends
- 6 'Poetry Through Material' opens to the public
- 7 Saturday Club, 10.30am
Art Appreciation for Adults
- 13 Volunteers Club, 10.30am
- 14 Continuing Club, 10.30am
Art Appreciation for Adults
- 17 'Three Contemporary Maori Artists' at the Annex closes
- 18 Friends Coffee Morning, Jonathan Mane - N.Z.
Art and the Maori Renaissance, 10.30am Art Annex
- 19 Kilmarnock Club, 10.30am Gallery club for disabled visitors
- 25 'Three Polynesian Artists' preview 5pm
Art Annex, all welcome

August

- 1 Wednesday Club, 10.30am
Art Appreciation for Adults
- 4 Saturday Club, 10.30am
Art Appreciation for Adults
- 10 Volunteers Club, 10.30am
- 11 Continuing Club, 10.30am Art appreciation club for adults
- 16 Kilmarnock Club, 10.30am Gallery club for disabled visitors
- 19 Close of 'Poetry Through Material'
- 19 "Over the Hills..." Friends trip to Akaroa*
- 28 'Three Polynesian Artists' at Annex closes.
- 30 'Roads to Rome' opening for Friends

* The 'Akaroa' trip this month takes the place of the coffee morning.
 Exhibition dates and programmes could vary slightly.