



Christchurch City Council



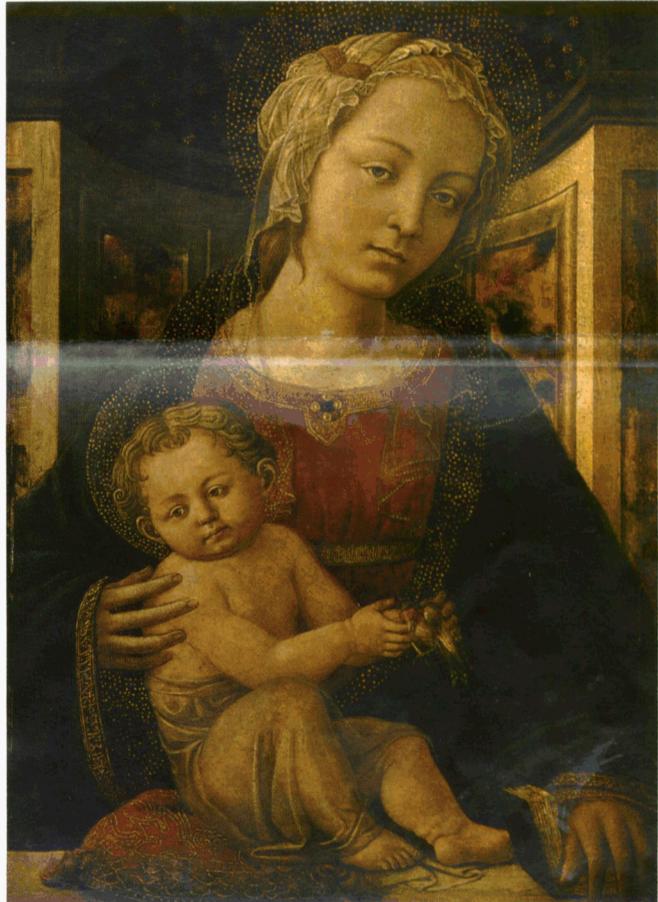
The Robert McDougall Art Gallery

ISSN 0111-1426

Number 78 March/April 1992

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

Artists



European Treasures—Great Paintings from Machiavelli to Monet

February 8—March 22 1992

On show at the Gallery at the moment are **European Treasures** from the collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

The 35 works are regarded by art authorities as being among the most important examples of master works in the European tradition available in Australia. Included are paintings by Turner, Pissarro, Constable and Monet.

The exhibition spans five and a half centuries and is one of the most valuable collections to tour New Zealand in recent years. The earliest work, from the fourteenth century, is from an altarpiece by Landini. The most recent is one of the famed Lancastrian L. S. Lowry's industrial scenes.

Eighteenth century portraits by the artists Sir Henry Raeburn and Sir Joshua Reynolds show the likeness of English aristocrats in the age before the invention of photography.

Among the stunningly beautiful images in the exhibition are the French-English artist James Tissot's tender portrait of his mistress captured in a moment of sadness as she waits to leave by train at Willesden Junction, London. The great French Impressionist, Claude Monet, is also represented.

Claude Lorrain's classical landscapes, the spiritual calm of Landini's altarpiece, and the sparkling freshness and immediacy of John Constable's matchless English landscape are exceptional works in an exhibition which has attracted large audiences in both New Plymouth and Hamilton.

Following its Christchurch presentation, the exhibition will travel to Wellington to be shown at the National Art Gallery and Museum of New Zealand.

A vital element in the Gallery's successful bid to obtain the exhibition for Christchurch was the support of three companies. The three, the law firm of Buddle Findlay, the accountancy firm of KPMG Peat Marwick and the architectural practice of Warren & Mahoney, are assisting in underwriting some of the exhibition's costs.

Fifty Works from the Collection

March 28–May 13 1992

In this, the gallery's sixtieth anniversary year, it is timely to focus on the permanent collection and return to the walls a number of historical works that have been seen infrequently in recent years. Throughout 1992 we hope to show many works from the gallery's collection as installations rather than as part of theme exhibitions.

Over the past decade it has been often difficult to show the collection because of space and the number of temporary exhibitions programmed.

This first collection installation will comprise fifty paintings representing the McDougall's historical British, European, and New Zealand collections spanning from around the mid 1650s through to the 1950s. It will include mostly portraits, landscapes and narrative paintings.

Several of the works have undergone conservation treatment in recent years and were also part of the gallery's foundation collection.

A large proportion of the original gallery collection came from the Canterbury Society of Arts by gift in 1932. Other works were added to the collection mostly by donation and bequest, until the late 1940s when the first purchases were made.

Since that time the collection has grown steadily. Among the earliest works, to be shown in this installation will be paintings by seventeenth and eighteenth century artists Gerard Dou, Jan van Son, Henry Raeburn and William Havell.

The Victorian and Edwardian works selected will include **La Lecture de la Bible** by Henrietta Browne, the first work gifted to the gallery from a private collection, and **Teresina** by Lord Frederic Leighton, one of the finest portrait studies by a Victorian painter in Australasia.

A narrative work, **Consent** by T. C. Gotch will also be on show. This painting was originally brought out for the 1889–90 New Zealand and South Seas exhibition in Dunedin and although it has been in the collection since 1932 it has not been exhibited for nearly two decades because of its condition. Recent conservation has now made that possible.

Highlighted among the twentieth century New Zealand paintings will be works by C. F. Goldie, Raymond McIntyre, Sydney L. Thompson, Margaret Stoddart, Rita Angus, Evelyn Page, Russell Clark, Rudolf Gopas, W. A. Sutton and Frances Hodgkins to name just a few. The latter's **Belgian Refugees** is one of the earliest painted in the oil medium by Frances Hodgkins, and **The Pleasure Garden** still stands as one of the most controversial art works in New Zealand's history and has been strongly identified with this gallery's collection since 1951.

Consent—Thomas C. Gotch



Coming Events

- March**
- 3 **Treasures** Floortalk See separate notice
 - 4 Wednesday Club 10.30am
 - 7 Saturday Club 10.30am
 - 8 **Art and Organised Labour** closes
 - 10 **My Own Private Idaho and Pots** by Gavin Chilcott closes at the Annex
 - 13 Volunteers Club 10.30am
 - 14 Continuing Club 10.30am
 - 14 **Tamarind Impressions** opens to the public
 - 17 **Treasures** Floortalk see separate notice
 - 18 **Contemporary Paintings from the Collection** opens to the public at the Annex
 - 18 **Speaker of the Month** visit to **Limeworks**
 - 20 Friends AGM Art Annex 7.00pm
 - 22 **European Treasures** closes
 - 28 **Collection Exhibition** opens to the public
- April**
- 1 Wednesday Club 10.30am
 - 4 Saturday Club 10.30am
 - 5 **Contrasts** closes
 - 11 Continuing Club 10.30am
 - 14 **Contemporary Paintings from the Collection** closes at the Art Annex
 - 15 **Speaker of the Month** Art Annex
 - 19 **Tamarind Impressions** closes

Tamarind Impressions

March 14–April 19 1992

The United States Government presents a cultural presentation of a touring exhibition entitled **Tamarind Impressions—Recent Lithographs**. The 40 original lithographs were created in collaboration with the workshop's master printers.

The prints in the exhibition, including both objective and abstract images, present a variety of technical approaches to lithography. The versatility of the medium is demonstrated through the use of the lithographic crayon, delicate tusche washes, blended inking, chine colle, and collage. Impressions of lithographs by such established artists as Philip Pearlstein, Judy Rifka, Fritz Scholder and Steven Sorman, as well as works by lesser-known artists, offer an exciting view of the contemporary printmaking scene in the United States. All of the lithographs were printed by hand from stones and metal plates drawn by the artists; all editions are limited and fully documented.

The lithographs in this exhibition are an excellent representation of the broad expressive potential of the medium, both aesthetically and technically. They are also the product of a unique workshop, The Tamarind Institute, which focuses on the training of printers and which is often credited with having been the essential force in the revival of American lithography. Since Tamarind's inception, respect for the medium, on the part of artists as well as of collections and art dealers, has been restored, and technical possibilities have been expanded greatly. American lithography has come a long way from the small black and white prints typical of the early part of the twentieth century.

Tamarind is recognised as a vital force in the revival of American lithography.

Founded at a time when serious artistic interest in printmaking was at a low ebb, Tamarind served as a catalyst to what has become a renaissance of the medium. Initially funded by a series of grants from the Ford Foundation, Tamarind was established as a division of the College of Fine Arts of the University of New Mexico in 1970. The Institute continues an active programme of research and publication as well as a unique professional printer-training programme. Many Tamarind-trained printers now operate successful workshops or teach lithography in all parts of the United States and abroad.

Tamarind Impressions is generously supported by the United States Information Service and the Museum Directors' Federation.

European Treasures Floortalks

March 3: Dr Pamela Gerrish Nunn will talk about *Solomon J. Solomon* and in particular "Eros".

March 17: Dr Mark Stocker will talk about *James Tissot* and in particular "Waiting for the Train".

Both talks will be held at the main gallery at 5.00pm. Please use Night Entrance. \$6.00 per talk. Please make a reservation by telephoning the Gallery.

New Members

Felicity Aitken
Jane Collins
P. Condon
Gill Dallison
Mr and Mrs G. J. C. Fairbairn
Mr G. V. Hathaway
Lew Johnson
L. T. MacDonald
J. & A. Marshall
Mary Murray
Olwyn Musgrove
Mr and Mrs Peter Reed
Mr and Mrs B. Stokes
Jacqueline Sweet
Beppie Vaags

Recent Acquisitions

The following works have been acquired:

Julia Morison

Amalgame 48, 1991
Mixed Media on wooden lidded box

Bill Culbert

Decharge Sault, 1991
Photograph

Grahame Sydney

Standing Model II
Etching

Richard McWhannell

Bathers Resurrect About Stony Bay Peak, 1990
Oil on Canvas on Board

Stephen Harris

Surrey Hills
Watercolour

Pat Unger

New Zealand Religion: Sport, 1991
Acrylic on paper

Neil Frazer

Sight After Sight
Oil on Canvas

George Woods

Two Girls Posing
Pencil on paper

Alan Pearson

Visitation and the Arrival of Man Over the Waimakariri, Canterbury
Oil on Canvas

Jane Zusters

I'd rather be swimming I
Mixed Media on paper

David Lewis

Untitled Platter
Stoneware

Dick Frizzell

Cow Banks Peninsula, 1991
Oil on Canvas

Art Annex

Gavin Chilcott—My Own Private Idaho and Pots

Until March 10, 1992

Until March 10, the McDougall Art Annex will be exhibiting **My Own Private Idaho and Pots**, an installation by Gavin Chilcott.

Chilcott has spent the last nine months living and working in Christchurch as Trust Bank Canterbury/Arts Council Artist in Residence for 1991. He is a widely respected contemporary artist whose work challenges the traditional boundaries between the fine and the applied arts.

The installation at the Annex includes paintings on canvas, works on paper, rugs and ceramics.

Contemporary Paintings from the Collection

March 18–April 14 1992

From March to April, the Annex will exhibit an installation of contemporary paintings from the permanent collection of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

It is often difficult to exhibit contemporary artworks which are frequently conceived on a large scale at the Gallery, due to its limitation of space. The Annex, with its lofty ceiling height and bare white walls, was expressly designed for the exhibition of contemporary art, and forms a much needed physical extension to the main Gallery.

The focus of this exhibition will be on contemporary abstraction in New Zealand, using examples from the collection.

Masterpieces from the Guggenheim

For the group of twenty-five fortunate enough to take part in the McDougall's first ever international excursion, one of the world's largest collections of early twentieth century masterpieces provided a superb exhibition and focus for this maiden tour.

The 111 works on tour from the Guggenheim Museum in New York, were on exhibition at the Gallery of New South Wales from September 22 to January 12. The McDougall's assorted group of guides, friends and gallery staff, headed and organised by Penelope Jackson, took advantage of the closeness to home of the exhibition, travelling to Sydney on November 29.

The five days of the tour were crammed with visits to Sydney's cultural highlights, with a bit of time to peruse the city's shopping meccas.

The first visit was naturally to the Guggenheim, with a thorough two hour guided tour of the exhibition preceded by a lecture from the gallery's curator of European art on non objective art. For the writer, the highlight of the Guggenheim was the magnificent room of Kandinskys which truly had to be seen and experienced to be fully appreciated.

An extensive tour of Elizabeth Bay House gave the group a view backwards to the late eighteenth century English house built in early nineteenth century Australia. The excellent guidance through the elaborately restored house we came to expect as typical. Without exception every gallery and public tour we had the pleasure of

being taken on was extensive and of the highest quality.

A visit to the Manly Gallery and Museum by ferry provided fabulous harbour views of Sydney and its suburbs and a look at an unusual permanent collection. Buckets and spades and other beach paraphernalia, bathing costumes, Manly beach souvenirs and ceramics are the unusual base to this gallery's collection, as well as the paintings by some of Australia's better known galleries.

Another highlight to come from the Gallery of New South Wales was a full morning tour of the gallery's permanent collection. For those amongst the group who were using the trip as an introduction to Australian art, the time proved to be not nearly long enough. The large collection of Aboriginal and Papua New Guinea art, followed by an overview of Australia's European art history certainly gave a taste and the desire to learn and see more.

One of Sydney's newest attractions was the Museum of Contemporary Art located at Circular Quay. Having only been open for two weeks prior to our viewing, the Museum of Art has a comprehensive collection of American post-modern works. Among the better known names on display were Kruger, Frankenthaler, Stella and Lichtenstein, and attached to the gallery is a most outstanding bookshop.

Other features of the trip included an architectural walk, a visit to the Powerhouse Museum and a tour of the Paddington Dealer Art galleries.

The success of the trip was without doubt due to the first rate organisation by Penelope and an enormous thanks must go to her for that. Reflecting on this success engenders interest in the possibility of a future trip and we all look forward to the chance of being part of that.

Kirsten Fergusson, Gallery Guide

Guggenheim travellers outside Elizabeth Bay House, Sydney.



John Coley's UK and Paris Visit

Arriving in Liverpool, jet-lagged late on a cold, wet winter's afternoon was a depressing start to what became a stimulating two weeks at the British Council's international seminar, **Managing Museums and Galleries in the 90s—Access and Accountability**, held in Liverpool and London.

The sixteen other seminar members came from Ethiopia, Portugal, Norway, Jordan, Venezuela, Germany, Sarawak, Yugoslavia, Chile, Australia and Malaysia, and represented a range of institutions; historical, science, maritime and historic house museums and art galleries.

Over two weeks, some 33 speakers addressed the group. Case studies of museums and galleries in Bradford, York and London were undertaken.

Among the points which emerged: successful museums have strong collections and identities, are sure of their roles within their communities, are supported by their controlling authorities, understand their audiences and have well founded philosophies informing committed staff who are able to communicate clearly with the public. They manage within their budgets, are able to recognise and respond to changes in society, and are flexible, inventive and resourceful in the ways in which they present their material without compromising the integrity of their collections or the quality of the museum visit.

The Disneyland Experience—Threat or Challenge

The frequency to which seminar participants and speakers referred to Disneyland and Orlando, Florida showed an awareness of the challenge that these entertainment centres offer to museums. The millions who have visited Disneyland expect lively, colourful presentation of museum exhibits, an expectation reinforced by entertaining television information programmes dealing with art, natural or social history subjects. Museums and galleries have to present their collections in exciting ways and make the museum/gallery visit an attractive and satisfying prospect for the public without trivialising their collections or the historical messages they carry.

Entry—To Pay or not to Pay

Britain remains divided on the issue of whether museums should be free or entry paid. Many galleries and museums, the National Gallery and the Tate in particular, steadfastly hold to the principle that national heritage collections should be freely available to all citizens, while others such as the Imperial War Museum and the Victoria and Albert have paid entry or a persuasive entry by donation policy. Where there are entry charges made, there are often a series of inducements and allowances for children, senior citizens and the unwaged. Some charging galleries

have free entry during the last thirty minutes of the day.

Galleries, Exhibitions and Museums

A bonus during the London period was the opportunity to see a number of exceptional exhibitions. The provocative Pop Art exhibition at The Royal Academy broke new ground for this quintessentially traditionalist institution. I wondered what some of the Academy's long dead stalwarts would have made of Warhol's Brillo boxes and Lichtenstein's comic cuts.

An exhibition of splendid paintings from the Royal Collection were at the National Gallery where the visitor could also appreciate the sympathetic Robert Venturi-designed Sainsbury wing. There was an exquisite exhibition of the graphic work of Giorgio Morandi at the Tate. I was impressed by the subtle and unobtrusive design of the new Clore wing holding the Tate's collection of Turner oils and watercolours. I visited the once-in-a-lifetime exhibition of Toulouse Lautrec paintings and graphic work at the Hayward Gallery. The Museum of the Moving Image, also at the Hayward, was a revelation of how densely packed with information and experiences a museum visit can be. Among the many things that can happen to the visitor besides having the chance to read the news on television is to be approached by an actor playing the part of a post-revolutionary Russian and be encouraged to watch propaganda films is an authentic railway wagon once used for taking movie pictures through Russia to the workers. During the showing the actor explained the technical innovations comrade Eisentein had developed in making these films.

Paris

What is one to make of Paris, a city where the streets are named for composers, novelists, poets and painters? What collective madness possesses a country whose leaders propose and support cultural projects like the Centre Pompidou, the hugely successful exhibition and performance centre, library and contemporary art gallery; the Musee D'Orsay, the vast, elegant museum of nineteenth century art converted from a railway terminus; the truly gigantic redevelopment of the museum and the Richelieu wing of the Palais du Louvre, or La Villette with its amazing natural history and technological museums, and the new, radical and truly massive National Library project, President Mitterand's initiative.

These projects are developed and flourish because it is a central belief of the French that the arts express the genius and singularity of their nation and that painting, music, literature and the theatre are forces which immeasurably enhance the quality of French life.

Schooled in the achievements of their culture, the French possess a confidence and authority in their dealings which many mistake for arrogance. It is not. It is the

result of a broad, deep, sometimes brutal history with many peaks of outstanding achievement in science, technology and the arts. To be brought up in this rich cultural medium is to know a good painting when one sees it, to identify a good argument, wine, or dinner from a bad one, and to be able to turn easily from one's work as an electrician, waiter, shop assistant or scientist, to the contemplation of an art exhibition or the opera.

If Paris sounds like Paradise, it has its down side like any city today. The writer had travellers cheques and cash stolen from his hotel room during his stay. This failed to dampen the champagne-like effect the city has on him.

In Christchurch we have made a start in beginning to name our streets after great artists, even if they are not our own.

We have Torvill and Dean Place ...

Leo Bensemann—Group Gathering

The Gallery has acquired an important work by the late Canterbury artist, Leo Bensemann. The painting, **Rain in the Paradise Garden, Takaka 1979**, was purchased with funding assistance from the Christchurch Group, the artists' organisation established in 1927, the annual exhibitions of which were for many years acknowledged as the leading forum for contemporary visual arts in New Zealand. With the development of dealer galleries providing venues for contemporary art exhibitions, the Group's exhibitions became less relevant and in 1976 members agreed to disband the organisation.

Recently, when a trust account holding some residual Group monies came to light, the remaining members agreed that the funds should be used to purchase **Rain in the Paradise Garden, Takaka 1979** for the city's collection to commemorate Leo Bensemann's long association with the Group.

The work was presented to the Gallery by Mr W. A. Sutton, also a prominent Group member, at a recent function attended by many Group members and supporters. Mr Peter Simpson, addressing the gathering, paid a tribute to Leo Bensemann's contribution to the arts in New Zealand as an artist of originality and vision, an influential intellectual, an engraver, typographer, publisher and leading spirit of the Christchurch Group.

Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery Inc.

President—Hilary Langer 348-3982

Vice-President—Margaret Ann Tan 348-6769

Treasurer—Chris Brocket 355-7133

Secretary—Gwen Wilton 663-675

Membership Secretary—Marie Lockey 388-5075



Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held in the Art Annex on Friday March 20. The meeting will start at 7.00pm. Reports will be presented, the committee elected and a change to the objects proposed, and time will of course be given for comments and questions from the floor. We feel that the year has been successful, with some new directions taken, and we also have more innovations planned for the coming year. (See, for example, the STOP PRESS item below).

We shall try, however, to complete these formalities quite quickly, so that members can enjoy the programme that is to follow.

Immediately following the AGM there will be a wine and cheese session, and at 8.00pm or thereabouts there will be an interesting and informative address by a guest speaker. (See below for details)

So, do come along to hear what your committee has done on your behalf, and what they have planned for 1992—and enjoy the informality that will follow the AGM.

Don't forget the time and place—mark your calendar now.

ART ANNEX: 7.00pm Friday March 20, 1992.

Art of the Sepik People

Following the AGM and the short wine and cheese session, there will be an address by Dr Denis Dutton, Senior Lecturer in the Philosophy of Art at the University of Canterbury. Well known as an interesting and challenging speaker on various topics in the seven years he has been here, Denis has been studying Melanesian art, and has a large collection of artefacts and slides from his contacts with the people of the Sepik River, in the north-west of Papua New Guinea. In 1991 he lived among the carvers in that area, recording their values and their understandings of their art. In his talk Denis will show their art and discuss their perceptions of it, and then compare it with our reactions to their art. The talk will be illustrated with slides and with sample artefacts which the audience will be able to handle.

Christmas Party

Judging by the numbers who turned up—well over 200—the annual Christmas party was a huge success. Indeed, the energies of the committee and the facilities of the Gallery were fully taxed to provide the refreshments with the minimum delay. Some people thought that they had missed the strawberries and cream, but it was mainly a problem of having to wash the utensils from those lucky enough to be served first.

Hilary Langer welcomed the guests in a short address, and then two items followed.

A choir of boys from Medbury School sang carols, and a group coached by Sam Beveridge dramatised the achievements of Sir Edmund Hillary.

Akaroa Art Scene

A visit to Banks Peninsula is almost always a pleasure for city dwellers, and the forty or so Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery were in a state of heightened anticipation when the party, making a later than scheduled start set off for a look at some local art works on November 20.

Our first stop was at the Akaroa Gallery, to be welcomed by Mr J. Holderness, Chairman of the Akaroa Gallery Committee, who explained the various reincarnations this charming brick building has experienced since its erection 80 years ago as a power house for the town. At the time of our visit paintings by Jan Chaffey and pottery by Rosemary Perry were on display, and the former was at hand to talk about the dominant "migrating bird" motif in her works. The number of red spots visible was testimony to the quality of the display and to the usefulness of the Gallery to the artists and the art-buying public.

For lunch we were guests at "Glencarrig", our hosts Mr Michael and Mrs Kay Stokes. Mrs Stokes gave a short history of this residence since it was built in 1853 to the design of Samuel Farr for one of the early clergymen in the district, the Rev. William Aylmer. Despite its age, the house retains some of the original features, such as a set of french doors and a totara ceiling. Indoors the house is well furnished with art works relating to the district; outdoors we inspected the flume and waterwheel, by means of which Aylmer's Stream was harnessed in the 1920s to drive milking machinery.

The development of the Akaroa Museum is a fine example of how much a small community can achieve in preserving and displaying its history. On this occasion our

attention was focussed on the Museum's small but interesting collection of paintings, discussed with us by the Curator, Mr Steve Lowndes.

Siene de Vries and Saskia van Voorn live and work in Le Bons Bay, in a house considered inaccessible to our bus, so they had trouble to bring some of their paintings, drawings, woodcuts and working equipment high up the valley, for display in a house kindly lent for the purpose. The effort was appreciated by our party, who showed a keen interest in the techniques used, and several purchases were made before we started on our homeward journey along the Summit Road, reflecting on the day's sensations and enjoying the spectacular Peninsula views.

To Hilary Langer, who organised this trip, and to all on the Peninsula who gave their time and efforts to receive us, our grateful thanks for a rewarding day.

B. H. Howard

Speaker of the Month

March

On March 18 there will be a visit to **The Limeworks**, 63 Ward Street, Addington (near the corner with Selwyn Street). Artists Marion Maguire and Steve Gleeson will demonstrate how they print the works of artists from throughout New Zealand. With new machinery installed space is very limited, so there will be TWO sessions for the Friends—at 10.30am and at 2.00pm—with no more than 18–20 Friends at each session.

Please make your own transport arrangements. On this occasion there will be no refreshments served and no charge. For any queries, please telephone Rosemary Craven on 352-8420.

April

On April 15 an illustrated talk entitled *How Photography Became an Art Form* will be given by Laurence Shustak, photographer and until very recently a lecturer at the School of Fine Arts.

Coffee and tea will be served at the Art Annex at 10.30am. \$1.50 members, \$2.50 non-members.

Stop Press

In 1992 the Friends committee will be launching a new regular event for members.

Watch out for ARTWATCH, a monthly video and film screening about art, artists, and art issues.

Details will be announced at the AGM and in future Bulletins.