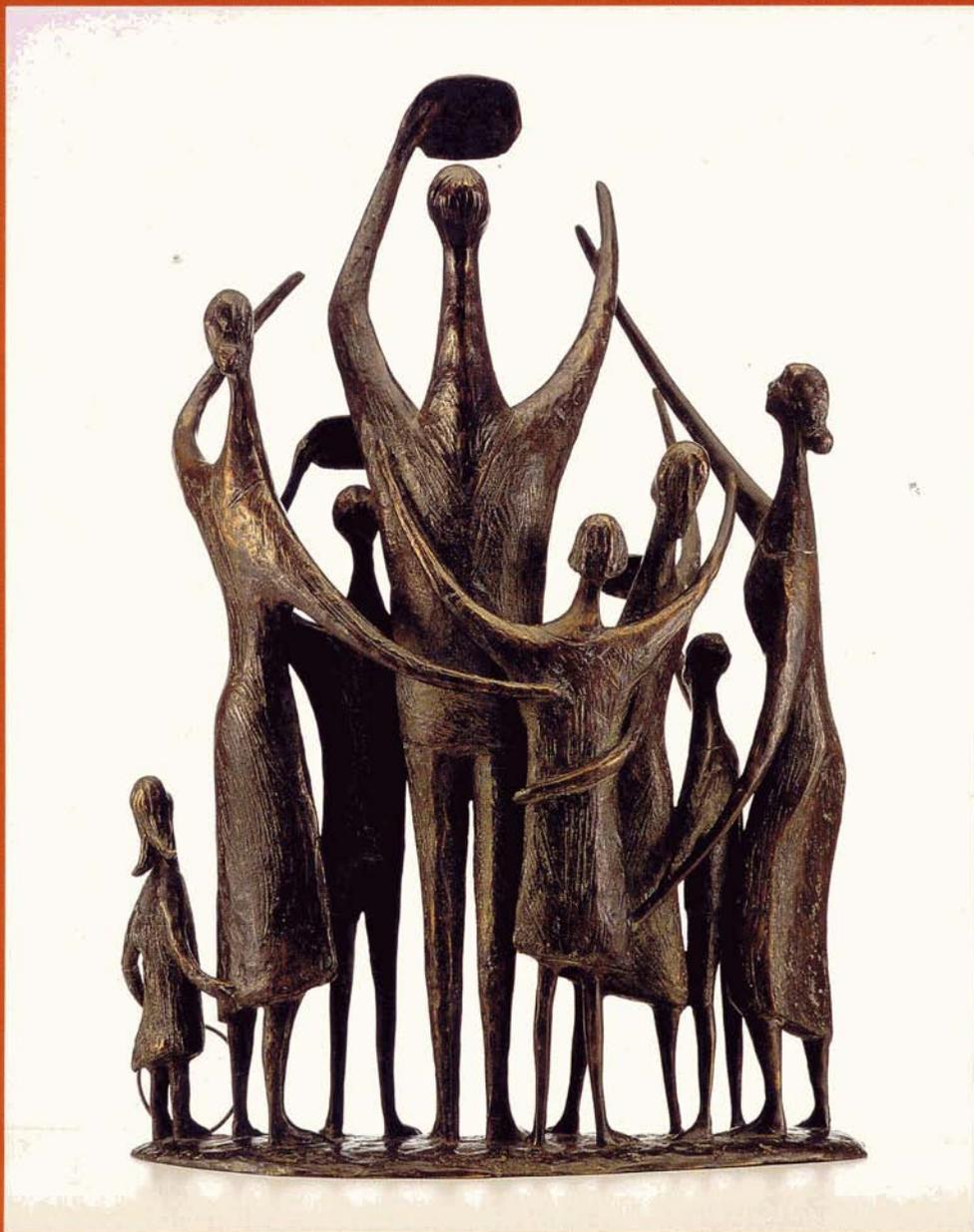


autumn

MARCH 1998 - MAY 1998



ROBERT
McDOUGALL
ART GALLERY
AND ANNEX



bulletin

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The Robert McDougall Art Gallery
and Contemporary Art Annex
Botanic Gardens, Rolleston Avenue
PO Box 2626, Christchurch, New Zealand
Telephone (03) 365-0915
Facsimile (03) 365-3942

Director: Tony Preston

'Gallery Hours:
10am until 5.30pm – summer
10am until 4.30pm – winter
Admission by donation.
Free guided tours available.

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exhibitions

Hotere - Out the Black Window
- now on until 19 April

The Legendary Lee Miller -
Photographs 1929-1964
- now on until 26 April

Sculpture in the Gardens
- now on until 5 April

Works from the Collection
- always on show

Embody - At the McDougall
Contemporary Art Annex
- now on until 19 April

PreMillennial - At the McDougall
Contemporary Art Annex
- 17 April until 31 May

Recent Acquisitions
- 25 April until 14 June

Ria Bancroft.
Three Decades of Sculpture
- 6 May until 21 June

coming events

March

- 1 Lecture. Margaret Dawson, Lecturer in Photography at the University of Canterbury will give an illustrated lecture on "Lee Miller: a Change in Vision." 11.00 am.
- 4 Wednesday 1 Club 10.30 am. Art appreciation club meeting.
Wednesday 2 Club 1.00 pm. Art appreciation club meeting.
- 5 Mac Club 10.30 am. Art appreciation club for the disabled or differently abled. New members welcome.
- 6 Friday Club 10.30 am. Art appreciation club meeting.
- 7 Saturday 1 Club 10.30 am. Art appreciation club meeting.
- 8 Curator's Floortalk. Elizabeth Caldwell, Curator of Contemporary Art, will speak on Embody, at the McDougall Contemporary Art Annex, 11.00 am.
- 10 Lunchtime Floortalk on **Hotere** - Out the Black Window with Ann Betts, Education Officer, 12 noon.
- 10 Quinns 1998 Winter Range. Fashion parade, 6.45 pm. Tickets \$20, available from the Gallery, Quinns of Merivale, or by phoning 372 2981. Bookings essential.
- 12 Curator's Floortalk. Elizabeth Caldwell, Curator of Contemporary Art, will speak on Embody, at the McDougall Contemporary Art Annex. 1.00 pm.
- 14 Saturday 2 Club 10.30 am. Art appreciation club meeting.
- 18 Speaker of the Month. Dr Pamela Gerrish Nunn of the Art History Department, University of Canterbury will speak on "Pre-Raphaelitism: 150 Years Young." At the Hurst Seager Room, Christchurch Arts Centre. 10.30 am.
- 19 Lunchtime Floortalk on **Hotere** - Out the Black Window with Ann Betts, Education Officer, 1.00 pm.

coming events continued

- 20 Friends' Annual General Meeting.** Jane Evans and John Coley will speak after the conclusion of the meeting and the award of the annual scholarships. 7.00 pm.
- 21 Children's Art and Poetry.** Liz Weir reads a selection of children's poetry to which children are invited to make an art work in response. 2.00 pm.
- 22 Lecture.** Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, Senior Lecturer University of Canterbury and the McDougall's honorary Kaitiaki Maori, will speak on "Ralph Hotere and Contemporary Maori Art", 11.00 am. At the Little Theatre, Christ's College, Rolleston Ave.
- 22 LocArt Visit** to studio of Barry Cleavin, 53 Proctor Street, at 10.50 am. To book or cancel phone 379 4055.

April

- 1 Wednesday 1 Club** 10.30 am. Art appreciation club meeting.
Wednesday 2 Club 1.00 pm. Art appreciation club meeting.
- 2 Mac Club** 10.30 am. Art appreciation club for the disabled or differently abled.
- 3 Friday Club** 10.30 am. Art appreciation club meeting.
- 4 Saturday 1 Club and Saturday 2 Club** 10.30 am. Art appreciation club meeting.
- 5 The Spoken Word and the Visual Sign.** Poets Gregory O'Brien, Mark Williams and Jenny Bornholdt read works which respond to paintings by Hotere and others. 11.00 am.
- 15 Speaker of the Month.** Jonathan Mane-Wheoki of the Art History Department, University of Canterbury and the McDougall's honorary Kaitiaki Maori will speak on "Ralph Hotere and the Spoken Word". At the Hurst Seager Room, Christchurch Arts Centre. 10.30 am.
- 18 McDougall Tour to visit Te Papa, Wellington.** Bookings and information 372 2973.
- 22 LocArt Visit** to Tony Bridge at the Photography Department, Papanui High School, 30 Langdons Road, at 2.10 pm. To book or cancel phone 379 4055.

May

- 1 Friday Club** 10.30 am. Art appreciation club meeting.
- 2 Saturday 1 Club** 10.30 am. Art appreciation club meeting.
- 6 Wednesday 1 Club** 10.30 am. Art appreciation club meeting. **Wednesday 2 Club** 1.30 pm. Art appreciation club meeting.
- 7 Mac Club** 10.30 am. Art appreciation club for the disabled or differently abled.
- 9 Saturday 2 Club** 10.30 am. Art appreciation club meeting.
- 10 Lecture.** Peb Simmons, the artist's daughter, will speak on "Powerful Images! Life events and the sculptures of Ria Bancroft", 11.00 am.
- 12 The Contemporary Eye** – Simple introduction to contemporary art. Tuesday morning sessions begin today. Enrolments essential. Bookings and information 372 2973.
- 12 Lunchtime Floortalk** on **Ria Bancroft. Three Decades of Sculpture.** Neil Roberts, Senior Curator. 12 noon.
- 16 The Contemporary Eye** – Simple introduction to contemporary art. Saturday morning sessions begin today. Enrolments essential. Bookings and information 372 2973.
- 20 Speaker of the Month.** John Coley will speak on "Life after the Gallery". 10.30 am. At the Lovell-Smith Room, Christchurch Arts Centre.
- 21 Lunchtime Floortalk** on **Ria Bancroft. Three Decades of Sculpture.** Neil Roberts, Senior Curator. 1.00 pm.
- 28 Forum.** Three Dimensional Thinking. A panel of well known sculptors lead a discussion on the special challenges of working with sculptural form. 5.00 pm. At the Hurst Seager Room, Christchurch Arts Centre.

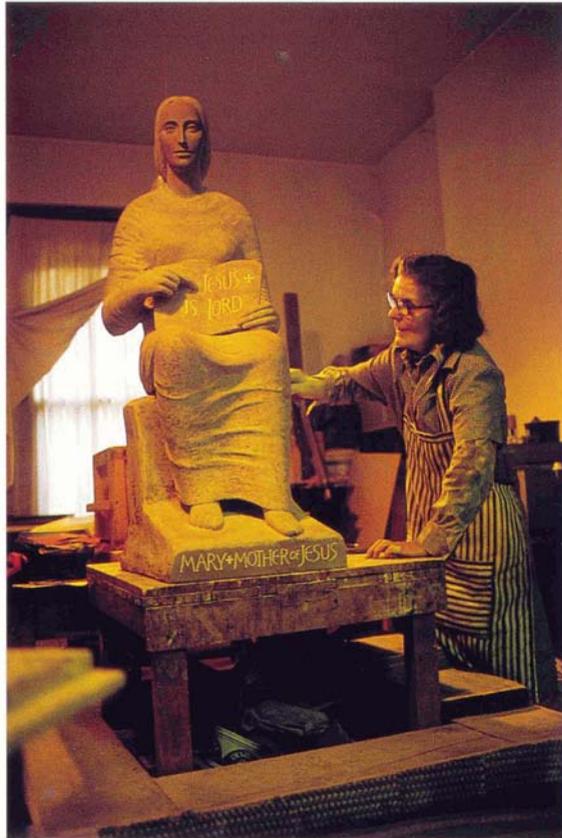
All venues, unless otherwise stated, are at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

Ria Bancroft Three Decades of Sculpture 6 May – 21 June

Ria Bancroft died in Christchurch on 8 March 1993 after a life journey that had taken her in many directions but had denied to her, apart from the last three decades of her life, the opportunity to fulfil herself as an artist. A commitment to art was made early in her life when as a child her special ability to work in three dimensions was recognised. But it was not until the 1960s that this was tested. In 1961, at 54 years of age and living and studying art in Italy, she realised that for the remainder of her life her art must be given a chance.

When her daughter Peb Simmons moved to New Zealand with her husband and family, Ria was invited to join them. She agreed, but was very hesitant about leaving a country that for her was the cradle of later western art. Equipped with a Diploma from the Academy of Florence, Bancroft left for New Zealand, arriving in Christchurch on 24 May 1962 to begin a new life as a professional artist and to reclaim some of the time lost. There was a realisation that, while in the past other activities and people had taken priority over her art, the future had to be very different if she was in any way to fulfil her purpose as a sculptor.

Bancroft gradually settled into the Christchurch art community, which in the early 1960s was on the threshold of renewal. A new generation of post-World War II artists was emerging with new ideas and a ready acceptance of international directions. This climate of change was however only small consolation to Bancroft against the frustration she felt living in Christchurch rather than Florence. At a most basic practical level the materials and equipment she was accustomed to using were not readily obtainable in New Zealand and the opportunity to cast her work in bronze almost



*Ria Bancroft at work on
the "Mary" sculpture
in her studio, 1984.*

non-existent. As in the past, when problems developed **Bancroft** found her own solutions and adapted modern resins as an effective substitute material.

Bancroft became a member of the Canterbury Society of Arts and in 1963 was invited to exhibit with The Group. Among the other artist members at that time were William A. **Sutton**, Toss Woollaston, Doris Lusk, Michael **Trumic**, Pat **Mulcahy**, **Tony** Fomison, **Ida Lough** and Tom Taylor. Included in her early work in New **Zealand** was *Unicycle No. 2* and *Rocking Horse Ride* both of which she showed at the 1963 Group exhibition.

Many artists in New **Zealand** in the 1960s were beginning to diversify, not only in their materials but also into other art disciplines in their work, and whilst potters and sculptors were not in as great numbers as painters, their position and acceptance had greatly improved from that of a decade earlier. Architects were also looking to sculptors and when new buildings were constructed more commissions were being offered. **Bancroft** was included in these developments and from the 1960s, as well as carrying out her own private work, she was also setting time aside for the commissions that came her way. The first major commission she accepted was in 1965 when she was invited by the Christchurch City Council to make a sculpture to be incorporated in the design of the new Horizon restaurant at Christchurch International Airport. The result was the work, *Horizon*.

Among the other major public commissions of the 1960's was *Foms*, the 9 metre long mural, which she made in collaboration with wood artist, Pat **Mulcahy**, for the Ministry of Works to be incorporated in the design of the foyer of the University of Canterbury's new Science Lecture Hall. Within a very short time, in 1966, the two artists were invited to design a mural for the new New **Zealand** Broadcasting Corporation building in Rotorua.

There was no question of **Bancroft's** status as a sculptor in New **Zealand**. As early as 1964 she was invited to join the New **Zealand** Society of

Sculptors which had among its members, **Mollie McAllister**, Carl Sydow, Alison Duff, Paul Beadle, Eric Doudney and **Greer Twiss**. It was also in the mid 1960s that **Bancroft** embarked upon a number of sculpture projects that included religious subjects, a thread in her work that was to grow stronger as the years advanced. A commission for the new parish church of St **Mathew's** in Bryndwr offered an exciting challenge but it was unable to progress when funding proved to be a difficulty.

This disappointment was perhaps not as great as that **Bancroft** experienced when her design for the Stewart Fountain in High Street was rejected after having been formally accepted. In 1967 the Christchurch Civic Trust commissioned the Stewart Fountain project and chose **Bancroft's** design but then changed its preference in favour of the sculptor **Laurence Karasek**. The fountain design eventually failed and attempts since to establish a replacement have foundered mostly through civic indecision. Perhaps if **Bancroft's** design had been honoured it would still be in place today.

Bancroft's first decade in New **Zealand** was one of establishing herself as a credible professional sculptor, and in this she succeeded, but it did not ensure a regular income with the result that yet again **Bancroft** was obliged to examine her options and compromise her time at the expense of her sculpture. By the early 1970s **Bancroft** became more and more involved in art education delivering talks and lectures and in 1971 she accepted a position as art teacher at Xavier College – a boys' high school. Whilst **Bancroft** found teaching rewarding, it was draining energy that should have been going into her work and this led to her decision in 1974 to resign.

During the years she was teaching she had not abandoned her sculpture and, though her output was reduced, she had continued to be involved in a very important project concerned with the conservation and refurbishment of the Roman Catholic Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Barbadoes Street. In 1968 **Bancroft** had become a member of a project group convened by Bishop

Brian **Ashby** to examine the conservation and restoration of the cathedral and by the mid 1970s much of this work had been carried out, but a great deal more was to follow. Part of that was the forming of a special side chapel of the Blessed Sacrament within the **cathedral**. This included a tabernacle above the altar for which **Bancroft** was invited to design a pair of doors covering a safe to hold sacramental vessels. For the subject of the doors **Bancroft** chose 'Christ has died – Christ is risen'. They were modelled by her in Christchurch and later cast in bronze by a foundry in **England**. The project was to be a labour of love for **Bancroft** and would prove to be her most significant work of that decade.

Of almost equal importance among her religious works of the 1970s was **Thy Kingdom Come** commissioned for the Holy Cross Chapel in Chancery Lane. By the end of the 1970s **Bancroft's** health was becoming less predictable and she became acutely aware of the preciousness of the time that remained in her life.

As a practising Roman Catholic living in New **Brighton** she was part of the community of the New **Brighton** parish church which was in the same street where she lived. The decision to redesign the interior of that church enabled **Bancroft** to become even more involved, working in collaboration with the sculptor Bing Dawe. Together they redefined many of the **furnishing** features of the church such as the altar lectern and font but, more importantly, they made a cross as a focus for the **sanctuary**. This was designed by **Bancroft** and carved by **Dawe**.

Following the refurbishment of the church interior in 1982, **Bancroft** felt that she would like to make a more personal contribution and decided to make a sculpture which she would **gift**. The church, which had formerly been named Our Lady Of the Immaculate Conception, had become **simply** St Mary's so **Bancroft** decided to make a seated figure of Mary the mother of Christ, depicting her as a mature **woman**. The community's opinion and approval was sought before she set about her task. She completed the figure of Mary in 1984. Like the **Tabernacle Screen Doors** made almost

a decade earlier this was one of her most significant works. Its success, in part, was due to the fact that for **Bancroft** it was not only a sculpture of religious symbolism but a personal statement about her spirituality and faith.

By the end of the **1980s**, with advancing age, **Bancroft** continued to work in spite of very fragile health. She felt she could accept one more important commission which was offered to her by All Saints Church in **Dunedin**. This commission was to make a memorial cross which depicted Christ in **majesty**. This **Christus Rex** was a fitting conclusion to **Bancroft's** work in public sculpture. Following its completion in 1990 she continued to be offered commissions, but **poor** health made it impossible to accept.

In 1992 she embarked on one final personal statement, a life size portrait head of the Russian writer and philosopher Alexander Solzhenitsyn. He was someone with whom **Bancroft** had felt great empathy in his struggle to fulfil his **objective** as an **artist**. The head of Solzhenitsyn was in a real sense a memorial, not only to his struggle and pain, but more poignantly to her own.

Ria Bancroft: Three Decades of Sculpture will comprise many of the most significant works of sculpture, in a variety of media, that **Bancroft** made during the three decades she was active as an artist in New **Zealand**. Even though the focus will be on work of the **1960s**, 70s and 80s there will also be a space dedicated to **Bancroft's** early work. In addition, an installation showing **Bancroft's** methods and process will be included. It is hoped that this will assist in providing a more complete insight into one of Canterbury's more important recent sculptors.

On Sunday 10 May at 11.00 am at the Gallery, the **artist's daughter** Peb Simmons will speak on her mother's life and works in a lecture entitled "Powerful Images! Life events and the sculptures of **Ria Bancroft**". The book 'No Ordinary Woman', written by Peb is available from the Gallery Shop for \$49.95.

Neil Roberts, Senior Curator

Embody

27 February – 19 April

Contemporary sculpture, painting and photography by some of New Zealand's leading artists will feature at the McDougall Contemporary Art Annex in **Embody**, an exhibition examining body-referencing works from the Gallery's collection. The artists in **Embody** all, either overtly or obliquely, use the human body as a tool with which to both suggest and reference the outside world.

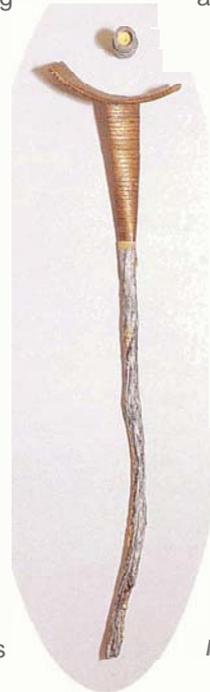
Vessel shapes are used in many cultures as symbols of tribal or genealogical continuity and the phallus-like forms of Christopher Braddock's *Vessels* have strong connections to the fertility symbols used by many ancient societies. Making reference to the boat, or vessel, used by Charon to ferry the bodies of the dead across the river Styx in Classical mythology, *Vessels* represents the journey from bodily existence towards spiritual life, the transition upon which the Christian doctrine of the crucifixion is based.

In other works, the body is suggested through its very absence, creating an atmosphere of alienation and isolation. Grant Lingard's *Flag* and *Boots* makes playful but poignant comments about the homosexual experience within New Zealand society, using symbolism which is both political and highly personal. His flag, made up entirely of Jockey Y Fronts, counteracts the enforced invisibility of gay culture with what Giovanni Intra has described as

"a secret matrix of erotic communication", its unrelenting whiteness suggesting society's obsession with homogeneity and intolerance of variation. The sheer number of underpants stresses the individual lives which are often blanketed by a single overwhelming stereotype. Lingard's football boots modelled from scented white soap, link the apparently unlinkable – femininity and rugby – in a poignant reminder of the highly prescribed and clichéd nature of gender in this country.

Caroline Menzies' *Flottage*, which consists of a breathing mask, a life jacket, deflated lungs and a kind of corset (all fashioned from kelp), provides a curious life support system for an absent body, using the body in water as a metaphor for life and death.

Menzies' work is deeply ambiguous – water is represented as both essential to life and as a threat to it, and the valves and masks we use to keep ourselves alive when underwater or in old age are just as capable of restricting the flow of air. A Menzies anchoring device can keep us safely moored, or drag us down beneath the waves. *Flottage's* suspended state on the Gallery wall is equally enigmatic – has it been washed up on the beach with all the other flotsam and jetsam of wreckage or simply hung up to dry until it is used again?



Andrew Drummond
'Support for a Limb'
wood, gold, copper and graphite
1990

Felicity Milburn, Curatorial Assistant

PreMillennial Signs of the Soon Coming Storm

27 April – 31 May



Ronnie van Hout
"Soldiers Resting"
acrylic paint
on plastic
1997

PreMillennial, a collaborative effort by two New Zealand-born artists, Mike Stevenson and Ronnie van Hout, plays upon the anxieties of a paranoid and future-obsessed society that is rapidly approaching the new millennium. In contrast to the friendly little green men of the 1950s, recent tales of alien encounters in the 1990s have been characterised by abductions, invasive medical examinations and sophisticated governmental cover-ups. In the wake of Roswell, the X Files and Oliver Stone, we have become fascinated by evil empires and seduced by the faintest hint of conspiracy. **PreMillennial** provides a compelling and often humorous insight into a brave new world where aliens and sinister government forces lurk behind every tree, door and computer screen.

Mike Stevenson's work consists of exquisite pastel copies of images from magazines such as *Artforum*, *Time* and *Art New Zealand*. Stevenson has doctored the appearance of the original photographs and, when his drawings are lit by an flashing ultra violet light, hidden messages and secret slogans are revealed. One image shows American artist Jeff Koons in front of a classroom of children, a celebrated picture from *Artforum* magazine. Stevenson's version includes the scrawled words "Accept The Mark" on the blackboard, along with "666" emblazoned on Koons' forehead. These cryptic changes play on the wide-spread public suspicion that contemporary art is based on hoaxes and confidence tricks and show how the subliminal techniques of advertising so familiar to a consumer society can be used to brainwash and subdue the population in readiness for an alien invasion.

In Ronnie van Hout's installation for PreMillennial, ghostly faked UFO photographs are juxtaposed with copies of the artist's own employment documentation and two unemployment applications generated by the New Zealand Labour Department. On these forms, van Hout is listed as an "artist seeking work", highlighting the common conception that art is not a 'real job', and questioning the continued relevance of the artist in today's world. The governmental data serves as a reminder of the enormous public machine dealing with these sorts of 'private documents' and hints at other documents (the real-life X Files) the government may be keeping secret. Twelve small dioramic models, fashioned from hobbyist's plastic, complete van Hout's display. These tiny scenarios of destruction add to a growing sense of the redundancy of art in this violent apocalypse.

Felicity Milburn, Curatorial Assistant

1997 has seen significant involvement between the Robert McDougall and National Services – Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa.

National Services functions as an 'arm' of Te Papa, extending to museums throughout New Zealand, and providing workshops, training seminars, resources and also partnership projects to enable development, in an holistic sense, within the very diverse range of museums throughout the country.

The funding received by the McDougall was for the implementation of a partnership project which focused on the promotion of, and visitation to, contemporary art galleries in general, with the McDougall Contemporary Art Annex being used as the model for this research. The concept behind the partnership was the collation and development of workable information which had wide application for other museums.

Opened ten years ago this October, the Annex holds a unique place in Christchurch, being part of a public art gallery, but being physically separated from the 'parent gallery,' it has had the opportunity to develop a distinctive personality that reflects the nature of the work it offers.

Presenting exhibitions by regional, national and international artists, the Annex plays a vital role within the realm of contemporary art shown in Christchurch and throughout New Zealand – providing visitors with the opportunity to view works by artists who are instrumental in the development and progression of art.

The focus of research for the Annex was visitation – numbers, in recent years had been lower than expected, which prompted questions as to why this had occurred and what action needed to be taken.

Robert McDougall and National Services: Partnership Project



**Elizabeth Caldwell (rep),
Curator of Contemporary Art,
and Annabel Tote (right),
Project Facilitator.**

As visitation has become the measure of a museum's success, having impact on future funding through sponsorship and budget allocations, **it** was imperative that we explore past factors as well as future options to ensure regular visitation.

The eight month partnership project was managed by the Gallery's Publicity and Marketing Officer, **Amanda** Gregan, and facilitated by myself.

Objectives included research and the development of practices to increase overall visitation with specific concentration on the education sector.

Extensive contacts were developed and research was conducted with staff, secondary school students, visitors and non-visitors in the wider community, as well as primary, secondary and tertiary educators to identify trends which motivate people to visit a contemporary art gallery.

The key findings of the project involve strengthening communication links with the education sector, developing greater awareness in the community of exhibitions and the location of the Annex through promotion and broadening the range of public programmes accompanying exhibitions at the Annex.

We are very grateful for the ongoing support of the educators, students and the public of Christchurch who were involved in this project. The enthusiasm and continual co-operation, particularly from educators, has been invaluable in aiding both the Art Annex and contemporary art museums throughout the country to devise workable approaches in implementing unique and stimulating experiences with contemporary art. Thank you.

Annabel Tate, Project Facilitator

upcoming events

Eye Spy Programmes for 1998

We will be repeating our popular **Eye Spy** beginners' courses in art appreciation this year, starting on Friday 20 February, Saturday 7 March and Tuesday 10 March, with programmes running on five consecutive Tuesday, Friday and Saturday mornings. There will also be a new four-session course, **The Contemporary Eye**, which is being offered in May on Tuesday or Saturday mornings. The course fees are \$25 and bookings are essential. To enrol in these programmes, or for further information, please phone 372 2973.

Tour to Te Papa on 18 April

We are organising a small tour group to visit the new **Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa** in Wellington for a day trip on Saturday 18 April. The plan is to see not only the public exhibits but also many of the specialist working areas behind the scenes in this 'state of the art' new museum. The group, which will be led by Ann Betts, the Education Officer, is limited to 20 persons and the fee which includes airfares, shuttles and the museum charges is \$295.00. For bookings or enquires please phone 372 2973.

The Robert *McDougall* Art Gallery *and* Quinns present 'Lee Miller and the Art of Fashion'

Quinns of Merivale will present their 1998 winter collection in the Centre Court of the Gallery on Tuesday 10 March at 6.45 pm. The fashion parade will be followed by wine and cheese and a private viewing of *The Legendary Lee Miller – Photographs 1929-1964* and *Hotere – Out the Black Window*. Admission is \$20 per person and tickets are available from the McDougall, Quinns of Merivale or by phoning 372 2981.

Book now as tickets are strictly limited and there will be no door sales.

*This event is supported by Montana Wines,
the McDougall's preferred wine supplier*



recent acquisitions

Shutter, a large oil on canvas work by Simon McIntyre, was purchased in late 1997. McIntyre was born in Wellington and attended Victoria University, but later came to Christchurch to study, attaining his Diploma of Fine Arts (Honours) from the Canterbury University School of Fine Arts in 1977. Initially experimenting with pure abstraction, McIntyre found the lack of prolonged development and engagement with life unfulfilling. Under the tutelage of artists such as William Sutton, Ted Bracey and Quentin MacFarlane, he developed an interest in landscape and gradually cultivated a style in which fragmented elements of the natural world were suspended in and over a flattened field of muted colour. Colin McCahon's Northland Panels were particularly influential, helping McIntyre to cement his ongoing preoccupation with surface and the breaking down of images, a process he describes as "taking a visual form, in many cases a landscape, and making sense of it on a two-dimensional surface".

While his first inspirations came from the land, McIntyre has also

Shutter Contemporary



Simon McIntyre
'Shutter' 1997

completed cycles of paintings relating to urban, nautical and musical themes. More recently, the graphic elements in his work have started to resemble doors, window frames, awnings and other details of architectural interiors. This new direction is characterised by a field of softly hued horizontal bands into and under which McIntyre's ambiguous visual 'hooks' are floated. In *Shutter*,

the palette is limited to filmy greys, creams and browns which obscure and veil a hazy window or door, but are peeled back and pierced through to reveal a chalky board studded with looming brown holes; a glimpse of the house's normally hidden, a cross section of a nailed plank, or merely a remembered echo of an obscure household detail? These deliberate interruptions to the painting's dominant rhythm are a recurring feature in McIntyre's work, and something he works hard to achieve: "(I) have to push myself to give the work the necessary toughness and edge. I often try to push myself away from harmony."

McIntyre's evocations extend past the merely visual into the other senses in which memory is contained. *Shutter* also recalls the sound of softly clacking venetian blinds, the creaking shift of wooden floorboards, even the soft whirr of a camera in action. Typically, McIntyre has chosen an enigmatic and evocative title, vividly suggestive, but completely open to interpretation.

Felicity Milburn, Curatorial Assistant

Visitor numbers at the Gallery and Annex for 1997 reached almost a quarter of a million – an increase of almost 20,000 on 1996. With many other Christchurch attractions reporting a downturn, this is a very pleasing result for the Gallery, and must surely augur well for the new Christchurch Art Gallery project.

▶ A number of significant changes of personnel are occurring on the national Gallery and Museum scene. We welcome to the South Island Priscilla Pitts, presently Director of the Govett-Brewster in New Plymouth, who has been appointed to lead the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Bob Maysmor, Director of the Dowse Art Museum in Lower Hutt has resigned his position, as has Richard Cassels, Director of the New Zealand National Maritime Museum in Auckland.

▶ Most prominent in the news, of course, is the opening of the Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington, which cost some 320 million dollars. What a party! (The celebration alone cost 2 million dollars. Don't hold your breath for a similar opening for the new Christchurch Art Gallery). The addition of a major new gallery space will doubtless attract some major exhibitions, and we look forward to what will most certainly be an exciting programme.

NEW CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY

The first phase of the new Christchurch Art Gallery, the production of the *Functional Design Brief* has now been completed.

If Christchurch City Council planning proceeds as scheduled the Christchurch Art Gallery will open in 2003. The next stage will be the development of a working brief from which an architect can develop a concept. Watch this space for continuing updates on the project.

friends
of



R O B E R T
M c D O U G A L L
A R T G A L L E R Y

Annual General Meeting 20 March

The meeting and the presentation of the new scholarship awards will commence at 7.00 pm and be followed by a break for refreshments. There will then be a chance to meet and hear a talk from the artist Jane Evans, one of New Zealand's most popular artists, and John Coley, well-known to most of us, and author of the recent publication "Jane Evans".

Speaker of the Month

These functions take place on the third Wednesday of each month, meeting at 10.30 am for tea and coffee followed by the morning's presentation. The charge is \$1.50 for members, \$2.50 for non-members.

On **18 March** Dr Pamela Gerrish Nunn, Senior Lecturer in the History of Art at the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts, will speak on "Pre-Raphaelitism: 150 Years Young". The venue will be the Hurst Seager Room, Christchurch Arts Centre.

On **15 April** Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, Senior Lecturer, History of Art and honorary Kaitiaki Maori for the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, will give an illustrated lecture on "Ralph Hotere and the Spoken Word". The venue is the Hurst Seager Room, Christchurch Arts Centre.

On **20 May** John Coley will speak on "Life after the Gallery". The venue is the Lovell Smith Room, Christchurch Arts Centre.

Coming LocArt Visits

On **Sunday 23 March**, nine Friends are invited to visit Barry Cleavin, printmaker, at his studio. Please meet June Goldstein outside 53 Proctor Street, Papanui at 10.50 am. To book or cancel please ring the answerphone on 379 4055.

On **Wednesday 22 April** a maximum of 20 Friends are invited to visit the Photographic Department of Papanui High School, 30 Langdons Road, where teacher and photographer Tony Bridge will explain "The Philosophy of Teaching Photography". Please meet June Goldstein by the first gateway at 2.10 pm. To book or cancel please ring the answerphone on 379 4055.

Recent LocArt Visits

October

Ten fortunate Friends visited Don Peebles in his home where they enjoyed the opportunity to converse and ask the questions which may have seemed minor in a larger venue.

With his wife Prue, Peebles was recently in Blenheim where Gary Collins, Neil Frazer and JS. Parker, who are all artists influenced by Peebles, were exhibiting in a fairly new gallery. Drawings made on the journey were passed around and carefully examined. Some showed overt subject matter; others appeared totally abstract with one or two carefully placed lines or an atmospheric smudge. Peebles is adamant that his works are abstract rather than abstracted. He is the artist and we must believe him. However this will not preclude spectators from developing their own rapport and from deriving connotations from his paintings. When asked, "Is landscape painting easier than abstract painting!" the quick response was "Yes".

Peebles has a consistent pattern of working every day. He believes that inspiration will not arise of its own accord and that it must be sought from a symbiotic relationship with materials until the artist becomes totally engaged. It is an ongoing process and he has recently started a new series of paintings incorporating fresh ideas which link to his previous works.

When asked whether he would do it all again, Peebles answered, "Probably not," observing that "art is such a useless occupation". This started a philosophical discussion about the point and pointlessness of activity. We all agreed that doubts were part of any process.

Peebles' studio is relatively small and was extremely uncluttered, although when pressed he admitted he had tidied it up for the occasion. Since student days he has continued to make life-drawings

exploring the underlying skeletal structure and the relationships of the various surface planes.

When Peebles paints, his large canvas supports may be hung on the wall or placed on the floor. Storage of large works can cause problems and sadly an occasional one may be destroyed or turned to other uses, like covering a sandpit. They should be gracing entrance walls to institutions, hotels, airports or vehicle showrooms. The loss is ours.

Thank you, Don Peebles, for patiently sharing your thoughtful knowledge and for your gracious hospitality.

November

Marian Maguire kindly accommodated the twelve or more Friends who visited her home studio workshop. Here, in addition to producing her own works, the determined, but reticent, Maguire assists in the production and printing of editions for other established artists. Techniques such as woodcutting extend out into the garden.

Maguire patiently explained the various techniques of drypoint, engraving and lithography. She showed us examples of each, and demonstrated the use of Japanese chisels which are kind to the wrists when woodcutting.

Printmaking is a messy activity in which the ultimate aim is a clear, clean print with ink only where it is meant to be. Monoprints are perhaps the exception. Printmaking is a difficult discipline and during our visit Maguire's work spaces were clinically clean. A little stretch of the imagination

allows us to visualise a typical work day. Artists may be drawing on a lithographic stone or woodcutting, perhaps kneeling on the porch working on a large piece of custom wood. When required, Maguire will print a proof from which the artist will make any necessary alterations until the desired image is reached. Most of the artists like Ralph Hotere, Gretchen Albrecht and John Pule live out of town, so it is particularly important that she understands the pictorial aims of each.

Any time left over is devoted to her own work. After years of printmaking during which she used warm colours and gestural lines and concentrated primarily on the life-force generated from tribal mythology and female forms, she has changed direction. Her main interest now is painting using acrylic paint on canvas and working in serial form. The change is drastic and her subject matter is now centred around the Renaissance artists' interest in the proportions and numbers taken from Greek classicism. Static, idealised figures are depicted with architectural columns in cool blues, around white and black.

We asked to see earlier work and, needless to say, there was much discussion about the overt change. It was an interesting afternoon and we were very grateful for some of Marian Maguire's precious time.

June Goldstein



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