

# Debenture Issue:

## A Preliminary Announcement

Three years ago when difficulties were being experienced in financing the new Gallery, many members suggested, and inquired when, the Society was going to have a debenture issue.

The suggestion was considered carefully by the Finance Committee, but because of the down turn in the economy at that time and the need to complete quickly the finances for the new Gallery, outside mortgage finance was secured.

We are greatly indebted to the Canterbury Savings Bank, which arranged to let the Society borrow \$50,000 on first mortgage, for this not only enabled us to build the Gallery quickly once the site had been agreed upon and approval obtained from the Building Programmer, but gained the Society some considerable advantage in building at a time of highly competitive tendering.

With the very active first year in the new Gallery behind us and the Gallery paid for, the Finance Committee can now see more clearly the financial pattern for 1969 and future years.

The biggest Gallery expense is interest on the mortgage (1969, \$2800) and, on top of this interest payment, \$2000 each year has to be found to reduce the mortgage which now stands at \$44,500. (We have largely been able to finance mortgage repayments so far from the proceeds of house inspections and the generous donations of members).

If it was possible to reduce the annual interest bill from \$2800 to, say, \$1600, not only would this reduce the annual financial interest burden, but the money saved would ensure the earlier repayment of the mortgage.

The Society's Council has, therefore, resolved to proceed at an early date with an issue of 3½% Debentures.

The Society has substantial equity in the new Gallery and proper security under a Trust Deed will be given to debenture holders.

Further details will be announced at a later date, but it is proposed that if a member subscribes for 200 of the 3½% Debentures he may elect to receive a free subscription to the Society instead of interest, during the term that such debentures remain unpaid.

**The Council is very conscious of the many recent and continuing appeals to the public of Christchurch, but would emphasise to members that in embarking on this debenture issue it is borrowing money which it intends repaying in full.**

## New Members

Miss Jenny Allison	Mr E. A. Fenner
Miss Judy Allison	Mr and Mrs R. H. Hammond
Mr H. R. Armstrong	
Mr Steven Belcher	Mr Colin Handley
Mr and Mrs A. O. Bentley	Mr and Mrs G. J. Inglis
Miss Cherry Bratt	Mrs L. K. Mason
Mrs A. Cameron	Mrs D. K. Ower
Mrs J. E. Corbett	Mrs M. Pollock
Mrs N. E. Farthing	Miss Katie Rudkin
Mrs E. Fearnley	Mr K. Silva

# news

No. TWENTY-FOUR, MARCH 1969



THE JOURNAL OF  
THE CANTERBURY SOCIETY OF ARTS  
66 GLOUCESTER STREET  
P.O. BOX 772  
CHRISTCHURCH  
TELEPHONE 67-261

## GALLERY CALENDAR

Subject to Adjustment

**March 8-23:** Potters.

**March 12-April 2:** Annual Autumn.

**March 29-April 11:** West Coast.

**April 12-26:** Ikons.

**April 28-May 11:** Bill Cumming.

**May 2-18:** Bashir Baraki.

**May 12-16:** Junior Art Class; John Coley.

**May 14-31:** Avis Higgs.

**May 23-June 8:** Open. Receiving Day, May 15.

**June 11-22:** Michael Eaton.

**June 23-July 12:** John Parker.

**July 26-August 3:** Town and Country.

**August 3-10:** N.Z. Library and Book Week.

**August 7-21:** "Star" School Show.

**August 24:** Photographic Society Film Evening.

**August 24-September 8:** Bob Bassant.

**August 24-September 9:** Ernest Kalnins.

**September 13-25:** David Brokenshire.

**September 29-October 9:** Institute of Management.

**October 11-19:** Latvian.

**October 13-25:** Don Peebles.

**October 15-30:** Summer Show. Receiving Day October 10.

**October 27-November 16:** Michael Smither.

**November 1-9:** Michael Eaton's School.

**November 15-30:** The Group.

**November 19-December 7:** Paree Ott.

**December 8-31:** Photographic Society.





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APRIL 18th, 19th and 20th

SEPT. 26th, 27th and 28th

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## Modern Living III: Inspection of To-day's Homes

Our third exhibition of modern living will be held on March 29, a Saturday, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

This, of course, is not an exhibition in the Gallery, but a field exhibition, a tour of contemporary, architect-designed homes selected with the assistance of the local branch of the Architects' Institute.

Inspection is offered through the generosity of the owners.

Tickets will be \$1 again.

The homes in the exhibition this time have been restricted to six because their situations range from Opawa to Fendalton and travelling time must be allowed for.

The list of homes, giving owners, addresses and architects, is:

Dr D. J. Dobson, **8A Grange Street, Opawa.** Lucking and Vial.

Mr M. E. Mahoney, **8 Pentlow Place, Fendalton.** Warren and Mahoney.

Mr C. B. McLachlan, **35 Leinster Road, Merivale.** Cowey and McGregor.

Mr A. J. Schneideman, **2 Makora Street, Fendalton.** Warren and Mahoney.

Mr S. B. Ashton, **Cnr. Yaldhurst and Withells Roads.** D. E. Donnithorne.

Mr Jack Ferrier, **29 McDougall Avenue, St. Albans.** Helmore, Cotterill and Fenton.

## Appreciation

It is reassuring to learn that the exhibitions we have secured for the new Gallery so far have been appreciated educationally. Testimony is offered in the following letter to the President from Mr Bashir Baraki, art master at Xavier College. Mr Baraki, incidentally, has made the most of Tony Fomison's Maori cave drawing exhibition (dealt with elsewhere in this issue) with his classes. It is a pity more other schools did not.

Sir,

I would like to thank the Canterbury Society of Arts for the splendid exhibitions of last year, for these have served well in the area of art education, especially for young adults on the Secondary school level—thus giving them the opportunity to see and explore the many areas of the art world, and on some occasions of meeting the artist themselves.

I feel that every art teacher should take advantage of these wonderful opportunities that the Canterbury Society of Arts offers. We, from Xavier College, will look forward to the coming exhibitions of this year with much interest, and feel that the Canterbury Society of Arts will offer many exciting avenues in the creative world of art, especially for those Secondary students starting their University Entrance Art courses this year.

Bashir H. Baraki.

## Mayoral Opening

The Mayor of Christchurch, Mr A. R. Guthrey, has accepted our invitation to open our 89th Annual Autumn Exhibition, on Wednesday, March 12.

As the sponsor of the C.S.A.-Guthrey Travel Award, Mr Guthrey is one in whose debt we stand.

The award is not only of value to young artists, enabling them to widen their horizons in Australia, but since all who have received it so far have been teachers too, our community as a whole is benefiting.



## Two Hundred Years of Art And Argument

[In view of the Royal Academy of Arts Bicentenary Exhibition 1768-1968 which is on the point of closing in London, we publish this brief history of the once august institution by London art critic Edward Lucie-Smith. In the next issue we intend to publish a description of the Bauhaus exhibition at the Royal Academy, which will show how far the august institution has come into the modern world.]

England is not generally thought of as a country where the arts submit to regulation. There is, for example, no English equivalent of the Académie Française. But for quite a considerable period of its history, English painting was under the rule of a single body—the Royal Academy.

The Academy was founded by George III, and one of its aims was to raise the professional status of the artist. The first President, Sir Joshua Reynolds, certainly did much to improve the social standing of himself and his fellow practitioners: until then, foreigners such as Rubens and Van Dyck had been well treated by their English patrons, but native-born Englishmen received far less consideration.

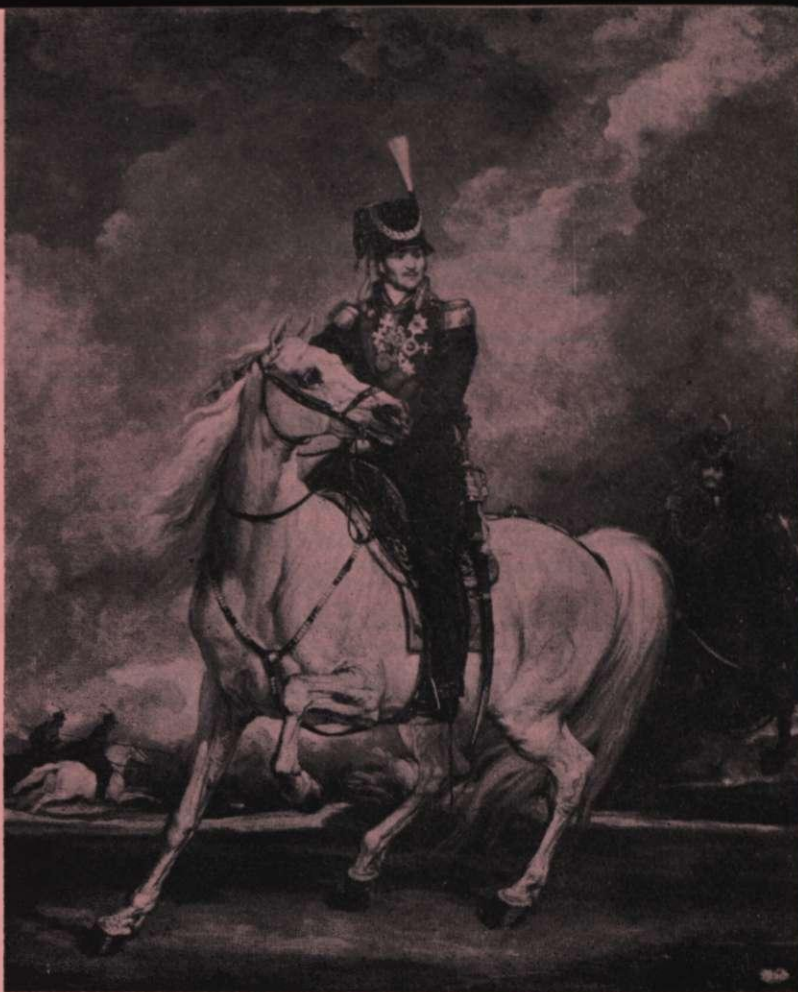
For the first one hundred years or so of its history, as the Bicentenary Exhibition at Burlington House demonstrates, the Academy did indeed manage to dominate English art. Artists might quarrel with it—Gainsborough was always on uneasy terms with an institution presided over by his great rival, and William Blake showed only minor things in the Academy's annual exhibition—but it continued to set the standard. The early rooms of the show are a roster of the great names of English painting during the second half of the eighteenth century and at the beginning of the nineteenth: Richard Wilson, George Stubbs, Constable, Turner, Lawrence. All of these are represented by splendid examples, if not always by the kind of painting which they would have sent for exhibition during their own lifetimes.

### The "Noblest Genre"

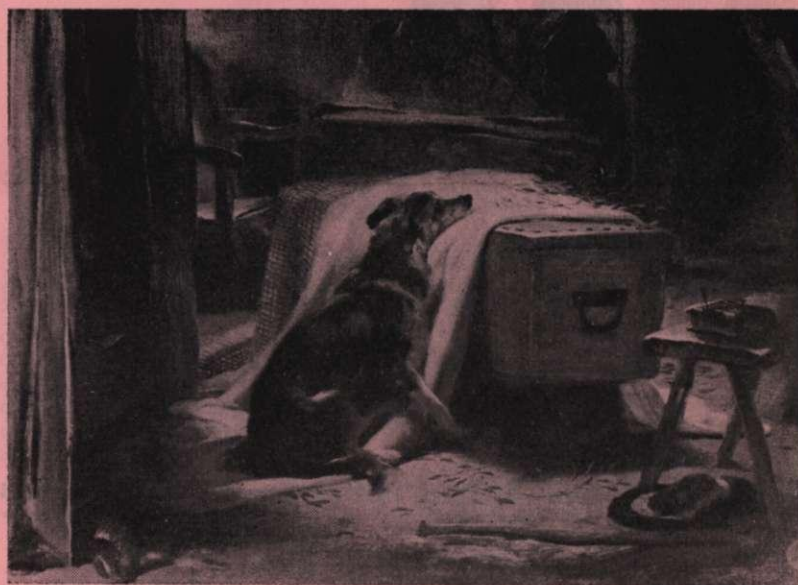
It is at this period that one sees not only the portraits for which so many Academicians were famous, but the persistent effort to establish the "history picture". Reynolds constantly recommended this genre as the noblest which an artist could attempt, though he did not practise what he preached. From the beginning, the Academy was divided between the demands of a society which was both aristocratic and mercantile for realistic depictions of men and women, horses and dogs; and the notion that the artist should be pursuing an end which was altogether higher.

During the nineteenth century, the balance shifted a little towards so-called imaginative painting, though the subjects became a good deal more anecdotal, less deliberately heroic. David Wilkie in particular was responsible for a revival of interest in humorous and sentimental genre-pictures—a fashion not altogether unconnected with that for Dutch painting among the great English collectors of the early 1800s.

Towards the middle of the century, the first really significant revolt against the Academy took place—the Pre-Raphaelite movement. On the whole, the Pre-Raphaelites were not natural rebels. One of them, John Millais, went on to become President of the Royal Academy at the end of his life. But Rossetti never submitted work for exhibition, apparently for fear that he would be rejected. And the violently hostile reception accorded to the Pre-Raphaelites in the years 1850-52 showed that the Academy had at last begun to lose confidence in itself. More serious revolts followed, among them the foundation of the New English Art Club in 1886. The result of these was to put the Academy on the defensive. For the first time, during the long presidency of Lord Leigh-



Heroics in oils: James Ward's "The Hetman Plat-off", lent to the Royal Academy's Bicentenary Exhibition by the Duke of Northumberland.



Sir Edwin Landseer's "The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner" in the Royal Academy's Bicentenary Exhibition.

ton, which lasted from 1878 to 1896, it became possible to speak of the "Academy picture" as something quite distinct from other kinds of painting.

### Consistent Idiom

The pictures of this period are particularly well displayed in the Bicentenary Exhibition, and it is impossible not to admire the skill and technical finish of the large classical scenes painted by men such as Leighton himself, Poynter and Alma-Tadema. By sheer force of personality, Leighton imposed a consistent idiom on one sector of British painting. But, as a result of his efforts, the Academy cut itself off from the development of European painting as a whole.

An objective study of the role of the Royal Academy during our own century has yet to be written. Though it continued to throw up bravura painters such as Orpen and Augustus John (perhaps it would be fairer to say "though it continued to attract" such men), as a whole the institution fell further and further out of



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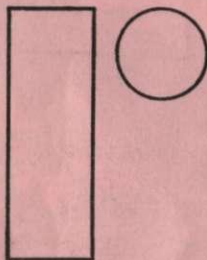
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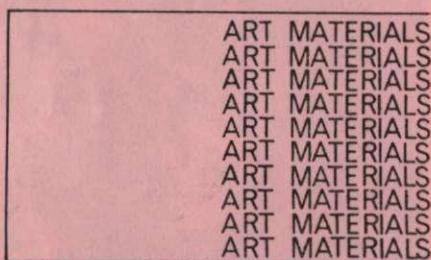
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touch with what was new and original. Nevertheless the art shown at the Academy remained very popular with the public as a whole, and its annual exhibitions were an important social event. The pictures of that anti-modernist, Sir Alfred Munnings, P.R.A., continue to fetch very high prices at auction, though his chief rivals there are now men whose work he detested, such as Henry Moore and Graham Sutherland. In recent years, however, the Academy shows have attracted consistently unfavourable comment from British art critics.

Perhaps as a form of reply to this, the Bicentenary Exhibition has a section of very modern work, produced by men who were recently pupils at the Royal Academy schools. (The training of artists has, from the beginning, formed an important part of the activities of the Royal Academy.) The presence of work by men such as Anthony Caro and John Hoyland seems to hint that the Academy is now ready to reconcile itself with the modernists.

### Maori Rock Drawings

[Here the artist Tony Fomison discusses his techniques in reproducing under what must be very unsympathetic circumstances his unique exhibition of Maori rock drawings which has been shown in our Gallery.]

In discussing the possibility of this show last November the Secretary-Manager (Mr Laidlaw) kindly offered it space rent-free, and I promised accordingly to make it available at short notice to take up any gap in the Society's exhibition calendar which could not be filled by a commercial show.

Another factor was its educational value, and February 1-28 had the advantage of being in the school term. All of this meant that members were not able to receive prior notice of the show in "News", although it is hoped this was compensated for by the newspaper publicity and the presence of the Manawatu and Kelliher prize entries which probably drew members who otherwise would have missed the rock drawings, to the gallery.

The copies were of Maori rock drawings in the limestone areas of inland South Canterbury and North Otago and consisted of tracings on polythene selected from the research collection stored at the Canterbury Museum, and which I have been building up, with occasional field assistance from interested people, since 1962.

In this now standard copying method, sheets of polythene are fixed over Maori drawings on limestone undercuts and overhangs with any tape capable of sticking to cold and damp surfaces.

Tracing is done with the sort of crayon pencils used for writing prices on china and glassware—they take to the polythene better than ordinary grease crayon and are available in colours which approximate the Maori black, earth-red, and yellow-to-white.

The pencil is pointed or sharpened along the side to accord with the size of the original strokes, and when held carefully will conform to the pigment-stroke of the underlying lines.

Before this technique was developed by two North Island archaeologists in the course of having to find a particularly accurate method of recording drawings at Waipapa and Benmore (as these drawings were to be drowned by hydro-scheme lakes) most rock art was generally considered to have been painted, and its extant sketchiness as due to weathering.

#### Recent Acknowledgement

Outline tracing was, therefore, considered sufficient and the development of area tracing is a fairly recent acknowledgement that most of the works of art concerned are in dry media, composed of linear networks often rather hazy in outline—the wall murals by Mr W. A. Sutton in the Archaeology Hall upstairs in the



Canterbury Museum give some idea of this textured appearance rock drawings have.

The Canterbury Museum has had a long association with rock drawing research; it was associated, for instance, with the work in this field of Sir Julius Von Haast and Mr T. Schoon. Some of the early outline copies in its collection are interesting examples of the way "sight copies" inevitably alter the original to bring out the copyist's particular theories or artistic background—some so much so that they cannot now be identified in the field.

The copies forming the C.S.A. exhibition were grouped in order to illustrate a sequence of styles, and to emphasise that Maori art style as we know it to-day was a fairly recent development.

The show drew both artistic and archaeological interest, although in the latter regard it was noticeable that, while culture change from Maa-hunter to later Maori as defined by differences in artefact types is now universally accepted, the idea of the nature of the differences as stylistic and therefore as most clearly demonstrated in art forms, is not yet, apparently, so acceptable.

The more naturalistic styles obviously created the most interest among visitors to the show: in these styles subject matter such as fish, dogs, birds (including a moa), travelling parties, horsemen and sailing ships, could be identified.

In thanking the Society of Arts for the opportunity to stage the show I would like to mention that it was also the first time I have had the space to unroll and compare such a relatively large number of tracings.

## Mrs Biggins

By W. S. Baverstock

To say that Mrs Biggins was an institution would conjure up a vision of something cold and forbidding—certainly not of Mrs Biggins. As "Martha Biggins" she was known to comparatively few, but as "Mrs Biggins" thousands of people of several generations year after year expected her greeting on entering the exhibition galleries of the Canterbury Society of Arts.

Captain Christopher Garsia, without whose initiative and drive it is unlikely that the Art Society would ever have acquired land and buildings on Armagh and Durham Streets, was far-sighted when, after a long period as Hon. Secretary, he invited the young girl, who was to become Mrs Biggins, to be exhibition cashier and attendant; but Garsia was an exceptional man (the father of distinguished sons) and his choice for the position was unerring. I know from my official association with Mrs Biggins for sixteen years from 1943 to 1959, when she retired.

It would have surprised me greatly if she had arrived late for work at opening time and more so if I had had any muddle to sort out in balancing the cash. On Private View nights she coped with many a rush for catalogues, which was really too much for one person, as her daughter, who helped her on occasions, knows. Mrs Biggins was so reliable that her services were in demand for art exhibitions other than those of the Art Society.

In the early days of "The Group", after we had vacated the old "Press" building in Cashel Street and engaged the Durham Street Gallery for our exhibitions, our own unerring choice of an attendant was Mrs Biggins. At the time of our 1931 exhibition I had occasion to write to a fellow member of "The Group" and mentioned "the zealous Mrs Biggins and the pleasant Mr Biggins."

### Long Connection

Mr W. J. Biggins died in 1932, and before that time the connection of Mr and Mrs Biggins as caretakers and Gallery assistants for the Canterbury Society of Arts had been long and the work included attendance when the Society's Permanent Gallery was open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays.



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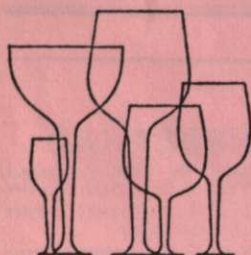
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For years, in my time, the first act of Mrs Biggins, before settling down to her job for an exhibition, was to secure her heavy travelling rug to her table so that it touched the floor and reduced discomfort from cold draughts—a speciality of the Durham Street room. Of more importance in an assessment of character is my observation that often, during the course of exhibitions, Mrs Biggins would produce, to the delight of children, something sweet she had secreted in the table drawer, and, at times, the children of children she had known long before would be made happy. She loved children and had a keen sense of fun. We all know how, in 1958, she staged an exhibition of her own collection and sold pictures in aid of the Crippled Children Society, of which she was made a life member.

Young artists who grew up in her time had reason to thank Mrs Biggins for her interest in their progress, and her voluntary work on the West Coast, where she founded the Westland Arts Society, was much appreciated and she was made a life member. As attendant at exhibitions, money was certainly not her first consideration—if it had been she would have been otherwise engaged and this tribute could not have been written. Payment was nominal.

In 1949 she visited Australia and took a tremendous interest in a round of visits to Galleries and exhibitions. In 1950 members of the Art Society were invited to show appreciation of Mrs Biggins, who was beginning her fifty-first year as attendant at the Society's Annual Exhibitions, and a writing-desk was presented to her.

### Independent

In 1954 she made her longest journey—to Britain—and it was my pleasure to give her the letter of introduction she asked for, not that she really needed it, for she could show a fine spirit of independence. Here I will give an instance. Before she left she confided in me that she was most disturbed by the insistence of a very wealthy woman to accompany her. "I am not wealthy," said Mrs Biggins, "I will feel quite out of place in the expensive hotels she will be staying in. I would rather be free to choose my own." Fortunately, at long last, something upset the departure dates and this generous lady of wealth went her way and Mrs Biggins went hers, retaining her independence.

In February, 1957, Mrs Biggins was elected an Honorary Life Member of the Canterbury Society of Arts, and, in September, 1958, this letter came to me: "I wish to tender my resignation from the Society's Art Shows as from next March, that being the end of my 60 years with the Art Society. I will miss them terribly. I've loved each one of them and have had nothing but kindness and consideration, but age creeps on one doesn't it. So with deep regret and kindest regards to all, Yours most sincerely, M. Biggins."

Mr G. C. C. Sandston, President of the Canterbury Society of Arts, reporting on the year ending September 20, 1959, wrote: "The retirement of Mrs M. Biggins, who had been attendant for the Society for 60 years, was announced at the opening of the exhibition and the President presented her with a cheque from the Society in recognition of her work. For 60 years Mrs Biggins gave loyal and devoted service to the Society far beyond the normal scope of an attendant. By her personality, her friendliness and her interest in members and the exhibitions she helped to develop the corporate spirit of the Society and became part of its tradition. We shall miss her very much and wish her all health and happiness in her retirement."

As one who has come to a full realisation of her worth, I write this tribute to Martha Biggins, who lived to reach her 91st year. Idleness and isolation were not congenial to her—she had to be up and doing. She was gregarious, if you will, but how much nicer it is to say that she liked people and people liked her.



## ATTENTION POTTERS

### The Living Past

Most people will already know that, in the week beginning March 3, the Fijian potter Miss Amele Nacewa will be demonstrating her art in Air New Zealand here. This event should be regarded not as a mere publicity stunt nor novel form of entertainment, but as an opportunity for finding out as much as we can about a traditional Fijian art which museums and archaeologists are doing their best to preserve.

In the last few years intense interest has been centred in the lower Sigatoka Valley in the south of the main Fijian island of Viti Levu. On a wind-swept barren piece of coast valuable archaeological work has brought to light pottery from three distinct levels with separate pottery traditions, the first of which probably dates back to the 9th century B.C.—i.e. before the alleged founding of ancient Rome.

The pots of this era suggest a coiling and scraping method with the occasional use of a red slip or dye.

Pots from two later levels have clearly been made by the "hammer and anvil" technique, the second with paddled impressed decoration, the third undecorated.

These discoveries focused attention on the work of potters in Fiji to-day, and this has proved exciting enough to attract potters from several countries. Both Hamada and Kawai thought it worthwhile to stop at Fiji on their return journey from New Zealand, and last year, we saw in Christchurch slides taken during a N.Z. Society of Potters expedition to study pottery in Fiji.

It has been found that in several parts of Fiji, but especially in the Sigatoka River Valley, native women are making pots by the hammer and anvil method, almost identical with that of the third period mentioned above.

Clay is collected from one special place and carried in coconut frond baskets to the village where it is cleaned, trodden and mixed with sand.

Several kinds of pots are made with slight variations in method as shape demands. The finished pots when dry are fired for about twenty minutes in a bonfire of dried coconut fronds, removed on long sticks and rubbed with chunks of resin from the Fijian kauri tree.

Amele has brought her own clay and will make several pots during the week. The Canterbury Potters' Association has arranged a field day at Mount Pleasant Community Centre on Saturday, March 8, when we hope Amele will make at least one pot and, in the afternoon, have a bonfire firing of the pots she has made while in Christchurch.

Admission—\$1.00.

Hot water can be obtained for tea, but bring your own meals.

### Pottery School

This will be held at Risingholme Community Centre from Friday, April 18 to Sunday April 20. The programme is as follows:

Friday, p.m.—**Demonstration**, throwing techniques.  
Saturday morning—**Demonstration**, continuation of Friday's work.

Saturday afternoon—**Lecture**, "An Approach to Raw Materials" illustrated with a collection of minerals of ceramic interest.

Saturday, 8 p.m.—**Slides** dealing with equipment, value and possibility of a craftsman's economic independence. Slides of some recent Crewenna pots.

Sunday, a.m.—**Demonstration** of finishing techniques—turning, spouts, handles, lid fitting, etc.

Sunday p.m.—**Lecture**: "The Conflict between Art and Commerce", the subject to be looked at his-

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**Closing date for application**—Wednesday, March 26.

## Pottery for Outdoor Living

An exhibition by the Canterbury Potters' Association. Official opening: Monday, March 10, at 8 p.m. in the C.S.A. Gallery, Gloucester Street.

The show will be open to the public from Tuesday, March 11, until Sunday, March 23.

## Competitions and Exhibitions

**N.Z. Academy:** Receiving date March 18. April 19-May 11.

**Nelson Suter Art Society:** Receiving date March 26. March 31-April 13.

**Kelliher Prize:** Receiving date April 11.

## Australians in Autumn

Two paintings by two of the best known Australian painters working to-day will be exhibited during our Annual Autumn Exhibition which will open on March 12.

Both are on loan to us by the Dunedin Public Art Gallery to whose Council and Director, Mr D. J. Charlton Edgar, we are most grateful.

One of the paintings, an oil, is "Parrots in Bush" by the very well known Australian, Albert Tucker. Tucker has made a big name for himself not only in Australia, but in the United States.

His work is in the New York Museum of Modern Art and in the Guggenheim Museum in New York—probably the two most important modern art galleries in the world. Tucker, aged 55, lived abroad for a good many years, but now lives in Melbourne.

The other painting, also an oil, is "Botany Landscape" by Reinis Zusters, a Sydney artist. It may be described as semi-abstract, but the painter's subject is clear—the sun over Botany Bay, N.S.W. It is a fine splash of colour. Zusters's recent exhibition in the Darlinghurst Gallery, Sydney, was virtually sold out.

As usual we do not expect everyone to like these two paintings, but many will and there is no doubt that they will create real interest.

## C.S.A.-Guthrey Award

The C.S.A.-Guthrey Travel Award this year has been awarded to Mr C. R. Newton-Broad, a graduate with honours from the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts.

Mr Newton-Broad is a sculptor and he intends, in Australia, to study bronze casting, a technique noticeably absent in New Zealand.

Mr Newton-Broad's special interest is the "lost wax casting method" on which he wrote his thesis.

There are no commercial art foundries in New Zealand and only one in Australia. Mr Newton-Broad eventually intends to build his own foundry for casting bronze.

He also intends to teach as part of his work and hopes to instruct his future students in bronze casting and to offset the almost complete lack of information on the subject in New Zealand.

The "lost wax casting method" dates to about 4000 B.C. and it was the method generally used for most of the statues in the middle of Christchurch.

In Australia Mr Newton-Broad will work with Mr Stephen Walker, who has studied bronze casting in Italy.



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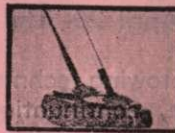
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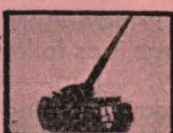
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