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Mr A. J. McNeill	Mrs Rosalie Todd
Mrs D. M. Manson	Miss B. A. Williams

news

No. TWENTY-FIVE, MAY 1969



THE JOURNAL OF
THE CANTERBURY SOCIETY OF ARTS
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Some of the fifty Christchurch potters who attended the April week-end pottery school organised by their Association at Risingholme Community Centre. The tutor was Harry Davis (at the wheel), a renowned potter of world acclaim who came to New Zealand some years ago and founded the Crewenna Pottery in Nelson province. His miraculous speed and confidence as he threw teapots, coffee pots, bowls, casseroles and vases held his audience spellbound.

Gallery Calendar Subject to Adjustment

To May 11: Bill Cumming. Drawings and Paintings.

To May 19: Bashir Baraki.

May 12-16: John Coley Junior School.

May 14-31: Avis Higgs.

May 24: Liederkränzchen.

May 23-June 8: Open. (Receiving day May 15).

June 11-22: Michael Eaton.

June 5-19: Norman Lemon. Sculpture in stone, wood, metal and painting in various media.

June 13-27: John McGirr (and Robyn Drury). Aluminium Relief.

July 1-20: Qantas.

July 16-31: Duncan Darroch. Arranged by the Dunedin Art Gallery and Mrs B. L. Williamson.

August 26-Sept. 3: Town and Country.

August 3-10: New Zealand Library and Book Week.

August 9-21: "Christchurch Star" Schools Exhibition.

August 23-Sept. 9: Ernest Kalnins.

August 24: Film Evening.

August 28-31: Mineral and Lapidary.

September 6-22: Ted Bracey and Tom Field.

September 13-25: David Brokenshire.

September 24-Oct. 9: Combined Show.

October 11-19: Latvian.

October 13-25: Don Peebles.

October 15-30: Summer Show. (Receiving day, October 10).

October 27-Nov. 16: Michael Smither.

November 1-10: Michael Eaton School.

November 15-30: The Group.

November 19-Dec. 7: Paree Ott.

December 8-31: Photographic Society.



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Exhibitions and Competitions

Otago Art Society Annual Exhibition. Receiving Day, May 21.

Redcliff Art Contest Society (Queensland). Entries close in Redcliff for this thirteenth annual art contest on August 20. The four prizes, and their conditions, are:

The Redcliffe Peninsula Prize—for representational oil painting, \$500.

The Redcliffe Peninsula Prize—for non-representational oil painting, \$200.

The A.P.M. Prize—for watercolour, \$200.

The Fred and Eleanor Schonell Prize—for watercolour or oil, \$100.

The entry in this section must express the activities of a child at play, dancing, with pets etc. Portraiture entries should not be submitted.

Entry forms and information are available from the Secretary, Mrs F. Hodgkison, 34 Pearl Street, Redcliffe North, 4020, Queensland.

Six Modern Houses

Once again the Society was lucky—we had an exceptionally good autumn day on March 26 for our third visit to houses selected by Christchurch architects.

All six houses were exceptional, each in a different way.

One, of particular interest, was designed with a Roman house in mind. It was a square in the centre of which was a smaller square—the living room—over which a balcony hung where children may not go.

Around the central square were bedrooms, kitchen and the usual service rooms. This house must surely be unique in design in Christchurch.

Another delightful house was full of fascinating furniture, and decorations—representing a collection over many years.

A beautiful Merivale house will certainly be remembered for its exquisite garden.

Two attractive houses appeared to have been designed for the utmost convenience of parents with young families and both in excellent taste.

Finally there was the charming home of one of the city's best known architects.

We limited the sale of tickets to 700 at \$1 each. Our expenses for each house visiting day would seldom exceed \$50, so two visiting days each year yield about \$1300 toward the \$2000 we must find annually to reduce our debt on the new Gallery.

Each reduction in our debt reduces our interest payment and thus some money is released for the important general aims of the Society.

It has been suggested that because we could certainly sell more than 700 tickets for each visiting day—perhaps 100 to 200 more—we should increase the price to, say, \$1.50.

We do not like the idea of selling more than about 700 for it could create congestion in the houses and be more inconvenient for the owners and helpers.

But it has also been suggested that members and friends would agree to an increased ticket price because of the use we make of this particular revenue.

Your Council is divided about this. Some of us do not care to risk losing the co-operation of our members and friends in these very interesting, successful visits.

What do you think?

Let us know if you have strong views.

We expect to arrange our fourth house visits in the spring—perhaps October. Some outstanding older houses have been suggested, perhaps to provide interesting contrast with the very new.

Once more we thank gratefully all the house owners for their kindness, the architects for their co-operation and Mrs Rhona Fleming and her team of helpers for "standing by" at each house.

The Royal Academy Follows Through

Following the article in the previous issue of "News" on the new-look Royal Academy, we publish this account by London art critic Edward Lucie-Smith of the Bauhaus exhibition at the Academy, one which never would have got near those august walls before now.

The Bauhaus is one of the legends of modern art. Bauhaus doctrine might be thought of as representing the Apollonian, or rational, aspect of modernism, as opposed to the Dionysiac frenzies of Dada and the Surrealists. The important Bauhaus exhibition at the Royal Academy in London this year marked a significant reconciliation between modernism and the past: after all, the Academy has a long history of its own as a teaching institution.

As one would expect, this was one of the most intelligent and thought-provoking shows to be seen in London in recent years. It was arranged to demonstrate not only the achievements of the teachers and students of the Bauhaus, but something of the methods employed there, and the way in which these altered with the years.

The Bauhaus had exactly the same span of activity as the Weimar Republic. It lasted, in its various guises, in Weimar, in Dessau, and finally in Berlin, from 1919 to 1933.

It therefore has an historical aspect—as perhaps the most important product of an extremely crucial period of German culture. It does not detract from the achievement of the Bauhaus to note that many of the artifacts produced by its designers now have a distinctly "period" flavour. They are as much of their own epoch as the designs made by the great Scottish initiator of Art Nouveau, Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

Art Nouveau Tradition

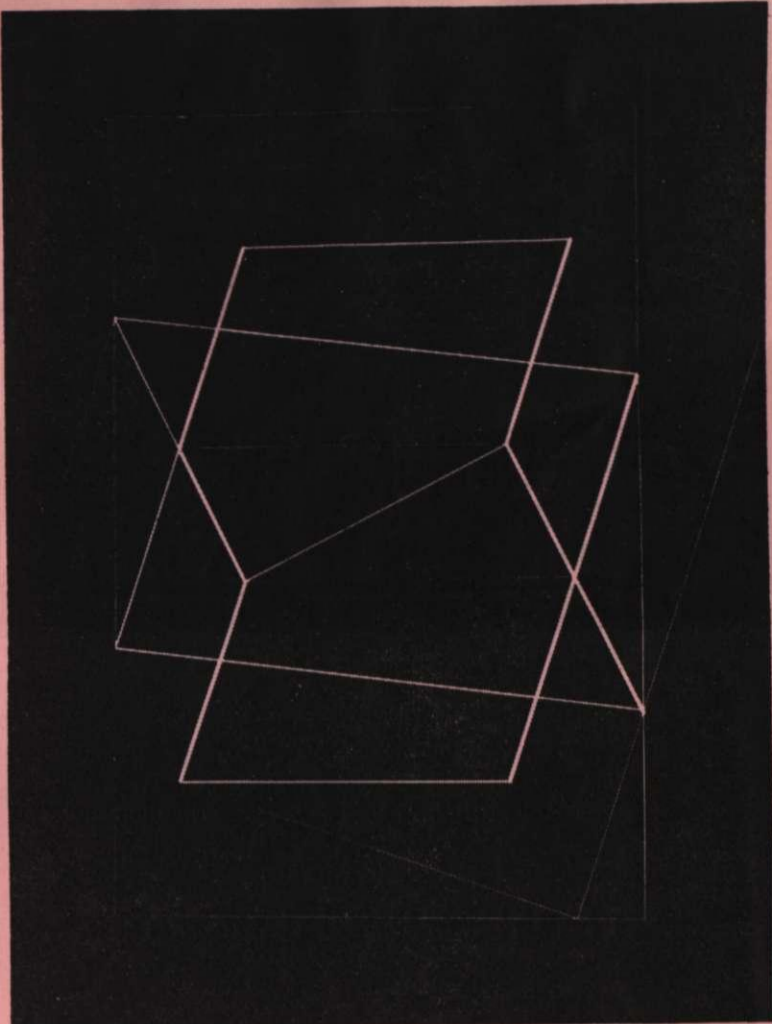
The conjunction is a significant one for another reason. The Bauhaus carried on the tradition of Art Nouveau by insisting that it was possible to achieve a completely unified style: that there should be no significant division between the fine and the applied arts.

Gropius, the founder of the Bauhaus, stated explicitly in his manifesto that "the complete building is the final aim of the visual arts." He went on to declare, "Art is not a 'profession'. There is no essential difference between the artist and the craftsman. The artist is an exalted craftsman."

Where the Bauhaus differed from Art Nouveau was in its insistence on the need for analysis and of the paramount power of reason. The preliminary course which was the foundation of Bauhaus teaching has had a profound influence on the development of art throughout the world. It would not be too much to call it the greatest reform in the training of artists since the "academy" of the Caracci. The current exhibition demonstrated, in one of its sections, how brilliantly imaginative the preliminary course was, and how various distinguished teachers—Johannes Itten, Moholy-Nagy, Albers, Kandinsky, Klee and Schlemmer—still found it flexible enough to enable them to impart ideas and qualities which were peculiarly their own. Itten's mysticism and playfulness turned towards technological research under Albers and Moholy-Nagy.

The Artist's Choice

Interest in technology was, indeed, one of the principal strengths of the Bauhaus, which arrived just at a moment when modern art was faced with a difficult choice. On the one hand, the artist might assert his individuality, but at the same time would be forced to drop out of the new technological society which was forming around him. On the other hand, the fact that technology itself was essentially inimical to anything



This work, "Transformation on a Scheme" by Josef Albers, from a private collection, was on show at the Bauhaus exhibition at the Royal Academy in London. The exhibition, illustrating an extremely crucial period of German culture, was hailed by the critics as one of the most thought-provoking to be seen in London in recent years.

but the collective seemed to shut the artist away from the prime sources of his inspiration. It was Gropius's achievement to create a situation, a framework, in which the individual and the collectivity could react to one another.

In consequence, life at the Bauhaus was not always smooth. Schlemmer noted ironically: "Nothing is received with as little enthusiasm by Gropius and the students as things coming from the masters, particularly if it is not confined to theoretical neutrality but expresses itself actively and directly." Gropius himself resigned from the Bauhaus in 1928, when faced with student demands for a stronger pedagogic orientation.

The show at the Royal Academy was not merely devoted to the Bauhaus method, however. Much of its space was given to the extremely solid achievements of the Bauhaus painters. The reputations of Kandinsky and Klee are already beyond question, and there is growing interest in men such as Moholy-Nagy and Oscar Schlemmer. Schlemmer's work was a special feature of the exhibition. Schlemmer belonged heart and soul to the Bauhaus, but he remained a figurative artist. His stage-designs, as well as his paintings, reveal an exuberant fancy.

Continuing Influence

The fact that the leading Bauhaus painters remained so different from one another is a reminder of the freedom which the organisation encouraged. The long continuance of Bauhaus influence, after the diaspora of 1933, is really proof of the wisdom of this policy. Where modern architecture is concerned, it is to the Bauhaus that we return, as the source of the main tradition, and it might, for example, very justly be said that the most spectacular Bauhaus achievements came into being in the United States, long after its formal dissolution.

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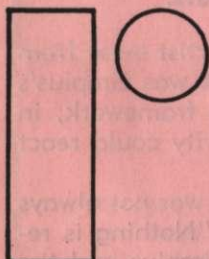
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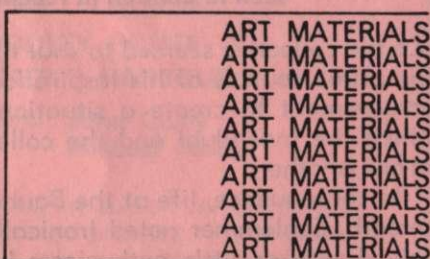
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Innumerable post-war experiments in painting are based on what was originally done at Dessau or Weimar. One of the most important post-war styles, Op Art, is almost entirely the product of Bauhaus ideas. The men of the Bauhaus persisted with their message, as this exhibition was at some pains to show. They were justified by the long-term results.

Art Union

We are indebted to Mrs Tracy Gough for a donation of \$40 to our mortgage redemption fund.

Mrs Gough won a \$20 prize in our Art Union, to which she added a further \$20 to make up her donation.

Some inquiries have revealed that a few members are not familiar with the working of this Art Union.

For those who fear they may have missed out, let them be reassured by the fact that it is not necessary to buy a ticket.

The ticket is, in fact, the invitation to the Annual Autumn Exhibition which goes out to all members. Each invitation bears an Art Union number.

There are ten prizes, all for paintings in the show—the first for one to the value of \$70, then two of \$35, two of \$30, and finally five of \$20.

The Art Union is drawn before the opening of this exhibition, and members who attend the opening can see the winners' names posted on a notice board.

Winners this year, in order of prize value, with the number of the painting they took, were: Mr J. Urlwin, No. 132; Maling and Co., No. 115; Mrs M. E. Gray, Nos. 7 and 31; Miss M. R. Baxter, No. 148; Mrs M. J. Couper, No. 11; Mrs John Creswell, No. 60; Mr W. B. Falvey, No. 5; Mrs Tracy Gough, donation to Mortgage Redemption; Mrs B. Crawford, No. 20; Mr M. R. Muir, No. 6.

Russian Icons

An unusual Exhibition, of considerable interest and appeal, shown in the Gallery in April, was that of the Russian Icons, which was arranged and presented by the John Leech Gallery, of Auckland.

These notes about the Icons will prove interesting to members who saw the Exhibition.

To have a true conception of early Russian painting, one must visit the museums of the U.S.S.R. Russian Icons are an important part of medieval painting. In the collection in our Gallery, the John Leech Gallery presented a collection of Russian Icons in the U.N.E.S.C.O. Religious Art Series of Plates, mounted to give an impression of complete authenticity.

Each Icon was backed by a thick wooden panel, surrounded by deep velvet or specially rubbed timbers, the whole enclosed in a carefully chosen frame. The result was that the figures in these Icons have become extraordinarily eloquent. The rich heritage of Byzantium and the dignity of medieval style is greatly enhanced in a display which covered work from the twelfth to the fifteenth century.

Spontaneous Feeling

The charm of these Russian Icons lies in their spontaneous feeling.

When Russia was first converted to Christianity about 989, many stone churches were built and decorated with frescoes, mosaics and Icons. Workshops of experienced artists were entrusted with their decoration. Painters from Constantinople took charge originally; Russian artists acting as their assistants and pupils.

Gradually the local painters replaced their masters and these workshops became purely Russian.

The earliest Russian Icons are those from Novgorod.

From 1223, when Mongol invasions severed relations with Byzantium, the traditions of Icon painting



From the Icon show: St George, from the Novgorod School, late fourteenth century. In brilliant colours St George triumphs over his dragon. The original is in the Russian Museum in Leningrad.

were kept alive here. Other regional schools developed later, including one in Moscow, where the Byzantine style was transformed.

Andrei Rublev, a painter of genius, played a determining role here.

Most of the Icons admired to-day as works of art were originally integral parts of a large ensemble, the Iconostasis.

This was essentially a large wooden screen, situated near the altar, and functioning as a support for evangelical scenes. The painter was obliged to simplify forms, lines and volumes so that they would be seen better at a distance.

In this way, the Iconostasis contributed to the formation of that concise, unencumbered style so typical of the best fifteenth century Icons.

Saintly

One of the earliest Icons in the Exhibition dated back to the twelfth century—a saintly, ethereal archangel.

A figure whose power is emphasised by the bold handling of the drapery was a magnificent "Virgin Orans."

Later Icons are notable for their lively colour. That protector of peasants and guardian of herds, St George, triumphs over a dragon.

Other distinguished saints play out their drama in powerful compositions.

"Michael the Archangel" is a monumental figure, created by that genius Rublev. Although the panel is quite small, a feel of size is cleverly conveyed.

In this whole collection, subject and presentation indicated that exceptional richness of feeling which sets Russian Icons apart as inspired works of art.



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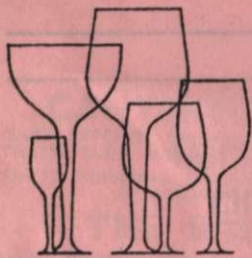
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Annual General Meeting

This will be held in the Hard of Hearing Hall, Victoria Street, on Wednesday, May 28.

Pottery for Outdoor Living

This exhibition caused considerable interest both on account of its original set-up and also because the pots themselves were a change from those usually seen at exhibitions. The selector, Miss Yvonne Rust, said this about the Exhibition:

"The standard of the exhibition as a whole is excellent. The few people involved in this exhibition have really extended themselves to cope with the imaginative theme. Although they were not necessarily outdoor potters they have achieved the architectural qualities required for terrace ceramics.

"It is a pity that more potters in Christchurch do not support this exhibition, because a theme such as this makes people think in a different way and must inevitably alter the style of their normal work. This keeps a potter on his toes and keeps his work vital."

Pottery School

From April 18 to 20, fifty people attended the pottery school conducted at Risingholme by Mr Harry Davis of Crewenna Pottery.

The miraculous speed and confidence with which Mr Davis threw a series of teapots, coffee pots, bowls, casseroles and vases held his audience spellbound and almost speechless.

His pots are simple, practical and honest, graceful in line and devoid of those gadgets and gimmicks which too frequently embellish the work of lesser potters.

His lecture dealt with ceramic materials, clays, glaze materials and glaze problems.

On the Saturday evening his collection of slides dealt with the making of a potter's equipment—kiln, ball mill and pug mill—and in addition he showed slides of some very fine pots recently made at Crewenna.

One of the highlights of the weekend was the final talk on "The Conflict Between Art and Commerce looked at historically with a view to considering the Role of Creative Crafts in the future."

In a scholarly talk enlivened by his fund of good humour, he showed how, as long as the artist or craftsman lived in an anti-commercial society, his work had



A salt-glazed terracotta pot with a red bronze slip by Freda Newfield seen in the Pottery for Outdoor Living Exhibition.

sparkle, playfulness and variety, but with the coming of the art patron and the business tycoon the artist or sculptor was drawn into social contact with princes and lost the exuberance he once had.

If pottery can escape the preciousness often associated with the artistic point of view it has something important to do.

Significant

This year we staged the first of what could turn out to be a significant exhibition—either a first for itself, or a first for a regional series, or both.

This was the West Coast Show, the like of which with its fascinating band, its paintings, pots, scree garden, magnificent fireplace and draught beer we have not quite had before.

Economically the West Coast is for the moment a special case in New Zealand.

In artistic and craft terms the exhibition was refreshing and grand. And it was significant—can the artist or designer-craftsman lead the way in rehabilitating an area?

This show suggested strongly that he can.

It might be possible to present regional exhibitions regularly—not only the West Coast, but regions like Nelson, North Otago, Southland, indeed anywhere—comprising not only painting but the works of designer-craftsmen as well.

Dunedin's Art Gallery

In his address prior to opening our Autumn Exhibition the Mayor, Mr A. R. Guthrey, after paying a tribute to Mr W. S. Baverstock, the retiring Director, and a life member of the C.S.A., said the City Council would be taking advice regarding the future policy and administration of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

Opening the "Origins of Frances Hodgkins Exhibition" in the McDougall Gallery on March 25, Cr. H. G. Hay, chairman of the City Council's Cultural Committee, also spoke about the future of that Gallery and said that perhaps a liaison between the administration of the McDougall and our C.S.A. Gallery could be achieved by reciprocal representation on each others committee.

For both galleries it is a very important matter to assist and complement the work of the other.

The C.S.A. will welcome any opportunity given us to assist in promoting the visual arts in Canterbury.

The Dunedin Public Art Gallery is certainly one of the best in the country. It already has a fine collection valued at around \$2 million. The method of administering it, while not necessarily a pattern for the McDougall, is most interesting and it may indicate, at least, some ideas well worth adopting in Christchurch.

In Dunedin the City Council owns the gallery and the collection and the Director of the Gallery (Mr D. J. Charlton Edgar) is classified as the head of one of the Dunedin City Council's departments.

But control of the gallery and collection is vested by deed of trust in the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society which is made up of about 800 members and 100 subscribing Dunedin business firms. Each year this Dunedin society elects a council of ten members and the Dunedin City Council appoints a further four members, at least one of whom must be a City Councillor.

This Dunedin society is quite independent in carrying out the work of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. It has firm control of both administration and buying new works.

The Dunedin City Council is responsible for maintenance, improvements and capital works. It makes a grant of around \$15,000 a year, but none of this

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money may be spent to buy works of art. Everything in the Gallery has been given, bequeathed or purchased from monies donated to the Gallery.

The Dunedin Public Gallery is fortunate for in addition to the City Council's grant, it has an annual income from endowment monies given by Dunedin citizens of about \$12,000. The citizens are made more conscious of their gallery, its work and aims by being given a substantial degree of control of it through their Art Gallery Society and this, no doubt, over the years has to some extent been responsible for the gifts and bequests of citizens which today provide such a useful endowment income.

On the staff of the Dunedin Gallery are the Director, an Assistant Director, Secretary, Secretary to the Director, Office Assistant and a Caretaker. A new workshop (for framing and repair work, etc.) and additional storage space are being planned. It is hoped to appoint a Keeper, Conservator and General Craftsman in due course.

Casual helpers are employed as required. Members of the Gallery Society voluntarily assist at Gallery functions, selling catalogues and so on.

Dunedin does not have an Education Officer, a staff appointment which is usually made by galleries overseas, but his work is incorporated in that of the Director and Assistant-Director. By arrangement with the Department of University Extension Studies eighteen sponsored lectures are given each year.

These are usually associated with exhibitions and provide a variety of speakers. Dunedin publishes a handbook of its collection which is brought up to date from time to time.

Christchurch visitors to Dunedin, especially C.S.A. members, will be well rewarded by an hour or so in the Dunedin Public Gallery.

It has fine basic collections of paintings, sculpture, graphics and pottery. Dunedin is very alert to acquiring works by important earlier New Zealand artists such as Gully, O'Keeffe, and Hodgkins. The period of 1920-1940 is well covered in the field of U.K. or European art and Dunedin's director is now concentrating on contemporary painting in Britain.

Dunedin probably has the finest collection of Australian art in this country, some of which has kindly been lent for exhibition in our C.S.A. Gallery. Last year the Director, Mr Charlton Edgar, visited Australia to acquire some first class works among them being an Arthur Boyd and "Girl in the Lace Dress" by Sir William Dobell.

Presentation

The man who transformed the outlook and activities of the Canterbury Society of Arts by making reality those long-standing dreams of a new Gallery was given fitting recognition of his work and vision at the opening of the Annual Autumn Exhibition.

The Society's President, Mr S. E. Mair, was presented with the Society's Silver Medal, the highest honour we can bestow.

Mr Mair joins a select group, the recipients of this award since it was revived—coincidentally, largely by Mr Mair himself—in recent years.

The medal was first struck as an award to students, when there was a bronze and a silver award.

Purchaser Helped

A fine painting by Peter Mardon, winner of the Kelliher Prize, has recently been purchased by a well known Christchurch company (which prefers to remain anonymous) through the C.S.A. The painting will be hung in the foyer of a new building in Auckland.



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