

No. Thirty Seven May, 1971

news

The Journal of the Canterbury Society of Arts
66 Gloucester Street
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P.O. Box 772 Christchurch

President: John Oakley.
Secretary-Manager: Russell Laidlaw
Exhibitions Officer: Tony Fomison.
Receptionist: Jill Parsonson.
News Editor: A. J. Bisley.

President's Comment

Gallery

With the increasing number of exhibitions, bookings must be made well ahead. Already our 1972 Gallery Calendar is filling up. There are however a few gaps where small exhibitions could be held this year.

C.S.A. Fair

Last December we tried out a Xmas Fair. It was rather a spontaneous effort by a few of the artist members, but its success has prompted the council to organise a larger one for September 7th.

This is something which I hope all members of the C.S.A. will support. Arrangements must be got under way as soon as possible and I would ask all those who are willing to run, or assist in running a stall to notify Mr Laidlaw at once.

House Visits

The next "House Visits" day will be on the first Saturday in November when a fine selection of new houses will be on display.

Extended Gallery Hours:

The Council have decided to extend the gallery hours from 4.30 p.m. until 7 p.m. on *Friday evenings ONLY*, starting from Friday 7th, May.

This decision should meet with the approval of those who find it difficult to visit the gallery during normal hours.

Storage Space in the Gallery

With all our increased activities storage space at the Gallery is far from satisfactory and our building committee, treating this as a matter of urgency, are working on ways and means of making extensions at the rear of the building.

Picture Hire Service

Our Picture Hire Service has proved to be very popular with business houses in the city, so much so that Mr Bill Cumming, who is in charge of the scheme, is finding it difficult to keep pace with the demands.

Members are reminded that they too are able to participate in a special Members Hire Scheme. The Secretary will supply you with all particulars.

Special Exhibitions

Two special exhibitions are under consideration at the moment. The first is a Design Exhibition which will be organized by Messrs P. J. Beaven and A. J. Bisley in conjunction with the N.Z. Council for Industrial Design. The other is a Retrospective Show of work by the late Russell Clark, a former member of the C.S.A. Council and Lecturer at the School of Art. He was undoubtedly the most versatile artist New Zealand has produced.

THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES, 1974

Benson & Hedges

We are negotiating with Benson and Hedges to have their art competition here in 1974 during the Commonwealth Games.

Sculpture Prize

The holding of a Sculpture Competition during the Commonwealth Games is also under consideration.

Lectures

It was disappointing to find that the lectures arranged for last year were so poorly attended. They were speci-

ally arranged to help our painters, but very few of them bothered to attend.

However we have the offer of a lecture on Persian Carpets by a connoisseur who will have his own private collection on display.

Details will be announced later.

Graphic and Craft Exhibition

Entries for this exhibition close on 20 May.

While pencil and ink drawings are acceptable, members are advised that watercolour sketches and pastels do not qualify.

Gallery Calendar Subject to Adjustment

May 2	Town and Country closing
May 6-20	Dr Breach—Collection of Prints acquired in Canada
May 9 (Preview)-19	Cora Wilding—Paintings
May 10-16	Embroidery Guild
May 14-31	Laurence Karasek Drawings
May 20 (Preview)-	Pamela Barnes Paintings
June 6 and Drawings	
May 28 (Preview)-	June 13 C.S.A. Graphic & Craft
June 4 (Preview)-20	Frits Krygsman Paintings
June 6-13	Retrospective exhibition of Design Students work, of the School of Fine Arts University of Canterbury
June 12 (Preview)-	June 27 L. Summers Paintings
June 16-30	Webb, Dawson and Edgar Sculpture
July	Maurice Askew C.S.A. Open John Turner University of Canterbury Maori Club
August	Star School David Jackson & Lyall Hallum Wool Weavers Bill Cumming Michael Smither Loan Exhibition—Canterbury Landscape
September	C.S.A. Fair N.Z. Potters Collette Rands Tony Fomison
October	Kelliher Art Prize Sister Lawrence Colin Wheeler
November	The Group R. Weld & Gregory Kane
December	10 Big Paintings (On behalf McDougall Gallery) Tony Geddes Junior Art

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New Members

THE SOCIETY WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

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Mr and Mrs George Adamson
Mrs Florence M. Barnard
Miss Hilary A. Blacklock
Professor and Mrs R. A. Caldwell
Miss Daphne Chapman
Mrs G. Clough
Mr and Mrs W. J. Cole
Mrs Judith M. Cowell
Mr N. S. Colledge
Mr G. M. Farrant
Miss Elizabeth Geaney
Miss Barbara Creswell
Mrs June Gibb
Mr and Mrs Tracy O. Gough
Mr Graham M. Harbutt
Miss L. A. Hardie
Mrs Mary Howard
Mr L. Karasek
Mr Frits Krijgsman
Mr Murray Laughlin
Miss Rosamond MacDonald
Mr A. J. Mills
Mrs Colleen Priest
Mr J. P. Travaglia
Mrs M. P. Unger
Miss Brenda Nelham Watson
Mr D. L. Waugh
Mr and Mrs Arthur D. Wethey
Mr Wong Chin Tong
Miss Louise Chestney
Mr Brian K. Holmewood
Miss Thelma Hyland
Miss Jocelyn R. Wells

CHANGE OF NAME:

Mr Yuri J. J. Wang (previously Yuri Gershevitch)

C.S.A. GUTHREY TRAVEL AWARD FOR ART

Applications for the 1971 Award will be received up to 4 p.m. on Thursday, 20th May, 1971

Full particulars from:

The Secretary,
C.S.A. Gallery,
P.O. Box 772,
CHRISTCHURCH.

Miss Cora Wilding *Exhibition, May 9-19*

Miss Wilding's exhibition exemplifies the two predominant interests of her life—painting and working for peace. At this exhibition all proceeds from the sale of pictures will go to Maori girls' education at Te Wai Pounamu. Miss Wilding believes in the importance of any attempts, by individuals, to promote harmony, friendly understanding and co-operation, both on inter-racial and international planes.

Maurice Askew; American Cities

Although Maurice Askew has exhibited at the Canterbury Society of Arts with groups, this is his first one-man show.

Out of his 1970 visit to the United States has come a series of water colours based on drawings and notes taken while in that country. "They started in a small way and got out of hand, grew into a kind of set." The water colours show involvement with the shapes and patterns of the cities; man hardly appears at all, as if he has created them, and then popped away for a hamburger lunch.

Frits Krijgsman

Exhibition, June 4-20

Fritz is a European, born in Leiden, in 1949, where he began painting at a very early age.

After attending high school at Leiden he went to study interior design and colour composition in Utrecht. As an individualist he was appreciated in Northern Europe for these qualities. Prior to coming to New Zealand he travelled and worked extensively in France and Sweden.

Pamela Barnes

May 20th-June 7th

An exhibition of paintings and drawings by PAMELA BARNES is to be held in May.

Some of her early works will be shown, featuring oil painting of the Ruapehu National Park area, and Mt. Egmont. A series of paintings with poster colour, all basic landscapes were done at this time too, when the artist was living in Wanganui, and these will be shown, along with some painted while she was studying at Christchurch Teachers' College.

From these early paintings she investigated the use of pastel, and began the line drawing which she now uses as her principal technique; then with colours often unrelated to the subject, and with ink; now with pencil and charcoal. These early drawings are of mountains in the remote valleys of Otago—Wilkin, Waiatoto and East Matukituki.

While living in Nelson for several years she found her interest and ability using pencil increased with these drawings—of the sea, boats and mountains.

Leaving Nelson she spent 2½ years teaching in Britain, in London and Edinburgh, with brief trips to the Continent. In many drawings and paintings she records the barrenness of the Scottish hills and moorland, and the stark winter trees.

Back in New Zealand and making a new home in Christchurch where she teaches at a Primary School her latest subjects are the hills and sea-scapes of Banks Peninsula, and the Canterbury Mountains.

Low Summers

Exhibition June 12-27

Born 1947, Christchurch. Son of John Summers, the local poet and bookseller. After attending Linwood High School, he served a three year farm-cadetship, a period of nursetraining at Sunnyside Hospital, worked as a carpenter, for a roofing firm and at a cast-iron foundry.

Low Summers started his sculpture in 1967, when he shared with Tony Fomison an enthusiasm for carving in limestone. His interest quickly extended to modelling in plaster and clay.

He worked at an iron foundry to learn the art of casting and with practical advice from Rodney Newton-Broad he commenced casting in cement-Fondu, which is his present medium.

Other Centres

Exhibition—Competitions

The National Bank Art Awards (1971)

The Conditions of Entry for the National Bank Art Awards 1971, are now obtainable from the Secretary of the C.S.A.

There are two awards, one for a Mural and one for a watercolour painting.

Entries close on May 24, 1971.

Otago Art Society: Annual Exhibition

'71 Receiving Day—Wed. 26 May

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Pottery Notes

Doris Holland

We have had little to report since last writing, but the year ahead is very busy. We would like members to put a ring round May 5th for the Annual Meeting of the Association, where, after the business of the evening, an interchange of Criticism and point of view will take place between Michael Trimic, Wyn Reed, and Doris Holland, during the presentation of slides of non-N.Z. pots. The following weekend brings the Commencement of the Warren Tippett School at Risingholme—this I hear is virtually booked out, potters of all grades being eager to work with this experienced and professional North Island Potter.

Details of the format of the National Exhibition, held in Christchurch in September will soon be available, and professional North Island potter, make this unusual exhibition a success.

It was good to see a large gathering of interested people at Smith & Smiths Showroom, 31st March, to hear an address by Wengers representative, Mr Arthur Nichol. This direct contact with a large English firm supplying us with materials from the other side of the world brought about some interesting and profitable points of view on clay types required for different areas and types of pottery. It was here I met Mr Lyall Hallum, who has been appointed tutor in charge of Ceramics at the Otago Polytechnic in Dunedin. This development of their Ceramic Department will give Dunedin a prestigious and practical advantage over other centres, where such an amenity for striving potters remains a desirable fantasy. We wish Mr Hallum every success in his future work.

Two dates to mark up:

Thursday, 13th May

Open day at Demmis Hadfields Riverside pottery at Amberley 27th May;

Pottery Film evening at Mt. Pleasant Group.

24 Frames a Second

Film at home, in the cinema, at school and on television, today, plays a major part in the shaping of our lives and thoughts.

As with reading and writing the language of film could be learnt when young, helping to discriminate between the good and ugly.

Film is a vehicle for the communication of ideas and feelings and has its own grammar.

Schools and other organisations overseas and in New Zealand are helping to put cameras into the hands of young people so that they may learn to 'read' and 'write' the language of moving images. The Society of Arts plans to help in this direction by holding film classes for children who have not had the opportunity to learn film making.

In the second term, May 29-August 14, Maurice Askew and Tony Bisley are supplementing our Saturday morning classes in art with classes in film. Fees will be as for art classes, \$7.50 for members' children, \$9 for non-members' children. Age groups 9-12 and numbers will be small in the classes. Enquiries and enrolling as from now at the Society office.

Primary, post-primary teachers and other members of the Society of Arts who are interested in this aspect of development for both children and adults might like to contact Mr Askew, Mr Bisley. There will be later in the year, opportunities under the aegis of the Canterbury Society of Arts, for the study of this Art.

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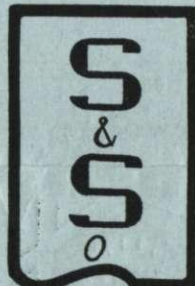
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What Use is the Art Critic?

by Joseph Tanner

When James Birdie the Scottish playwright said carelessly in a volume of essays "The animating motive of most critics is to make the artist look a fool". James Agate hurled at the offending playwright the whole Oxford Dictionary with its definition of CRITICISM as:—

- (i) The art of judging with knowledge and propriety of the beauties and faults of a literary performance, or of a production in the fine arts, as e.g. dramatic criticism.
- (ii) The secondary or subsidiary meaning of animadversion or censure.

Every serious critic takes this order for granted roared James Bridie "Whoever reverses it is none!"

A friend of mine claims he never goes to an art exhibition which has been favourably reviewed, on the grounds that it is likely to be bad. Most people, I suppose, do the opposite. And while my friend's claim is partly ironical, his attitude raises interesting questions about the relationship of artist, critic and public that seem worth discussing. Art criticism is now an established feature of many New Zealand newspapers and periodicals, but no-one appears to have a clear view of what the critic should do, or even if there is anything he can usefully do.

Fortunately or otherwise the critic has some influence over the public's attitude to an artist's work. Some current art criticism however, provides neither the public nor the the artist with any useful perspective on the work concerned, but merely expresses the prejudices of the critic or his clique. What is worse, such criticism may be wholly negative in its effects because it

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tends to stifle the public's response and prevent that feedback between artist and public which must exist if vigorous art forms are to develop. We have to accept I think that the artist is influenced by the opinions and attitudes of those around him. But if the critic through not understanding or not even trying to understand what the artist is doing, fosters indifference or hostility in the public, then this simply increases the isolation of the artist. Bad or insensitive criticism does more to isolate the artist from the public than any other single factor. We must further accept that any vigorous artist is likely to be trying new and strange forms in an attempt to explore some range of possibilities in his medium. The artist who does only what we expect has done nothing at all. But again, bad criticism, if it retards the public's acceptance of an artist's work, may set limits to what an artist can attempt.

What the critic can do here then, is act as a go-between for artist and public. The critic can help simply by trying to see what the artist is up to, and then trying to convey some of this to the public — who preferably will make up their own minds as to the merit of the work. The public may find a starting point useful. And given a starting point they can begin to interact with the artist in a way that is stimulating both to artist and public.

Art is dependent on the artist's environment in another way: art is cumulative in an historical sense. The best work and the best artists have almost invariably risen out of, and partly reacted against, some sort of rich artistic background. Vigorous art forms depend partly on a build-up of art in the past. But there is a tendency at present for some critics to pan heavily any work which does not conform to some external (i.e. non-aesthetic) set of standards. The result of this is to prevent the build-up of artistic ideas from which something interesting may emerge and how on earth can the critic predict which art forms will or will not at least provide a new impetus at some time?

Furthermore, art has always been abstract in the sense that the abstract or formal qualities and relations of a work in the end determine whether or not it is good art. To have a good painting say, we must have a complex and interesting interplay between the elements of the painting (and also in some cases, between those of the painting and some part of its environment). Art may take its apparent justification or beginning from an endless number of sources, e.g. religious belief, interest in natural phenomena, interest in various sorts of technical problems, and so on. The important thing is not to confuse the justification or "context" of a work of art, with what the work *is*, viewed simply as art. And yet critics persistently confuse these two more or less unrelated aspects of a work of art, making statements of the form, "This is bad art *because* I cannot agree with the format." This type of judgment is simply the worst sort of logical blunder, much as if one were to say "This is a morally bad act *because* it was done on a bicycle." This applies particularly to the debate about whether art in a non-indigenous style is worthwhile or not. And anyway, we can expect an indigenous style in art only (a) if there is a strong indigenous culture (which there isn't) and (b) if there is a rich, vigorous growth of artistic experimentation and ideas (which some critics are trying to prevent), and (c) if there is a real interplay between artist and public (which again some critics are trying to prevent).

It seems to me that the first question a critic has to ask when confronted with an artist's work is simply — is this worthwhile, is it interesting, does it work? Having done this he can attempt to understand why it does or does not work, what are its strengths and weaknesses, where it might lead and so on. The critics job is to help both public and artist confront a work of art, rather than look round it. Some critics are showing a marked tendency to do just the opposite.

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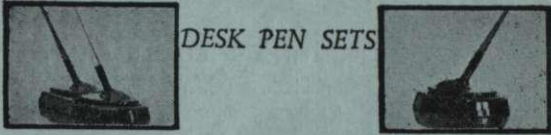
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Embroidery Guild

It is often supposed that embroidery is a skill which ladies may acquire for adornment of dress or household furnishings.

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Just as the brush declares a world of beauty, the hammer and chisel another, so the needle and thread can open a door to a third, to its, own special world, with its own special beauty that no other means of expression can achieve.

The Canterbury Embroidery Guild will display members work at the Canterbury Society of Arts from May 10th to May 17th revealing the many facets of embroidery both in uses and techniques.

Dunedin Public Art Gallery

From our correspondent in Dunedin

With a Building Fund target of \$300,000 the Art Gallery Council is at present committed to a vigorous programme of fund raising. A recent auction sale of donated antiques at a city saleroom realised \$8,300, bringing the \$50,000 mark within sight.

The appearance of the Gallery is already changing as the new storerooms and a caretaker's flat near completion. The idea now is to increase space to house the rapidly growing permanent collection and at the same time allow visiting exhibitions to be hung without the back-breaking work of continually dismantling and reassembling permanent collections that should always be on view, particularly to visitors and scholars who often come specially to study them.

Tom Esplin



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