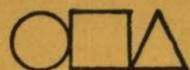


# news



The Journal of the Canterbury Society of Arts

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<i>President:</i>	Miles Warren
<i>Secretary-manager:</i>	Russell Laidlaw
<i>Exhibitions Officer:</i>	Tony Geddes
<i>Receptionist:</i>	Joanna Mowat
<i>News Editor:</i>	Stuart McMillan



A work from the Children's Art Exhibition, December 1972

## Gallery calendar (subject to adjustment)

Mar. 3-18 Arts Festival  
 Mar. 10 House Visits  
 Mar. 24 CSA Building Fair  
 Mar. 24-Apr. 3 Marc Way  
 Mar. 28-Apr. 12 Brian Holmewood  
 Mar. 30-Apr. 15 Mary Darwin  
 Mar. 31-Apr. 13 Molly Canady  
 Apr. 5-13 Hunter & Fielding  
 Apr. 13-29 Art Students  
 Apr. 15-29 P. Kundycki  
 Apr. 18-30 Bashir Baraki

May: A. R. Pearson  
 University Centennial  
 Kindergarten  
 Neville Sinclair  
 CSA Open Exhibition

June: Ian Hutson  
 Wilhelmus Ruifrok  
 Michael Oaten

July: Louise Lewis  
 Ans Westra  
 Martin Mendelsburg  
 CSA Graphic and Craft

August: Don Peebles  
 David Cheer  
 Thelma Muschamp  
 Bob Goundrill  
 Town & Country

September: The Group

October: John Oakley  
 W. A. Sutton  
 Pat Hanly  
 Roy & Juliet Cowan  
 Colette Rands

November: Bill Cumming  
 G. & M. Van Der Lingen  
 CSA Summer Exhibition

December: Doreen Fraser  
 Junior Art Exhibition

## New members

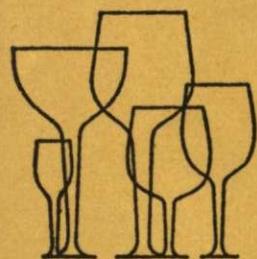
We welcome to the CSA:  
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 Mrs E. A. Bakker  
 Mr T. Baltakmens  
 Mrs R. F. Brunsdon  
 Mrs C. M. Clark  
 Mr W. Collison  
 Mr F. L. Crooks  
 Mrs R. E. Douglas

Miss M. J. G. Giesen  
 Mr R. J. Goundrill  
 Mrs S. Grosse  
 Mr & Mrs S. H. Hinton  
 Mr & Mrs M. Jerard  
 Mrs R. Kempe  
 Mrs N. M. Kempthorne  
 Mrs A. C. Klijn  
 Mr D. S. Langley

Mr G. M. Leonard  
 Mrs A. Lowe  
 Mr & Mrs R. Morris  
 Mrs U. E. Murray  
 Mrs L. N. Neale  
 Mr W. J. Paynter  
 Mr D. C. Peebles  
 Mr & Mrs A. J. G. Plank  
 Mrs D. N. Preston

Mr W. C. Ruifrok  
 Mr & Mrs W. G. Russell  
 Mr & Mrs R. H. Shearman  
 Miss J. Steel  
 Mr D. A. Syme  
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 Mr J. M. Thomas  
 Mr P. Warner  
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## Fair on March 24

DATE: 24th March 1973

TIME: 10.30am through to 3.30pm

PLACE: CSA Gallery

FEATURING: Parade of Theatrical Costumes from:

*Coppelia, Henry V, The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, compered by Mrs Helen Holmes.

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Make a note of the date now and come prepared to buy from a most interesting collection of items. Refreshments will be available throughout the day.

Please read the enclosed circular for further details. Derek Hargreaves, Convener, Fair Committee.

## Australian trip

A fourteen-day visit to public and private galleries in Melbourne, Canberra, and Sydney from 6-20 May is being arranged for a small group through Union Travel, Christchurch. The cost, which includes Economy Class Air Fares, good hotel accommodation – but not meals – is \$287 approx. CSA members and others who feel that they would like further information are invited to get in touch with Don Peebles, Senior lecturer, School of Fine Arts, who will be accompanying the group. He can be reached by telephone at 71-649 extension 252 or in the evenings at 525-283.

## From the office

On behalf of us all, felicitations to Jill Parsonson who was our receptionist from January 1970, to August, 1971.

Since she left us she has experienced the rigours of India and Nepal and the fleshpots of St. Johann and is now marrying Christopher Marshall of Yorkshire, a farmer and a sculptor.

## House visits

There will be a visit to houses on March 10. Tickets are available at the Gallery.

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## The exhibitions

Marc Way: Born in Wales, 1953; came to Dunedin with his parents in 1959; left Kings High School with Fine Arts Prelim, 1971. Such facts have less bearing on his painting and drawing than that, with all the solitude of an only child, he has always dreamt and drawn a private world. A world informed by his wide reading, and peopled by ideals of beauty — and cruelty — obsessions which he releases for us, in drawing after drawing, with demure honesty.

More relevant to his work than the Art School he left last year after two terms, to return to drawing, would be (via reproductions) any of the recent schools most home to imagination and fantasy: Symbolist, Pre-Raphaelite, Surrealist, etc. He says that his biggest influence is Virginia

Molly Morpeth Canaday was born in Wellington, New Zealand, on February 5, 1903, the daughter of Florence Euphemia and Charlton Douglas Morpeth. Her instinct for artistic creation was expressed during her early youth in the skill with which she aided her mother in developing the family's country place into a garden of beauty and delight. Among her contributions to the charm of their garden were the sculptured ornaments she made for it.

She married Frank H. Canaday of Toledo, Ohio, on December 17, 1932. From then until 1941 when they moved to New York, she studied painting, sculpture and art history at the Toledo Museum of Art and privately with a Toledo artist, Israel Abramofsky.

Woolf, and lists other interests as Mahler, Mantegna, Thomas Mann, The 'Ballet Russe' production that Cocteau did the sets for — and set-design in general. The Rossettis and Burne-Jones in the Dunedin Public Gallery were treasured encouragement to Way in taking up the solitary apprenticeship his art requires. And his new pictures show considerable progress since his first one-man show at the Rosslyn Gallery, Dunedin, last year. Attention to detail does not flag, the further a drawing goes beyond the face or faces that are the central concern of each. Faces, framed by hair, that by its treatment makes a surprising range of metaphors, are more variously presented; gone is the appealing moist eye. Backdrops have developed into

Between 1937 and 1947 Molly Canaday exhibited frequently in the Toledo Area Artists Annuals at the Toledo Museum, where she received an honorable mention in 1942, her first award. In the 1944 Toledo Area Artists Annual she was awarded the first award for oil painting, the Roulet Medal, for "Winter Bouquet".

After she and Mr Canaday moved to New York in 1947, her commitment to painting was further confirmed. She continued her studies with a New York artist Joseph Floch, and later with Jean de Botton and at New York University and the Art Students League.

Her first one-man show was held at the Toledo Museum of Art in 1948. After one-man shows at the Dudsensing

backgrounds, and the pencil work is everywhere increased in care and strength.

Implicit in Marc Way's application to his work is that it will continue to progress, just as he himself is bound to continue his travels in search of scenes larger and more hospitable to art of the imagination. In the meantime, CSA members should all take this chance to see his work, and to take heart from his example, that even here, painting must sooner or later return from the dried plains of stylisms, to serve again the endless springs of imagination en-caved in each one of us.

Tony Fomison

Gallery in Woodstock, Vermont in 1949; Royal Oak, New Zealand in 1950 and the Stamford, Connecticut Women's Club in 1952, she held her second one-man show at the Toledo Museum of Art in 1958.

Molly Canaday devoted much of her life to studying art and to painting. The Toledo Museum of Art and Art Interests Incorporated are pleased to present this retrospective exhibition of her work at the Toledo Museum where her studies began in 1932. To Robert F. Phillips, the Museum's Curator of Contemporary Art, should go credit for the exhibition's organisation, installation and catalogue.

Otto Wittmann, Director

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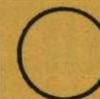
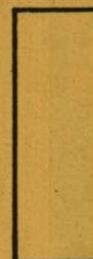
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## A deal with Qantas

News of a record price for an Australian printing, \$60,000 for Sidney Nolan's *Dog and Duck Hotel*, and a recent financially successful Nolan exhibition at London's Marlborough Gallery, has prompted the Australian airline Qantas to demonstrate the monetary advantages of patronage of the arts.

Qantas is to sell five pictures painted by the Australian artist for the airline in 1957. Up until now they had apparently been lying forgotten in storerooms.

Qantas received the paintings in return for a round-the-world air ticket which would have been worth about \$1200.

*Dog and Duck Hotel* is perhaps the internationally best known individual Australian painting.

The painting, which was the property of Mervyn Horton, Sydney collector and editor of *Art and Australia*, was reproduced on Qantas menu cards.

Although the Qantas Nolans are not in the same category as *Dog and Duck Hotel* their sale should yield the

airline a substantial profit.

They will probably sell at from \$3,000 to \$5,000 each, representing a profit of up to \$24,000.

The lower value of the commissioned Nolans is because of the subject matter as well as the quality of the paintings.

The paintings, all oil on board, signed and dated 1957 and measuring about 28in by 36in, are *Temple of Dawn, Bangkok, The Tower Bridge, London, Jain Temple, Calcutta, Colosseum, Rome, and Gouden Horn, Istanbul.*

Australian themes by Australian artists sell far better it seems, than non-Australian themes, even when the artist has become as internationally acclaimed as Nolan.

Prices of works in Nolan's recent Marlborough exhibition ranged from £stg850 for an oil on paper to £stg5,000 for an oil on hardboard.

The major work, *Snake*, a long mixed media effort, was marked not for sale.

Apart from its assistance to an individual artist Qantas has been involved as an art patron through its maintenance

of an art gallery at its London office and its commissions for films on Australian art and artists.

The Qantas London gallery shows work by both Australian artists, mainly those resident in London, and British artists.

It is now showing lithographs by Arthur Boyd and later this year will show the works by Sir William Dobell held by the Dobell Foundation and to be auctioned by Sotheby's at Sydney Opera House in October.

The gallery is non-commercial but artists are at liberty to sell their works privately and there is no commission.

Qantas has made five films on contemporary Australian art (on Dobell, Nolan, Drysdale, Nolan's Gallipoli paintings and the Australian collection of the U.S. collector, Harold Mertz) as well as two films on Aboriginal art.



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## Pottery notes, by Mari Tohill

It is hoped that the Canterbury Potters have been busy making a good selection of pots for their Exhibition as one of the attractions for the Festival in March. Our Exhibition opens on March 3 in the down-stairs gallery of the CSA.

Uragami, a well-known potter from Japan, who specialises in Bizen ware will be in Christchurch during the Arts Festival.

Two functions have been arranged. The first is a film evening at the Museum Lecture Theatre on Friday March 9 at 8 p.m. where members and the public will be able to see films of the best potters of Japan and Bizen pottery.

On Saturday night at 8 p.m. there will be a demonstration by Uragami at Risingholme which members and visiting potters may attend. This will also be a Social Evening where people can meet and question Uragami on different aspects of Bizen pottery and pottery in Japan today.

Another Festival attraction will be an exhibition of Arts and Crafts at Mona Vale opening on March 13 for three days. It will be open from 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., there will

be a charge of 20 cents for admission and morning and afternoon teas will be provided. There will be a wide selection of all the Crafts as well as pottery by Crewenna and Patricia Perrin.

We would like to congratulate four Canterbury Potters who had pots bought at the last N.Z. potters' Exhibition in Wellington; sculptural pieces by Nola Barron and David Brokenshire and pots by Fredica Ernsten and Irene Spiller. The first three were bought by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Irene Spiller's went to the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

The following is an extract from a letter written by May Davis to a friend in Christchurch:—

In 1970 Harry and I went to Peru for a holiday as I have for a long time had a great desire to see Machu-Picchu. We were fascinated by central Peru, and the Andean Indians. We were fortunate in making friends with the Mayer family in Huancayo, and through them were able to visit potters and weavers etc. in their homes. The weaving

is at a very high standard, technically and aesthetically, but pottery, though lively and attractive, is fairly primitive albeit adequate for the needs of a simple people. They use no wheel — as we know it — shaping the pots on a saucer-shaped stone which is rotated by hand — and no glaze. Coloured slips are used for decoration. The idea was born that perhaps we could help start a village pottery, and after 2½ years of gestation and planning this is coming to pass.

We propose to start with our own funds, raised largely by Harry's lecture tours, and we hope individuals and charitable organisations will help later if the need arises. The Society of Friends has already contributed, and CORSO and OXFAM have been helpful in official ways. In May, 1972, Harry and I went to Australia at the invitation of the potters over there, and Harry was asked to speak in the "Guest of Honour" series in Sydney.

Another lecture tour in U.S. and U.K. in 1971 gave us the opportunity to visit Peru on the way back. We discovered many small water -wheels, some idle, and we



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collected a range of materials for testing. These, both clays and rocks for glazes, have yielded an impressive range of high-quality products.

For several months Harry was very busy making machines to take with us — two wheels, a vacuum pug, blunger parts, press, ball mills, blower, etc. and also re-conditioned a pelton-wheel for water power. He deliberately refrained from using the modern aids available in Nelson, and has made these items by older methods (very hard work), methods that will have to be used in Peru. The only concession was a welder. These pieces of equipment really look as though they had just arrived from a modern factory.

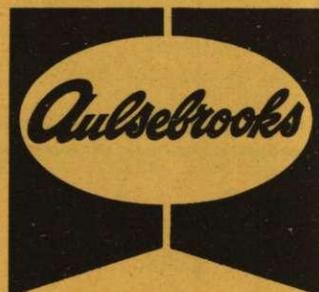
I hope by the time this is ready for posting I shall know where we shall be — in the Andes, about 11,000 feet up probably. We have talked of community activity with raw materials processed, pots fired, in a central workshop, but made in the homes of the people. We do not want to disrupt or disturb the existing potters, whose work has a valid place now, although it may be doomed along with the

way of life to which it belongs.

Peru has one of the largest population explosions in the world and very little is being done for the rural economy. The result is a steady drift to the capital, Lima, where one million live in slum conditions in the desert outside the city. These people leave behind their traditions and skills, their dress, their crafts, their songs and festivals, all those cultural aspects of their lives which bound them to their Inca fore-fathers. They become factory hands, wear Western clothes, and consume western industrial products. It is an eternal tragedy, it seems, that with all the good will in the world (which mostly isn't there) the West does not know how to put food into the mouths of these people except by assimilating them into our industrial-capitalist system, with all its exploitation of mankind and the world of Nature. If Harry and I can show a few how they can use the materials around them to obtain a livelihood without having to live in a city, and without having to dance to the tune of some foreign capitalist we shall be doing

something more worth-while and satisfying than living in this paradise, and making pots for the rich who do not need them.

It will be a real wrench for me to leave lovely Crewenna and the three girls. I have so many friends and my activities cover such a wide field — but I console myself that every major move we have made we have recongised in retrospect as having been a good thing. It is easy to stagnate — easier as one grows older. Coming to New Zealand widened our field and increased our knowledge — life has become enormously enriched as a result. Perhaps Peru will be the same — and this time we are keeping Crewenna as a base. The house will only be let. One could say that the Peru project will only be a success on the day when we can hand it over to them and bow gracefully out. How many years this might be is anyone's guess.



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## The role and functions of a public art gallery

by Brian Muir, Director Robert McDougall Art Gallery

It is now nearly four years since Eric Westbrook, the Director of the National Art Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, addressed a large gathering in what is now the Stewart Mair Gallery of the CSA Gallery building. That occasion was a momentous one as far as the development of the public art gallery in Christchurch was concerned, even if it merely indicated the way ahead.

I well recall the degree of public interest, and indeed controversy, into which the McDougall Gallery had, once again, entered. It was not the first time that the institution had been the subject of public concern. There had been at least two major occasions in the past. The first was a public vote opposing a City Council resolution to raise a loan to provide a public art gallery. The choice favoured by the ratepayers at the time was the Council's administration building now in Manchester Street. It is interesting to note in passing that at the same time the citizens voted against having a new town hall. The result was to see the provision of the Civic Theatre, skilfully incorporated into the civic administration block, and the city having to endure the limitations of second best for decades to come. Looking back, perhaps there is now more room for rejoicing than there used to be now that a Town Hall in its own right is a shining reality, and the city does have a public art gallery into the bargain — thanks to the generosity and public mindedness of Robert Ewing McDougall. One wonders what might be the state of the public art gallery (if any) today, if Mr McDougall, (who was then managing director of Aulsebrooks Ltd.), had not willingly made available the amount required to build one.

The design for the building was competitive. The

location was the subject of prolonged and indecisive debate until finally it was decided to place it fronting onto the Botanic Gardens and wedged in behind the Museum.

The opening was a great event in the history of Christchurch, and the gleaming new building seems to have attracted as much attention during its first year as the Town Hall has forty years later. Over a hundred and twenty-eight thousand people passed through it in the first twelve months — a figure which has not yet been equalled, although the figures for the last twelve months (Jan-Dec 1972) show a total of 101,684 (an increase from 35,557 in 1968).

Mr McDougall had expressed the wish that the building be a beautiful little gem to house the city's permanent collection of art works. When completed, it was acknowledged as fulfilling the donor's wishes. Into it went approximately a hundred and fifty works of art, comprising oils, watercolours, drawings, prints, and sculptures, all of which were well displayed for the period and providing, seemingly, a permanent and static display. It was the culmination of centuries of civilized attitudes towards the arts. It was, I believe, a reflection of a society and an environment which had siphoned off the arts and which placed what were considered to be the finest products of artificial creativity into a form of cool storage.

I do not wish to denigrate either the institution so established, nor those responsible for it. What I aim to do is simply to describe the attributes of the period, remembering how fortunate indeed we are, that this event occurred, after all it was a recognition, if not by the community, at least by one or two enlightened individuals

of the importance of the role and function of a public art gallery in the community. Within the existing social and economic structure into which it was born, the McDougall Art Gallery was a magnificent concept and undertaking. Unfortunately it was a great beginning that was to see little active encouragement, and one that was brought, almost to a tragic end through community neglect.

The role and function of public art galleries has been and is a changing one; changing (and challenging) because Society is changing and challenging. The origins of the public gallery lie far back in European history with the first collectors of works of art. The Middle Ages and The Renaissance saw the first great collections that we know very much about, assembled under the enthusiasm and the wealth principally of powerful ruling families. Not only had they in many cases rich art resources to draw upon, but they also set about encouraging their growth and development. So began in earnest, the development of the so called 'fine arts' — the highly intellectual pursuits of drawing, painting, printmaking and sculpture; essentially the skill and the intellect and the emotional side of man's activity.

For the most part the private collections of the early connoisseurs were not visible to the public. More often than not they helped to provide the aura surrounding the high and the mighty — temporal as well as ecclesiastical rulers. To some extent and in varying degrees the artist worked for the aggrandizement of the state or the church, as well as increasingly for himself. The Renaissance was a period of re-birth of scholasticism and intellectualism, but it also had new features. An artist of the stature of Albrecht

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Durer for example could, and did impose his will upon an art which to a great extent had previously been anonymous. No longer simply an expressive craft, art in hands and minds like his cried out for recognition of the individual creator. Henceforth art historians would seek not simply truth in art forms, but individualism, creativeness, and individual expression. Art was to become the subject of revolt, and of revolutions, of faithful followers of established beliefs and heretics to denounce and to be denounced.

Social revolution grew largely out of revolutions in the arts. Writers rather than painters have been accredited with much of the responsibility for the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century.

One can argue at interminable length the pros and cons and the needs (or not) for the change. Change it seems, we must accept as the inevitable, integral art of the restless of man.

The French Revolution brought about a vast change as far as the arts were concerned. It was the beginning of ultimate liberation. Ideally, no man was subject any more to any higher authority. Even the old notions of God and beauty were questioned and even destroyed. Ideal followed ideal, chaos on chaos, change upon change. The old order crumbled and fell throughout Europe. Art treasures were trundled back to France to glorify the nation that had liberated men's minds as well as bodies, until reaction gathered its forces and repulsed the winds of change. They could not defeat, however, the underlying ideals of equality and freedom for which the revolution stood.

A positive, and perhaps permanent outcome was the

availability, virtually for the first time, and certainly on a large scale, of the accumulated treasures of mankind.

The ancient palace of the kings of France, the Louvre, with the accumulated wealth of the nation's art — in fact its outward identity — was opened to the people and became a public museum.

National wealth and pride so evident inspired other nations in the next few decades to follow the example. In Britain the National Art Gallery grew out of a large private collection purchased by the Government, and housed in a building constructed specially for the purpose and opened in 1824.

Throughout Europe the museum movement gathered enormous and popular momentum during the nineteenth century. Out of a royal and aristocratic foundation it became a movement of the people. Its aim in nineteenth century terms was education and recreation. The museums and their treasures still amplified a nation's or a city's wealth and pride, but more impressively and importantly now in terms of enlightenment. The opportunity to understand and to appreciate the products of man's skill and creative ability had become an inborn right for everyone.

While museums of national history and the sciences flourished, the art galleries, which relied much more upon emotion and intuition and an understanding of aesthetics which is less certain and less obvious, and less purely practical, made a slower progress though still a very positive one.

The development of collections was aimed at showing the development, the history, or the story of man's arts. In

the belief that man was growing better and better his fine art works were symbolic milestones indicating his intellectual growth and development. From an idealistic peak in the Greek and Roman period, man had risen again through a period of primitive barbarism, to a new idealism. The work of Giotto for example was seen as primitive, but its aspirations towards humanism, and truth in terms of enlightenment of the spirit, made it worthy of a place in a museum of art. The accumulation of acquired skills, formulas, techniques, became institutionalised too, to be forever emulated and defended. Against such bulwarks of scholasticism and conservatism, new revolts erupted in the world of art itself.

What, for example, did one do with a follower of the dangerous and barbarous idea of 'impressionism'? What did one do with artists who saw beauty — not just scientific interest — but BEAUTY and ART in the arts of 'primitive' peoples. Such revolts and movements away from established conventions were seen as chaos, as destructive to the 'progress' of the 'refinement' of art, and ultimately as decadence. The fascist, as well as the socialist movements, most strangely sided with the conservative elements of European society seemingly in the belief that art must have a direct and practical social function. There the arts were given a specific social duty . . . the promotion of social revolution. There, too, in the style of revolutionary France, museums were set up as part of the educational machine. The art works, no matter of what period, are seen as the products of the people.

Essentially the art museum of today is not vastly different from that of the past. As with the nineteenth

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century the emphasis is still on education for understanding, and appreciation; more simply . . . learning and enjoyment.

There is a whole history of man's art accumulated. This has to be studied, and learnt, to be fully appreciated. This is the realm of books and of libraries. The job of the art gallery as a museum of art (and this is where the McDougall comes in) is to acquire and present actual physical, original examples in order to show by their very presence, the changing ideas through which man and his arts have progressed. In that sense an art museum today more accurately represents an accumulation of ideas — represented by actual, real pieces in the form of drawings, paintings, prints (I do not mean mechanical photographic reproductions but actual original artist-made or artist-supervised prints) pottery, weaving, sculpture. Ideas, aspirations, ideals. Combinations of the best, or most appropriate techniques with an ability to communicate or express some thought, some ideal, some truth. We aim to get the best examples available to represent as many periods or phases as we possibly can, including those of the present day, to illustrate the progress of man's ideas and ideals and their diversity, in the history of art.

The art gallery is a store house and a display place for those objects. The objects themselves remain static. The methods and the means by which we use them do not. The first function then is to collect. The second is to analyse, record, and preserve the objects collected, otherwise the basic function is destroyed. This is followed by presentation, or display, and this today includes many things that would not have been admitted to a gallery in the past, or things which would not have been available. Today, a lively art gallery divides its attentions roughly equally between the items it owns and preserves and uses, and adds to, and those which it borrows and displays from others. The idea of temporary exhibitions, on specific topics, or periods or artists has been a recent development. It has come about largely since the second World War, when there have been great cultural exchanges and an upsurge generally in relation to all things cultural.

The availability of loan exhibitions has for example brought to New Zealand art works of priceless cultural as well as economic value. They have helped vastly to improve our understanding of other nations, other peoples, other periods, as well as fostering a greater appreciation, understanding and above all else — development of our own. No people, no country can be a nation which places no store by its cultural assets. Until recently we in this country have had a dual cultural heritage. On the one hand, a rich and old European culture — on the other an equally rich and ancient, though vastly different Polynesian culture. The two have gradually merged a little and there have been constant transfusions from abroad. Our culture, nationally and distinctively is still in the melting pot — no matter what we might say or do. The role of the art gallery is to reflect, to record and show the stream that has flowed into that pot, and thereby hope that we might all better understand ourselves. We look into the pot, too, no matter how upsetting it might be at times, to see what we've got

coming out of it. All creation is a frightening experience. Art newly created can be frightening for that very reason. That does not mean we cannot come to terms with it and recognise a good brew when we see one. To do that, however, we must know the ingredients that have gone into it, how and why it has been stirred, and with what ultimate, conscious aim and intent. Then we can assess the degree of success or failure and establish the place of the product — not the 'process' but the 'product' in its rightful place in the order of things. Art is concerned with the establishment of order . . . not chaos. But the need to establish order itself implies a temporary state of action, or reaction, or even of chaos . . . or let us call it 'creation.'

One avenue, one opportunity for an insight into this age-old process of human endeavour. One insight — among many others — into an understanding of ourselves and others, and the things of the spirit — that essentially is the role and function of an art gallery today.

I have not said anything, or much at least about the mechanics of how we do these things, the finances we need and how we spend them, the physical needs of an ageing and inadequate building, the sciences of research, presentation and restoration of art works, the intricacies of daily administration of an active, organised education programme for schools, the problems of organizing temporary exhibition after temporary exhibition. These are the things that operate behind the scenes (though, not always behind) in the service and the interest of people. I hope however, that these utterances and thoughts will give some indication of what the McDougall Art Gallery stands for and how we go about putting that into effect.

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## Optimism or nothing — a reply to Pessimistic notes

by Tony Fomison

About the middle of May 1966, I was, just for a weekend, back in Paris. At one stage we were at this rather arty party, and although I'd started painting again, it was still the Cinema that as usual, I preferred to talk about: to me and most of my friends, in London, it was obviously the only visual art that was, for the 20th century what painting and sculpture were, say, to the Renaissance. Both arts being the leading means of visual narrative of their time, and using techniques most particular to their time. Only the popularity of a film festival could be likened particular to the devotion with which a newly-completed Michaelangelo got carried through the streets or a Caravaggio carried, still not finished, to some main square for the impatient crowd to view. As John Coley said in the last News, you couldn't expect new paintings to cause the riots today that they used to in the Paris Salon, and certainly for an equivalent from my own observation I have to turn to Cinema — an afternoon screening at a Cinematique Francaise of *L'Age d'or* (the Dali/Bunuel collaboration which caused outraged audiences to riot 43 years ago): when we came out we found the police had had to be called for the completely opposite reason, to clear the foyer of the angry crowd unable to get seats for the evening screening.

But to get back to the party. It was for an American millionaire, an ordinary oil-well one, but interested in the arts. In particular, he was taking his spare money out of the stage and re-investing it in film production, a move some opera-buff staff were still protesting. So that hearing my Cinema rave, their boss called these dissident advisors over with an air of "see, even this talking monkey can see I'm right" — and I had to rave it all over again.

So with regard to John Coley's "Pessimistic Notes" of the last News, we are obviously agreed on the pre-eminence of Cinema; it is rather over the implications of this fact to Painting that we differ (and I should warn you, John, the times when "critics were not afraid to pour scorn" have not passed me by!)

John Coley is a full-time lecturer in art; so too, perhaps, is the "artist" he saw "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" with. Perhaps the reader has also noticed how hurt such people can be if introduced to someone as an art-

teacher instead of as a painter. But surely it is only in their spare time that they paint, and surely they risk becoming the very "Sunday Painters" they would presume to educate. "The earth shakes with my fury" and all that (paraphrasing Coley); nowhere in his "Notes" is the committed painters viewpoint represented.

Of course Cinema is so large, it has relieved Painting of a popular narrative function that used to make so much painting tedious, just as photography encouraged painters to do better than the dull likeness level of portraiture they had too often been content with. Every challenge to Painting can be seen as the very means of furthering its self-knowledge, of recognising its unique characteristics, one such is that a painting can be from start to finish the product of one person's vision — no compromise is necessary with other interests, or members of a team, e.g. producer, publisher, actors, editor, etc. You could say such vision is a rare thing, much rarer than painters, whose numbers might be reduced, under competition with other visual arts, to its actual advantage.

Anyway, Cinema aside, Coley's pessimism seems to be that the visual complexity of the metropolitan environment, such things as advertising neon lights, hoardings and signs, are blunting the appreciation ability of the visual artist's public. But such things, along with traffic lights, clock faces and newsreels, are mechanised sources of information only — they are not vehicles for the visionary's imagination in the way that I regard painting to be. Not all painting subscribes to that view of course; such categories there are of painting, as "Op" and "Pop", that are quite content to slop around the streets in the lowly company of the merely visual. They win the competitions, however, with nothing else to do all day but pander to the very materialism that other more conscientious painting is trying to criticise. That a work representing the one intention, should be coupled with another embodying its opposite, as Coley does in comparing public reactions between last year's Benson and Hedges winner, and "The Clockwork Orange", without his noticing the incongruity, is a more depressing ground for pessimism than anything in his article.