

C . S . A . G A L L E R Y

# PREVIEW

MARCH — APRIL 1991 157  
Art in the heart of Christchurch



Michael Armstrong reports  
on his visit to the

## **SYDNEY BIENNALE**

## **Letter from London**

by David GL  
Brudenell-Cowie

C.S.A. Preview is registered at  
New Zealand Post Office Headquarters  
Wellington as a magazine







The Journal of the  
Canterbury Society  
of Arts  
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Mr and Mrs P D Zwart

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir

In reference to the review in today's PRESS (31/1/91) written by Pat Unger, of the shows by Don McAra and by the Deans' at your gallery.

In criticising these shows Unger refers to landscape painting as a style that looks backwards. Unger may wish to be seen as the champion of the modern cause but western avant-garde art can be seen as competitive, expansionist, invasive and as colonial, in that modernist art has a style referred to as appropriation, a popular style of theft of art ideas, and in fact these notions that are used to explain and propagandize the avant-garde are just as entrenched and institutionalised. The avant-garde follows a formulaised concept that is in part dependent on audience participation. The avant-garde is supported and funded by public institutions. In its search for justification in the public eye it has become just as entrenched, and society has to look at it in that light because it has become an integral part.

The art of McAra and of the Deans appeals to a wide public taste and the sale of their work justifies and continues the creation of landscape paintings. The

freedom to enjoy art to one's own taste is a normal function of society, whilst remaining respectful of the tastes of others. Unger's critique is written to an old formula but offers no new sociological insight that broadens the viewing of art works, nor does it offer any dialogue on the ethical nature of realist paintings that Unger dismisses as nostalgia or myth, but that encompass a set of human values and ethics that form cohesiveness in society, but that are often ignored in the quest for modernity that sweeps away anything it considers conservative, without offering to replace those values with anything relevant to some peoples' eyes.

Changes happen in society without having to be led by art, and history will be written later. Michael Armstrong

Dear Editor

If I understand Michael Armstrong's letter correctly he objects to my description of the Deans' and Don McAra's art as backward looking.

He mentions categories such as 'avant-garde', 'modern' and what presumably is 'post-modern', (by reference to 'appropriation and theft') and he includes concepts such as 'nostalgia, myth, ethics, human values and social cohesiveness'. To discuss the validity of any given work encompassing all these ideas would take pages of clear text, not possible in a 300 word review. After all, once upon a time, landscape painting itself was regarded as avant-garde. And romantic realism was similarly an innovative style.

By now conventions associated with this genre are well established and predictable, even when skillfully painted as are these works.

To criticise is to 'find fault', not to promote 'sales' or massage what is perceived to be the 'taste' of the day. Would Mr Armstrong have all reviews published on the last day so as not to interfere with business?

I see a review as a way to heighten the enjoyment of a work through critical analysis of content and context. Perhaps we could both agree that the romantic realist landscape, so popular earlier in the century, if not backward looking is at least not forward looking.

Yours sincerely  
Pat Unger

## MIXED MEDIA

### THE FRANCIS WITHERSPOON ANNUAL PRINTMAKERS AWARD

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# a v i s i t t o A U S T R A L I A

*Michael Armstrong was the 1989 recipient of the CSA Guthrey Travel Award. He travelled to Australia in 1990 to visit the Biennale in Sydney. In November Michael spoke to those present at the CSA AGM of his experiences during his time away...*

At the entrance to the Sydney Biennale at the National Gallery was an art work entitled "I Wish; Vincent Van Gogh" which consisted of a battery powered sunflower that danced in time with a spoken text as it came through the speakers. The background was two prints — a defaced self portrait by Rembrandt and one by Vincent Van Gogh, also defaced. The text to which the plastic sunflower jiggled went thus:

"Dear Theo, How strange it is to be popular now, the sunflowers are selling very well, I shall repay you soon. Greetings. Vincent."

I must say how grateful I am to have been given the opportunity offered by the CSA Guthrey Award. From many points of view the opportunity to travel presents positive stimulation. On a personal level it means a chance to relax, observe and enjoy another culture, to travel and be a passenger looking at the landscape, cityscape etc. It provides the chance to see differences in the society from our own milieu here. The trip also provided the opportunity to look at art works from an Australian and international base and to relate concepts from these works to the New Zealand art scene, to compare and learn from what was there visually.

I made every endeavour to see every gallery available in each city. There are very useful guide books, although there was a feeling that there were other galleries that were not listed. Maybe alternative galleries simply do not exist or survive. That was a side which did not seem to be represented or possibly had been absorbed into the mainstream. The rate at which young artists accelerate into mainstream acceptability seemed remarkable. The system may simply function on that level, the higher price of living, especially in Sydney, largely excludes any but the most successful artists access to the market place.

Overall, the art scene (and this was in May prior to the most recent recession) seemed busy and bouyant. The last I heard was that the gallery scene was dead quiet. One must bear in mind when comparing the Australian situation with that here, that Australia spends about twice as much per head

of population on public funding.

A very general look at the local scene with my own painterly concerns in mind... With tongue in cheek I have compiled a brief history of the use of classicism in white Australian art. The art was very diverse locally, with very broad stylistic variation. Style seemed to predominate, content was less accentuated.

The classical theme as a continuing historical context was evident in the local scene, references cropping up in various artists' work. Classical Greek sculpture and the broken torsos from antiquities took on a variety of meanings in modern artworks — political references, feminist polemic and the post-modern use of the symbolic aura that adds glory through the reusing of the clichéd art historical contextualisation. A few artists (such as Peter Booth and earlier, Donald Friend) succeeded in adding a new dimension by broadening the context to include other cultures' symbolism.

There were works which made reference to Aboriginal art and ritual and applied these to a gallery context, although by and large, aboriginal forms were ignored or relegated. The occasional dreamtime of arcadian myth combined with an overlay of other conquered cultures' art forms, primitivist patterns and figuration as psychic symbols, all seem to be looking back to some more idealised past, making comparisons with a modern loss of freedom and innocence. Consumerism, voyeurism and corruption of values are painterly counterpoints to a seeking for the soul. Booth in particular, uses images of the neurotic to address the modern problems of existence. Human existence is never far from the brutal, self destructive, deformed, competitive, anablastic... All can be seen as metaphors of the twentieth century, urban civilisation and its institutionalised and indirect violence allied to power seeking domination of one group over another. Psychic disruption would seem to be Booth's central theme, that technology and civilisation have merely ritualised and repressed violence to a deeper level.

The Biennale took the theme of the ready made

"Standing Figures 2"  
Woodyn Sculpture  
Nicholas Dean





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boomerang and put this movement into an historical context by bringing in as much early work of Duchamp, Picabia and Man Ray as possible, although costs had minimalised this to some extent. Overall the show followed these ideas through the twentieth century. The basic tenets of the readymade vary according to the school of thought but overall there is an emphasis on the use of non-aesthetic objects of everyday consumerism used to produce a social commentary on value systems of exclusivity as opposed to mass production and of the use of modern technology to create a very different interaction with the viewer.

Overall the modern works dealt with aspects of human empathy, a social context based on sensuous and emotional involvement through the media. The use of technology also reflects that the human subject, the audience, is shaped by a technology which traps and destroys, not only spiritually but physically. Our lives rely on electronic technology. It defines us just as earlier machines dictated our lifestyles. The manner in which the electronic media of these art works interacted directly with the audience placed the spectators in a dramatic role.

Whereas we have witnessed the so called contextualisation of the text over the last few years, where written and theoretic concepts have been promulgated through visual art forms, this new age of technology throws up another combination of art forms, this time video and psychodrama. These focus on social and political issues rather than personal. The main negative perception of this is that the political reading of any work will override its value or relevance as an art form.

There were criticism of the theme of the Biennale. Probably the major criticism was that the show was based on the old idea of the artist as a rebel at a time when the 'avant garde' has become totally accepted and its rhetoric has become conventional, stylised and superficial. There was also a disinclination to accept works for theoretical justifications alone. However, the Biennale presented a very diverse view, from funny, sensual and conceptual to boring, trite and cynical.

All in all, an intriguing look at various aspects of modern practice in the artfield and a chance to weigh up possible future directions.

**Michael Armstrong**

# a l e t t e r f r o m L O N D O N

20 November 1990 David GL Brudnell-Cowie

*David GL Brudnell-Cowie's work as a film maker has included a film on New Zealand sculptor, Llew Summers. In this letter he sends members of the CSA some details of his current film in progress and his life in London.*

Dear Readers

One of the main creative projects that I am involved with is a sequel to the sculpture film on Llew Summers — another social arts sculpture film, this time on New Zealander Nicholas Deans and a Deans family arts profile. The New Zealand section is already shot along with about five hours of unedited material here. This film entitled "Origins of Style, Nicholas Deans, Sculptor", deals with many complex themes. Often filming is made difficult

by Nick's poor health with a kidney complaint. However, Nick's own incredible continuous output of very beautiful pieces in wood and marble takes one's breath away due to their life-like size and realism. When I'm filming, I stumble around with a three quarter inch low band video camera, using a tripod catching fleeting moments, as works develop.

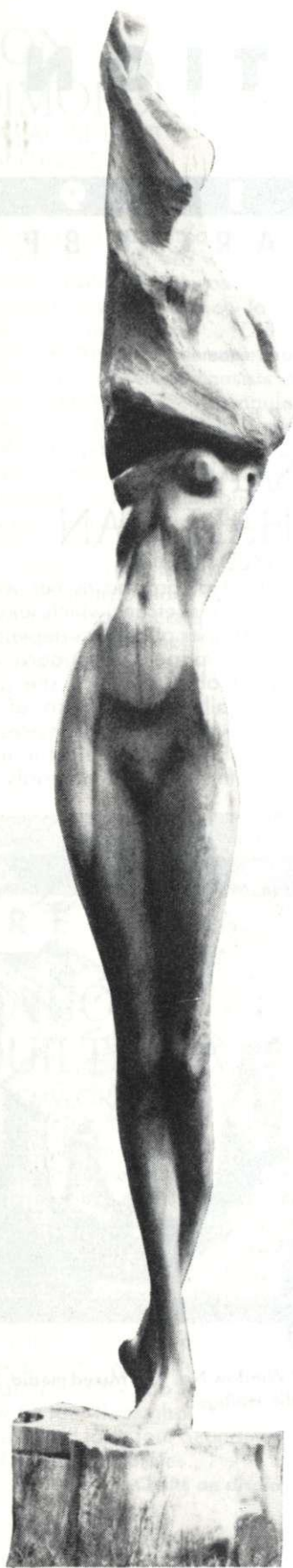
Teaching full-time, as I have been since arriving in London, is exciting and rewarding, meeting and getting to know different people. I

The art of Mr Ara and of the Deans appeals to a wide public taste and the sale of their work justifies and continues the creation of landscape paintings. The

both agree that the romantic ideal of landscape, so popular earlier in the century, if not backward looking is at least not forward looking.  
Yours sincerely  
Pat Unger

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Auckland,  
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"Standing Figure 2",  
Wooden Sculpture,  
Nicholas Deans

leave for work sometimes as early as 6.45 pm to catch the train, tube and bus that take me across this vast city. Not far from where I live is the Dulwich Picture Gallery and here you can view one of the best collections of painting from all periods. From Canaletto to Rubens, Reni and three Rembrandts that have been stolen several times and returned to the gallery.

At the Tate Gallery recently I saw an installation of flint covering an entire floor space of a huge gallery. In other wings of that gallery one finds one's usual friends in the form of Mondrians, Braques and of course the Romantic School, together with the Martin Room. I know that pre 1930 you could buy a John Martin for £5.00. Now these huge apocalyptic paintings are hung all together, each like a scene from a Cecil B De Milne film such as 'The Seventh Plague of Egypt'. There is never a dull moment living in London with dealer galleries, major galleries and libraries to visit.

Writing in mid-November 1990 the sky at 3.15 pm is blue and the air warm. A month or two ago it was hot and humid. Global Warming. Along with North Sea Gas and central heating one is never cold. People are polite, kind and generous. You ask anyone directions and they willingly stop in their tracks and offer them. They are always correct.

There's much talk in the media about Iraq and inflation and high prices for fuel related products. But worse than that Margaret Thatcher is being challenged over the Pound Sterling and it changing to the much discussed 'Euro-dollar' with England joining the European monetary system. Most people seem to agree that doing away with the pound would lead to even worse inflation worldwide and devaluation of international money. Now it seems steps are underway to abolish this sovereign currency.

There are many fine artists in Britain and Nicholas Deans is one who, on his own, has established himself with dealer galleries in England and Europe, as far afield as Milan. In making a film about him I want to describe the beauty of his works of the human figure in wood and marble on a life-like and life-size scale. Postures that are so unusual, detailed and gigantic, they are wonderfully exciting. They are created by Nick Deans simply because he wants to make them so. The dealer gallery takes the work on because of the quality not because he is promoting that work or a name.

The filming goes on, the life here is fast, hectic, competitive and overcrowded — realistic for Britain.

**David GL Brudenel-Cowie.**



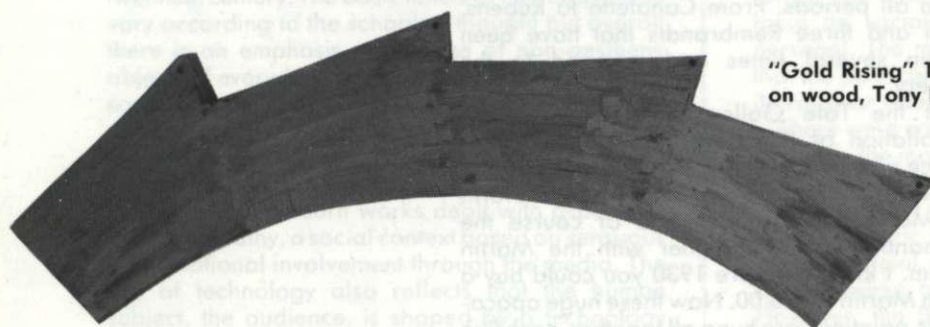
**Nicholas Deans**



# C.S.A. EXHIBITIONS

6 - 1 7 M A R C H 1 9 9 1

P R E V I E W S T U E S D A Y 5 M A R C H 8 P M



"Gold Rising" 1990, Oil and enamel on wood, Tony De Latour

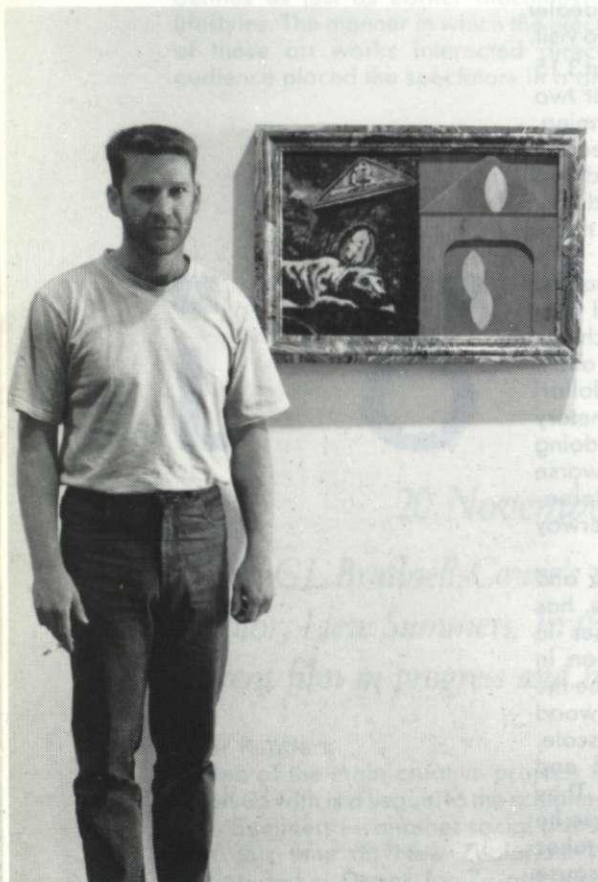
## SANDIE HALLIGAN

MIXED MEDIA

Sandie Halligan bases her works on quick sketches which take on new shapes and forms depending on the paper, cardboard and 'found objects' which she glues and nails on. The use of old windows as framing devices reflects the artist's interest in using cast off and found materials.



"Window No. 13", Mixed media, Sandie Halligan



Spencer Hamilton and "Dog House", Mixed media.

## SPENCER J HAMILTON AND TONY DE LATOUR

PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS

Tony De Latour presents a series of drawings and relief paintings developed from an interest in masks and other associated headgear. The sources for the work are diverse and include comic strip superheroes and science fiction movies.

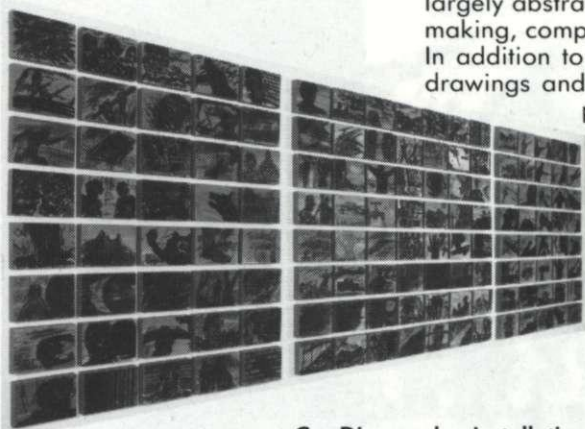
Spencer Hamilton presents an exhibition of new works made during 1990 and 1991 depicting images which derive from gravestones. Most of the works consist of two panels and incorporate painting and construction using modern building products. Each panel refers to the other in a number of ways and together offer a plurality of ways in which the works may be read. The glossy marbled frames are very much an integral part of these works, signifying a concern with things 'tacky', and with society's entombment in kitsch.



## CON DIMOPOULOS "PARADISE LOST" PAINTINGS

'In his new exhibition Con Dimopoulos is primarily concerned about images in contemporary society. We live in an era where the artist's traditional role as image producer has been largely taken over by the mass media . . . Dimopoulos is showing a series of works each of which consists of small individual rectangular scenes . . . The concept is based on the story-board used by producers in the artistic direction of plays and films. The multiplicity of images parodies our image-laden culture; individual scenes are quickly executed, reflecting the brief span of time for which separate images occupy our consciousness.' (Stephen Cain — Evening Post)

## CONTEMPORARY BLACK AFRICAN ARTISTS' PAINTINGS



Con Dimopoulos, installation

## FRANCES DE WORMS

### "RIVERLEA SERIES" DRAWINGS AND PRINTS

This exhibition consists of the artist's recent "Riverlea" series, drawings and prints from observations of the Riverlea Wreckers yard. The works are largely abstract, exploring mark-making, composition and colour. In addition to these selected life drawings and prints will be displayed.

**6 - 24 MARCH 1991**  
**PREVIEW TUESDAY 5 MARCH 8 PM**

## NATIONAL QUILT SHOW

### PATCHWORK AND QUILTING

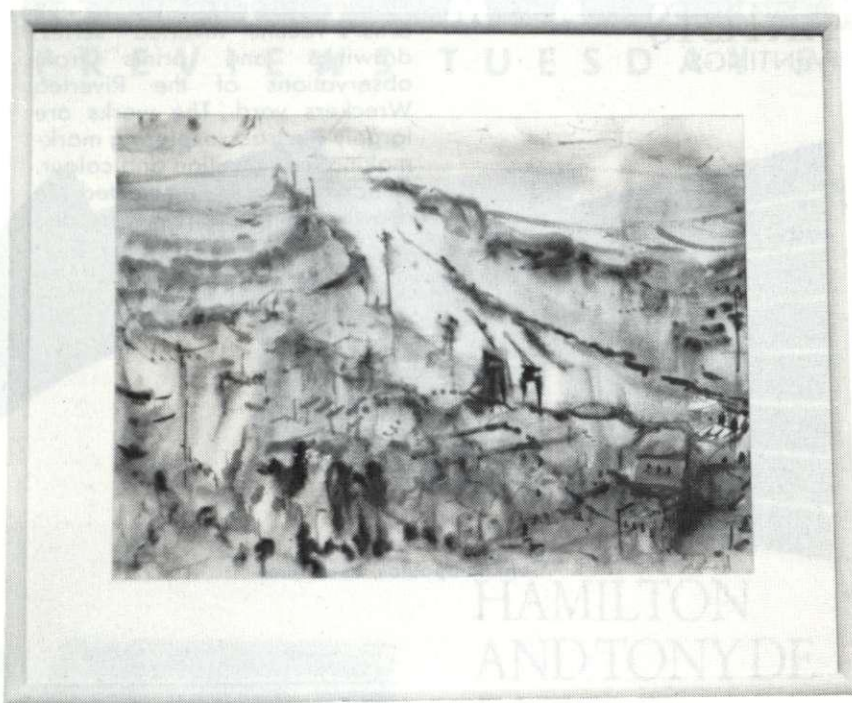
As part of its Touring Exhibition Programme, the Southern Regional Arts Council in association with ENZED Sewing Limited, Auckland is mounting a tour of fourteen prize winning quilts. Earlier in 1990 ENZED Sewing ran a nationwide quilting competition which attracted some 460 entries. Seventy-two were selected for judging and the top fourteen are now on tour throughout the country and will later tour Scandinavia and the United States.

Quilts on display





**2 0 - 3 1 M A R C H 1 9 9 1**  
**P R E V I E W S T U E S D A Y 1 9 M A R C H 8 P M**



Untitled, Watercolour, Mary Zohrab

## MARY ZOHRAB

### "CIRCUITS ROUND TWO ISLANDS"

#### PAINTINGS

This exhibition of watercolours and works on paper follows the artist's move from Christchurch to the North Island to live in a coastal area of Wellington. The works depict journeys around the two islands where the artist has had homes.

## SANDRA BUSHBY

#### PAINTINGS

## THE CITY, THE CSA

#### PAINTINGS

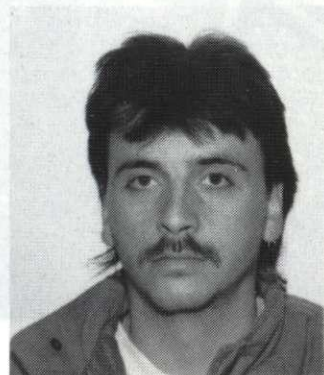
This year has seen the gallery working with architects on installations of artworks in new corporate high rise buildings and apartments. This exhibition comprises of works in a contemporary idiom and the show will be of special interest to architects and interior design professionals.

George Balogy  
 Con Dimopoulos  
 Neil Driver  
 Robert Ellis  
 John Hoby  
 Mary McIntyre  
 Paul Radford  
 Michael Reed  
 David Reid  
 Ian Scott  
 Peter Siddell  
 Eion Stevens  
 Elizabeth Stevens  
 Pamela Wolfe

## JOHN FLYNN

#### PAINTINGS

Making extensive use of an airbrush John Flynn's works concentrate on how colours are built up, react with each other and merge together. He paints abstract works in which clean lines contrast with the subtle effects of airbrushing.



John Flynn

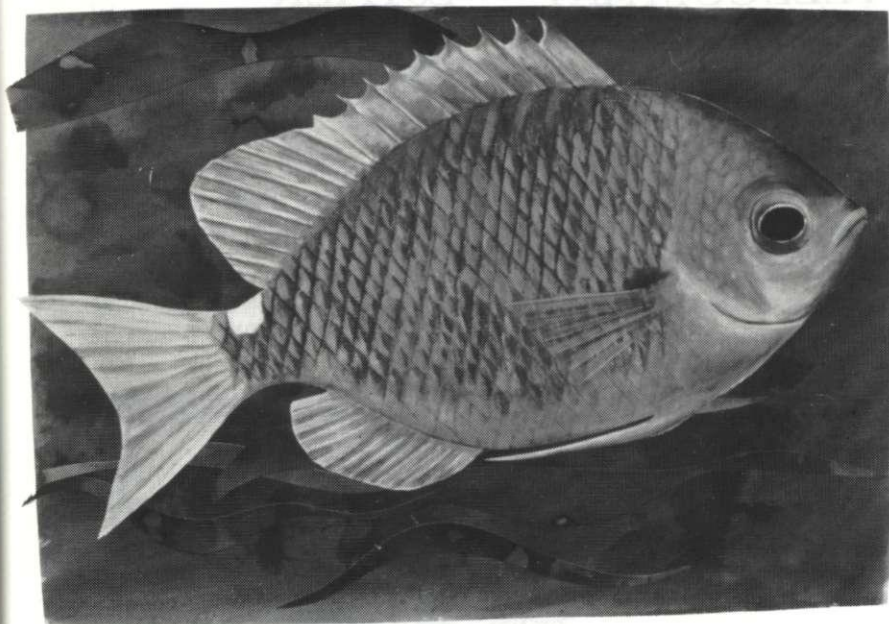
## POWELL GROUP

#### PAINTINGS

This show consists of works by a small group of women from varying professional backgrounds who have painted together for some years. They work in oil, acrylic and watercolour and bring to their subjects originality, colour and a feminine perspective.







Untitled, Painting, Andrew Gordon

## JUDY DUNKLEY

PAINTINGS

This show consists of works completed by Judy Dunkley over the last three years. Having been employed in England as a Botanical Illustrator, the artist's works display the size and working technique of plant studies. Built up in watercolour and pencil these paintings are concerned with the rhythms of organic forms and the growth of plant life in different environments, elements which have always held a prominent place in the artist's appreciation of the world.



## ANDREW GORDON

PAINTINGS

Andrew Gordon presents recent works illustrating his fascination with plant and animal life. As a child the artist kept eels in the washhouse sink, lizards in old fish tanks and frogs and tadpoles during the summer months. When his family moved to Thailand his interest was fueled further by the ready availability for purchase of anything from large live scorpions to a pitiful caged bear cub in the Bangkok markets. These works reflect a childhood vision of wonder at the infinite colours, forms and textures of the living things around us.

Untitled, Watercolour, Judy Dunkley

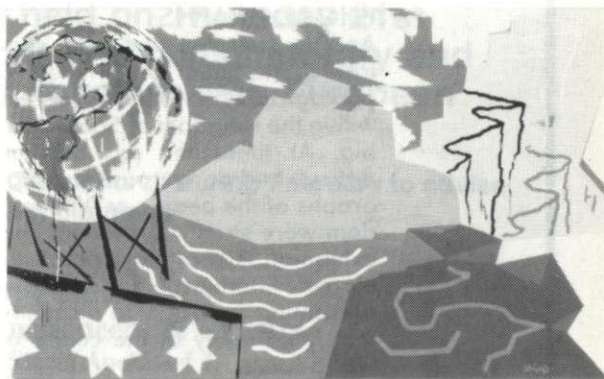
## ROGER GUISE

PAINTINGS

A casually scribbled sketch of a construction site which fifteen months ago was merely a distracting idea, has expanded to a point where the architectural image has become a motif, and graphic departure point for a variety of observations and ideas about the 'building' itself. The visual applications of the construction business in a cultural environment where the imposing perspectives of modern architecture have become a striking graphic icon for progress.

In 'On This Site' (pictured here), the architectural image dominates as the object of the BIG PROMISE, the grand claim of commerce. Working the idea that the glossy airbrushed "dream" apartment building depicted on construction speculators hoardings seem somehow to represent universal hopes of a better and improved world. A commercial deception similar to the model aircraft that never remotely resembles the artists impression on the box.

The work in my upcoming show at the C.S.A. continues working in and around this theme . . . applied meanings to what are intended to be paintings first and foremost, and resolved as individual graphic ideas.



'Resort' painting Roger Guise



24 APRIL - 5 MAY 1991  
PREVIEWS TUESDAY 23 APRIL 8 PM



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ANDREW  
JOHNSTON  
"IMAGES OF SAUDI  
ARABIA"  
PHOTOGRAPHS

Andrew Johnston was under contract to the Saudi Government to photograph the Western Progress within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. At times the job became difficult and dangerous as photographs of the people or the kingdom were strictly forbidden. This exhibition is a photo journalistic essay of Saudi Arabia, the images presenting an insight to a country that is currently at the centre of world focus.

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# TELECOM ART AWARD

Since October 1989 over 2000 New Zealand artists have entered the Telecom regional art awards, with winners having their work featured on the cover of their local telephone directory. The awards run progressively in each of the 18 regions covered by Telecom Directories. As each regional directory is replaced Telecom Directories organises a competition for local residents to compete for the cover design and a cash award of \$2,500. The CSA is hosting the awards in their second year and presents an exhibition of the finalists. Entry forms are available from the gallery.

# CSA AUTUMN EXHIBITION

MIXED MEDIA

The Annual Autumn Exhibition presents art works by working members of the CSA Gallery in a variety of media.

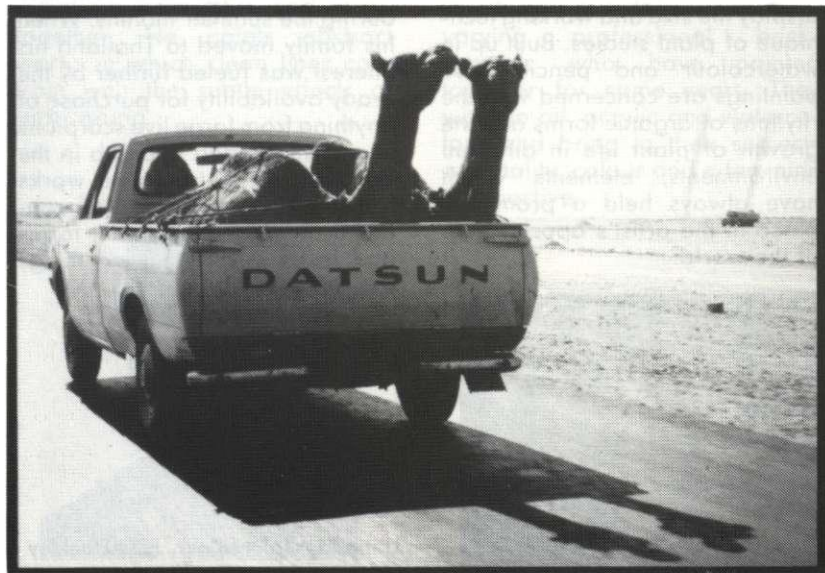
ESTHER  
ARCHDALL

## TAPESTRIES

The works in this exhibition span the years from 1982-1990. The ideas expressed come from visual sources, departing from the source to suit the design needs of the theme and techniques of tapestry weaving. The artist's interest lies in colour relationships, shapes, line and texture.



**"Libation" 1989, Tapestry, Esther Archdall**



**"Off to Market", photograph, Andrew Johnston**



## "ANYTHING GOES"

### TEXTILES OF THE JAZZ AGE

Warner's connection with the textile industry dates back to the late 17th century when William Warner worked as a scarlet dyer at Spitalfields in the East End of London. This connection carried on with various members of the family eventually branching into the weaving side, until a direct descendant, Benjamin Warner founded the present Warner company in 1870 as a specialised weaver in hand made silks. Warner to this day still deal in these fabrics, but they are made specifically for order. Over the years their contribution to design and the manufacture of furnishing fab-

rics, has become one of the United Kingdom's most unique furnishing houses. They broke into the printed fabrics in the early 1920's, and into wallcoverings some 10 years ago. Their total interior furnishing range is reputed to be one of the largest in the world. This exhibition of "Anything Goes" is a catalogue of designs produced for the Jazz Age. When after the First World War production was becoming limited in hand woven fabrics and the public as a whole were becoming far more interested in more modern designs, fashionable styles incorporated far more reaching colours with stylized and orientalised patterns, which led to the type of designs this exhibition shows." The whole of the Warner range is available to New Zealand through leading retailers.



## ART under the hammer..

The first important sale of 1991 is being held on Thursday 21st March. The catalogue comprises New Zealand contemporary and historical paintings, drawings and prints, together with European works of art.

Entries close Friday 22nd February. Peter Webb will visit Christchurch during February to advise on placing works in this sale. Phone, write or fax for an appointment.

# Webb's

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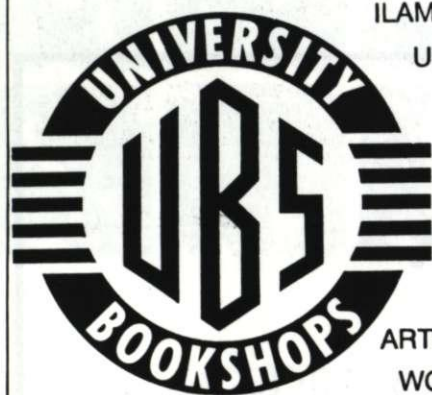




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Craig Hood  
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The Selling Gallery is situated on the ground floor, leading off the Canaday Gallery. If you wish to view or buy artwork from our extensive stock, talk to Rona Rose, our gallery consultant, or enquire at reception. Phone 667-261 for an appointment

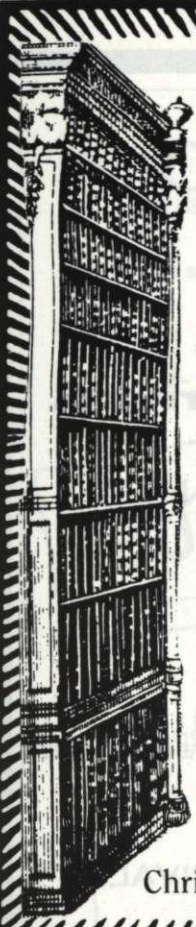


Robert McLeod,  
"Small Domestic  
Lanark No 10"

### Artists Represented by the CSA:

Elizabeth Buchanan  
Nigel Buxton  
Gordon Crook  
Melvin Day  
Eliza Donald  
John Drawbridge  
Ross Gray  
Sam Mahon  
Robert McLeod  
Simon Ogden  
John Papas  
Alan Pearson  
Michael Reed  
Ian Scott  
Barbara Strathdee  
Rob Taylor





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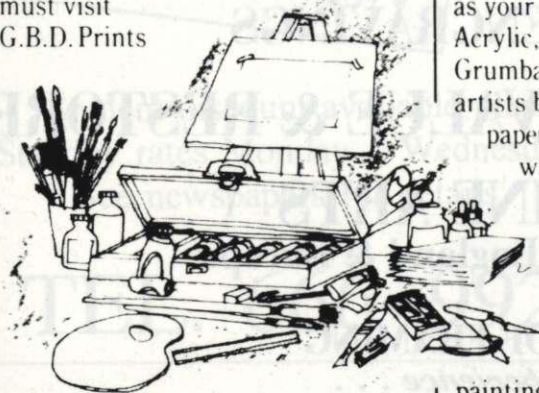
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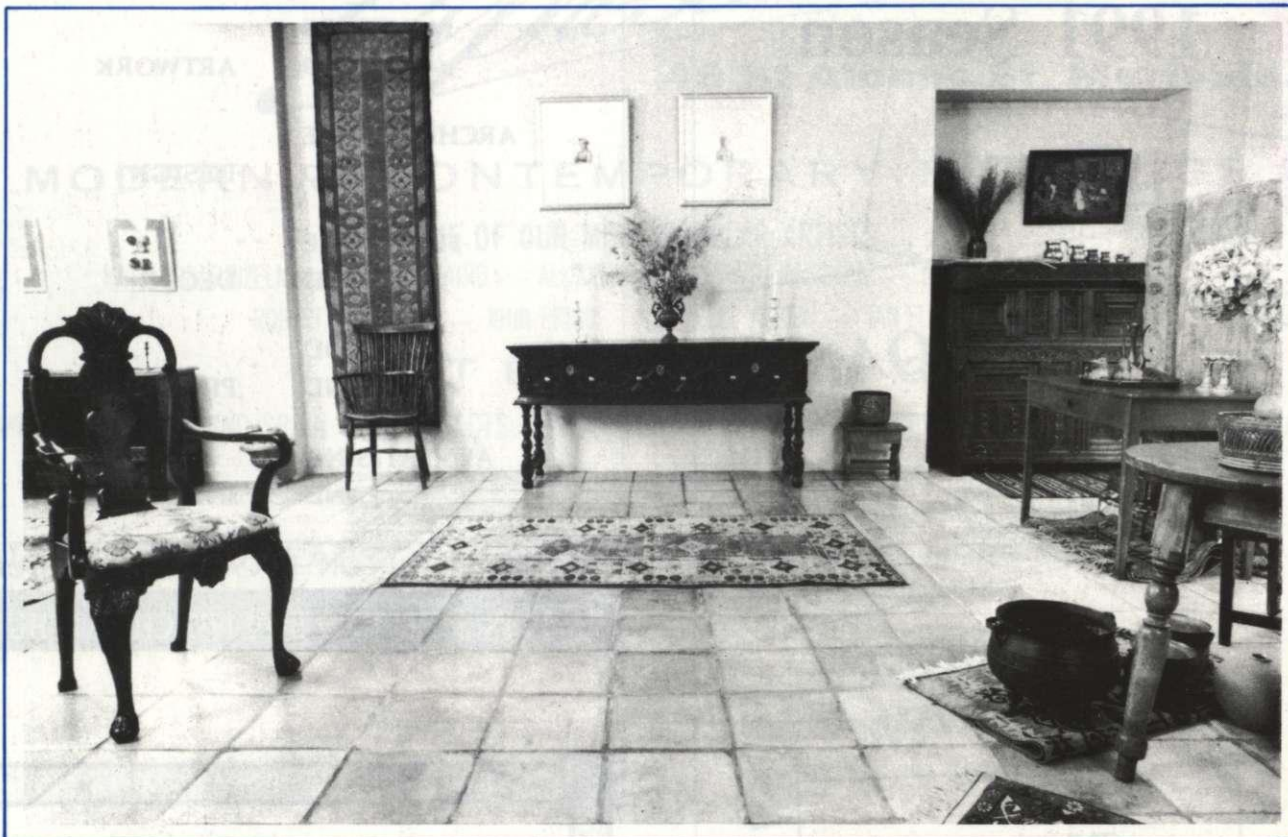
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