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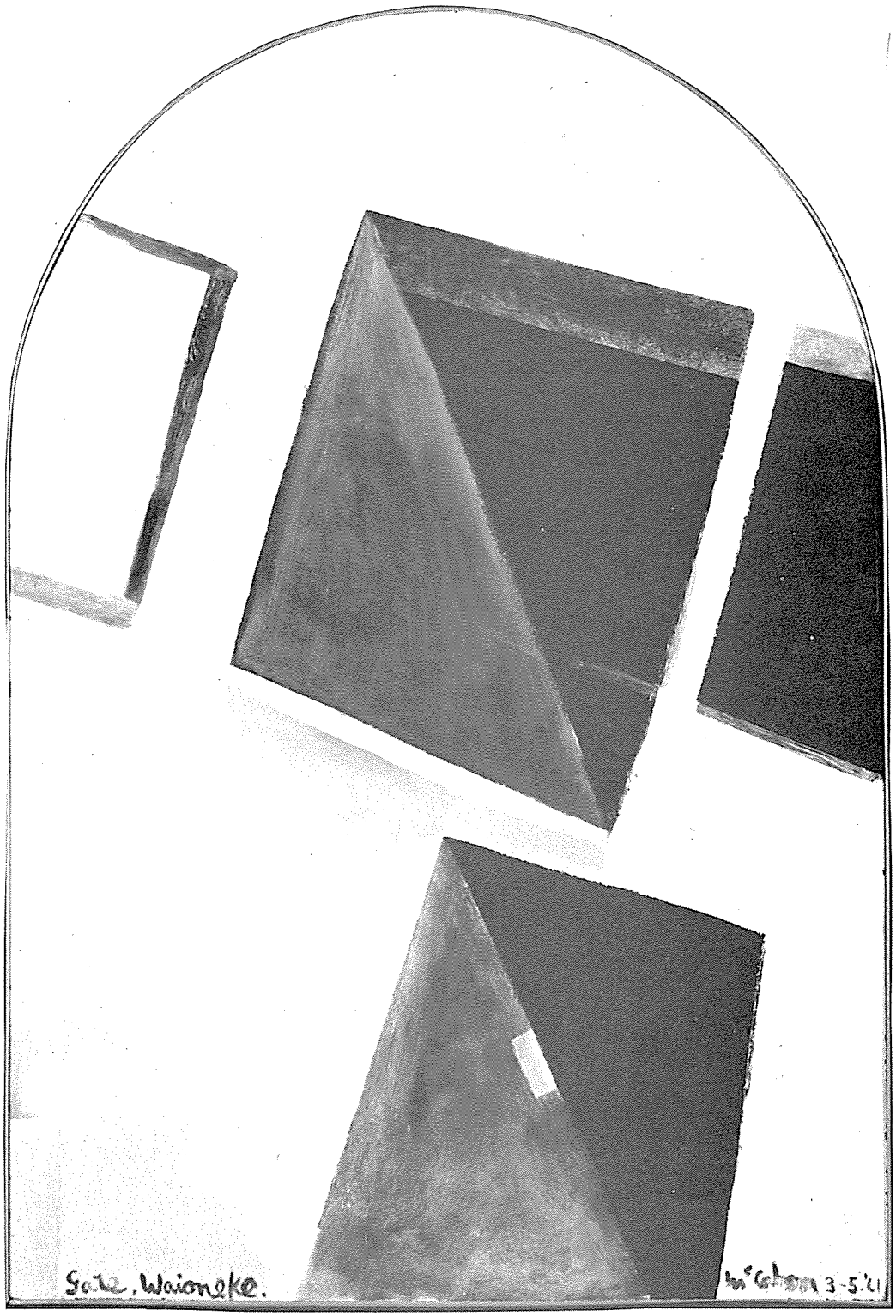

Quarterly of The Art Galleries & Museums Association of New Zealand

Cover illustration: Gate, Waioneke. Colin McCahon Dulux on panel 1961. Collection of the National Art Gallery.

AGMANZ JOURNAL

Contents

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In this issue

This issue of the Journal focuses on concerns about collections held in art museums and in soliciting articles from both curators and directors I posed the following questions:
(a) What is your institution's collection policy?
(b) Why are you collecting, for whom and what are the limits for art museums? Should there be limits, guidelines or maybe an overall cover so that collections are much more complementary? Is this a feasible proposition in a country the size of New Zealand?
(c) What use is made of the collections you hold and to whom do Art Museums have a responsibility?
(d) Are the collections sufficiently accessible?

The results represent a wide range of concerns and attitudes from a limited number of institutions (I was unable to include all submissions). The overwhelming one being a soul searching and tightening of policies with emphasis being put on a unique and individual stand to counter the wide undefined collecting that has been occurring in many institutions. It is good that we have become much more inward looking and specialised, however New Zealand is a small country and stimulus from outside an important factor (especially in the contemporary area) if we are to have something to measure and gage ourselves against.

I am pleased to be able to include a conversation on contemporary Maori Art which didn't come up in the December issue and also a number of philosophical papers on the nature of art and collection rationalisation.

I hope the contents of the Journal will provide further food for thought and discussion.

Jan Bieringa

Aspects of Collection Rationalisation

The following observations formed part of a paper presented to this year's AGMANZ Conference under the heading 'Rationalising of Art Gallery Collections'.

A public collection of any content should have a coherency and demonstrate a pattern of development. It should be readily identifiable, whether it be a regional or national entity. How does one go about achieving this ideal? Trained art historians and administrators are a relatively new phenomenon in New Zealand and they have by and large been faced with a body of works which appears 'ad hoc' and serving no particular set of rules.

Once a collections management policy is established and the staff of an institution has become thoroughly conversant with their charge then it is highly likely that the word 'deaccessioning' will begin rearing its ugly head. What does one do with twenty 19th century French fans when a decorative arts section seems far less a priority than representing the work of local artists seriously committed to their vocation?

In my opinion, it is too easy a solution to simply sell them off (if that were possible) or ignore the fact that they exist. There again, what does one do with those foxed sketches, countless number of them, by a now forgotten painter who once lived in the area. They take up precious space, they all need re-matting (not to mention restoration), they have never been properly catalogued — secretly you would like to burn them all!

Nevertheless, those sketches were donated in good faith and accepted for the collection fifty years ago. Perhaps there really is no aesthetic worth to them and possibly there is little of historical interest either. But let us not be too hasty. The value judgements that curators bring to their positions today can conflict markedly with their predecessors. To dismiss those aspects of the collection that we had no part in forming can be a gross arrogance.

Before taking that decision to 'deaccession' those sketches, should there be an attempt to judge them in another way? Could they be used as comparative material, or for educative purposes in explaining a certain technique and approach to subject? Are they really all that bad? Aside from these qualitative considerations, do we wish to risk losing potential donors by permanently removing (given that this was legally proper) works that originally came by way of gift?

One way round this dilemma, I suggest, is to judiciously separate works from the permanent collection into primary and secondary holdings. The primary component would be active, public demonstration of the art gallery's personality and role in the community, whereas the secondary component would serve as back-up study material or could well be of a difference character entirely to the other. Discreet handling of the secondary works would ensure that they need not impose their presence on the 'up-front' functioning of the institution. An example of how one body took advantage of a two-tiered system is the Victoria and Albert Museum. Until a few years ago it operated a travelling exhibition programme through the Circulation Department which distributed a variety of works around Britain's regional centres. These works were derived from an alternative collection (a secondary collection in essence) to the main holdings. In adopting this activity, the institution was seen to democratically serve its public on a broad basis.

Secondary works could also be utilised by government or city council departments (although ideally they should acquire collections for their own use). As tastes change and artists are re-evaluated, the

two-tiered system could prove in some instances to be interchangeable. For example, in the gallery's organisation of a thematic exhibition, certain secondary collection items might easily be called upon. To facilitate these instances, and to generally maintain high standards of professionalism, the same rigorous 'housekeeping' of all art works would need to be constantly in force and an up-to-date inventory kept. A system of appraising afresh the contents of both components of the collection should ideally occur regularly.

Tying in with a secondary collection is the possibility of exchanging material with other institutions. If those 19th century French fans do not fit into the overall concept of your gallery, they may very well suit an institution elsewhere in the country. Here, I venture to suggest that many of the pre-1880s New Zealand works at the National Art Gallery (William Swainson drawings for instance) would be much better served in the Alexander Turnbull Library. A movement of works to more meaningful situations is surely desirable and avoids the problem of duplication among collections. It is at the Turnbull that we expect to find Swainson drawings, not at the National Art Gallery. A policy of long-term loan should, I believe, be adopted far more readily than it currently is. Certainly, this sideways shift would stall the more drastic step of 'deaccessioning'.

There have been instances when removal of material from permanent collections abroad and in this country, through sale, has subsequently been regretted. Nowadays I believe we should acknowledge the value of individuals building up a collection over the years with strengths according to their own special field of knowledge. Those strengths should be honoured in retrospect and not dismissed by succeeding encumbants. For the question of an individual's 'taste' and area of expertise is variable, and institutions should constantly be aware of this. Even if those very early bequests to your gallery comprised 'indifferent' material chosen by a less discriminating eye we should remember that lesser quality objects, even forgeries or copies, can have merit as study material.

In this country, the emphasis in any collection must ideally reflect the New Zealand sensibility. For regional galleries it probably makes most sense to acquire the work of local artists as a priority just as at the National Art Gallery, the focus should be on a comprehensive coverage of New Zealand art (without however, invading the Turnbull's territory) around which other material is assembled. The gallery's international works should complement the New Zealand component and in doing so offer a broader experience of the visual arts, enabling viewers to see the national product in a world perspective.

How do we get past the feeling that only mid to late career artists may reliably be collected? The Australian National Gallery had until recently, an enterprising scheme called Art Current which provided first-hand experience of new art developments. Granted, only international material was involved, but the notion could equally be applied to local artists. Basically, Art Current allowed for the purchase of work by young artists which was retained by the institution for a set period and then reviewed. At this point the work was either formally accepted into the permanent collection, or it was offered to other institutions and possibly put on the market. Right from the start, both the artists and institution were aware of the terms regarding the acceptance of material. This policy allowed the Australian National Gallery to speculate much more than it would normally do and it avoided the issue of trying to 'deaccession' later on.

In summary, rationalising an art gallery collection, is about acquiring a thorough knowledge of existing holdings and those of other institutions. It is about endeavouring to present a coherent and readily identifiable presence to the users of your gallery. In doing so it might well adopt a two-tiered system for the collection. And it should demonstrate a flexibility that allows for change in keeping with the development of these times.

(I thank Margaret Taylor, who in the course of discussion, assisted with this paper.)

Anne Kirker
Curator of Prints and Drawings
National Art Gallery

Note: Deaccessioning

Auckland City Art Gallery has prepared an excellent paper on the rationale for deaccessioning and disposal of art works from their collections. This paper could well serve as a framework in part or entirety for institutions looking to implement such a policy. Both the policy and deaccessioning forms are available on request from the Auckland City Art Gallery.

The Arts and QEII

This issue of Agmanz which focuses on art museums and their collections, provides a useful opportunity to examine the Arts Council's relationship with public art galleries and art museums. While the historical basis of the relationship remains unchanged, the Council is developing more active partnerships with organisations and institutions in order to address areas of mutual concern and to achieve shared goals.

Historically, the Council's policy towards galleries and art museums has been to encourage and support the development of the profession; to assist galleries and art museums to make the visual arts accessible to New Zealanders; and to encourage an appreciation of the visual arts in order to contribute to the development of a climate within which they might flourish. This policy has been translated into a number of programmes designed to realise these broad goals. These include:-

- Major grants for study and training. The Council recognises the importance of training to those working within the profession and a number of grants have been approved over the years to directors, curators, education officers, art historians, and so on to undertake both long-term and short-term courses of study overseas. The newly established curatorial internship at the National Art Gallery will also provide important training opportunities for graduates pursuing a curatorial career. The internship is funded jointly by the Arts Council and the National Art Gallery.
- Ongoing support for the New Zealand Art Gallery Directors' Council through annual grants to assist with administration costs.
- The administration of an exhibitions budget to assist with the costs of mounting and touring exhibitions for the national circuit. Applications for exhibition grants are assessed by an exhibitions committee comprising two representatives of the Arts Council and the Chairman of the NZAGDC or his/her nominee. This allows the profession to be directly involved in the Council's decision-making process.
- The Gallery Purchases Subsidy Scheme. Under this scheme dollar for dollar subsidies up to a prescribed amount are available to public art galleries and art museums to assist with the purchase of major works of art by significant New Zealand artists. When the scheme was introduced, the Council hoped that the availability of funds, which must be matched by gallery funds,

would encourage local body funding authorities to increase the acquisitions budgets of their local art galleries. The scheme has been successful and the Council now finds itself in a position where the acquisitions budgets of most institutions far outstrip our ability to assist. Nevertheless, although the monies available to galleries under this scheme form a very small part of their total acquisitions budgets, galleries still find the scheme useful, particularly those who apply the funds to controversial works which might otherwise have a difficult path through City Councils.

While the Council remains committed to this range of programmes, we also believe that there is an urgent need to strengthen and extend the support structures available to practising artists. This focus on the needs of artists will be reflected in some of these programmes. For instance, last year an important change was approved to the Gallery Purchases Subsidy Scheme. The subsidies now apply only to works of art which are being sold for the first time by an artist or his/her dealer. This is to ensure that the funds benefit not only the galleries by assisting with purchases costs but also the artists by contributing directly to their incomes. Works purchased from auctions or private or public collections are no longer eligible for subsidies.

Perhaps the most significant recent development however has been the beginnings of a series of partnerships between the Arts Council and individual galleries which reflect a shared concern to address the problems faced by the visual arts community and a commitment to achieving a better deal for artists. Some examples of these partnerships include:-

- The introduction of an artist-in-residence programme. The Council sees the introduction of this programme as an important means of providing greater part-time and full-time work opportunities for artists which in the long term will contribute to the goal of reducing artists' financial dependency. The first residency is under way in Wellington in the Rita Angus Cottage and the second is under discussion with the Sarjeant Art Gallery in Wanganui. The partnership envisaged involves the Wanganui City Council and the Sarjeant setting up and maintaining a house and studio for visiting artists and a commitment from the Arts Council to providing major grants for the artists selected to take up the residency. The programme will benefit artists by providing them with employment opportunities for periods of up to 12 months, and it will also contribute to the long-term goal of integrating artists into the community.
- The Chelsea project. Under this project, which was developed by the Arts Council, five New Zealand photographers were commissioned for a fee of $3,000 each to produce a series of images for the New Zealand Sugar Company. With the co-operation of the Auckland City Art Gallery this project was later developed into an exhibition with an accompanying catalogue and poster. For the artists, the project provided a fee, a portfolio of images which they may sell, a full-colour catalogue documenting the project, and extensive promotion of their work through the catalogue and the exhibition.
- An international programme. The Council believes that there is a need to develop a structured international programme which will allow us to project New Zealand art into an international context and to bring exhibitions, artists, critics, and so on into New Zealand. This can only be achieved with the support and co-operation of public art galleries and art museums. Perhaps the best example of this kind of co-operative venture to date is the Colin McCahon exhibition *I Will Need Words* which was organised by the Arts Council and the National Art Gallery for the Fifth Biennale of Sydney. This exhibition has attracted significant critical attention both in Sydney and in the United Kingdom and it has done much to broaden perceptions of New Zealand art amongst our colleagues in Australia and further abroad.

The Arts Council believes it has a responsibility to act as an advocate for visual artists and that this responsibility includes encouraging public institutions to extend the role they can play as an important part of the support structure for visual artists. Our relationship with the profession is therefore likely to continue to develop as a partnership with those institutions who acknowledge the very real needs of artists and whose programmes reflect these concerns.

John McCormack
Visual Arts Advisory Officer
QEII

Thoughts Towards a Nationally Co-ordinated Collecting Policy

In this note I shall confine myself to discussing only collections of the visual arts, in public galleries and libraries. It would be useful to widen the discussion to include what may be called museum collections, but that would carry me beyond the time and space available.

By public galleries I mean those institutions that are in any form of public ownership, whether they are called galleries or museums, which have, as a matter of policy, collections of the visual arts which they seek to enlarge. The libraries I have in mind are principally the Alexander Turnbull and the Hocken though it is important to remember that others, such as the Auckland and Dunedin Public Libraries, have significant collections of visual arts material.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of our visual arts collections is that they are so numerous, and, generally speaking, so small. A visitor from Britain, the United States or even Australia, is likely to wonder why so few people have set up so many collections. In other places three million people might be served by one or two large collections. In New Zealand there are more than twenty collections in Public Galleries and Libraries. It is this numerousness that dictates the smallness of our institutions. We have no equivalent of the State collection in Victoria although that territory has a population about the same as our own.

But to wonder at this is to wonder at the nature of New Zealand life itself. We are a scattered population in a broken country. The history of Australia is that of a few large settlements in a large, uninhabited space. The history of New Zealand is that of a gaggle of small settlements divided by geography and regional loyalties.

It may be thought that New Zealand is changing because in recent years Auckland has emerged as a conurbation clearly on a greater scale than any of the others. But at the same time the number of collections has multiplied, not diminished, and so it must be supposed that our tendency to organise at the regional and community level, rather than the national, is intensifying.

It seems then that any consideration of national policy must take this fragmentation into account.

The next most striking characteristic of our collections is their relative lack of funds

available for collecting. The principal collection in Victoria will this year spend in excess of A$800,000 on acquisitions. If the funds spent by all the New Zealand collections were added together they would perhaps amount to half that sum. (The comparison becomes even more invidious when it is recalled that there are other collections in Victoria which are spending considerable sums and of course the Australian National Gallery is spending at a rate which dwarfs that of Melbourne's.)

There are several reasons why we spend less collecting the visual arts than the Australians (or the Americans or the British) but one of them is probably the numerousness and smallness of our institutions. In this matter a lot of little voices do not command the same respect as one big one.

The third outstanding characteristic of our collections is that despite their number and their tiny resources, they seem frequently to be in competition with each other. Almost every institution is collecting contemporary New Zealand art (the Turnbull is the principal exception) and there are very few fields in which only one of our institutions is active.

If prompted most Directors would probably cite a demand by the community or the ideal of educating the public as the reason why they collect contemporary New Zealand art. The cynical will add that this is one of the cheapest fields of endeavour open to us. No doubt all these things act upon us, and not unreasonably.

But what is unreasonable, or at least disorganised, is that with so few resources we have made virtually no attempt to co-ordinate what we do.

To co-ordinate the activities of all these institutions would be at least complex. In the absence of a self-restraining consensus it would be impossible. Because to establish a co-ordinated collecting policy would be to secure a general agreement among Directors to collect only in certain fields and more often than not in fields where no-one else was collecting. In short Directors would have to agree to give up collecting in fields in which they are now active, or would like to be active. While it might not be difficult to persuade Directors of the desirability of the general adoption of such a policy, persuading them individually to make the necessary sacrifices is likely to be very difficult.

Even so some points may be made concerning the adoption of a nationally co-ordinated policy.

Collecting policy is, or should be made within three general constraints:

1. The funds available.
2. The nature and extent (or absence) of any existing collections.
3. The desires and needs of the public the collection is designed to serve.

A nationally co-ordinated policy would have to consider:

1. To be the total of funds currently available for collecting in all the institutions. Perhaps about NZ$500,000 p.a.
2. To be the existing patchwork of collections around the country, some idea of which can be gained from a careful reading of Keith Thomson's *Art Galleries and Museums in New Zealand.* This may perhaps be crudely summarised as revealing: six major New Zealand collections; two significant and two lesser foreign collections; a number of lesser New Zealand collections; a number of minor foreign collections; and some highly specialised collections such as the Mediaeval holdings of the Auckland and Dunedin Public Libraries.
3. To be the desires and needs of the whole population of New Zealand. What these are is liable to be the subject of some discussion. In discussing the matter it should not be supposed that what the public desires its institutions to collect is what those institutions now collect. Nor should it be supposed that what needs to be collected for the public is what it now desires.

It seems to me that a policy made up with due regard to these constraints would probably embrace the following points:

a) That no more (and preferably) fewer than the present six large New Zealand collections should be built with comprehensive aims or even with the aim of being generally representative. That in those cities where there are two of these collections (Wellington and Dunedin) the scope of each should be reduced so that ultimately the two will together amount to a comprehensive New Zealand collection. It would be absurd to end up with two comprehensive collections in one place.

b) That most galleries will continue to collect contemporary New Zealand works but some kind of specialisation, either regional, or perhaps by medium or subject matter, should be agreed upon so that we don't end up with twenty minor New Zealand collections that are all more or less alike.

c) That in collecting foreign works every effort be made to concentrate resources and avoid duplication. Considered together, the collections throughout the country might be taken as a base for building the kind of foreign collection there is at Melbourne. (Our development has probably gone too far to permit consideration of the kind of collection envisaged by the A.N.G.) The most obvious approach is to divide the field into different nationalities and periods and then allocate these on the basis of existing collections and funds available.

But this is more easily said than done. We can perhaps agree that the field of mediaeval painting should be left to the Auckland and Dunedin Public Libraries (though that is one too many) as the four metropolitan galleries have far lesser holdings of that sort. But the Auckland and Dunedin Galleries have substantial holdings in many of the same fields. The National Art Gallery and the Robert McDougall also have holdings in some of those areas and so who is going to give up collecting what?

Consensus about these things would not be easily reached. But if the galleries and libraries were able to put together a National policy it would then be possible to go to the government with a case for additional funding that would have some moral authority. We would not be asking for funds to spend competing with each other. We would be asking for them to assist in building a carefully crafted National resource.

The failure in other countries of attempts to produce a nationally co-ordinated collecting policy does not augur well for us in our fragmented condition. This note is intended to sound opinion on the subject but the writer will not be unduly offended if other members regard it principally as the expression of a pious hope.

Peter Entwisle
Deputy Director
Dunedin Public Art Gallery

Contemporary Maori Art

During the Easter weekend I went to the Tangihanga for my sister in law. It was in this house of my own people that I met my oldest friend Rautama. I had been asked to write an article on contemporary Maori art and had found the process of defining and refining Maori art to be as elusive as the wind. Perhaps definition is after all something that belongs to the pakeha world rather than Maoridom.

As I glanced intently at the beautifully carved poupou, I caught the flickering image of Rautama as he passed between the poupou and I, with a welcoming smile of instant friendly recognition.

He walked over, grabbed my hand and as our foreheads touched in our traditional greeting, I was reminded of his mother and father who had brought me up as a child. How I was born the week after his father's best friend had died and given that name.

Well brother, good to see you again he said, we'll have another long korero just so I can make sure you haven't forgotten too much in that pakeha world.

I explained to him that I had been given this task to write something on contemporary Maori art. I had known him longer than any of the other artists working in a modern style. I had followed his work very closely and wondered if he would let me interview him.

Darcy: Rautama, can I interview you on your art?

Rautama: Well, I don't know brother, some of my ideas might be a bit strange. Who are you going to show this to?

Darcy: Gallery and Museum people as well as others involved in the arts.

Rautama: Come for a walk first, I want us to go up to the urupa where our parents are buried.

We returned close on two hours later and he then agreed to do the interview.

Darcy: You have been painting and drawing now for as long as I have known you. You only started carving about eight years ago. Are you a Maori artist, do you see this as a fair description of yourself?

Rautama: For the sake of making things easy for our pakeha friends, you can call me a Maori artist. It is a bit like telling them though that the sun is a round ball in the sky. There is an element of truth but the reality is far more complex.

Darcy: Can you expand on this?

Rautama: Yes, to be a Maori is to feel the wind and fill your lungs and heart with it, you look out across our ancestral land and for hundreds and hundreds of years, this land has fed us, clothed us, comforted us and acted as our final resting place. There used to be special trees, rocks, pa sites that acted as history books, guiding lights, and spiritual resources for us. The land here in Taranaki has been decimated by the pakeha. To be Maori is to see the land as the blood and dust of our ancestors, it is to feel the pulse of it and to feel that you are in harmony with it. It is this and many more things.

Darcy: Well the land is always a subject of great confusion with the pakeha, especially when we speak in terms of "productivity". I know you have a special love for it as it is always central to your paintings and carvings. Do you think a lot of the land is wasted by us?

Rautama: No! As I said the land sustained us for hundreds and hundreds of years. The trees and dense bush has been a storehouse for our people. All the small bird and plant life, small eel streams, everything was there, you need only to have walked out and got your food. The sea was another place, a valuable storehouse of food. I feel angry when I think of it all. The first thing the settlers did was to destroy the bush, they destroyed the animal life and then took the land. Now they pollute all our seafood. The land like all these big businesses belong to just a small number of people. It cannot feed most of our people who have drifted to the city for work.

Darcy: How does this affect your work?

Rautama: Well, you have to look at what our people think of themselves. They see themselves as landless, cultureless, a people with a very unworthy background. They run to the churches for salvation, they get into gangs, they laugh at themselves and act like they are stupid. You and I know that our people are not stupid, they are trying to find an answer, they have put themselves in this prison because they don't question the pakeha, they think the pakeha will provide the answer but they are wrong.

Darcy: Yes, but how does this affect your work?

Rautama: Well my work is a reflection of my sense of belonging to the land and the people. I want to tell my people that they also belong. My work speaks only to them. I like to show it wherever our people gather. I like speaking to our young people.

Darcy: How do they accept your work?

Rautama: Well, some are completely confused because their vision is clouded by Christianity. I don't know if we can help them.

Darcy: Is Christianity such a bad thing?

Rautama: No! I think the basic idea of Christianity is very good. However, I don't think most Christians or a very high number of priests even understand their religions. The Christians preach that Jesus was the Son of God. The Maori concept is that people are at one with nature.

Christians are obsessed with worshipping this blue-eyed fair man called Jesus. I think man created their god in their own image. It has worked badly for our people because all the things we believed in were cast aside and made our people into glossy-eyed puppets.

Darcy: That's a bit strong.

Rautama: Well you might be right. But in my heart, the arrogance of the missionaries hurts. What sort of people distracted us from the beauty of living in harmony with nature.

Darcy: I know all these points are important in helping to understand where your art comes from. Let's discuss contemporary Maori art. What to you are traditional symbols and do they ever appear in your art forms?

Rautama: The mere creation of a work of art places it in the realm of tradition. Tradition is the step just taken.

Darcy: How then does contemporary Maori art differ from contemporary pakeha art?

Rautama: Well, to start with the word Contemporary Maori Art really has no particular meaning for me. Our art, as always, has relevance to what is happening to our Maori people today. We have been really 'hacked about' but there is an exciting phase developing amongst some of our artists. All they need now is some sort of encouragement.

Darcy: What do you mean by some sort of encouragement?

Rautama: We are a race of warriors. We need a challenge, a mountain to climb. We have to do the fighting for ourselves. For too long we keep asking for handouts and put ourselves in a subordinate position all the time. We spend too much time fighting amongst ourselves, trying to get the upper hand. We need a common goal.

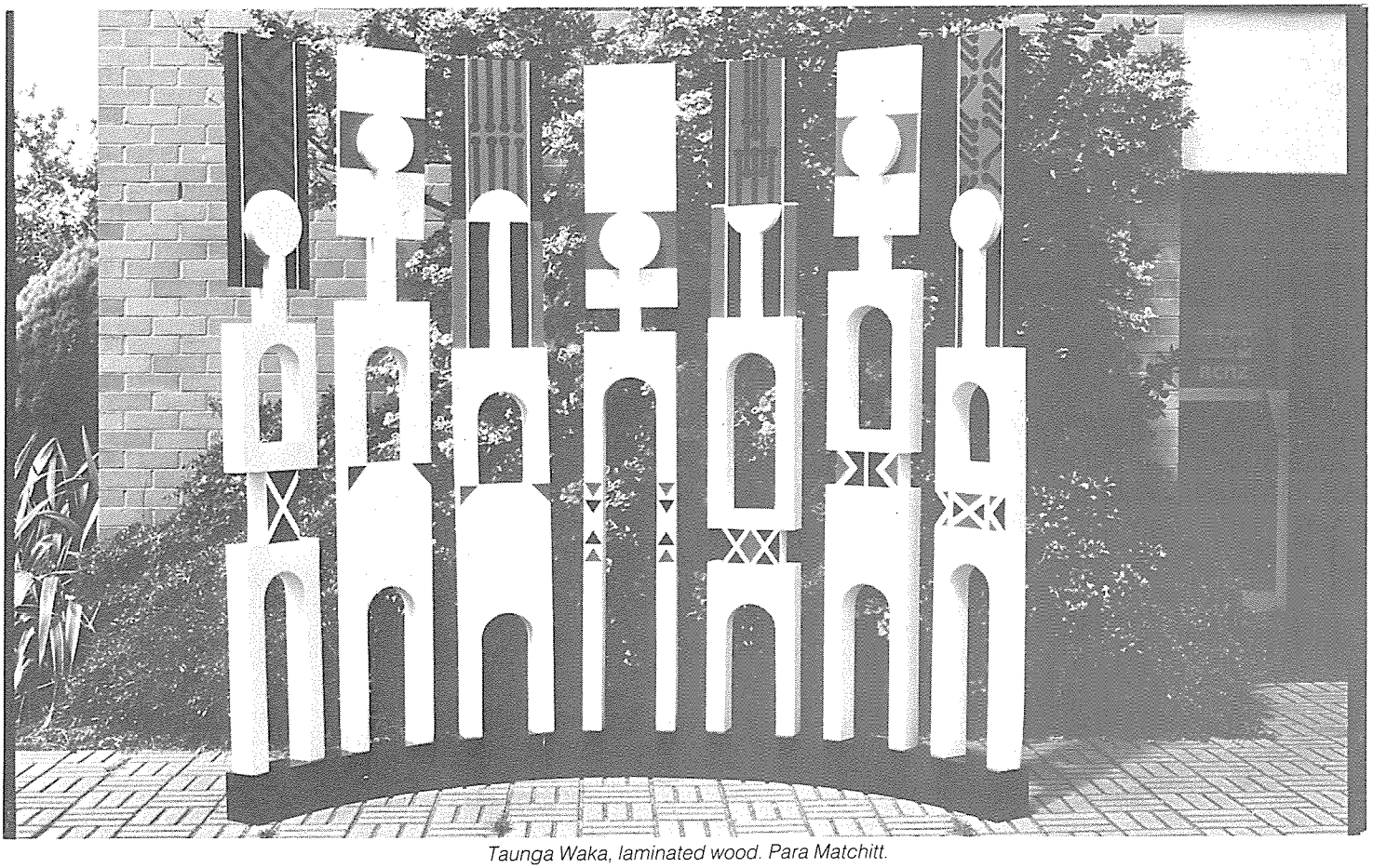
Darcy: Well could you think of one.

Rautama: Just off my head, how about using our art to uplift our people.

Darcy: Give me examples.

Rautama: We need to get organised and promote our own art to our own people. Look at our music, our dance, our carving, painting, weaving. Apply it to our culture and make it available to our people. Send some of our people overseas to broaden their vision. Overseas travel lets you know of your own uniqueness. Let those people come back and teach the young and the old. Let us find ourselves again and work

Pallisade wooden poles and painted found objects. Selwyn Muru.



Taunga Waka, laminated wood. Para Matchitt.

from there. We should feel good about ourselves.
Darcy: Hasn't this been done by artists like Kiri Te Kanawa.
Rautama: Well, yes but I think she has gone so far sideways, she has become highly adept at pakeha things. I find it hard to relate to her success in the pakeha world.

I think people like Pine and Jone Taiapa and in more recent years, the work of Cliff Whiting and Para Matchitt has a vast impact on making people feel good about being Maori.
Darcy: Well, what about Te Maori?
Rautama: Te Maori showed people here what you and I have known for years. It has taken this long for pakeha people to see the uniqueness of our culture. Unfortunately it will probably take just as long for them to realise the value of work by people like Cliff and Para, Fred Graham, Pine and John Taiapa, and many of our artists who have been working in the last fifty years.
Darcy: With the upsurge in pakeha people carving, many people would say that people like Owen Mapp, Norman Clark, and Don Salt can carve as well as Maori carvers.
Rautama: One day Androids may replace humans. Their work reminds me of that, it is pretty and precise. I like to see work by people that reflects their personality, their intellect, their cultural heritage. Look at the work of Selwyn Muru, aggressive, emotional, warts and all. It gives us an impression of how the Maori mind works today.

The real value of Maori art today will tell you how Maori people are thinking, how they feel about themselves, their people, their environment, their culture.
Darcy: I want to try and raise points made by pakeha friends. Is Maori art today just part and parcel of New Zealand art?
Rautama: No! What they see as New Zealand art has a reference point starting from Britain and stretching out through America and Europe. It has a reference point beginning in foreign lands amidst foreign cultures.

Some of our artists have tried following the pakeha road as it is still a fascinating one. But let's not fool ourselves, it has a different reference point. If our artists want to do it, it is their choice. In the final analysis, it is still a reflection on where Maori people are today.
Darcy: Are you saying that we need to convince pakeha people that our art is different?
Rautama: No you don't need to convince the pakeha people of anything. Like I said before, we need to educate our own people, we need to build galleries and break through our own boundaries. We need our own art schools and to work from our own base. If anyone is capable of breaking into the International art arena, it is our people. Take this as a serious statement because it is true.
Darcy: Do you think we should become part of the International art arena? I mean can you put a price on our art?
Rautama: No you can't put a price on our art. I'm not sure whether we can keep our art off the International arena after Te Maori. In many ways we are caught in a swift current and don't know where it's headed.
Darcy: Fast currents can lead to waterfalls.
Rautama: I know, but they can also lead to the sea and other horizons. We are a seagoing people. We don't send the whole tribe but we should send some of our most experienced and seasoned warriors to scout out the new horizons.
Darcy: Others have done this and I have to return to the field of music with Kiri and Inia Te Wiata. There have been others in the field of light entertainment like Dalvanius.
Rautama: When you look at people like Kiri and Inia they did break new ground and show our people that they could attain the highest levels of Opera in the pakeha world. That still does not make our people feel good about themselves. It makes them feel good about Kiri and Inia.

What Dalvanius is doing is very good but it is still a single step in a marathon. In the final analysis it all boils down to how the art makes us feel about ourselves.
Darcy: Some people would say that museums provide our people with the inspiration they need.
Rautama: Museums provide museum people with what they need. They need to feel good about their collection, they need to feel good about their knowledge, they need to feel good about their cataloguing, restoration, and preservation of the severed limbs of our culture. It really has nothing to do with the Maori people apart from using them as a vehicle for their own pleasure. Museum people need to go out hui, spend time around them and talk to our people. Not just large gatherings but also small ones. They should return carvings to their own people if not permanently at least from time to time.
Darcy: How do you find the New Zealand art galleries?
Rautama: Well, they fell in love with the British, then the French, then the Americans and at times the Dutch and the Spanish. At other times, the whole lot at once. What should I think of the galleries? Now they want to take control of our carvings. They also want to use them as a vehicle for their own pleasure and status. It really has nothing to do with our people.
Darcy: What do you think of the pakeha?
Rautama: There is good and bad in all walks of life. When it boils down to the common denominator, we are speaking of people in power whether it be pakeha, Maori, Japanese, French, Russian, Chinese. Power can corrupt people who don't know how to handle it. Take public servants for example, they do their best to obstruct you but if you have power and influence they do their best to help you. If they saw themselves as helping people then the smaller people wouldn't have so much stress in their lives.

All races have been guilty of extreme cruelty. Our people are certainly no exception. But we live in a country where there is potential for so much richness.
Darcy: Well, we could speak on a whole range of things but time is short. What do you suggest?
Rautama: I don't know. What is 'short time'?
Darcy: Well, I think our nephews have dug the hole. We should go back to the Tangi. It has been good talking to you. Can I show you something I have written and would like to include in the article with your permission.

Thoughts

These thoughts remind me of my mother and father
— for they are my earth and sky,
They remind me of those who have passed before me
— for they are the stars of my darkness
They remind me of my family
— for they are the sun they warm my heart and soul
They remind me of our sister Sylvia Nicholas
— who left us on the morning star 4 April 1985

Rautama: There is a centre
The sacred tree is alive and well

Darcy Nicholas
Director, Wellington Arts Centre

Comment
This interview with Rautama was at his ancestral meeting house, his family Urupa and his family house. Rautama is described by Darcy Nicholas as his Taiaha, that timeles element, that parallel spirit that all Maori people have in the world of today.
Darcy Nicholas is a Maori artist and Director of the Wellington Arts Centre. In 1984 he was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study Contemporary Native American and Afro American Art.
The photos are by Kees Sprengers and were selected by The Editor.

A Provincial Response to Art Museum Collecting

I consider it a very appropriate time for a major re-evaluation of the collecting policies of New Zealand art museums, so I will attempt to outline the policies, observations and strategies I have been involved with at the Sarjeant Gallery.

A brief outline of our Acquisitions Policy categories:

1. **New Zealand Collection:** developing a collection of New Zealand Art in all mediums, excluding applied arts, by artists who have contributed to the development of New Zealand art in the widest sense.
2. **Wanganui Regional Collection:** A subcategory of the N.Z. Collection shall be directed;

a) A collection of art in all mediums including applied arts, representative of the best work produced by artists who work in the Wanganui Region.

b) Work by Edith Marion Collier

3. **A Collection of Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century International Art:** A secondary collecting category shall be directed to the general collection of art in all mediums, including Applied Arts, covering a period 1800–1940 with special emphasis placed on British taste of that period.

This policy has in many ways been the backbone of the Gallery's management, and it allows us to examine the strengths, and develop short and medium term strategies to develop the collection in these categories. For example, during the late 70's we filled gaps in the earlier N.Z. Collection and started to look at a few contemporary artists. More recently, we have looked at regional artists, and firmed up on several contemporary artists, with particular emphasis on Philip Trusttum due to his having been born in the Region.

The collecting strategy of any given period in our institution's history generally reflects the attitudes of the time, and currently re-assessment of previous systems and attitudes is taking place in all aspects of New Zealand life.

Our institution houses a collection that typically illustrates a country coming to terms with itself i.e. late 19th C early 20th C; reinforcing the ties with Mother England; the 1920's and 30's; attempts at Nationalism; the struggle with Internationalism of the 50's to 70's, and now an emerging respect for a unique or individual stance.

More institutions are refining their policies so that strengths that exist within their collections — and new directions, can be more positively developed to enable them to take up a unique position rather than just housing an above, below or average generalised collection of N.Z. Art.

I see value in encouraging this process of developing the uniqueness of collections within our institutions, to the point where I would strongly support the allocation of increased funds from Central Government, to assist the process of building on strengths in collections, as well as encouraging reciprocal exchange or permanent loan, between institutions, of material more appropriate to such collections.

However, any such development should offer support rather than impose direction. It also opens up the opportunity for specialist collecting in areas that to date many institutions have not come to terms with i.e. applied arts, contemporary Maori art, studio ceramics etc.

At the same time as examining acquisitions policies, and the possibilities of developing specialist strengths, it is useful to examine the rationale for collecting and whom do the collections serve.

The more usually quoted reasons, such as developing an archive of art achievement for now and the future, providing informed and high quality art experience for our public, and a study resource, generally overshadow the significance of the acquisition of artworks by public institutions to the creators of the works — the Artists.

To have a work acquired by an institution that has a reputation for its strong collection in a given area, provides meaningful creditation, that could increase opportunities, and growth of position for the artist. Equally, a sound purchase of a leading or exciting new artist provides the institution with strengthened credentials that can be projected to the public.

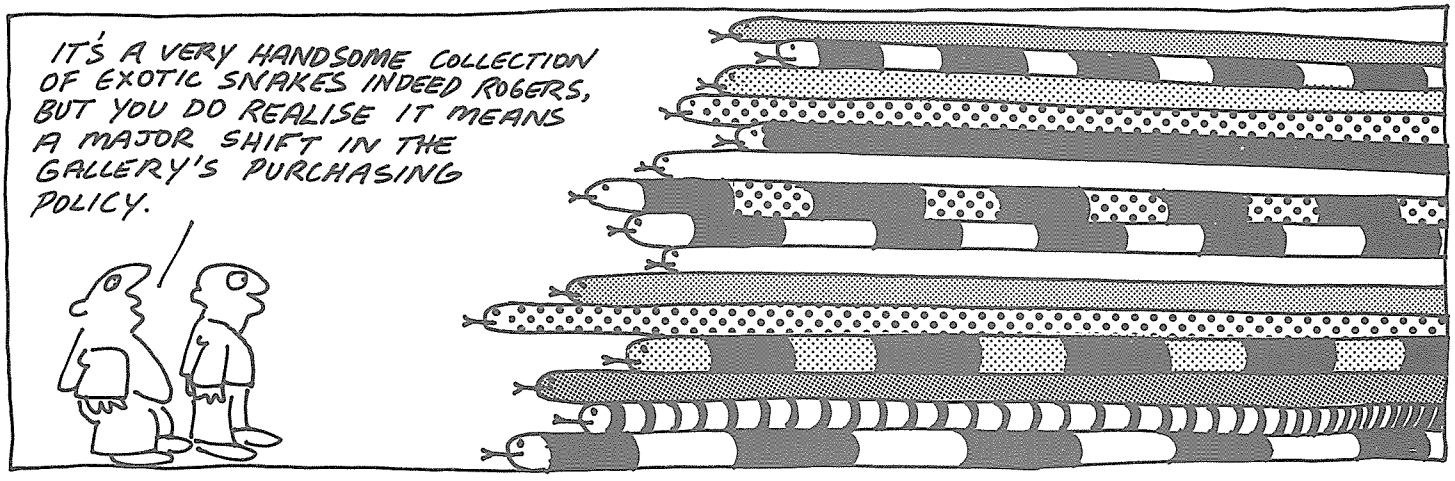
This institution/artist relationship is invaluable in developing strengths, and depths in collections, and I see it as an integral part of any acquisitions policy strategy.

Naturally, the collections serve a local, as well as a broader public, and in local government institutions it is this group of people to whom the collections formally belong. This building of collection strengths that recognise regional achievement and provide direct contact with the artists help build a local pride and support, as well as offering a unique experience for the travelling public. The collections therefore serve as an important promotional function, not only for the institution itself, but for the community as a whole.

As strategies to strengthen the collection are developed, then it is expected that a greater use of them, in an exhibition sense, will occur. Currently the touring exhibition programme is occupying a greater proportion of exhibiting space than is often justified, and a re-structuring of that programme to fewer and more clearly focussed exhibitions would free space for greater use and impact, to be made use of by our collections.

Already much has been achieved with improvements to the storage and registration of collections, and with more space given to the collections, the promotion and projection of our holdings can become more directly focussed.

Bill Milbank
Director, Sarjeant Gallery



Installation of Colin McCahon at Manawatu Art Gallery.

Manawatu Art Gallery

Every collection worthy of the name is to a certain extent a work of art in itself, revealing qualities of proportion and harmony which spring from a controlled idea. Unlike a magpie's hoard, a true collection manifests a sense of design.

In order to achieve this continuity of intention each governing body should publish a written statement of its acquisition policy. This is one of the most important documents or statements of intention that the staff have to understand in order to function properly. This pertains to *all* staff, not just curators or directors. All staff are communicating to the public so must be able to explain the reasoning behind their collection policy. The encouraging of gifts and donations and the searching out of suitable material can be spread wide if understood by everyone.

Hand in hand with knowing the strengths and weaknesses of one's own collection is the need to know other collections and their intentions and the need to communicate with one's colleagues in other institutions. Rivalry does, but should not occur in 'chasing' acquisitions and when material is found to be more significant to another collection than our own — then this should be passed on.

The policy of non-encroachment is one to be encouraged especially in a country of our size.

The acquisition policy of the Manawatu Art Gallery is to establish a representative New Zealand art collection from the 1890's to the present day with particular emphasis upon the last 30 years — it embraces all media. Much of its intention is understood rather than written. It allows the gift of work outside this stated area of collection should it be considered relevant by the Director and Council of the gallery. I find this broadly defined policy extremely workable and non-restrictive.

Many institutions in this country and in Australia have been established for a number of years and therefore have extensive collections — many of these were accumulated before the advent of professional staff and before even a policy was formulated.

Although such collections may contain some objects of little significance to our present view — I personally have had difficulty in accepting the too easy solution of de-accessioning. I should hesitate very much in imposing my taste and judgement on a collection formed by my predecessors. I am very aware of the healthy differences in people's expertise and recognise the interesting bias of succeeding directors.

However I am also very aware of the difficulties arising from this policy when we all seem to suffer from lack of adequate

storage space.

As the size of exhibits over the last fifteen years have increased so drastically — so the demand for proper storage is embarrassing many institutions.

Certainly in the small gallery we have many restrictions on our collecting — not only that of space and money but also time and pressure of work on a small staff.

My visits to Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch are once yearly — if time and budget allow. It is always difficult to restrain one's greed for acquisition and so perhaps the restriction in funding has its compensations. It makes one immensely critical of the qualities and appropriateness of each object. There can be no compromise in standard.

To assist in the regular re-assessment of the collection — it is of prime importance to compile and publish a checklist — if not a catalogue of your collections. It is your most valuable working document — it shows you your strengths and weaknesses and as importantly it shows others your areas of specialisation and will help to prevent unnecessary duplication of material.

Already through exhibition loan, material is travelling between institutions — which diminishes the demand for duplication. The benefits of exchange of material for the purpose of exhibition are enormous. Such exchange would be greatly facilitated by the establishment of a national register or catalogue. Our registrars, in compiling a national manual of registration have already begun this exercise.

As the main function of an art gallery is in the area of education, the collection is geared towards the needs of the community. It has to take note of the local needs, that is of schools, colleges, of craft guilds and individual craftsmen. Much of the resource material required by these groups must be furnished by the gallery if it is to properly fulfil its role. Where the permanent collection cannot satisfy demand then the exhibition programme must supplement.

There is a whole new area of collection which is necessary to extend the experience of the visitor. It can be described as the 'study' collection and consists of the support material, the explanatory photographs, sketch books, blocks, plates, letters, tapes, all of which can illuminate a specific subject or person.

My present preoccupation at the Manawatu Art Gallery is the extending of certain areas of collection by finding significant works on paper, constructions, photographs, working drawings which will 'round out' the existing collection. By acquiring such supplementary works which are all of the highest standard — we are able to assemble significant small exhibitions of such artists as McCahon, Woollaston, Walters, Trusttum, Stringer, Peebles, Clairmont, Hotere and others. These become the teaching exhibitions which are needed by local students and public alike. The works can now cover a wide period, a wide variety of media and stand as positive statements by the artist.

I must and always will argue the idea that a major work of art can be on a small piece of paper — it does not by definition mean the costly completed canvas or bronze.

Unhappily there are many physical restrictions on making the permanent collection accessible to the public, conservation requirements and staff supervision inhibit it. Also the collection has to be exhibited not arbitrarily but coherently for its proper educational function. I remember with great nostalgia the rooms and glass cabinets at the Victoria and Albert which displayed acres of ceramics, glass and precious metals for the enlightenment of the craftsman and student. Perhaps the new museums could store their 'safe' material in such a way that the public could have access to it. I do not think it feasible in the area of painting and sculpture, prints and drawings.

The aim of public museums and their collections is the pleasure and edification of the public. Large museums are increasing the number of their departments, each concerned with a different subject and staffed by experts, who in turn are often specialists in a particular branch. Smaller museums encourage their staff to concentrate on some special field, and often deliberately limit the range of their acquisitions.

This specialisation is largely the result of the museum becoming increasingly regarded as an integral part of the educational system of a country. Acquisitions reflect this concern for specialisation — it does not encourage the thin spread — the one work by a number of artists, rather it persuades one to acquire a series of works by a limited number of artists. Be happy to borrow to supplement your collection. Do not think it necessary to compete for ownership.

Margaret Taylor
Director, Manawatu Art Gallery

The Dowse Art Museum

A written acquisition policy for the Dowse Art Museum is currently in the pipeline. The Board of Management of the Dowse Art Museum have agreed that it is necessary to put together a collection that has a unique edge, a collection that does not just clone that done by other similar institutions. Like all institutions, the Dowse Art Museum has restricted purchasing power and for that reason it has been decided to give priority to artists who produce art works that some people would define as craft. In simple terms therefore the collection is about the fine and applied arts.

Apart from collecting New Zealand artists where possible the work of artists who have visited New Zealand, taught here and spread their influence will also be considered. It is also intended that artists chosen to be represented in the collection be represented by several pieces of their work so that the viewing public can more readily see the scope of their artistic prowess.

Budget limitations mean that it is difficult to buy major historical works and a submission is before the Dowse Art Museum Management Board to consider setting aside seven and a half thousand dollars a year which will accumulate so that if and when a major historical work becomes available there is a pool of money there that can be used.

On the recommendation of the Director the Management Board have also agreed to a fiscal commitment to the art of glass in New Zealand for the next 3 years. Both historic and contemporary hot and flat glass are being purchased. At the end of the 3-year period it is possible that another craft area will be given considered attention.

Given that the Dowse Art Museum is a regional museum the parochial edge of the collection is important but works from local artists will only enter the collection judged against national standards.

There has been a moratorium placed on the purchase of paintings but consideration will be given to purchasing paintings that are considered exceptional or which are particularly relevant to the Dowse Art Museum collections. There is a policy of purchasing graphic materials related to the collection in its entirety and an ongoing commitment to building up the gallery's photographic collection for which there is a small bequest devoted entirely to the purchase of photography.

It is believed there is a given responsi-

bility not to collect exactly the same works as those being collected by the National Art Gallery.

It is intended that the policy document to be presented to the Dowse Art Museum Management Board pays particular attention to a reasoned de-accessioning programme and that it also gives serious consideration to borrowing works to substantiate those already in the collection.

It is believed that the policy should name names and even though that list will not be finite it will give serious consideration to making in depth study of a group of artists in the following areas:- ceramics, glass, weaving, fabric, wood, jewellery, sculpture and photography.

It is important to put together a collection which has unique strengths and differences.

Use of the Collections

The ceramics collection is in study/storage and is accessible to anybody who gives us some notice of their intention to see it. Paintings other than those works on paper are also reasonably accessible. We are undertaking major work on the works of art on paper collection which we are sorting out and plan to refurbish and permanently frame 50 works a year until we have caught up with the backlog.

It is our intention to eventually have all the works in the collection photographed and to have an alphabetical index of those available for public inspection. Most of these dreams are bound up with undertaking a major conservation programme but part of the global plan to make the collection more accessible has been put in train.

I believe implicitly that institutions have a responsibility to look seriously at their collection policy as it relates to other kindred organisations. Given that New Zealand is small and that there are a large number of cultural institutions we should be looking at doing some one thing better than our colleagues are doing. It will be healthier in the long run and will vigorously observe the arts on a broader base than they are currently being.

Vive la difference!

James Mack
Director, Dowse Art Museum

The Bishop Suter Collection

Since the original bequest of paintings from the estate of Andrew Burn Suter in 1898 the collection has been added to by further bequests and some occasional purchases. It now numbers some six hundred works notable amongst which are the forty-two by John Gully and one hundred and six by Tosswill Woollaston.

Acquisitions in recent years have been based more on enlightened opportunism than consistent policy since funding for this purpose has at best been sporadic. The Suter's first acquisitions policy was devised as recently as eight years ago. This states that works will be acquired which —

1. complement the existing collection of works by early New Zealand painters;
2. extend the collection of works by significant contemporary New Zealand artists, and;
3. represent notable local developments.

The QEII picture purchase subsidy together with an annual grant from the Nelson Provincial Arts Council has enabled the Gallery to acquire in the last few years works by Albrecht, Clairmont, Trusttum, Siddell, Taylor, Peebles, Maddox, Hanly, Frizzell, Drawbridge, Ellis and Fomison.

The Gallery also has a collection of contemporary ceramics which is added to from time to time.

Works which complement the existing collection of works by early NZ artists have not been purchased for the simple reason that there is no one-for-one subsidy available for this category from the QEII Arts Council.

Rotating the Collection

Speculation as to developments in the visual arts over the next hundred years can only produce one certainty: that, provided the incipient holocaust holds off, the period in which we are now living will provide fascinating study. On the assumption that we survive, and it's the only assumption our profession allows, the decisions that we are now making regarding our collections, though they may not be as immediately critical as those of the new breed of geneticists and bio-technocrats, will certainly be of equal interest to future generations.

Our collections are among the raw materials of history, the material evidence without which future generations would be unable to evaluate either our achievements or their traditions. The evidence has to be readily available however and it is this issue which is perhaps fraught with the most problems and remains the subject of greatest concern.

It is in the very nature of things that arguments for more adequate funding of our institutions, given the largely parochial concerns of our governing bodies, can best be substantiated by eloquent attendance records. The 'material evidence' has therefore to be made abundantly available, regular exhibition turnover being the method. Those who are likely to visit must be provided with good reason to do so frequently. High throughput figures provide the only evidence likely to impress the vulgarians that so frequently manage to infiltrate our committees.

But it is also in the nature of things that excessive handling and exposure to even minimal U.V. levels will inevitably cause more deterioration than should be acceptable.

With large collections in New Zealand with rotation cycles of anything from possibly two to four years, handling levels might be acceptable. A work on view say for one month out of four years would have a low deterioration factor low enough anyway to be acceptable.

With small collections like that at the Suter with a rotation cycle of something like six months, repeated handling and exposure can only be regarded with dismay. So we have a dilemma. To obtain high throughput from a small community and thus encourage better funding one requires rapid changeround of display, but the rapid changeround of a small collection is ethically unacceptable.

Posterity vs Prosperity

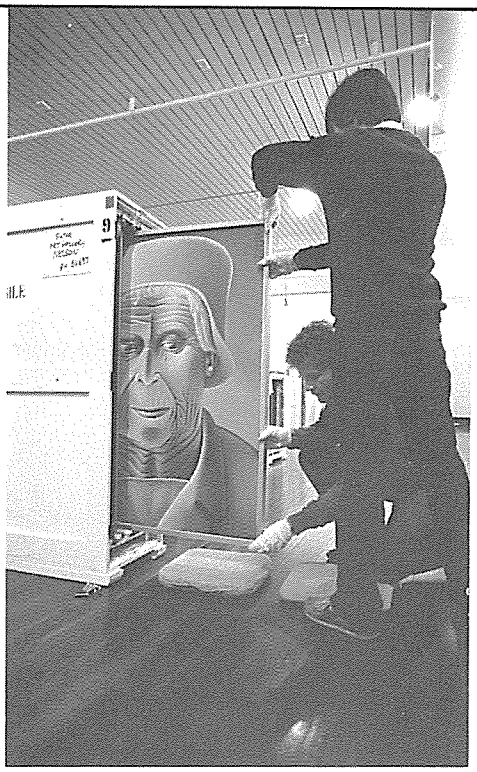
At the Suter (since its modernisation eight years ago) the problem has so far been partly resolved by presenting a large number of the available touring exhibitions and reserving only a part of the Gallery in which the permanent collection is rotated, thus extending the rotation factor to something like two years. If these touring exhibitions which are usually subsidised by the QEII Arts Council become too expensive however, and if present murmurings are anything to go by, this appears almost inevitable. The Suter and similar-size galleries will be able to afford only two or three a year — so we would be left with little alternative but to start shortening the rotation cycle of our permanent collections with consequent deleterious effects.

Were we thinking exclusively in terms of posterity it's probable that the optimum conditions for our collections exist only in a bank vault.

There's no question but that visitors are a serious embarrassment to art museums, poking fingers and damp breath are the stuff of nightmares, and the average school party is regarded as the peacetime equivalent of a commando raid. The only right and proper attitude to the exhibiting of permanent collections is — don't.

Unfortunately the two most crucial factors as we see them here, i.e. our concern for posterity and the need for a modicum of prosperity, appear to be mutually exclusive. To exploit our resource to its maximum and thus encourage maximum funding to enable us to extend our collection, we must do just that which is contrary to the best interests of posterity — rotate our collections more frequently and thus over-expose our collection to the depredations of light (albeit filtered), of handling and of the prodding digits of the lumpenproletariat.

The recently announced Goodman Suter Biennale will enable the Suter to purchase an additional sixteen thousand dollars worth of paintings every alternate year, thus allowing a fairly rapid expansion in the size of the collection — with a consequent extension to the rotation cycle. The continuing availability of the touring exhibitions at rates within the grasp of the smaller galleries hangs in the balance. The bigger the collection, the less handling and exposure it gets — and provided the storage space is climatically stable and reasonably dark and clean, posterity gets a better deal. And of course the bigger the collection the more important your asset. Where it can be described with a modicum of conviction as, for instance, the 'third largest collection of New Zealand paintings in the South Island', even the vulgarians, with whom quantity is the only criterion, have to be impressed.



Julian Bowron and Eroll Shaw, exhibition organiser, unpacking 'Anxious Image' works.

Restoration

Although the rotation factor is of major concern it is by no means the only concern. Restoration, storage and presentation, are anguished over constantly. Restoration in particular. In the past, works from the Suter collection have been restored at both Auckland City Art Gallery and at Dunedin City Art Gallery. Now Auckland appears to be limiting its help to other North Island galleries, and Dunedin appears to be having staffing shortages.

Three works in oil are currently undergoing restoration at the recently established workshop of John Harper in Christchurch. The high cost however must inevitably limit this work to about four paintings a year on present budget levels. At the time of writing there appears to be no one to whom this gallery can confidently send works on paper for restoration.

Fundamental to our long-term obligations lie the issues of care and concern for our collections. If local bodies are to be persuaded to take a more positive approach to funding in these areas, the full frontal approach is not likely to be the most effective.

Techniques vary. Intentionally enlarging the collection to beyond saturation point while at the same time circulating disaster-photographs i.e. enlargements of borer holes, silverfish and foxing, might be considered a trifle Machiavellian, but with councillors with real-estate proclivities (not by any means a rare species) there is nothing like pointing to a depreciating asset to arouse supportive indignation.

Austen Davies
Director, Bishop Suter Art Gallery

Photo: Michael McArthur.

Aigantighe Art Gallery

Aigantighe is essentially a provincial gallery. This is not intended, in any way, to be a denigration but rather an acceptance of our situation, our collection, and our public. Timaru is a conservative area with a large proportion of retired people. There is an active Arts Society but a small number of professional artists. We aim to be a provincial gallery in the best sense and consider education and appreciation to be our main aims.

Our acquisition policy is limited by purchasing finance which is solely interest from bequests, plus a QEII subsidy. As the total amount is about $5000 annually our new acquisitions are modest, to say the least.

The primary collecting category of Aigantighe is directed towards developing a collection of paintings, drawings, prints, sculpture and crafts by artists who have contributed to the development of New Zealand art in the widest sense. This includes historical and contemporary works with an emphasis on any works relating to South Canterbury. We hope to build up a good regional collection and history of historical and contemporary works of local artists.

We are, at present, trying out an idea whereby a portion of the purchasing funds is directed towards a collection of paintings, prints and sculpture by young artists in their final year at an art school or in the early stages of their career. Some emphasis in this area is to be placed on the acquisition of prints to tie in with the earlier idea of being a Print Repository. This would mean that we would become a Print Repository of selected artists rather than an overall coverage. To give relevance to this idea, those artists chosen must be followed and works bought throughout their careers.

It is hoped that this will refine our collection so that we have a selected number of artists who will be represented in some detail rather than a random selection with little continuity or depth. There are many risks involved in this scheme. All artists who show promise do not necessarily achieve anything more, or even continue their work.

The Aigantighe collection has about 900 items, most of which would be on display at some time over a two year period. Should anyone want to see something which is not on display, all works are readily accessible.

If other smaller galleries are like ours and find when making exhibitions from their permanent collections that the gaps are possibly more significant than the actual works, then perhaps having established aims and accession policies, some thought should be given to deaccession policies with a view to swapping within galleries?

Meg Parkin Director

The Hamilton Centre Gallery of Contemporary Art

The Hamilton Centre Gallery of Contemporary Art is a component of the Hamilton Arts Centre — a project of the Chartwell Trust. The Gallery opened in August 1982.

The building occupied by the Arts Centre was formerly the Hamilton Hotel and has been redeveloped to include spaces for the Centre Gallery of Contemporary Art, a gallery for the Waikato Society of Arts, a tavern, 2 restaurants and an arts supply shop. In addition a theatre has been developed from a separate building in the garden at the rear of the site and there remains approximately 8,000 square feet for development on the first floor. A garden at the rear of the building enhances the Gallery of Contemporary Art and the Left Bank Cafe Restaurant.

The Centre is sited on 1¼ acres adjoining the Waikato river, Marlborough Place and Victoria Street — the main shopping street of Hamilton. The Centre Gallery occupies about 7,500 square feet inclusive of exhibition space of 4,000 square feet and storage 2,500 square feet. The Gallery has been planned to provide a frontage to passing casual pedestrian traffic at the Victoria street level and an entrance at the rear on the lower level from the Terrace access off Marlborough Place. The Gallery provides an alternative access to the Cafe and this was planned to provide exposure of exhibitions to a generated traffic of potential viewers. The concept behind the redevelopment has been to integrate a contemporary art space into the commercial central business area of Hamilton and to include components immediately adjacent to the Gallery which would attract visitors to the facility.

The Waikato Museum of Art and History is under construction about 50 yards up river from the Arts Centre site. The decision to establish the Centre Gallery of Contemporary Art was directly influenced by the potential of this physical relationship. The site for the future museum was known when the Art Centre development was planned but at that stage the Hamilton City Council had not made the decision to commence construction.

The Centre Gallery has been established primarily as a safe and orderly storage for the growing Chartwell Art Collection and to enable its active use in a Gallery exhibition programme. The policy for the Collection is to complement the painting collection of the Waikato Museum of Art and History and there is a direct and active interest in integrating the ultimate potential of the two collections. We plan to continue to collect paintings by contemporary living artists including a representative collection of New Zealand works and expressionist works from countries around the Pacific. To date a number of Australian paintings have been purchased and future acquisitions are likely to reflect the expressionistic character and policy of the Collection. The Collection is stored on sliding steel mesh racks within an airconditioned and secured store space.

Hamilton Art Centre — rear exterior with left Bank Cafe/Restaurant on terrace.

Works from the Collection are exhibited for 2 months of the year in the Gallery (December and January) and in the future it is expected that an increasing proportion of exhibition time/space will be taken up by works from the Collection. The exhibitions programme for the balance of the year has been on a calendar monthly cycle and to date some emphasis has been possible on shows by mid-career artists usually with a guest organiser or the artist carrying out planning and design functions. The Gallery is not a selling Gallery and is not equipped staff-wise to develop heavily curated shows in the manner of public galleries in New Zealand. The use of guest organisers has enabled the Gallery to keep permanent staff to a minimum and this policy will continue. Two permanent staff and 3 part-timers with supporting office and management services enable an active and flexible programme to operate.

Consulting curatorial services for the Collection will be required and to date assistance when requested has been given by the staff of the Waikato Museum.

The future policy of Gallery operation is likely to increasingly emphasise the Collection and it is hoped that its acquisitions will give a unique character to the facility and the exhibitions which are presented therein. Access to the Collection store on an appointment basis is likely to be encouraged under suitable supervision and the exhibition programme will continue to provide opportunity for artists to be creative in the exhibition situation. There is a perception of an opportunity for public education in New Zealand contemporary art and for each exhibition the Gallery prepares and issues a simple information statement for visitors' use. This is the basis of a release of exhibition information to media and schools which is supported by distribution of Gallery posters as part of a regular publicity and promotion effort including advertising in newspapers and art magazines. Generally there is no formal exhibition opening.

The Gallery currently opens from 10–4.30 on weekdays but currently consideration is being given to a reduction of hours of opening during the week to 12 midday to 4 pm with 2 hours of opening on Saturday

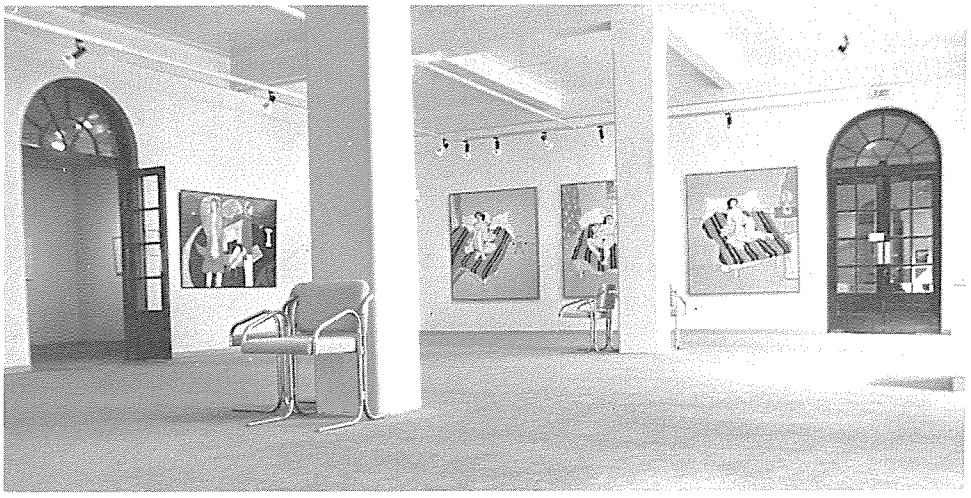
morning.

The Gallery has examined the potential for establishment of an in-residence artist facility within the Centre and there is space available for such a development. Planning will continue on this proposal.

The Gallery is being seen as an alternative exhibition space to the traditional public gallery and dealer gallery facilities in New Zealand but shares with them similar concerns to increase standards, education and communication in the visual arts.

The Gallery looks forward to continuing to operate and further develop a quality exhibition space and Collection of contemporary paintings which will increase the interest in and potential for contemporary art in New Zealand.

Rob Gardiner Director



Hamilton Centre Gallery. Main gallery showing Chartwell Art Collection

Southland Museum & Art Gallery

Aquisition policies are necessary and often evolve based on the past achievements of the institution and a desire to expand them. Each region in New Zealand served by galleries has its own unique conditions caused through population, distribution, geographical position and other factors which give rise to different community or visitor needs. Collection policies should incorporate these points also.

My own institution, for example, is a combined Museum and Art Gallery and the collections are mainly concerned with Southland's art, natural and cultural history. It serves a population of approximately 100,000 with about half that number living in Invercargill. It is geographically at the bottom end with little through traffic from the travelling public. With considerable input and support from the local people, it is very much a community museum.

The region has also several smaller museums and two public art galleries. One in Gore and the other, Anderson Park Art Gallery, on the outskirts of Invercargill. We all work closely together sharing our collections and expertise. A combined committee known as the Southland Art Galleries Liaison Committee co-ordinates activities. With consideration for these factors, the following policy for the acquisition of art has been in operation for several years — "To acquire New Zealand works of art and craft with the emphasis on contemporary works having relevance to Southland or Southern New Zealand".

As Southland does not have a large population the addition of southern New Zealand gives a little latitude to the north.

The policy is interpreted by the following guidelines: The artist may have been born or lived for some period of time in the region; the works may depict some aspect of the area, be constructed of materials from the region or executed there.

Taken to the extreme, one could argue that this policy could include almost anything. However, the key words are — "relevance to Southland".

Like all policies there are likely to be grey areas and like all institutions there are small pockets in collections which have on face value little relationship to the policy. These are inevitable and many were probably inherited before policies were in existence.

A few years ago I visited several American museums, most of which covered the whole field but I was particularly impressed with the Oakland Museum whose policy was only concerned with the State of California. The permanent art collection featured California and its artists from the early period to the present. A small separate section on Asian art at first appeared out of place until one was made aware of the strong Chinese community in California and their contribution.

Similarly, we have a small and important collection of etchings by foreign artists but these works represent collections made by Southland people who were prominent in the community. When these are shown, together with the details of the collector and his or her contribution to Southland, the works probably have a place.

Where does it all end? The purists will say there is no room for grey areas but we will all have inherited or created grey areas which are not easily disposed of. The solution is to make sure they stay just grey and do not deviate the main policy objective.

Of equal importance to the policy itself is to make it publicly known, especially in the gallery, where the works immediately mean more to the visitor.

The art collection at Southland Museum and Art Gallery had its beginning in 1961 when the art gallery section was added and only in recent years has there been an active purchasing programme. It is still small and by no means representative of what it could be. Gaps have been filled with loaned works from the Anderson Park Art Gallery and Dunedin Public Art Gallery collection and we are particularly fortunate in this respect. If galleries knew each other's policies and holdings more use could be made of collections in this way. It also offers to solve any disposal problems.

Not all contemporary art survives as lasting works, yet may have served a useful purpose at the time.

Disposal is still difficult ground but art galleries who have always purchased their collections can possibly justify selling their unwanted works with little public comment. However, the situation is much different for museums and combined museum/art galleries, who largely rely on gifts. Much of our art collection has been purchased but the other collections are all given. This practice continues and is the basis of most community musuems. De-accession in this case is much more sensitive and public pride in a museum is hard won but easily lost.

Regional policies such as ours have some advantages in that the opportunity is there for the justification of particular artists to be represented in depth, complete with major and development works, drawings, biographical details, etc. If policies were

better known valuable background material could be offered to the appropriate gallery by artists, individuals and collectors, who often have little regard for this important facet.

Our policy appears to work well at the moment but naturally will not be acceptable to other regions. We all live in a changing world and policies will change too.

Art collections are assembled according to the resources and ability of the staff of each institution. Biased collections, masterpieces and rubbish will automatically result as time sorts them out, but averaged throughout the country the total New Zealand collection finally becomes a valuable resource which should be easily accessible to another "art form" the concept and presentation of specialised exhibitions.

Russell J. Beck
Director Southland Museum and Art Gallery

One of two galleries at SMAG showing permanent collection which concentrates on local work. Photo L. C. Hazley.

Collecting for a New Regional Museum

One of the exciting prospects that faces a new regional museum is its potential to build a collection based on a well formulated collecting policy that seeks to apply modern collecting principles. This means that from the outset the institution can choose what it will collect within a specified field of interest with the result that the institution develops its own regional identity within the network of National Museums.

In the case of the Forrester Gallery, which has adopted a strongly regional collecting philosophy, a range of collecting interests of both historical and contemporary significance have been clearly defined. These interests encompass historical art and architecture such as material relating to Maori daylight shelter drawings, art that depicts European colonial settlement in North Otago and architectural material relating to colonial buildings and houses. As it is considered that the great artistic achievement of North Otago is its architecture, the collection of architectural drawings, specifications, photographs and other documents is given priority.

In the modern field the Gallery collects art works and crafts by its best contemporary artists and crafts people with the aim of establishing a representational body of work that reflects the arts and crafts of the region.

A further aim of the collecting policy is to create a selective and representational collection of art works relating to the national community. In this area the aim is to avoid duplicating other collections but at the same time to provide works of nationally significant artists and crafts persons. Within this category a representative collection of the works of both regionally and nationally known architects is also envisaged.

As expressed in the policy the purpose of the collection is to preserve a record of the cultural activity, ideas and values of the North Otago community. Also inherent in the policy is an obligation to interpret the collections by providing a service to the community that presents the collections as a meaningful resource with which the visitor can interact.

Obviously, such a collection should be accessible to the widest possible audience: under current policy, anyone can visit the Gallery free of charge. Taken a step further, a collection ought to serve its local community by being a usable cultural resource of local relevance. In this respect it would equally serve as a resource that is interesting (both in the educational and entertaining senses) to visitors from outside the region. For both categories of audience the collection would also function as a regional cultural data centre, assisting the diligent research of the scholar.

Once a local museum has succeeded in defining regionally appropriate collecting guidelines and established the means of implementing them, the question of regionally complimentary collections emerges as a dynamic factor promoting interaction between institutions. There is a growing body of evidence, in the form of loan and exhibition proposals, that suggests that this is becoming acceptable practice among a number of South Island art galleries.

Looked at from the viewpoint of smaller local or regional museums it is very reassuring to such a museum if it is granted loan access on a selective (thematic) basis to part of the collection of larger neighbouring institutions. It is nothing less than exhilarating if it can participate in medium scale, affordable cost exhibitions, that are curated on regional themes to which the option of future reciprocation with an exhibition, drawn from its own collection, is not an impossible reality.

Somehow it is moral-boosting not only to know exactly what neighbouring or further-flung institutions have in their collections — the institutions have either given or sold its neighbour a copy of the catalogue of its collections — but also to actually be invited to use thematic components of that collection. Such institutional interaction can only be applauded, not simply because it is good to build lively modes of communication between institutions, but perhaps more importantly because it offers such great opportunities to extend the resource base of a museum so that, with appropriate management, the museum can cast a wider and closer-meshed net across the culturally lethargic parts of its community.

Museums that set out to operate along these sorts of guidelines — that is, museums that have defined and limited their collecting policies and then embarked on a policy of mutual interaction with other museums — are museums endeared with with an extravert vigour that may hopefully succeed in commanding wide community respect. This has got to be a welcome contrast to the old insular policies that seemed to be based on intraverted and decadent competitiveness that effectively resulted in static collections enshrined in dull institutions.

Tony Martin Forrester Art Gallery

Hocken Library

As a hedge against the unlikely event of my being taken as an official spokesman of the Hocken Library, it has to be said at the outset that what follows is a personal view of the predicament of art — one, I might add for which there is plenty of precedent in the current literature; and the approach is perforce a philosophical one and deliberately perverse to the extent that more problems are spawned than it cares to answer. I do not believe that any of these questions about the raison d'etre of the gallery particularly with respect to its incestuous relationship with its art offspring, can be answered without a complete perhaps painful and incommodious unravelling of our base assumptions about "art" generally, for in these troubled times it is by no means obvious that "art" has any solid claim to ontological authenticity as a special entity separable from that equal absurdity, a "non-art" world.

(a) Without a doubt the thing uppermost in Dr Hocken's mind was the documentation of an historical process; and though it is perhaps questionable whether he thought of all the pictorial items he collected as "art" — a word which at the time was possibly more synonymous with the finer things of life and high-minded fantasy than anything else — he most certainly had an eye for the attractive image, so that the fine wide-ranging collection of media he eventually gave to the University of Otago for the benefit of the people of New Zealand in 1910 as, in his own intriguingly 20th Century sounding words, a 'museum of information', contained a vast amount of what today we would call "art". But since Hocken's death the increasing value that has been placed on that brand of veracity peculiar to the photograph — itself a recent victim of being dubbed as "art" — together with a tendency on the part of artists to retreat from the objective reality rumoured of by philosophers to a wholely subjective one of the Self, has resulted in a shift in collecting policy from an original emphasis on documentation to one on pure aesthetics. Art had, as it were, come of age and had become as socially autistic and self-historicising as the rose was said to have been by the venerable Gertrude, so that from a curatorial point of view, art, like the lady whose beauty was her dowry, no longer needed any justification for its existence beyond its aesthetic quality which at the profoundest and therefore most easily understood domestic level would be demonstrable by perhaps nothing more or less complicated than say the knack of placing a vase at a certain spot on the mantlepiece (classical) or contriving a divinely inspired dishevelment of coiffure (romantic). The Hocken Library was fortunate that its librarians and committees were sufficiently aware of these functional changes in art to make the appropriate staff adjustments. It will be interesting to see if the present generation of curators in the municipal galleries will have similar foresight when the time comes to read the writing on the wall hinting of further erosion of "art's" existential status within society, and act accordingly, or will they be the last to know and on full salary beach their whales regardless of the sea's depth and state of tide. Broadly speaking the Hocken's present aim would be to collect New Zealand related art along the whole length of its 200-year-long time frontier, augmenting the clusters of work by particular artists already held and whenever possible plugging the gaps. But the existing strengths of the historic sections coupled with a finite financial resource has resulted in a sort of de facto policy of collecting mainly the work of living artists or as near to living as possible; and by and large this policy is one which accords well with that of the library's founder for whom watercolourists such as William Fox were contemporaries. Because for some it is a faintly perjorative term synonymous with a Siren's kiss of death, "established" is used here advisedly in the sense that in the choice of artist's work for inclusion in the collection, precedent tends to be followed and not set, for it is debatable whether a public historical collection should knowingly contribute to the "establishment" of an artist thereby short-circuiting and so forging the history's outcome. The sociology of "getting established" is a bizarre one likely to provide the software visitable upon a second and third generation of art history students to come.

(b) To be asked the reasons for collection contemporary art, let alone for building the galleries to house it at the public's expense, implies that one has a clear idea of the alleged culture and the social needs thereof in relation to which the collection takes place, for clearly it does not happen in a vacuum or merely as an expression of the whimsical tastes of curatordom. That such questions are asked at all is perhaps indicative of a crisis in art as deep as any of those currently besetting this country. These days art can never be just "art" any more than sport can be just "sport" as the "Tour" showed. Likewise money is judged according to the context of its acquisition and growth. And art too is validated by the morality of its operational contexts. Admittedly except for perhaps during one or two of the more cock-sure eras of the soiree when "certainty" was a fashionable thing, "art" and "culture" have proved pretty well immune to definition. But "art" in the sense that it is commonly used by us is after all only 250 or so years old and there is no early reason why it should not vanish again. Even now it is beginning to look very much as though "art" is virtually a costly anachronistic Romantic left-over which we have been landed with by default of history, with the artists as a sort of Lost Tribe of self styled professional bleeding hearts demanding a place in the Promised Land of Gallerydom. A tennis game that continued long after the ball was lost became in the fullness of time a slow and elegant pas de deux in memory of one Tenys Baule of unknown origin. This dance is usually performed in the summer months on green mats with a mysterious background of nets and occasionally the dancers hold strangely looped wands. Gallery genre "art" is such a dance. The art collection of the Hocken is subsumed under the public reference and research functions of the library as a whole which broadly speaking collects so that people, anyone at all and for whatever can among other things research, investigate, contribute to, participate in and as a result find themselves a part of an ongoing historical process. It is a matter of providing the wherewithall for a people to find out about itself and perhaps even research the possibility of a future for itself on the basis of the knowns of the present. Supposing the inherited knowledge of a people is transmitted from one generation to the next by means of delicate cultural structures in a way similar to that by which our biological characteristics are transmitted genetically, then our museums could be said to be culturally gonadic — the cultural sperm and ovary banks as it were of a people who show the unmistakeable signs of a growing lack of interest in the orthodoxy of reproduction of any kind. As a nation susceptible to sporadic crises of self-identification one would expect its cultural institutions to provide solid ground on which to build the lean-to of the spirit, and not cater for the effete tastes of a Culture of Surpluses which is virtually what the galleries are doing.

Contemporary art appears to be very much a purely gallery-generated genre the forms of which apart from a few notable

exceptions would be considered by most as being merely decorative, iconographically frivolous or introspectively morbid and therefore meaningless; and to claim by way of explanation that the unrequited voyeuristic exercise of viewing gallery art is edifying, good for one, enculturing or any of the things usually claimed for it, is to beg the question and patronise people who already have a pretty good idea of what life is all about. It is difficult to demonstrate qualities attributable to "art" which are not also inherent in the ordinary events and objects of daily living. The reason for these difficulties lies perhaps in the fact that "art" has no context of its own to which it can be meaningfully related except for the absurd and artificial zoo-like white walled clinical milieu of the gallery where even now people still go around whispering as if they were in church. Why, we might well ask, go on building and stocking grandiose hothouses for orchids when people on the whole prefer the lilies of the fields. Would it not be better to sink our funds into event-art: music, drama, children's theatre, playgrounds etc etc, and leave the private inner world of the "artist" where it belongs and stop pretending that it has any cultural significance whatever in this day and age beyond the family and home, and a circle of friends.

Any big city in the world would probably sport as many if not more collections than the whole of New Zealand put together, so let us hope therefore that for the time being at any rate we will continue to enjoy a multiplicity of independent collections, for to coordinate their management would concentrate power in the hands of the few. The burial of art administrators at the centres of the bureaucratic labyrinth is inimical to the natural ecology and free flow of cultural forces. Anyone who has seen high school art exhibitions particularly at the school certificate level will know what a frightful thing centralised art education is, in its clone-like conformity. Centralism in the arts is disastrous for a small place like New Zealand with its tiny population, because there is not enough background noise in the market place to drown the voice of the career expert art administrator.

We appear to have succumbed to the hubristic belief that "art" and "culture" are the same thing. But "art" is only a by-product of a culture or an indicator that one exists. Art implies the presence of culture perhaps as the visible one-tenth part of an iceberg implies the vastness of the nine-tenths submerged. Our iceberg has a convincing shape, but it is flat bottomed and floats on a raft. We build our costly galleries in the hope that a culture will ensue like the tails of Ms Peep's sheep. And it is this weird and wonderful trick of switching effects for causes that enables the Australians to mount such Cecil B. de Mille-like monstrosities of the spirit as the Sydney Biennale. We have produced something unique in the annals of the planet: an art without a culture.

(c) Unlike the municipal galleries who need to put the case for contemporary art at every stage and justify the relevance of its operation to the ratepayer the Hocken's interests in art are entirely phenomenological; being an historical collection its staff are not called upon to justify the artscene but only to take good samples.

(d) The degree of public accessibility to gallery culture hinges as often as not on cost-free factors such as staff attitudes: whether or not for instance curators welcome the public behind the scenes and are willing to explain the purpose of what they are doing. It hinges too on whether or not large publically funded and indemnified exhibitions are sent to more than one or two of our more heavily built-up areas. And it's got to do with whether or not we ditch the socially disgusting paraphernalia of official openings and replace them with festive occasions for all comers, dignitaries included. Without any intrinsic meaning or context of its own "art" has become a front for social games. The meaning of a painting does not lie in anything inherent in it, but in the circumstances of its success or failure as social currency. "Art" which in hallowed and historical perspective we have been encultured to think of as one of man's unifying principles, has become socially divisive. The philosophy which has developed is a romantic one that says: "solitariness is the essential human condition. The human being's alienation from others and from society is all part of being an individual . . . artists are encouraged to consider the inner reality of the self as the true reality. This is the way the world is. We exist as solitary beings; the world revolves around us as a system of unrelated and disconnected events over which we have no control. This concern with the isolated individual, the inner reality does nothing to help the understanding or development of people and society . . . The story of the art world is familiar. A network of galleries and a high art market maintain the status quo. Art *objects* are generally considered more significant as art since their commodity value is easily recognised. Artists are supposed to aspire to the established gallery system, to seek recognition and acceptance within the artworld. The work which will become successful under this system is that which is socially meaningless . . . art cannot be socially or politically meaningful, since this infringes on its 'universal' value. If a work is socially relevant, it does not support the essential nature of human beings which is solitary. In fact it deceives people enormously by suggesting that outer reality exists and that the inner reality is socially and historically related [to it]" — Marsh, *Live Art* 1984. The art that is filling our galleries is a publically funded anachronism — the reverberating after whimper of the big bang of the 19th Century German Romanticism. And as a result it has become a social problem with society, an economic problem for institutions and a personal problem for the "artist" for whom token feelings of alienation are still mandatory. One wonders at what other times in history there has been such a concerted effort to foist private iconic forms onto the public by means of its own money in the name of concepts with such scant ontological presence.

(e) It may well be that in the face of a wholly commercialised runaway dealer generated "art scene" over supplied by the mass production lines of a Romantically inspired studio based cottage industry, that the municipal gallery hard pressed to justify its high costs will be forced to revert to an earlier position at which time it was something of a sensation to find the work of a living artist on its walls and resume the time-honoured truly museum function of providing shelter for private iconic forms of household objects and pictures etc which through social upheaval have been dispossessed of their natural habitat and context. The gallery which in its previous life was the palace of the bankrupt aristocrat should now quietly slip into the form of its next avatar, a venue for communal event. It may well be that apart from the private iconic object in context on the one hand and the public performance-event such as drama, concerts, playgrounds, festivals, circuses, parks etc etc on the other, there is no such thing as art *per se,* and what we call "art" is in fact nothing more than an historical freak, a recently emerged icon/circus hybrid with no natural functional habitat of its own outside the contrived life-support systems of the gallery for whose walls the "art" is being expressly manufactured. And certainly in some of its more extreme forms "art" would seem to be trying to will itself out of existence.

Tim Garrity
Hocken Library

Dunedin Public Art Gallery

We are collecting to exemplify excellence. We aim to augment and improve the existing strengths of the Gallery's holdings, detailed in our official policy. The scope of the collection is national rather than regional. Particular emphasis is placed on the work of Frances Hodgkins in the collection.

The collections are vested in the City of Dunedin, the Gallery's funding authority, though purchased with D.P.A.G. Society funds. The Gallery serves the region culturally in the same way as the City serves it in trade, transport, communications, education, medical care, etc.

Purpose

We have to be able to conserve, display and explain examples of the styles of painting and graphic art from the late Gothic to the present day.

Our audience consists of Art Gallery Society members, University, Polytechnic and Art School Students and staff, school children of all ages as well as the citizens of Dunedin, out of town visitors and tourists.

The best way to make works of art intelligible to visitors, ranging from the cognoscenti to the visually illiterate, is to have a wide range of reference.

Use of Collections

Because only a small proportion of our paintings are on show at any given time we have to be prepared to show works in store on racks to visitors at short notice: this falls short of the ideal of visible storage.

We accept some responsibility for compiling compact exhibitions for smaller institutions in the region as well as forming, or contributing to, national touring shows.

Comment

One characteristic of institutional collecting in New Zealand is the involvement of art museums with the contemporary *avant-garde.* In Europe and America major institutions usually keep a respectful distance from innovative new work as exhibition or acquisition material, preferring to leave the risk, and the excitement of discovery, to dealer galleries.

There is much to be said for allowing the creative dust to settle, letting an artist's work to recede into perspective, so to speak, before committing public funds. Even for the best of us, buying contemporary work will undoubtedly yield a 50% wastage after the passage of forty years. However, our small, close-knit society expects public art museums to be involved as pioneering patrons. We are not performing unless we stick our necks out!

Complementary Collections

A National Collection in Wellington, though geographically central, is less accessible to the South Islanders than to the North. The separation of the main centres is bound to harden the wilful independence of Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin with their individual strengths. The question of Government funding for an exclusively Wellington-based National Collection will no doubt be challenged by the other centres. Perhaps the best thing we can do is to move towards building complementary collections, pooling catalogue information and photographs, at least on collections of New Zealand paintings, as though the sum of our holdings were a National Collection.

Disposals and transfers might be used to refine, improve quality and bring cognate material together. A specialised collection can be more efficiently run and is of greater interest to both visitors and sister institutions.

Giving ground here and there might bring appreciable gains.

Acquisitions Policy

The following are the principal collections to be augmented:-

New Zealand: paintings, water-colours, drawings, prints from 1840 to the present day. Contemporary photographs and sculpture.

British: Paintings, water-colours, drawings and prints from the 16th to the 20th century.

Australian: Paintings, water-colours, drawings and prints, 19th and 20th century.

Old Masters: Italian, French, Dutch, Flemish, German and Spanish paintings, drawings, and engravings; Russian Ikons.

19th Century, Impressionist and Modern European paintings, drawings and prints.

Japanese Prints: 18th and 19th century.

Ancillary Collections of Some Importance

Funds are seldom available for active collecting in these fields:-

British pottery, porcelain and glass.

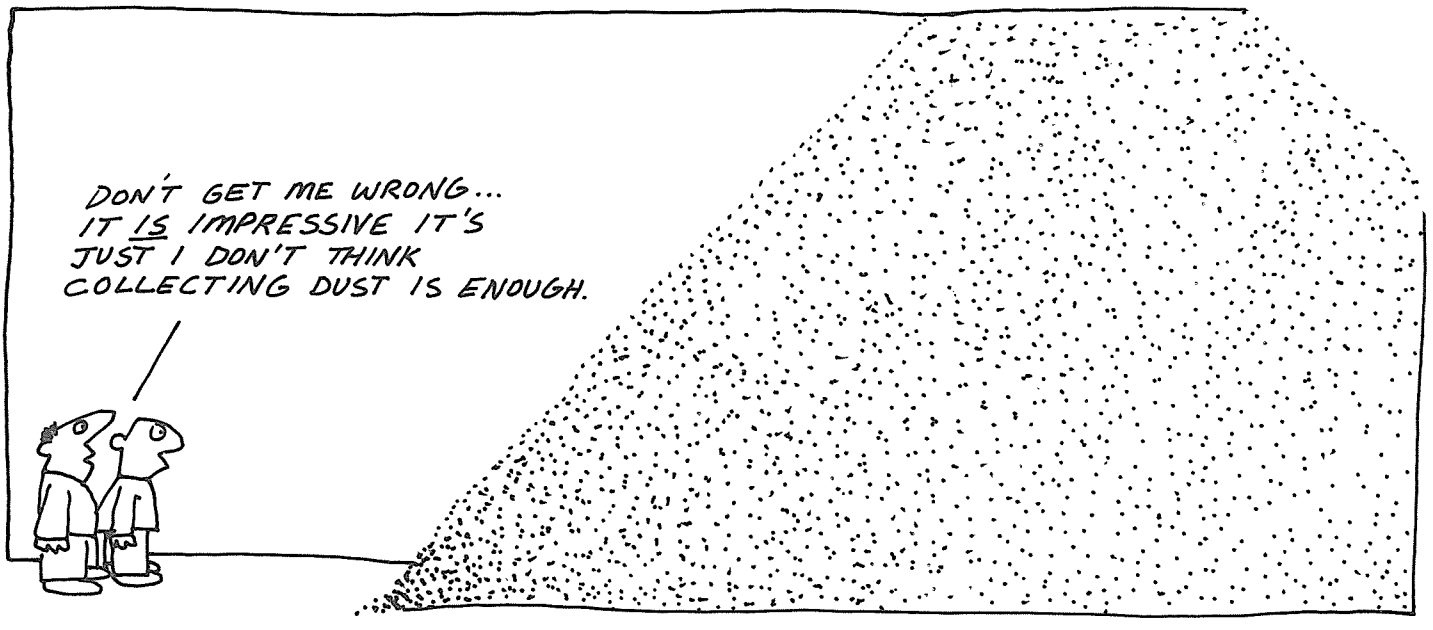
Costume and accessories: New Zealand 19th century.

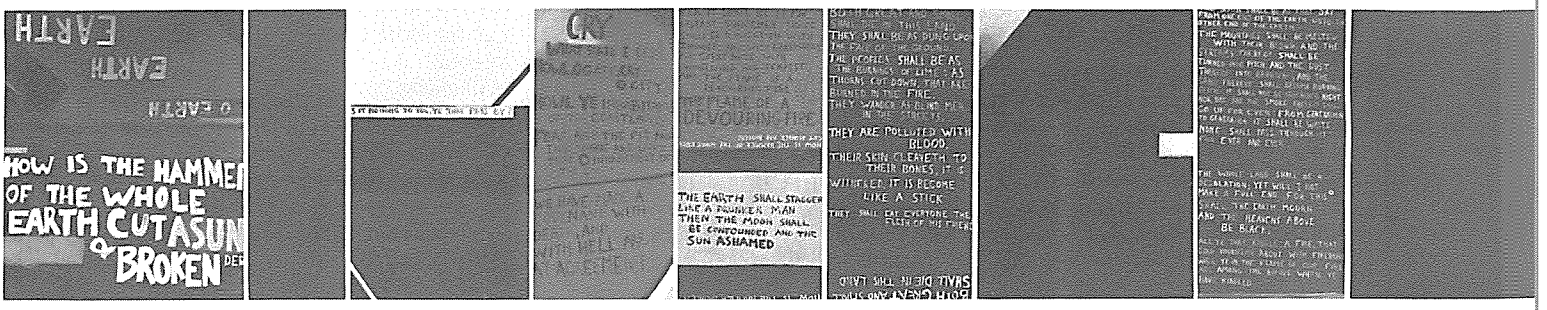
Furniture & Woodwork: British.

Netsuke: Complimentary to Japanese Prints.

Oriental Rugs: Currently augmented by de Beer gifts.

F. H. Dickinson
Director, Dunedin Public Art Gallery





Collecting and Collection Policies at the National Art Gallery

The idea of a National Collection for New Zealand predates by some thirty years the physical establishment of a National Art Gallery in 1936. The opening exhibition staged by the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts in 1906–7, titled the New Zealand International Exhibition, "presented works which were to be the basis of the future National Collection; paintings purchased (a) in England 1906–7 . . . and (b) in Christchurch at the New Zealand International Exhibition 1906–7 . . . to New Zealand, Britain was still the homeland and British art the desirable area for appraisal and collection"[1].

This predilection for 'contemporary' British art as opposed to contemporary developments within New Zealand has fortunately altered dramatically during the last ten years and any British purchases actioned or gifts accepted during recent years have related either to a strengthening of particular aspects of the early 20th century British collection (e.g. Duncan Grant and Ivon Hitchens) or to the general context of international art (e.g. John Walker and Howard Hodgkin).

Most institutions of some age have had less than an orderly or specified start to their collecting habits and have either continued their historical ad-hocism or have started to rationalise and restructure their collections and collecting behaviour according to their public sensitivity and accountability or lack of; their physical and financial wealth or lack of.

Few institutions, even though like the National Art Gallery they may be relatively young, have had the inspirational character and willpower, combined with wealth, that characterises a MOMA with its unique and singleminded goals underpinning all its collecting modes.

Given the fact that few New Zealand art museums had a 'clean' beginning, most having been occasioned by interested groups such as art societies, most collections bear the evidence of a passive acquisition approach.

As such many collections will naturally reflect the character of those who put them together. "In the case of a public collection this does not depend exclusively on the task and knowledge of those placed successively in charge of it, but also on that of the private benefactors over the years who have made generous contributions either from their own collections or with funds or advice. Such a collector may give a whole new direction to the acquisition policy of an art museum".[2] The results can in many richer environments be stunning and in a less passive way often lead to the creation of unique institutions such as the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. However, too often the legacy has been one of irrelevance, uneven representation, duplication, gaps and obvious biases.

As the process of evaluation and the drafting of collection policies take place in the National Art Gallery at the present time the legacy of passive acquisition in the past presents a major obstacle which of necessity must be hurdled but should not delay an immediate and fresh approach to present and future collecting modes.

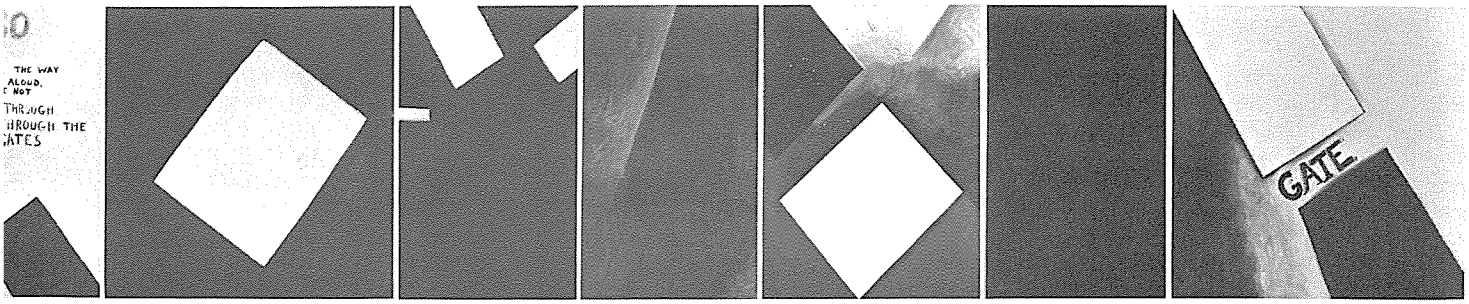
In addressing these policies the prime motivations should be (a) the reasons for collecting, and (b) the accountability for what is collected — whose interests are being served by what is collected and what consciousness is being developed.

Every institution has a limit relative to its constitutional functions and the existing financial and staff resources which conditions the ability to manage a soundly based approach to collecting.

In the case of the National Art Gallery the limitless and totally unspecified collecting function included in the new Act of 1972 did nothing to sharpen the approach to an ad hoc legacy: "To acquire, preserve, act as a national repository for, . . . collections of works representing the whole range of the visual arts;"

Having had the curatorial responsibility for a highly restricted and finely tuned collection policy at the Manawatu Art Gallery as Director, including a highly restricted budget, it has taken some time to match the theoretical freedom without bounds with the realities of a finite budget and a curatorial staff of two at the National institution. Up until the late seventies, even though there had already been a sharp shift away from the 'home is elsewhere' atittude to a New Zealand perspective for some time, there was a continued wallowing in the great freedom of a generous or non-existing collection policy. Pots, perhaps ceramics, were acquired from a variety of instantaneous prime sources, mainly the NZ Academy of Fine Arts exhibitions, as were weavings of varied quality; initial attempts were made with a greater input of expertise to commence a collection of photography. All this was 'achieved' haphazardly and in a well-meaning manner without the relevant curatorial staff resources.

Realising that neither its financial nor staff resources enabled it to do justice to the infinite scope of the visual arts the Gallery



Colin McCahon. The Second Gate series. Oil on panels 1962.

abruptly ceased its collecting activities in the applied/decorative arts area, while leaving its future attitudes open to more specific and defined perspectives. At the same time the Gallery assessed the future and purpose of its photographic collection and evolved an essential contemporary collection policy of New Zealand and international works.

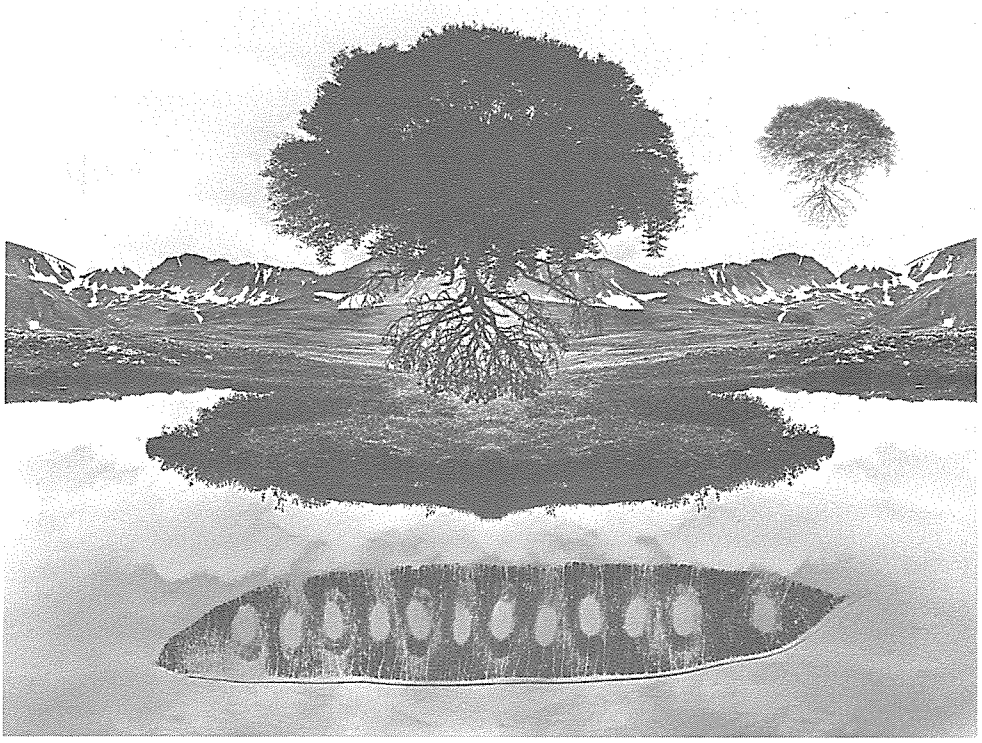
Until an intensive debate about future collection policies commenced during 1984 as a result of planning policies for the new National Art Gallery the intervening years (1980–83) were largely conditioned by a more debated attitude towards art work purchases in an environment of rationalism within implied rather than stated policies. As the staff of the National Art Gallery commenced its internal debate on the future collection policies certain 'givens' and obligations were enumerated:

(a) a body of some 9,000 art works demanding utilisation existed.
(b) exhibition and extension programmes cannot be divorced from collection policies since they are part of the temporary 'collection' or short-term loan collection.
(c) these museums with tight, well thought-through policies generate, perhaps, the greatest sustained excitement in their programmes.
(d) as a supposedly national institution its obligations should be more New Zealand-centric and sympathetic to a nation-wide perspective, not however at the expense of international collecting.
(e) even as a national institution the National Art Gallery is unlikely to ever approach the 'dizzying' financial resources of some similar overseas counterparts.
(f) any collection policy/ies evolved must address the questions of 'in whose interests' and 'to what purpose'.
(g) the realisation that the collections include at most a dozen works by contemporary Maori artists in a collection of some 9000 works.
(h) the need for a wide-ranging national input by artists, critics, consumers and other commentators.

No doubt as the policy-formulation process progresses more impinging and necessary considerations will be taken aboard, not the least of which will be the broader context of the collections co-existing in the National Art Gallery and National Museum building under the Board's aegis.

To date the demands placed on our skeletal staff by the ill-fated Molesworth Street exercise during 1984 has only enabled some of the comprehensive review processes to be tackled, e.g. interviews with a wide range of artists. However, as the National Art Gallery shifts its site-perspectives the formulation of new policies will continue and see the creation of a detailed written statement that sets forth the purpose of this art museum and its goals and explains how these goals are interpreted in its collections activity. As such the collection policies must derive from a publicly acceptable statement of philosophy and objectives. This philosophy and the ensuring objectives should be New Zealand-centric first and foremost in order to justify the existence of a truly National Art Museum of New Zealand.

Luit H. Bieringa
Director, National Art Gallery



Jerry Uelsman. Equivalent 1984 b/w photograph.

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2. *A Selection of the Paintings, Sculpture, Drawings, Watercolours and Prints,* Leeds City Art Gallery.

An Aspect of Collecting: Contemporary International Prints

The following observations are made from a curatorial standpoint and moreover, with the National Art Gallery in mind. Quite rightly, this institution has as its prime function, the preservation and exhibition of indigenous works of art. A strong New Zealand component in the collection is paramount for establishing a truly national repository for our visual history. At the same time, the acquisition of 'off-shore' material allows for the realisation that there are not only fundamental differences but also points of resemblance between the art of other cultures and our own.

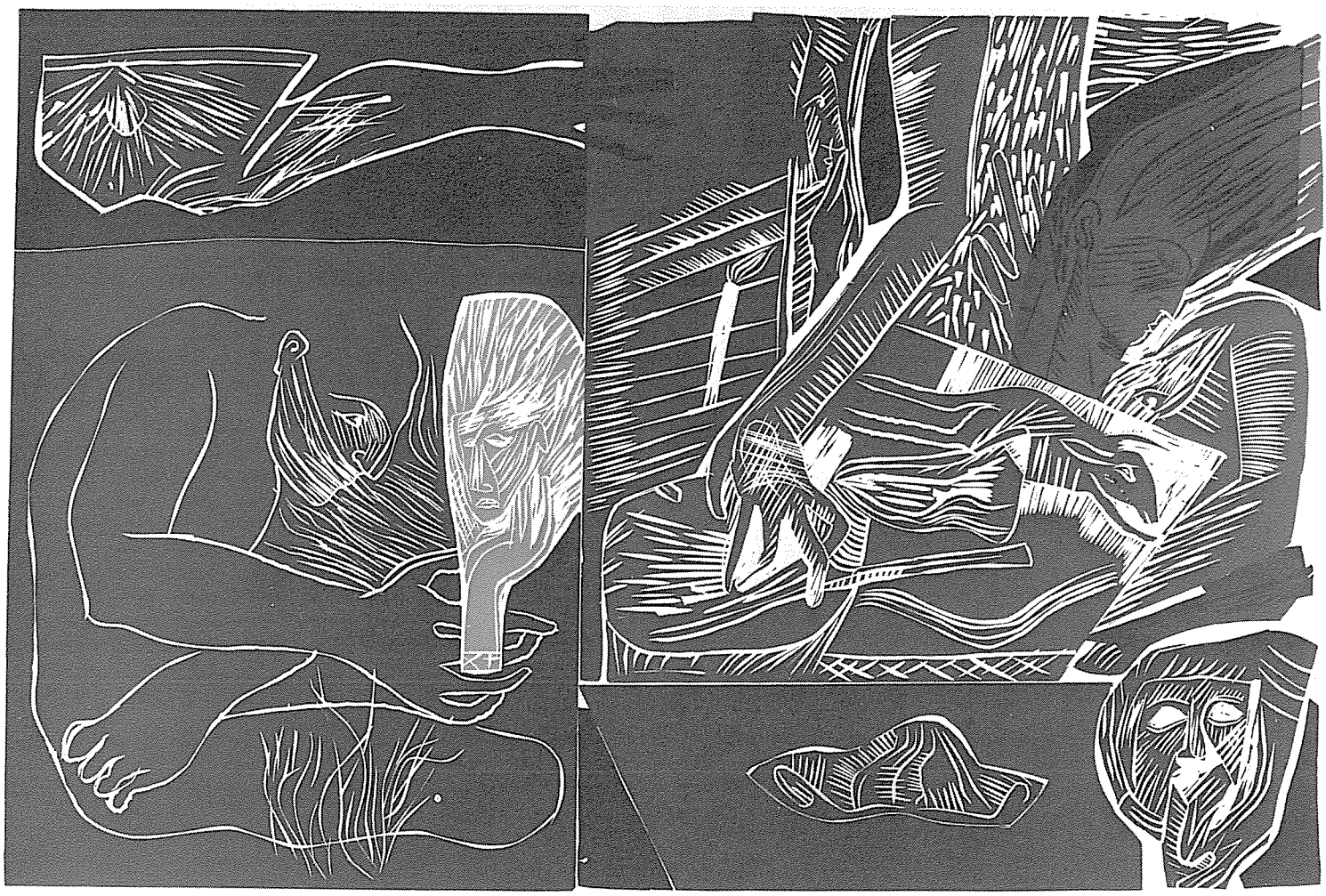
Given the regularly adjusted price tags on appropriate works at dealers and increased returns expected from auction houses, the monies allocated from the public purse for art acquisitions barely keeps pace with our aspirations. If it wasn't for a Lottery Board grant over the past few years, the national collection would have virtually stagnated. With such budget limitations, priorities are understandably directed more and more to works originating from New Zealand. At the same time, if one acknowledges the usefulness of reflecting particular modes of creative expression from elsewhere, how can this be achieved? One suggestion has been that regular travelling exhibitions from abroad would serve the inspirational and educational function expected of an international collection. Nevertheless, if we take as an example the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection of American and European Modern Masters, which toured New Zealand in 1980, can we assume that such 'block-buster' shows would always be available. More to the point, can we be sure that government indemnification would be provided as a matter of course as well as funds to meet other aspects of the hefty costs involved in transporting valuable paintings and other unique art objects. Even if small specialised exhibitions such as the Morris Louis project at the Auckland City Art Gallery in 1971, were organised on a continuing basis, are these fair substitutes for an international collection? Neither category of travelling show is a regular occurrence and is subject to any number of unforeseen problems which may stall or cancel their advent. The strong case for permanent collections, in light of this, is their very status of 'permanency'. Material that can readily be made available to the public facilitates an immediate expectation or enquiry.

There is an area, financial stringencies notwithstanding, whereby our institution can reflect and keep abreast of art movements outside New Zealand in a way that it is not obliged to settle for the second-rate or pale imitation. A coherent and vital indication of work being produced in Australia, Japan, Europe, Great Britain and the United States can be provided through the acquisition of original prints. Print collecting was once considered the perogative of a leisured class who considered prints to be part of a gentleman's library, closetted away from the public gaze. In recent times printmaking has been seen as having equal weight and validity as other visual art forms and prints can no longer be seen as the poor relatives. They are not simply the entrepreneurial solution to disseminate certain images by well-known artists, although obviously such attempts are made. The history and nature of printmaking is much more complex than that. Printmaking can become another tool for the artist, enabling him or her to create a work which could be expressed in no other way.

Through collecting contemporary prints it is possible to explore the most important directions in twentieth century art and at the same time, affirm the creative role of printmaking in the unfolding story of modern art. Furthermore, the multiple originality intrinsic to printmaking is a concept that assists in demystifying the notion of High Art and allows for greater integration with the community at large. Artist's books and posters are close relations of prints, so too in a sense are photographs, video and film. In fact, the democratic ideal for an art collection is perhaps best served by printed art forms. Study rooms and a rotating system of exhibitions enable the public to have direct engagement with such material and provide an opportunity to repeat the viewing experience as often as wished.

The comparatively low cost of good examples of recent international prints allows for an indepth collection. One artist's approach may be analysed through several examples or otherwise, an overview of a particular trend or style can be gauged by juxtaposing the work of several printmakers. Compare this situation with the acquisition of a single unique object, more especially a painting or piece of sculpture, which would probably cream off most of the art purchasing budget and stand as an isolated entity, referring only to itself. There is no need for panic buying either, in the area of print collecting, for the heartening thing about prints is that if you miss out the first time one can often get another at a later stage. Most works aren't unique so that it is possible to have second chances.

Richard Hamilton "I'm Dreaming of a Black Christmas" 1971 mixed media with collotype. Coll. National Art Gallery



Paladino Nimmo Dedalus 1984. Linocut 800 × 1190 mm. Coll. National Art Gallery.

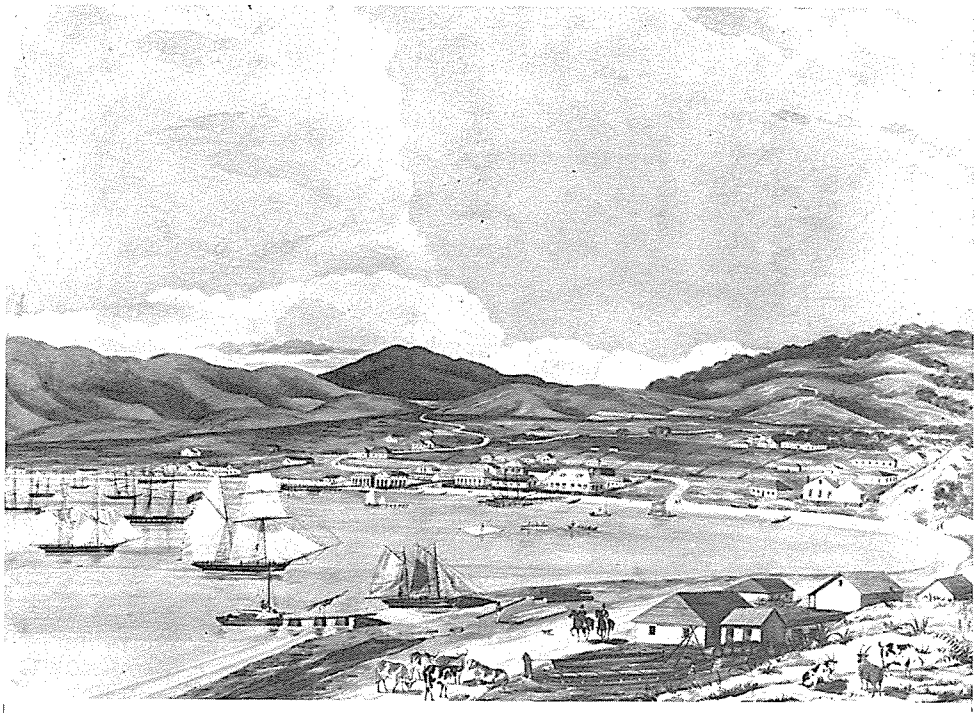
When it comes to organising travelling exhibitions from the collection, contemporary prints are less likely to require costly budgets — moderate insurance fees, manageable crating requirements and the fact that couriers are generally not necessary, means that the smaller less well-endowed galleries are able to participate in a tour. This is the rationale behind the National Art Gallery's series of international print shows beginning with the 'Prints of the 70s by Six British Artists', in 1981.

But what of the present nature of the national collection of international prints and how does it perceive future growth? Comprising some two thousand items, it spans the entire period in the history of European printmaking (that is from the 15th century) and continues through to recent developments on a world-wide basis. In sheer numbers, it forms the strongest group of non-New Zealand works at the Gallery. Dürer, Rembrandt, Whistler, the French Impressionists and Post-Impressionists are particular highlights. We owe many of these works to bequests from private collectors namely, Bishop Monrad, Sir John Ilott and Harold Wright. Now with private art patronage largely a thing of the past (or rather, the donation of major collections to public institutions is a rare occurrence) it is largely left up to the curators. The holdings of contemporary prints at the National Art Gallery have been built up solely through purchases, on the basis of an individual's curatorial expertise. A curator's choice is conditioned by a number of factors, such as the aesthetic quality of a print, the way it fits into the general matrix of the collection, the potential it has for describing a particular aspect of art history as well as social history, the way it may relate to other works in the collection by the artist, and so forth.

Since the 1960s, the upsurge in innovative print imagery from workshops in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York and London has prompted the Gallery to concentrate on purchasing examples indicative of this phenomenon. In this respect, acquisition has been made of among others the lithograph/screenprint by Roy Lichtenstein called *Industry and the Arts* (1969), Dorothea Rockburn's *Locus* (1972-75) series of six folded paper works printed from etched and aquatinted plates and three examples of Richard Hamilton's complex images dated 1971, 1979 and 1982. As New Zealand's links with the Australian art community continue to strengthen, it has been desirable and essential to regularly investigate developments in printed art from this source. Bea Maddock, John Dent and Bruce Latimer are among the artists who have been collected to represent this particular school. In time, it would be good to see emphasis given also to prints from Japan, another close neighbour but also a country that has an enviable history of printmaking activity. Prints have the capacity to engage the imagination, to reflect chief concerns of a large number of artists and through their multiple nature can reach out further than other forms of the visual arts. It is for this reason that I believe contemporary international prints perform a vital role in any national collection.

Anne Kirker
Curator of Prints and Drawings
National Art Gallery

The Drawings and Prints Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library



View of a part of the town of Wellington . . . 1841. Charles Heaphy, 1820–1881. Collection Alexander Turnbull Library.

Fitting the Turnbull's collection into a discussion on fine art museums may seem something of a contradiction, since the Turnbull is a research library and the paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture within it are part of a research collection, rather than an art museum. The main visible differences, however, are our lack of emphasis on exhibitions, coupled with a strong emphasis on the provision of illustrations. Otherwise we have much in common with art museums.

Collection Policy

The Drawings and Prints Section of the Library collects actively, adding between 500 and 1000 new items a year to an already large collection of some 40,000 works. We aim to collect graphic records from the earliest period of European settlement in New Zealand to about 1870 or 1880. Early Pacific material is also within our scope. Artistic merit carries less weight with us than the information conveyed by a painting or drawing, so that a frequent question when we are considering something for purchase is "What does it tell us?" The 1870s cut off date relates to the fact that photography became the main medium for factual pictorial recording at about this period.

The cut off date does not apply to some facets of our acquisitions policy: As part of the National Library, we are the recipients, under the Copyright Act, of two copies of every art reproduction published in New Zealand. Naturally, this includes published reproductions of modern paintings. We collect early architectural plans, the majority of which date from 1880–1920; and we acquire current and earlier portraits of notable New Zealanders, especially those prominent in the arts. In addition we acquire items that relate to the wider acquisitions policy of the library as a whole and its specialised fields, such as Katherine Mansfield, Milton and examples of fine printing which happen to fit better into our section than the book collection.

Because of our emphasis on the provision of photographs suitable for illustration we also do our best to record related public and private collections through a file of photographs of works of art, including full coverage of the New Zealand material in such places as the Rex Nan Kivell Collection in Canberra, and the British Library.

We are collecting in order to add to the research value of our collection and to build on our existing strengths. The limits on us are the obvious ones of insufficient funds in an art market of steeply rising prices, and competition from private buyers. Competition from other major institutions is rarely a problem, since phone-calls before an art auction readily establish who is bidding for what. From our standpoint, any rigid set of guidelines on acquisitions policies to cover the whole country would achieve little, since art museums are reasonably aware of each other's specialised fields already and such a policy would be unlikely to encompass every small historical society or City Council. In our experience, the organisations that fail to check another institution's interest before bidding for a watercolour of local historical value are often one-off purchasers. The other flaw in the notion of guidelines to cover the whole country, is the problem of cash flow. Every institution experiences shortages of funds at certain times of the year and must therefore forego an important item, even when it fits clearly into acquisitions policies. That same item is usually better off in another relevant institution than in private hands.

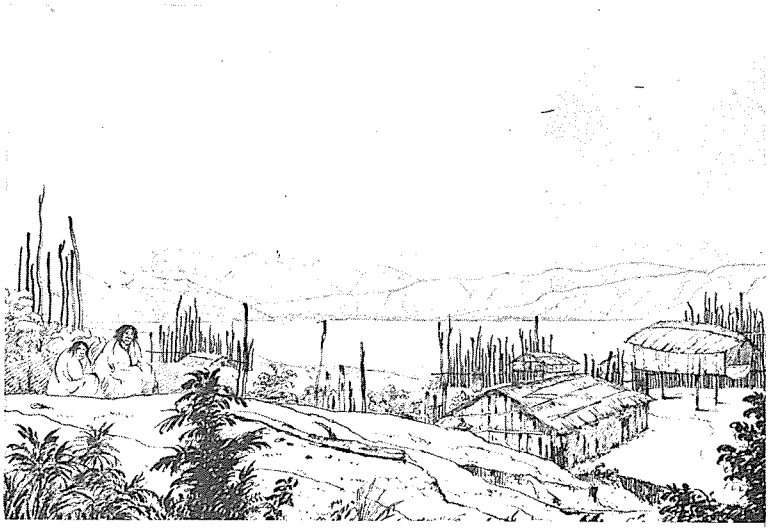
Use of the Collection

The Drawings and Prints Collection is quite heavily used, with between 700 and 800 visitors a year, some 700 reference queries by phone and over 500 letters to be researched and answered. As New Zealand art history becomes more widely taught, we observe an increasing number of art history students among our users. The majority, however, are looking for illustrations for books, articles, films, television, school publications, Lands and Survey park handbooks and audio-visual displays, local and family histories, to choose just a few examples. As more of the collection is photographed, less handling of originals becomes necessary, and we are able to supply either black and white or colour photographs relatively quickly and cheaply.

We are often accused of paying insufficient attention to exhibiting our collection. However, we hold only a few hundred oils and the bulk of the collection is in watercolour, pencil drawing or sketchbook form and is displayable only in low lighting and for brief periods. We are due to move into the new National Library building by the beginning of 1987 and a spacious and properly lit gallery is planned to overcome the inadequacies of our present display area.

Accessibility

Our hours are a little restricted at present (10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday) but we should revert to 9 a.m. opening once we are in the new building, providing our staffing is adequate. The exhibition



From the pah, Pipitea, Port Nicholson, December 1840. William Mein Smith, 1799–1869.

gallery will probably be open in the weekends, as well as during the week.

With only two professional staff and cramped conditions, appointments are necessary for researchers; and we are able to accommodate only one visitor or group of visitors at a time, for both space and security reasons. We also discourage handling of original material unless it is absolutely necessary, but this is not really a restriction, since the majority of users are content to handle photographs; it is quicker and more efficient and protects fragile originals. We are happy to send photocopies of photographs or catalogue cards to enquirers in other parts of the country and overseas. We encourage reproduction of our pictorial material by keeping processing fees as low as possible and waiving reproduction fees for any educational or historical publication.

Final Thoughts

A perennial cry, I know, but it does seem particularly important at present for art museums and their like to have adequate funding for purchase. Speculators are rife at the moment. Many attractive early watercolours materialise at every auction and change hands every few months or so, with constantly rising price tags. They are likely to be on continual display in unsuitable lighting. Yet the norm remains acid mat board, since acid-free board is very much dearer and available only in a very limited range of colours. While the majority of such paintings fall outside our scope, we cannot even afford to buy those that are relevant, and "rescue" them from incorrect handling and storage. Banks and other large organisations are also building up art collections, including early watercolours, some purely for investments, others to adorn brightly-lit offices and boardrooms, accessible only to staff members. Our competitors in the artmarket are well-heeled and we are increasingly dropping out of the race.

Marian Minson
Curator of Drawings & Prints
Alexander Turnbull Library

Maori 'Taonga' and the Art Gallery/Museum Dichotomy

Introduction

Rodney Wilson's article in the last issue of the *AGMANZ Journal* raised the question whether Maori taonga, traditionally collected by museums, should be housed in art galleries. While most art galleries in New Zealand clearly qualify as museums in the general sense of the word, they are often contrasted with 'museums' — meaning 'general' or 'history' or 'natural history' museums — with which they coexist in many cities (e.g. Auckland, New Plymouth and Palmerston North).

While I hesitate to make too much of the gallery/museum dichotomy (many centres already have unified institutions) the dichotomy still clearly exists in New Zealand.

My main argument is that as New Zealand Art Galleries become bicultural, they will inevitably be involved with societies that do not have a concept of 'art' as it is defined in Western European society. Without 'art', 'art museum' becomes 'museum'. Thus the aims and objectives of these museums become increasingly hard to separate from general museums.

Therefore some centres will have to rationalise the objectives of their museums and their art galleries. At present the national institutions have a chance to set some precedents.

The 'Te Maori' Exhibition

This exhibition has acted as a catalyst for many issues.

The exhibition, now touring the USA, is a popular one, and will be keenly sought when it returns to New Zealand.

Among the general museums of New Zealand the exhibition seems to be regarded as something they should be doing more of. It has potential to be more exciting than most of the present 'Maori' displays in New Zealand museums and generally represents a far greater degree of cooperation and coordination than is normal for these museums, especially when dealing with the Maori taonga in their collections.

Meanwhile at least one art gallery in New Zealand seems increasingly to see an exhibition such as Te Maori as being within the scope of its philosophy and operations. This break from a monocultural definition of 'art' is certainly a new deveopment for some New Zealand art galleries.

There are some practical elements of art gallery operations which might justify an argument that they are the places to display Te Maori (if not other Maori taonga), rather than the 'museums' which actually 'house' the objects. These arguments are:

1) Art galleries are better organised to receive a temporary exhibition like this, because they do not usually 'lock up' their display areas with 'permanent' displays that are sometimes literally set in concrete.

2) Art gallery staff are more familiar with the procedures and techniques of travelling exhibitions than museums usually are.

3) Art gallery display standards are often higher than those in many museums. Generally exhibitions play a much greater part in the activities of a 'gallery' than they do in 'museums' (as the name gallery implies). Art gallery displays are usually less crowded than museums, and they achieve this by possessing fewer objects,

and perfecting simple, less person-costly display techniques which allow them to show a few objects well for a short time, rather than many objects poorly for 50 years.

4) Art gallery displays tend to give an object a better chance of being *seen* than museum displays. This seems to me to be partly because art galleries have not felt themselves so obliged to be EDUCATIONAL — a compulsion that forces museums to surround, if not overwhelm, most of their objects with written words.

However, while these purely *practical* factors might be used to support the art gallery case for exhibiting Te Maori, they obscure the true nature of the change that must occur if art galleries exhibit traditional Maori taonga.

My argument is that art galleries, by breaking out of the constraints of Western European Art History, are actually becoming 'museums' in the strict sense of the word.

'Art' and multi-cultural museums

To display an object that was created by another culture, especially an ancient or non-Western one, demands that its significance in the culture of its maker, be acknowledged and explored. Its history, social and spiritual significance must be comprehended.

If you do not do this, and continue to apply Western European aesthetic standards, the results can be bizarre. Easter Island statues could end up being called 'modernistic'; Papua New Guinea art could be called 'primitive'. The Kaitaia lintel might be described as 'fine', whereas a 19th Century Rotorua carving is judged as 'mediocre'.

To display ancient or non-Western objects as 'art' is potentially as bizarre as displaying a carved Maori human figure in a 'gallery of psychology'. While there is no reason why a Maori carving cannot be judged as an example of human psychology, the object is in danger of being debased by its transfer to a category that is entirely inappropriate in its own society. One could only get away with it if there were indeed, somewhere nearby, excellent explanations of the real context of that carving in its own culture.

A recent touring exhibition of Papua New Guinea 'art' fell into this trap. Basically the objects were displayed with little indication of their place in their own society. The exhibition was therefore as odd as a Highland New Guinea village mounting an exhibition of New Zealand teapot lids. A New Zealand visitor would find it very strange, and would have an overwhelming urge to explain the (rather slight) significance that teapot lids have in New Zealand society. He/she would rightly regard the exhibition as saying a lot more about New Guinea Highland society than about New Zealand society.

To some extent the inappropriateness of the New Guinea display was ameliorated by an informative catalogue. However not everyone buys a catalogue and a display technique based on the philosophy that 'the object speaks for itself' simply does not work for a different culture. I have always found it hard to hear art objects speaking, but I think it is particularly hard to understand when they are speaking another language.

Once you are dealing with objects from a different culture, where 'art' is not defined in the way we define it, with its special social and behavioural implications, you have to come to terms with that other culture. The curator *must* become anthropologist. The 'gallery' becomes 'museum'.

So, I argue that, for art galleries to move into the field of very different cultures, they necessarily adopt the philosophy of general museums. Museums have a philosophy that demands that the historical, social, cultural and spiritual significance, personal associations etc of the objects in its collections are paramount. Value judgements should have no place in museums; their philosophy should be multi-cultural. They have not often managed to communicate this through their displays, but this is to some extent a practical failing rather than a philosophical one.

As art galleries broaden their philosophy to incorporate the wider range of values that 'museums' hold, they will lose the singleness of purpose that has to date been a major factor in the efficiency of their operations. Let us hope that they do not become bogged down by the multiplicity of roles they now find themselves committed to playing, as some 'general' museums have.

If the aims and objectives of galleries are inseparable from those of general museums, the logical place of art galleries becomes as art departments of a museum.

Now, in the cases of the many centres that have both an art gallery and a museum, I do not think this is politically practicable, nor necessarily desirable. A great deal of energy and vigour would be lost, and diverted into beaurocratic infighting. What does evolve in the regional centres will be very interesting to see and it will be exciting if a variety of solutions emerge.

However, in the case of the national institutions in Wellington, where there is currently a great philosophical soul searching about the future, the art department option seems worth considering.

The National Museum Institutions

The issue of the future of the national institutions is given some urgency by the Government (present and past) expressing a willingness in principle to build a second museum/gallery building, perhaps by the Wellington waterfront.

Assuming that the old (present) building remains, we are then faced with the question of how to divide the National Museum/Gallery into two (possibly into three or four sometime later, but one new building seems likely to be the limit for a while).

If forced to divide the national institutions into two, option One would be to follow precedent, and carry on with the separation into a National Museum and a National Art Gallery.

Practically, this makes it reasonably difficult to decide where 'Te Maori' should be shown, and I believe the reason for this difficulty is the real philosophical one I have been discussing that art galleries have become indistinguishable from 'museums' once they deal with societies that do not share the concept of 'art'.

Option two might be to redraw the philosophical dividing lines a bit by broadening the concept of an art gallery and thus create (a) a museum of fine pieces to amaze us, drawn from all our cultural heritages, in contrast to (b) a museum of ordinary objects that tell us very important things we should know about — a sort of museum of history, society, folk-culture and nature.

Thus (a) might display Porsches (NZ assembled of course), McCahon's, Brickell pots, the Kaitaia lintel and chevroned amulets, while (b) concerned itself with Minis, landscape paintings, Woolworths material culture, digging sticks, bone toggles and obsidian flakes.

However such a division where, for example, the National Maori Collection would be divided into 'fine' and 'ordinary' objects, would be embarrassingly Eurocentric/Curator-centric — a politically unacceptable elitism. How and by whom would the choice be made?

The third option, which I favour, is first to unite the National Art Gallery and National Museum into one National Museum operation. This would allow more flexibility in the way the collections were used. Since we are now faced with the temporary or short-term problem of dividing the collection (or the exhibitions?) into two physically separate buildings, I personally would advocate a split into a National Museum of the Human Heritage on one hand, and the National Musem of the Natural Heritage on the other.

In this new Museum of New Zealand's Human Heritage, the academic disciplines of history, anthropology and art history would clash creatively with the reality of New Zealand's people today. I believe this

represents a suitably heroic ideal on which to base a new museum.

It might seem that this would lead to the loss of another heroic ideal — the attempt to relate People to Nature (an aim of many of our present museums) or Nature to People (as in Orbell's new book 'The Natural World of the Maori'). However I see no reason why both institutions could not incorporate this aim among their objectives.

I would hate to see the functions of the two institutions remain rigid, and provision must be made in the political structure of the new museum to allow for flexibility and changing of roles in the near future. However, to get an institution off the ground, you need a clear guiding principle, and the concept of a Museum of the Human Heritage of New Zealand would be such a concept. It would give a very positive lead in the direction of eliminating the traditional division of Art Gallery vs Museum, a polarisation that has now had its day, as the last issue of *AGMANZ Journal* and the Te Maori exhibition showed so well.

Acknowledgements

I would particularly like to thank Luit Bieringa, Ken Gorbey and Mina McKenzie for the lively discussions which have prompted me to write this.

Richard Cassels
Manawatu Museum

Notes

Dictionary of New Zealand Biography

W. H. Oliver, Editor; DNZB

At least for the next six years, and probably for quite a few more, people associated with *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* could be looking to museums for assistance and support. Some museums are, in fact, already involved with the project. Many regional Working Parties include members from museum staffs, and some Working Parties are actually based at museums (Taranaki, Gisborne and Hawkes Bay).

It is easy to see why this should be so — museums are treasure houses of historical information, holding collections large and small, and museum staffs are well acquainted with the nature of those collections.

This brief note is a way of giving all museums some background information, and of thanking many for the help they have already given and, it is hoped, will continue to give.

The publication of the Dictionary will begin in 1990. It is an official Sesquicentennial project, financed by the Lottery Fund Board and the Department of Internal Affairs, and serviced by that Department. We plan to publish two volumes in that year — both covering the period from the late 18th to the late 19th century. One will contain all entries for that period — between 500 and 600 of them, ranging in length from 500 to 5000 words. The other will contain only Maori entries in the Maori language — these entries will also appear in English in the larger volume. Volumes to be published subsequently will cover the pre-contact period, and the period from the later 19th century to about 1980.

To get to the publication of these two volumes in six years will not be easy — in both Australia and Canada it took longer to make a start, with a larger staff. The scope and nature of the project is not always appreciated; sometimes even well-informed people assume that six years is plenty of time.

Without a great deal of voluntary help the task would be quite impossible. As many as twenty Working Parties are now in existence, most of them regional in scope, and others attending to special fields — religion, armed services and police, labour, science, the Pacific. This network is now in being, and has begun to work. We hope, through these groups, to give the Dictionary a broad social base. Close to 5000 forms have been distributed to Working Parties through which they can make nominations and supply essential data. In this way people with specialised knowledge will help to form the database from which a preliminary selection of names for successive volumes will be made, and supply information which will be checked and expanded by further research.

At the same time, preliminary steps have been taken to set up a Maori network. We are coping, too, with another major historical problem: how to secure an adequate representation of women. For though a biographical dictionary must have an elitist character, we are determined not to be overwhelmed by politicians and runholders. The important people will be there; but so too will be a number of representative figures, and as many as we can find of the colourful and the unusual.

Of course, not all the nominations will find their way into the published volumes. But all names and information will be stored, both on paper and on a computing system. Thus the database should evolve into a permanent biographical archive for research. This is one way in which we hope to make some return for all the voluntary assistance we are receiving.

Over the next two years the selection of names for inclusion in the early volumes will continue. Although writing will commence shortly, a great deal of research work lies ahead. We will be very grateful for any help museums can give us — ideas, information, and perhaps publicity. We are still searching for interesting 19th century women for example. If museums wanted to appeal to the public, by mounting a display, we can supply a small kit-set as the nucleus. Please write to the Secretary, DNZB, Internal Affairs, Private Bag, Wellington for publicity material or further information.

Southland Museum and Art Gallery team

relaxing "in the pot" in the new History Gallery after it was opened on December 4 1984, by the Governor General Sir David Beattie. The large gallery features many aspects of the development of Southland from the 1790's to about 1940. The objects are displayed in association with the prolific use of large photographs and only a minimum of material is behind glass. The total gallery has been designed to be flexible and easily changed to emphasise a particular theme. So far it has proved very popular, attracting large crowds. Some of the items are working examples, such as a 3-tonne lighthouse beacon. However, we've nae got the genuine Hokonui still warmed up yet!

Photo: L. C. Hazley

Union List of New Zealand Newspapers Published Before 1940

compiled by D. R. Harvey

This new publication lists New Zealand holdings of newspapers published in this country before 1940. It lists holdings of original newspapers and microfilm copies and locations of known indexes. Entries are arranged geographically according to place of publication, then alphabetically by the latest title used up to 1940. It includes a comprehensive title index. For each title the following bibliographic information is given:

- Dates of first and last issues. The lack of a final date indicates that the newspaper is still published, or, ceased after 1939.
- Place of publication, if it differs from the place under which the title is entered.
- Previous titles, with dates of title changes.
- Frequency, with dates of alteration.

This 94 p. A4 format publication will be invaluable to librarians, museum curators and all others who wish to find out which newspapers have been preserved and where they are located.

	New Zealand	Overseas
Paper ISBN 0 477 06044 7	$20	$25
Microfiche ISBN 0 477 06045 5	$10	$12

Available March 1985 from: Publications Officer National Library of New Zealand Private Bag Wellington

AGMANZ Survey Results

In 1983 AGMANZ Council circularised a survey to all member institutions which is approximately 100. The survey asked basic questions which Council felt would be helpful for various reasons. Data was received from 61 museums and art galleries and 20 house museums, giving an 81% return which does present figures lower than the actuals. The data refers to the "latest financial year", which was 1982, when the survey was conducted. The results will always be about two years retrospective but as the survey is intended to be an annual one trends will be apparent as time goes on, which will be additional helpful information. The 1983 survey is being compiled now and incorporates extra data which should provide a more complete picture. The following brief details have been extracted for publication and any detailed enquiries may be directed through the secretary.

Attendances

The total for 1982 for all museums was approximately 3.8 million, which exceeds the population of New Zealand. This figure is conservative as some institutions do not keep attendance records and this survey only covers institutional members of AGMANZ. Some museums do not keep a breakdown of adults and children, but for the 16 with these records they range from 84% to 34% but most are consistent around 60% adults.

Staff Numbers

A total of 1,399 people worked last year in museums and art galleries, including house museums, etc. Again this figure is much lower than the actual, especially honorary staff. (See table below.)

Opening Hours

Hours open to the public for 51 institutions, other than house museums, etc, varied considerably from two to 63 hours per week. Figures from seventeen main provincial institutions vary from 31–48 hours but most are in the low 40's. Possibly some standardisation of hours could be of benefit to the travelling visitor.

	Museums & Art Galleries	House Museums and others	TOTAL
ATTENDANCES	3,570,289	271,695	3,841,984
Staff Numbers			
Permanent full time:	322	59	381
Permanent part time:	111	55	166
Honorary full & part time:	421	36	457
Education Officer(s) full & part time:	32		32
PEP workers	328	35	363
TOTAL	1,214	185	1,399

Collator Russell J. Beck

Conservation/National Library

The Conservation Unit of the National Library has produced a list of about 200 Library of Congress topical subject headings relating to the conservation of cultural property. The list is intended for searching for monographs and to a lesser extent for serials for conservators, curators, researchers and librarians serving them. A list of headings has become essential for use where the NZ Bibliographic Network or microfiche from it is the main catalogue because the conservation oriented component of the heading is not part of the 'a' subfield.

Users of hard copy catalogues will also find it a valuable aid.

Readers wanting copies of the list should write to:- The Conservation Unit, National Library of New Zealand, Private Bag, Wellington. Ref: L.C. Subject Headings

Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand (Inc.)

PRESIDENT:
Mr G. S. Park
Auckland Institute and Museum
Private Bag
Auckland

SECRETARY-TREASURER:
Mrs Elaine Dewhirst
10 Military Road
P.O. Box 45-067
Epuni
Lower Hutt

EDITOR *AGMANZ JOURNAL*:
Mrs J. Bieringa
13 Hataitai Road
Hataitai
Wellington

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