

A bi-monthly publication containing news, views and reviews of activities at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

Number 7.

January / February 1980

Resume of OutReach Programme, 1979

The Gallery OutReach programme has, during the past three to four months been steadily expanding its scope and testing the community response with quite gratifying results.

There is no longer any real doubt about the Sunday concert programme, as patronage to the In-Gallery concert on the first Sunday of each month grows steadily. The concerts commenced in June with a season of contemporary electronic music followed by several classical choral and instrumental concerts. In the new year we plan to include folk and jazz seasons in what will be a particularly varied and lively programme. As a venue for young artists keen to acquire performance skills, or for groups interested in extending their reputation in the city, the McDougall Gallery Concerts provide an ideal venue and one that is non-competitive with other musical organisations. The range of our programmes would be considerably extended if we had a Gallery piano. Perhaps a member of the Friends Society might know of a suitable instrument we could have on loan at the Gallery.

Another Gallery activity has been the selection and training of a team of volunteer Gallery Guides who conduct visitors on guided tours through the Gallery exhibitions each Saturday and Sunday afternoon. We plan to extend the service to Wednesday in 1980 and we will be commencing a training session in February and March so anyone interested in art and the Gallery and with time to spare for this very worthwhile service, is urged to contact us so they can be recruited for the 1980 season.

Other aspects involving the public in the Gallery have been the public-participating projects such as the 'Weave-In' we held during Labour Weekend in conjunction with the Weaving Exhibition. These proved very successful ventures and the amusement and pleasure expressed by Gallery visitors make this type of OutReach activity one which we shall try to extend in the coming year.

As a community extension programme, however, OutReach is also involved in taking programmes out into the community. We have found the best response to date, not as we had expected in the suburban community centres or social clubs, but in communities such as hospitals and Aged People's homes.

Passages from prose and poetry works are specially chosen with the interests and backgrounds of the audiences acting as the rationale behind each selection and are accompanied by songs and audience participation. A few works from the collection are taken and discussed as well.

During the year we also took small exhibitions of selected works from the permanent collection out into commercial and industrial venues with a most enthusiastic response. It is certainly hoped that we can do more of this in the future, our chief limitation being a properly secure and supervised space with tolerable heating and lighting conditions.

One of the most exciting prospects in the OutReach programme is the use of the Threepenny Folly musical company in the Gallery holiday programme and OutReach programme. With the assistance of the four very skilful musicians and performers in the company the Gallery plans to bring programmes of Celtic part singing, theatrical sketches involving European folk-tales and public-participation dance programme to a series of Gallery performances and to a wide variety of OutReach venues including community centres, schools, kindergartens, hospitals and homes of various types. We also envisage street theatre performances by

the group so you may expect to see them in Cathedral Square, Brighton Mall and in local shopping complexes. Certainly OutReach is extending itself out into the community.

Other activities of OutReach include the organisation of brief seasons in Christchurch by visiting artists. Gary McCormick, the New Zealand poet visited the city in November giving readings and recitals of his poetry at a variety of city venues. Factory staff were entertained in lunch hour performances and the South Island Writers Association, joined the general public in the opportunity to meet and hear this artist. Another visitor brought to the city as part of the OutReach programme was Billy Apple, the frequently publicised expatriate New Zealand artist now living in New York. Although the Gallery did not have the space available for him in the McDougall, OutReach programme organised a place for his work and hosted his informative slide lecture.

And last, but most certainly not least, the gallery has—with the assistance of the special work schemes administered by the Department of Labour—employed four painters upon large-scale decoration projects at the Christchurch Public Hospital. Here the OutReach programme has dovetailed in with the ambitions of the North Canterbury Hospital Board's "Murals and Aesthetics Committee" to



Gary McCormick, OutReach poetry reading in Cathedral Square

commence work on the first four, of what we hope will be continuing mural projects at the hospital. There is no doubt that hospitals can be amongst the most forbidding of institutions and that visitors and patients alike can be daunted by the ominous spaces that sometimes prevail. If by this agency we can help relieve some of the pressures acting upon the sick, and the friends and relatives of the sick, whilst providing challenging projects for unemployed artists, we will have realised one of our ambitions.

The 1980 Programme

Last year was a busy year. Behind the scenes we completed the check-accessioning project begun at the end of 1978 and in so doing not only scrutinised and updated all existing records, but brought the total of accessioned items from 1700 to 3654. The records were, furthermore, checked against the works themselves and now we can report with considerable satisfaction that the City's entire collection has been photographed. A second set of accession cards have been completed, an iconographic (subject) index has been begun, slides and books catalogued, artists archives established, a good nucleus of photographic equipment set up, substantial progress made on the provision of conservation facilities (much equipment has arrived and is arriving and 'Works on Paper' conservation is well underway) and new essential workshop and education supplies obtained. We have, however, far to go. The gallery has a major conservation programme to be tackled and further delay can only mean further deterioration. We have to provide better storage facilities, improved environment and lighting conditions in half the gallery, not to mention addressing ourselves to the critical space problems that necessitate the storing of so much of our collection, the ad hocism of technical services, and the undertaking of educational activities in the most trying conditions. The gallery is bursting at its seams. Every corner of space that can be used has been called into service as offices, prep rooms, storage, workshops etc. Not a square centimeter of potentially usable space is not being used. Sadly it is obvious and inevitable that the programme and service we offer to the city, to the province, indeed much further than that, will continue to suffer and to be compromised during 1980 and beyond as a result of these conditions.

1979 was a busy year "out front" as well. Readers of this *Bulletin* will have noted that the year was marked by an especially valuable acquisition programme. Many important purchases and valuable gifts were received. As reported in this issue, the OutReach programme came into its own and now can only go on from strength to strength as its full potentials begin to be developed. But we also showed a large number and extraordinary variety of exhibitions. Some may even say, too many. Certainly that programme was at the expense of the display of permanent collection, but we believe, however, that a lively and varied programme is of the utmost importance and for this reason the policy to promote such a rapidly changing diversity of material was pursued. Furthermore it

remains a sad fact that so much of the collection must undergo conservation treatment before it can be shown in its optimum condition. 1980 is going to be a full year as well. The number of exhibitions planned is, none-the-less, smaller than for the previous year. It is our intention to provide greater interpretative and supportive material for each programme and this means that it simply is not going to be possible to handle as many differing exhibitions with the existing staff numbers. We will continue to rotate the collection through the galleries. In the Print Room this will, as before, mean a programme of theme exhibitions drawn from the 'Works on Paper' collection, but we also will establish some semi-permanent rooms rather in the manner of the European Painting room. Recognising one of our greatest strengths we are to establish a Van der Velden room in the centre-south gallery. We will also mount an expatriates room (Hodgkins, McIntyre, Merton), a pre-1890 room, an Asian room, (a 17th century Coromandel Screen on loan to the gallery and ceramics from the collection) as well as others.

Whilst the policy for this year will be to place a somewhat greater emphasis on the collection, we will on one occasion

employ the gallery entirely for our first venture into the area of what might be considered sociological/thematic exhibitions—'The Street', our contribution to Arts Festival and for the rest of March and April as well. It is a large scale collaboration exercise for artists, sociologists, townplanners and others—it may be provocative—we hope it will be a useful chance for reflection, and will help our public in the forming of personal ideas about the future of this important part of our social and aesthetic environment.

We are looking forward to 1980. The programme is different from 1979 and we are optimistic about its success. We hope that you will feel as positively about it as we do. In any case the patronage and support of our "Friends" is especially gratifying and we trust that your support will continue during this year and, indeed, during this new decade into which we have stepped.



Unloading the 17th Century coromandel Screen.

**Faces from old New Zealand:
C. F. Goldie**

Included among the Goldie works held by the Gallery are several portraits which represent some of the artist's earliest Maori studies on canvas. The painting "A Hot Day" is characteristic of this. It was one of the works painted following the artist's first sketching trip to Rotorua in 1901.

Early in April of the following year this painting and two others "Sammy-Rotorua" and "Caught Napping" were sent to Christchurch, to the Canterbury Society of Arts for inclusion in the Society's Annual Exhibition. All three works aroused much interest from the visiting public and Art Society members alike; so much so that at a committee meeting of the Society on 16th of April 1902 Dr Jennings moved a resolution recommending that the Society purchase the painting "A Hot Day". Mr James Jamieson seconded the motion and it was duly agreed to purchase the portrait at the artist's price of 25 guineas.

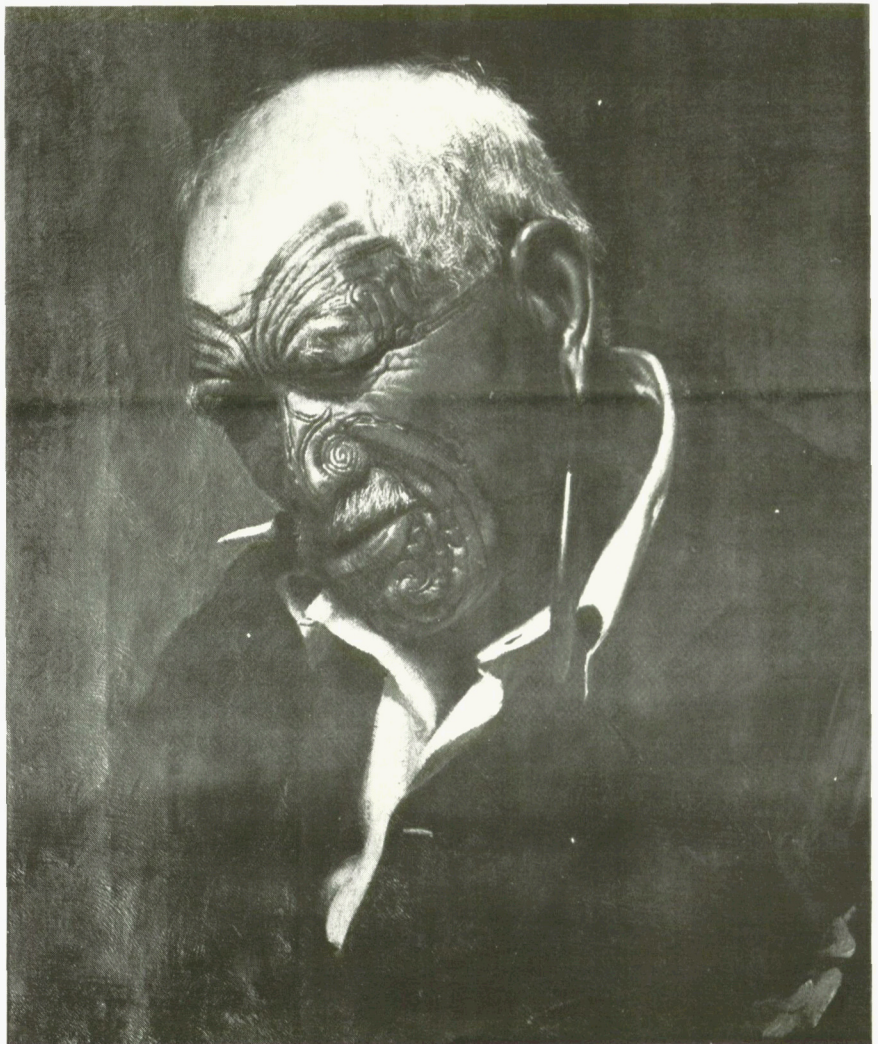
After its purchase this painting remained in the Canterbury Society of Arts' permanent collection until 1932 when it was presented with many other works to this gallery. By that time "A Hot Day" like many early portraits by Goldie, was well known throughout New Zealand and even further afield, having by then been reproduced many times in the form of

reproduction prints and post-cards.

This painting is a work which in many ways—through Goldie's somewhat Romantic imagination—sums up the sad melancholic introspective aspect of the Maori at the beginning of our century. It is a statement reflecting a tired and expiring culture. The old culture, the *raison d'être* of Maoridom having been undermined by missionary and colonial activity. The faces Goldie painted were those from a dying race in New Zealand's history, one which within a few decades would vanish completely leaving only the remnants of its culture.

In many respects we must be thankful for Goldie's activity as a recorder, an activity which would not have come about had he remained content with painting portraits of Auckland's Post-Colonials. As he once stated, he was "utterly bored with making portraits of the money grubbing pakeha merchants." Goldie had a definite empathy with the Maori and was greatly respected by them. Most of his sitters refused to sit for any other artist. His fluency in the Maori language was a strong asset, as was his friendship with the painter Thomas Ryan who was married to the daughter of a prominent Maori chief. Goldie and Ryan had studied together in Paris during the 1890s and on returning to New Zealand the latter began to operate a tourist launch service on Lake Taupo. Both he and his wife did much to establish Goldie's success with many of the tribes in the centre of the North Island, tribes that had refused artists to either paint or photograph their members.

Over the years since the artist's death in 1947, much speculation has occurred concerning his painting methods, and it is often considered that he used photo-sensitive materials to achieve his realistic effects. The degree of dependence which he placed on the camera is uncertain, but it is known that he did use his half plate camera as an aid for recording intricate details of moko and facial tattooing. Whatever the means Goldie employed however, as a recorder of what he saw and knew he stepped beyond mere photographic realism. Visitors who view the present hanging in the gallery will certainly recognise this for themselves.



Charles F. Goldie, "A hot day", oil, 1901.

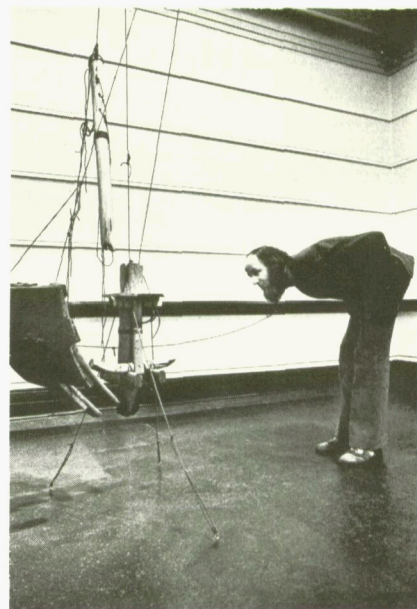
Forthcoming Exhibitions

Gallery People

December 14, 1979—January 14, 1980.

People of all ages and from all backgrounds use the gallery: their gallery, your gallery, our gallery, everybody's gallery. You, the co-owners, are a varied and intensely interesting group and you and your trips to the gallery using our facilities and taking from our programmes and collections form the lifeblood of our existence. Without a public we are a repository for cultural objects, a resting place, no more. But when the first visitor crosses the threshold to take from that which the gallery has to offer, we have begun to assume our greater function, that of an agency in the exchange between artists and spectator, and agency of communication as the

works of art themselves are. During 1979, while you participated in our programme, while you have contributed the 'consumer' component of that exchange of sensibilities without which an art experience has no existence, you have—perhaps unwittingly—been providing the source of another event. Glenn Jowitt, a photographer working at the gallery during the year, has observed your comings, doings and goings through his camera's lens. With this magic looking glass the gallery looks back at those who look at us. We present you—in all your variety—for your own scrutiny; you the "consumer" but now also the "consumed".



"Gallery people", the gallery looking back at you. Glenn Jowitt.

Richard Smith February 1—28, 1980

The work of Richard Smith, a British painter, is not widely known in New Zealand even though he enjoys an acclaimed reputation as a major innovator in Britain and America.

A product of the effervescent Britain of the '50s that produced British 'Pop', a world of Beatles, Rock'n'Roll, Carneby Row and the new wave fashions of Ossie Clark, with his talented Royal College friends: David Hockney, Lawrence Alloway, Richard Hamilton and Peter Blake, Richard Smith was attracted to the excesses of popular culture. Smith became aware that techniques of mechanical reproduction had radically altered our vision. People now perceived nature second hand, through the media—a world where the soft-focus blur of green in glossy ads for mentholated cigarettes metaphorically equated cool tobacco with the freshness of a spring landscape. This observation opened up the possibility of a representational art based, not on the observation of nature, but on the imitation of images generated through reproduction.

It was in New York, in the late '50s, that Smith found the scale and stimuli he needed. While Claes Oldenburg celebrated the lower East side of Manhattan, Smith was drawn to the affluent pastel chic of Bonwit's windows (occasionally decorated by Andy Warhol who was later to become the mogul of American Pop), to brilliant Times Square billboards, colour photographs, cinemascope movies and the barrage of seductive advertising imagery.

The random brush stroke techniques Smith used before New York gradually coalesced into patterns and shapes with soft edges, circular motifs reminiscent of spotlights on a stage bisected or quartered, capturing something of the excitement, the optimism, the rush and movement that Smith felt in New York. The paintings rapidly increased in size often taking on the form of environments, taut canvas over oddly built stretchers

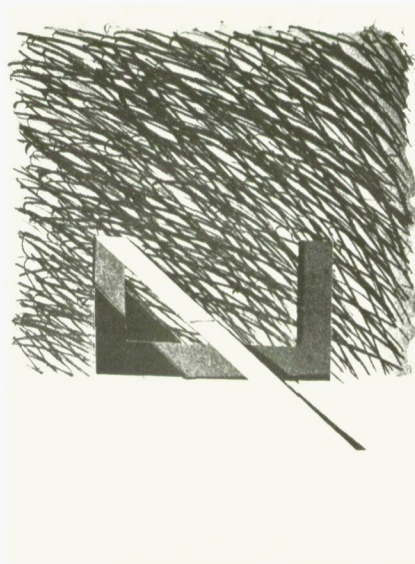
with protruding corners and sides.

In 1966, feeling the party was over, in an America torn by Race relations and the Vietnam war, Smith returned to Britain. There he developed his paintings to their distinctive 'kite' appearance—canvas stretched over aluminium rods with broad washes of applied colour. He also expanded his interest in related graphics and multiples which, with printing techniques and drawing, have always been analogous to processes and subjects in his paintings.

Visitors to this gallery between February 1 and 28, 1980 will have the opportunity to view retrospectively the multiples and prints produced by Richard Smith. Besides being provocative works in their own right, they provide an excellent means of examining how Smith forms his ideas for paintings.

Speaking of the relationship painting to printmaking Smith says, in the fully illustrated catalogue which accompanies this exhibition, "*Painting, drawing and printmaking are all equally capable of incepting ideas which can transfer to other mediums, so though not necessarily as direct as painting prints or printing paintings the processes are closely bound.*"

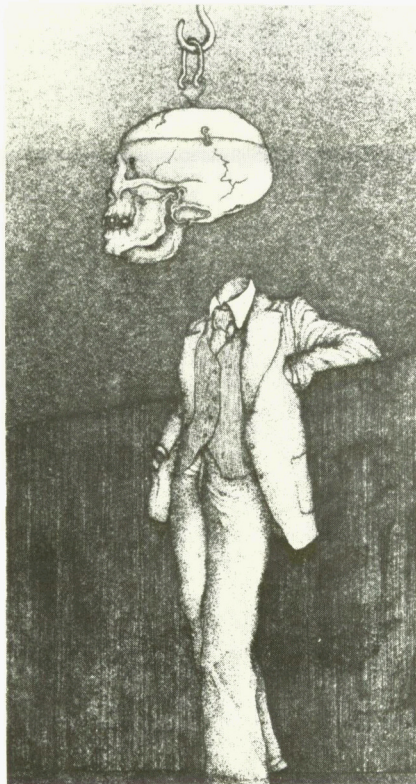
Richard Smith, "Bramble", lithograph 1970.



B. V. Cleavin 'Society of Friends' Print

Copies are still available of the etching/aquatint *Death and the Young Man* especially produced for our Society Members by this major Christchurch printmaker.

Printed in an edition of 40 examples, each print is on Velin Arches Blanc 150gsm 38 x 28cm paper and has an image size of 35.5 x 17cm. The price to members is \$25 only—in accordance with our "no sales of art works" policy we would repeat that this is a non-profit making venture aimed only at providing members with the opportunity of a significant work of art at a very manageable price.



Weekend Gallery Hours

At its December 17 Meeting the City Council approved new weekend hours for the gallery. These are as follows:

Summer

November 1—April 30 Saturday / Sunday
1:00—5:30 P.M.

Winter

May 1—October 31 Saturday / Sunday
12:00—4:30 P.M.

Society of Friends Membership

The membership of our Society is still significantly smaller than that which might be expected of a city the size of Christchurch—the moreso when you consider how well patronised the gallery is and how proud our citizens are of their cultural inclinations.

May we urge you, once again, to canvas for new members on our behalf. A membership form is enclosed—you can use this to renew your own subscription and to purchase a gift subscription for a friend. We would be grateful if you would also use it to instruct us to mail other potential members.

We would like you to consider that by taking out membership you are demonstrating your support of this institution. Please help us to help the community.

Important Notice

We look forward to the day, not too far off it is to be hoped—when, with adequate storage facilities completed, we can offer our public immediate and easy access to any work in our collection. In the meantime, however, we have reluctantly decided that whilst we can display an *accession card photograph* for any object you care to see, we will no longer be able to give access to the works in storage for casual requests. This decision has been made *only after careful consideration*. Until storage conditions are improved the risks to which works are exposed whilst searching for others are too great to allow us to permit unnecessary movement of pictures and other objects. We know that you will understand that this decision is motivated entirely by a deep concern for the wellbeing of the City's collection and we trust that the improved conditions are not too far off.

Acquisitions

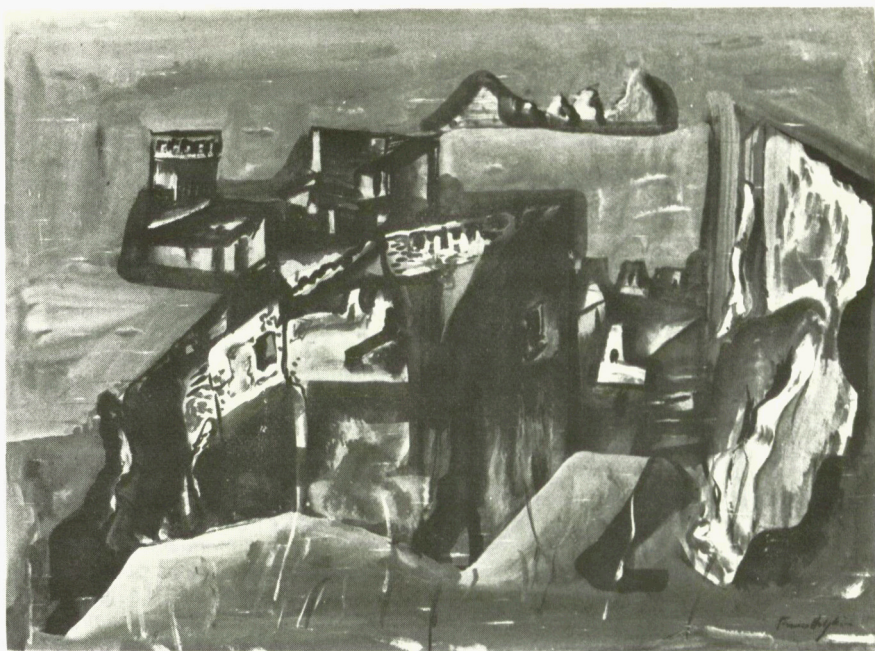
The following works have been recently gifted to the gallery.

1
 From the Contemporary Art Society, London;
 Bernard Cohen, *Untitled*, 1975. Gouache.
 Bruce Naumann, *War*, 1971. Lithograph 30/100
 Richard Serra, *Untitled*, 1972. Screenprint 42/100

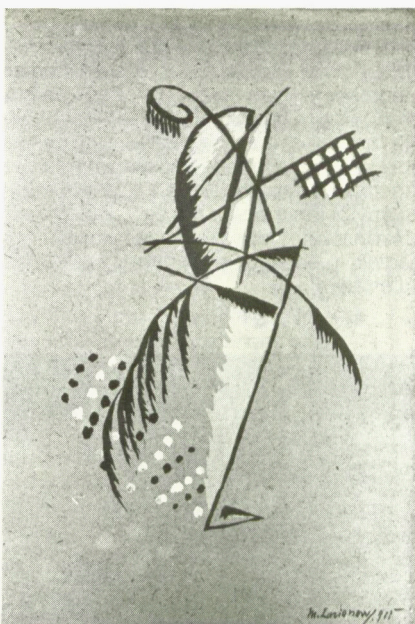
2
 From Mr & Mrs Maurice Ash, Totnes, England
 Frances Hodgkins, *Phoenician ruins*. Gouache.

3
 From Mrs Anita Muling, Christchurch. A signed numbered copy (65/400) of *Gontcharova Larionov: L'art Décoratif Théâtral Moderne*, Edition. *La Cible*, Paris 1919, containing 5 silkscreen prints and 2 lithographs by Michel Larionov and 3 silkscreen prints and 2 lithographs by Nathalie Gontcharova, as well as 2 signed and dated gouache drawings from 1915 and 1916 by Larionov.

4
 From Ms Jule Einhorn and other participants in the gallery's OutReach intaglio *Print Workshop* held earlier this year, a portfolio of prints by K. Coolahan, M. Reed, J. Einhorn, T. Thornley, B. Cleavin, P. Ransom, D. Copland, J. Zusters.



Frances Hodgkins, "Phoenician ruins", gouache.



Michel Larionov, "Untitled gouache drawing", 1915.



Michael Reed, "The collector", etching.

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 27000
 364
 360
 92
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 208
 185