



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

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### Friends of the Future

The Robert McDougall Gallery's increased range of activities over the past few years could not be managed efficiently were it not for the assistance of a group of volunteers who give their time to act as gallery guides, Bulletin folders, exhibition attendants and general helpers.

They have made the task of staging major exhibitions like 100 Years of European Painting and Ikon: Inspired Art easier by providing numerous services. They are indeed Friends of the Robert McDougall Gallery.

I am sure that these volunteers represent only a small portion of the goodwill that exists towards the gallery in the community and that there are many members of the Friends organisation who have skills and time they would willingly offer if asked.

Grateful as we are for the assistance we already receive, we are concerned that opportunities for wider involvement in the affairs of the gallery should be available to a greater number of Canterbury supporters of the visual arts than is

represented by the present three hundred financial members of the Friends.

In short, the Gallery would like to see both the numbers and scope of activities of the Friends organisation increased with a range of interesting initiatives offering to the Gallery from the membership itself.

A move in the direction of supporters having a greater say in the Gallery's activities would be for the Friends becoming an incorporated Society. Formed to support the gallery, Friends Inc. would have its own management committee overseeing projects initiated in collaboration with the gallery staff or independently by the organisation itself.

Organising social functions, raising funds for special items of equipment or works to be donated to the collection, planning activities and lectures for the membership are the kinds of involvement an active organisation could provide.

Friends of the Gallery Inc. would of

course be funded by the subscription of its members, responsible for its own expenditure and income.

Taking part in the work of the Friends would provide satisfying spare time activity for gallery supporters, perhaps in retirement, whose special knowledge, enthusiasm for the visual arts, experience and judgement would be of immense value to the Robert McDougall Gallery.

To evaluate interest in this suggestion we propose a simple survey, a telephone poll, so to speak. We invite readers, members of the Friends or not, to phone the Gallery, 791-660 ext 484 or 485, and indicate yes or no to the question:

"Should there be an incorporated, self administering organisation formed to support the work of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery?"

Phone in today

*John Coley*

### Progress Report

The task of excavating the basement area of the gallery is more complicated than it might appear to the casual observer. Before the floor level can be lowered, sealed and the walls clad, considerable work underpinning the foundations has to be carried out. This is well under way and massive reinforced seatings under the original outer walls have been put in place with more than 10<sup>3</sup>m of concrete.

Clerk of Works Brian Mitchell, Foreman Craig Fraser and his team, John Kennedy, Bryan Seager and Ian Gracie dig on.



*From left: Bryan Seager, Ian Gracie, Craig Fraser and John Kennedy.*

## Murals from World War II

Peter Ireland recently assisted in the delicate work of removing two murals from the walls of the Returned Servicemen's Rehabilitation League's diningroom at the League's Riccarton Road premises.

The murals were originally painted during the second world war for the Army, Navy and Airforce Club, a recreation centre for off-duty servicemen and women which was situated above Pannell's shoe store in Cashel Street.

The murals were commissioned and painted separately, one of the work of Richard Wallwork and Colin Lovell-Smith (fragment illustrated), and the second painted by a rising young artist in his middle twenties, W.A. Sutton.

Both works graced the ANA until the end of the war when the club closed. They were then moved to the new Returned Servicemen's Rehabilitation League centre in Riccarton and installed at opposite ends of the diningroom.

The Lovell-Smith Wallwork mural is painted on linoleum while the Sutton work is executed on what appears to be an early inferior kind of "Pinex".

Mr Sutton recently recalled that due to wartime economics he had to paint



Mural by Richard Wallwork & Colin Lovell-Smith

his mural, a very patriotic piece illustrating the many facets of life in the armed services, "on a substance resembling biscuits".

The fragile nature of the panels was apparent as Peter Ireland and League employees carefully detached them from the wall.

Also clear to see was the remarkable talent of the young Sutton. His skill at grouping and rendering complex groups of figures and other elements over a surface 10m x 1.2m showed extraordinary technical command. Mr Sutton acknowledges the mural shows the influence of Frank Brangwyn whose shadow loomed large in the art schools between the world wars.

The murals will go to the conservation department of the Dunedin City Gallery for restoration.

## Too Late!

A group supporting a North Island Gallery recently wrote to W.A. Sutton asking if it would be possible for them to acquire examples of the artist's early work.

Mr Sutton, now in his seventh decade, replied with his customary courtesy that he regretfully couldn't help as .... "I'm no longer doing early works."

## Henry Moore Tapestries

Disappointment at the Italian Government's decision not to allow the Pompeii exhibition to come to New Zealand will be offset to some extent by the news that there is a real possibility of an important exhibition of Henry Moore tapestries coming here in 1982.

Enquiries are being made with the Victoria and Albert Museum, the exhibition's originating gallery, for the eight works and supporting designs to come to this country.

There are eight large (around 208 x 261 cms) tapestries woven by five weavers of the West Dean College, West Sussex, working under the overall supervision of Eva-Louise Svensson, director of the Tapestry Studio.

Since there is no approved way for a tapestry weaver to translate an artist's design from a small piece of paper to a full size working cartoon and no approved way in which to select and assemble the hundreds of coloured wools needed to make it, the weaver has to choose and interpret the drawing, a procedure that Henry Moore himself has responded to enthusiastically.

"If it were just going to be another colour reproduction, I wouldn't be interested", he has said, "It is

because it is a translation from one medium to another and has to be different that you get the surprise. It is not like the bronze-caster who has to produce an absolutely exact copy or it is thrown away; the beauty of tapestry is that it is different, an interpretation and that is to me the excitement and the pleasure."

It is intended to amplify the exhibition with drawings by Moore from New Zealand collections.

## May School Holiday Programme

During the May school holidays a puppet programme will be presented in the gallery by The Flying Hat Company.

Monday to Friday from May 11th to 22nd there will be two performances each weekday at 11am and 2pm.

Admission as always to the gallery's OutReach Programme is free presenting another enjoyable facet to the McDougall's varied programme.

## Graham Snowden Leaves

Graham Snowden has left the gallery's staff having decided to make his future in Auckland where eventually he intends to establish a business manufacturing specialised graphic equipment.

In the two years that Graham was Gallery Technician, he achieved an impressive reputation for the high standard of his work a notable example of which was the reconstruction of many of the pieces in the memorial exhibition of the late Carl Sydow's sculpture.

Graham's last major undertaking for the gallery was designed and building elements of the 3D Project and fitting out the art trailer for the exhibition's tour of New Zealand.

We wish Graham well for the future and record our appreciation of his service to the gallery.

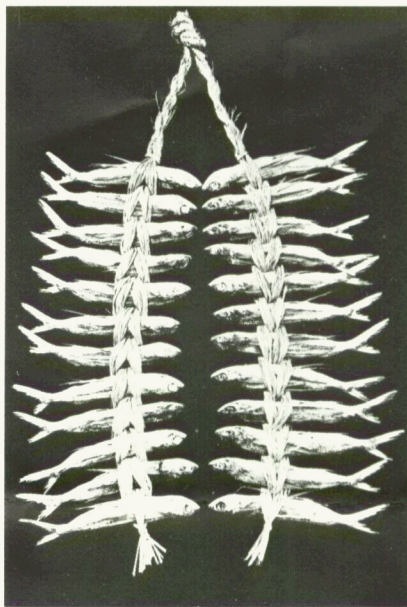
## Tsutsumu: The Art of the Japanese Package

May 1-31

No one can deny that the modern system of mass production has made our daily life comfortable and easy. But perhaps we should pause to reflect upon how in earlier times, items of value and fragility were paced and to ask ourselves if we have lost something in exchange for so much convenience.

The exhibition "Tsutsumu: The Art of the Japanese Package" provides just such an opportunity for gallery visitors. The 221 items in this exhibition allow us to see how Japanese packages assumed their shapes over years of unselfconscious use and experimentation to such a degree where packaging is now considered another form of Japan's cultural heritage.

Hideyuki Oka the author of the lavishly illustrated catalogue which accompanies this exhibition explains .... There are two clear sources of the Japanese package. The first which has been called the utilitarian, is when an object was wrapped in whatever material lay at hand. An example would be bamboo leaves around rice dumplings or the use of oak leaves for wrapping rice cakes. Somewhat more complicated is the rope wrapping for dried fish which permits just the right amount of ventilation, preserving the fish for up to six months and the package can be unwrapped a bit at a time as it is needed. As wrappings they are in no way self-conscious and are whispered evidence of the Japanese ability to create beauty from the simplest products of nature.



*Japanese packaging*

The second recognisable source is called handcraft, which involves more highly developed techniques and more refined aesthetic sensibilities. Departing from considerations of sheer utilitarianism, the craftsmen endeavour to refine their methods and did so in a spirit of artistry. In time techniques became so sophisticated, the art became professionalised, employing artisans working in old long-established shops, who lifted the art of packaging to such a level that often the packages had more charm and more value than the actual contents of the package.

Traditionally the Japanese package has been made of natural materials such as wood, bamboo, straw, and clay or derivatives of these materials such as paper cloth and ceramics. Always these natural materials were used in such a way as to show their freshness and their natural textures and to enhance the object they were protecting. It is important to note that in each case the natural material is not used exactly as it originally existed but is re-created in some form or another by the hand of man.

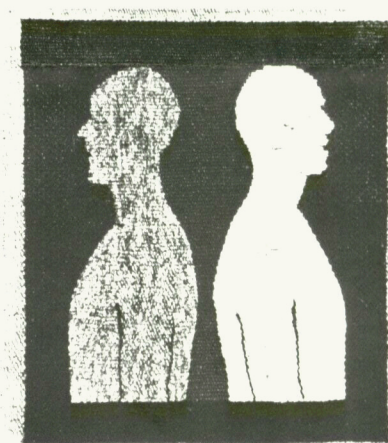
Another characteristic common to many forms of traditional Japanese packaging is that of cleanliness. The act of packaging an object becomes a ritual of purification of distinguishing the contents of the package from all similar objects which have not been purified. Traditional packaging is thus a reflection of Japanese psychology which doubtless accounts for much of its orderliness and tidiness.

This exhibition has been on an extensive tour of the United States and Australia and presently tours New Zealand with the assistance of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand. The exhibition as it will appear in this gallery will be expanded to include displays on contemporary New Zealand packaging as well as an exhibition of traditional and contemporary Japanese woodblock prints from the permanent collection. Catalogues available at \$5 each.

## Small Tapestries May 8-June 21

Tapestry weaving is almost as ancient as weaving itself. The most universal of all weaving techniques, it has been found in Persia, Mesopotamia and Syria. The history of this particular technique within western civilisation can be traced back 3,300 years to Egypt, to the fragmentary pieces from the tomb of Thutmosis IV, dating from 1420-1411 BC.

Although the tapestry technique was (and still is) a universal technique, it reached its most refined and sophisticated expression in Europe in the Middle Ages through the eighteenth century. It is therefore of no surprise the technique became synonymous with the large, colourful hangings it produced. The style and choice of subject for these tapestries related very much to those used in paintings — indeed paintings were often copied and major painters of the period were commissioned to design tapestries. Throughout they were dominated by human figures, religion, mythology, allegory, history and romance, as well as aspects of daily life.



*Outward by Fiona Mathison*

The purpose served by tapestries has always been that of covering walls, especially those of cold and damp European churches, castles and palaces and were also used to line the streets on great occasions.

Tapestry weaving differs from other weaving techniques in that it carries

its coloured wefts in each case wound around a bobbin, only as far as they are required by a given pattern. The wefts never run the full width of the piece but rather the extent of the colour area. In addition to this tapestry weaving covers its warp threads completely.

While tapestry manufacture flourished in Europe, where entire communities were devoted to their creation, the names of their towns often becoming synonymous with a special technique, the English chose to import their tapestries from Flanders. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century when William Morris founded a factory at Merton Abbey in Surrey, could the English contribution to the tradition of tapestry manufacture be considered.

As a direct result of this important workshop the fourth Marquis of Bute established the Dovecot Studios in Edinburgh in 1912 — now known as the Edinburgh Tapestry Company — which is seen as being the beginning of tapestry manufacture in Scotland.

The first tapestries destined for Bute ancestral homes were large traditional historical scenes, but after the Second World War work on these large panels stopped and a number of designs were obtained from leading contemporary artists such as Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland and Stanley Spencer. This tradition continues today with many leading British and American artists translating their paintings onto the tapestry medium.

At Dovecot, small tapestries were woven by student weavers before a tapestry was begun, so the client could gain an idea of the colour and texture as well as allowing the studio to solve aesthetic and technical problems. In time the small tapestries developed technically, first as scaled-down works in their own right. A conscious effort was made by students to produce maquettes in tapestry to develop their ideas and designs and see them worked through.

The staff of Dovecot encouraged the students in their new endeavour, exhibitions were organised and now small tapestries are woven by practically all Scottish tapestry artists. Their works are considered individual statements, complete as they stand and woven at the size required by the design.

This exhibition of small tapestries which was organised by the Scottish Arts Council and is touring New Zealand with the assistance of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council and the New Zealand Art Gallery Directors' Council, consists of 60 works by leading Scottish tapestry artists and range from the purely pictorial, decorative, textured or three-dimensional to any combination of these elements, still all made with the tapestry tradition.

The exhibition is complemented by tapestries from our own permanent collection and there is an informative and illustrated catalogue available for \$1.00.



W.A. Sutton, *Homage to Frances Hodgkins*, 1951. From the left: William Sutton, Doris Lusk, Colin McCahon, Heathcote Helmore, Margaret Frankel (centre), Beth Zanders, Rene Lonsdale, Alan Brassington, John Oakley, Olivia Spencer Bower.

#### **Drawings of Homage — May 16-July 11**

A small installation is planned for the gallery in June to commemorate what is now an historical conflict between proponents of so called 'modern painting' on one hand and conservative forces on the other. It is thirty years since the 'Pleasure Garden controversy' in Christchurch — an event which divided the Christchurch art world into fiercely warring camps.

William Sutton, at the time a young artist, executed a painting entitled 'Homage to Frances Hodgkins' which was a group portrait of the leading supporters of Frances Hodgkins' painting. Sutton's painting was damaged beyond repair many years ago but photographs remain of the work.

Within the composition the artist placed each of the leading personalities according to the intensity of their support. Margaret Frankel (nee Anderson) stood prominently in the

centre discussing the work. From the onset she championed the purchase of the 'Pleasure Garden' for the city and she had the unswerving support of Alan Brassington, Rene Lonsdale who stood on her immediate right and Heathcote Helmore who stands directly behind the easel. Christchurch owes these a debt of gratitude for their courage and foresight in the purchase of the Pleasure Garden for the city collection. Colin McCahon also a supporter is also depicted as is Doris Lusk, Beth Zanders, John Oakley and Olivia Spencer Bower. The artist, W.A. Sutton has shown himself in the background where, while in sympathy with the issue, he is seen getting on with his craft.

On the floor is a copy of the Christchurch Press. A paper which fairly presented commentary and correspondence on the dispute.

This exhibition will show William Sutton's preparatory drawings.

#### **ANZART: Australia New Zealand Artists Encounter**

Christchurch is to be the host to a major encounter for contemporary Australian and New Zealand artists between August 17-30. It will be the first such event in New Zealand for ten years. Organized by Ian Hunter, former Acting Director of the National Art Gallery, Wellington, the theme of ANZART is the development of the trans-Tasman connection for artists, aimed at encouraging a greater exchange and communication between the art communities on both sides of the Tasman.

ANZART will focus on recent art activities in Australia and New Zealand, with emphasis upon experimental art forms and new

media. The programme will include static exhibitions, installation projects, documentation work, video, film, photography and performance work. Interspaced through all of these will be regular programmes of films, lectures, informal discussions, workshops and social gatherings.

The ANZART programme will be spread throughout the city with the Robert McDougall Art Gallery as a major venue, in addition to the Christchurch Arts Centre, Gingko print gallery workshop, The Canterbury Society of Arts, the University of Canterbury and other venues to be announced, in the programme to be published later in the year.

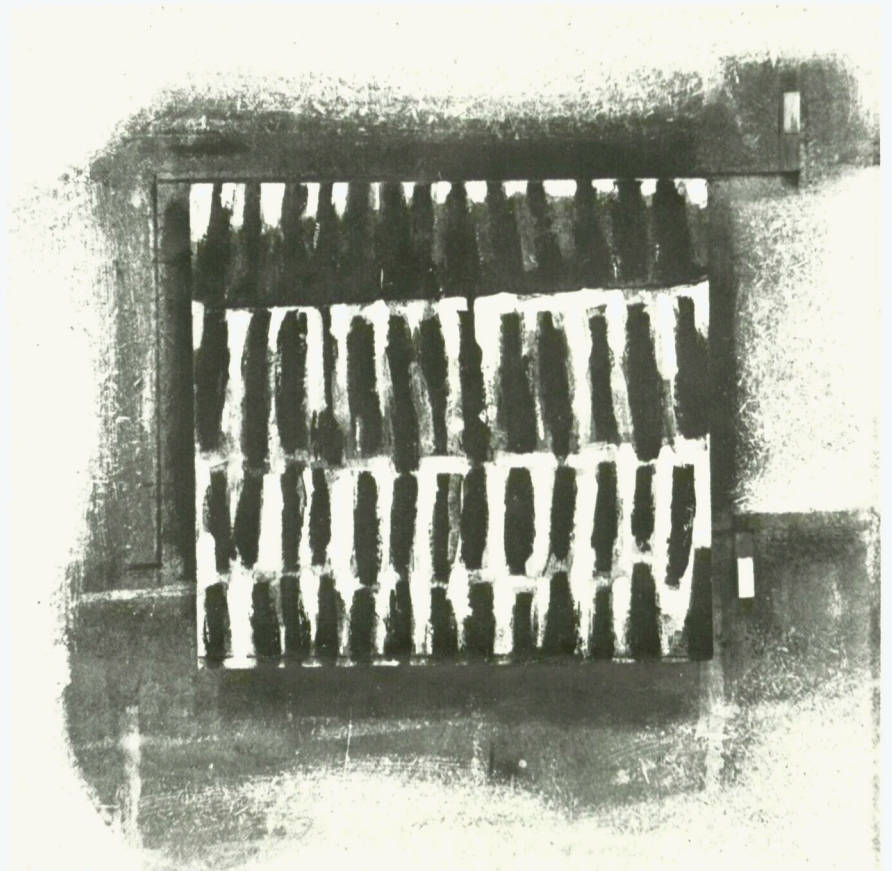
ANZART is not exclusively a 'sculptural' or 'experimental art' concern, emphasis is placed upon encouraging all artists from New Zealand and Australia and the wider public to come and join the officially invited Australian and New Zealand artists as well as those from Poland, Italy, Holland and Britain, to engage in informal discussions on issues and ideas in art, of mutual concern. The wider public is especially invited to all exhibitions and in particular lectures and discussion groups.

Additional information on ANZART will appear in the next issue of 'Bulletin'.

## Loose Canvas May 30 — July 11

From the late 50s many New Zealand painters have chosen to make paintings which dispensed with the traditional stretcher and frame. Some continued to paint on canvas while others preferred rough jute, large sheets of paper, sheet plastic and in recent years, a range of synthetic materials. The dispensing of frames and stretchers allowed the artist to work more rapidly as ideas developed and in time the special qualities of irregular loose canvas edges and the gentle movement in the air became an essential part of the work. By working on loose canvas artists were able to increase the size of their works, joining large sheets of canvas together, often adding relief to the surface, extending the painting the full length of a six foot high roll of canvas.

This exhibition presents a collection of paintings by Trusstum, McCahon, Clairmont, Hotere and a very large recent work by Don Peebles, each work showing how the artist approaches and uses their selected loose painting support and how they choose to manipulate this loose support to extend their concept of the painting.



*Relief Painting by Don Peebles*

### Don Peebles, *Relief Painting*

Our need to keep important local artists represented in the contemporary collection is fundamental to the gallery's exhibition policy and to this end we have acquired a work from the recent Don Peebles exhibition.

Peebles is a major New Zealand artist and this powerful small work successfully compliments our collection of his work.

## Acquisitions March — April

The following works have recently been purchased



*Portrait of Margaret Carn by Richard de B. Lovell Smith*

### Richard de B. Lovell Smith, *Portrait of Margaret Carn* Oil on board

This recent purchase also extends our collection of Canterbury painters.

Richard Lovell-Smith was until his recent retirement a lecturer in painting at Canterbury University School of Fine Arts. As a member of a well known Christchurch family which included such distinguished Canterbury artists as Rata and Colin Lovell-Smith his accomplishments in

painting have been no less distinguished. As a muralist in the 1940s he achieved equal distinction gaining a major award that enabled him to undertake overseas study. Although this artist has been less active in recent years his work of the 1940s and 50s should be recognised in the city's collection.

The recently acquired portrait adds a new facet to the portrait collection as it is a profile study. Until now this type of study has not been included. It is considered that both this aspect and its sensitive compositional treatment affords many exhibition installation possibilities and adds considerably to our portrait collection.

## Reminder

Subscriptions for the 1981-1982 year are now due as from the 31st March.

As you renew your subscription — Family \$10, Single \$8 or Student \$5 — we would like you to keep in mind your friends and acquaintances whom you feel might enjoy belonging to the McDougall Society of Friends. A subscription form for friends is enclosed.

### John Hurrell, *Mesh III* Acrylic on canvas

It was during August/September 1979 that John Hurrell held his first one man exhibition and since that time he has been seen to be emerging as a promising painter. Until recently he has been working with hard edge mathematically placed abstract elements presenting a varied subtlety of optical activation of the canvas surface.

*Mesh III* is a work that was exhibited in his 1980 exhibition and is a good example from the most recent period of this artist's work displaying as it does through its structure of sensitively modulated units a harmony of painting elements drawn together under extremes of tension. This painting is a pleasing addition to our small holding of geometric abstracts which already includes works by Milan Mrkusich and Ian Scott.

Our decision to acquire a work by John Hurrell remains consistent with our current policy to acquire young artists' work whilst it is still available. We are certain that in years to come our decision to collect this artist's work now will be seen to have been most worthwhile.

**William J Reed,**  
*Derelicts St Bathans*  
Oil on board

This work by W.J. Reed was recently purchased for the gallery's New Zealand Painting collection to strengthen the gallery's collection of artists from the Canterbury School.

The artist W.J. Reed was born in Canterbury in 1908 and received his early training at Canterbury College School of Fine Art in the late 1920s early 30s. In the years prior to World War II he worked as a commercial artist and during the war he served with the Third Division in the Pacific, an experience that was to prove the source of many paintings.

Following his war service he became a lecturer at Dunedin School of Art at the Otago Polytechnic and finally at the Southland Community College.

William Reed was a contemporary of such noted artists as the late Rita Angus, James and Alfred Cook and Russell Clark. The latter having a strikingly similar career to his own and a close respected friend.

Mr Reed who now resides in Timaru recently made available to us a selection of his works for possible purchase. 'Derelicts St Bathans' was chosen as it makes a statement not only about New Zealand's recent colonial past, but also expresses something of the somewhat romantic nostalgia that entered New Zealand painting during the 1930s, 40s and early 50s.

This painting well illustrates important stylistic features of its period.

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### **The Flying Hat Company joins OutReach**

For a short period this year The Flying Hat Company a Christchurch based puppet theatre troupe are to work with the gallery's OutReach Programme. While the main body of the troupe work towards a major puppet performance later in the year, a small demonstration troupe will be visiting a number of venues around the city with a brief introductory programme which introduces puppets and puppet manipulation.

The Flying Hat Company began in 1979 when their director Briar Middleditch first began designing and building a range of puppets as the first step towards a fully developed theatre of puppetry. Their puppets range in size from 3½ feet to 8 feet and in the animation method used. Some appear in groups while others are individually animated by complex systems of overhead cables and rods. With these complex manipulation systems a specially designed set or stage is essential and obviously these are not very portable. Christchurch audiences therefore will need to wait until August to see the full effect of their work.



*William J. Reed, Derelicts St Bathans*

Meanwhile the special demonstration troupe are busy introducing simple puppets and puppet-making techniques to various groups around the city and planning is underway for simple puppet shows in the gallery during the May school holidays. These will be limited obviously by the space and facilities available in the gallery's central court, but they are certain to captivate and delight their young audiences.



*Puppet from The Flying Hat Company*

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### **Alan Pearson May 16-July 11**

Over the years this gallery has carefully collected the paintings of Alan Pearson, whose work is known for its expressive brush work and use of strong colour. Our complete collection of paintings by Alan which include several portraits, still life and non-figurative works, will be exhibited as part of our continuing programme of small exhibitions of the gallery's collection of works by individual artists.

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### **Special events for Members of the Friends of the McDougall during May and June**

**April 30 8.00pm** Frames Evening performance at McDougall. Admission \$5.50 for public \$4.50 for Members of Friends Society. Bookings and tickets from Gallery.

**May 1 12.30pm** lunch hour performance by 'Frames' the special dance troupe from the Impulse Dance Theatre on tour from Wellington. Admission \$5.50 for public \$4.50 for Members of Friends Society. Bookings and tickets from the Gallery.

**also 8.00pm** 'Frames' Evening performance at McDougall

**May 3 5.00pm** Opening of The Art of the Japanese Package Exhibition

**May 26 8.00pm** Discussion by McDougall Curator Neil Roberts concerning the Valuation and Authentication of art works.

**June 7 3.00pm** Gallery Concert — artist to be announced

**June 17 8.00pm** Ian Hunter will discuss issues in recent Australian and New Zealand art.

The Robert McDougall Art Gallery  
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