



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

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Ruth c1913

Raymond McIntyre Survey Exhibition February 20 - March 24

This is a major touring exhibition of over seventy paintings, drawings and prints by Raymond McIntyre, one of the most distinguished expatriate New Zealand painters of the early twentieth century.

Born in Christchurch in 1879 Raymond McIntyre lived in South Brighton during his childhood enrolling at a youthful age at the Canterbury College School of Art where he later became a tutor. At this time McIntyre was a frequent exhibitor with the Canterbury Society of Arts. He also shared a studio with Leonard Booth and Sydney Thompson and in the contemporary press reviews was clearly identified as one of the most exciting younger painters of the time.

Seeking further training and stimulation McIntyre, like most promising New Zealand artists in the early twentieth century, left Christchurch in 1909 to continue his art studies in London. Here he was determined to carve out a career as a painter working in the modern styles. Letters written during these early years express his aspirations and disappointments, the shows he saw and the artists he met. This was the time when British art audiences were first exposed to the exciting

works of the Post Impressionist painters, Cezanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin and Matisse and their influences are clearly seen in the McIntyre's landscape panels of around 1913. Like the French painters and like Whistler, McIntyre sought a spontaneity and breadth in the handling of paint and for a distillation which captured only the 'essentials'.

The seventy odd works collected in this exhibition are grouped into McIntyre's main subject areas of landscapes, still life and portraits. Covering 26 years of his artistic career we see how early tendencies first evident in the New Zealand works are extended and developed.

Raymond McIntyre was along with Frances Hodgkins and his early friend and fellow student Sydney Thompson among the New Zealand

artists who chose not to return permanently to New Zealand. It is fortunate then that this exhibition of his works has been assembled and organised by the Auckland City Art Gallery and toured by the N.Z.A.G.D.C. to Christchurch, Wellington and Dunedin. The works are also accompanied by a comprehensive book on Raymond McIntyre with critical essay, selections from McIntyre's own writings and 48 colour plates. Together they give us the unique opportunity to consider Raymond McIntyre both as an artist and as an art critic.

It is interesting to speculate whether Christchurch audiences over 50 years after his death will today provide a more enlightened and appreciative audience for Raymond McIntyre's works than the one he left at his departure in 1909.



Self Portrait c1915

Sherris and Robertson Sponsorship for Raymond McIntyre Exhibition

This important exhibition of 70 works by the Christchurch born artist Raymond McIntyre (1879-1933) will be sponsored by Sherris and Robertson Limited.

Mr Bryan Dobson, a principal of the sponsoring company, considers that collaboration with the Gallery in presenting the Raymond McIntyre exhibition is an important contribution Sherris and Robertson can make to the cultural life of Christchurch and hopes there may be other opportunities to support McDougall exhibitions.



The support of Sherris and Robertson is timely and very much appreciated when the costs of mounting and touring exhibitions are increasing. If the Gallery is to maintain its programmes of quality exhibitions, assistance from the private sector will be essential.

The Gallery is seeking sponsorship for other exhibitions planned for 1985.

Sketch of Mr R.F. McIntyre Artist and Musician by Leonard Booth published in Dec 20, 1906 by The Exhibition sketcher, courtesy Canterbury Museum.

Drawings from the Olivia Spencer-Bower Foundation February 17 - March 24

Before her death in 1982, the artist, Olivia Spencer-Bower, one of New Zealand's most accomplished artists, made careful arrangements for the disposal of her estate. She planned that the funds realised from the sale of her property and paintings should provide funds to support an artist in order to allow them to work full time for 1 year.

She established the Olivia Spencer-Bower Foundation to which she bequeathed property and paintings. These works have been held in safekeeping by the Robert McDougall Art Gallery on behalf of the trustees of the Foundation.

An exhibition of drawings from the Olivia Spencer-Bower Foundation collection will be shown in the Gallery from February 14 to March 24. The selection, which spans all periods of the artist's life, will subsequently be available for purchase at the Canterbury Society of Arts Gallery 14-21 April.



Drawing by Olivia Spencer-Bower



Merilynne Evans

Appointment of Gallery Receptionist

We welcome to the permanent staff Mrs Merilynne Evans who has been appointed to the position of the Gallery's Receptionist. Mrs Evans has previously been employed at the Gallery in a temporary capacity as a research and education assistant.

The Robert McDougall Art Gallery
P.O. Box 2626 Christchurch.
Botanic Gardens, Rolleston Avenue,
Christchurch 1.

Origins and Development of the Collection

The Robert McDougall Art Gallery opened its doors to the public in 1932, and like many New Zealand Public galleries, adopted a collection which had come into being many decades earlier. This collection was that of the Canterbury Society of Arts and its history is inextricably part of the history of this gallery. The origins of the public collection therefore date back to 1881 when the Canterbury Society of Arts made its first acquisition *Shades of Evening* by John Gibb, who at that time was the most prominent professional artist in Canterbury. Gradually during the 1880s a small collection was formed largely with works by Contemporary New Zealand Artists until in 1886 a decision was made to acquire more British works. The then President of the Royal Academy in London, Alfred Lord Leighton was approached for assistance and advice with the result that the following year several works were selected and purchased from the Royal Academy exhibition.

When those works arrived they were stored at the Canterbury Museum where they eventually went on display. The Museum had a history of exhibiting art which dated back to 1870 and this was largely due to the enthusiasm of the Museum's first Curator, Julius Von Haast.

In 1894 the Society opened a new Permanent Collection Gallery in Durham Street and the complete collection was placed on public view for the first time. Throughout the 1890s and 1900s the collection increased steadily from both purchase and bequest and was given a major boost in both quality and quantity in 1907 when many important works of painting and sculpture were purchased from the British section of the New Zealand International Exhibition.

Further purchases of more contemporary British works followed in 1911 and the following year the Christchurch City Council voted to grant £50 per annum to the Society for the purchase of works but insisted that the emphasis was to be placed on the purchase of works by contemporary New Zealand artists.

The first purchases under this scheme included works by Margaret Stoddart and A. Elizabeth Kelly. Over the following 17 years many acquisitions were made with the aid of these funds and became part of this gallery's collection in 1932. By early that year the new gallery was nearing completion and the first independent gifts of work were made. The most prominent included *La*

Lecture de la Bible by Henrietta Browne presented by R.E. McDougall. The *Dutch Funeral Marken* by Petrus van der Velden presented from the collection of H.C.D. Van Asch and two works from the touring Murray Fuller Exhibition *Timber Coming Down the Mountain, Wales* by Lucy Kemp Welch and the *Blue Room, Kensington* by James Durden. These were presented by a group of citizens of Christchurch.

Therefore by opening day a major collection of some 156 paintings had been assembled supported by a minor collection of sculpture and miniatures. Towards the end of 1932 the gallery secured a further 27 works from the family of the late James Jamieson who had died in 1927 leaving the contents of his private gallery to the city. Unfortunately the rather parochial attitudes of the committee who made the final selection deprived the collection of many important works.

The Jamieson collection included several watercolours which was a boost to this aspect of the collection. Within the foundation collection there were few works on paper, only 28 watercolours and virtually no works of printmaking or drawing. Development of the collection almost ceased in the years after the gallery opened.

When George Bernard Shaw paid a visit on April 9, 1934 he was most impressed with the design of the building but was less than complimentary about the collection. He thought an act of fire might remedy the situation. Shaw's views may have been extreme but there is no doubt that there was some concern about where the collection was heading.

During the mid 30s there was a deal of correspondence to the local press concerning it.

In 1936 on the death of Sir Joseph Kinsey the collection got a major boost through the Kinsey bequest, the 34 works of printmaking gained formed a foundation for the print collection as it stands today. Further additions were made during the 1930s and 40s, the most notable in 1938 when five French works were purchased for the gallery by Sydney Thompson with the Schlesinger Bequest. In 1943 15 more works came into the collection from the Robert Bell estate. The theft in 1942 of *Psyche* by Solomon. J. Solomon robbed the gallery of an important academic work which was never recovered.

The 1940s did not go happily for the collection. In 1944 a painting by

Evelyn Page *December Morn* was withdrawn from public view during the lifetime of the model depicted in this painting. The decade ended with the largest controversy ever experienced by the gallery, over an acquisition, when the *Pleasure Garden* incident erupted during 1948 and took a further 3 years before it was resolved. By 1949 the gallery's total collection stood at 268 works and that same year £200 was granted for acquisitions. With this commitment from the Christchurch City Council the gallery arrived at a major change in direction concerning acquisition policy. From 1949 on, regular purchases were made for the collection. The first two works to be purchased were *West Coast, Wellington* by Nugent Welch and *South Window* by Rata Lovell-Smith.

Throughout the 1950s acquisitions increased slowly without any controversy. This calm was broken in 1960 when a move was made to acquire a work by New Zealand's most prominent contemporary artist Colin McCahon. The painting *Tomorrow Will be the Same but not as this is* had been purchased by a group of far-sighted subscribers as had been the *Pleasure Garden* by Frances Hodgkins. However the city fathers were not entirely convinced that it was a suitable work for the collection and the same churlish attitude prevailed as had occurred in the late 1940s. Fortunately it was eventually accepted in 1962.

In 1965 the decision to purchase a work of Contemporary sculpture by the Italian artist Marcello Marcherini gave rise to a similar reaction. Once again the opposition was strong and the sculpture entered the collection only after considerable public debate. The less positive aspects of acquisition were more than balanced by the addition to the collection of two Bronzes by Rodin and important historical works from Sir Leonard Woolley, Heathcote Helmore, and Sir Heaton Rhodes bequests.

The beginnings of a ceramic collection were also under way by the close of the 60s with further expansion into a textile collection in 1972.

During the last 15 years all areas of the collection have grown substantially and reaccessioning in 1979 increased the collection total dramatically. Many works hitherto uncatalogued were registered with the result that the collection today stands at around 3500 items in the 9 categories: Painting, Drawing, Sculpture, Printmaking, Watercolours, Textiles, Ceramics, Photography and Miniatures.

The "Dutch Funeral" Restoration Fund

Petrus van der Velden's *The Dutch Funeral*, one of the Gallery's most popular images, is in need of conservation. The work requires specialist treatment by an oil painting conservator. The work has a discoloured varnish layer, with a layer of surface dirt and some accretions. Movement in the canvas has caused weak canvas/ground bond. Treatment involving cleaning, relining of the canvas, re-attachment of lifted paint, re-stretching on to a refurbished stretcher is necessary. It is intended that this work is undertaken in 1985 by Mr John Harper, a professional conservator of oil paintings.

Mr John Brandts-Giesen, member of the Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery is seeking the support, by way of donations, from members of the Christchurch Dutch Community for the work to be carried out. The



The Dutch Funeral by Petrus van der Velden.

painting is not only of considerable artistic significance but represents the early contribution made to the cultural development of the City by 19th century Dutch migrants.

Readers who would like to support

the restoration fund may forward donations to:

Mr J.J. Brandts-Giesen
Convenor
Dutch Funeral Restoration Fund
C/- P.O. Box 2626 Christchurch

New Weekend Hours

The Gallery has new weekend opening hours in line with weekday hours. On Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays we are open from 10.00 a.m. until 4.30 p.m.



New Gallery Postal Address and Phone Numbers

To relieve pressure on the Christchurch City Council's switchboard. The Gallery has acquired its own independent line.

The Gallery's new telephone number is Christchurch 50-914.

To ease the burden of carrying mail daily from the Council offices to the Gallery we now also have our own Post Office box number which is P.O. Box 2626 Christchurch.

Portable Ramps for the Disabled

The Gallery has now acquired two sets of portable ramps which may be set out in the Centre Court where disabled visitors enter the Gallery. The ramps will enable the steps to the raised levels off the Centre Court to be negotiated by wheelchairs.

Excavations under the Northern Galleries proceed apace.

Art Forums in Conjunction with Artfull

A series of special Art Forum lectures and discussions will be held late January - early February at the conclusion of the Artfull show. Intended to extend our knowledge and familiarity with the collection, and to stimulate thought and dialogue these will be occasions not to be missed.

Details are not available as copy for this Bulletin is prepared but please watch for further notices and for the advertised programme in your newspaper.

Acquisitions

The following works have been recently purchased:

Quentin Macfarlane
Untitled
Acrylics on Canvas

Melvin Day
Courtyard
Oil on Paper

Vivienne Mountford
Wizard Trapped
Mixed Media

Ainslie Manson
Portrait of Francis Shurrock
Oil on Board

Thomas Lyde Hornbrook
Off the Pier c1843
Watercolour

Gary Collins
Untitled
Oil on Board



Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery Inc

Artfull Champagne Lunch

Over 280 guests gathered for the Friends' Christmas lunch at the Gallery on Sunday 18 November. The occasion was opened by John Coley, who paid tribute to the huge amount of work put in by gallery staff to hang the 631 exhibits (which comprise roughly 95% of the available oil paintings, though only a fraction of the McDougall's total permanent collection of some 3300 items). Following the Director's welcoming address, the Friends' Acting President (Gerrit van der Lingen) and the man responsible for devising the title of the show (Bruce Scott) ceremonially hung the last work. The painting in question is one of the Gallery's most recent acquisitions, Doris Lusk's *Imagined Projects, II: Limeworks* (acrylic on canvas). Then the Curator, Neil Roberts, gave a short talk about the collection, commenting on its range, its strengths and weaknesses, and telling a number of interesting anecdotes about individual works. This phase of events was brought to a close by the Friends' Acting President, who welcomed our Patron, W.A. Sutton, and spoke briefly on the organisation of the occasion. This was followed by lunch, catered by members of the Burwood branch of the Plunket Society, and a chance for another glass of pink champagne and a look at the artworks copiously on display.

We thank those Friends who supported the event, and trust that they enjoyed what was a memorable gathering. Those wishing for a memento of the exhibition are reminded that a poster, featuring the painting "The Wizard's Garden", is available from the foyer of the Gallery for \$5. Proceeds from the sale of this poster, and of our popular range of greetings cards (illustrated in the Nov/Dec Newsletter), will go to the Friends' acquisitions fund.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish our members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

New Members

P.J. Bailey
Murray Charters
M.A. Eller
M.L.E. Foate
Mrs J.M. Foley
Dr John and Mrs Donna Kenny
Helen Moore
D.R. Morris
A.J. Verrall
Sandra Zenvos

Coffee Mornings

On Wednesday 17 October, a large group of Friends listened appreciatively to Dr Dennis Dutton of the Department of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury, talk on art forgery with particular reference to Han van Meegeren the famous, or infamous, producer of Vermeers. Dr Dutton, who only recently arrived here from a position as Professor of Philosophy at the University of Michigan, gave the Friends present at this coffee morning a real insight into the mind and the skill of the art forger, at the same time establishing for us the psychological state of the art critic and art audience which makes the acceptance of such forgery possible.
(reported by Barry Wilkie)

On November 21, Julie King, Lecturer in Art History at the school of Fine Arts, gave a well researched talk on Artfull. She considered the diversity of the collection as indicating something about our local cultural heritage. What the collection represents is 100 years of the history of public collecting in Christchurch. To develop this theme, she considered five French works which came into the McDougall in 1938 and which were chosen by Sydney Thompson and paid for from the bequest of Miss Schlesinger. Although as she pointed out, the history of French art has been written without them, each work and each artist could be seen within the context of French art. For instance, Othon Friesz's *In the Woods* was painted by a man who held a significant place with Braque, Dufy

and Matisse in the formation of the Fauvist movement in 1905-6. The Gallery also has a lithograph, *In Court*, which was drawn by an artist who was a friend of Degas and who also showed in a number of impressionist exhibitions. It was informative to learn more about the artists and their place in French art. Lucien Simon's *Actors in a side-show* was another work chosen by Thompson for the Gallery and here was a New Zealand-French connection since Thompson had studied with Simon, an artist whose painting centred on Brittany. Above all, what Thompson hoped to do in choosing these works for Christchurch in 1938, was to introduce to the public examples of work from France and with a more modern feel to them than the Victorian paintings which still largely dominated the Collection in those days. His desire to further expand the Collection with more modern French art was never realised. All the same this bequest benefited Christchurch with a group of interesting works as well as representing a phase in our cultural history. It shows the donor's wish and Thompson's, that of an expatriate painter like so many other New Zealanders in the first half of the twentieth century, to bring a little bit France and Europe back to Canterbury.

The coffee morning on 20 February 1985 will, we hope, feature our President - Robert Erwin - reporting back on some aspect of his recent overseas trip. A speaker has yet to be arranged for the coffee morning on 20 March 1985.

P.O. Box 2626, Christchurch
Botanic Gardens, Rolleston Ave.,
President - Robert Erwin, 558-675
Secretary - Pat Unger, 487-482
Treasurer - Annie Crighton.
