

# bulletin



Christchurch City Council



## The Robert McDougall Art Gallery

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Robert McDougall Art Gallery  
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*Indomitable Spirit*, Helenn Rumpel, creative stichery, USA, 400x340 mm.

### **Threadworks** June 24-July 26

In collaboration with the Embroiderers' Guild, the Gallery will host an exhibition of textile art called **Threadworks**. This exhibition will be part of an extensive textile programme in Christchurch including the Globe Theatre Hangings at the Canterbury Museum and a national conference of textile artists during July.

The exhibits for **Threadworks** were selected from over 100 submissions. The

judges, Cheryl Sotheran Director of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Elizabeth Auton a local textile artist, and John Coley, chose 60 works for exhibition. The invitation to submit works encouraged innovative approaches to traditional techniques and the organisers and judges were extremely happy with the standards of the selected exhibits, some of which represent the most advanced craftswomen from both within New Zealand and abroad.

Coates Patons NZ Ltd have kindly sponsored **Threadworks**.

## Aqua-Marine July 11–September 6

The sea and coast where land and water meet, has as a subject, occupied the attention of artists for centuries. In island nations such as Great Britain and New Zealand it holds a special significance and has given rise to some distinctive marine imagery.

However before the nineteenth century, manifestations of the sea as a theme in British painting was closely linked with depictions of sea power, often war, and was frequently used just as a backdrop to ship portraiture.

The interpretations of the sea as a theme in its own right began to emerge in the early 1800s. Artists, among them John Constable, J. N. W. Turner and James McNeill Whistler treated it in their work as an expression of naturalism, sometimes imbued with romantic mystery.

This exhibition comprises oils and watercolours from the gallery's historical British and New Zealand collections. The paintings included date mostly from the late 1800s through to the 1930s which was a time when the discovery, and ways of exploring the sea as a potential theme, was in its ascendancy. Among the British and New Zealand artists represented are Julius Olsson, W. L. Wylie, T. S. Robins, Charles Dixon, James Nairn and Alfred W. Walsh.

### Works from the Collection July 19–October 25

This second major installation for 1992 from the permanent collection will also place on exhibition once again a number of works that have seldom been seen in recent years.

Among these is a distinctive marine painting by John Wilson Carmichael (1800–1868) titled **The Shannon and the Chesapeake**. This painting, which was until 1931 in the collection of Major A. C. D. Spencer was bequeathed that year by his widow to the Canterbury Society of Arts who gifted it to the gallery in 1932.

Like many of the marine paintings by J. W. Carmichael it reveals his intense powers as a draughtsman and his concern for natural elements, particularly the forces of weather at sea. Carmichael was born and spent his youth at Newcastle-on-Tyne. At an early age he went to sea and became familiar with shipping.

Following this experience he began training as an artist and became a pupil of Thomas Miles Richardson senior (1784–1848). For a while he also worked as a designer in a ship builder's office and did colour work for Newcastle architect John Dobson before committing himself completely to painting. Until 1825 much of his work was in watercolour often taking his inspiration from the Northumberland coast. However, he was also keenly interested in the exploits of the Royal Navy and incidents from British naval history



J. W. Carmichael *The Shannon and the Chesapeake*.

frequently featured in his work. **The Shannon and the Chesapeake** is a celebrated example. It is thought that Carmichael painted this work in 1841 commemorating the deeds of Admiral Sir Philip Bowes Vere Broke who died that year aged 65.

Broke, or "Brave Broke" as he became known, was the central figure in the duel that occurred between HMS *Shannon* and USS *Chesapeake*. In 1812 the long war between England and France resulted in blockades that were proving destructive to the American economy, with the result that the staunch Republican President James Madison would tolerate it no longer and declared war on Britain. As there was no naval action as such, engagements only occurred between individual US and Royal Navy vessels.

On June 1 1813 the Royal Navy's 44-gun frigate HMS *Shannon* under the command of Captain Broke duelled outside Boston harbour with the US frigate *Chesapeake* carrying 50 guns and a crew of 376.

The Americans were confident of success but proved to be no match for Broke's 306 highly-disciplined men who had honed their skills during the war with France. After two broadsides from *Shannon's* guns which had a discharge of 1,176 kilograms the British sprang across the bulwarks and within fifteen minutes had captured *Chesapeake* and run up the Union Jack.

During the fight Broke was severely wounded but recovered and continued his service in the Royal Navy eventually achieving the rank of Admiral. Even though *Chesapeake* had superior armaments and large man-power she was crippled by the two broadsides fired over her gunwales. When Broke fell wounded, Provo Wallis, his second lieutenant, took command and escorted the captured US vessel to Halifax in Nova Scotia. As a result of the conflict the total casualties were 71 killed and 174 wounded. The British victory became part of naval folk-

lore and was even celebrated by a popular song.

Carmichael's depiction of the engagement is highly dramatised. Captain Broke is shown heroically, with his sword raised being rowed towards *Chesapeake* in the midst of a howling gale.

The composition has been intensely enlivened for pictorial effect. In fact the duel occurred in much calmer seas closer to the marine artist Thomas Whitcombe's depiction painted many years earlier.

### COMMEMORATIVE TAPESTRY

The Women's Suffrage Committee of the Christchurch City Council in association with the Embroiderers' Guild intends to commission a tapestry to be made by members of the Embroiderers' Guild commemorating 100 years of women's suffrage in New Zealand and which will be located in the Christchurch Town Hall. The work is to commemorate 100 years of women having the vote in New Zealand. New Zealand led the world in recognising that women's right to vote is fundamental in a democracy. The passing of legislation in 1893 was the result of the determined and persistent efforts of the many women who made up the suffragist movement.

The Committee invites expressions of interest from suitably qualified female artists/designers who wish to be considered for such a commission. Please respond by sending name, address, CV and photographs of recent work to:

Mrs Vivienne Allen  
City Promotions Co-ordinator  
Christchurch City Council  
PO Box 237  
Christchurch by 31 July.

## Coming Events

- July**
- 1 **Artwatch: Impressionism** 12 noon and 5pm.
  - 1 Wednesday Club 10.30am.
  - 4 Saturday Club 10.30am.
  - 5 **IN OUR TIME: The World as Seen by Magnum Photographers** closes.
  - 9 **Contemporary Prints from the Collection** opens at the Annex.
  - 11 Continuing Club 10.30am.
  - 11 **Four French Masters** opens to the public.
  - 11 **Aqua-marine: Collection Exhibition** opens to the public.
  - 15 Speaker of the Month: **Robin White**, 10.30am. Art Annex.
  - 16 Kilmarnock Club 10.30am.
  - 19 **LocArt** (see Friends Page for details).
  - 26 **Threadworks** closes.
- August**
- 1 Saturday Club 10.30am.
  - 5 Wednesday Club 10.30am.
  - 5 **Artwatch: The Renaissance.**
  - 8 Continuing Club 10.30am.
  - 9 **Contemporary Prints** closes at the Annex.
  - 12 Preview of **Vanitas: an Exploration of the Still Life** at the Annex, 5.30pm. All welcome.
  - 13 **Vanitas** opens to the public.
  - 19 Speaker of the Month: **Neil Roberts**, 10.30am. Main Gallery.
  - 20 Kilmarnock Club 10.30am.

## New Members

Margaret Baxter  
 Margaret Meetham  
 Gavin Bonnet and Lieve Bierque  
 John Britten  
 Mrs Katrine Brown  
 Mrs S. W. Bullen  
 Helen Caldwell  
 B. N. Crawford  
 Adrienne Dempsey  
 June and Michael Douglas  
 J. Drysdale  
 A. M. Everist  
 Mr and Mrs P. Fear  
 Kate Fielder  
 John Fletcher  
 Brenda Forsythe  
 Barbara Fowler  
 Kate Garside  
 Liz Grant  
 Amanda Greenslade  
 Alison Grimshaw  
 Anne Harvey  
 Gladys Keeley  
 Penny Lewis  
 Jane Lucas  
 Anne Marsh  
 W. McMillan  
 Mr Neale  
 Elizabeth Nicol  
 Chris Parkin  
 Keith Plunkett  
 Prof B. J. and Mrs G. R. Ross  
 D. and S. Ruarus  
 M. A. H. Rudkin  
 Jane Ruder  
 Ed Simpson  
 Sir James and Lady Stewart  
 Donald H. Stringer  
 June Stroud  
 George and Beryl Sweet  
 Jo Thomson  
 Alison Torrance  
 Martha Tripp  
 W. B. van Pelt  
 J. R. Vincent

Clare Walker  
 Val Wisely

## Acquisitions

The following works have been acquired by the Gallery:

### Dick Frizzel

*Preparatory Study for Cow, Banks Peninsula, 1991*

Pencil on Paper  
 Presented by the artist

### Unknown Artist

*Untitled*  
 Oil on Canvas  
 Veda Frances Jobberns Bequest

### Richard McWhannell

*Study: Neudorf Landscape "White Paddock" 1977*

Watercolour  
*Study: Neudorf Landscape*  
 Pencil

*Untitled*  
 Silkscreen Print  
 Presented by the artist

### Morgan Jones

*Dream of a Prisoner*  
 Sculpture installation of 10 pieces  
 Wood, plywood, acrylic  
 Presented by the artist

## Peter Weiermair Visit

Peter Weiermair the Director of the Frankfurter Kunstvereins gave an address to a large and interested audience at the Art Annex in the course of a New Zealand tour in April. His report on the current status of art museums and the visual arts in Europe, struck some chords here in New Zealand.

European cities were in competition with

each other and supported business generating activity to help increase a city's status and economy. Frankfurt's location gave it an advantage as the centre of a European transport and communication network. Big exhibitions were seen by city authorities as relatively low cost ways to generate good public relations, hence the vast shows which soon became vehicles for the egos of mega-curators. For a museum, block-busting exhibitions forced staff away from undertaking the essential research their collections demanded. Some contemporary curators saw themselves as meta-artists to execute their curatorial conceptions but this had produced a backlash from artists who refused to be walk-on players in a curator's script.

It was not easy to streamline developments in German art. Painting was not necessarily the leading media, object and photographic art were strong in the European context. Neo-conceptual attitudes were apparent undercutting the widely held perception that German art is predominantly painting.

Peter Weiermair believes the pace of art is becoming slower as we approach the 21st century. Artists are in a difficult position today because there is no mainstream tradition.

In this age of disoccupation there is more leisure time and the art museum has a role to provide cultural events.

Frankfurt has built 13 new museums in the last decade and they sit like a string of pearls within the central city. Four of them are dedicated to contemporary art. The Frankfurt Art Fair is a major European event and reflects the city's pan-European outlook. Art in public spaces is also flourishing, with a city ordinance that three per cent of the cost of every public building go towards a fund which enables public art projects. Some of these are of transitory three months duration, undertakings which give the opportunity for the public to be involved in works without the expense or problems of long term permanence.

West German cities were centres of great wealth and had many significant picture collectors. The city of Bremen built a beautiful art museum but asked for donations or loans from private collectors to fill it. The danger with collections formed this way was that the collectors could well sell the collections out of the museum at any time. There were cases where the research the gallery's curators had carried out and the maintenance the conservators had performed improved the market value of the collections which were then sold to the considerable profit of the collectors and great disadvantage to the museum.

After the incredible consumerist period of the eighties, it is now time to review what has been learned. What is the educational benefit of big blockbuster exhibitions. The age of huge shows is at an end. Loans are seldom available and when they are the insurance cover they require is prohibitive. Galleries and curators will have to develop new forms of exhibitions in the nineties.



Artist Julian Dasper talks to Secondary School students in April.



Curator of the Tamarind Institute, USA, Rebecca Shnelcker, gives a floortalk.



Professor Peter Weiermair, Director of the Frankfurter Kunstreins, speaking at the Annex in April.

Terry Salmond, Tom Hutchins, Bruce Foster, Glenn Busch and John Coley at the opening of "In Our Time".



Dame Catherine Tizard and Conservator Lynn Campbell in the Gallery's Conservation Laboratory.



Dame Catherine Tizard meets Gallery staff in the Centre Court.



## Four French Masters Visions and Realities

July 11–September 6

The contribution to printmaking by French artists has been considerable. This small installation from the gallery's historical print collection focuses on just four recognised French masters, Jaques Callot, Honoré Daumier, Charles Meryon, and Odilon Redon. Each artist has been selected for the innovative way in which he handled the medium in which he worked. All share a common factor in their imagery which is both real and visionary. Of the four, Jacques Callot (1592–1635) is the earliest.

Recognised as having introduced etching into France, Callot's influence expanded widely throughout Europe during his lifetime, and he is considered to be the first French printmaker to gain an international reputation. Foremost were Callot's technical achievements. By combining engraving and etching techniques and using more than one biting he was able to gain a greater breadth in the chiaroscuro tonality of his line.

Such experimentation was matched by the range of subject matter he explored which varied from Caprices of fantasy, images of theatre, religion, court festivals and war.

Callot's set of plates "Miseries of War" was among his most influential, bearing imagery that was both real and visionary. These plates documented the impact of the so-called Thirty Years War.

The Thirty Years War was a conflict in the sixteenth century between rival powers for domination over Central Europe. It incited much oppression and bloodshed as marauding mercenary soldiers who made up most of the armies, pillaged land and burned dwellings and property. Many of Callot's minutely detailed prints capture the same suffering and futility of war that was experienced in 1991 with the televising of the Gulf conflict.

The backdrop of political turmoil that drew the attention of Jacques Callot has parallels in the work of Honoré Daumier (1808–1879), but where Callot was moved by the suffering of a war that revealed the worst traits of mankind, Daumier was something of a crusader against the social and political injustices of his time, which he satirised mercilessly in many thousands of lithographs. Through his printmaking, like Callot he achieved a timeless quality. His expression of the foibles of human behaviour are as relevant today as they were in the nineteenth century.

Daumier's innovation lay not only in the treatment of his imagery, but in the technical advances he made in the medium of lithography. He developed a whole range of chinks and scrapers which he used in relatively complex combinations to extend the potential of his line and tone.

In contrast to the caustic realities of Callot and Daumier the imagery of Charles Meryon (1821–1868) and Odilon Redon was modified by the reflection of an inner vision. Of the two Meryon had perhaps

the greatest influence and drew many followers in the nineteenth century soon after his death. It was his images of Paris that made the strongest impact. He began his magnum opus, the twelve plate series *Eaux-fortes sur Paris* in 1850.

Cities had hitherto been depicted as panoramic views developed for their picturesque qualities alone. Often buildings, as such, were not considered worthy subject for artistic expression. Meryon's imagery wrought change in that. He used the buildings of Paris as a means of revealing the mystery of his inner self.

Like Meryon, Odilon Redon (1840–1911) also had a highly personal approach to his imagery through which he externalised his own visionary world. A world of dreams and mystery that seemingly transcended reality. For Redon, lithography was an essential medium for his expression. Through the interplay of black and white tonality he found a way of accessing the subconscious mind where conflicts between powers of light and darkness gave forth apparitions, angels, monsters and visions that became realities.

Each of the four artists in this installation, although different, are linked not only by what they contributed to the development of the medium in which they worked, but the timeless quality of their imagery.

## Lawrence Shustak on Photography

It was fitting that on April 15, just a month before the opening of the exhibition *IN OUR TIME: The World as seen by Magnum Photographers*, Lawrence Shustak, should give his interesting talk about many aspects of photography. In perhaps the most informal style we have had for some time, he referred to the numerous technological advances in cameras and the enormous social influences that resulted—from the publication of significant historical events to records of families. Lawrence challenged the audience to consider photography as a means of producing art that was no less worthy of serious attention than other techniques of making visual statements.

## Margriet Windhausen on Sculpture

Well known as the artist commissioned for the Kate Sheppard memorial, this Dutch-born and trained sculptor who now lives near Timaru, explained the techniques of her craft in terms of positives and negatives. To produce a large bronze sculpture requires first the construction of a framework to support the clay positive. Then in turn she makes a plaster case, using the negative image; then a wax positive of the plaster; then a ceramic shell to form another negative; and finally the bronze positive, built up from five or more pieces in the case of large figures. Then begins the laborious work of welding and smoothing the fragments into a complete whole.

## Art Annex

### Contemporary Prints from the Collection

July 9–August 9

During July the Annex will be exhibiting a selection of prints from the collection by contemporary New Zealand artists.

One of the Gallery's major strengths is its significant collection of works on paper, both national and international.

The installation at the Annex brings together an interesting selection of prints made in New Zealand over the last twenty years, using a variety of techniques.

Artists whose works appear in the exhibition include Gretchen Albrecht, Patrick Hanly, Colin McCahon, Robin White, Denise Copland, Ralph Hotere, Barry Cleavin, Para Matchitt, Gordon Walters, Philip Clairmont, Jason Greig, and Tony Fomison.

### Vanitas

Opens August 13–September 13

Opening on August 13 at the Annex is **Vanitas**, an exhibition which explores aspects of the still life in the work of contemporary New Zealand painters.

"Vanitas" is a Latin word which literally translates as "emptiness". It is used in connection with the traditional genre of still life painting to indicate the emptiness of earthly possessions in the light of the hereafter.

Still life painting emerged as an independent artistic genre in the 16th century. A still life painting is one which closely described familiar objects. The subjects are often drawn from the domestic environment (crockery, flowers, books, musical instruments, food, etc) and can also include objects such as skulls, bones, or dead game.

Objects in still life painting often contain a hidden allegory. In a general, secular sense, they can symbolise the transience of existence: with the introduction of eucharistic elements such as wine, a jug of water, and a loaf of bread, a more specifically Christian meaning may be evoked.

Vanitas brings together a vibrant selection of contemporary works which represent various approaches to the still life. The work of younger Canterbury artists will be included with that of more senior artists in the exhibition.

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# Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery Inc.

President—Hilary Langer 348-3982

Treasurer—Chris Brocket 355-7133

Secretary—John Small 792-185

Membership Secretary—Marie Lockey 388-5075

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## LocArt

This other initiative for 1992 also had a successful beginning. Eighty-three people viewed the art collection displayed in various places at Lincoln University. The tour was conducted by Dick Lucas who also gave an illustrated talk about the collection, its history and some of related issues. From *ad hoc* beginnings based on gifts and the enthusiasms of people like Dick himself, art at Lincoln has evolved into an activity that is guided by policy about, for example, space for art in new buildings. Decisions are now made by a representative group, and the items on display reflected a pleasing variety of artist and works. Among the names familiar to most Friends were John Bevan Ford, Trevor Moffitt, William Sutton, Maurice Angelo, Philip Trusttum, Robyn Kahukiwa, Joanna Braithwaite, Edward Bullmore, Doris Lusk, Grant Banbury, Louise Henderson and Eileen Mayo.

The next LocArt event will be a visit to two artists' studios on Sunday July 19, one session 10.30am to 12.30pm and the other 2-4pm, each beginning at Belle Melzer's studio and home, 337 Worcester Street. Because of space restrictions, only 15 people can be accommodated each time. It is therefore essential to book by leaving your name and phone number on the Friends' answerphone 794-055. It is essential also to cancel if your plans change.

LocArt visits will be occasional events rather than a regular feature.

## Artwatch

Over eighty people attended the first showing, and their reactions were highly favourable. A smaller number was at the second. Obviously the times—noon and 5pm on the first Wednesday of each month—are popular. Each session commences promptly, and usually takes just one hour. As far as possible the schedule of Artwatch showings takes some account of exhibitions in the Gallery.

On July 1 the showing is entitled Impressionism. This is an entertaining and informative account of the recent US exhibition of Impressionist landscapes; A Day in the Country. On August 5 the topic is Renaissance Art, an exciting look at some newly restored treasures of Florence and Rome.

## New Cards

A new series of six cards are now ready. They show works by Chevalier, Stoddart (2), Angus Gotch, and Browne. As usual, the standard is high and with the usual 10 per cent discount for Friends, these cards are very good value.



June Goldstein and Dick Lucas at Lincoln University.

## Speaker of the Month

### July

On July 15 we will be fortunate to have as speaker, Robin White, a New Zealand artist now living in Kiribati, who has been appointed Artist in Residence at Christchurch Polytechnic from July to September. At 10.30am coffee and tea will be served in the Art Annex. Usual entry: \$1.50 for members, \$2.50 for non-members.

### August

On August 19, in the main Gallery, Neil Roberts will talk on Looking at Some Aspects of the Contemporary Collection. He will show slides of works by New Zealand artists, and from about 11.35am we will look at the originals on display in the Gallery. Remember: the main Gallery this time. Coffee and tea will be served in the Foyer at 10.30am: \$1.50 for members, \$2.50 for non-members.

## Subscriptions

Many thanks to those who paid so promptly. Thanks also to those who donated money to the Friends, to the Stained Glass Window Appeal and to the Civic Art Galley Trust.

Please note that our financial years run from January 1 to December 31, but because our AGM is held in March, accounts for membership are mailed after that. So, even if your current membership shows December 31 1992 as the expiry date, effectively it ends on March 31 1993, or four weeks after you have received your account.

## New Phone

We now have our own answerphone installed in the Gallery: **794-055**. Please make use of this for all business to do with the Friends, such as RSVPs, queries about events and dates, subscriptions, reservations for trips and outings. Use this number also to give us your reactions and suggestions about programmes and events.