

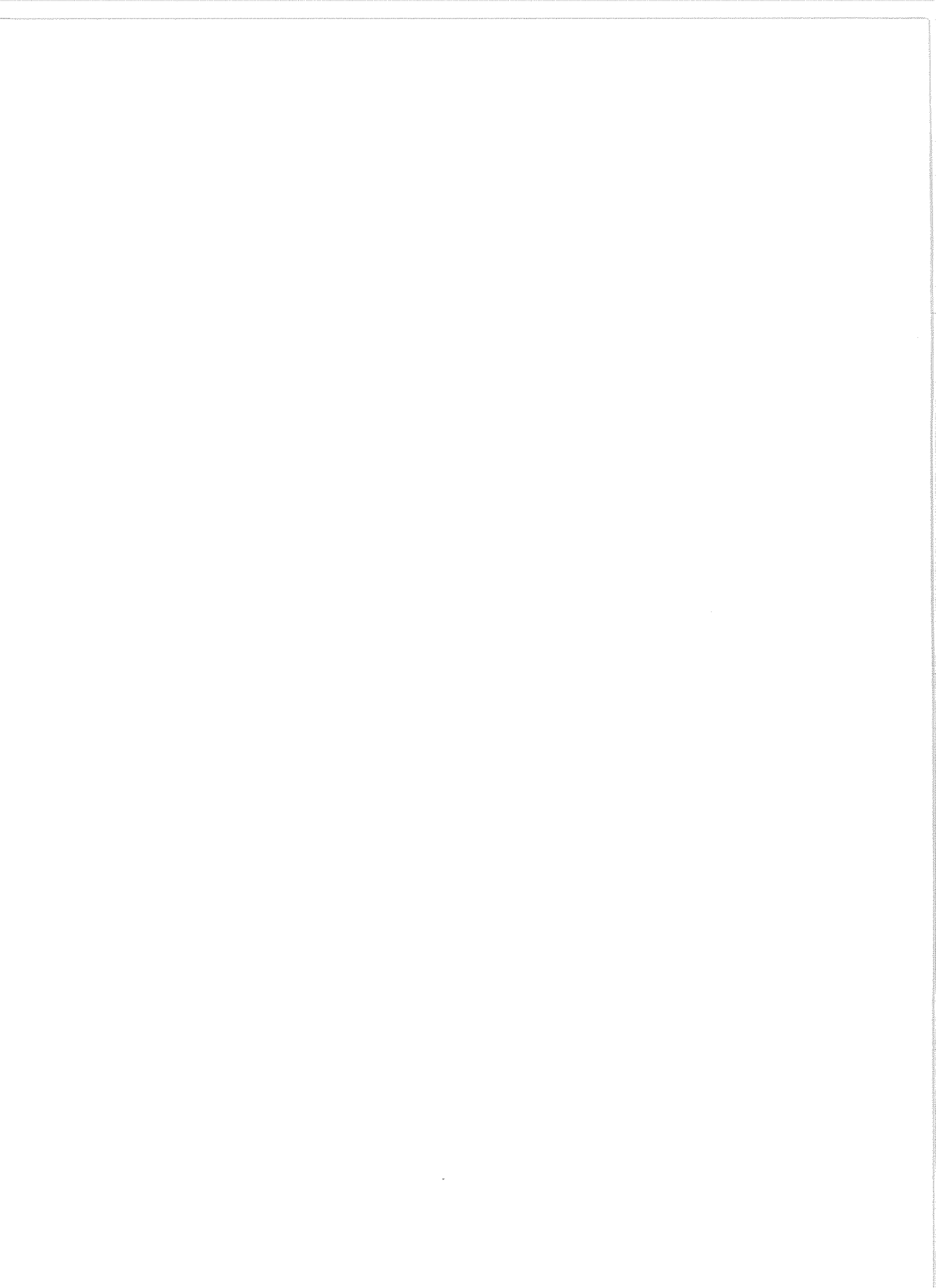


A CONCISE  
HISTORY OF ART  
IN  
CANTERBURY  
1850–2000





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Robert McDougall Art Gallery

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*Youth*, oil on canvas.  
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

**Angus, Rita** (1908–1978)  
*Cass* 1937,  
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*To Seed*, Sculpture in the Gardens,  
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Samuel Moreton in his studio, c.1897.  
Robert McDougall Art Gallery Archives

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*Nor'wester in the Cemetery* 1950,  
oil on canvas.  
Collection: Auckland Art Gallery Toi o  
Tāmaki, purchased 1954.

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Entrance to the Fine Arts Gallery, International Exhibition, Christchurch, 1882.  
F. Bradley & Co photograph. Collection: Canterbury Museum



# FOREWORD

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In 1990, the Robert McDougall Art Gallery published *A Canterbury Perspective Nga Taonga Whakamuri i Roto i Waitaha* to accompany an exhibition of the same name, and this was the first comprehensive chronicle of art in the Canterbury context, from pre-European settlement onwards. *A Concise History of Art in Canterbury, 1850–2000* reassesses much of that earlier material, and this substantial revision, plus considerable new documentation, has created the present – arguably definitive – sesquicentennial survey.

Compiling a history of 150 years of virile and influential Canterbury art has involved a great deal of primary research on the part of several Gallery staff, and I wish to acknowledge Neil Roberts, in his role as Senior Curator, for his major contribution to this project. Furthermore, it was his original work for the 1990 perspective which laid an invaluable foundation for this publication in 2000. For the more recent milestones, I thank Felicity Milburn, our Curator of Contemporary Art for her overview, and the project has been ably assisted by Jennifer Hay, Belinda Jones, Ruth McGirr and Peter Vangioni.

Fundamental sources of information have been newspaper reports, articles and reviews in contemporary journals and publications, as well as the archives of the Canterbury Society of Arts, the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts, individual artists and personal reminiscences. Additionally, on behalf of our publication team, may I thank also the Alexander Turnbull Library, Auckland Art Gallery, Canterbury Museum, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Hocken Library and Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa for their invaluable support.

Canterbury art has three prominent phases of development that can be readily identified – each with a distinctive emphasis. From 1850 to 1899, the art activity of an essentially

colonial culture was less settled, dominated by the regular arrival and departure of both amateur and professional artists. Yet this period also witnessed the founding of a Society of Art in 1880, a School of Art in 1882, and that same year, Christchurch held its first international ‘exposition’. This last event enabled the local community to measure its progress in the broader world – including its art – for the first time.

In the second phase, 1900 to 1949, the most important aspect was the emergence of the first two generations of Canterbury-born artists, who formed what has been called ‘The Canterbury School’, and the gradual shifts in direction and emphasis that were an outcome of this ‘loose confederacy’.

The formation of ‘The Group’ in 1927 coalesced those artists who were drawn towards modernism, reaching a watershed in the Canterbury (if not the national!) art arena with the ‘Pleasure Garden’ controversy of the late 1940s.

Since 1950, the third phase that has taken place has given rise to some of the most significant changes ever in Canterbury art, with the impact of international ideas increasingly accessible through exhibitions, publications and the new information technologies – all providing artists with ever-widening scope. In the year 2000, whilst Canterbury still holds a strong current of brush painting that has become the traditional measure of the Canterbury School, contemporary artists are as diverse in the practice of their art, as are the media they employ.

I thank – and congratulate – all involved with this fascinating and valuable art historical perspective, and recommend it wholeheartedly!

P. ANTHONY PRESTON  
DIRECTOR

# 1850–1899



**Van der Velden, Petrus** (1837–1913) *A Waterfall in the Otira Gorge* oil on canvas (1891).

Collection: Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

# INTRODUCTION

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In 1851 the politician and amateur water-colourist, William Fox, wrote:

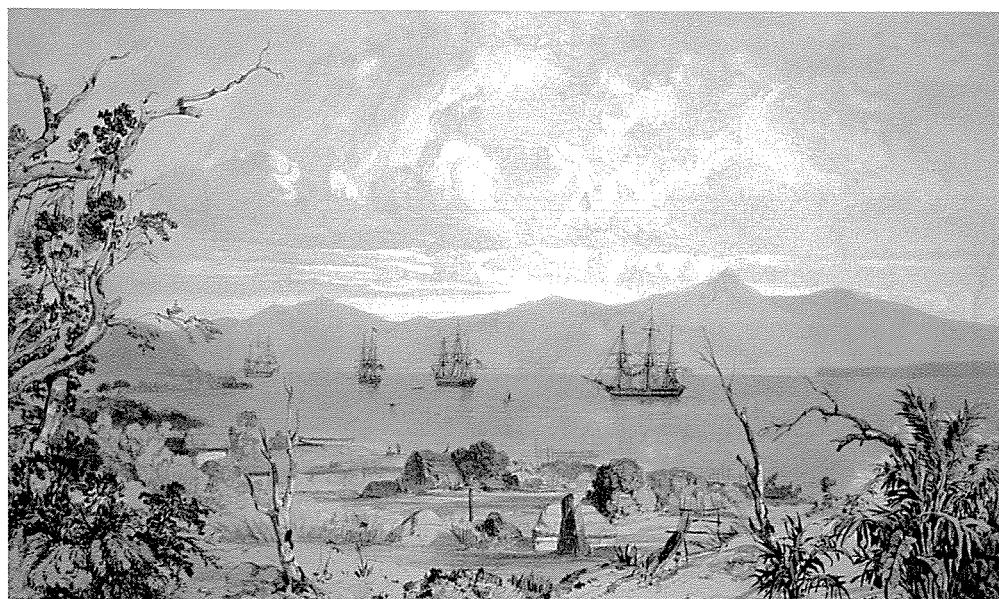
*'Canterbury is yet in progress of formation but it cannot fail to be one of the most important settlements in New Zealand – it has for its field of operation an immense level plain of more than two million acres.'*<sup>1</sup>

Fox's vision of Canterbury was accurate and it was equally so in the field of art. In 1849 he was one of the first to paint the Canterbury Plains, which were to become a distinctive landscape subject in artists' work in the following decades. He also stands as one of the most important exponents of art in Canterbury during the 1840s.

The 1840s in Canterbury were momentous years and gave rise to a unique period of activity in art. Few people making topographical sketches or watercolours in this period would have considered themselves artists, as the prime motivation was to make illustrations in diaries, journals or fieldbooks as a record or leisure diversion. At the beginning of the decade the focus of interest and

activity was Akaroa, on Banks Peninsula. In April 1840 the amateur artist Louis Le Breton (1790-1866), travelling on board *Astrolobe* with Dumont d'Urville's scientific expedition to the Antipodes, made a nine day visit to Akaroa Harbour, where he made many sketches. One of these was later worked up into a lithograph that was used with other reproductions to illustrate the 12-volume account of the voyage published as the 'Atlas Pittoresque'.

The following month, just prior to the proclamation of British Sovereignty over the South Island, French immigrants arrived at Akaroa. To maintain their safety, a French corvette, the *Rhin* was stationed there for almost three years between 1843 and 1846. On board was a young naval officer cadet and draughtsman, Charles Meryon (1821-1866), who sketched in his spare time. For a time in 1844/45 he set up a studio in a room ashore where he sculpted. This probably qualifies him as Canterbury's first resident artist. Other itinerants who visited Canterbury in the 1840s



**Leon J.B. Sabatier** after Louis Le Breton, (1818-1866).  
*Baie d'Akaroa (Nouvelle – Zelande)*  
Lithograph.

Collection: Alexander Turnbull Library,  
National Library of New Zealand, Te  
Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa. Publi-  
0028-185.





**Bracquemond, Felix** (1833–1914)  
*Portrait of Charles Meryon* (1853),  
etching.

were the first wave of surveyors who measured and drew the topographical features of the province. Included were Captain William Mein Smith (1790–1869), Surveyor General of the New Zealand Company, J. W. Barnicoat (1814–1905), Walter B. W. Mantell (1820–1895), J. H. Cridland and William Fox (1812–1893), Principle Agent for the New Zealand Company.

Fox arrived in December 1848 and in January 1849 made some of the first credible watercolour studies of Canterbury and its inhabitants. These revealed him to be among the few accomplished amateur artists to work in Canterbury in the 1840s. Fox returned to Canterbury in December 1850 to be present when the first colonists arrived. Another amateur artist in Lyttelton Harbour at that time was Richard Aldworth Oliver (1811–1889), Commander of the HMS *Fly* and hydrographic marine surveyor. Oliver's watercolours were almost as adept as Fox's.

On 17 February 1851, the Canterbury Association representative, John Robert Godley, in a letter to his father wrote of the progress of the Canterbury Settlement. 'Two months ago it [Christchurch] was a grassy plain unmarked by any sign of human footsteps or handiwork. Now it is covered by at least 80 habitations of every variety form and material.'<sup>2</sup> Later that year Godley's infant son

was painted by Lyttelton artist Mary Townsend (1822–1886) who has the distinction of being perhaps Canterbury's first woman artist.

Among the other artists active in Lyttelton in the 1850s, besides Mary Townsend, were William Henry Raworth (1821–1904), who also taught, William Howard Holmes (1825–1885), Edmund Norman (1820–1875), Jane Todhunter and Emily Barker. In addition to resident artists such as Andrew Hamilton and John Calcott St Quentin, there was a steady flow of visitors throughout the 1860s. The more prominent, William Matthew Hodgkins (1839–1898), Nicholas Chevalier (1828–1902), and Charles D. Barraud (1822–1897), all held exhibitions in Christchurch.

What was particularly distinctive about the 1860s was the increase in the level of professional practice and the growing awareness in the community of the importance of art. By 1867 Christchurch had its first piece of public sculpture with the erection in Cathedral Square of the Godley Statue by Thomas Woolner. The decade that followed was marked by an expanding vision among Canterbury artists as they travelled greater distances to seek landscape subjects.

The 1870s opened with the first major Fine Art Exhibition, held at the Canterbury Museum, which included not only work by most of Canterbury's leading resident artists, but

**Fox, William** (1812–1893)  
*Riccarton. Messrs Deans' Station.*  
*Canterbury 1848.* Watercolour.  
Collection: The Hocken Library, Uare  
Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago,  
Dunedin.





others from throughout the South Island.

New arrivals in the early 1870s included Thomas Attwood (snr), Allan Bowles Cambridge, Laurence W. Wilson and Thomas Cane, who added new vision to that of the resident artists, such as Thomas S. Cousins and James Peele. John B. C. Hoyte, William M. Hodgkins and John Kinder were prominent visitors. By 1877 John M. Madden and John Gibb had established themselves as professional artists, each teaching students. Gibb set himself up in 1876 as a full-time professional painter, thus reinforcing the move away from amateurism. This was further consolidated in 1880 with the formation of the Canterbury Society of Arts, which provided Christchurch with regular art exhibitions. The drive toward greater levels of professionalism was reinforced in 1882 with the opening of Canterbury College School of Art. That same year Christchurch's first International Exhibition opened and was, in part, a showcase for work by many of the leading contemporary European artists as well as those of Canterbury. Canterbury artists were not only regularly exhibiting locally and throughout New Zealand, but also overseas, particularly in Australia. They were well represented at the International Exhibitions in Melbourne in 1880 and 1888 and at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition London in 1886.

With the 1890s, art reached a new level as a whole new generation of Canterbury-born artists began to emerge and it would be these who would carry the development of art in the region forward into the twentieth century. In contrast to previous decades there were a greater number of women actively choosing to pursue careers as professional artists. Among them were Margaret Stoddart, Rosa Budden (Sawtell), Edith Munnings and Eleanor Waymouth. The expectations of the new generation altered as they prepared to challenge some more conservative attitudes, particularly of the Canterbury Society of Arts membership.

Outwardly the early 1890s showed signs

of stability in the art community. The Canterbury Society of Arts had managed to build a gallery and was looking to extend this with a building to house its permanent collection. The arrival of Petrus van der Velden in Christchurch in June 1890 brought a new and vital figure into the local art community, who was quickly adopted as a role model and mentor by several of the students at Canterbury College School of Art. In particular, Sydney Lough Thompson, Robert Procter and Charles Bickerton were encouraged by Van der Velden. Van der Velden, however, became disillusioned with Canterbury and its people and left in 1898. Nevertheless the effects of his inspiration remained and were unmistakable in subsequent artists' work.

The 1890s saw the rise of interest in plein-air landscape painting as more Canterbury artists worked out of doors. Alfred Walsh, William K. Sprott, James Madden and Edmund Gouldsmith were at the core as champions of this practice and were further encouraged with the formation of the Palette Club, which began to hold increasingly popular annual exhibitions. By 1895 the success of the Palette Club exhibitions rivalled the Canterbury Society of Arts. Organised art activity in other Canterbury centres also advanced in the mid 1890s with the establishment of the Ashburton Society of Arts in 1895 and the South Canterbury Art Society the following year.

As the century drew to a close and traditional art values continued to be upheld in Canterbury, many younger artists were encouraged to seek further training overseas. Dora Meeson, Margaret Stoddart and Charles Bickerton left for Europe.

The first fifty years of art in Canterbury witnessed the development of the artist from the often itinerant amateur, to the skilled, trained professional exhibiting work both nationally and internationally, thus raising the reputation of Canterbury art.

NEIL ROBERTS

## 1850

When the first of the Canterbury Association ships arrived in December 1850 there was at least one resident in Lyttelton who could claim to be an amateur artist. He was Richard Aldworth Oliver (1811–1889). Oliver was commander of the *Fly*, an Auckland based vessel at the disposal of the Governor, but more often engaged in hydrographic work. Oliver had first visited Canterbury in May 1848 and had spent two weeks at Akaroa with the Government commission negotiating land sales. During this time he made many watercolour studies.

The second visit in December 1850 followed a journey to the Auckland Islands by the *Fly*. They arrived in Lyttelton Harbour on 13 December and remained a week to await the first colonists. Oliver occupied himself during the leisure hours of that week writing

and painting. Among the watercolours he made was a view of the small Maori settlement at Purau whose inhabitants at that time numbered about ten.

Another visitor in December 1850 who also made a number of watercolour studies, was Frederick Aloysius Weld (1823–1891) who, as a representative of the Settlers Constitutional Association, was making a visit to Canterbury to examine the sites of Lyttelton and Christchurch, in an effort to find a stock route north to Marlborough. The watercolours that Weld made in the early 1850s are primitive but do appear to exhibit a certain facility for observation, although Edward Jollie maintained that ‘Mr Weld’s sketches were defective’.<sup>3</sup>



**Oliver, Richard A.** (1811–1889)  
*The Maori Settlement, Purau Bay, Port Cooper 1850*  
Watercolour.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery

## 1851

Among the colonists who stepped ashore at Lyttelton during December 1850 and January 1851 were a number who had better than average ability at drawing and making watercolours, but very few would have considered this activity as more than a casual leisuretime diversion. James Edward FitzGerald (1818–1896), later the First Superintendent of the Canterbury Provincial Government, was one. FitzGerald was a keen recorder and had busied himself with making watercolour studies from the time he left England on the *Charlotte Jane*.

A long sea voyage provided a unique opportunity for amateur artists to practise their interest and FitzGerald was no exception. Soon after his arrival in Canterbury he continued to paint, recording the infant settlement of Christchurch with more than average amateur skill.

In February 1851 a schoolmaster, William Howard Holmes (1825–1885), arrived to take up his position at the newly formed Collegiate Grammar School in Lyttelton. Holmes had gained his position partly for his ability in music

**Fox, William** (1812–1893)  
*Port Lyttelton. Immigrants' luggage disembarking 1851.*  
Watercolour.

Collection: The Hocken Library, Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago, Dunedin.





and art. Within weeks of arriving he was active with his pen and pencil and was also making plans to publish sketches of Canterbury. By December 1851 many were being made available for private viewing at the *Steadfast* Coffee

When the Canterbury Association's chief agent, John Robert Godley, was about to return to England early in 1853, FitzGerald presented him with an album of watercolours. The purpose of these studies was clear. Had FitzGerald had colour photography at his disposal it is likely that this would have been his chosen medium. Whilst FitzGerald's activity in art was mostly casual, there were others who took it more seriously and even attempted to earn a living from it.

William Henry Raworth (1821-1904) was one such artist. Although Raworth had arrived in Canterbury as a surveyor, his commitment to art was strong, although it is debatable whether or not it always matched his ability. As the nephew of British artist John Linnell, Raworth's stature as a watercolourist gradually grew in the 1850's while he was active as a drawing master. By the 1860s he had firmly established himself as a professional artist. The culmination of this was his first major exhibition in 1869. As a painter he was uneven, with

Room, Lyttelton. Four sketches were eventually published in C.W. Adams' *A Spring in Canterbury* 1853 and others were issued as single line engravings printed in London.

the result that reception of his work was mixed during the time he lived in Christchurch.

In contrast, the work of Mary Townsend (Mrs Donald) (1822-1886) was well received. Mary Townsend has the distinction of being perhaps the first semi-professional woman artist in Canterbury. She had received some years training in England prior to emigrating to New Zealand in 1850 with her family. The following year she married Dr William Donald, Medical Officer of Health at Lyttelton, but continued to paint, gaining some reputation as a portraitist. One of the earliest portraits by her to be exhibited publicly in Canterbury was of the Chairman of the Colonists Association. This was completed in August 1852. Her drawings and watercolours of Lyttelton, showing the arrival of immigrants, were equally well regarded. One of these was engraved to illustrate *Canterbury Papers* 1850-51. It is recognised that the emphasis on topographical drawing was stronger than painting at this time.

## 1852

Far left: Mrs William Donald (née Mary Townsend)

Collection: Canterbury Museum, Ref: 6828



Left: Townsend, Mary (1822–1869) *Portrait of Godley's Son* 1851, oil on canvas.

Collection: Canterbury Museum

Below: FitzGerald, James E. (1818–1896)

*Christchurch from the Bridle Path above Heathcote Ferry* 1852, watercolour.

Collection: Canterbury Museum



1853

In June 1853 William Leigh passed through the Banks Peninsula region while visiting New Zealand, completing some watercolour sketches of Akaroa Harbour and Pigeon Bay. Born in 1829 at Staffordshire, Leigh had been sent by his father to oversee land speculations

in Adelaide and as an amateur watercolourist, recorded many scenes while on his travels throughout Australasia. His views of Banks Peninsula provide an accurate record of the region at this time.

1854

In April 1854 James F. McCardell, a Christchurch bookseller and stationer with a keen interest in art and photography, was advertising the availability of engravings after sketches by Holmes ‘recently arrived from England’.<sup>4</sup> Holmes left Canterbury for Wellington in 1852 and did not return to live. His work exhibited a degree of facility as an amateur topographical draughtsman but it had limitations.

By far the most skillful draughtsman to arrive in the 1850s was Edmund Norman



(1820-1875). Norman had first come to New Zealand as a cadet surveyor but it was more than a decade before he settled in Canterbury.

Far right: Holmes, William H. (1825–1885). (Detail) *Lyttelton From The Water* (1852), pen and ink. Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery

1855

By November 1855 Norman was firmly established in Lyttelton, advertising his services as a professional draughtsman. He was also taking pupils, amongst them W.M.N. Watkins, but work was scarce. Several of his drawings were engraved as illustrations for *New Zealand or Zealandia – The Britain of the South* and others were lithographed by McClure and McDonald London. In 1856 Norman collaborated with Akaroa identity and architect Samuel C. Farr to paint a panoramic view of Akaroa and the harbour. Norman carried out the drawing outline, which Farr worked up in oils. This large painting was well received when it was exhibited in July 1856 at the Colonists Hall, Lyttelton.

Norman left Christchurch in 1862 for South Canterbury where he became a station hand, thus confining his drawing to a part-time pursuit. The scope for an artist to work full-time at his art was limited, as the combined population of Christchurch and Lyttelton in 1856 was about 1400.

The first phase of surveying had come to an

end, leaving employment prospects meagre. Architects experienced the same problems. Benjamin W. Mountfort (1824-1898), an architect who was a skilled draughtsman and watercolourist with an interest in art, turned to photography and taught drawing in the 1850s in order to secure a living. There were likely other artists active in Christchurch then that time has now obscured. One was a F. Worsley who lived at the town end of Papanui Road. To date no work by him has been identified. Others may have just passed through without making their presence known. There were also few venues other than shops and halls where artists could exhibit work, although no major exhibitions seem to have occurred in Canterbury during the 1850s.

As Canterbury moved into the 1860s a certain optimism emerged. By the middle of the decade communications had improved and a road west to the gold fields was completed. This improvement in communications opened up a whole new range of landscape subject possibilities for artists, of which they were quick to take advantage.

1857

John Turnbull Thomson began a preliminary survey of the area surrounding Mt Cook, including Lindis Pass, Lake Ohau and Lake Pukaki in December 1857. He sketched Mt Cook from atop the Benmore Ranges and later

worked his sketches up into watercolour paintings, which were the first images of Mt Cook from the east. This scene was to prove to be a popular one for future Canterbury artists.



One of the earliest arrivals was Samuel Butler, who stepped ashore at Lyttelton on 27 January 1860. As well as being an author of fiction, Butler was a respected writer on art and art criticism. It was his strongest wish to be a professional artist, even though during his time in Canterbury that wish was only partly realised. For the most part, his efforts never rose much above amateur status.

Samuel Butler took up land at the head of the Rangitata in 1860 at a place he called *Mesopotamia*, which he farmed for four years. By June 1864 he had become disillusioned with Canterbury as a colony and returned to England. During the time he was in the province he did many drawings and several portraits including, in 1863, a portrait of John Marshman, Canterbury's first immigration officer and Manager of Canterbury Railways.

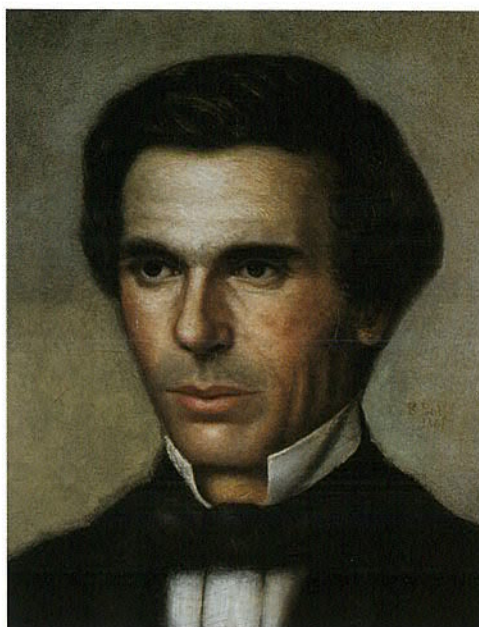
Among the many hands that Butler had working at *Mesopotamia* was Robert B. Booth (1840-1913), who was also an enthusiastic amateur artist of picturesque back country subjects. Robert Booth had arrived in 1859, but like Butler, had become disillusioned with the colony by 1864 and sailed for India to join his brother in Bombay.

The early 1860s also witnessed an

In 1861 Haast moved from Nelson to Christchurch to take up an appointment as Provincial Geologist. This position involved much fieldwork, which he carefully illustrated with very able watercolour drawings. Despite this he did not consider himself an artist.

Between March 1861 and April 1862 he explored much of the alpine region of Canter-

enthusiasm for founding cultural societies, among them the Royal Musical Society and Philosophical Institute of Canterbury. The latter had as a principle the advancement of Science, Literature and Art. A prime mover in its establishment was Julius von Haast (1822-1887), a geological scientist who had more than just a passing interest in art and artists.



## 1850–1899

### 1860

Left: **Butler, Samuel** (1835–1902)  
*Portrait of John Marshman* (1863)  
oil on canvas.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery

Below: **Butler, Samuel**  
(1835–1902)  
*Mesopotamia*, pen and ink.

Collection: Canterbury Museum



**Gully, John** (1819–1888)  
*Sources of the Godley River,  
Classens and Godley Glaciers,  
3550 feet* (1862), watercolour.

Collection: Drawings and Prints,  
Alexander Turnbull Library, National  
Library of New Zealand, Te Puna  
Mātauranga o Aotearoa. C-096-004.

### 1861

bury, the results of which he documented in a paper titled *Notes on Mountains and Glaciers of Canterbury Province, New Zealand*. This was read to the Royal Geographical Society in London in 1864 and was illustrated with 12 commissioned watercolours made by John Gully, a watercolourist just emerging in New Zealand. Haast had first met Gully in New





**Chevalier, Nicholas** (1828–1902)  
*Akaroa Harbour Seen from Barry's Bay* (1881), watercolour.

Collection: Canterbury Museum

Plymouth in 1859 and had resumed his acquaintance with the artist while living in

Nelson the following year.

## 1862

John Gully prepared his 12 watercolours from sketches supplied by Haast, including *Sources of the Godley River, Classens and Godley Glaciers, 3550 feet* 1863. By September 1862 these were completed and were exhibited briefly in Nelson before being sent to London. The significance of this is that it was not only

the beginning of Gully working on Canterbury subjects, but also it was one of the first commissions offered to an artist by the Canterbury region.

With the formation of a Philosophical Society there was also a current of interest in the establishment of a Society of Arts.

## 1863

On 25 March 1863 *The Lyttelton Times* reported that a Society of Fine Arts was proposed, with plans to establish an annual exhibition system, a School of Design and to prepare for building a public art gallery. The proposition was not immediately taken up, but on 28 October a preliminary meeting was held in the recently completed studio of Andrew Hamilton with the purpose of exploring the feasibility of forming a School. A committee was convened, the members being Samuel Butler, Andrew Hamilton, E. C. J. Stevens, John Ollivier and H. J. Tancred, who was an

education enthusiast. This first step to form a School of Art was not carried any further and lapsed for almost seventeen years.

One of the keenest supporters on the committee for the idea was Andrew Hamilton, a trained professional artist who had exhibited with both the Royal Academy London and the Royal Scottish Academy Edinburgh. Hamilton had arrived at Lyttelton on 16 June 1863 and within little more than a week was advertising his services as an artist. By 24 August he had had a studio built in Hereford Street and was offering lessons in drawing and painting.

## 1864

Although the October meeting had not led to anything positive, Hamilton's enthusiasm was not daunted. In an illustrated lecture on 'Arts and Design', which he delivered at the Mechanic's Institute on 25 January 1864, he emphasised the need for art school training

to be established. He cautioned that

*If we fall into the habit of sending to the old country for everything which we wanted, there would be at once an end to all art education, and the development of art in the province would be checked.*<sup>5</sup>

Prospects in Christchurch for professional artists in 1864 were still not good and by the end of February Hamilton had stopped advertising his services and soon after gave up his studio and left for Dunedin.

During the 12 months or so that he had lived in Canterbury he had been energetic in his work and had travelled widely in the province making watercolours. However, opportunities in Otago for artists were certainly more evident and promotion of the arts was well under way, with the preparation for a major New Zealand Exhibition to be held in 1865.

The first of the New Zealand International Exhibitions was very successful in all respects. It was opened on 12 January and ran until 6 May 1865. There were few exhibits by Canterbury artists and by far the most significant presence was Hamilton's *Canterbury Scenery*, which included Banks Peninsula, Mt Oxford, Waimakariri Gorge and the Geraldine region.

Even though there were departures in the 1860s, there were also many more arrivals. Among the more notable, in 1863, was William Brassington and Thomas Selby Cousins. William Brassington (1840-1905) was a sculptor and stonemason whose first major project was the Provincial Council Chamber designed by B.W. Mountfort (1825-1898). The artist, T. S. Cousins (1840-1897), arrived after some years in Melbourne, where he had worked as an illustrator for *Melbourne Punch* and the *Melbourne Age*. A fellow artist had been Nicholas Chevalier. Cousins was the nephew of Samuel Cousins RA and had been

Nicholas Chevalier (1828-1902) embarked on his painting tour of New Zealand in Otago during December 1865. His objective was ostensibly to make a series of works to show at the Paris International Exhibition of 1867. At a meeting of the Canterbury Provincial Council held on 23 January 1866 a motion was passed to engage Chevalier for £200 to make sketches of the Canterbury province.

On 27 March Chevalier arrived in Lyttelton and immediately proceeded to Pigeon Bay to join his wife who was already

In October John Irvine visited Christchurch advertising his services as a portrait painter, while also offering lessons in drawing and oil painting. He established, for a short period, a studio in the schoolroom of the Scotch Church (St Andrews, corner of Tuam, Antigua and Lichfield Streets) and appears to have briefly taught drawing at Christchurch College. Irvine studied art in Edinburgh and London (R.A.) specialising in portraits. He settled in Dunedin in 1863 as a professional artist focusing mainly on portrait work. He returned to Dunedin after his short stay in Christchurch.<sup>6</sup>



1865

William Brassington at his yard, Kilmore Street c.1860.

Collection: Canterbury Museum

second only to Edwin Landseer in a Royal Academy Scholarship.

The demand for an artist of Cousins's skill in Canterbury was small so he spent time as a station hand and at other work. By January 1864 he had a job at Elsbees Photographic Rooms colouring photographs in oil colour. There was also some freelance illustrating but it was very limited. In 1867 he returned to Melbourne, possibly after renewing his acquaintance with Nicholas Chevalier when he visited Canterbury in 1866.

staying there. After a few days on the Peninsula they left for Christchurch to plan a painting expedition to the West Coast, which Julius von Haast helped to get under way. Early in April Chevalier and his party set off via the Hurunui and Taramakau Rivers to Hokitika, and returned by the Otira and Waimakariri Rivers on the newly formed coach road.

They were away for about five weeks. Soon after their return late in May they travelled south to the McKenzie Country and South Canterbury, but by June 20 they were back

1866





**Watkins, William M.N.**  
(1835–1904)  
*Akaroa Harbour*,  
oil on canvas.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery

again in Christchurch preparing for an exhibition at the Town Hall in High Street. The exhibition opened on 4 July and ran for five days. It comprised more than 200 of his sketches and watercolours made over the previous eight months in both Otago and Canterbury. Even though many of the works were unfinished, the exhibition was one of the most impressive by a single artist to have been held in Christchurch at that time. It was received well by the local press which described his works as *'strikingly masterly'*.<sup>7</sup> Three weeks later most of these works were given a further showing in Otago.

On 10 August Chevalier returned to Melbourne where in October he exhibited many of the works again at the Intercolonial Exhibition, which was the biggest art event in Australasia in 1866/67.

Almost concurrent with the Chevalier exhibition in Christchurch there was, at Bonnington's Hall, an exhibition by resident artist

F. Worsley. Most of the works were copies of Murillo and Landseer paintings. In the 1860s Bonnington's Music Hall and warehouse was a favourite venue for exhibitions and Art Unions, which had been held there as early as 1864.

On 26 April 1866 an Art Union was held that had as first prize a replica of Noel Paton's *Silver Cord Loosed* by artist engraver George B. Shaw. George Shaw, who spent much of his life in New Zealand living in Otago, was in Christchurch for a few years in the mid 1860s.

Although much of the art activity at this time was focussed in Christchurch, artists were working elsewhere in Canterbury. By the mid 1860s the Watkins brothers, Stephen (1836–1894) and William (1835–1904), were active at Akaroa, Stephen as a painter and William as a photographer. It was William Watkins who was to gain prominence as a painter a decade later.

South Canterbury also had a number of amateur artists and enthusiasts among the runholders.

## 1867

One of the topics of conversation in the latter part of 1866 was the Thomas Woolner statue of John Robert Godley, which had recently arrived but was yet to be set in place and unveiled. The Woolner commission was a protracted saga that had begun soon after Godley's death in England on 28 October 1861. The following year, on the first anniversary of this, a meeting of citizens of Christchurch was held at which it was resolved to erect a memorial statue to the colony's founder. But it was felt that there was no local sculptor who could carry

out the commission. A memorial committee was then set up in England headed by Sir John Simeon. In February 1863 Simeon approached Thomas Woolner (1825–1892) who was well known to many Canterbury colonists and had a reputation as a portrait sculptor. A member of the original Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, he had left England in 1852 to seek his fortune on the goldfields of Victoria, Australia. When this did not eventuate he returned to sculpting in Melbourne and competed for many colonial portrait commissions with some success, but



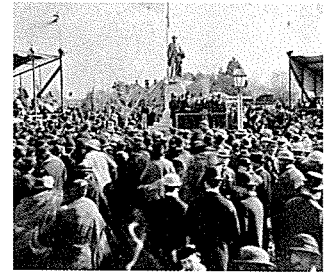
insufficient for him to remain in Australia so by 1857 he had returned to England.

The Godley commission was confirmed on 4 March 1863 and Woolner commenced work. He completed his initial designs by using photographs of the subject. By October the preparations for the sculpture were well under way. The clay modelling was finished in May 1864 and by late August was ready for casting. The casting was made at Coalbrookdale foundry in Shropshire at a cost of £1500. During July 1865 the statue was placed on view at South Kensington Museum, London, where it was well received.

Meanwhile a site was being prepared in Cathedral Square and William Brassington had been engaged to make a plinth from dimensions sent by Woolner. Brassington set about his task

working a 5 tonne block of stone taken from the Hoon Hay Quarry. The Godley statue finally arrived at Lyttelton in July 1866, but could not be put in place as the dimensions given to Brassington had been incorrect, this meant that a reworking of the top plinth stone was required. It was to be a further nine months before the statue was finally raised on its pedestal to be shrouded for its unveiling, which was also delayed. June arrived and it still had not been unveiled and there were fears that its wrapping in wet covers for several months would oxidise the bronze, spoiling its patina. There had also been vandalism on the site.

Finally on 6 August 1867 a crowd of 2,000 people gathered to witness the official unveiling by Christchurch magistrate Charles Bowen, who had once been Godley's private secretary.



The unveiling of the Godley Statue in Cathedral Square, 6 August 1867.

Photo by A.C. Barker.  
Collection: Canterbury Museum.

During 1868 there was some interest amongst Canterbury artists in Otago's proposed Fine Arts Exhibition planned for 1869. This ex-

hibition, the first of its kind to be held in New Zealand, opened at Dunedin in early February.

1868

Colonial artists were represented amongst the 1400 works that included watercolours, engravings, bronze sculptures and photography, a large number of which were on loan from local Otago collectors. Prominent amongst the Canterbury artists were F. Worsley and William Montague Nevin Watkins.

Among the visitors to Canterbury in 1869 were C. D. Barraud (1822-1897) and William Mathew Hodgkins (1833-1898). Barraud had been a silver medallist at the 1865 Exhibition and spent time while in Canterbury painting at Sumner, on the Cashmere estate, and near Timaru. This was not his first visit. In March 1852 he had held an exhibition of 60 paintings and engravings at Lyttelton and an Art Union, one of the first in the region. Hodgkins also painted at Sumner and Akaroa.

On 23 April the Royal flotilla arrived at

Lyttelton. On board *H. M. S. Galatea* was the Duke of Edinburgh. Travelling with the Royal party were Nicholas Chevalier and W. M. Hodgkins, who had visited the previous month. In preparation for this first Royal visit much effort had gone into decorating Christchurch. The principal designer and artist employed to carry out many of the street decorations was John C. St Quentin who had also been responsible for the painted decorative work on the 1865 Provincial Council Chamber. Coinciding with the Royal Visit was an exhibition of New Zealand scenery, the work of W. H. Raworth held at Kent's Repository in Oxford Terrace, and a waxworks tableaux of the death of soldier artist Gustavus Ferdinand von Tempsky was also showing in the old Wesleyan Hall, High Street.

1869

The immense success of New Zealand's first fine arts exhibition in Otago was an encouraging sign, particularly to Richard W. Fereday, a local solicitor, who was also an amateur artist of some ability. On 27 August 1869 Fereday wrote to *The Press* expressing his

belief that '*the residents of Christchurch and surrounding areas would appreciate an art exhibition*'.<sup>8</sup> He cited the Chevalier exhibition of 1866 as evidence of public interest.

It was his view that any proceeds from such an exhibition could be used towards

1870

establishing a school of art, but he feared that 'the province is not as yet sufficiently advanced'.<sup>9</sup>

Fereday's appeal was not lost and was taken up by the Provincial Council who also saw merits in staging such an event in 1870. A committee was formed and a prospectus issued, modelled on that laid down by the commissioners for the 1862 South Kensington Art Exhibition in London. At first it was intended that models of mechanical inventions would also be included, but it was finally decided to concentrate exclusively on fine art.

Time however, was short and problems as to a likely venue arose. As the new stone Canterbury museum building was nearing completion it was decided that it could be made available, provided the exhibition took place before March 1870. As there was limited time also to secure loan exhibits beyond Canterbury it was also decided to restrict them to entries from Otago, Nelson and Wellington.

In January 1870 a temporary annex to house some exhibits was constructed adjacent to the newly finished museum. On 9 February the Superintendent of the Province, William Rolleston, opened the exhibition.

Between three and four hundred attended the opening ceremony. In his address, Rolleston remarked that this was

*the first occasion in which the province has been able to achieve any special effect in the promotion and advancement of art.*<sup>10</sup>

With a new generation growing up, he felt that there was a need to attend to this part of their education:

*hopefully the exhibition may be an incentive to the public generally, to assist and be sympathetic to the promotion of general study and cultivation of science, literature and philosophy, for example in establishing a school of art, a library and science laboratory, the government need the people's support.*<sup>11</sup>

In his speech Charles Bowen, representing the exhibition committee, stated that he hoped that

*this modest exhibition will be the first of a long series, and that those in the future will be more richly adorned by the works of the native artists.*<sup>12</sup>

He charged that *it is the first exhibition in Canterbury to be within the reach of all.*<sup>13</sup>

Most of the exhibits were on loan from private collections or local artists. Included were items of statuary, tapestry, jewellery, arms, coins, photography and engraving at ground floor level, and in the annex Polynesian exhibits were displayed.

On the first floor mezzanine galleries 365 works were exhibited, with oil paintings on the East and watercolours on the West and North walls. Among the amateur and professional Canterbury artists represented were William Packe, W. H. Raworth, T.S. Cousins, Randolph Mainwaring, Samuel Butler, Miss E. Sheath, Mrs Mary McDonald, (née Townsend) B. W. Mountfort, and Mrs Montgomery (née Todhunter). The non-Canterbury artists included George O'Brien, Nicholas Chevalier, C. D. Barraud, J. C. Richmond, John Gully and others. There were also many loan works by British artists such as W.M.W. Turner, C.J. Lauder, J.F. Herring, Sir T. Lawrence and H. Fuseli.

During the time the exhibition was opened reviewers responded well but were critical of the 'jumble' of some collections, the hanging of pictures, ticketing and catalogue. They hoped that in future this exhibition '*one which has undoubtedly raised standards of appreciation in Canterbury*',<sup>14</sup> if it could be improved upon would be sure of success.



'Art Exhibition, 1870'

Credit: A C Barker photograph.  
Collection: Canterbury Museum,  
Ref: 6740.

## 1871

Amongst the arrivals to Christchurch in 1870 were Allan Bowles Cambridge (1847-1911) and Henry Fisher (1834-1923). Henry Fisher was a

gilder by trade who had had a picture framing business in London from 1865. He arrived at Lyttelton on board the *Merope* on 27 October

1870 with 280 other immigrants, amongst them Thomas Attwood, father of T. A. Attwood (1865-1926). Lyttelton was in ruins after the fire of two days earlier. W. H. Raworth painted this conflagration early in 1871.

Fisher established a business on the corner of Hereford and Colombo Streets and later in Hereford Street next to the Golden Age Hotel. In the 1870s he quickly rose to prominence as the leading framer and art dealer. Fisher's was also the venue for small one-man exhibitions. One of the earliest was of work by the portraitist Allan Bowles Cambridge.

By 1870 Thomas S. Cousins had returned to Christchurch and was once again working at photograph tinting and colouring. But he had begun drawing for the *Illustrated Press* and was also making watercolours and doing commissioned work, mostly portraits.

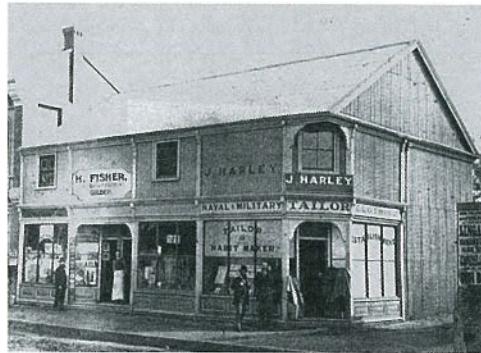
Also resident in Christchurch by 1870 was Cousins' young cousin, Laurence W. Wilson (c.1850-1912). Wilson completed a number of watercolours of Sumner in 1871. He remained in Canterbury until shortly after his marriage in 1877. A large solo exhibition of 90 watercolour paintings of New Zealand scenery by W. H. Raworth was shown at the Supper Room in the old Town Hall, High



**Raworth, William H.** (1821–1904)  
*Great Fire in Lyttelton, 25<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1870,*  
watercolour.

Collection: Canterbury Museum

Street during September 1871. Raworth travelled extensively throughout Canterbury prior to this exhibition which included many scenes of the Lewis Pass region, Banks Peninsula, the Amuri, Waitohi Gorge, Hanmer Plains and the Upper Waiau.



H. Fisher Picture Framing Shop –  
Hereford street, c.1875.  
*Left to right:* H. Fisher, J.H. Fisher,  
W.H. Jewel, J. Harley.

Photo courtesy of Fisher's Fine Arts.

The year 1872 witnessed Christchurch busy putting together exhibits for the International Exhibition to be held in Vienna. When the exhibition opened in September 1873 Canterbury artists were represented in the New Zealand Court.

On New Year's eve W.H. Raworth and W.M.N. Watkins held an exhibition of their paintings at Thomas Kent's premises in Cashel Street, Christchurch. Watkins' paintings focused on the Banks Peninsula area while Raworth's included a number of works of New Zealand scenery.<sup>15</sup>

Among the more casual artist visitors were Auckland's John Kinder (1819-1903) and John Barr Clarke Hoyte (1835-1913). The Reverend John Kinder visited Dunedin in December 1873 and called in briefly to Lyttelton in January 1874 where he had time to make a few watercolour sketches that he later

By 1872 A. B. Cambridge had opened a picture dealing business in Hereford Street. He also established a studio where he was commissioned to paint portraits of local identities.

In December of that year Christchurch hosted the first Interprovincial Exhibition in the Drill shed, Montreal Street, which included a variety of exhibits as well as a number of paintings by local artists. As the 1870s progressed, movements of artists to and from the province continued as in the 1860s, but more were staying than in the previous decade.

developed into paintings. Hoyte also arrived in January and spent time on a sketching tour of Canterbury that included Banks Peninsula. Before he left he held a small exhibition of watercolours at Warners Hotel in Cathedral Square. Others were also shown with Henry Fisher in Hereford Street.

1872

1873



1874

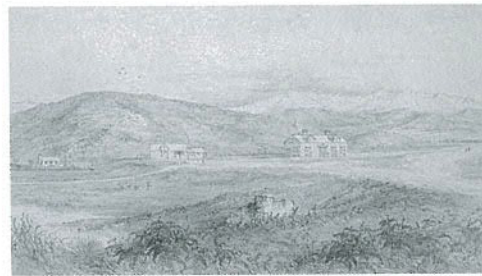
A recent arrival from England in 1874 was Thomas Cane (1830-1905), who had been appointed Provincial Architect. Cane's skills as a watercolourist outside his profession were well practised and immediately recognised. On the abolition of the provinces two years later Cane set up practice privately in High Street, but like B. W. Mountfort, never found it easy to find work as an architect. In his spare time he worked at his painting, often making

watercolours of his favourite locality – Banks Peninsula.

Another arrival was Thornhill Cooper (1840-1940), a passionate amateur watercolourist and photographer. In 1874 he left his position with the Bank of New Zealand to take over a photographic business in Oxford Terrace, but after about a year he sold out to make a sketching and photographic tour of Canterbury.

1875

On 2 June 1875 Edmund Norman was found dead at Burkes Pass. Norman had spent most of the previous ten years living and working



**Norman, Edmund** (1820–1875)  
*Burkes Pass*, 1875, pencil.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery

in South Canterbury. He was in many respects the most able and colourful artist living there at the time. There were others, however, mostly amateurs, who included William Packe, who with his brother ran 'Raincliff' station and made watercolours in his spare time, Mrs Emily Acland (née Harper) at Mt Peel, and by far the most original, the Reverend James Preston (1834-1898). Preston had been in Canterbury since the 1850s working on stations and making his distinctive primitive watercolours.

1876

During September 1876 Scottish born artist John Gibb (1831-1909) arrived in Lyttelton with his family, which included two sons, John Walker Gibb and William Menzies Gibb. John Gibb senior quickly established a studio and an identity in Canterbury as a professional marine painter. In December 1876 he held his first one-man exhibition at Firth's Picture Framers in High Street. Gibb already had a career as an artist spanning almost 25 years before coming to Christchurch, which added to his status as a professional. In the 1880s his son, William Menzies Gibb, emerged as an artist of some ability.

The International Exhibition of 1876 in

Philadelphia, U. S. A. had attracted exhibitors from around the world and New Zealand was no exception. Canterbury was represented by several artists, including William Marshall Cooper (1833-1921). In the 1860s Cooper had worked as a surveyor in Westland and by 1876 was in the employ of the Provincial Government. Like most surveyors of the time he was thoroughly skilled in draughtsmanship but had better than average ability as a lithographer. As early as 1869 Harnett and Co of Hokitika had published an edition of lithographs drawn by Cooper.

Among other arrivals in 1876 was English painter John Mackintosh Madden (1856-1923). Madden earned part of his living as a drawing master, and later joined the staff of Christs College in that capacity, following others such as B. W. Mountfort, Thomas S. Cousins and Thomas Cane.

In 1876 Julius von Haast, who had developed a keen interest in Maori rock art, became aware of the drawings in the Weka Pass Shelter, North Canterbury. Haast engaged his friend, T. S. Cousins, to copy them and do some site paintings.



**Cousins, Thomas S.** (1840–1897)  
*The Artist recording Maori Rock Art, Waikari* 1876.

Collection: Canterbury Museum



By 1877 it was evident that interest in art had grown. When on 10 June a major Art Exhibition opened at the Canterbury Museum, crowds were so large that not all could be admitted. However, no progress had emerged on forming an art school. For most, training had to be sought elsewhere, often in Otago or Melbourne. In 1876 W. M. N. Watkins left for

Melbourne to study at the National Gallery School followed by William Menzies Gibb in 1880.<sup>16</sup>

John Gibb was invited by Christchurch lithographer, W. C. Brunsdon, to make a portrait of Reverend C. Fraser as the first in a series of portraits of local identities, which were published by Brunsdon.

As the 1870s drew to a close there was more than an air of optimism for the future.

The major event in 1879 for New Zealand artists was the International Exhibition, Sydney, which opened in September. In May a Canterbury exhibition committee had been set up and space allocated for a gallery of New Zealand art at the exhibition. Prominent among the exhibitors were John Gibb, William Montague Nevin Watkins, Thomas Cane and Louis Neville. Photographers included James McCordell, Aaron Ayers, Nelson K. Cherrill, and silversmith Marcus Sandstein. This was the first exhibition outside New Zealand in which Canterbury artists were well represented. By the time the 1879 exhibition was about to close preparations were already underway for a similar event to be held in Melbourne in 1880. Once again a committee was formed in Christchurch to allocate space and a high number of applicants were received, including most of the artists who had shown the previous year. The 1880 Melbourne Exhibition was one of the most impressive festivals of art to be held in Australasia. On opening day in September 15,000 people attended.

By 1879 Christchurch had several professional artists with well-established studios. The most notable were Thomas S. Cousins,

Manchester Street; Allan B. Cambridge, Hereford Street; John Gibb, Barbadoes Street and Gottfried Lindauer at Cashel Street West, close to Julius von Haast. The most recent arrival was Gottfried Lindauer (1839–1926).

Early in 1879 Lindauer, who was an exhibitor at the Sydney exhibition, visited Australia and while he was there he married. On returning to New Zealand a few months later he settled in Christchurch. In February 1880, however, his wife died in childbirth and soon after he left to live in Napier.

In 1879 ex India army officer, Edwyn F. Temple (1835–1920), settled near Geraldine after spending two years living in Christchurch. Temple was an amateur, but with a better than average ability in both oils and watercolours and while living in Christchurch he helped form the Canterbury Society of Arts (CSA).



**Temple, Edwyn F.** (1835–1920)  
*Mount Hutt Station, June 1880,*  
watercolour.  
Private Collection.

With the rise in the number of both amateur and professional artists in Canterbury it was felt timely that a society of arts should be formed. On 30 June 1880 a public meeting was called at St Michael's schoolroom for those interested in the formation of a society.

Among those present were Julius von Haast, Alexander Lean, H. P. Lance, F. W. Hutton, E.F. Temple, C. C. Corfe, Thomas Acland, W. H. Wynn-Williams, Louis Neville, J. E. Parker and the Reverend E. J. Penny, who

chaired the meeting. W. H. Wynn-Williams proposed that a society be formed and this was seconded by Julius von Haast.

From 15 to 20 July Christchurch held an Industrial Exhibition at the Drill shed on Montreal Street. Included in the exhibits were paintings by John Gibb and William Menzies Gibb who also decorated a central front panel of a walnut cabinet built by local cabinet-maker, A. J. White. Large crowds attended this exhibition with over 5000 paying visitors on

1877

1879

1880



its second day of opening.<sup>17</sup>

On 7 July a further meeting was held at the Public Library where the Society's structure and rules were discussed. The following week at a meeting chaired by H. J. Tancred, the society's first council was elected. Further meetings followed during 1880 to form policy and regulations for exhibitions

and elect the first working members. The prime objective in forming a society was to promote the study, practise and cultivation of the fine arts in New Zealand and educate public taste through exhibitions. By early September the Society's formation was advertised and an inaugural exhibition was planned for January.

## 1881

The first exhibition was held in rooms of the Boys' High School, Worcester Street West. A total of 105 works were shown by member artists that included; T. S Cousins, J. M. Madden, W. Menzies Gibb, George Turner, H. M. L. Atcherley, Richmond Beetham, and John Gibb, whose *Shades of Evening, the Estuary* was the first work purchased for the society's permanent collection. Also included were 41 loan works from private collections. This first exhibition was very successful and throughout the 1880s the Society was to go from strength to strength.

Canterbury artists were well represented at the Melbourne International Exhibition. Prominent among the fine art exhibitors were John Gibb, James Peele, Capt. E.F. Temple, William Watkins, Thomas Cane, William Menzies Gibb, William Gapes, Samuel Farr, Mrs A.R. Nicolls, Henry Billens and Louis Neville.

Marianne North, an artist specialising in Botanical painting, arrived in Christchurch in

early March while on a tour of New Zealand. Staying with her cousin, John Enys, on his farm at Castle Rock, Craigieburn, North sketched beech forest in this area before travelling to the Otira Gorge where she sketched local flora and fauna. North's Gallery in Kew Gardens, London include Canterbury paintings, *View of the Otira Gorge*, *Castle Hill Station with Beech Forest*, and *Entrance to the Otira Gorge*.

About the same time that the Canterbury Society of Arts was coming into being progress was also being made in art education.

In 1879 the board of Governors of Canterbury College realised the success of David Con Hutton's School of Art in Dunedin and, partly on Hutton's urging, decided to establish a similar school in Canterbury. Preparations were soon underway and in 1881 lists of requirements for the new art school were sent to the South Kensington Museum, London, by the Canterbury College Museum Committee. Cases of casts, models and books were shipped out and a suitable art master to head



**Gibb, John** (1831–1909)  
*Shades of Evening, the Estuary*  
(1881), oil on canvas.  
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery

the school was sought. In April 1881 the conditions of appointment were announced. These included a requirement that the appointee would have to have the ability 'to explain to students the principals of mach-

inery'.<sup>18</sup> The successful applicant was David Blair (1852-1925), then examiner for art at South Kensington. Blair left England for New Zealand in July 1881.

It was decided that the recently vacated old Girls High School building in Hereford Street West was suitable for conversion to an art school. This building required some renovation and Blair spent many months after his arrival arranging this. He also prepared a prospectus modelled on that of the South Kensington School. In January 1882 this was issued, offering morning and evening classes Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Applications for the first term of study soon began to be received and when the school opened on 1 March 1882, 28 day and 63 evening students were enrolled. Amongst the students were W. E. Chapman, Rosa Budden (Sawtell), Edith E. Munning, Margaret O. Stoddart and E. W. Greenstreet.

On March 2 *The Press* reported that: 'the former Girls High School has been transformed into a miniature South Kensington school of art'.<sup>19</sup> Blair's young assistant, who had also arrived in 1881, was George Herbert Elliot (1860-1940), a gold medallist the previous year at the Royal College of Art, South Kensington.

The success of the 1881 exhibition in Adelaide, organised by exhibition promoters M. Jules Jourbert and R. E. N Twopeny, was a deciding factor when they put forward the proposition of holding a similar International Exhibition in Christchurch in 1882.

During September a circular letter declaring their intention had been sent by Jourbert and Twopeny to the New Zealand Government, the Mayor of Christchurch, J. Gapes, and the Christchurch Industrial Association. The exhibition was to be a purely private venture carried out under the auspices of the Christchurch City Council. The Council eventually gave the venture its support, as did the government. The government also granted permission for temporary use of a portion of land in South Hagley Park on the corner of Riccarton and Lincoln Roads (Hospital corner).

Christchurch architect T. S. Lambert was

commissioned to design the exhibition buildings, which included an art gallery 30 x 20 metres within the main transept. The entrance approach to this was screened by an elaborate Corinthian façade constructed of plaster. A collection of some 250 loan works was assembled, described as including paintings by 'many of the best modern masters of English, French, Italian and German Schools'.<sup>20</sup>

Unfortunately very few of the New Zealand works were by local artists. John Gibb and W. M. N. Watkins, who was awarded a silver medal, were among the exceptions. The exhibition was formally opened to the public on 10 April. Within a month there was a call in the press for the exhibition site to be leased from the government and the buildings retained and acquired by the city for an Art and Music complex after the exhibition had closed. The suggestion was not taken up.

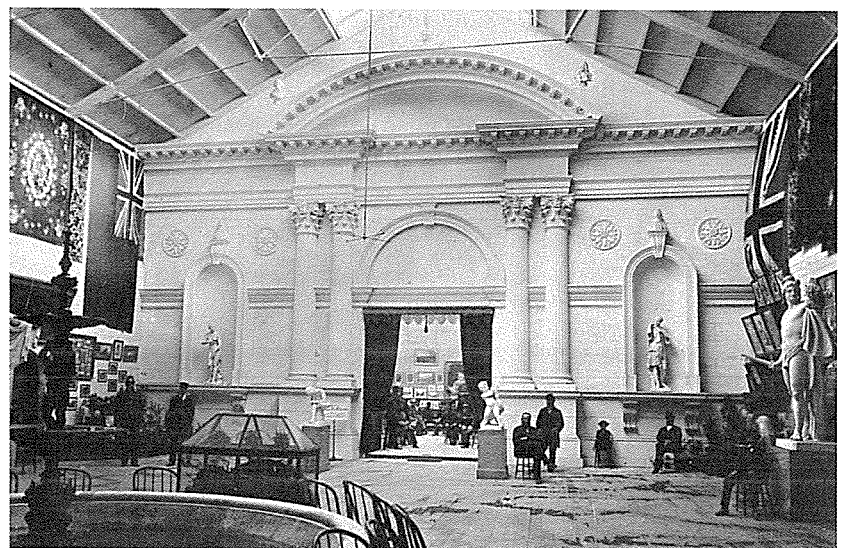
On 15 July the exhibition closed and a week later demolition of the buildings began.

Over the 14 weeks that this exhibition of Industry and Art was open it attracted 226,300 visitors and many of the art works had been sold to local collectors.

1882

Entrance to the Fine Arts Gallery, International Exhibition, Christchurch, 1882.

F. Bradley & Co photograph. Collection: Canterbury Museum





1883

Alfred Beere arrived in Christchurch from England in late 1882. Having exhibited several pieces of sculpture at the Royal Academy in 1880 and 1881, Beere was an early professional sculptor who resided in Christchurch for a short time. He exhibited three pieces at the 1883 CSA exhibition, including a bust of Professor Julius von Haast. He was also commissioned to model a bust of W. Montgomery of the Canterbury College Trust, and a high relief in terracotta representing England protecting New Zealand. During Beere's stay in Christchurch he worked mainly in terracotta in

conjunction with the local pottery firm Austin and Kirk, who also exhibited his work in their premises on Colombo Street. By September 1883, however, Beere had moved on to Sydney where a larger population offered greater opportunities.<sup>21</sup>

On 17 December the Second Industrial Exhibition opened at the Drill shed in Montreal Street. Exhibiting artists from Canterbury included John Gibb, W.M. Gibb, Margaret Stoddart, W. M. N. Watkins, H. Billens, A. B. Cambridge, Eliza Gillette Culliford, Rosa Budden, and W. J. W. Hamilton.

1885

By 1885 T. S. Cousins had gained some local reputation as a portraitist, but had decided to leave Christchurch to live in Dunedin. In January he held an exhibition of *Old Identities* at Cokers Hotel billiard room in Manchester Street. This exhibition of watercolours included portraits of many of Canterbury's most notable colonists.

The artist George N. Turner (1833-1911) was also on the move but just to new premises in High Street, having vacated his *Art Repository* in Hereford Street, perhaps because it was about to be demolished to make way for Mortens Building. Among the services he offered at his new business was the making of illuminated addresses. Turner had come to New Zealand in 1885 and had held several Public Works positions over the years while maintaining enthusiastic interest as a part-time amateur painter. By the 1880s he was totally involved in his activity as an artist.

On 1 August 1885 a major Industrial Exhibition opened in Wellington with a special art section. Many Canterbury artists contributed work. Included were paintings by William Menzies Gibb, who was awarded a

silver medal for flower paintings, James Peele, who received high commendation, John Gibb, A. B. Cambridge, R. W. Fereday and younger artists Eleanor Waymouth, Ernest A. Chapman, Margaret Stoddart, Rosa Budden and Isa B. Spensley.

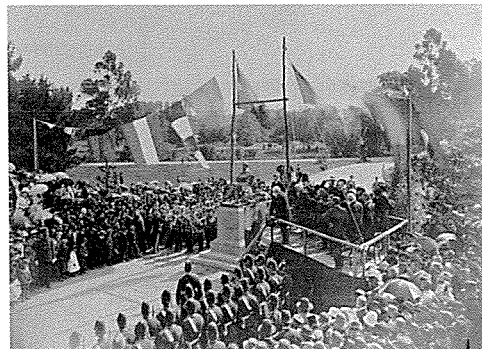
About the time that the exhibition was in its closing weeks an incident occurred in Hagley Park on the evening of 8 October 1885 that was to have a devastating effect on the career of David Blair. Blair was arrested and charged with an offence of indecent exposure. The evidence, however, was inconclusive and insufficient to warrant a conviction, but the implication was enough for the board of Governors of Canterbury College to ask him to take twelve months notice.

Blair resigned before this came into effect and George H. Elliott was appointed his successor.

The increase in student numbers had made it necessary to also increase the number of teaching assistants. In 1885 there were two – W.E. Chapman and E. Louise Bradbury. Alfred W. Walsh (1859-1916) filled Elliot's vacant position of assistant master the following year, which he took up in early 1887.

On 22 December 1885 a public holiday was declared for the unveiling of a statue to Canterbury's longest serving Provincial Government Superintendent, William Sefton Moorhouse. This event marked the culmination of a sculpture project that was almost as protracted as the Godley Statue had been.

In June H.M. Atcherley held a solo exhibition of watercolour sketches of New Zealand scenery, particularly the Banks



Unveiling of Statue of William Sefton Moorhouse in Christchurch Botanic Gardens, 22 December 1885.

T. Easter photograph.  
Collection: Canterbury Museum



**Peele, James** (1847–1905)  
*Pack Train, Ocean Beach*,  
oil on canvas.

Collection: Christchurch Art Gallery  
Trust, Robert McDougall Art Gallery

Peninsula region, in a room above Simpson's bookshop in High Street.<sup>22</sup>

Shortly after Moorhouse died in 1881 a commemorative statue was proposed and an appeal launched by the Mayor, J. Gapes. After some delays it was decided to commission British sculptor George A. Lawson (1832–1904) to make the statue. During 1884 it was modelled with the aid of photographs, and eventually cast in bronze. On 1 August 1885 it finally arrived at Lyttelton on board *S. S. Ruapehu*. At the private viewing held a week later many considered it a good likeness, others

strongly disagreed. By November its siting in the Botanic Gardens was confirmed and well under way.

About this time Julius von Haast was preparing a loan exhibition of works to be sent to the Indian and Colonial Exhibition planned to be held in London in 1886. Haast, as commissioner of the New Zealand Court, had travelled through New Zealand in 1885 organising exhibits. Among the Canterbury artists' works chosen were those by T. S. Cousins, G. H. Elliott, John Gibb, Capt. E. F. Temple and James Peele.

Early in 1886 Haast left for England. While he was away he planned to visit Europe, where he hoped to purchase works of art. In June the Canterbury College Board of Governors made an allocation of £150 for this purpose, plus travelling and freight expenses. The enthusiasm to acquire more non-New Zealand works for a Canterbury collection was shared by many other Canterbury Society of Arts members. On 1 April 1886 it was agreed that the president of the Royal Academy, Frederic Leighton, should be approached to purchase several works of an 'educational character' for the Society. Leighton acquired five the following year from the Royal Academy Exhibition. Years were to elapse before any kind of gallery was built to house the Society's permanent collection.

Among the new members elected to the Canterbury Society of Arts in 1886 was

English-born Edmund Gouldsmith (1852–1932), a recent arrival from Adelaide.

Gouldsmith became a part-time art master at Christs College and was highly regarded as an artist by many of his contemporaries while he lived in Christchurch.

During September 1886 the Canterbury Society of Arts held its first annual Black and White Exhibition at Simpson's Buildings, High Street. This broadened the scope of work that could be shown through the Society considerably. At the opening the President, Richmond Beetham, voiced his support for the Canterbury Society of Arts collection forming the nucleus of a National collection.

*It only requires some of our wealthy citizens to come forward and aid a little by the presentation of pictures for the city to possess a really creditable National Gallery.*<sup>23</sup>

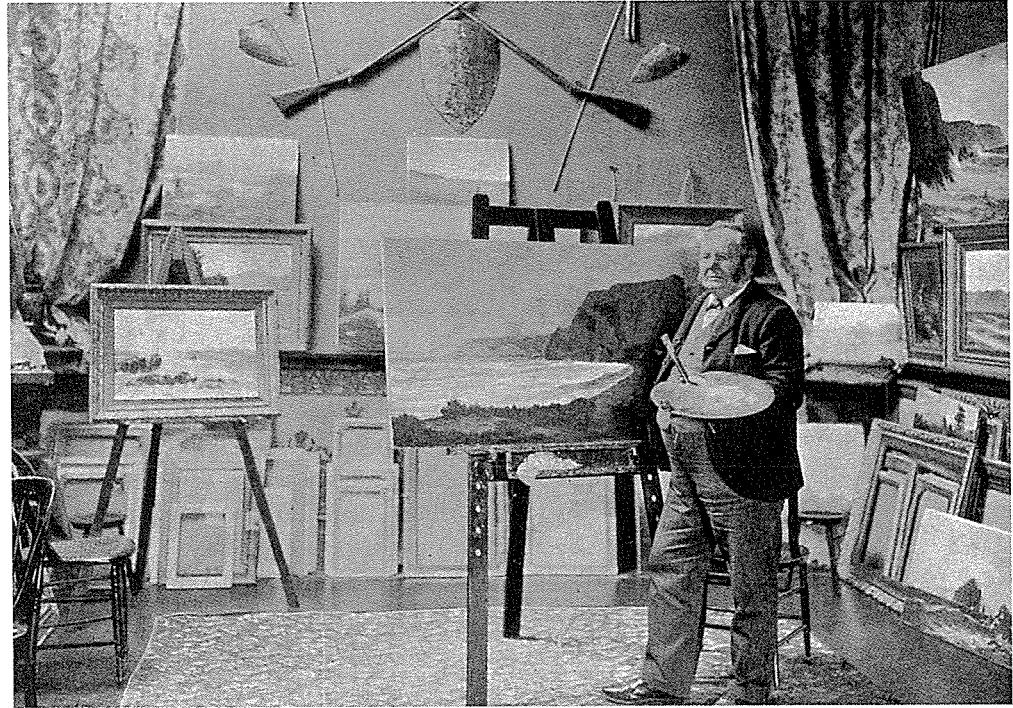
This exhibition was also eventful in that

## 1886

Thomas Cane was awarded a silver medal by the Society in recognition of his work.

John Gibb jnr opened a picture framing business, Gibb's Art Depot, in the recently constructed Mortens Building, Cathedral

Square. His father occupied a studio in the same building above the shop. Gibb's Art Depot provided a permanent exhibition space for John snr, William Menzies Gibb and other Canterbury artists.



John Gibb in his studio.  
The Weekly Press photograph,  
December 1900.  
Collection: Canterbury Museum.

1887

In August 1887 Julius von Haast died and with his death Canterbury lost a strong supporter and promoter of art. His involvement with promoting New Zealand overseas at various international exhibitions was unrivalled. The importance of these events for colonial New Zealand cannot be overrated as they provided artists with the steady exposure of their work beyond their local environment.

The major event for artists in 1888 was the Australian Centennial International Exhibition,

Melbourne, to which many Canterbury artists sent work, although some, like William Menzies Gibb, Florence and Beatrice Partridge and A. Handel Gear, attracted more attention than others.

Alfred Walsh arrived in Christchurch from Dunedin to take up his position as assistant master at the Canterbury College School of Art. He held this position until 1910 when he departed for Auckland.

1888

A. Handel Gear, was a recent arrival to Canterbury having lived for several years in Dunedin. Trained in England, he had held the head-mastership of Ryde School and Christs Hospital College before coming to take up a position as drawing master, art instructor and lecturer in art at Christchurch Girls' High School. In June 1888 he gave a course of illustrated lectures at the Philosophical Institute based on *Art from an Educational point of View*. In these he strongly advocated the proposition of a

'modern' school of art being established in New Zealand.

During May 1888 attempts by artist George Fodor to recover fees from a client came to nothing and litigation ensued. This action was one of the first of its kind in Canterbury. Judgement was eventually given in favour of Fodor who, by the 1880s, was well known as a painter of bloodstock and illustrator for *The Weekly Press*. As this court action had been something of a first so too



was the rejection of more than 60 works for the inclusion by the Hanging Committee of the Canterbury Society of Arts in the Annual Exhibition. This did not sit well with certain member artists and sowed the seeds of discontent that was eventually to erupt into protest and lead to the formation of the Palette Club.

Early in November news was received of the death in Nelson of John Gully. Gully had a high profile as a New Zealand watercolourist and his association with Canterbury, mostly through Julius von Haast, had spanned more than twenty-five years.

Towards the end of that year there was some discussion amongst artists and others about the proposed exhibition to be held in Dunedin in 1889 and a meeting was held to decide what Canterbury's representation would be.



**Gear, A. Handel**  
*A Fellow of Infinite Jest* 1889, charcoal.

Collection: The Centre of Contemporary Art, Canterbury Society of Arts Charitable Trust Collection

**Sawtell, Rosa** (1868–1940)  
*Wild Roses* (1895), watercolour.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

The New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition 1889/1890 was Otago's contribution to New Zealand's Jubilee celebrations. When the exhibition building was erected it contained a substantial art gallery designed to house British, European and Colonial artists' work. In July a number of Christchurch artists applied for space. Included were – George Fodor, J. M. Madden, W. M. N. Watkins, Edmund Goldsmith, Rosa Sawtell, Sydney Smith, Margaret Stoddart, William Menzies Gibb, Alfred Walsh and James Peele. When the exhibition opened on 26 November 1889 the representation by Canterbury artists was larger than for any other previous major New Zealand exhibition. Among the older artists was James Peele (1847-1905), who had painted in Canterbury part-time for many years while in the service of the Bank of New Zealand. In 1889 he retired as branch manager at Amberley to devote his time completely to painting. Over the years he had exhibited with some success both in New Zealand and overseas. However, when in January 1889, he held an exhibition and auction of his work before departing for Australia, the public response was poor. *The Press* the following day reported on the low prices achieved and made a plea for greater patronage of the arts. It was possibly indicative of the difficult economic times

that New Zealand was going through in the late 1880s.

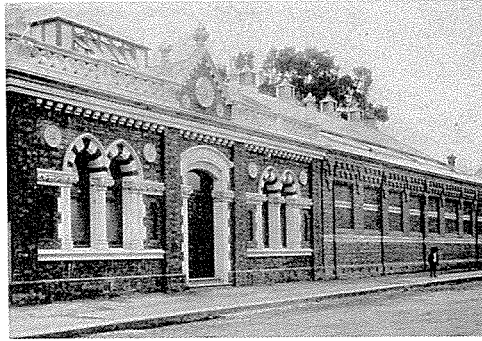
Despite the general state of the economy, by July 1889 the Canterbury Society of Arts was financially sound and had made considerable progress towards achieving a gallery building. A grant of land had been secured



**Stoddart, Margaret O.**  
(1865–1934)  
*Primroses* 1891.  
Watercolour.

School of Fine Arts Collection, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.

1889



Canterbury Society of Arts Gallery,  
Durham Street. 1897.

Photograph by E. Wheeler & Son.  
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery  
Archives

from the government on the corner of Armagh and Durham Streets and founder member Benjamin W. Mountfort had a design underway. While outwardly the Society seemed stable, internal tensions among certain artist members were growing and a rift was imminent. As the decade closed it could be said that Canterbury art had almost arrived at the end of the first phase of its colonial development.

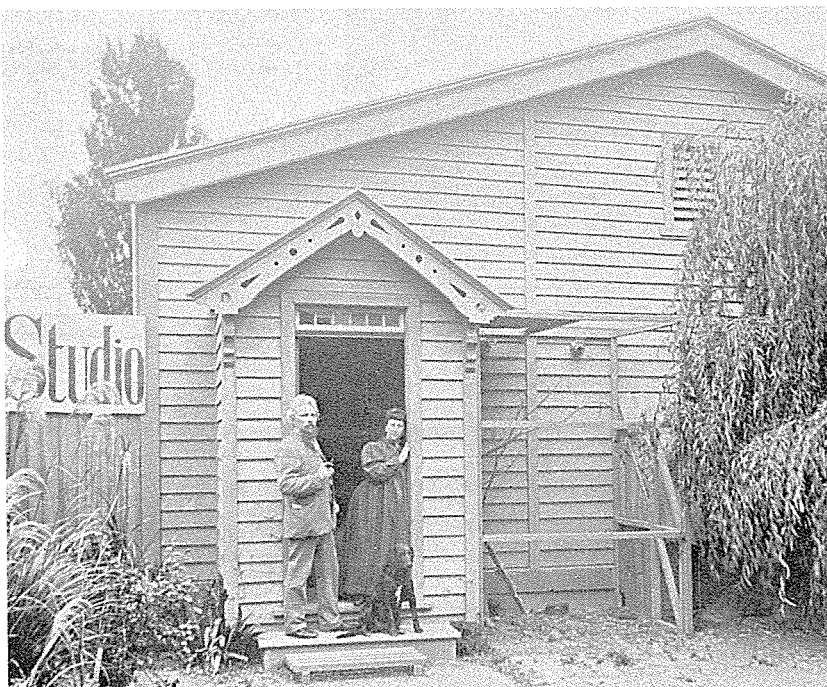
## 1890

By 1890 Canterbury College School of Art was well advanced, and within three years could boast a staff of five, headed by George H. Elliott. The courses being offered were providing young artists with the benefit of achieving a sound art education. Art in Canterbury was still dominated by amateurs, and the parochial attitudes of colonialism lingered long. The Christchurch art milieu readily accepted those who were British born, but European-born artists were accepted more cautiously. So it was when Petrus van der Velden (1837–1913) arrived in 1890.

Petrus van der Velden landed at Lyttelton with his family on 21 June 1890. For a professional Dutch artist of some thirty years standing to conquer colonial Christchurch presented something of a challenge. Though in his early fifties, Van der Velden was

enthusiastic and had been close to recent developments of art in Europe. He was just the kind of artist a new generation needed and during the time he was living in Canterbury his impact was significant. For the artist himself, he was to discover in the landscape of west Canterbury, at Otira, a subject that was to appeal to his romantic realist sensibility and establish for him a major motif in his New Zealand landscape painting. He first visited Otira in January 1891 at the urging of John Gibb (1831–1909) who had worked there in the 1880's. On his return to Christchurch he painted the first major Otira painting in a long, remarkable series. A week prior to his first journey to Otira Van der Velden held a solo exhibition at the CSA Gallery in Armagh Street. Seven large paintings were exhibited, five being of Dutch subject matter relating to the Marken series, and two New Zealand related works, including *Sunset*, *Avonside*, *Christchurch*.<sup>24</sup>

Petrus van der Velden and his wife  
in front of his Durham Street  
Studio, c. 1895.



Attempts by the artist to become part of the local art community were met with mixed reaction. He joined the Canterbury Society of Arts and Otago Society of Arts, and other groups in Christchurch, and was accepted, but when he offered his services to teach at Canterbury College School of Art his offer was declined.

By December 1893 Van der Velden had two studios completed at the rear of his home described as '*the best in Australasia*'<sup>25</sup>. In one of these, at the beginning of 1894, he had started to receive pupils for a term of 13 lessons in 2 1/2 hour sessions. Over the following four years he tutored some of Canterbury's most promising young artists. Among these were Leonard H. Booth, Sydney L. Thompson, Robert Procter, Raymond McIntyre and Charles Bickerton. All were also students at





Canterbury College School of Art. By 1897 he was teaching ten students.

Through the early 1890s Van der Velden's painting appeared regularly in Canterbury Society of Arts exhibitions. In 1891 the whole west wall of the gallery at the Annual Exhibition was given over to a loan collection of his work. He also exhibited regularly with Henry Fisher in High Street.

In February 1895 Fisher showed a painting described as '*the first portrait painted by Van der Velden in New Zealand*' and it was stated

that '*the artist is determined to take up this branch of art in addition to more important works*'.<sup>26</sup> Van der Velden was also exhibiting at his studio and he was advertising that his '*studio was now open for inspection*'.<sup>27</sup>

By the beginning of 1896, despite attempts to raise his profile in the community, sales of works were small, and he was in financial difficulty. There were few options open, but one hope was an art union and he set about organising one. Of the 500 tickets printed only 275 were sold, and Van der Velden took 100

**Van der Velden, Petrus**  
(1837–1913)

*A Waterfall in the Otira Gorge*,  
oil on canvas 1891.

Collection: Dunedin Public Art Gallery



**Madden, John M.** (1856–1923)

*Queenstown*,  
oil on canvas, 1895.

Collection Mr Williams, Tai Tapu.





Painting Students and staff, Canterbury College School of Arts, c.1896. *Top left to right:* Sydney L. Thompson, Roland Westropp, Charles Bickerton, Robert Procter, Leonard H. Booth. *Far left:* Alfred W. Walsh. *Sitting:* George H. Elliott. *Far right:* Italy Garsia. The women pupils remain unidentified apart from M.M. Dohrmann standing next to Walsh.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery Archives



**Sprott, William K.** (1864–1893)  
*Sunset on the Port Hills*, (1893),  
oil on canvas.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery

himself. When on 29 April 1890 the Art Union was finally drawn, Van der Velden held tickets for five of the seven major prizes. This aroused some criticism in *The Press* and he was asked to donate at least one work to the art gallery. The

Art Union gave him some financial relief, but by 1897 he had become totally disillusioned with trying to make his way in Canterbury. At the end of April 1898 he sailed from Lyttelton, bound for Sydney.

By the end of the 1880s the relative conservatism of the Council of the Canterbury Society of Arts led to severe rejection of works submitted for the Annual Exhibition. In 1889 the number of rejections by the largely amateur hanging committee raised the ire of a small number of professional artists, including J.M. Madden and some students of Canterbury College School of Art. This protest group decided to form their own artists' club, a kind of Société des Refusés, which they called the *Palette Club*. It was, however, primarily a sketch club set up to benefit professional artists and students alike. One objective was

*to encourage serious work and study from nature, and to raise the standard of artistic excellence, and discourage the making of pot boilers.*<sup>28</sup>

As a group it was closely affiliated to the other sketch clubs in New Zealand, the Mahlstick Club in Auckland, the Wellington Sketch Club, the Bishopdale Club, Nelson and Easel Club in Dunedin. The club met weekly promoting the study of nature and providing the opportunity for mutual criticism. In October 1890 it held its first exhibition and invited the Mahlstick Club to be guest exhibitor.

The exchange of works between the sketch clubs continued through the 1890s. At the 1892 exhibition 52 Auckland works were shown. Amongst the prominent members of the Christchurch Palette Club were artists John M. Madden, William Menzies Gibb, George H. Elliott, Charles Kidson, W.K. Sprott, H.J. Jenkins, Alfred W. Walsh, and students Edith E. Munning, Eliza Gillett Culliford, Margaret Stoddart, and Dora Meeson. It also attracted the interest of Petrus van der Velden.

## 1893

By mid 1893 both artist and student membership of the Palette Club had grown, but two prominent members had departed. Dora Meeson had left to travel overseas for a short visit and William K. Sprott had moved north to Auckland to try and gain some relief from his incurable illness. It had no effect and

within a few months the Club was mourning the loss of one of New Zealand's most promising artists.

The Club's 1893 exhibition received a very good response and it was clear that the public was enjoying Palette Club exhibitions more than those held by the Canterbury Society of





**Gibb, William Menzies**  
(1859–1931)  
*April Morning, Kaikoura* 1892,  
oil on canvas.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery

Arts. As the Club advanced it became more business-like and a committee was formed. In its organisation it closely paralleled the Canterbury Society of Arts but differed in that it had open membership and no selection committee.

As the Palette Club progressed the Canterbury Society of Arts began to feel the effects as artists held back their best works for the Club exhibition. The rift was growing wider.

By October 1895 such was the strength of the New Zealand sketch clubs that the President of the Palette Club, John M. Madden, felt that it was timely to have a Bill introduced into parliament incorporating the committees of all New Zealand Art Clubs including the Christchurch Palette Club.

In April 1895 the Canterbury Society of Arts had had one of the poorest exhibitions on record and there was a call to restructure the management of the Society. In his address at the opening of the Palette Club exhibition on 7 October, Madden alluded to the rift that had occurred between the Club and the Canterbury Society of Arts and stated that

*the broad principle underlying the matter is an important one for the welfare of art, and the position of artists in the colony is the right of professional artists to manage their affairs.*<sup>29</sup>

The 1895 Palette Club exhibition was very successful and drew the praise of the press

*'it is unnecessary to make comparisons with*

*this show and the previous ones in Christchurch, but if there ever has been one better we do not remember it.*<sup>30</sup>

Many of the works lauded were the product of sketching classes; others were produced after holiday excursions.

In March 1896 moves were made to resolve the differences between the two Societies when representatives from both met. The following month *Triad* reported: *'it is pleasing to know that the Canterbury Society of Arts and the Christchurch Palette Club have reunited and members of the latter intend to exhibit at the next exhibition in May'*.<sup>31</sup>

The Staff at Canterbury College  
School of Art, 1900.

*From the left standing:* Samuel Hurst-Seager, Charles Kidson.  
*From the left seated:* George W. Bradley, Miss H.L. Smith, George Herbert Elliott (headmaster), Miss Helen F. Gibson, Alfred Walsh.

Collection: School of Fine Arts,  
University of Canterbury.





The years that the Palette Club was in existence had an effect on attitudes within the Canterbury Society of Arts and forced it to examine its policies and give greater consideration to working members and their place on its council.

While the battle of the societies dominated the 1890s, other events in art were taking place. At the beginning of 1893 Samuel Hurst Seager, Edith Munning and Charles Kidson were appointed to the staff of the School of Art. With Walsh and Elliott this staff remained largely unchanged for much of the decade and by 1900 had risen to only seven.

There were, however, changes with assistant

tutors, as there had been in the 1880s. Among those to leave was Ernest W. Chapman, who by 1893 was gaining some recognition overseas, and had had work accepted for the Paris Salon.

In the mid 1890s Canterbury continued to receive a number of visiting travelling artists. During May 1895 Adelaide painters Alfred Sinclair and William Wadham held a large exhibition of their work at the hall of the Chamber of Commerce building. It ran for a fortnight and at its end the works were auctioned.

In August Ernest W. Christmas, also from Adelaide, held a similar exhibition at the same venue.

1894

Ellis Rowan, the Australian flower painter, visited Christchurch and travelled to the Oira

Gorge to paint local flora and fauna.

1895

In March J. D. Perrett held a sale of forty paintings and twenty-four etchings at the Christchurch auction firm of Bowman and Son. Perrett had recently completed a trip through Fiordland, the Southern Lakes and Oira Gorge.

Art activity in Ashburton had been growing in the 1890s and led to the formation of the Ashburton Art Society. During April 1895 it held its first exhibition to which a number of Christchurch artists contributed works. A highlight of 1895 was the *Exhibition of Art and Industry* opened on 29 August to a crowd of

4,000-5,000. This was believed to be one of the largest openings to have occurred up to that time. The exhibition, held in temporary buildings next to the Drill shed in Cashel Street, had departments of drawing, painting, modelling, carving and photography, with exhibits by artists of all ages.

Margaret Stoddart travelled to Melbourne in August where she held a solo exhibition at James Peele's studio at the Old City Court, Swanton Street. She returned to Christchurch in November.<sup>32</sup>

1896

On 6 January 1896 the South Canterbury Art Society, formed the previous year, opened its first Annual Exhibition. Like that held at Ashburton nine months earlier it included representative works by a number of Christchurch artists.

Later in the year it was announced that the Canterbury College School of Art was 'now affiliated to the Science and Art Department of

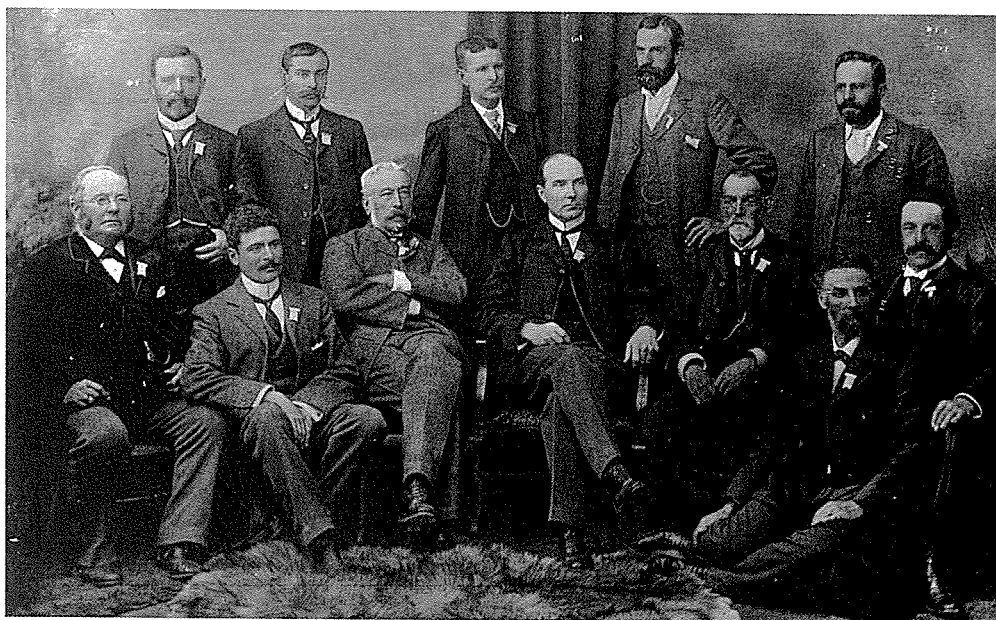
*South Kensington, London*<sup>33</sup> and Canterbury students were eligible to compete for awards. One of the first young recipients was Sydney L. Thompson, who in 1897 received a silver medal for painting from still life in the National competition. The previous year he had created something of a record by winning three full scholarships at the School of Art.

1897

In September 1897 Dora Meeson was awarded second prize in the triennial travelling scholarship offered to students of the National Gallery School, Melbourne. She travelled to England

and was followed shortly after by Margaret Stoddart. By the close of the decade others would also follow.

## 1850–1899



Arts Committee Jubilee Exhibition. *Standing, left to right:* W. M. Gibb, N.L. Macbeth, T. Garrard (secretary), A.W. Walsh, F.W. Tregear.

*Sitting, left to right:* J. Gibb, W.A. Bowring, Hon E.C.J. Stevens, S. Hurst Seager (chairman), Captain Garsia, W.E. Sorrell, G.H. Elliott.

Credit: Sorrell photograph, *Canterbury Times Pictorial Supplement*, 16 January 1901, p.31, Canterbury Museum, Ref: 16716.



During the summer of 1898–99 Charles Kidson worked on the Kaiapoi Memorial carving, his first public commission, for the site of the Kaiapoi Pa. A committee of Kaiapoi Maori appointed Samuel Hurst Seager as architect. He designed a round column obelisk nine metres high and a metre in diameter topped by an atua emblematic guardian of the tribe.

Preparations for the Canterbury jubilee in 1900 were underway in 1899 with the formation of many committees including the Arts Committee.

## 1898– 1899

Charles Kidson carving the Kaiapoi Monument at Graham and Greig's St Asaph Street building yard with Samuel Hurst Seager on right. 1899.

Collection: Canterbury Museum.



## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> William Fox *The Six Colonies of New Zealand*, London 1851
- <sup>2</sup> J.R. Godley, Letter to his father, 17 February 1851
- <sup>3</sup> Edward Jollie: Recollections of early Life in New Zealand 1841-1860. *The Weekly Press* Jubilee Number, Christchurch, 15 December 1900, p.43
- <sup>4</sup> *The Lyttelton Times*, 8 April 1854, p.12
- <sup>5</sup> *The Lyttelton Times*, 27 February 1864, p.5
- <sup>6</sup> *The Press*, 26 October 1864, p.1
- <sup>7</sup> *The Press*, 5 July 1866, p.2
- <sup>8</sup> *The Press*, 1 September 1869, p.2
- <sup>9</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>10</sup> *The Press*, 9 February 1870, p.2
- <sup>11</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>12</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>13</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>14</sup> *The Press*, 4 April 1870, p.2
- <sup>15</sup> *The Press*, 31 December 1872, p.2
- <sup>16</sup> Roll of Art Students, 1870-1883. Victoria Academy of Fine Arts
- <sup>17</sup> *The Press*, 17 July 1880, p.2
- <sup>18</sup> Graeme Chalmers *Whatever Happened to David Blair?* Art New Zealand p.112 quotes
- <sup>19</sup> *The Press*, Christchurch, 2 March 1882, p.2
- <sup>20</sup> New Zealand International Record 1883, p.90
- <sup>21</sup> *Star*, 28 July 1883, p.3, *The Lyttelton Times*, 27 February 1883, p.6
- <sup>22</sup> *The Lyttelton Times*, 13 June 1885, p.4
- <sup>23</sup> *The Press*, Christchurch, 9 September 1886, p.2
- <sup>24</sup> *The Press*, 16 January 1891, p.1
- <sup>25</sup> *Triad*, Vol no 9, 15 December 1893, p.20
- <sup>26</sup> *The Press*, Christchurch, 18 February 1895, p.4
- <sup>27</sup> *The Press*, Christchurch, 4 November 1895, p.5
- <sup>28</sup> *The Lyttelton Times*, Christchurch, 29 August 1892, p.5
- <sup>29</sup> *The Press*, Christchurch, 8 October 1895, p.6
- <sup>30</sup> *The Press*, Christchurch, 12 October 1895, p.6
- <sup>31</sup> *Triad*, Vol no 11, April 1896, p.7
- <sup>32</sup> J. King, *Flowers into Landscape: the Landscape Paintings of Margaret Stoddart*. p.10
- <sup>33</sup> *The Press*, Christchurch, December 1896, p.6

# 1900–1949



Angus, Rita (1908–1978), *Cass* 1937, oil on canvas.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery



# INTRODUCTION

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The years between 1900 and 1949 were largely dominated by two generations of Canterbury artists and witnessed the rise of Canterbury art to a place of pre-eminence, which set the scene for a new order in the visual arts. But this would also incite a shift in attitudes in the years that followed, thus diminishing the position that Canterbury art once held. In 1900 Canterbury art was still on the brink of change with the first generation of artists to emerge from Canterbury College School of Art beginning to find a place in the art community. Many in the first decade of the twentieth century, like Sydney Lough Thompson, Raymond McIntyre, Eleanor Waymouth (Hughes), Cecil Jameson and Owen Merton felt it necessary to pursue further study overseas, whilst others remained behind to teach. By 1905 Elizabeth Abbott (Kelly) had set up a studio taking pupils, while Leonard Booth and Cecil Kelly had joined the permanent staff of Canterbury College School of Art.

The most momentous event of the 1900s was the 1906-07 New Zealand International Exhibition which provided an opportunity to measure Canterbury artists' development with contemporaries beyond New Zealand, particularly Britain and Australia. The exhibition also provided a stimulus for art crafts tendencies that Robert Herdman-Smith was trying to foster at Canterbury College School of Art. The representation of Canterbury artists at the exhibition was high, 124 works that included oils, watercolours, sculptures, metal craft and graphics. The place of graphic art at this time was particularly strong in Christchurch. David Low, Leonard Booth, Andrew Kennaway Henderson, Edwin Bartley and Walter Bowring were all actively drawing and illustrating daily and weekly newspapers both in New Zealand and Australia.

As a new generation of artists began to

emerge in the 1900s there was also the passing of an era as older artists died. William M. N. Watkins and William H. Raworth both died in 1904, Thomas Cane in 1905 and the 'veteran' of Canterbury art, John Gibb in 1909.

By 1912 the departure for overseas had slowed and some who had studied abroad began to return. The outbreak of war in 1914 stalled the immediate return of others. Esther Barker (Hope) and Cora Wilding became involved in war service and remained in France. Several former students of the Canterbury College School of Art joined the armed forces. Archibold Nicoll, Robert Procter, Gerard K. Webber and Colin Lovell-Smith all enlisted. Nicoll was wounded and Webber killed in action. In Canterbury the general reaction to the War was one of great patriotism and artists contributed in raising funds for the war effort in any way they could.

At the end of hostilities the climate for art became buoyant with record numbers of art works being sold at Canterbury Society of Arts exhibitions. In the 1920s Canterbury's reputation and place in New Zealand art gradually grew. Christchurch at this time had many of the country's most promising young artists, among them Cedric Savage, Alfred and James Cook, Rhona Haszard, Evelyn Polson (Page), Ngaio Marsh, Ronald McKenzie, Ivy Fife, Olivia Spencer Bower and Russell Clark.

At the heart of Canterbury's success was the Canterbury College School of Art, then under the direction of Archibold Nicoll, assisted by a teaching staff that included Richard Wallwork, Cecil Kelly, Leonard Booth and Francis Shurrock, firmly committed to maintaining standards that gave Canterbury the distinction of having the foremost art school in the country. The emphasis was unquestionably on painting and it was within this period that the mani-

festation of what was later to be termed the 'Canterbury School' occurred.

An added stimulus to the climate of activity in Canterbury art was the presence of James Shelley, Professor of Education at the Canterbury College. Shelley, who had arrived in 1920, was an effective lecturer, commentator and critic who helped broaden some of the more conservative attitudes towards art.

Throughout the 1920s, art in Canterbury was certainly at a peak; more artists were exhibiting their work nationally and internationally, particularly in Britain and Australia. The Art School, under the administration of Richard Wallwork, offered for the first time an undergraduate Diploma in Fine Art course in 1929. In September of that year several ex-students of the Art School who had banded together in 1927, and called themselves The Group, held their first major exhibition. While it was in no way revolutionary, The Group's questioning artists wanted some relief from the collective conservatism of the Canterbury Society of Arts without reforming it. The formation of The Group into the New Zealand Society of Artists in 1933 was short-lived, and with it one of the elements in the process of experimentation in the art community of Christchurch attempting to bring about change.

By the mid 1930s Canterbury seemed to have advanced further than other New Zealand centres. It had a new public art gallery, opened in 1932, a strong Art School and a vital art community. These factors, despite economic depression, helped Canterbury

maintain its lead. Although as the decade advanced, the Canterbury Society of Arts, which had been the focus in giving the Christchurch visual art community some cohesion, remained conservative and slow to accept change. The new generation of Canterbury artists that had emerged by the late 1930s included former pupils of the Canterbury College School of Art; W. A. Sutton, Owen Lee, Austen Deans, Juliet Peter and Molly Macalister. Although they were essentially interested in experimenting in their work, they were cautious and still somewhat under the influence of their teachers.

Because of the Second World War, this did not manifest itself until 1948 with the *Pleasure Garden* controversy. It provided the catalyst for the real division in attitudes as conservatives opposed the emergence of new ideas. The controversy was protracted, and while it was a watershed in the attitudes toward art that existed in not only Canterbury but elsewhere in New Zealand, it had the effect of splitting the Art Community of Christchurch asunder. What it revealed was that even though Canterbury art had maintained a lead and cohesion in the first half of the twentieth century, it was founded on group orientation rather than the individual achievements of the artist. The more conservative academic thinking, controlled by a few prominent artists, lingered too long and there was much to be done to try and catch up, which ultimately effected the place that Canterbury had in New Zealand art throughout most of the 1950s.

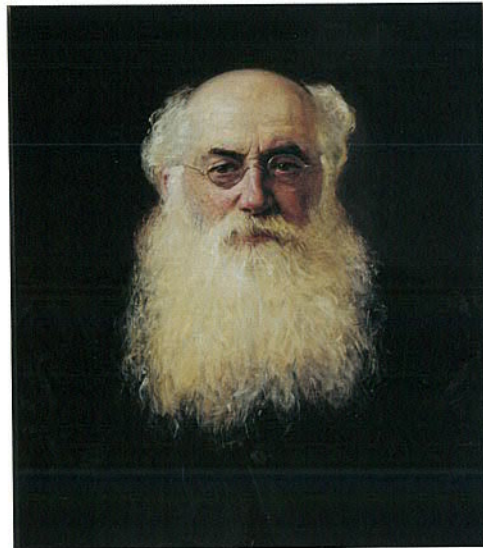
NEIL ROBERTS



## 1900

By the end of the century Canterbury was well advanced in preparations for the province's jubilee celebrations that were planned for 1900 and 1901. Part of these was a large Jubilee Exhibition of Industry and Art.

On 1 November 1900 this opened in the newly completed Canterbury Hall in Manchester Street. The picture galleries were set up in two large rooms on the first floor of the building. One was devoted to a large loan collection of works from both public and private sources, and the other to works by local artists, that included; John Gibb, Margaret Stoddart, Rosa Sawtell, George H. Elliott,



**Balfour, James Lawson**  
(1870–1964)  
*Portrait of Samuel Charles Farr,*  
c.1907,  
oil on canvas.  
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery

Walter Bowring, Sydney L. Thompson, Raymond McIntyre, James Lawson Balfour and Charles N. Worsley.

During August a number of artists had gathered together in the studio of William Menzies Gibb to farewell Canterbury's most promising young artist, Sydney L. Thompson, who was about to leave for study in Europe.

This departure was just one of many that occurred through the 1900s, but for every departure there was also an arrival. In 1900 the most notable were Charles N. Worsley and James Lawson Balfour. By the time Worsley arrived in Christchurch to live he was already very well known in art society circles. He quickly established his studio and began taking private pupils.

Balfour was also quite well known to many, as his artist/musician father James Balfour senior had lived in Christchurch for more than twenty years and had been visited by his son on several occasions. When he set up his studio J.L. Balfour turned to portraiture as a 'pot boiler' and like Thomas S. Cousin's before him found a ready clientele amongst the old identities of Canterbury, whose families wished them to be immortalised on canvas before they passed on.

Australian painter, Tom Roberts, passed through Christchurch en route to Dunedin and the Southern Lakes District in March.

## 1901

At 203 Gloucester Street the genial Samuel Moreton ran classes at his 'Pre-Raphaelite School of Art' and towards the end of 1901 Moreton held the first exhibition of the school's work.

Having just returned from a three year journey to Europe where he studied art in London, Paris and Antwerp, George E. Butler held an exhibition of 51 paintings and sketches, mainly of European subjects, in the Hall of the Chamber of Commerce in early February.<sup>1</sup>

The progress on a jubilee memorial had advanced by this time and a decision had been



S.L. Thompson in his Cambridge Terrace studio, 1906.  
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery Archives

made that it should incorporate a statue to the late queen and a memorial pedestal to those who had fallen in the Boer War in South Africa. It was May 1903 before the completed work was finally unveiled.

## 1902

The Canterbury Society of Arts, by 1902, was debt free, and slowly building up its permanent collection. It was also providing encouragement for younger artists, many of

whom were keen to pursue further studies overseas. The following year Cecil Jameson departed, followed soon after by Robert Procter.

At the beginning of 1903 Leonard H. Booth, joined the staff of Canterbury College School of Art. Booth also shared a studio in Cathedral Square with several other artists including Raymond F. McIntyre. Booth's drawings were included as illustrations to Steele Rudd's collection of short stories *Our New Selection* along with Australian artists Norman Lindsay, Lionel Lindsay, Norman Carter and Alf

By the middle of 1904 Elizabeth Abbott was taking pupils at her studio at 218 Hereford Street, while teaching part-time at the School of Art. Charles Bickerton had returned from overseas and had quickly established himself

In February 1905 Sydney L. Thompson returned and soon after set up his studio at 97 Cambridge Terrace.

Almost as Thompson arrived, Walter Bowring was preparing to leave for London. He was farewelled at a function attended by fellow artists at the Durham Street Art Gallery.

On 5 October 1905 a large Sketch and Photographic exhibition was opened in the Armagh Street Gallery comprising over 400 photographs and 300 sketches. The *Spectator* described it as 'the finest collection of photographs and sketches ever displayed in New Zealand'.<sup>2</sup> Among the artists represented were Sydney L. Thompson, Edwin Bartley, Leonard H. Booth, William Menzies Gibb, Charles N. Worsley, Alfred Walsh, Andrew Kennaway Henderson, Charles Bickerton, Robert A. Gill, James Lawson Balfour, and Raymond McIntyre. All of these artists belonged to the recently formed *Christchurch Artists Sketch Club* and several of the works exhibited were the product of their weekly studio meetings.

The Christchurch Artists Sketch Club was formed largely through the efforts of Sydney Thompson. Artists would gather together to sketch at least once or twice a week in one of the member's studios, where often a model would be provided. On occasions the group gave artists an opportunity to practice their drawing skills. In the summer months excursions were made to Kaikoura and Otira, favoured by plein air exponents like Alfred Walsh. When artists were about to leave

Vincent. At this time Booth was also a regular contributor of drawings to *The Bulletin*.

Charles Kidson was granted leave of absence from his teaching duties at the Canterbury College School of Art in July to travel to England and France where he gained experience in wood carving, metal craft, modelling and plasterer's techniques.

at 'Wainoni Park', New Brighton Road, where he was also taking pupils.

Among the departures were Eleanor Waimouth (Hughes) and Owen Merton.

Christchurch the Club would hold a farewell dinner in honour of the occasion.

In 1906 both Margaret Stoddart and Owen Merton returned to Christchurch after overseas study. For Merton it had been only eighteen months away, but for Margaret Stoddart it had been almost a decade.

Canterbury College School of Art also had a new head. The flamboyant Robert Herdman-Smith had replaced George Herbert Elliott, who after twenty years resigned to take a position as art master at Palmerston North Technical School. Many changes were made by Herdman-Smith as he quickly introduced a new syllabus to expand the scope of the School. A principal feature was a graduated system of courses of instruction to benefit

1903

1904

1905

'Hanging The Pictures'. The Canterbury Art Society's Annual Exhibition in the Art Gallery, Christchurch.

Left to right: unknown, Alfred Walsh, William Menzies Gibb.

*The Weekly Press*  
The New Zealand Collection, Canterbury Public Library.





both trades and professions alike, with a particular focus on graphics and design craft. This new arts and craft emphasis was consistent with contemporary trends in art education worldwide.

When the New Zealand International

Exhibition opened in Hagley Park on 1 November 1906, there was a strong presence in the display of craftwork exhibits, silver and metal craft, embroidery, woodcarving and textile design.

## 1906

The idea for a 'great international fair' was the brainchild of Prime Minister Richard John Seddon, who first mooted it in 1903, but it was not until 1905 that it became a reality. It was an exhibition organised with the cooperation of the people of Christchurch, under the auspices of the New Zealand Government.

By the beginning of 1906 the immense exhibition building covering 8 hectares started to rise on North Hagley Park opposite Park Terrace. Incorporated in the exhibition complex was a purpose built brick and asbestos art gallery which became a special feature.

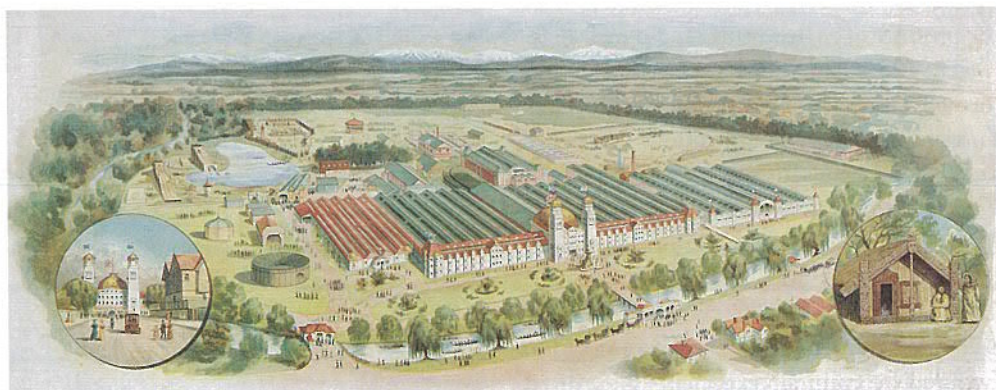
A Fine Arts committee of 12 was set up to organise the New Zealand Fine Arts exhibits. On this committee were artists Phil Presants, J. Lawson Balfour, William Menzies Gibb and Sydney L. Thompson. Over the months exhibits from Britain, Australia, South Africa, Canada and Fiji slowly arrived.

The elaborately decorated art gallery comprised one large and two smaller spaces, in which New Zealand and Australian exhibits were housed, and nine additional gallery spaces in which were displayed a British art collection. Of these, one large and four smaller spaces had oil paintings; two were hung with watercolours, one held etchings and black and white drawings, and another exhibits of arts and crafts. As space was found to be inadequate for all the British exhibits, architectural

drawings and several craft objects were displayed in the main building.

A combined total of 2,200 British and Australasian art exhibits were shown. The section devoted to just British art and craft was the largest, most comprehensive display of its kind that had ever been seen in New Zealand, and remained unrivalled during the twentieth century. It was described in the official catalogue as an 'artists exhibition'. Of the three gallery spaces devoted to Australasian art, the first was occupied by New Zealand Painting and Sculpture with most of the major New Zealand artists being represented. The Canterbury exhibitors included; John Gibb, Sydney Thompson, Margaret Stoddart, Raymond McIntyre, James Madden, as well as a number of graphic artists, among them Leonard Booth, Walter Bowring, Phil Presants, Andrew Kennaway Henderson and David Low.

The 1900s witnessed a rise in the number of illustrated papers and magazines throughout New Zealand with a corresponding rise in the demand for free-lance graphic artists, particularly cartoonists and caricaturists. Christchurch had the *Spectator* published by G. W. Russell, *The Canterbury Times* published by the Lyttelton Times Company, *The Weekly Press* and *New Zealand Illustrated Annual* both published by the Christchurch Press Company.



*A Bird's-eye View of the New Zealand International Exhibition, 1906/07. Chromolithograph.*

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery Archives

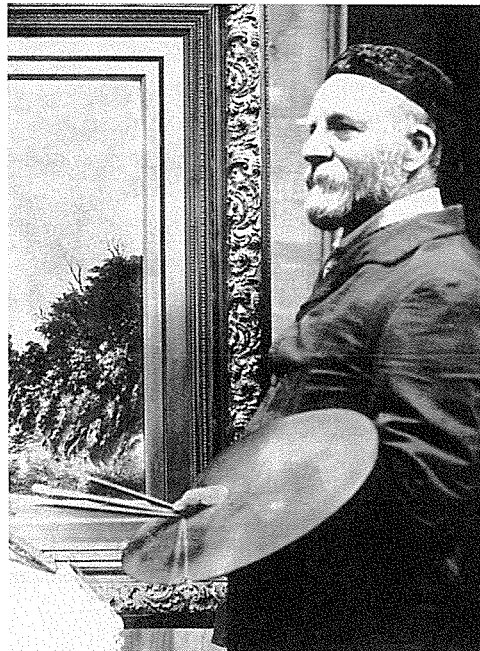
During October 1906, just prior to the opening of the New Zealand International Exhibition, well known caricaturist and former editor of the *Dunedin Sketcher*, Fred Rayner, began publication of the *Exhibition Sketcher*. The *Exhibition Sketcher* appeared weekly through the duration of the exhibition.

A special feature of the paper was its satirical drawings.

Prominent among the contributors that Rayner engaged were two of Australasia's finest black and white artists, Leonard Booth, and the sixteen-year-old David Low.

On 15 April the exhibition closed, having received just under 2 million visits from the public. Many of the exhibits were sold at the conclusion of the exhibition and the Canterbury Society of Arts was not the least amongst the buyers. Many British works were acquired for the permanent collection. One of the British artists who had shown at the exhibition was William Hounsom-Byles. He had come to Christchurch during the exhibition and decided to stay.

The Canterbury College School of Art had its first intake of junior free place students at the beginning of 1907 and Cecil F. Kelly was appointed to the staff to teach them. Among the senior students at the school was Gerard K. Webber who had arrived in Christchurch from Auckland. Webber was already an accomplished artist.



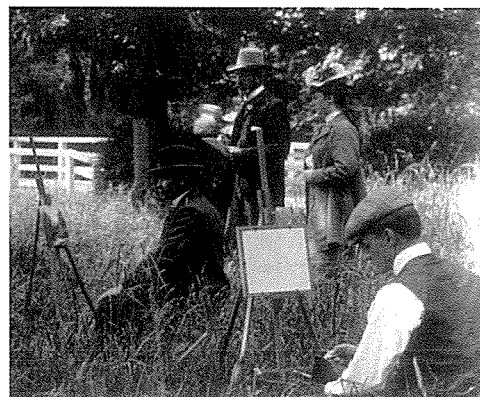
Samuel Moreton in his studio, c. 1897.

Robert McDougall Art Gallery Archives

On 26 February 1908 the Christchurch Artists' Sketch Club held its second major dinner. The occasion was to farewell two of its members; Archibald F. Nicoll, who had received an appointment to the staff of Elam School of Art, Auckland. James Lawson Balfour was leaving for London with his wife, the actress Eva Balfour, who had been asked to perform in two plays at His Majesty's Theatre in London's West End.

Present at this dinner was Raymond McIntyre who later that year held an exhibition at the Armagh Street Gallery, just before his own departure for England. At that time McIntyre was assisting Kelly in teaching junior classes at the Art School.

On 2 October news was received of the death of Charles Kidson. Kidson had been on the staff of the School of Art from 1891 until 1906 and had carried out many important sculpture commissions including the Grigg



Alfred Walsh and students of the outdoor painting class at the Helmores Lane Bridge, Hagley Park. c. 1908 (detail).

(Webb & Bunz photo).  
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery Archives.

Memorial in Ashburton and the Kaiapoi Memorial Monument at Waikuku. He had also sculpted many bust portraits of notable New Zealanders, among them Richard John Seddon, T. E. Taylor, and a few weeks before his death, a bust of a former Mayor of Christchurch, Sir John Hall, who had died in June the previous year.

1907

1908



## 1909

It was announced in February 1909 that Robert Herdman-Smith would be taking six months leave to visit Europe. While he was away he intended to purchase works of art for the Art School's collection.

By the close of the decade the School of Art was very popular and numbers in all classes were growing, almost to a crowded level. This was to eventually cause problems for Herdman-Smith.

On 13 December 1909 Canterbury lost John Gibb who had been a major identity in Canterbury art for more than thirty years. Gibb was one of the last representatives of the old colonial generation.

With overseas experience behind them the attitudes of younger artists were changing, looking forward into the twentieth century.

This was helped by the growing interest in craft. The Canterbury Society of Arts was giving a greater place to works of craft in Annual Exhibitions. The previous year there had been 200 entries in the craft section alone.

In December 1909 a large Loan Collection Exhibition was held which, unfortunately, reinforced the lingering prevailing attitudes towards Ruskinian theory and truth to nature. The aesthetic movement, and artists like J. A. McNeill Whistler, were still as yet a force to be reckoned with, but some younger artists understood their message. Perhaps the most important exponent of that direction was Raymond McIntyre. Artists like Charles Bickerton, Elizabeth Kelly and William Hounsom-Byles understood, but were still very committed to literary subjects in their painting.

## 1910

During 1910 William Menzies Gibb and Edwin Bartley left for overseas travel.

Towards the end of that year Alfred Walsh retired from the Canterbury College School of Art. His place was taken in 1911 by Richard Wallwork (1882-1955). He was a Kings Prize-

man in anatomy at the Royal College of Art and had studied mural painting with Gerald E. Moira and etching under Frank Short. Within a short time of commencing his position he had etching classes under way.

## 1911

Sydney Thompson left once again to return to Europe in March 1911. Two months later Alfred Walsh left Canterbury to live in Auckland. On 3 October a major arts and craft exhibition opened in conjunction with the annual sketch club show. There were 36 exhibitors showing works of metalcraft, embroidery, carving and design. Included were 8 etchings by Richard Wallwork and several drawings by Leonard Booth and others.

Three weeks later a major solo exhibition of 50 watercolours by Margaret Stoddart was opened at the Armagh Street gallery.

There had been other one-man exhibitions



in 1911 including recent work by Owen Merton done in Europe and at St Ives in England.

**Merton, Owen**

*The Beach, St Ives, c.1910,*  
watercolour.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery

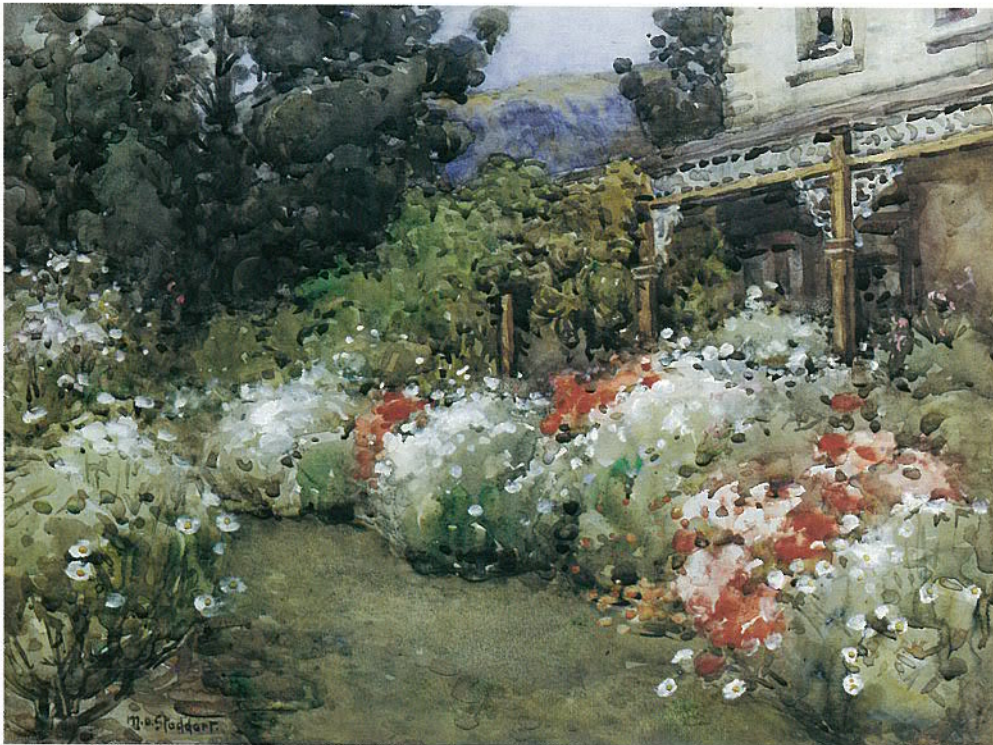
## 1912

On 29 February 1912 the Canterbury Society of Arts formally protested against the proposal to establish a National Art Gallery in Wellington. In this, and against centralisation of the arts generally, Canterbury maintained a strong resistance.

In November the decision by the Christchurch City Council to make an annual grant

to the Society of £50 for picture purchase was carried into effect. Two works were acquired in 1912 with these funds, one by Elizabeth Kelly and the other by the popular Margaret Stoddart. The Stoddart family's long residency at Diamond Harbour ended in 1913 when they relinquished possession of property then including the old family cottage and what is





**Stoddart, Margaret O.**  
(1865–1934)  
*Godley House, Diamond Harbour*  
(c.1913), watercolour.  
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery

now known as Godley House.

In 1912 controversy raged. Leonard H. Booth took libel action on behalf of the Committee of the Canterbury Society of Arts against *Triad* magazine for their published

criticism of the society. Judgement was in favour of the plaintiff. It was during this period that Booth illustrated Arnold Wall's booklet of verse *Dream Fishing – An Extravaganza* (1913).

*Below right: Wallwork, Richard*  
(1883–1955) *Up for Repairs* 1912.  
Oil on Canvas.

Reproduced courtesy of the artist's family.  
Collection: Christchurch Art Gallery Trust, Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

In April 1913 the Canterbury Society of Arts decided to purchase Richard Wallwork's *Up*

*For Repairs*, using the City Council's £50 grant. As the grant was ostensibly for New Zealand artists only, it was considered by some that Wallwork did not qualify which aroused much debate in the press. This continued well into 1914.

## 1913

*Left: Booth, Leonard H.*  
(1879–1974)  
*Frontispiece to 'Dream Fishing'*  
(1913), pen and ink.  
Collection: Alan & Sheila Climpson





## 1914

With the outbreak of war in August 1914 several Canterbury artists such as Owen Merton, Cora Wilding and Esther Barker (Hope) found themselves caught overseas. Both Esther Barker and Cora Wilding remained for the duration of the war.

Four days after the declaration of war enrolments for active service were being taken. Prominent among the soldier artists from Canterbury who eventually enlisted were Gerard K. Webber, Nugent Welch, Colin Lovell-Smith and Archibald F. Nicoll. In August 1914 Archibald F. Nicoll returned to Christchurch from a prolonged period of art activity in the United Kingdom and the continent. During October he mounted a

major solo exhibition of his work at W.E. Simes' auction rooms in Hereford Street, with over 200 works, including oils, watercolours and etchings. Nicoll's plans to return to Europe were disrupted by the war and after his enlistment in December, he was assigned to the New Zealand Field Artillery as a gunner, spending some months in Egypt before going to France. While there he had time to make many watercolours which were sent back for exhibition in the 1916 Annual Art Society show. Archibald Nicoll was wounded at the Battle of the Somme and was eventually invalided back to New Zealand in 1918. Gerard Kingley Webber was less fortunate, he was killed at Beancourt in November 1916.

## 1915

In 1915 Colin Lovell-Smith served with the first New Zealand Expeditionary Force at



**Bowring, Walter A.** (1874–1931)  
*H.M.N.Z.T. 13 S.S. Verdela and H.M.N.Z.T. 14 R.M.S. Willochra about to sail on 15 December 1914 with the Second Reinforcements of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.* Gouache.

Collection: *The Press*

Gallipoli, and later as a draughtsman with the Survey Company of Engineers on the Balkan Front where he was awarded the Serbian Gold Medal of Merit. In 1917 he returned to the New Zealand Division.

In 1918 Nugent Welch, who had tenuous links with Canterbury, was made an official war artist and executed scores of watercolours of the action at the Western Front in Belgium and France. Back in New Zealand Walter Bowring painted the home effects of the war, the heartfelt departures of troop ships and the return of casualties from Gallipoli.

## 1916

The war was having its effects on the School of Art and by 1916 women students once more predominated. It was also affecting the Canterbury Society of Arts. In a circular letter early that year the acting secretary wrote *'the*

*war has adversely affected the finances of the society*'.<sup>3</sup>

Late in September 1916 news was received of the death at Tauranga of Alfred Walsh.

## 1917

At the beginning of 1917, after almost four years, there was much interest in the sculptural memorial to Antarctic explorer Robert Falcon Scott that had been commissioned by the Christchurch City Council. Early in January the Carrara marble statue sculpted by the explorer's widow, Lady Kathleen Scott, arrived at Lyttelton.

The move to have a memorial to Scott erected had begun in February 1913, when a memorial committee was set up, and a public subscription appeal launched. By the close of

that year a contract with Lady Scott had been drawn up and the commission proceeded. Originally the sculpture was to have been cast in bronze, but by June 1915, because of the war, its cost had become prohibitive. The alternative was marble, which was eventually agreed to. The completed statue, formally unveiled on 7 February 1917, was in fact a replica of another, which Lady Scott had carried out for the Fleet Memorial, Waterloo Place, London.

As the war progressed more Canterbury

artists were called up. In October 1917 Cecil Kelly was enrolled in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force reserve. Others like Leonard Booth and Andrew Kennaway Henderson were conscientious objectors. Booth appealed against his call-up and was granted a release, but Henderson was more defiant after his name appeared in ballot, in January 1918. When he refused to acknowledge the call-up and submit to a medical examination, he was court martialled. The charge was 'disobedience to a lawful command, given by a Superior'<sup>4</sup> for which he was eventually found guilty and received two and a half years hard labour at Paparoa Prison.



Scott Memorial.  
Photo: Brendan Lee.

When Canterbury College School of Art commenced its first term in 1918 it had no director. Robert Herdman-Smith had resigned the previous year after difficulties with the Board of Canterbury College. Frederick Gurnsey (1863-1953) was given the position of acting director, which he held for the next two years.

On 11 September 1918 the Canterbury Society of Arts gave a Mr Rogers and a Mr Bigazzi, representatives of the French

Government, permission to show and sell a collection of French painting and sculpture, in both their Durham and Armagh Street galleries. When the exhibition was held the following month £1,400 was raised to aid funds for blinded French soldiers.

By mid November the impact of the Influenza epidemic was being felt. The School of Art closed early and postponed its annual examinations. All exhibitions and meetings were suspended or cancelled.

The fortieth Annual Society of Arts Exhibition in 1919 attracted a record catalogue of entries with 450 exhibits being shown, making it the

largest Society exhibition up to that time. The sale of work was also a record.

This encouraging sign of post war recovery was repeated again in 1920, when an additional attraction was the exhibition of painting by returned soldier artists John Weeks, Francis McCracken, Nugent Welch, W. Robert Johnson and Archibald Nicoll.

Archibald Nicoll, the only Cantabrian in the group, had been in his position as Director of the School of Art a short time and, with his staff, was preparing to enter a new decade in

art education in Canterbury. A recent arrival from England who was to play an important role in this was James Shelley (1884-1961), the new Professor of Education at Canterbury College. James Shelley had lectured in the history of art at the University of Manchester before coming to New Zealand and had a considerable knowledge of the philosophy of art. In 1921 he began lectures to students in art history that were a revelation to many.

In late December 1920, Cecil and Elizabeth Kelly left New Zealand for England where they established a studio in Kensington, London. It is likely that they spent time travelling overland from Naples to London between

February and April. While in London Elizabeth Kelly worked on a number of portraits, including one of Mrs Tahu Rhodes. The Kellys travelled to Cornwall and France before returning to New Zealand early in

1918

1919

1920

1921



January 1922 with W. Wauchop who had also been in Europe throughout 1921.

## 1922



**Booth, Leonard H.** (1879–1974)  
*Penelope (Trelawney of the Wells)*  
1922. Oil on Canvas.

Collection: Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa.  
Photograph: Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa, B.41778.



Bridge of Remembrance.

Photo: Brendan Lee

Christchurch in the early 1920's had established a reputation for having a strong art community led by an effective art school and art society. Many students were attracted to Canterbury and by 1922 Christchurch had many of New Zealand's most promising young artists, among them Alfred and James Cook, Rhona Haszard, Ngaio Marsh, Ronald McKenzie, Evelyn Polson, Cedric Savage, and John Weeks. Prominent on

the staff were Leonard Booth, Archibald Nicoll, Cecil Kelly and Richard Wallwork, who in the 1920's introduced more students to printmaking techniques.

Following the war New Zealand became involved in a fervour for memorial building to the fallen. Canterbury was no exception. War memorial committees were providing new opportunities for sculptors. Early in 1921 William Trehewey successfully gained the Kaiapoi War Memorial project. His marble sculpture was unveiled during April the following year.

By September 1921, designs had been submitted for the Memorial Bridge to span the Avon at Cashel Street. Completed in 1924, much of the sculptural detail was carved by Frederick Gurnsey and his students.

The promotion of art in Canterbury was given a boost in 1922 with the formation of the Society for Imperial Culture begun at the instigation of Rosa Sawtell and others. The society's aim was to promote culture, this involved encouraging promising artists and acquiring works of art for the public collection. Rosa Sawtell was also instrumental in establishing a travelling scholarship under the auspices of the society.

## 1923

Concern for the future of art was also in the minds of members of the Canterbury Society of Arts Council and by early 1923 they had secured the interest of the Christchurch City Council to build a new public gallery.

Towards the end of November Francis A. Shurrock, the newly appointed modelling and art craft teacher at the School of Art, had left England to take up his position in Christchurch. Over the following twenty-four years Shurrock, as a sculptor and inspired teacher, was to exert a considerable influence on a whole generation of Canterbury students.

Sydney Thompson returned to Christchurch where he was accorded a Civic

reception. Sydney Thompson's recent work aroused much interest during the weeklong exhibition held from 15 December 1923. Among the works exhibited was *Horses on the Quay*, a work that had been shown in the 1922 Paris Salon. This painting was one of two purchased for the Art Society's permanent collection.

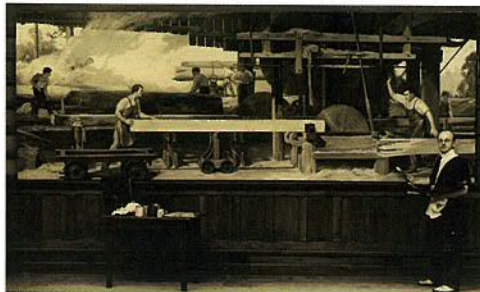
Meanwhile Canterbury artists' works were being exhibited at the Hokitika British and Intercolonial Exhibition. Included were paintings by Charles Worsley and John Madden, artists who had both died in 1923. There were also works by Cecil and Elizabeth Kelly.



In January 1924 a collection of etchings sent by the Australian Painters and Etchers Society arrived. They were shown two months later in conjunction with the Canterbury Society of Arts Annual Exhibition. The exhibition had largely been the inspiration of Richard Wallwork who was also promoting etching through his classes at the School of Art.

Between 15 and 20 December 1923, prior to his departure for a year's travel overseas, Wallwork held an exhibition of his mural paintings commissioned by the New Zealand Government for the main Hall in the New Zealand Pavilion at the Wembley Exhibition of 1924. The five murals depicted various aspects of New Zealand's timber industry which Wallwork had observed at the Te Kinga

mill on the West Coast. Among the other Canterbury artists to travel overseas that year were Alfred Baxter, who had left Christchurch in July, and Margaret Anderson. In June Margaret Stoddart left for a sketching holiday in Tahiti. Cora Wilding, who had been away for some years, returned and held an exhibition in December.



Photograph of Richard Wallwork (1923) standing in front of his mural painted for the Wembley Exhibition. Private Collection.

At the beginning of 1925 the Society for Imperial Culture announced that the two-year, travelling Rosa Sawtell Scholarship was open, but only to past and present students of Canterbury College School of Art.

In March Sydney Thompson held an exhibition of painting at his studio at 97 Cambridge Terrace before returning to France.

Among the exhibitions outside Christchurch that aroused interest was the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, London, to which several Canterbury artists had sent works. Also the New Zealand and South Seas International Exhibition, Dunedin, that opened in November. The art section included

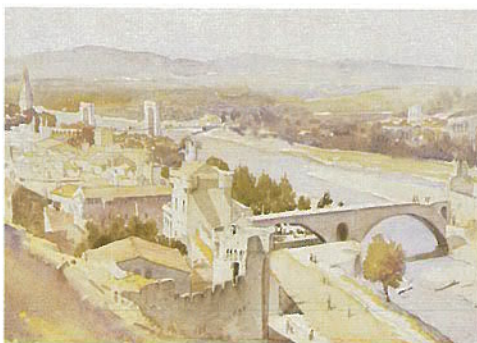
works by Grace Butler, Sydney Thompson, Archibald Nicoll, William Menzies Gibb, Elizabeth Wallwork, Elizabeth Baird Friberg and William Greene, who had died a few months earlier. An exhibition of Greene's painting was held in May 1926 to raise funds for his widow.

In late October an exhibition of Maud Sherwood's work was held at the Durham Street Gallery. A few weeks earlier an exhibition of 63 works by Ronald McKenzie ran for seven days prior to the artist leaving for Europe. Two months later his former wife Rhona Haszard also left for England.

## 1925

The rising number of solo exhibitions continued in 1926 at both the Durham and Armagh Street galleries. The most notable were those of artists Eleanor Hughes (née Waymouth), Alfred Baxter and Richard Wallwork who included a number of etchings, some based on subjects from his recent overseas trip

Also exhibited was work by W. E. James Cook, who, on winning the Sawtell travelling scholarship, left for Europe.



Cook, W.E. (James) (1904–1960) *Avignon from the Palace Gardens* c.1928, watercolour.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery

## 1926

In 1927 a few artists felt that they needed the benefit of the association they had enjoyed as art students. They considered that they would mutually benefit from having a studio in

which they could work and meet. The result was that an informal group was formed, and space was rented on the first floor of the old *Weekly Press* building in Cashel Street. Most

## 1927



Right: Archibald Nicoll painting portrait of Sir George Harper, 1931.



Far right: William Menzies Gibb and his daughter painting outdoors. Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery Archives.



Margaret Stoddart (1865–1934) painting out-of-doors, Hawkes Bay, c.1930. Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery Archives

Right: Kelly, Elizabeth (1877–1946) *Youth*, oil on canvas.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.



of the early members of The Group were also members of the Canterbury Society of Arts and included Cora Wilding, Evelyn Polson, Ngaio Marsh, Margaret Anderson, William H. Montgomery, Edith Wall, Viola Macmillan-Brown and William S. Baverstock. Late in 1927 they held their first studio exhibition which aroused much interest. Although The Group was a mixture of older and younger artists, their attitudes to art were progressive, and attracted others of a similar mind.

In contrast, the largely conservative group that included Richard Wallwork, Archibald Nicoll and Cecil and Elizabeth Kelly maintained their distance from The Group. By 1927 Elizabeth Kelly and Archibald Nicoll were Canterbury's leading formal portrait artists. Nicoll concentrated mostly on male commissions while Elizabeth Kelly painted Canterbury socialites and their lively young daughters. A work that typified this was the portrait of Miss Carey, *Youth*, purchased for the Art Society's collection that year.

During October 1927 the Canterbury

Society of Arts honoured one of its most respected senior artists, William Menzies Gibb, with a large retrospective exhibition of the artist's work spanning almost 50 years.

## 1928

An exhibition of over 200 etchings was held during November 1928 in the recital hall of Messrs Chas. Begg and Co. Ltd. in Manchester Street. Organised by the Australian Painter and Etchers Society, artists included the Canterbury printmakers, Richard Wallwork and J. M. Thomasson, as well as British artists Frank Brangwyn, Hubert Herkomer and Australians Sydney Long, Henry van Raalte, Sydney Ure Smith, and Auckland printmaker, Trevor Lloyd.<sup>5</sup>

The progress toward getting a new gallery had almost stalled and the death of James Jamieson left the city with a decision as to how it would house the collection he had be-

queathed. By March 1928 it had reached a critical point. A target of fund raising had not been achieved and time was running out.

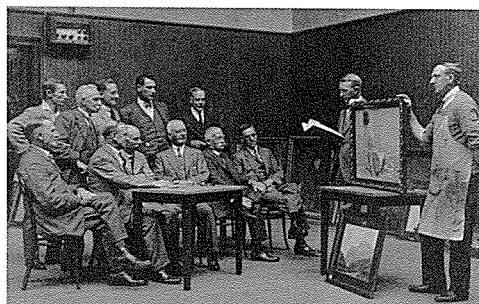
The situation was rescued at the eleventh hour by R. E. McDougall who donated £25,000 to build the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

During that same month a major retrospective exhibition of the work of Margaret O. Stoddart opened, organised by Richard Wallwork, A. E. Baxter, Archibald Nicoll and Francis Shurrock, with assistance from the artist herself. In November a touring exhibition of travel posters organised by Wellington artist Winifred Guy was shown and received a favourable reception.

To close the year there was a week-long exhibition of painting by Cranleigh Barton.

During the last two years of the 1920s the Canterbury Society of Arts exhibition programme steadily increased. Works for the Society's Annual Exhibitions were still very much under the control of the hanging committee, however, more space was being let for independent shows.

In July 1928 the first of the touring Murray Fuller exhibitions of British Paintings and Etchings was held at the Durham Street



Gallery. There was also a demand for the revival of Arts and Crafts exhibitions and the first of these was held in October.

Selection Committee of the Canterbury Society of Arts, 1928. *Standing from left:* Francis Shurrock, B. McGregor-Wright, Alfred E. Baxter, A.L. Cropp, Cecil F. Kelly, George L. Donaldson, (secretary). (*Holding book of Entries*) W. Biggins (caretaker). *Seated from left:* Dr G.M.L. Lester, Richard Wallwork, N.L. McBeth, William Menzies Gibb, C.J.R. Williams, Archibald F. Nicoll.

Photo: Canterbury Society of Arts, Christchurch.

In the six years of its existence the Society for Imperial Culture had done much to foster art in Canterbury. It had held lectures, purchased works for the public collection and helped sponsor a travelling scholarship awarded to W. E. James Cook, in 1926. On April 27 1929 the society formally held a reception at the Chamber of Commerce building to welcome James Cook back to Christchurch. As recipient of the Rosa Sawtell Scholarship, he had travelled widely in Europe and soon after his arrival back an exhibition was planned. This opened at the Durham Street Gallery on 14 June 1929 and included drawings, watercolours and oils made in France, Italy and Spain, during 1927 and 1928. Gerona, Spain had made a particular impact on Cook, and he later returned there to live.

Between September 10 and 14 The Group, wishing to secure its identity, mounted its first public exhibition at the Durham Street Gallery, comprising 108 works.

The following month an exhibition was held to honour Alfred Walsh and William Sprott. This had been organised by Margaret Stoddart, Alfred Baxter and Cecil Kelly.

Towards the end of October the Graphic and Plastic Crafts, Drawing and Studies Exhibition opened. It comprised 186 exhibits including works far beyond the region and proved to be the most successful of its kind, creating much interest among younger artists. However, having a separate exhibition for craft was not to Francis Shurrock's liking. He had never favoured the division of art and craft. At the November meeting of the Society of Arts he resigned in protest.

The last major solo exhibition for 1929 was that of Cedric Savage, held during a week in December, prior to his departure for Australia. Another artist who had recently left for overseas travel at the end of 1929 was Olivia Spencer Bower.

## 1929



Above: Grace Butler painting out-of-doors, c.1950.

Photo courtesy of Grace Adams.



The Group 1936.

Photo: Olivia Spencer Bower



1930

The opening of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 16 June 1932.

Reproduced from *The Christchurch Times*.  
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery Archives



As a new decade dawned in 1930 the art community of Canterbury, like everyone else, faced the problems of the world depression, but Christchurch had a new art gallery almost underway. The tenders were let in October and by December construction of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery had begun, and continued through the following year. It was finally opened to the public on 16 June 1932.

Early in March Malcolm McCormack opened a new dealer gallery in Victoria Square with an inaugural exhibition of 150 paintings by Cranleigh Barton. McCormack had first started as an art dealer in the 1920s after some years in business with Charles Pugh. Both had been former staff members of H. Fisher and Son.

Later that month the Canterbury Society of Arts held its jubilee exhibition. There were 552 exhibits representing works by artists from all parts of New Zealand and several from New Zealand painters abroad. Foremost were Sydney Thompson and Rhona Haszard.

During May there were solo exhibitions held by James Fitzgerald, Esther Hope and K. Airini Vane. News was also received that Archibald Nicoll had had his painting *Akaroa Road* accepted for hanging in a Royal Academy Exhibition, London. A number of other Canterbury artists were included in the inaugural exhibition of the North Otago Art Society, Oamaru.

Among the arrivals from Australia in the second half of the year were James Lawson Balfour and Margaret Preston. Margaret Preston's visit was to study Maori design.

The Wellington based artist T. A. McCormack arrived at the invitation of W. Basil Honour and remained in Christchurch through the early 1930s.

Canterbury printmakers represented at the Auckland City Art Gallery's exhibition of New Zealand printmaking included Richard Wallwork, John M. Thomasson, Archibald F. Nicoll, James Fitzgerald, Leonard H. Booth, Gordon L. Anderson of Christchurch and Albert J. Rae of Timaru.

Throughout 1930 there was discussion about the Captain Cook commemorative statue competition. Among the competitors were sculptors Robert N. Field, William H. Wright, Francis T. Clapperton, of London, Francis Shurrock and William F. Trethewey. The Cook memorial project had been initiated by Mr Mathew T. Barnett, who in 1928 made a gift of money as a nucleus of funds for a memorial. Late in November 1930 the entries were exhibited at the Durham Street Gallery for selection by the Memorial Committee. William Trethewey, who was awarded the project, had worked on other memorials including the Kaiapoi War Memorial, unveiled in April 1922.

1931

By the end of April 1931 work on the statue was well in hand and Trethewey and his assistants had cut almost a third of the 12-tonne block of Carrara marble. This block was reputed to be the largest ever sent from Italy to the Southern Hemisphere.

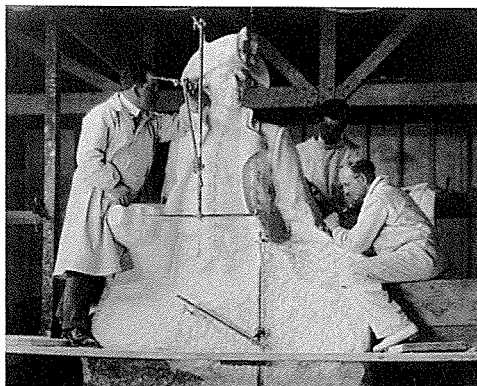
Over the following nine months work proceeded at Trethewey's Linwood Avenue studio. The new statue and plinth were finally put in place in July 1932 and unveiled on 10 August.

Later in January Owen Merton died in

London. Merton was the first of several artists to die that year. The following month Rhona Haszard died after a fall from a window in Alexandria, Egypt. On 26 July William Menzies Gibb died after a short illness and on 5 November Walter Bowring died in Sydney, followed by Robert Procter three weeks later in Melbourne.

During 1931, artists continued to travel. On January 31 Elioth Gruner visited Christchurch and was greatly impressed with the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, then in its early stages of construction. In July Cedric Savage and Arthur d'Auvergne Boxall set off to paint in Fiji. Late in May M.T. Woollaston moved down to Christchurch from Nelson to study at Canterbury College School of Art. The two terms that Woollaston spent at Canterbury were not to prove very beneficial for him. In 1932 he sought more progressive instruction in Dunedin with Robert N. Field.

By 1931 the School of Art had become more closely integrated with Canterbury University College, the Director having been



William Trethewey (left) and assistants working on the Captain Cook Statue, May, 1931.

Photograph: Green & Hahn. Courtesy: Allan Trethewey.

admitted to the Professorial Board. At the end of that year the first students studying for a Diploma in Fine Arts completed their 4-year course.

Among the exhibitions held that year was a major solo show by Marcus King, at Fisher's in High Street.

In England, Eleanor Hughes' (née Waymouth) exhibition of etchings received favourable review in *Studio* magazine and A. Elizabeth Kelly had another portrait accepted for a Royal Academy exhibition in London.

The main event of 1932 was the opening of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery on 16 June. Christchurch finally had a public art gallery.

Many arrivals and departures marked the year. In February Rosa Sawtell returned after a brief visit to England. Flora Scales came back from Europe and spent several months in Christchurch before going back to Nelson, and Ngaio Marsh returned after four years away. November saw Olivia Spencer Bower back in New Zealand after several years in England and Europe.

Arthur d'Auvergne Boxall left for Sydney and in May W. James Cook, dissatisfied with attempts to change attitudes in teaching at Canterbury University College of Art, went back to London.

The exhibitions held in 1932 included another travelling collection of Contemporary British Art and Etching, organised by E. Murray Fuller. It opened in May at the Durham Street gallery and was well received by a number of younger artists.

In July the School of Art celebrated its jubilee with a diverse, 200-work retrospective exhibition at the Armagh Street gallery. Also

in July a major loan collection of antiques organised by Heathcote Helmore was well under way. It opened on 3 August with proceeds going to the YMCA relief fund for the unemployed.



Francis A. Shurrock modelling portrait of C. Perkins, 1933.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery Archives.

## 1932



**Nicoll, Archibald F.** (1886–1953)  
*Canterbury Winter* c.1945,  
oil on canvas.

W.S. & Alison MacGibbon Collection,  
Macmillan Brown Library, University of  
Canterbury.  
Reproduced courtesy of the artist's  
family.



Between 5 and 15 September The Group held its last exhibition before going into recess. This was opened by Professor James Shelley who had only recently returned to Christchurch after a nine-month tour of the United States on a Carnegie travelling scholarship. Guest artist at this exhibition was Christopher Perkins who was just beginning to receive some attent-

ion after several difficult years as an artist in New Zealand. Perkins visited Christchurch for two weeks while The Group show was on, and formed a friendship with Francis Shurrock.

During the hot summer of 1933 Perkins came to Christchurch again and spent more time with Shurrock. On the day that he was to leave Shurrock modelled a portrait sketch of him in clay. It was eventually cast in bronze and was to prove to be one of his most successful works.

Archibald Nicoll, as well as working on several portrait commissions, was also exploring more regularly the landscape on Banks Peninsula. His reputation as one of New Zealand's leading landscape painters was at its peak, and in that year he became the first recipient of the Bledisloe medal for landscape painting.

## 1933

In July 1933 The Group was reformed as the New Zealand Society of Artists (NZSA). The Society opened a studio and clubrooms at 115 Gloucester Street and set about structuring its organisation. It had a committee, plus artist and subscribing members. There was a quite radical manifesto which included the aim to foster the unprejudiced study of what was termed modern art. It also had as a prime objective 'to expand the boundaries of art expression and appreciation – to assist artists, students and the public in these directions and to also encourage a definite development in artistic achievement amongst New Zealand artists.'<sup>6</sup>

As an organisation, the Society exhibited all the signs of becoming just a younger version of the Canterbury Society of Arts: an artists' club, where concern was more for club

functions than the art of its members. After two years of operation it failed for a variety of reasons. One was that several artists found that running such a large society was taking up too much time. Despite its problems, during the time it operated, the NZSA had many successes. There were numerous monthly lectures, radio broadcasts and a major exhibition of British art was organised through the Empire Collections Society. But without

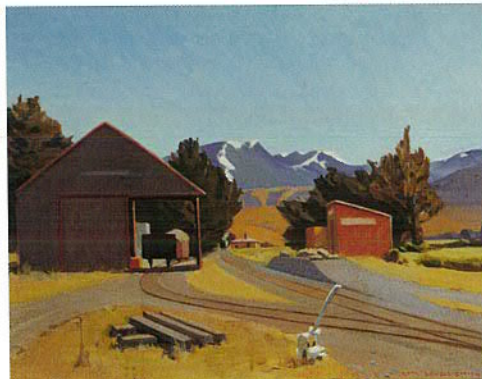
Far right: **Marsh, Ngaio**  
(1895–1982)

*The Quarry*, c.1933,  
oil on canvas.

Collection: Ngaio Marsh Trust.  
Reproduced courtesy of John Dacres-Mannings.

**Lovell-Smith, Rata** (1900–1969)  
*Hawkins* 1933,  
oil on canvas/board.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.  
Reproduced courtesy of  
J.B. Lovell-Smith.



doubt it was the exhibitions held by the members themselves that were most noteworthy. In October the first exhibition of the Society was held and occupied both the Durham Street and Armagh Street Galleries. Professor Shelley described this exhibition as 'courageous and stimulating'.<sup>7</sup> Some 276 exhibits by 44 artists were shown, including works by Olivia Spencer Bower, Margaret Anderson, Francis A. Shurrock, Evelyn Polson, W Basil Honour, Rita Angus, James and Alfred Cook and Ngaio Marsh. Among certain artists the concern with structural design over painterly expression was emerging. Both *Hawkins* by Rata Lovell-Smith and *The Quarry* by Ngaio Marsh revealed something of this.

This first NZSA exhibition was very successful. More than 5000 attended during the

three weeks it was open, 35 new members were signed up and it was considered the best response there had been in Christchurch for many years. Over the months that the Society had been in operation its lectures and classes had enlivened the whole local community of artists.

Among those who returned in 1933 were Alfred E. Baxter, after four years in Europe, and Cedric Savage who had spent two years painting in the Pacific. Soon after his return Savage set up painting and drawing classes and formed a landscape sketching club. In July Leslie Greener returned to Christchurch with an exhibition of paintings and prints by his late wife Rhona Haszard.

During September 1933, Raymond McIntyre died in London.

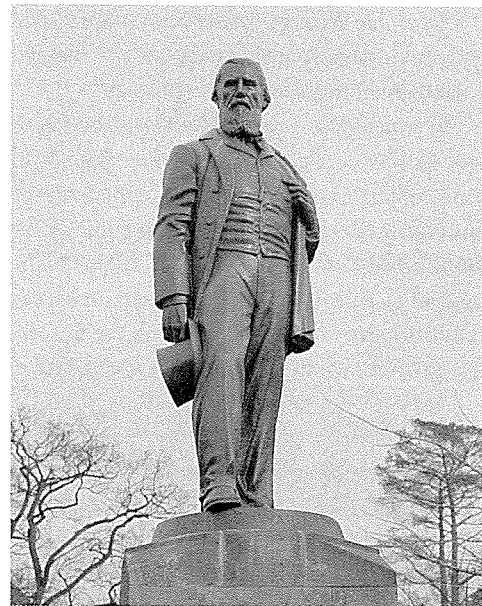
By the end of January 1934 Sydney L. Thompson had also returned again, after an absence of eight years away in France.

Early in February Mr R.E. Green made an offer to the Christchurch City Council to sponsor the erection of a statue in Latimer Square to James Edward FitzGerald, first Superintendent of Canterbury. The response from the Council was favourable and Mr Green approached Francis Shurrock to carry out the project.

By November he had the project well in hand but in the intervening months objections were lodged by Mr Green's family with the result that the Council withdrew its acceptance. It would not reconsider 'if a satisfactory arrangement between the citizen offering it, and his family was not reached'.<sup>8</sup>

This did not happen and a bitter wrangle ensued that involved action in court. Shurrock became the innocent victim, in many respects caught in the middle. He maintained his side of the contract, modelled the statue, had it cast in England. On 15 July 1936 the finished bronze arrived in Christchurch and was held in customs bond.

Further attempts were made in the following months to try and get the City Council to rescind its decision and accept the statue, but to no avail. A proposal was then made that the Council should buy the statue, but Mr



1934

James E. FitzGerald Statue.  
Photo: Brendan Lee.

Green would not agree. 'Rather than sell it I will send it to a foundry and have it broken up'. Shurrock was of a similar mind, he stated that 'I am fed up with the whole business – it has made me hate the statue – I would rather see it broken up for scrap'<sup>10</sup>. Bond storage was also beginning to cost him money that he could ill afford.

Throughout 1936 and 1937 the debate and further legal proceedings continued. After protracted negotiations in July 1938 the Domains Board eventually accepted the statue for siting either in Hagley Park or the Botanic





Elizabeth Kelly in her studio, 1929.  
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery Archives.

Gardens. Eventually neither was chosen, and it was sited at the end of Cashel Street where it was unveiled on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1939.

After five years of controversy, court cases and procrastination, Shurrock was not pleased to have been involved in the project.

In June 1934 a major event on the year's art calendar occurred with the opening, on 15 June, of an exhibition of paintings representative of leading British artists, toured by the Empire Collections Society. This was the first of a number of significant overseas exhibitions to be received through the Society and to be shown in Christchurch in the 1930s.

## 1935

Among other notable exhibitions held in 1935 was the E. Murray Fuller exhibition of British Contemporary Art, a loan exhibition of Oriental Art, a loan collection of lithographs from the Sendfelder Club and a retrospective exhibition of the work of Dorothy Kate Richmond, who had recently died.

The activity at both the Durham and

The initiative to arrange such exhibitions from Britain had been made the previous year by (Sir) Percy R. Sargood and the Dunedin Art Gallery trustees.

Each year since the 1920s A. Elizabeth Kelly had had some success overseas, and 1934 was to prove to be no exception. She was awarded a silver medal from the Société des Artistes Français, Paris. This made her the only New Zealand artist up to that time to have received that level of recognition for portraiture. The only other Cantabrian who had gained some attention in France was Sydney L. Thompson. On October 2, 1932 a major one-man exhibition of his work opened at the Durham Street gallery. Since his return, Thompson had become very involved in the art scene in Christchurch. He was back on the Council of the Art Society, gave lectures and was taking an enthusiastic interest in the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. He was also keen to promote Christchurch artists in the region and organised an exhibition of their work for Timaru.

The New Zealand Society of Artists held its second and last major exhibition in October 1934. Guest exhibitors were Kathleen Salmond, Flora Scales, John Weeks, and Nugent Welch. In December Canterbury lost one of its most distinguished watercolourists with the death of Margaret O. Stoddart. During June of the following year a major retrospective exhibition of her work was mounted.

## 1936

During October the re-formed Group held its first exhibition since the folding of the New Zealand Society of Artists. But it was evident that the efforts of the Society had not been in vain. At the opening of the 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition of the Canterbury Society of Arts in 1936 it was noted by the *Star-Sun* reviewer that: 'exhibits were better than for a long time

Armagh Street galleries was growing with the increase of temporary exhibitions, and the Canterbury Society of Arts felt strongly that the Christchurch City Council should carry some of the burden, otherwise a temporary exhibition programme would have to be restricted.

past... all of the artists of whom the public has come to expect much have lived up to their reputations... their consideration for the orthodox has been for too long a guiding rule... perhaps the now defunct Society of Artists had something to do with this.'<sup>11</sup>

The success of certain Canterbury artists overseas continued in 1936. A. Elizabeth Kelly

had works in several London exhibitions including the Royal Academy and Walker Galleries and former Timaru based artist, Alexander H. McLintock, had the maximum number of etchings accepted for the New English Art Club exhibition.

During October the Society for Imperial Culture met to farewell Professor James Shelley, their president, who was leaving Christchurch to take up his appointment as Director General of Broadcasting.

By 1936 the number of bequests to the Robert McDougall Art Gallery had dwindled.

In March Sydney Thompson, as President of the Canterbury Society of Art, made an appeal for further support from the community, and requested that the Christchurch City Council also initiate acquisition funding. His appeal did not go unheeded. Several months later noted collector, Sir James Kinsey, left a bequest to the Gallery when he died, which enabled it to establish a works on paper collection.

The Lyttelton Harbour Board also took the initiative to be the first public body to encourage art in the region by commissioning a work, *Lyttelton from the Bridle Path* by S. L. Thompson, and then donating it to the public collection in 1938. In addition there was some shift in attitudes away from the exclusive policy of not showing temporary exhibitions at the McDougall Art Gallery. On November 27 the first temporary loan exhibition *Scottish Art* was opened and the first lecture in conjunction with an exhibition was given by Dr J. Guthrie.

The membership of The Group grew to include several artists living outside Christchurch. At the 1936 exhibition guest exhibitors were M. T. Woollaston and Leslie Greener. One



**Thompson, Sydney L.**  
(1877–1973)

*Lyttelton from the Bridle Path* 1936,  
oil on canvas.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.  
Reproduced courtesy of Thompson/  
Caldwell family.



**Spencer Bower, Olivia**  
(1905–1982)

*La Piccola Marina, Capri* 1931,  
watercolour.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.  
Reproduced courtesy of the Olivia  
Spencer Bower Foundation.

of the younger artists who had shown regularly with The Group since 1927 was Evelyn Polson (Page). During mid December she held her first solo exhibition before departing for England. The work of Olivia Spencer Bower was also beginning to develop. Another well-known early member was Stephanie Vincent (née Buckhurst). She died in 1936, as did Alfred E. Baxter.

By 1937 a certain apathy in attendance at gallery exhibitions had set in. That year the Canterbury Society of Arts sponsored two loan exhibitions – one from the New South Wales Gallery and another from the National Loan Trust. Both were poorly attended, although the CSA exhibitions were well supported. Similarly an exhibition of etchings from Gallery Twenty-one in London aroused small interest.

In May the second loan exhibition to be held at the McDougall Art Gallery, *Chinese Art*,

received a good response. Also several private exhibitions by local artists seemed to fare better, particularly the Sydney Thompson exhibition, held at Fisher's Gallery in June, just prior to his departure for France once again.

In August Cora Wilding also held an exhibition of watercolours of Spain and Morocco, done during 1927 and 1928, at Fisher's Gallery. The proceeds of sales were used for the benefit of Spanish children who were refugees from the Spanish Civil War.

1937



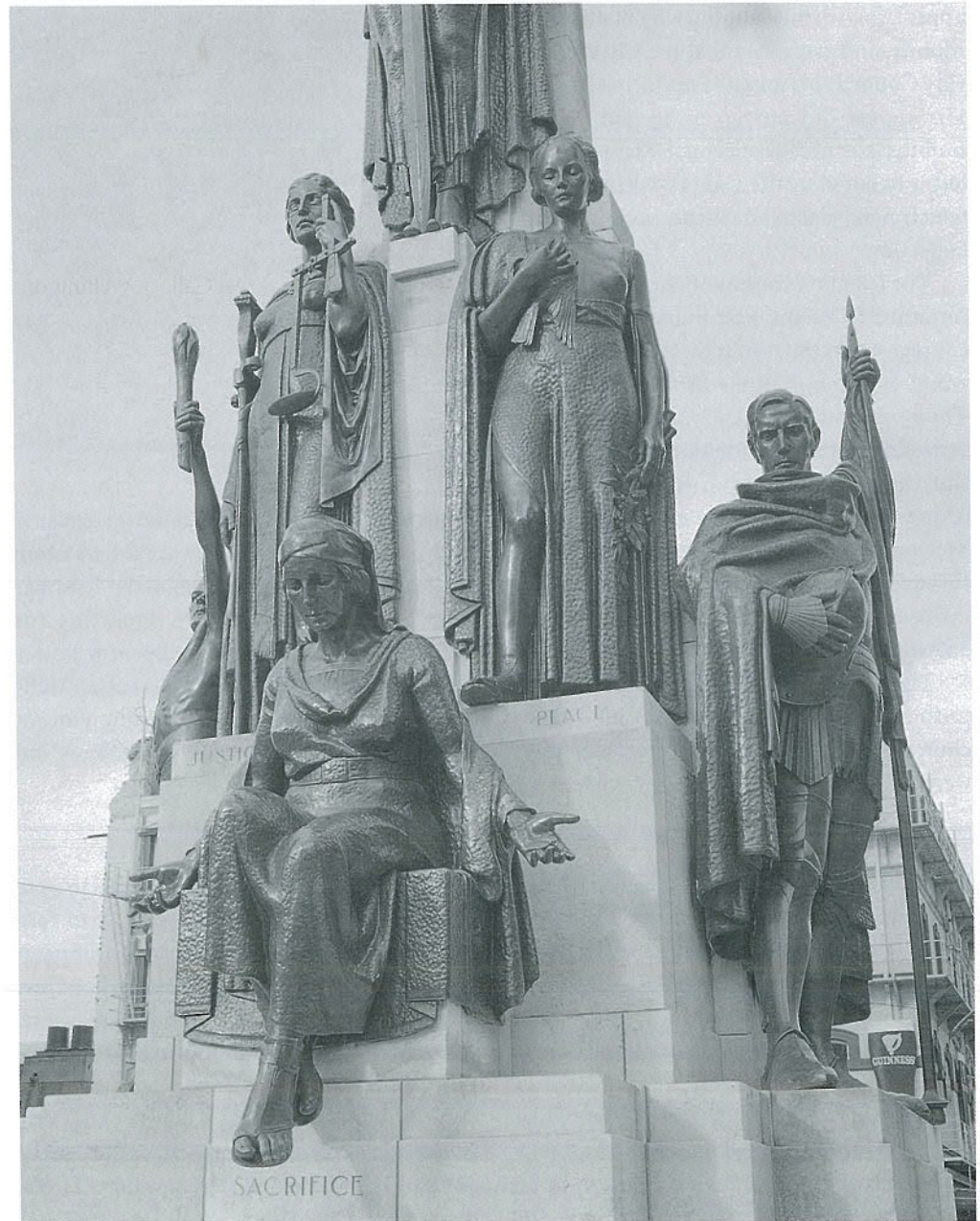
## 1900–1949

### A CONCISE HISTORY OF ART IN CANTERBURY 1850–2000

Right: **Bensemman, Leo**  
(1912–1986)  
*Dr. Faustus*,  
pen and ink.  
Private Collection.



Far right: **Angus, Rita** (1908–1978)  
*Cass 1937*,  
oil on canvas.  
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery



Citizens War Memorial.  
Photo: Brendan Lee.

The Caxton Press published a book of 13 drawings by Leo Bensemann titled *Fantastica*. Limited to an edition of 125 the illustrations in *Fantastica*, such as *Dr Faustus*, were of a highly imaginative nature. While attending the Canterbury College School of Art between 1932 and 1936 Bensemann had become acquainted with Denis Glover and eventually became a business partner in the Caxton Press. Other publications to be illustrated by Bensemann included *Nastagio and the Obdurate lady: A Tale from The Decameron* (1941) and *A Second Book of Leo Bensemann's Work* (1948).

1937 also saw Bensemann sharing studios with Rita Angus and Lawrence Baigent at 97 Cambridge Terrace, Sydney L. Thompson's studio.

Throughout 1938 there was something of a focus on art education in Christchurch. The previous year a stimulus had been provided when the visiting director of the Toronto Art Gallery, Arthur Lismer, conducted a seminar on art education at the Durham Street Gallery.

Early in February Francis Shurrock convened an art group in connection with the establishment of a new education fellowship. The intention was to arrange lectures and meetings specifically for art teachers. This activity coincided with the large loan exhibition from the National Gallery and Tate collections in London.

Later in the year, during October, Christchurch had the benefit of seeing an exhibition of Canadian Art, toured under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation. This was to boost the confidence of artists who were

By the beginning of 1939 a number of emerging younger artists were exhibiting further afield. Artists like Leo Bensemann, A. Austen Deans, John Knight, Owen Lee, Juliet Peter, and William A. Sutton. Several of these were also selected for inclusion in the touring centennial exhibition of 200 works of New Zealand art. This was being organised to coincide with the large commemorative New Zealand Centennial Exhibition at Wellington. Others were directly involved in mural commissions.

While controversy still hovered around Shurrock's FitzGerald commission, one of the most significant works of public sculpture in Canterbury, the Citizens War Memorial, was nearing completion. On 9 June William Trethewey's allegorical figures, grouped around the foot of a 7 metre cross was formally unveiled. The memorial had been several years in progress and had occupied much of the sculptor's time, although he did undertake other commissions, including the Waitara memorial to Sir Maui Pomare.

Trethewey had travelled to England in 1936 to supervise the casting of the figures for the memorial, at A.B. Burton's foundry. While he was away he also took the opportunity to expand his art education.

following similar tendencies in their painting.

Among the private exhibitions held in 1938 was Russell Clark's first one-man exhibition at the Bowen Street Gallery, Wellington. Rata and Colin Lovell-Smith held an exhibition at Fisher's Gallery in May, followed by Basil Honour, who was about to move back to Wellington. In August Rita Angus started showing with The Group.

By 1938 A. Elizabeth Kelly's profile as a New Zealand portraitist was high, and this was formally acknowledged when she was awarded the C.B.E. Only one other Canterbury artist, Sydney L. Thompson, had received such official recognition up to that time. He had returned from France in December 1938 having secured five valuable French works for the public collection.

In 1938 a national competition had been held for an artist to design and carry out the decorative sculpture for the Centennial Exhibition. The successful competitor was William T. Trethewey. His brief included making allegorical statuary to be located around the exhibition grounds illustrating discovery, pioneering and development. There was also to be a large bas-relief processional mural 3 x 30 metres, to grace the entrance to the tower block, and a frieze around the central fountain. Both were carved from plaster. Trethewey

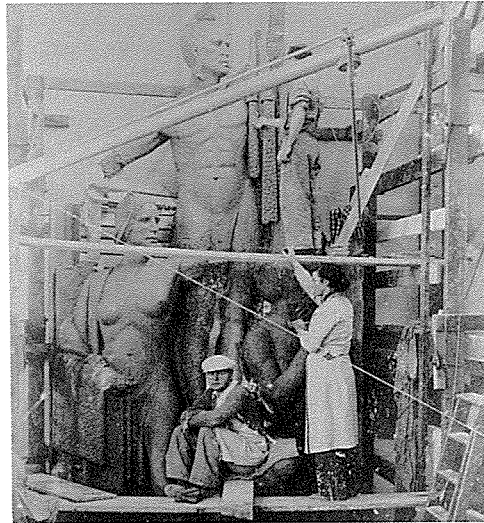
1938

1939



Chrystabel Aitken working on the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition Sculpture 1939 with Noel Ireland (seated) and Jack Hutchison (above).

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery Archives.



employed several assistants to do much of the work on these. These included Chrystabel Aitken (McArthur), R. J. (Jack) Hutchison and Mary Barrett (Bensemann). Other Canterbury artists working on the site were A. Austen Deans, who had been commissioned to paint a landscape mural for the Canterbury Court, and Russell Clark, who painted a mural for the Wellington Pavilion depicting the departure of *Tory* from Plymouth.

By the time the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition opened on 8 November 1939, the New Zealand Government had declared its support for Britain, and placed New Zealand at war with Germany.

## 1940

Early in the summer of 1940 Richard and Elizabeth Wallwork, and Colin and Rata Lovell-Smith spent time painting together at Kaikoura and exhibited several of the resulting paintings at the Canterbury Society of Arts' Sixtieth Jubilee Exhibition in March. There was a particular interest in the work of Rata Lovell-Smith as she was the most recent recipient of the Bledisloe medal for landscape painting.

As the year advanced shortages of artists' materials became more acute and some in-

genuity was required by artists and students alike. Despite the restrictions the Canterbury College School of Art Sketch Club Exhibition, held at Beath & Co. in June, was considered one of the most successful to be held and attracted a large public attendance. Prominent among the student exhibitors were Owen Lee (awarded the Canterbury College School of Art gold medal for excellence in 1939), Juliet Peter, Alan Ingham and William A. (Bill) Sutton.

## 1941

During 1940 Britain had nominated its war artists but the New Zealand government was slower in making its decision. By the beginning of 1941 there were already several Canterbury artists in the services. The most distinguished was A. Austen Deans who had left with the First Echelon. Deans was very active painting while he was stationed in Egypt, and through the last week of February a small exhibition of recent watercolours was held at H. Fisher and Son Ltd, in new premises at 691 Colombo Street. Most of the works were desert camp subjects or scenes in Egypt and Libya.

The Canterbury Society of Arts put Deans' name forward for the position of Official War Artist in the Middle East but Peter McIntyre was appointed. However, Deans was made an official war artist in Greece, where he was active up until his capture as a prisoner of war.

At the time of the Great War 1914–1918, exhibitions were held to aid patriotic funds. This was also the case during the Second World War. One of the earliest of this type was held in November 1941 at Ballantyne's lounge. It was a 38-work exhibition arranged by the New Zealand Artists' Society.

## 1942

By March 1942 all evening exhibition openings were suspended because of black-out restrictions. Student numbers at the School of Art had also decreased as more staff and young artists slowly entered the services.

During 1942 W. A. Sutton, Francis Shur-

rock and Colin Lovell-Smith all joined the Home Defence Corp, and Juliet Peter the Land Army.

When the Canterbury Society of Arts held its next Annual Exhibition in 1943, it was at Ballantyne's Dunstable House, as the Society's

galleries, and the basement of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, had been requisitioned for the duration of the war.

It was evident that the war was providing

Discussion continued on who would be appointed as war artist in the Pacific. Likely candidates were Cedric Savage, William A. Sutton or William J. Reed. In August 1943 the Canterbury Society of Arts made representations to the Prime Minister. They considered

Throughout 1944 Clark made studies, filling numerous sketchbooks with drawings, of active service in the Solomon Islands, then on the Treasuries, Bougainville Islands and at Guadalcanal.

Being in a war zone, however, was not his only problem. Often paint tubes burst, paper turned mouldy and brushes were chewed by giant moths.

Some of the more recent work by Russell Clark had been included in the touring *New Zealand Artists in Uniform Exhibition* organised by the Army and Welfare Service. It opened in Christchurch in April 1944. Among the other Canterbury artists included were W.

a new source of subjects, exhibits had titles like *Lime Juice* and *Land Girl Take Over*. There was also a sound complement of portraits of army nurses and khaki uniformed soldiers.

that at least two artists should be appointed and strongly endorsed the candidature of W. A. Sutton. Russell Clark had put his own name forward. Within a matter of months a decision had been made in his favour.

A. Sutton, R. J. Hutchinson, Colin Wheeler and Ainslee Manson.

The influence of wartime on artists was not total and many continued to paint as before. One such artist was Evelyn Page, whose 1929 painting *Summer Morn* had been the subject of a small controversy the previous year, when it was officially removed from the walls of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery at the request of the Christchurch City Council.

In 1944 Evelyn Page exhibited *New Year's Holiday* at the annual Canterbury Society of Arts exhibition. Of this painting one reviewer considered that 'Evelyn Page's work this year

1943

1944



Russell Clark as official war artist working on a portrait of Lieutenant Theodore S. Wilkinson V.C., 1944.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery Archives.





**Page, Evelyn** (1899–1988)  
*New Years Holiday (Corsair Bay)*  
(c.1943), oil on canvas.

Collection: The Hocken Library, Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago, Dunedin.  
Reproduced courtesy of A.C. Wilson and L.S. Page.

attained great heights, indeed her *New Years Holiday* is as good as anything she has ever painted.<sup>12</sup>

Older artists like Sydney L. Thompson,

Richard Wallwork, Cecil Kelly and Archibald Nicoll were similarly finding their escape in the coastal bays of the South Island landscape.

## 1945

On 8 May 1945 V.E. Day was declared. The war had ushered in changes in attitudes and a shift in the public perception of art and artists, and there was, by 1945, an eagerness for greater experiences through art.

Changes were also approaching at the School of Art. In 1945 Archibald Nicoll, Cecil Kelly, Francis Shurrock, Rata Lovell-Smith and Richard Wallwork all retired. The school was heading for a new regime under the director-

ship of Colin Lovell-Smith.

With a reorganisation of the staff in 1946, Junior and Technical Classes were dropped from the syllabus. New appointments included John Knight, W. A. Sutton, and John Oakley. Plans were also underway to build a new art school on a site at the corner of Gloucester and Montreal Streets, but this was never realised.

## 1946

Several artists died in 1945 and 1946, among them were Claudius Brassington, Edwin Bartley, James Fitzgerald and A. Elizabeth Kelly. Dr Lester, a stalwart supporter of the arts, past-president of the Canterbury Society of Arts and long serving free-lance critic for *The Press* also died.

One of the students at the School of Art in the early 1940s had been Theo Schoon. While living in Christchurch he had expanded his interest in ethnic art through many visits to

the Canterbury Museum. Early in July 1946 Dr Roger Duff of the Museum engaged Schoon to copy several Maori rock drawings that were rapidly deteriorating in shelters sited throughout South Canterbury. Schoon's arduous task continued until 1948. During this time he carried out valuable fieldwork and through his unique interpretations in paint, gave this early Maori art form a new identity. Early in 1947 the Canterbury Society of Arts had most of its gallery returned to it by the

army, although it was not until 30 April 1949 that the whole building was formally handed back.

The activities of the Empire Loan Collections Society, in recess during the war, now began a new programme of touring exhibitions. While many young artists were returning from overseas, others were leaving to widen their art education.

In May 1947 William A. Sutton and Richard de B. Lovell-Smith who had recently received a Mural Scholarship, left for England.

Later that month Frances Hodgkins died. It was quickly realised that little of her recent work existed in New Zealand public collections. There was much interest among certain Canterbury Society of Arts members who felt that attempts should be made to acquire a work. In June Colin Lovell-Smith wrote to W. A. Sutton in London to negotiate a purchase with the £200 set aside for that purpose. Sutton viewed several works at Lefevre Galleries but hesitated to recommend any of the works he examined. Meanwhile negotiations had begun in another quarter to arrange to have works sent out through the British Council.

Margaret Frankel and Doris Lusk established a pottery workshop at the Risingholme Community Centre, Opawa, which was to contribute to the growth of studio pottery in Canterbury throughout the

1950s, '60s and '70s.

The Group gave an opportunity for potters to exhibit their pieces, with Lusk first exhibiting pottery at the 1948 Group exhibition. The Risingholme Ceramics Group exhibited their pottery in the 1952 exhibition while other individual potters exhibited regularly over the years with The Group, including Chrystabel Aitken, Nola Barron, Doreen Blumhardt, Barry Brickell, Len Castle, Roy Cowan, Dorothy Crumpton, R. N. Field, Ivy Fife, Margaret Frankel, John Fuller, Olive Jones, Arno Lehman, Helen Mason, Margaret Milne, Juliet Peter, Andre Simoni, Peter Stitchbury, Graeme Storm, Paddy Taylor, Warren Tippett, and Michael Trumic.

The Caxton Press began publication of its quarterly literary journal, *Landfall*, edited by Charles Brash. *Landfall* is still being published 53 years later.



Doris Lusk (right) teaching pottery student at The Risingholme Community Centre c.1947.  
Collection: Canterbury Museum.

Early in 1948 Colin McCahon moved to Christchurch to live and paint. At first he stayed with the artist Doris Lusk and her husband Dermot Holland, who had moved up from Dunedin seven years earlier. For McCahon at this time painting had to be a part-time pursuit as earning a living gardening absorbed most of his waking hours. He also worked for a time as an assistant to Leo Bensemann at The Caxton Press.

Included in the 1948 Canterbury Society of Arts Exhibition in April were several works by William A. Sutton and Richard de B. Lovell-Smith. These were the first of their English landscapes to be shown locally. There were also a number of works by Archibald Nicoll, who the previous year had been awarded the OBE for his long service to art.

Among the works exhibited at the 1948 Group Show was Doris Lusk's *Overlooking Kaitawa, Waikaremoana*.

The pursuit of a suitable Frances Hodgkins work had moved on apace by September 1948 and 6 paintings, sent on approval by the British Council, were on their way from England. At a special meeting of the Art Society Council held after the works had arrived, it was decided that none met their requirements. Two other South Island galleries, in Dunedin and Nelson, were interested, however, it was made known that they would not buy, but would accept purchases made privately and donated.

Christchurch had a more conservative viewpoint. When the *Pleasure Garden* was chosen and purchased through public subscription, then offered to the City Council in

1947

1948





**Lusk, Doris** (1916–1993)  
*Landscape, Overlooking Kaitawa, Waikaremoana* 1948,  
 oil on board.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

June 1949, it was ‘respectfully declined’.<sup>13</sup>

The Mayor of Christchurch, Sir Ernest Andrews, advised the donors that it had been declined as it was ‘unacceptable on its merits’<sup>14</sup>. Immediately the ‘*Pleasure Garden* controversy’ as it has come to be known, moved into a new

and more passionate phase.

Correspondence columns of the two local dailies were filled with letters of support or anger. Christchurch’s art community was soon divided.

## 1949

On 18 July 1949 a deputation of campaigners led by Alan Brassington appealed against the City Council decision, but without success. During the previous month the *Pleasure Garden* had been exhibited in the window of H. Fisher and Son, Colombo Street and then at Beath & Co.

While it was being shown at Fisher’s William A. Sutton, recently back from England, saw the watercolour for the first time.

In 1947 he had been cautious about the Canterbury Society of Arts acquiring a work from what was then available in London. His views immediately changed and he considered the *Pleasure Garden* to be a fine example of Frances Hodgkins’ work; ‘It was a beautiful Fanny Hodgkins. I was highly diverted as I stood by the picture for an hour and listened to the comments of the crowd.’<sup>15</sup> His support for the acquisition of the painting and those





Sutton in front of *Homage to Frances Hodgkins* 1949.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

who championed it took the form of a unique piece of propaganda in paint – the large canvas, *Homage to Frances Hodgkins*.

The Adult Education Department of Canterbury University College, assisted by the Canterbury Society of Arts, mounted a Working Members' touring exhibition which travelled to South Canterbury and West Coast towns between July and November 1949. Sixty-six works were sent including oils,

watercolours, drawings, and prints. Artists included Rita Angus, Leo Bensemann, Phyllis D. Bethune, Grace Butler, Russell Clark, Ivy G. Fife, Rona Fleming, Esther Hope, Cecil F. Kelly, W. S. Leslie, Colin Lovell-Smith, D. Manning, Archibald F. Nicoll, John Oakley, Paul Olds, Olivia Spencer Bower, William A. Sutton, Sydney L. Thompson, and Richard Wallwork.

<sup>1</sup> *The Press*, 5 February 1901, p.6

<sup>2</sup> *The Spectator*, 5 October 1905

<sup>3</sup> Circular letter from Acting Secretary, 1 December 1916, C.S.A. clipbook, Robert McDougall Art Gallery Archives.

<sup>4</sup> Rhodes, H.W. *Kennaway Henderson, Artist, Editor and Radical*, Christchurch, 1988, p19

<sup>5</sup> *The Press*, 6 November 1928, p.6

<sup>6</sup> Catalogue of the First General Exhibition of the New Zealand Society of Artists, Christchurch 1933 p23

<sup>7</sup> *The Christchurch Times*, 21 October 1933 p5

<sup>8</sup> *The Press*, Christchurch 20 August 1937, p10.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

<sup>11</sup> *The Christchurch Star-Sun*, 20 March 1936, p.8

<sup>12</sup> *Art in New Zealand* Vol 16, No 64, June 1944, p2.

<sup>13</sup> *The Press*, Christchurch, 18 June 1949

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*

<sup>15</sup> 'Bill' William Alexander Sutton Retrospective Exhibition catalogue 1917-1971, Dowse Art Gallery, Lower Hutt 1972, p10

## Notes



## 1950-2000



Drummond, Andrew, *For Beating and Breathing*, installation view, McDougall Contemporary Art Annex, 1995.

# INTRODUCTION

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The last fifty years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were significant ones for art in Canterbury, characterised by the increasing profile, if not acceptance, of the modernist aesthetic and a growing sense of professionalism in the arts, both for artists and art galleries. A gradual opening up of opportunities for artists, through new awards, public commissions, Arts Council grants and exhibition spaces culminated with the previously distant prospect of a new, purpose-built public Art Gallery for Christchurch becoming a concrete reality.

From the early 1950s, exhibition opportunities for local artists began to increase. Changes to the exhibition programme of the Canterbury Society of Arts brought a new richness and diversity to art in the city. Not only was the Society's schedule enlarged to comprise three exhibitions instead of one, but there was an increasingly international agenda. The shift of the CSA to larger premises in Gloucester Street in 1968 allowed for a far more vigorous exhibition programme. The opening of Gallery 91 in 1959 was also beneficial to the artistic community and to an art-conscious public who seemed anxious for fresh and innovative practice. These developments heralded a new era of professionalism for Canterbury artists.

The 1950s also saw the evolution of a new generation of artists who, increasingly aware of international trends, were intent on pushing the boundaries of art and widening the somewhat conservative focus of the established Christchurch arts scene. The exhibition 'Young New Zealand Artists' 1957 signalled a new willingness by artists to take their careers into their own hands, providing themselves with opportunities beyond those offered by public institutions. Openness to experimentation and more progressive practices was reflected in the criteria of the Hay's Art Competition,

which, unlike most such awards of the time, set no restrictions on subject or style.

The increasing number and variety of touring exhibitions also influenced the attitudes of both artists and the public. International shows, which included displays of the work of Lawrence S. Lowry (1956), Barbara Hepworth (1961) and Henry Moore (1956) were important in informing Canterbury artists and art-viewers of international trends, and went some way toward redressing the gap between European and Antipodean artistic development. Events such as the refusal (by the Christchurch City Council) of paintings by Frances Hodgkins, Ted Bracey and Colin McCahon, however, revealed a deep vein of conservatism that would take many years to overcome. The role of the City Council in making decisions relating to the Robert McDougall Art Gallery was brought into question by controversy over the Duchamp exhibition and the acquisitions of Hodgkin's *Pleasure Garden*, McCahon's *Tomorrow will be the same but not as this is...* and Marcello Mascherini's *The Bather* and the need for an independent, professional director became apparent. This criteria was met by the appointment of Brian Muir, who rejuvenated the McDougall's exhibition schedule and acquisitions policy by promoting the work of young Canterbury artists.

The 1960s were a period of innovation and experimentation, with artists such as Russell Clark using public commissions to extend the public conception of what art could, or should, be. One of several influential lecturers at the School of Arts, Rudolf Gopas, encouraged his students to appreciate and emulate modernist 20<sup>th</sup> century art. Canterbury artists were also increasingly travelling beyond New Zealand in search of new artistic ideas and practices. Bill Culbert, Pat Hanly, Rosemary Johnson and



Tony Fomison brought fresh ideas from overseas and had much influence on the work produced in the province afterwards. Exhibitions produced locally, such as those organised by 20/20 Vision, were significant in profiling contemporary Canterbury art, as were those that toured to New Zealand from overseas, such as the 'Marcel Duchamp/The Mary Sisler Collection' exhibition, 'Contemporary New Zealand Sculpture' and 'Rodin and his Contemporaries'.

The 1970s were a period of consolidation for art in Canterbury, with the profile of sculpture greatly improved by the formation of the Sculptor's Group by Tom Taylor and Carl Sydow in 1970 and Taylor's lectureship at the Canterbury School of Fine Arts. Graduates of that period, including Neil Dawson, Pauline Rhodes, Paul Cullen, Merylyn Tweedie, Bing Dawe and Stephen Clarke have been influential in their innovative approaches to environment, materials and construction. The rise of temporary and time-based sculpture was heralded by the work of artists such as Pauline Rhodes, Rosemary Johnson, Michael Thomas and visiting Canadian sculptor Marty Mendlesburg. Their high-profile projects did much to alter and extend existing beliefs about the purpose and limitations of sculptural practice.

Artists continued to question and challenge the boundaries, both in terms of multi-media approaches and provocative works and performances. Controversial performance pieces, such as Andrew Drummond's *Crucifixion* (1978), raised the profile of such practice to a national level. A more liberal approach to what could be termed 'art' was reflected in the new courses in photography, film and printmaking offered by the Art School. The appointment of Barry Cleavin to the Head of the Graphic Department at the University of Canterbury began a decade of printmaking that was unparalleled in the history of Canterbury. The establishment of the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the University of Canterbury in 1982 increased the variety of courses available to students and contributed to a strengthened contemporary art presence in Canterbury.

The international feminist movement had considerable impact on New Zealand art during the mid 1970s, with Christchurch

playing a vital role. Allie Eagle (the Robert McDougall Art Gallery's Exhibitions Officer), who organised both 'A Survey of Women Painters' (1974) and 'Six Women Artists' (1974) at the Gallery and participated with Jane Zusters and Anna Keir in the avante-garde 'Three Feminist Artists' exhibition at the CSA Gallery (1978), was pivotal in critiquing existing attitudes pertaining to gender and art-making.

The cessation of The Group, fifty years after its inception in 1927, signalled the closing of a significant chapter in New Zealand art history. The expansion of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery's contemporary programme, the rise (if not survival) of new dealer galleries and an increase in art competitions and awards meant that exhibition opportunities could be found without requiring artists to manufacture them. The Brooke-Gifford Gallery, which has survived beyond the end of the century despite the considerable attrition rate of private galleries established in the 1970s, was crucial in supporting and promoting significant local contemporary artists such as Alan Pearson, Bill Hammond and Tom Field. The gradual shift in the 1980s towards a Post-modern aesthetic brought other Canterbury artists such as John Hurrell, Margaret Dawson, Merylyn Tweedie, and Julia Morison to the fore.

Dr T. L. Rodney Wilson, appointed as the Director of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery in 1978, made several important changes to the staffing of the Gallery and the new positions of Exhibitions Officer, Conservator, Education Officer and Curator were fundamental to establishing a more professional standard in the exhibition, preservation and interpretation of art. International relationships were also consolidated in the 1980s, with the Gallery maintaining a successful programme of touring exhibitions from America and Europe. Events such as ANZART, held for the first time in Christchurch in 1981, provided a valuable forum for interaction and collaboration between Australian and New Zealand artists.

The late 1980s and early 1990s were notable for the burgeoning of private, public and artist-run arts venues. Important contemporary dealer galleries established during this time

were the Manawa, James Paul, Jonathan Jensen (now Jonathan Smart) and, more recently, Campbell Grant Galleries and the Arthouse. Opportunities for emerging and experimental artists were provided by the formation of the Christchurch Artists' Collective in 1986 and later with the founding of the Space Gallery in 1994. South Island Art Projects was fundamental to the development of a vital and informed arts environment through exhibitions, public projects, collaborations and forums. The Ashburton Art Gallery (opened in 1995) and the Linwood Community Arts Centre (1997) have provided new venues for art practice and appreciation both within and beyond their surrounding populations.

The McDougall Contemporary Art Annex, formed as an extension of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery in 1988, has maintained a vigorous exhibition schedule of local, national and international touring exhibitions, with a particular emphasis on Canterbury art. The establishment of the High Street Project in 1992 began an impressive history of exhibitions and initiatives. These new venues provided an outlet for an increase in art practice focused on new technologies and installation practice, reinforced and continued by the Physics Room Trust (founded in 1996). More recently, the Oblique Trust has been responsible for a variety of initiatives, including the controversial Otira Oblique project and the venue/environment 'Kiosk'.

The establishment of new residencies and visiting artist programmes within Canterbury continued to meld diverse artists and practices from within New Zealand and overseas. The University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts Artist in Residence Programme, started in 1994 with the assistance of Creative New Zealand, has allowed residencies for up to three artists

per year and has been complimented by artists of the Canterbury Visiting Fellowship. More recently the residencies programme at the Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology has been particularly valuable in facilitating discussion and exchange between artists and the arts community.

The 1990s have been characterised by the marking of several major anniversaries, which have brought with them prolific opportunities for artistic involvement. New Zealand's Sesquicentennial in 1990 was cause for a variety of commemorative exhibitions, including the comprehensive 'A Canterbury Perspective'. In 1993, New Zealand celebrated 100 years of women's suffrage and several projects were devised to mark the occasion, with Christchurch's Kate Sheppard honoured for her contribution by a memorial sculpture. Perhaps the most intense period of celebrations was 1999/2000 with exhibitions, public commissions and conferences abounding to commemorate the move into the third millennium.

Arguably the most significant art event for Canterbury in the 1990s was the confirmation that, after decades of discussion, a new Christchurch Art Gallery would be completed in 2003 to replace the over-extended Robert McDougall Art Gallery. The new building, situated on the corner of Worcester/Gloucestre and Montreal Streets, will provide five to six times the exhibition space offered by the current Gallery and will also feature an extensive sculpture garden. The new Gallery heralds an exciting era for art in Canterbury, with even greater potential to present diverse international, national and local exhibitions and showcase the proud traditions of Canterbury art through the Gallery's permanent Collections.

FELICITY MILBURN



## 1950

The time that W. A. Sutton spent overseas had impressed upon him the real potential of compositional structure and design in painting. As he applied this more to the subjects he chose, its impact became more apparent. By 1950 he had begun a series based on country churches in Canterbury, of which the painting *Nor'wester in the Cemetery* was the first. With this work Sutton captured the intense character of a dry Canterbury summer. It is recognised through its inspired compositional design as a symbolic touchstone of regional painting.

Throughout 1950 the *Pleasure Garden* controversy still raged as Canterbury made

preparations to celebrate its centennial with events that included two major exhibitions. The first was the 'Living Canterbury Artists' Loan Exhibition' which opened on 4 September. It comprised paintings, sculpture and graphics by 219 artists. Included in the show were W. S. Baverstock, who had recently been appointed honorary curator of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. Also Paul Olds, who, as a winner of the 1950 National Art Gallery Travelling Scholarship, was about to leave for overseas, and Louise Henderson, who had already left Christchurch to live in Auckland.



**Sutton, William, A.** (1917–2000)  
*Nor'wester in the Cemetery* 1950,  
oil on canvas.

Collection: Auckland Art Gallery Toi o  
Tāmaki, purchased 1954.

## 1951

'The Living Artists' Loan Exhibition' was followed in July 1951 by a 'Retrospective loan exhibition of Canterbury Artists' (1850-1950).

The previous month a new City Council had been elected, as had the Art Advisory Committee, and the '*Pleasure Garden* controversy' entered its final stage. On 3 September 1951, after a lengthy debate, the Christchurch City Council endorsed the recommendation to accept the *Pleasure Garden* into the public collection. The incident had raised many

issues, but most important, it stimulated and aroused an interest in progressive directions in contemporary art. It also assisted in changing attitudes toward giving major commissions to contemporary artists.

The Women's International Art Club held an exhibition at the Festival of Britain in London, which featured nine artists representing New Zealand, including Grace Butler and Rata Lovell-Smith from Canterbury.<sup>1</sup>

In 1952 Colin McCahon received a commission from Tasman Empire Airways Ltd (TEAL), to make a painting commemorating the 1953 London to Christchurch Air Race. It was one that McCahon was not altogether comfortable with, but a large painting was completed. The subject was a jet-propelled airliner and a smaller military jet depicted

flying above land between layers of cloud.

In the early 1950s there was little exposure of Canterbury artists' work outside New Zealand, however, during June and July 1952 work by Doris Lusk was included in the 'Fifteen New Zealand Painters' exhibition shown at Irving Galleries, London. She was the only Christchurch artist represented.

On the day of the Air Race, 10 October, McCahon's painting and sketches were exhibited at the 1953 Group exhibition where they were well received. This contrasted with the reaction of the staff of TEAL. Many years later the painting was quietly disposed of. For the artist this work was behind him. In May he had left Christchurch to live in Auckland. Rita Angus had also left by 1953 and was living in Wellington.

Among the few arrivals were Rudolf Gopas and the young sculptor Alan Ingham, who returned after spending time away in England where he had been an assistant to Henry Moore. Ingham shared a studio for a time with Russell Clark whose interest and activity in sculpture had increased. Clark's place as a sculptor in Canterbury would soon eclipse that once held by Francis Shurrock and William Trethewey. But in 1953 Shurrock still held his position as the province's premier sculptor.

On 1 February Archibald Nicoll died and the Canterbury Society of Arts resolved to

commission a memorial to commemorate the painter's lifetime service to art. It was finally decided that Francis Shurrock's 1925 bust of Nicoll would be a fitting memorial. Shurrock arranged to have this cast in bronze in England.

London art dealer Rex Nan Kivell donated a collection of over 200 prints by contemporary British artists to the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. Born in Christchurch in 1898, Nan Kivell became involved with the Redfern Gallery in London during the 1920s and felt that a gift of this sort would aid students of art in Christchurch. Similar gifts were made to the National Art Gallery, Auckland Art Gallery and the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. While living in London Nan Kivell had amassed an enviable collection of historical paintings, prints and other material relating to the Pacific region. The following year, 169 works from his collection toured New Zealand and were exhibited at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery in April.

Frederick George Gurnsey died in October.

By early 1954 there was much discussion among certain artists about their place in society, and what prospects New Zealand had to offer their younger colleagues. During April a pamphlet was printed and circulated among politicians and prominent citizens. It had been written by Russell Clark in collaboration with Eric J. Doudney, a recently appointed lecturer in sculpture at the School of Art. In it they floated the idea of establishing an Arts Council in New Zealand.

The well considered pamphlet made definite suggestions regarding the acquisition of works of art, and how local and central government could encourage artists and designers by offering commissions and further

incentives through an award system.

On 30 July a meeting was held to consider the setting up of an Arts Council as 'an association to facilitate the employment of artists'<sup>2</sup> who were also 'being starved of encouragement',<sup>3</sup>

Much of what Russell Clark and Eric Doudney proposed was considered in the years that followed and probably played a part in the eventual emergence of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council.

One of the paintings to attract some attention at the 1954 Canterbury Society of Arts Annual Exhibition was *Royal Visit* by Ivy Fife (1905–1976), a member of the staff of the School of Art and a familiar and much

1952

1953

1954



respected Canterbury artist. This work was eventually purchased for the permanent

collection of the Canterbury Society of Arts.

## 1955

As the Canterbury Society of Arts moved into its 75<sup>th</sup> year of operation there were fears that art was losing some of its support. With the improvements in quality reproductions and art publications many of these were being acquired at the expense of original works. In his opening address at the Society's 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition the president, Colin Lovell-Smith, made an appeal for more active support

and encouragement of art and artists rather than what he termed 'the passive enjoyment of art books and reproductions'.<sup>4</sup>

In 1949 Toss Woollaston had moved to Greymouth but continued to exhibit with The Group, an association which began in 1936 when he was a guest exhibitor and was to continue through to 1970. *Sunset, Grey River* was exhibited at the 1955 Group exhibition.

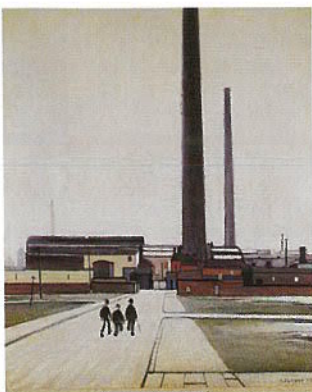
**Woollaston, M. Toss**  
(1910–1998)  
*Sunset, Grey River* 1955,  
oil on board.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.  
Courtesy of The Toss Woollaston Trust.



**Below: Lowry, Lawrence W.**  
*Factory at Widnes*, 1956,  
oil on canvas.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.



## 1956

The year 1956 was a particularly active and varied one, and attempts were being made to popularise and modernise the Canterbury Society of Arts. This resulted in a change in the number of annual exhibitions from one to three - Autumn, Winter and Spring. At the annual Autumn Exhibition the guest was the celebrated British artist Lawrence S. Lowry who exhibited two works. The Arts Advisory Committee of the Christchurch City Council recommended the purchase of *Factory at Widnes* for the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

The Winter Exhibition included 34 drawings by eight Melbourne artists and fellowship award pottery by Peter Stitchbury. In August the Spring Exhibition offered a new

departure as artists could choose the works they exhibited. In conjunction with this was a large 300-work exhibition, British Fine Craft, from Great Britain.

The previous month a major retrospective of the painting of Richard Wallwork, who had died in April 1955, was held. Among other artists who died in 1956 were William Trethewey and Daisy Osborn.

On 20 November the controversial Henry Moore exhibition, comprising 32 drawings and 25 sculptures, was opened by Russell Clark at the Durham Street Art Gallery. Over 3000 visitors attended while it was in Christchurch, encouraged by the publicity that had preceded it. The reaction was less hostile than it had



been in Auckland but this did not mean Canterbury's more conservative citizens were less vocal.

As the 1950's moved further into the second half of the decade, a new influential

generation of young artists was emerging from the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts. It is they who would eventually set in place the elements for change.

Over the summer of 1956-57 an idea was formed between Pat Hanly, Peter Tennant, John Coley and other students living at 22 Armagh Street, to hold an exhibition of work by young contemporary artists under 30 years of age. Early in 1957 the idea began to take form and was realised when an exhibition Young New Zealand Artists opened on 23 February at Durham Street Art Gallery. It included a large number of painters, sculptors and designers, mostly senior students at the School of Fine Arts. Among them were Pat Hanly, John Coley, Bill Culbert, Peter Tennant, Michael Browne, Gil Taverner, Tim Garrity, J. Nelson Kenny, Quentin MacFarlane, Ted Bracey and Hamish Keith.

Some care was taken in preparing the exhibition installation with the limited means at the group's disposal. These young artists had hopes that such an exhibition would signal the beginning of contemporary developments in New Zealand. These were not misplaced, as change was on the way and within a decade many of them would be at the forefront of New Zealand art practice.

In 1950 the School of Art had been given full status within the University of Canterbury, but by 1956 space problems had become critical, and the art school buildings were required to enable expansion of the University library.

It was decided to move the School out to the Okeover homestead on Ilam Road. By the end of the year this had been renovated and the construction of temporary prefabricated studio buildings was well advanced ready for the 1957 intake of students.

Prominent on the teaching staff at this time was Russell Clark, who was developing a reputation as a sculptor, and becoming more involved in public commissions. One of these was a mural for the new automatic telephone exchange in Timaru. Early in 1956, architect Stewart Minson invited Russell Clark to design a sculptural mural for the new exchange.



1957

**Pearson, Alan**  
*Margaret Tyndall and Alan Oliver,*  
*22 Armagh St.*  
Oil on board.  
Collection: Alan Pearson.

Construction of the three-quarter-tonne sculpture was well advanced by July 1957 and was ready for installation in September. As Timaru had gone through some debate on the merits of abstract vs. traditional art, there was uncertainty as to how the mural would be



Still life painting class, University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts, 1957.

Photo by Mannering and Donaldson.



Young N.Z. Artists Exhibition,  
Durham Street Art Gallery 1957.  
Robert McDougall Art Gallery Archives.



received. The response was largely favourable and no controversy arose.

During the late 1950s the number of touring contemporary exhibitions to be held in Christchurch increased. At the Robert McDougall Art Gallery in October 1957 a

major exhibition of 'Contemporary Russian Art' was opened, followed in December by the Esterich collection of 'Twentieth Century French Painting'.

The artist, Daisy Osborn, died on 3 May 1957.

## 1958

In 1958 'Rouault Lithographs', the first 'New Zealand Painters' exhibition organised by the Auckland City Art Gallery, and 'British Abstract Painting' were all shown at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. The latter exhibition was to influence several local artists.

At the Canterbury Society of Arts gallery an important exhibition of 'Eight Contemporary Australian Artists' opened on 13 June. This included work by John Brack, Arthur Boyd and Clifton Pugh.

The Autumn Exhibition was one of the more successful with guest exhibitor the potter, Len Castle. With an increase in temporary exhibitions occupying much of the space of the two main galleries, there was a growing demand for other exhibition venues. Hays Ltd offered space at their store, and in

September an inaugural exhibition of 30 loan works was held. By the early 1960s it was to become an important venue, especially for the annual Hays prize exhibitions.

In the late 1950s Yvonne Rust was encouraging the development of studio pottery in Canterbury. In August of that year she helped to establish, along with Jim Nelson, The Springfield Road Craft Centre, which was similar to the Risingholme Community Centre in nurturing not only pottery but other crafts such as weaving. In August 1958 Rust organised a national pottery school at the Canterbury School of Fine Arts with Patricia Perrin, Carl Vandelbosch, Marian Mauger and Merik Smisek as tutors. Fifty pottery wheels were gathered together for the 80 people who attended the school.<sup>5</sup>

## 1959

Perhaps the most momentous year of the decade was 1959. On 24 January Christchurch's first contemporary private dealer gallery at 91A Cashel Street, called Gallery 91, was opened. Largely the inspiration of André and Barbara Brooke, it offered an ambitious alternative venue for both established and emerging artists. Over the eleven months of its operation regular lectures, poetry readings and workshops were held, as well as exhibitions. The very active programme included group shows like 'Three Auckland Painters' and 'Five Wellington Painters'.

Among the solo exhibitions were those by M.T. Woollaston, Doris Lusk, Helen Brown,

Douglas McDiarmid, Rudolf Gopas, Frank Gross, John Coley, June Black, Olivia Spencer Bower and Colin McCahon. These events attracted a membership of 250 subscribers and provided a focus for contemporary art in Christchurch. By December, however, Gallery 91 was closed with André Brooke's appointment as secretary of the Canterbury Society of Arts. He hoped to continue his exhibition programme at the CSA's Durham Street Gallery in conjunction with the Art Society shows. In fact, the alliance was shortlived: Brooke clashed with the more conservative members and resigned in 1961.

Upstairs at the Canterbury Public Library, City Librarian R. N. O'Reilly, had established another exhibition venue, the Garrick Room. Among the exhibitions shown there were Rouault's *Miserere* and 16 *Wake Panels* by Colin McCahon.

One of the artists that André Brooke had given strong support to at Gallery 91 was Rudolf Gopas (1913–1983). Lithuanian born, Gopas had moved to Christchurch from



Gallery 91, Cashel Street, 1959, Barbara and André Brooke on left. Collection: Canterbury Public Library.



**Gopas, Rudolf** (1913–1983)  
*Boats at Kaikoura* 1958,  
 oil on board.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

Dunedin in 1953 and by 1959 was recognised as a major exponent of European expressionism in New Zealand. It was during this year that he was appointed to Ilam School of Fine Arts as a lecturer in painting. He was, however, still struggling to come to terms with the New Zealand landscape, and give it identity within the European modern tradition.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s Gopas worked on a series of paintings in which it seemed that Baltic and Canterbury coasts merged. One of the more successful in the series was *Boats at Kaikoura*, 1958, exhibited the following year at The Group exhibition.

Among the younger artists whose work was shown with The Group in 1959 were Ted Bracey and Julian Royds. Prior to the exhibition opening an abstract painting by each of these artists was selected and reserved by the Art Advisory Committee of the Christchurch City Council. However, at a meeting on 21 December 1959 City councillors overruled the committee's recommendation and declined the two works as potential purchases for the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. This decision led to the resignation of artist members on the committee and unleashed a stream of comments through the correspondence column of *The Press* that continued into 1960.

The positive effect of this incident was that it turned a focus on the operation and administration of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery and reinforced the case for the appointment of a full-time director.

Earlier in the year there had also been a move for change within the Canterbury Society of Arts. At a meeting on 19 February a plea was made by Quentin MacFarlane that the Society encourage young artists to exhibit. In his remarks he said 'I am 23, most of the people here seem to be double my age - when I look around everything seems to be musty and full of borer'.<sup>6</sup> By the close of the year changes were in evidence.

In November two events signalled the end of an era. One was the retrospective exhibition of Archibald F. Nicoll, and the other the resignation of William S. Baverstock as Secretary/Treasurer of the Society. The Society invited André Brooke to take Baverstock's place. He accepted and by the end of the month had closed Gallery 91. Much of the spirit of that operation and the promotion of contemporary art he carried with him to his new position. During 1960 he transformed the Canterbury Society of Arts and this was a mark of the beginning of new progressive directions art in Canterbury was to follow in the future.



1960

Dealer galleries emerged in New Zealand during the 1950s and 1960s, encouraging artists to adopt a more professional attitude. They signalled a shift from group to solo shows, showcasing the work of individuals.

After the closure of Gallery 91 it was fifteen years before a comparable venue opened in Christchurch. Throughout the 1960s however, a number of small craft galleries appeared, offering exhibition venues for artists despite the monopoly of the CSA. These included Several Arts Gallery and Joe White's Little Woodware Shop in Victoria Street where artists such as Susan Chaytor, Graham Barton and Vivian Lynn had their first solo shows.

Christchurch artists often exhibited with dealers in other cities, like the Ikon and Barry Lett Galleries in Auckland, and the Bett-Duncan Gallery in Wellington. Some moved north, usually to Auckland, where the City Art Gallery and dealer system provided more support for contemporary art.

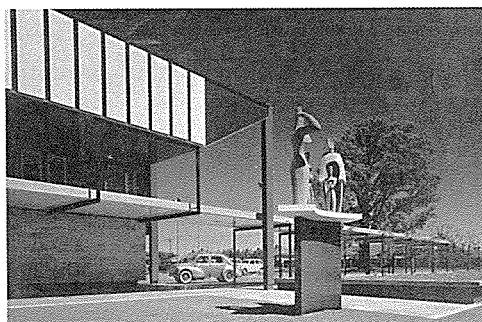
The Hay's Shopping Centre opened in Upper Riccarton in November 1960, the first shopping centre of its kind in New Zealand. The Hay's Company commissioned Russell Clark to produce a sculpture which would not only enhance the new building, designed by Miles Warren, but also the company's image of 'the friendly store'. After the criticism arising from the Timaru Telephone Exchange commission in 1957, Hays were hesitant to accept Clark's more abstract designs but were happy

with his proposal for the sculpture *The Family Group*. Positioned on the forecourt of the new shopping centre, Clark's *The Family Group* had a grey-green cement fondu exterior, one of the many new materials Clark had been experimenting with throughout the 1950s.

The Hay's Department Store also encouraged the arts in Christchurch through the Hay's Ltd Art Competition as one of New Zealand's first instances of corporate funding of the visual arts. The Kelliher Prize, the only comparable award, was limited to naturalistic landscape painting. By contrast, the Hay's competition set no restriction on subject or style. It aimed to encourage interest in contemporary painting and provide artists with an incentive to exhibit their work.

The first award in 1960 drew 400 entries from all over New Zealand. Three judges were enlisted: Peter Tomory, director of the Auckland City Art Gallery and Russell Clark and John Simpson, lecturers at the University of Canterbury School of Fine Art. Finally they agreed to differ and divided the prize among three strikingly disparate entries: Colin McCahon's *Painting*; Julian Royds's *Composition*; and Francis J. Jones's *Kanieri Gold Dredge*. At the time McCahon was an established, but controversial artist; Royds, a recent art school graduate working in a semi abstract manner; and Jones, an unknown, elderly, naïve painter.

The judges' verdict raised a stir. Newspaper correspondents railed against abstraction (which was generally seen as a hoax) and the diatribe focused on McCahon's entry. Artists' reactions varied according to their stance on modernism, but critics like J. Nelson Kenny championed the much-maligned *Painting*. Some claimed that the Hay's exhibition was the liveliest ever to be seen in Christchurch. Later the debate received further publicity in *Landfall* and the *New Zealand Listener*.



*The Family Group* Russell Clark  
Hay's Shopping Centre, Riccarton  
Road, Christchurch, 1960.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery  
Archives.

1961

Conflict continued in the following year when Hay's Ltd offered to gift one of the three winning paintings to the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. The City Council rejected the Art Gallery Committee's recommendation that McCahon's *Painting* be accepted. It sided with gallery director, William Baverstock, who

maintained that none of the works was fit for the collection.

The decision to spurn Hay's offer piqued local artists, and both the CSA and the Art School withdrew their representatives from the Committee. But the incident also highlighted the problem of gallery administration.

Many protested that the Council was exceeding its authority - ignoring the committee of 'experts' and assuming the role of art critic itself. By 1961 this issue had become something of a saga. Artists had confronted the Council in 1959 when it vetoed the purchase of a work by Ted Bracey. In the 1949 *Pleasure Garden* controversy, the Council had declined a Frances Hodgkins painting on the grounds that it was 'unworthy of the artist.'

The row over the Hay's Competition promoted other events - such as the Colin McCahon exhibition at Cashmere High School. Quentin MacFarlane, the organiser, felt McCahon had been shabbily treated. He set out to deflate the fuss over the winning painting by showing it in the wider context of McCahon's stylistic development.

The exhibition also boosted the fundraising project to buy McCahon's *Tomorrow will be the same but not as this is...* for the McDougall Art Gallery. The painting was received into the collection in 1962, despite the reservations of city councillors and William Baverstock.

In 1961 art students initiated the Several Arts Gallery. Shows were increased when Michael and Victoria Trumic took over in the mid 1960s. Crafts were interspersed with solo exhibitions by Eileen Mayo, Doris Lusk, Philip Clairmont, Tony Fomison and others.

In September 1961 the Robert McDougall Art Gallery held an exhibition of work by Barbara Hepworth which included sculpture, drawings and photographs of her sculpture.

John Simpson was appointed Head of the School of Fine Arts at the University of Canterbury. He replaced Colin Lovell-Smith who had died the previous year.

By the 1960s New York appeared to have superseded Paris as the art capital of the western world. New Zealanders, however, were still more familiar with British and European art. Increasingly numbers of young Christchurch artists travelled abroad from the late 1950s, and usually they set their sights on London. Pat Hanly and Bill Culbert arrived in 1957, followed by Ted Bullmore (via Florence) two years later. Others studied in London during the early 1960s (Stephen Furlonger, John Panting, Tony Fomison, Matt Pine, Alan Pearson, and Carl Sydow), while John Coley



and Ted Bracey visited the United States. Many were assisted by travel grants, administered by the QEII Arts Council from 1963.

Local students had little access to international art news in the early 1960s. Imported journals like *The Studio* and *Art International* helped to bridge the gap, but often the first-hand experience of contemporary art came as a shock. In New Zealand modernism was finally gaining acceptance, some fifty years after it had seemed radical in Europe and the United States. Overseas it had become doctrine and there were signs of a new development. The art of the 1960s - Pop, Neo-Dada, and Conceptual art - questioned the basic premises of modernism. It challenged the validity of prevailing aesthetic

**McCahon, Colin**  
*Tomorrow Will Be The Same But Not As This Is* 1958.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.  
Courtesy of the Colin McCahon  
Research and Publication Trust.



values and posited an insecurity about the functions and critical standards of art.

In Christchurch art students returning from abroad formed a vital link with international developments. So, too, did immigrant

lecturers. The Art School was invigorated by many new teachers in the 1960s, including Rudolf Gopas, Ted Francis and Laurence Karasek.

## 1962

In 1962 the second Hay's Competition provoked another wrangle. Daryl Lindsay, an Australian gallery director, awarded first prize to a landscape painting by Peter McIntyre. J. Nelson Kenny scoffed at the decision in *The Press* review, describing the winning entry as 'rich in the qualities which make a good calendar picture'<sup>8</sup>. A spate of letters to the newspapers ensued, both deriding and defending Kenny's views.

Subsequent awards were less fraught affairs. Christchurch artists who won first prize were Tom Field in 1963, David Graham (oils) and Doris Lusk (watercolours) in 1966.

Other locals (Michael Eaton, André Brooke, Don Peebles and Quentin MacFarlane) won merit prizes in the Hay's Competition.

The Town and Country Club was formed in November, catering for students who had attended art classes of the Adult Education Department of the University of Canterbury as well as classes of the Workers Educational Association.

Grace Butler died at her daughter's house in Wellington during November. Butler had an impressive record with the CSA, exhibiting regularly from 1915 through to 1960.

## 1963

In 1963 there were many touring exhibitions staged at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. Among them were Recent British Prints, Polish Posters, Recent French Graphics and Dutch Landscape of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century in Print

and Drawing, but perhaps more importantly from a local stand-point was the first major retrospective exhibition of the work of Petrus van der Velden, curated by W. S. Baverstock, which opened in November of that year.

## 1964

In March the sculptor Tom Taylor was selected as the first recipient of the Canterbury Society of Arts Guthrey Travel Award which enabled Canterbury artists to travel to Australia to study contemporary Australian art. Other artists to receive this award were G. Barton and Doris Lusk.

Carl Sydow travelled to Britain where he came into contact with fellow New Zealand sculptors John Panting, Stephen Furlonger, Matt Pine and Rosemary Johnson. Sydow's contact with these students and the sculptures of contemporaries, such as Philip King, Michael Bolus, Tim Scott, Isaac Witkin, and William Tucker led to changes in his work which involved abandoning the traditional pedestal in favour of placing '...his sculpture directly on the ground and confirmed in him the tendency to paint his works in bright colours.'

In September Francis Shurrock was invited to submit designs for New Zealand decimal

coins, as the currency was to change from pounds to the decimal system. Although three of his designs were received favourably by the Coinage Design Advisory Committee, public opinion was less sympathetic leading to the designs being withdrawn by the Minister of Finance, Harry Lake.

On his return from the United States, John Coley was pro-active in bringing together the group 20-20 Vision. He had encountered new art trends in San Francisco and was keen to start an experimental exhibiting group in Christchurch.

20-20 Vision, an informal grouping of artists, originally consisted of about twenty members. Most, like Coley, were art school graduates of the late 1950s who were teaching at local secondary schools. They saw themselves as rebellious and avant-garde and drew impetus from contemporary overseas developments. Of these, Pop Art and Neo-Dada were especially influential, encouraging a more

light-hearted and irreverent attitude towards art. By the mid 1960s Cantabrians could read about these movements in the newspapers.

Other members included Art School

20-20 Vision's first show in February 1965, at the Durham Street Gallery, was organised as an offbeat event for the Pan-Pacific Arts Festival. At the entrance, Tom Taylor's life-size plaster figure echoed viewers' comments through a hidden microphone. Inside, quirky constructions, Op-Art prints, and 'paintings with bits that move' vied for attention.<sup>10</sup> Electronic music and novel display techniques helped set the scene (exhibits were hung on metal grids, backed against newspaper lined walls) and the show drew praise from art critics and gallery goers alike.

Among the many other activities to take

20/20 Vision's second exhibition in 1966 was billed as 'the exhibition in which anything can happen!'<sup>11</sup> Seventeen artists took part and selected works were toured to Hamilton and Auckland. This show, entitled *Five 20-20 Painters*, included John Coley, Michael Eaton, David Graham, Don Peebles and Quentin MacFarlane.

In 1966, 20-20 Vision artists also assisted with the 'Contemporary Italian Sculpture' exhibition, one of a series of shows toured by the QEII Arts Council. Group members designed the installation at Durham Street Gallery and also organised a lecture programme.

Art School staff initiated a move to buy one of the exhibits for the McDougall Art Gallery - Marcello Mascherini's elegant bronze *The Bather*. But others failed to share their enthusiasm: journalists derided it as a 'naked, headless woman' and 'a waste of ratepayers' money.'<sup>12</sup> Eventually the proposal went to Council where it was passed, after lengthy debate, by just one vote. This was quite a milestone for local artists, since *The Bather* was the first sculpture to be purchased for the Gallery. The University of Canterbury also acquired a piece from the exhibition; *The Navigator*, a lead sculpture by Francesco Somaini.

On 10 November 1966 the exhibition 'New

lecturers like Tom Taylor, Bill Sutton and Don Peebles; and artists from outside Christchurch also participated.

place at the Pan-Pacific Arts Festival were exhibitions at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 'Australian Painting of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries' and '100 New Zealand Painters'. The Japanese potter Shoji Hamada demonstrated pottery throwing in front of large crowds at the Wool Exchange Building on Whiteleigh Avenue.

Ria Bancroft was commissioned to do *Horizon*, a sculpture for Christchurch International Airport and the 9-metre *Forms* mural with sculptor Pat Mulcahy for the University of Canterbury.



## 1965

## 1966

**Eaton, Michael**  
*Image I* 1966

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.  
Reproduced courtesy of Micheal Eaton.

Zealand Maori Culture and the Contemporary Scene: An Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture Derived from Maori Culture' opened at the Canterbury Museum. Curated by Baden Pere and Buck Nin, a recent graduate from the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts, this exhibition focused on contemporary Maori art practice featuring the artists Cath Brown, Fred Graham, Mere Harrison, Norman Lemon (Te Whata), Jonathon Mane-Wheoki, Katerina Mataira, Selwyn Muru, Buck Nin, Arnold Wilson and Pauline Yearbury. The exhibition toured to the National Art Gallery, Wellington as well as galleries throughout Australia, Western Samoa, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Japan.

Senior Canterbury artist, Russell Clark, died on 29 July after several months of illness. Clark had been a major figure in Canterbury art as a painter, illustrator, sculptor and teacher.

**Mascherini, Marcello**  
*The Bather*

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.





1967

One of the most controversial touring shows to visit the city in 1967 was the Marcel Duchamp exhibition ('Marcel Duchamp/the Mary Sisler Collection) held at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. Duchamp had been a leading member of the Dada movement (1916–1923) which set out to debunk notions of the preciousness of art. His ideas were a major influence on new trends of the 1960s; Pop, Neo-Dada and Conceptual Art.

In Christchurch, however, the irony of Duchamp's exploits was lost on local authorities. A City Councillor withdrew two exhibits on the grounds that they were 'degrading to the gallery and offensive to the public'<sup>13</sup>. One of these items was a porcelain urinal, the *Fountain* – perhaps Duchamp's most notorious statement. It had been the first 'readymade' object to be exhibited in defiance of conventional definitions of art.

The decision to censor the show made front-page newspaper headlines and 200 students held a protest march in Cathedral Square. Statues were appropriated during the demonstration; Queen Victoria was hung with a placard proclaiming: 'Keep Victorianism out of the McDougall!'<sup>14</sup> But the rejected works remained banished to the director's office – where art students could make a special detour to see them. The director of the QEII Arts Council lamented: 'The *Fountain* was completed in 1917, and now, fifty years later, Christchurch is still not ready for it'<sup>15</sup>.

To Rudolf Gopas, the McDougall was 'that graveyard of paintings' – one of the most neglected and dowdy art galleries in New

Zealand.<sup>16</sup> The appointment of a full-time director in 1959 had made little difference to policy. William Baverstock saw the Gallery simply as a repository for the permanent collection, which consisted mainly of Victorian paintings. Moreover, he was unwilling to challenge the City Council's stranglehold over administration. The Gallery continued to be constrained by scant staff, inadequate planning and restrictive amenities.

Local artists looked to another institution for support – the Canterbury Public Library. As City Librarian from 1951–1968, Ron O'Reilly ran a successful picture hire service with contemporary art works. Proceeds from the scheme financed new acquisitions, creating income for artists and a substantial public collection.

By contrast, the McDougall Art Gallery was idle and dissatisfaction had mounted during the 1960s. Critics made pointed comparisons with the Auckland City Art Gallery, a well-staffed facility with lively exhibitions. Many petitioned the City Council for change, with proposals focusing on the need for a new professional director.

Late in 1967 the first issue of *Assent*, a Journal of Arts in New Zealand published by The Caxton Press, appeared. Co-edited by Leo Bensemann and Barbara Brooke, it was short lived, surviving just five issues.

Duncan Darroch passed away in December. Working as a guide at Mount Cook, Darroch painted many mountain scenes and was a working member of the Canterbury Society of Arts for forty-four years.

1968

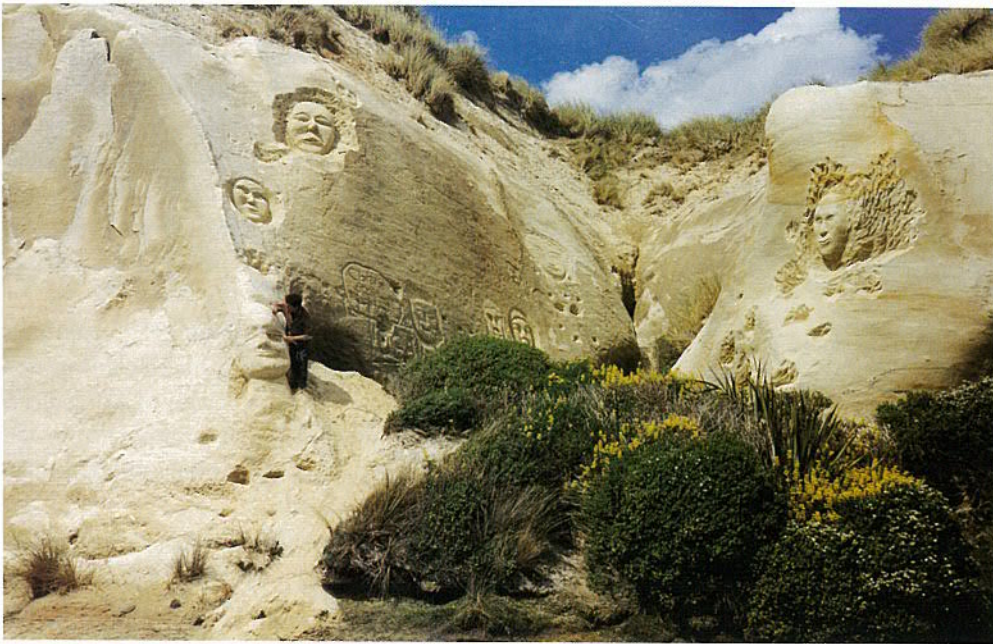
Tony Fomison, who had returned to Christchurch in 1967 after a trip to Europe, travelled to Te Waiwai Bay, Southland, with the Summers family in the summer of 1967/68 where he, along with Llewellyn and Gwilym Summers, completed some striking carved faces in the sandstone cliff-face at Kaitangata Point. It was at this time that Fomison had begun exploring 'gurner' faces in his paintings.

Improved travel also brought renowned visitors to New Zealand, including Clement Greenberg, described as 'the most important and influential art critic',<sup>17</sup> who lectured in Christchurch in 1968. But he had dismal news

for local artists: Greenberg declared that New Zealand was too isolated from the hub of the international scene to produce anything but second-rate art.

The Canterbury Society of Arts assumed a livelier role during the 1960s, with Barbara Brooke succeeding André Brooke as secretary. In 1966 Russell 'Rusty' Laidlaw took over the position. During his tenure he assisted young artists and also doubled the Society's membership.

The CSA's Durham Street Gallery, the only hireable venue in the City, was a focus for local art activities. It hosted touring, historical and



*Tony Fomison with faces carved by himself, Llewellyn and Gwilym Summers at Kaitangata Point, Te Waewae Bay, Southland. Summer, 1967–68.*

Photo by G. Summers, reproduced courtesy of Mrs C.M. Summers.

contemporary exhibitions, helping to fill the gap in the dealer network. All the same, its extensive spaces discouraged solo shows and artists continued to combine forces in groups like *20-20 Vision*.

Christchurch businessman, Stuart Mair, was the impetus behind the new CSA Gallery in Gloucester Street. Its three-story premises, encompassing six exhibition areas, opened in 1968. Artists could hire these galleries at

reasonable rates and the number of solo shows escalated during the 1970s.

The Canterbury Society of Arts' new gallery opening in March 1968 coincided with the Second Christchurch Pan Pacific Arts Festival, which included a total of 30 exhibitions. A major exhibition was held of Rodin sculptures, entitled 'Rodin and his Contemporaries', featuring 25 bronzes by Rodin as well as sculpture by Malliol, Despain, Daumier,



*Christchurch Members of 20/20 Vision, Summer 1968. Left to right, at top: painters Michael Eaton (with beard), David Graham, Don Peebles, Carl Sydow, printmaker Derek Mitchell, designer Michael Kitson. Next row from extreme left: painters Trevor Moffitt, Gavin Bishop, Ted Francis, Alan Oliver, Quentin MacFarlane, sculptor Tom Taylor (white sweater). Clockwise from painter Vivian Bishop: painters John Coley, Bill Sutton, designers Maurice Askew, Clive Luscombe.*

Photo by Ken Griffiths.





Coley, John  
*Rain, Rain*. 1968.  
 Screen print.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

Carpeaux, Germito, Gonzales, Renoir, Picasso and Bourdelle. Other venues involved in the Pan Pacific Arts Festival included an exhibition of New Zealand pottery at the CSA Gallery in Durham Street, the Robert McDougall Art Gallery held exhibitions of Australian sculpture, the cartoonist David Low and British prints, while the Canterbury Museum held an exhibition of historical Canterbury painting from 1840 to 1890. Concurrent with these was 20-20 *Vision's* 'multiple print' exhibition for the festival. Designs by twenty-five invited

artists were commercially silk-screened in editions of one hundred. These prints were displayed concurrently at two public venues – Dominion Motors Showroom and Northlands Shopping Centre – where visitors could purchase them at two dollars each. The show attracted interest throughout New Zealand as the first local venture into multiple print-making.

On 18 April an exhibition of 25 paintings by the Australian artist, Sydney Nolan, opened at the new Canterbury Society of Arts gallery. The exhibition featured paintings from the 'Kelly Gang' series and proved a popular show with gallery patrons.

In 1968 a group of artists and administrators circulated a flyer entitled *A desirable public gallery for Christchurch*. Those signing the leaflet included Leo Bensemann, Tom Taylor and John Coley. In fact, local artists had to wait: the gallery became a priority only after William Baverstock's retirement in 1969. Eric Westbrook (former director of the Auckland City Art Gallery) visited the McDougall at the Council's request.

## 1969

Eric Westbrook offered recommendations on its needs and potentials and assisted in appointing Brian Muir the new Director, resulting in major changes. Muir launched a brisk programme to promote the Gallery, including a series of exhibitions featuring Canterbury artists. He also began building the permanent collection, acquiring paintings by Ralph Hotere, Bill Sutton, Tony Fomison and others.

In December Ria Bancroft was commissioned by the Christchurch Civic Trust to design the High Street Triangle Fountain. The design was then mysteriously withdrawn in favour of a less costly one by Lawrence Karasek. This action had the potential of a major row but Bancroft did not proceed with litigation even though she felt cheated.

Expatriate artist Cedric Savage, died in Greece in December.

In the 1950s and 1960s considerable

changes were wrought in art education, particularly at the Canterbury University School of Fine Arts. Students at the Art School in the 1950s tackled a highly structured traditional course, including drawing from the antique, still life, landscape and figure drawing. Staff were sceptical about the merits of abstract work that some young painters were submitting. Only Bill Sutton and Russell Clark were sympathetic to experimentation.

From the late 1950s, however, the School was enlivened by a new influx of immigrant lecturers. John Simpson, Maurice Askew, Michael Kitson and Ted Francis were the latest in a seventy-year tradition of British tutors. Rudolf Gopas, by comparison – lecturer in painting from 1959 – was the only non-British staff member. His knowledge of German Expressionism provided a new emphasis in contrast to the Art School's English academic basis.

## 1970

In 1970 George and Ngaire Hewson took over the running of Several Arts from Michael

Trumic and Marcel Pierre, establishing it as a successful commercial enterprise. Eileen

Mayo, who had a contact with the Redfern Gallery in England exhibited with Several Arts as did Rudolf Gopas, Philip Trusttum, Barry Cleavin, Trevor Moffitt, Len Castle, Yvonne Rust and Peter Stitchbury.

Growing interest in sculpture prompted Tom Taylor and Carl Sydow to form the *Sculptors' Group* in 1970, as a forum for exhibitions and discussion. Members organised film and lecture evenings and also hosted Anthony Caro when he visited in 1972. The *Sculptors' Group* held three shows in Christchurch in 1970 and 1971, including two at the CSA Gallery. The third comprised an array of whimsical constructions outside the Provincial Chambers buildings. Bruce Edgar's spoked and paddled wheels spun in the Avon River while Neil Dawson's cups, hooks and mirrors were ordered in precise rows on the lawn. Boyd Webb showed a hose threaded through a series of photographs of the Avon, ending in a garden spray propped up with a pitchfork. Group members disbanded in 1972 when several were absorbed into the Auckland-based *New Zealand Society of Painters and Sculptors*. Many of the younger sculptors studied overseas and some moved to the North Island seeking institutional support for their work.

Nevertheless, sculpture continued to be one of the Art School's strengths in the 1970s. Tom Taylor, lecturer in sculpture at the Canterbury School of Fine Arts from 1966, encouraged his students to experiment conceptually and in varied media, with such graduates as Pauline Rhodes, Paul Cullen, Bing Dawe and Stephen Clarke displaying innovation and a lateral attitude toward making sculpture.

'Art of the Space Age' toured New Zealand for eight months in 1970 courtesy of the QEII Arts Council and Rothmans Foundation. 'Optical and kinetic art from Europe, the US and Australia' was almost certainly the largest, costliest and most up to date show to visit New Zealand. It consisted of paintings, silk-screen

prints, mobiles, sculptures and 'light' paintings, dating from late 1950s and 1960s, including Duchamp's *Rotor relief* (1934). One room in the Robert McDougall Gallery had to be blacked out and special wiring installed. Light boxes, spinning disks and electronic music whirred and illuminated the north gallery. The hard-edged optic art represented a turning away from traditional values and was a hugely popular exhibition for the Gallery.

The programme at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery continued to expand under Brian Muir's directorship. The Friends of the Gallery was established and a library started for research. Staff curated survey shows of local artists alongside retrospectives by Ivy Fife, Olivia Spencer-Bower, Russell Clark, and David Graham. Touring shows from Malaysia, Europe, and national exhibitions such as *New Zealand Art of the 60s* featured. Photography and crafts also became a regular component of the exhibitions' calendar and the purchase of new works such as Ray Thorburn's optical illusion work *Modular Painting 3 Series 2* ensured the collection was kept dynamic and contemporary.

Barry Cleavin's Graphic Gallery opened in 1970, hosting several shows by printmakers. Joan Livingstone at Labyrinth Gallery promoted young artists throughout the mid 1970s (including William Collison, Chris Matthews, Glenn Busch and Merylyn Tweedie).

Further afield, Kobi and Patricia Bosshard ran the Rue Pompallier (later Bosshard) Gallery at Akaroa from 1970 to 1975. As one of the few venues in the region to present and sell the work of contemporary artists, such as David Cheer, Jeffrey Harris and Philip Trusttum, it attracted a Christchurch clientele.

Rita Angus died in 1970. However it was not until 1983 that a major retrospective of work would claim her as being one of New Zealand's most important women artists.

Yvonne Rust was awarded a silver medal from the Canterbury Society of Arts.

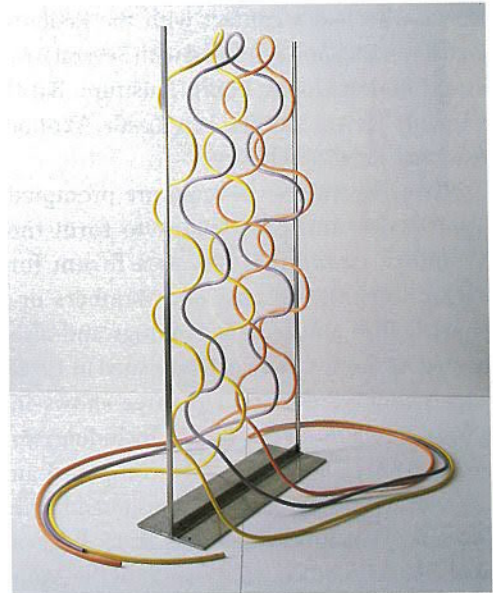
John Panting (1940-1974) and Carl Sydow (1940-1975) had both travelled abroad to England during the late 1960s, their sculptural aesthetic mirrored the international trend of installation, kinetic and multi-media-based

constructions of a non-figurative nature. The British artist, Anthony Caro, had by 1960 abandoned the traditional pedestal in favour of free-standing abstract forms made from industrial materials. Conception and process

1971



were emphasised, rather than the finished product. New Zealand artists such as Tom Taylor, Stephen Furlonger, John Panting, Carl Sydow and Matt Pine also worked beyond the pedestal, in unframed space. Sydow's *Flow* and *Meander* (1971) reflect the artist's formal interest in such materials as PVC tubing, hose, perspex and aluminium. The perspex in *Meander* provides a transparent frame through which hose is woven, the flexible lines of the coloured hose suggesting a continuous movement in space. In 1971 Sydow transformed the CSA into an interactive environment activated by the movements of participants in the gallery. Similarly John Panting, teaching in England during the early 1970s, constructed minimal steel cable sculptures demarcating taut linear forms.



**Sydow, Carl**, (1940–1975)  
*Meander* 1971.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.  
Reproduced courtesy of Rosemary Sydow.

The Pat Hanly mural design for the Christchurch Town Hall was unveiled in 1972, and a sculpture competition was held

for the 1974 Commonwealth Games, the entries being exhibited at the Canterbury Society of Arts.

## 1972

In 1972 the City Council gave the Director of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery greater responsibility for the purchase of art works. No longer did new acquisitions have to be scrutinised by city councillors.

Meanwhile, international shows increased in number and additional staff were recruited to plan educational and curatorial activities.

But by 1973 the Gallery had outgrown its premises and the Council began to consider plans for a new building.

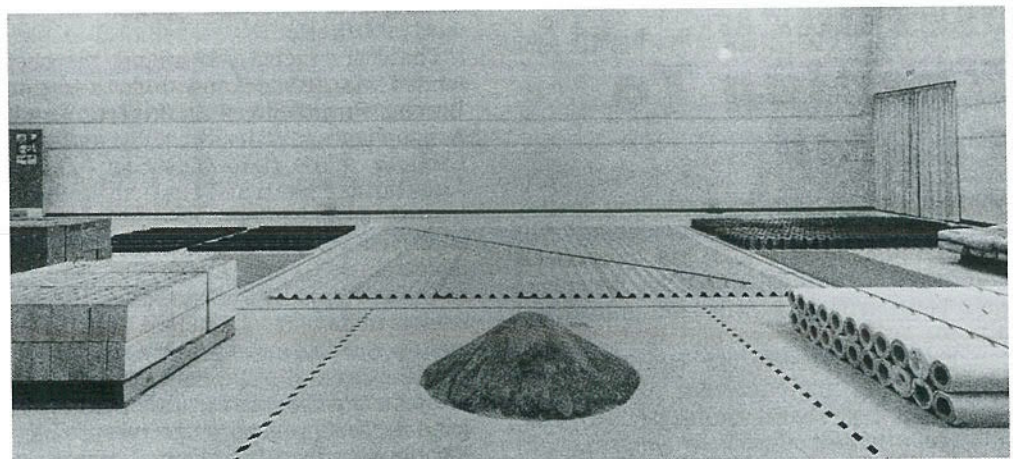
Vivienne Mountfort was awarded first and second prize in the 1972 New Zealand Wool Board Off-Loom competition.

David Graham, winner of the 1966 Hays Prize for Contemporary Art, died aged 44 years.

## 1973

Tom Taylor's multi-media installation at the CSA, *Palladian Subdivision* (1973) was concerned with dualisms of the 'real' and the 'ideal'. The placement of mass-produced unused building material (wood, concrete

blocks, insulation, plastic roofing and tiles) within the sub-divided shape of a Palladian floor plan, articulated a socio-political critique of modern day dependence on systems and unquestioning acceptance of processes. A tape



**Taylor, Tom** (1925–1994)  
*Palladian Subdivision* 1973,  
multi-media installation  
C.S.A Gallery.

recording of 'God Defend New Zealand' sung by a choir repeatedly played through the speaker system and toward the end of the exhibition the materials were wrapped Christo-like in black plastic. On the closing evening a mock auction by a professional real estate auctioneer took place to further ridicule the systems of land/art ownership.

Among touring exhibitions were Bill

In 1974, a proposal for a Henry Moore sculpture to be placed on the Sugar Loaf was turned down by the Summit Road Advisory Committee of the Canterbury Regional Planning Authority, because it would 'create a precedent that would open the way for less desirable developments'. When a wealthy American offered to give a Henry Moore sculpture to Christchurch, the general response was unenthusiastic. The original Port Hills site was abandoned: local advisors decided that *Sheep Piece II*, (a 14 ft high bronze), was 'not in keeping with the natural environment'<sup>18</sup>.

Because the sculpture did not resemble a sheep to many people, it came in for some caustic criticism. 'I wish to be rude about it,' said Mr D.M.C. Burnett, who stated that the history of the Mackenzie Country was one of hard winters and hard work. 'To introduce a frivolous picture into the district is entirely out of character'.<sup>19</sup> In 1975, other South Island districts voted against accepting the sculpture. Three years later, when Rodney Wilson was appointed Director of the McDougall, he made an unsuccessful bid to revive the offer.

Jim Allen won the sculpture competition of 1972 and Air New Zealand commissioned Allen's wind-sail sculpture for the entrance to QEII Park, commemorating the Commonwealth Games. Due to lack of communication between sculptor, sponsor and local authorities it never functioned according to plan. After wind damage it was written off and later it was dismantled.

Bill Sutton exhibited his watercolours and drawings of Italy at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. Head of painting at the School of Fine

Sutton and Toss Woollaston exhibitions at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery in 1973, as well as an exhibition by Hundterwasser and a Barbara Hepworth British Council touring show of photographs and reproductions with some original bronzes.

Sydney Lough Thompson died at Carneau in France at the age of 96.

Arts, Sutton had spent 12 months in Italy on sabbatical, travelling to Rome, Florence and Venice studying quattrocento painting with work from other periods. His working method evolved by first producing a drawing in pencil, wetting the whole page before building up a series of watercolour washes, finally adding further detail in pencil over the dried surface. Canterbury University Press later reproduced these works in a publication in 1975.

From the early 1970s the women's art movement gained momentum in New Zealand. Initially it centred on Christchurch. American writers and artists such as Lucy Lippard, Linda Nochlin and Judy Chicago influenced local women. These spokeswomen analysed the social and cultural factors, which had traditionally disadvantaged female artists. They questioned the values of the male-dominated art world and began to form a critique of modernism.

In 1974 Allie Eagle (Alison Mitchell), Exhibitions Officer at the Robert McDougall, organised an historical show of women painters from the Gallery collection. Her introductory essay considered the lives of New Zealand women artists from a feminist perspective. Entitled 'A Survey of New Zealand Women Painters', the exhibition included work by Frances Hodgkins, Grace Joel, Elizabeth Kelly, Grace Butler, Eleanor Hughes, Maud Sherwood, Juliet Peter, Evelyn Page and Doris Lusk.

In December the Arts Centre of Christchurch was formed and Leonard Booth, the last of the generation to study under Van der Velden, died on 6 September, aged 94.

In 1975 (International Women's Year) Allie Eagle curated New Zealand's first contem-

porary art exhibition based solely on gender difference. 'Six Women Artists' was prompted

1974

1975



by another show at the McDougall, 'Six New Zealand Artists', all of whom were men. Those represented in Allie Eagle's exhibition were: Joanna Harris (Paul), Rhondda Bosworth, Helen Rockel, Joanne Hardy, Jane Arbuckle (Zusters) and Stephanie Sheehan. It was described in the press as 'a propagandist exhibition devoted to the feminist art movement'.<sup>20</sup>

By the mid 1970s local women had formed an artist's support group and the first issue of their magazine, *Spiral*, appeared in 1976. *Spiral*, edited by Heather McPherson, was conceived as a separatist journal for women's art and literature.

Russell (Rusty) Laidlaw retired as director of the Canterbury Society of Arts. In October the former secretary of the Canterbury Society of Arts and Director of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery from 1960–1969, W. S. Baverstock, died.

The touring '3D Fibre' show consisting of American sculptural fibre constructions and 'Photorealist Art from New York' were exhibited at the Robert McDougall in May and April and 'The Active Eye', contemporary New Zealand photography by 12 New Zealand photographers, toured by the Manawatu Art Gallery, increased acceptance of photography as a legitimate art form.

Barry Cleavin was appointed to head the Graphic Department at the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts. This was to substantially influence the rise of printmaking

in Canterbury during the decades that followed.

The 1975 Arts Festival included temporary public sculptures in Christchurch's Cathedral Square by Rosemary Johnson, Michael Thomas and Marty Mendlesberg who constructed a huge plastic *Walkway/Inflatable Corridor*. Mendlesberg, a Canadian sculptor, was visiting lecturer at the School of Fine Arts between 1973 and 1978. He used recycled materials in his interactive environments that played on the theme of being inside and outside simultaneously and with the idea of being in multiple locations at once.

The Wizard had for some time offered himself to the City of Christchurch as a 'Living Work of Art'. An ongoing 'happening', the Wizard's duty was to make life more interesting, fuller and richer, instructing and entertaining the public, with the Square serving as his arena.

Several new galleries were established in 1975, but the Brooke-Gifford, which opened in May of that year, was the only venue to survive. Its directors were Judith Gifford and Barbara Brooke (previously involved with Gallery 91 and the CSA). The Brooke-Gifford was run on professional lines with regular changing solo shows and work held in stock. For most of its first decade it was Christchurch's only private gallery. Tom Field, Alan Pearson, Julia Morison and Bill Hammond were some of its earlier regular exhibitors.

The need for a new Art School had been critical for many years and problems were exacerbated when a fire destroyed the School of Fine Arts at Ilam in 1975.

The University gifted its old Worcester Street site to the city and Brett Riley was appointed Director of the Christchurch Arts Centre. Under the terms of the 1978 Arts Centre Trust, its buildings were to provide a facility for cultural and educational groups. By 1980 some 60 arts-related organizations were based there, as well as 60 individual tenants.



Johnson, Rosemary (1942–1982)  
*Cloud Box*, 1975.  
Robert McDougall Art Gallery Archives.

1976

The mid seventies witnessed the death of many senior Canterbury artists. Among them

in 1976 were Ivy Fife and Rhona Fleming.

1977

Christchurch artists had formed The Group in 1927 as an exhibiting alternative to the

conservative art society shows. In its heyday, in the 1930s and 1940s, it was one of New

Zealand's liveliest annual art events. Core members from this period (Doris Lusk, Olivia Spencer Bower, Bill Sutton, Colin McCahon, Leo Bensemann and Toss Woollaston) continued to participate until it ended in 1977.

Members sustained The Group's vitality during the 1950s by recruiting art school graduates to exhibit. Bill Culbert was one of the first in 1956, followed by Ted Bracey, John Coley, Quentin MacFarlane and others. Most became full members in the 1960s alongside Group regulars, like Ria Bancroft, Ida Lough, Ralph Hotere and Rudolf Gopas. By the late 1960s however, The Group had outlived its usefulness: with the upsurge in dealer galleries, artists had access to new venues. Competitions like the Benson and Hedges award provided another forum for contemporary art, and the role of public galleries was also expanding.

From 1970 there had been efforts to revive The Group's former pre-eminence: exhibition design improved, thematic shows were considered, and younger artists swelled the ranks. The 1972 guest artist, Leon Narbey, exhibited in a high tech 'environment' with green mercury vapour and argon tubes. Nevertheless, it was obvious that The Group was moribund and members in 1977 decided to end its existence, performing its last possible revolutionary act by putting itself out of existence. A fiftieth and final exhibition was held at the CSA Gallery, while a retrospective at the McDougall showed the work of stalwarts.

During March/April 1977 a major exhibition of the work of Petrus van der Velden, curated by Dr T. L. Rodney Wilson was held at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

Allie Eagle organised an Olivia Spencer Bower retrospective exhibition of 85 paintings

Anna Keir, Allie Eagle and Jane Zusters exhibited as 'Three Feminist Artists' at the CSA Gallery. *Rape Trial Piece* was part of Allie Eagle's installation, *Live limbs that buttress the patriarchy*. It presented a slashed mattress with an outline of a woman's body, placed under a glass-topped table. A conglomeration of squashed egg, jelly and spaghetti oozed from a tubular shaft at the top of the piece. Also shown with this exhibition was, 'A seasons' diaries' – a visual documentary project by

at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery in November of that year.

In 1977, feminists organised the 'Women's Environment' at the CSA Gallery as a focus for the United Women's Convention in Christchurch. Basing the project on 'Womanspace', an American exhibition, they set out to democratise and demystify art-making; challenging dominant critical standards from a feminist viewpoint. Women were invited to show work that dealt with their personal, socio-political, and physical environments. Co-ordinators hoped to transform the gallery into a more intimate space by modifying the existing architectural structure. However, they avoided "controlling" the area, which was altered by continuous contributions: exhibits, installation and performance. Amateurs took part alongside professionals such as Rosemary Johnson and Jacqueline Fahey, and the gallery was open exclusively to women for the first three days.

The CSA *Environment* posited the gallery as a place where issues of social importance could be expressed. It provided a contrast to the dealer gallery context, with its competitive, one-person focus, and became a model for subsequent ventures like the Women's Gallery in Wellington.

In 1977 Nola Barron succeeded Anella McDougall as CSA Director. She promoted crafts and community-based shows, and also provided art school honours students with free exhibition space.

Ria Bancroft completed the bronze tabernacle screen doors for the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Barbadoes Street.

One of the stalwarts of the Christchurch art community, John Oakley, died.

several women and organised by the Wellington Women's Art Gallery.

Many feminists moved to the North Island in the late 1970s and the Wellington Women's Art Gallery became the new centre of activity. But local artists like Tiffany Thornley and Linda James continued to expand the ideas of the CSA *Environment*, with Women's Festivals in 1979 and 1980.

The 1978 Christchurch Arts Festival included displays and workshops of weaving,

1978





Eagle, Allie  
*Rape Trial Piece* 1978.  
 Multi-media installation, C.S.A.  
 Gallery.

Reproduced courtesy of Allie Eagle.

embroidery, woodturning, woodcarving, furniture, enamelling and ceramics. The CSA in conjunction with the Festival, organised through the initiatives of Neil Dawson, Marty Mendlesberg and Rosemary Johnson a group exhibition *Platforms*, offering 15 artists three given structures to work with, a square, rectangle or cruciform. Andrew Drummond chose to symbolically explore the nature of the cruciform St Andrew's cross through a performance that suggested ancient pagan skin sloughing rituals. For twenty-five minutes he lay naked on the cross, protected by a gas mask while a latex 'skin' was cast over his body, a visual display heart beat monitor recorded the artists physical state while the ritual was performed. At the end of the process the skin was mounted on the cross along with ten polaroid photographs (taken by Paul Johns). The fuss began when two viewers took exception to Drummond's nudity and laid charges against the artist. Arts Festival Committee members confirmed their support for the performance, but police stepped in and removed the photographs on the grounds that they contravened the Indecent Publications Act by showing nudity. Five months later the

case went to court in Wellington where the charges against Drummond were dismissed.

Performance art was part of a wider movement in the 1970s, which challenged the conventions of modernism. Its proponents often reacted against the gallery context as a showcase for 'High Art,' producing an eclectic and transitory activity which blurred the traditional boundaries between media. Some felt that this form of expression offered a more direct link with a larger audience. However, performance, a thriving activity that had dominated the art scene overseas since the early 1960s was relatively unseen in New Zealand and Drummond's *Crucifixion* was the first 'performance' to hit the headlines on a national level.

Most New Zealanders adopting the media were North Islanders, and performance in Christchurch usually centred around feminist artists like Allie Eagle and Anna Heinz. John Cousins became involved from the mid 1970s, using electronic devices in performance and installation projects. He has performed solo, as in *Membrane* at the 1984 Edinburgh Festival, and in collaboration with artists such as Colleen Anstey.

Brian Muir resigned as Director of the McDougall Gallery to take up the position of Curator of Applied Arts at the Auckland Institute and Museum. Dr T. L. R. Wilson, senior lecturer in Art History at the University of Canterbury, became the new Director and his vision was to 'promote art in the widest sense'.

A major event for the art community was the formation of the Arts Centre Trust.

## 1979

The new School of Fine Arts opened in 1979. Since the early 1970s the Art School's situation was described as the worst of any University in New Zealand. Even so, it was only when fire had destroyed studios in 1975 that the matter became a priority. Approval for a new School was granted in 1976 and the department moved premises three years later after languishing in temporary buildings for 22 years.

Since 1960 new subjects had been established at the School, attaining equal status with painting and sculpture. Maurice Askew updated the graphic design course during the 1960s,

introducing photography and film components. When the burgeoning department was restructured he set up a separate film course in 1971. From 1977 photography, tutored by Laurence Shustak, was similarly offered as an independent subject. Printmaking also became an autonomous department during the 1970s. Bill Sutton retired from teaching at the School of Fine Art after 30 years.

Billy Apple's *Subtraction* at the CSA treated space itself as an art object, which continued his series of *Alterations* of New Zealand galleries. Matt Pine, a graduate from the

School of Fine Arts in the early 1960s and associate of Carl Sydow, John Panting and Stephen Furlonger exhibited in three venues - at the CSA, the Robert McDougall and on the Archery Lawn of the Botanical Gardens. Pine's knowledge of Maori Pa fortifications and meeting houses influenced his large-scale sculptural work, which consisted of perspex tubes, wood, brick and iron constructions.

Rodney Wilson was instrumental in new staff appointments at the Gallery, an Exhibitions Officer, Conservator, Curator and Education Officer ensured the Gallery's operations and activities ran professionally.

Short-lived gallery ventures of the late 1970s included Arteries Gallery, run by students and lecturers from the Art School and Christchurch Polytechnic. It provided affordable exhibition space for younger artists such as Paul Johns, Murray Hedwig and Martin Whitworth.

The Wizard who had been created a 'Living Work of Art' at the National Gallery of Victoria

International shows became a feature of the 1980s, highlighting the need for a new public gallery. Crowd-pullers included 'America and Europe: A Century of Modern Masters the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection' in November and December 1980. This touring exhibition of 108 paintings represented the major art movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including work by Monet, Picasso, Degas, De Chirico, Pollock and Rauschenberg. Queues to see the exhibition on some days reached Rolleston Avenue. The total of 34,199 visitors over the 26 days was unprecedented in the history of the Gallery.

Other exhibitions included 'Ikon Inspired Art' and 'Image and Idea', a touring exhibition of contemporary ceramics from Britain.

On 20 December 1980, a new Print Workshop and Gallery (Gingko) for works on paper was opened under the direction of Julie Einhorn.

John Coley succeeded Rodney Wilson as Director of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

New Zealand came to identify more with other Pacific countries. Dialogue between Australian and New Zealand artists and

in 1974, was finally acknowledged as such in Christchurch. Dr Rodney Wilson arranged, with the approval of Christchurch City Council, to transfer the 'Living Work' as a loan from the National Gallery of Victoria.

Many of the basic tenets of modernism were challenged during the 1970s by feminist, performance, and conceptual artists. Frequently the 'new' art was transitory and ephemeral. By contrast the 1980s marked a return to more formalist traditional media (although often employed in an unusual or irreverent manner). Post-modernism, a strategy of art encompassing a wide range of styles and subject matter, an appropriation of disparate artistic, historical, literary and geographical sources, in an eclectic and multi-layered approach to representation, began to develop in Christchurch during the 1980s. Artists such as John Hurrell, and graduates from the School of Fine Arts such as Julia Morison and Margaret Dawson began to display an interest in allegory, pun, and allusion.

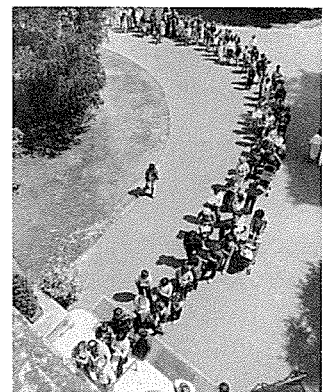
The Gingko was a national centre for print-making. It originally supplied the facilities and technical expertise for intaglio processes, but a lithography workshop was added in 1986. The Gingko Gallery, adjacent to the workshop, presented fortnightly exhibitions of prints and works on paper. It consistently showed art school graduates (Denise Copland, Peter Ransom, Kate McLean, Mary Kay and Sandra Thompson) as well as more senior artists (Graham Bennett and Barry Cleavin). The Gingko was directed by Julie Einhorn and operated with subsidies from the Arts Centre Trust. The Gingko became the Salamander Gallery in 1990 and was operated by Noeline Brokenshire in conjunction with the Cave Rock Gallery. This gave rise to a change in emphasis to include painting and sculpture.

William A. Sutton was awarded a CBE for his services to art.

administrators developed, with events like ANZART and ARX and trans-Tasman shows. ANZART took place in Christchurch in 1981, billed as 'one of the most exciting international art events ever to be held in New Zealand'.<sup>23</sup>

## 1980

Queue for the Thyssen-Bornemisza exhibition, 1980, Robert McDougall Art Gallery.



## 1981



Co-ordinator Ian Hunter, an Irish born artist and administrator (and visiting lecturer in art theory at the School of Fine Arts during 1981), set out to provide a forum for Australian and New Zealand art with an emphasis on performance and installation. He had conducted a study sponsored by the New Zealand Arts Council in 1980 in which he recommended a closer relationship with Australia. Christchurch was chosen as the venue because the South Island seemed to be missing out on such activities and the Arts Centre could provide a unique central space for the forum.

ANZART was also prompted by an awareness that Australians knew little of art across the Tasman. In 1979 for example, only two New Zealanders were invited to participate in the prestigious Sydney Biennale, one of the major international shows in the Southern Hemisphere. Fourteen Australians participated in the two-week ANZART programme, including Dale Frank, Mike Parr, Bonita Ely

and international artists Marina Abramovic and Ulay. The Arts Centre was the venue for performance and environmental works, such as Morgan Jones' *Shelter*, Stuart Griffiths' *U Pass 2* and Di ffrench's performance *Fontanel*. The exhibitions programme consisted of installations, video, experimental music and artists' books, based at the Robert McDougall and the Canterbury Society of Arts. Lectures and seminars by artists and writers completed the line-up.

Neil Dawson's *Echo*, commissioned by the Arts Centre in 1981, a fibreglass tubing sculpture, was suspended above the Arts Centre courtyard by wires. It was initially intended as a six-month project, but public response was such that it is now permanently installed (on loan from a private collector).

Ray Sleeman was appointed Director of the Christchurch Arts Centre on the resignation of Brett Riley.

## 1982

The McDougall Art Gallery purchased McCahon's *As there is a Constant Flow of Light* for \$10,000, which generated huge public controversy. Newspaper and radio correspondents criticised the decision (recalling the Hay's incident twenty years earlier). Colin McCahon's *Crucifixion According to St Mark* was also bequeathed to the art gallery during this time.

Most of the new dealer galleries in the 1980s were short-lived, an indication of limited support for contemporary art in Christchurch. For example, the Robinson-Brooker survived for just seven months, in spite of excellent facilities and a line-up of more established artists.

Initiatives by the Christchurch City Council to take advantage of the Labour Department employment schemes gave rise to a programme of public art making. As part of this Gary Collins began co-ordinating a series of large-scale wall paintings around Christchurch. Some appeared in very public places, like Janet de Wagt's *Kiwi Quarter-Acre Paradise* (Lichfield Street end of Bell's Arcade) and Collin's *People Palace* (corner of Manchester and St Asaph Streets). Others were designed for specific community groups, such

as sports venues, childcare facilities and regional centres. Peter Clifford took over in 1985 and supervised the last of the Labour Department mural schemes. The North Canterbury Hospital Board supported several projects, approving fifteen designs for local institutions.

The Bachelor of Fine Arts degree was established in 1982 at the Canterbury School of Art where previously only Diploma courses had been awarded, providing greater flexibility in choice of subjects. Papers in art history, education and theory strengthened the Art School's links with other University faculties, 'plugging artists into the art establishment'. This coincided with the Centenary of the Canterbury School of Fine Arts, the only art school in New Zealand to have maintained an unbroken record of art instruction for 100 years.

In June of 1982 the Robert McDougall Art Gallery acknowledged its Jubilee and the Centenary of the School of Art by mounting special historical exhibitions.

Olivia Spencer Bower died in 1982 and in 1984 the Olivia Spencer Bower Foundation Trust Fund was established to provide an annual Art Award for painters and sculptors.

1983

'A Singular Vision', an exhibition of work by Colin McCahon spanning 14 years, was exhibited at the McDougall. 'About Women', black and white photographs by Margaret Dawson, depicting women in a variety of tasks, careers and attitudes toured the South Island during 1983–85. Dawson, tired of seeing photographs of women in 'sexy poses' decided to pursue an alternative representation of women, to instead depict the everyday reality of women in New Zealand society.

Pippa Davis, a Christchurch embroiderer, collaborated on *The Birth Project*, designed and co-ordinated by the American artist Judy Chicago and was the only non-North American artist to contribute. Chicago, researching ways to express the often hidden or overlooked experiences of women and incorporating them collaboratively in art works (as seen by *The Dinner Party*, 1979) initiated a collection of embroidered statements on the myths, legends and realities of giving birth. 200 women were engaged in the project, managed by The Flower Corporation.

Pauline Rhodes exhibited *Extensums*, *Extensors* at the CSA, which consisted of paper laid along the length of the Mair Gallery imbued with rust stains from iron plates and javelin-like pieces of coloured rods (extensors or 'spatial activators') leant on an angle upwards in the same direction. This was a conceptually powerful exhibition by an artist interested in exploring the ongoing ephemeral, changing aspects of life around us through varied media and process.

The major touring show of 139 paintings and drawings by Rita Angus was the first major review of her work in New Zealand. The exhibition, shown at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, traced her development from days at the Canterbury Art School in the late 1920s through to the late 1960s, with self-portraits, goddess portraits, still life and landscape depicting the local Canterbury landscape.

Bill Hammond exhibited a series of 19 paintings at the Brooke Gifford Gallery in October in which the theatrical, disturbing world of domesticity he depicted was described as 'a consistent and original vision, a schema of a universe partly our own, partly other worldly'.<sup>22</sup> Hammond constructed a



**Moffitt, Trevor G.**  
*The Threatened River* 1983.  
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

world of exaggerated linear perspective, theatrical curtains descending upon a stage of suburbia, replete with space heaters, TV sets, beds and lounge suits. A soap opera of activity askew can also be seen in *The Look of Love Plus the Sound of Music* (1986).

G. T. Moffitt exhibited 'The Threatened River', 29 works based on the Rakaia River, at the McDougall Gallery. The river had provided the source of inspiration in his work since the 1970s, as seen in *The Big Fisherman Series* (1970–71). Moffitt considered the Rakaia integral to the Canterbury landscape, *The Threatened River* depicting scenes from the mouth of the river to the mountains as a changing landscape of variety, 'as you go toward the mountains the land forms demand they become part of the work, but as you go towards the mouth, the sky takes over'.<sup>23</sup> Born in Southland, Moffitt taught art at Burnside High School and painted in the quintessential

**Hammond, William (Bill)**  
*The Look of Love Plus the Sound of Music*, 1986,  
acrylic on board.  
Photograph, Bill Nichol.  
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.



**Rhodes, Pauline**  
*Intensums* 1988.  
Multi-media installation Robert McDougall Art Gallery.  
Reproduced courtesy of the artist.





**Trusstum, Philip**  
*Garden – Still Life*,  
oil on board.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

Canterbury School landscape style, which explored the geometry of the landscape.

The Brooke Gifford continued to show more senior painters such as Bill Sutton and Gordon Walters while at the same time including art school graduates, such as Nigel Wilson, Joanna Braithwaite and Neil Frazer in its stable, thus reflecting a national trend of the 1980s: the marketing of younger artists. The Christchurch Arts Festival continued to support and promote a wide range of artistic activity until its demise in 1984.

Rudolf Gopas died in 1983. Gopas had studied art in Kaunas, Lithuania, before World War II curtailed his career. In 1949 he arrived in New Zealand as a refugee, settling in Christchurch four years later. From 1951 he exhibited regularly with The Group where his

paintings attracted critical attention. Like fellow European artists, Frank Gross and André Brooke, Gopas became very influential. He took a keen interest in young painters and often presided at Art School Sketch Club critiques prior to 1960.

During his seventeen years as a lecturer Gopas was a stimulating and controversial figure. He stressed the need for intuition and emotional response over technical skill, but demanded a critical attitude towards the painting process. Students were urged to look to twentieth century art and apply the lessons of modernism to their own work. Gopas's example was a model to young artists such as Philip Clairmont, Rosemary Campbell, Tony Fomison and Phillip Trusstum.

## 1984

The mid 1980s saw a return to painting in a figurative and abstract expressionist manner. Artists such as Alan Pearson, Philip Trusstum, Philippa Blair and Euan Macleod exhibited large expressionist works, while more austere, intellectual abstractionism could be seen in the paintings of Julia Morison.

'Paperchase', an exhibition of work by American, Australian, British and New Zealand artists, opened at the McDougall as part of the 1984 Arts Festival. Alan Pearson exhibited his *Variations on a Theatre*, and the exhibition also included the work of Terry Stringer, Michael Reed, Ralph Hotere, Don Peebles and Philip Trusstum.

Julia Morison's exhibition *Invocation Equivocation* at the Brooke Gifford displayed her semiotic interest in denotative and cognitive signs. Binary opposites and the space between raised questions of meaning and

perspective as a result of aesthetic and conceptual juxtapositions. Black and white canvases shaped as a trapezium incorporated the cross as a motif in such a manner as to upset the normal, vertical view. Ambiguity is also apparent in *Hermes* (1985) whereby Morison implies the transcendence of two distinct entities in Greek mythology from 'dog' to 'god'. One was a Greek god represented by a head of a dog, the other, Hermes Thismegistus, was supposedly the first and greatest teacher of gnosis.<sup>24</sup> Added to the contrast of meaning is the use of excrement (mortality) and gold leaf (signifying wealth, religion and the ideal).

Philip Trusstum exhibited *The Book of Dreams* at the CSA before leaving for the Edinburgh Arts Festival and a one-man show at the Kornblee Gallery in New York. The large work consisted of acrylic on canvas, felt, jute, silk and cottons in a collage that could be manipulated by velcro strip fasteners.

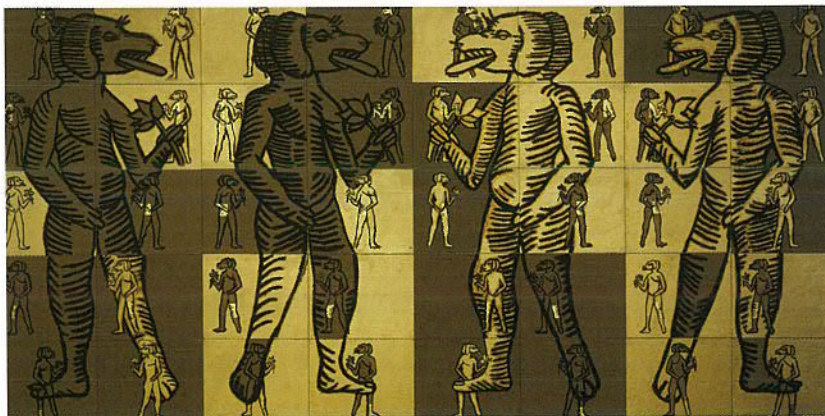
Bing Dawe exhibited *The Cock Fight* at the Brooke Gifford, and 13 paintings of the Canterbury landscape by Quentin MacFarlane, exhibited at the McDougall Art Gallery, displayed a gestural celebration of paint in deep blues, greens and vivid purples.

Christopher Doig was appointed director of the Christchurch Arts Centre on the resignation of Ray Sleeman.

In May of 1984, Philip Clairmont, who had been a student at the School of Fine Arts from 1967-1970 and had developed a high profile

**Morison, Julia**  
*Hermes* 1985,  
mixed media.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.



as an artist, committed suicide. A year earlier he had been the recipient of a major award enabling him to travel to the United States to study. Influenced by Gopas, Clairmont's psychologically intense expressionist canvases of subject matter ranging from the crucifixion to angst-ridden domestic interiors full of gestural brushstrokes, are metaphors for

human experience, 'that spoke volumes about our stressful, often frightening times'.<sup>26</sup>

William A. Sutton was the recipient of the Governor General's Award, made by the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts.

John Knight, artist and prominent teacher at the School of Art from 1945-78, died in 1984.

Two new ventures opened mid-decade, alleviating an acute need for exhibition space. The James Paul Gallery (1985-1987) represented a wide range of artists, including Gail Wright, Ruth Watson and Rudolf Boelee. The gallery opened with an exhibition from a recent graduate of painting from the School of Fine Arts, Grant Lingard. The Manawa Gallery, Cashel Street, that opened in December 1985, provided a venue for the younger and less mainstream artists, including Grant Takle, Helm Ruifrock and Ronnie van Hout.

Private printmaking workshops were also initiated in Christchurch during the mid 1980s. Denise Copland managed El Knoko at Stewarts Gully from 1984 to 1989. Marian Maguire and Stephen Gleeson established The Limeworks in 1985.

The Riki Rangi Maori Carving Centre opened in 1985 at the Arts Centre and continues to this day. Riki and Tony Manuel and Michael Hooper were the resident artists, who specialised in traditional Maori art, pounamu, timber, ivory and bone carving.

The Gefin Craft Group, which began in the 1970s, progressed rapidly, eventually opening a shop in Cashel Street Arcade.

Len Castle, who was one of the earliest non-Canterbury professional potters, exhibited a series of works at the CSA based on marine life and free-standing pots.

The Brooke Gifford celebrated their ten-year anniversary with an exhibition to coincide with the United Nations Women's Decade. Six women artists, Julia Morison, Philippa Blair, Claudia Pond-Eyley, Gretchen Albrecht, Maria Olsen, Merylyn Tweedie and Sylvia Siddell made up the group. Other Brooke Gifford shows in 1985 included work by Simon Ogden, Jane Zusters, Philippa Blair, Gary Collins, Euan Macleod, Alan Pearson and Graham Bennett.

Chrystabel Aitken exhibited a selection of

60 years' work at the Canterbury Society of Arts. It was her first solo show despite being an active and talented artist of varied media since the 1920s. An assistant to Francis Shurrock, Aitken's main interest was in animal painting (à la Rosa Bonheur) and sculpture. As the Canterbury School focused primarily on the figure and landscape during her time as a student, Aitken taught herself the fundamentals of drawing the anatomy of animals.

Philip Trusttum, on his return from abroad, exhibited at the CSA a large collage, *Lee's Table* (1985), that celebrated the link between art and craft. Incorporating found objects such as rulers, magazine cuttings, and patterns attached with glue, pins, buttons or velcro, Trusttum transmuted aspects of his immediate life into a work of art that was personal and sociological.

Alan Pearson also returned after four years in England. His show of twenty-four paintings at the Brooke Gifford Gallery included work from 1972 to 1979, and traced his painting history in New Zealand, including portraits and semi-figurative abstractions based on the tree-form such as *Huia Variations* and *The King Series*. The Robert McDougall Art Gallery also held an exhibition of his work, entitled 'Time Away'. Pearson graduated from the School of Fine Arts with honours in painting in 1961 and was awarded the National Bank Portrait Prize in 1978 and 1979. His oeuvre of an expressionistic style externalises his reaction to the world through personal visual ciphers. His canvases are imbued with a strong palette of broad colour and indicate both a command of paint and an articulation of spiritual realms.

Margaret Dawson included a suite of five large colour photographs as part of a group exhibition at the CSA – *Dreams and Illusions*. Presenting the notion of self as a kind of

1985





Dawson, Margaret  
*Cathedral Woman* 1985.

Reproduced courtesy of the artist.

fiction, Dawson acted out gender roles and New Zealand stereotypes, 'Marching Girl', 'Maori Maiden', 'Housewife', 'Depressed Bride' and 'Cathedral Woman'.

A more controversial show opened in June at the McDougall. Toured by the gallery and the Govett Brewster Art Gallery, 'Fresh Art: 23 Post Modernist Works by Nine Artists' focused on work by young artists. Stuart Griffiths installed *Health*, a Christ's College blazer hung on the wall stiffened with butter wrappers and from the 'head' a garden hose looped through a section of clay drain pipe on the gallery floor. Other artists included Debra Bustin, Nicola Jackson, Christine Webster and Bill Hammond, who challenged, through their paintings, sculpture and installation the steadfast tradition of New Zealand landscape painting.

'Anxious Images', a touring exhibition organised by the Auckland Art Gallery, went on display at the McDougall Art Gallery. Gopas was referred to as a major influence on many of the artists in the exhibition during their formative years, including Tony Fomison and Philip Clairmont. The exhibition looked at politics, domestic life, sexual hatred and spiritual unease, its emotional content making a powerful statement and thwarting criticisms that painting in the 80s had become a 'reactionary conservatism'.

A number of Christchurch artists were included in major international events. Sculptor Neil Dawson was one of six New Zealand artists included in the Australian biennial survey exhibition 'Perspecta '85', while the nine contemporary New Zealand artists entered in

New York's Art Expo in April 1986 included printmaker, Barry Cleavin. Two other Christchurch artists, Tracy Wilson and David Partridge, were chosen to represent New Zealand in Commonwealth Art Exhibition in London.

As part of a policy, developed in 1983, designed to increase the opportunities for exhibiting contemporary sculpture, the Robert McDougall Art Gallery commissioned Bing Dawe to make a sculpture specifically for the gallery space. Bing Dawe's *Still keeping his balance he used the umbrella as a safety net - image of a man with a missile* was completed in 1985 and was followed by Denis O'Connor's 31-piece *The Gorse King*, which was made from South Island limestone blocks rescued from the demolished Cavesham Gasworks in Dunedin. It was commissioned in 1987 but finally accessioned in 1992.

*The Crucifixion According to St Mark*, by Colin McCahon, which had been bequeathed to the Gallery by the late Ron O'Reilly, a former city librarian, in 1982, was received into the collection after having been displayed in Australian National Gallery, Canberra, for the previous two years. The work had been given to O'Reilly by the artist on the condition that it pass to the Gallery upon his death.

In August, Theo Schoon, the Dutch painter whose studies of Maori Rock drawings had provided a catalyst for the work of Gordon Walters, died. Ida Lough, one of the country's leading craftswoman and a pioneer of tapestry weaving also died.

## 1986

The Christchurch Artists' Collective was formed in 1986, aiming to provide a support network for members as well as inexpensive gallery space. It was initially associated with the Warehouse Trust, a crafts branch of the Christchurch Unemployed Rights Collective. The Collective's core group of five – Tiffany Thornley, Linda James, Dianne Morris, Grant Lingard and Graham McFelin expanded to include over fifty artists. Membership was open to both amateurs and professionals so it encompassed a diversity of background and experience. The Collective organised several group exhibitions, offering an alternative to

the usual dealer context.

Following the resignation of Nola Barron, Chris Taylor was appointed as director of the CSA Gallery. Amateurs and community groups were still catered for, but the focus was on solo shows by local artists. Sam Mahon, Mark Lander, Pat Unger and Michael Ebel were some of the CSA's regular exhibitors at this time. A retrospective exhibition of Doris Lusk's work was held at the Gallery to celebrate the artist's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Christchurch City Councillors were reported as describing the government's proposal for a \$180 million dollar national

museum as 'anti-Christchurch, anti-South Island and anti-Auckland'.<sup>26</sup>

Riki Manuel completed a Ruatēpupuke carving commissioned by the Tourist and Publicity Department of Singapore Airlines to celebrate their inaugural flight from Singapore to Christchurch. The carving was presented to the airline in Singapore by the then Minister of Transport, Richard Prebble.

Twenty-two intermediate and secondary schools, each with six painters, collaborated in the *Mural Expo '86* project, sponsored by *The Star* newspaper and British Paints.

The Connexion Gallery opened in the Arts Centre, providing an exhibition and retail space for contemporary jewellers.

The Olivia Spencer-Bower Art Award, funded by the late painter's estate, was established and advertised as being available to painters and sculptors throughout New Zealand, with preference being given to local artists. Pauline Rhodes was the first recipient, ahead of 55 other applicants. Since 1987 there have been 13 recipients.

In 1987, the commissioning of sculptures for the new Law Courts provoked controversy. The design brief stated that proposals should 'reflect the multi-cultural nature of the building';<sup>27</sup> but the Selection Committee failed to mention this clause until it had chosen a short-list of artists. Five of those nominated resigned in protest, demanding that non-Europeans and women be fairly represented. At this point the three remaining artists, Mark Whyte, Bianca van Rangelrooy and Richard McIlroy, were awarded the commissions by default. In addition to their work, a carving by Cliff Whiting was commissioned by Ngai Tahu. *Nga Kete Wananga*, or *Baskets of Knowledge*, was unveiled on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1990 by E.D. Mnangagwa, the Zimbabwean Minister of Justice.

The exhibition, 'Te Maori', opened at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery in March 1987, its third New Zealand venue after returning from the United States. A dawn ceremony marked the opening, with the ritual lifting of the tapu. Elders of the Ngai Tahu – and associated North Island tribes – greeted the *taonga* and welcomed visitors indoors. Regional

groups took turns to act as gallery guides during the nine-week exhibition. For them, *Te Maori* was a chance to renew spiritual links with their *taonga*. For Pakeha, it revealed the dynamic quality of the Maori cultural tradition. *Te Maori* established new benchmarks for consultation between iwi and museums and attracted an astonishing 6000 people on its final day. In total, 147,000 people visited the exhibition; more than twice the highest attendance for any other event at the Gallery at that time.

Christchurch painter and typographer, Leo Vernon Bensemann, who had played such a significant role over many years at The Caxton Press and who had exhibited with The Group, died.

The City Council established the Civic Arts Plan in 1984, enabling it to make provision for public art in the estimates for new buildings. Its first project was the sculpture commission for the Manchester Street M.E.D. building. Bing Dawe's design, consisting of three tiled medallions, was installed in 1987.

A major touring exhibition, *Evelyn Page, Seven Decades*, prepared and organised by the Robert McDougall Art Gallery opened on 7 December.

Colin McCahon died in Auckland on 27 May at the age of 67. McCahon had lived in Christchurch from 1949–1953.



1987

Opening Ceremony for 'Te Maori', Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 1986.

Courtesy of *The Christchurch Star*.

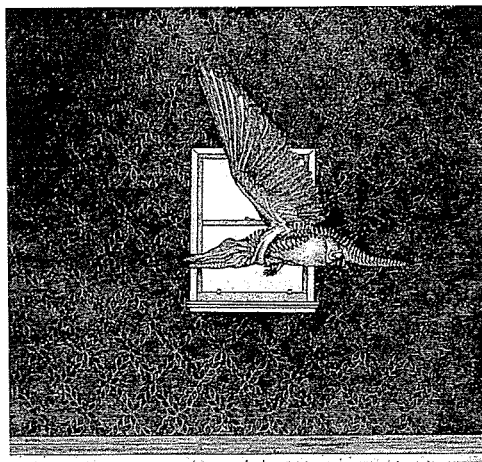


1988

In response to the need for extra space to display contemporary art at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, the City Council agreed to the Gallery renting a space in the Arts Centre provided the gallery raised a considerable portion of the set up costs. The entry fee to Val Griffith-Jones' enormously popular 'Stuffing On' exhibition during the summer of 1987/88 provided the extra required funding and the Annex became a reality. The McDougall Art Annex opened in October 1988 in the Christchurch Arts Centre as an extension of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. Situated in the former Canterbury College Library building, it provided a much needed public venue for contemporary art in Christchurch. The Annex was officially opened by Peter Simpson, Member of Parliament for Lyttelton and former president of the Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. The first exhibition, 'Here and Now', opened on 20 October with work by 'twelve Canterbury artists of promise'.<sup>28</sup>

In March, the Jonathan Jensen Gallery opened at 160 High Street, filling a gap left by the closure of the James Paul and Manawa galleries. It represented emerging and mid-career artists, including Julia Morison, Richard Reddaway, Mark Braunias and Adrienne Martyn. The Canterbury Gallery, with directors Pat and Marilyn Condon, opened in September at 48 Papanui Road and held fortnightly stock and solo shows. In addition, 292 and the La Quete provided venues for new-comers to the exhibition circuit.

A concern that there should be more art



**Cleavin, Barry**  
*Just one of a number of Allegations flying around a room 1988, print.*

Courtesy of the artist.

seen around the Campus encouraged several staff members of the University of Canterbury to form a committee to buy artworks and accept donations and bequests.

The first South Island Stone Symposium was organised at Spencer Park by Llew Summers.

Fundraising for a new Christchurch Art Gallery got underway with a far-sighted \$284,000 bequest from Monica Richards, a graduate of Canterbury University and post-graduate student of the Sorbonne in Paris. When she discussed with the Christchurch City Council administrators her wish to leave money specifically for the building of a new Gallery, they thought the idea such a distant prospect that they advised her against the bequest and asked her to consider bequeathing the money for the purchase of artworks. She was not dissuaded and with careful investment, the bequest is now (2000) worth close to one million dollars. An exhibition space on Level One in the new Art Gallery has been designated as the Monica Richards Gallery in acknowledgement of her generous bequest.

The Trust Bank Canterbury Artist-in-Residence award was set up in 1988 to assist artists from other parts of New Zealand. A nine months appointment, funded by the Arts Centre Trust, QEII Arts Council and Trust Bank Canterbury, it covered accommodation at the Arts Centre and living expenses. No recipient was selected from the first round of applicants, but Tom Kreisler, a New Plymouth painter who studied in Christchurch during the 1960s, was announced as the inaugural recipient in May 1989.

'Celebration', an exhibition commemorating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canterbury Potter's Association was held at the CSA from 8 to 19 November.

A new development for public art in Christchurch was an 'art-for-floorspace bonus', based on schemes run by City Councils in other New Zealand cities. The bonus allowed property developers to exceed height restrictions if they purchased a public art work.

Evelyn Page, Canterbury-trained and renowned for her vital use of colour and studies of the nude, died aged 89, in Wellington.

Several Christchurch artists received international acclaim in 1989. In January, Judy McIntosh Wilson was selected to participate in the 6<sup>th</sup> Triennale of Tapestry in Lodz, Poland. Noel Gregg was one of a group of blacksmiths invited from fourteen nations to contribute to the commemorative project 'Great Gates of Memphis' in Tennessee. Christchurch-born Stephen Bambury won the inaugural Moet et Chandon Art Fellowship, receiving \$25,000, a return airfare to France

A controversy arose over a commissioned sculpture for Cathedral Square by sculptor, Bing Dawe, who had collaborated with iron worker, Noel Gregg. They designed a concept brief for submission to the Christchurch City Council for a children's play sculpture. Based on fantastic mythological figures, *Reintroducing the Fabulous Races (A Sculpture for Children)* was completed in June 1990 after a 'fantasy flower' was added by American artist Jim Wallace. The sculpture was installed in the south-west quadrant of the Square. Controversy surrounded the proposal from the outset and negative public opinion, with comments ranging from 'unseemly' to 'obscene' saw its removal from Cathedral Square in 1992. Gifted by the Christchurch City Council to the Arts Centre, it was re-sited on the grass lawn of the Market Square in the Arts Centre in 1994.

Four Christchurch artists, Stephen Allwood, Grant Banbury, Mark Lander and Quentin MacFarlane, had their works exhibited and purchased for the Goodman Suter Biennale.

The Robert McDougall Art Gallery began its programme of exhibitions for the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century on 24 February with the opening of 'A Canterbury Perspective'. This exhibition co-incided with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of settlement in New Zealand. The exhibition was divided into ten rooms of ten periods, mapping the development of Canterbury Art from Pre-European settlement to 1990.

In November 1990, Simon Ogden, lecturer at the School of Fine Arts, completed a set of street banners for the central city, commissioned by the Christchurch City Council. Later

and a studio near Paris for nine months. Sculptor Neil Dawson was invited to participate in 'Magicians de la Terre', the first 'world-wide' exhibition organised by MOMA and the Pompidou Centre. Dawson installed his work, *Globe*, 25 metres above Pompidou Plaza. Christchurch-trained artist Shane Cotton won the Young Artist of the Year Award, with a prize of \$10,000.

Former Director of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Brian Muir, died on 9 May.

in the year, Ogden was announced as the winner of the Inaugural Telecom Telephone Book Cover Award for Christchurch.

On the retirement of Professor John Simpson as Head of the School of Fine Arts at the University of Canterbury, Ted Bracey was appointed to this position.

One of Canterbury's most distinguished expatriates, Sydney Lough Thompson, was recognised by a retrospective exhibition of 71



'A Canterbury Perspective', exhibition installation view, North Gallery, Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

works, 'At Home and Abroad', guest-curated by University of Canterbury Art History lecturer, Julie King, opened at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. Thompson, an expatriate artist who focused on the regional landscapes of France, was born in Oxford, Canterbury in 1877 and died in France in 1973.



Dawe, Bing / Gregg, Noel  
*Reintroducing the Fabulous Races (A Sculpture for Children)* 1989.  
Collection of the Christchurch City Council.

1989

1990



In November 1990 the Salamander Art Gallery opened to replace the Ginkgo Gallery in the Christchurch Arts Centre. Directed by Noeline Brokenshire and managed by artist Michael Armstrong, it presented the work of over thirty of New Zealand's foremost print-makers, together with photography and sculpture.

Tony Fomison, who trained at the School of Fine Arts in the early 1960s and had made

a study of pre-European rock drawings in the central South Island, died on 7 February, 1990. Doris Lusk, artist, art lecturer and member of The Group, died in April. She was posthumously awarded the Governor General's Art Award. Presented by the New Zealand Academy of Fine Art and supported by the Governor General, this award was intended to recognise the major contribution of an individual to the arts.

## 1991



**ffrench, Di** (1946–1999)  
Black and White Photographs and Cibachromes (installation view),  
McDougall Contemporary Art Annex, 1991.

Exhibitions at the McDougall Contemporary Art Annex included 'Di ffrench: Black and White Photographs and Cibachromes', held as part of ffrench's time as Trust Bank Artist in Residence at the Arts Centre, opened on the 31st January 1991. A series of subtle and complex photographs made allusions to the past and the multiple layers of time and meaning. 'Recognitions', an exhibition highlighting current trends in Canterbury artmaking, featured the work of six emerging local artists, Peter Robinson, Séraphine Pick, Kim Pieters, David Reid, Marianna Bullmore and Shane Cotton.

In July 1991, Several Arts, believed to be the oldest craft shop in New Zealand, closed. Established in 1960, it specialised in New Zealand-made contemporary art and craft.

The Christchurch Civic Art Gallery Trust was launched as a charitable trust to assist and promote the production of art in Canterbury and to support the activities of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. In 1991 the search for

a site for a new Christchurch art gallery progressed when five potential sites were identified in August, including the 'Sheraton site' on the corner of Montreal Street and Worcester Boulevard.

Graham Bennett's *Sea, Sky, Stone*, a 40 metre long abstract sculpture of oxidised steel and reflective glass, was displayed temporarily on the Archery Lawn of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens.

South Island Art Projects (SIAP) was launched in 1991 as the initiative of a group of artists with the assistance of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand. It was a project-based organisation, intended to 'promote activity, dialogue and debate around the contemporary visual arts in New Zealand, with special reference to the South Island.'<sup>9</sup> In addition to facilitating several major arts projects, SIAP published a bi-monthly newsletter, developed a film and video programme and hosted visiting artists and speakers.

## 1992

Among the exhibitions held at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery in 1992 were 'Contrasts', an exhibition of works by Petrus van der Velden, in recognition of the Abel Tasman

Commemorative Year, and 'Toss Woollaston: A Retrospective'. Woollaston was born in Taranaki in 1910 and studied art in Christchurch and Dunedin, then lived and painted



in Nelson for most of his life.

'Prospect Canterbury 1992', a survey exhibition of contemporary art in Canterbury opened at both the Robert McDougall Art Gallery and Annex. Following on from 'A Canterbury Perspective', which considered historical art, it identified and discussed new directions in contemporary art making in the region.

Three rugs designed by Christchurch artists Michael Reed, Bing Dawe and Kate

Wells and handtufted by Dilana Rugs were exhibited as part of Expo '92 in Seville, Spain.

The High Street Project, a non-profit initiative devised to support emerging artists, was formed in 1992. For the first two years, the Project's exhibitions were held at a venue above Michael's Restaurant in High Street, with the support of the proprietor, Michael Lee Richards. It shifted to a new premises in High Street in 1995 and from there to an upstairs site on Hereford Street in 1997.

As the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Women's Suffrage in New Zealand, 1993 witnessed a number of projects designed to illustrate and acclaim the achievements of New Zealand women throughout the century. Art projects included 'White Camellias', which was held at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery and featured 177 works by 48 artists celebrating 100 years of artmaking by Canterbury women.

Diffrench was commissioned by the Christchurch City Council to design a wall hanging depicting various aspects of women's lives between 1893 and 1993. Embroidered by 100 members of the Embroiderer's Guild and coordinated by Marianne Hargreaves the work took eight months to complete and was exhibited at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery before being installed permanently in the Town Hall. 'Women's Lives', at the McDougall Art Annex, featured small works on paper by approximately 70 invited women artists. The Kate Sheppard Memorial, a bas-relief sculpture by Magriet Windhausen, was unveiled on the east bank of the River Avon on 19 September, 1993.

In September 1993 'T'Arting up Town', a four month project using vacant shops to promote local artists, got underway. Developed by the Christchurch Community Arts Council, it was jointly funded by the Southern Regional Arts Council and the Robert McDougall Art Gallery

The inaugural Cranleigh Barton Drawing Award was held at the Robert McDougall Contemporary Art Annex, with first prize won by Michael Dell's *Spoerri's Table*, which was subsequently purchased by the Gallery. The competition has continued to be held biennially and is jointly presented by the Gallery and the

Canterbury Museum. It was made possible through the bequest of Cranleigh Harper Barton (1890 - 1975), a well known Canterbury painter and Sumner identity.

In November 1993, *Taking Flight*, a cast bronze drinking fountain sculpture by Philip Price was donated to Christchurch for a Botanic Gardens site by the Canterbury branch of the New Zealand Foundrymen's Institute.

A new craft space, Form Gallery, opened in Cathedral Square in December 1993, with the aim of show-casing handmade works, particularly jewellery and glass, from contemporary New Zealand designers.

The inaugural 'Sculpture in the Gardens' exhibition was held in the Botanic Gardens and featured the work of sculptors Jeff Thomson, Philip Price and Neil Dawson. Jointly presented by the Gardens and the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, the first exhibition was partly funded by the QEII Arts Council. The public display of sculpture has attracted much appreciation and interest since then, with the 1995-6 exhibition featuring artists Pauline Rhodes, Judy McIntosh Wilson, Bronwyn Taylor and Chris Booth. The 1997-8 theme of 'Wind and Water' produced kinetic artworks by Randall Watson, Sam Mahon, Evan Webb and *Large Blade*, a major sound

## 1993



Entrance to White Camellias Exhibition, Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 1993.





**Gunn, Fiona**  
*To Seed, Sculpture in the Gardens,*  
1997–99.

Photograph: Brendan Lee.

and movement work by the late Len Lye, which was temporarily set up outside the Gallery for a series of public performances. The 1999–2000 exhibition featured Stuart Griffiths, Paul

Cullen and Fiona Gunn, all of whom tapped into the hidden and complex histories of their Garden sites.

'Public Practices' was organised by South Island Arts Projects and involved six artists' projects in Otago/Southland regional centres and a public forum examining prevailing notions of audience, regionalism and access to contemporary art. Papers from this forum were later published by SIAP, together with essays on the artists' projects.

Sculptor Ria Bancroft died aged 86 on 8 March. Born in England, Bancroft lived in Canada before emigrating to New Zealand in 1962. Over the 30 years that she lived and worked in Canterbury she developed a profile as a much respected figurative sculptor.

## 1994

'Aoraki/Hikurangi', an exhibition by twelve Maori artists, six Ngai Tahu and six Ngati Porou, was held at the McDougall Contemporary Art Annex to celebrate the centennial of Sir Apirana Ngata's graduation from Canterbury College in 1894.

Christchurch painter Bill Hammond shared the 1994 Visa Gold Art Award with Auckland artist, Luise Fong.

A six metre poupou carved by Riki Manuel was unveiled on November 23, 1994. It had been commissioned by the Christchurch City Council in conjunction with the Ngai Tahu

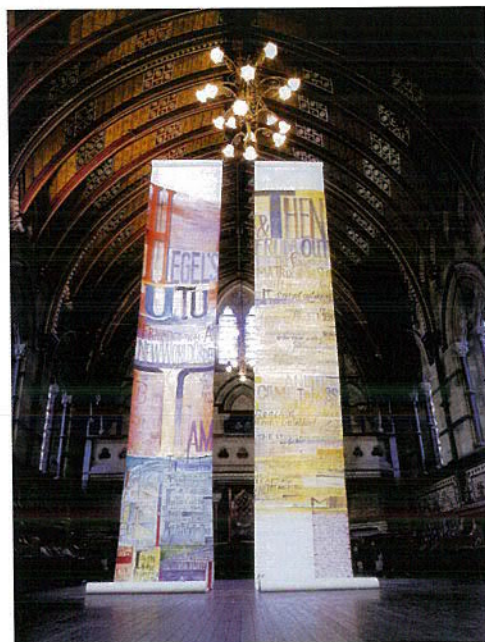
Maori Trust Board as part of a 1990 project commemorating the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.

'Tales Untold: unearthing Christchurch histories' was organised by South Island Art Projects as a contemporary component for the Christchurch City Council's Heritage Week. The nine diverse projects included an installation of Y-Fronts in the Annex basement by Grant Lingard, a woollen runner designed by Nicola Jackson and manufactured in Christchurch by Dilana Rugs, which was placed in the Nurses Memorial Chapel and Ralph Paine's *Hegel's Utu*, a paradoxical and fantastic tale of post-colonialism told on a series of scrolls and hung from the ornate ceiling of the Old Provincial Council Chambers.

The Space Gallery, a not-for-profit space for emerging and alternative artists, opened in 1994 under the directorship of Kate Spencer. In 1996, Sarah Amazinnia took over as director and in the following year the gallery moved into new premises in Bedford Row.

On the resignation of Geoff Ellis, Dr Paddy Austin was appointed as Director of the Christchurch Arts Centre, a position she would hold until 1998.

Dame Eileen Mayo, an artist of national and international reputation, died on 4 January 1994, aged 87. Mayo had studied at the Slade School of Art in London and was well known for her paintings, prints, book



**Paine, Ralph**  
*Hegel's Utu,*  
Canterbury Provincial Council  
Chambers, 1994.

Courtesy of the Artist.



illustrations and postage stamp designs. Dame Louise Henderson, another highly regarded artist, known for her precisely controlled cubist works and credited with introducing hard-edge abstraction to New Zealand in the 1950s, died in Auckland in June. Born and raised in France, Henderson settled in Christchurch in 1925, taught at Canterbury College and exhibited regularly with The Group from 1935–1951. Tom Taylor, noted sculptor and member of The Group and 20/

20 Vision, died in July. A retired Head of Sculpture at the School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury, Taylor was an influential teacher to several generations of sculptors in Canterbury that included John Panting, Carl Sydow, Rosemary Johnson, Chris Booth, Boyd Webb, Matt Pine, Neil Dawson, Bronwyn Taylor, Pauline Rhodes, Merylyn Tweedie, and Phil Price. He was also president of the Sculptor's Group of the Artist's Association.

Andrew Drummond, lecturer at the School of Fine Arts, was commissioned by the Robert McDougall Art Gallery to make a kinetic sculpture for its collection. The resulting installation, 'For Beating and Breathing', was exhibited at the McDougall Contemporary Art Annex in November.

John Coley retired as the Director of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery after fourteen years and P. Anthony (Tony) Preston, Head of Education at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, was appointed to the position.

'Praxis', a project funded by the Arts Council and organised by SIAP, was launched in March, and featured nine artists, all graduates of the University of Canterbury's School of Fine Arts.

In February, Andrew Jensen, co-director of the Jonathan Jensen Gallery, moved to Wellington, leaving Jonathan Smart as the sole proprietor of what became the Jonathan Smart Gallery.

On 26 April, 1995, a proposal by the Art Gallery in the Park Association to site the new Christchurch Art Gallery on public land in Hagley Park was defeated at a Christchurch City Council meeting. Later in the year, a site on Worcester Boulevard (the 'Sheraton site') was identified and negotiations began to purchase it.

'What Now?' was a series of ten installations organised by the High Street Project and involved twelve emerging artists and included *Filthy Claws* by Saskia Leek, a 'sinister fun park'<sup>30</sup> by James Wallace and Jason Maling and *Desperately Seeking*, a window, floor and wall installation by Melissa McLeod.

'Kidzart', a biennial exhibition of Primary School art at the McDougall pursued the theme of 'home'.

During the Arts Festival in September the Wizard of Christchurch, a 'Living Work of Art', was an exhibition at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. It opened with a performance piece based on aspects of works of art from the conceptual to the real.

The Ashburton Art Gallery/Museum opened in the old Ashburton County Council Building. Financial assistance for the Art Gallery was gained from the Lottery Grants Board and grants from Trust Bank South Canterbury and the Ashburton Licensing

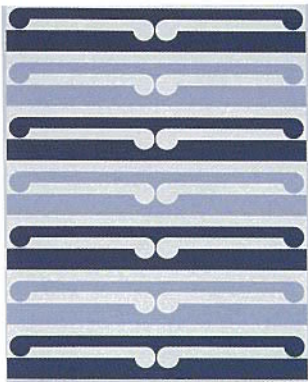
## 1995

**Drummond, Andrew**  
*For Beating and Breathing*,  
installation view, McDougall  
Contemporary Art Annex, 1995.



**McLeod, Melissa**  
*Desperately Seeking*,  
High Street Project, 1995.  
Courtesy of the artist.





Walters, Gordon, (1919-1995)  
*Untitled (Koru Series) 1982,*  
oil on canvas.

Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.  
Reproduced courtesy of Walters Estate.

Trust. The Gallery does not have a permanent collection, but provides exhibition opportunities for local and national artists.

The inaugural Trust Bank Community Trust Arts Excellence Awards were announced. Visual arts recipients included Tony Bond, Graham Bennett, Tony de Lautour, Bing Dawe and Steve Fullmer. Tony de Lautour also won the 1995 Visa Gold Art Award.

Nigel Buxton won the second Cranleigh Barton Drawing Award.

Following on from a long tradition of arts festivals in Christchurch, the last of which occurred in 1984, the first Christchurch Arts Festival was held in 1995 and has continued

biennially. With operating funds provided by the Christchurch City Council, the Festival presents a bold and broad programme of high quality arts events targeting the residents of, and visitors to, Christchurch.

An exhibition of the work of Elizabeth Kelly opened at the Robert McDougall Gallery and continued into 1996, marking the 50th anniversary of Kelly's death.

Gordon Walters died on 5 November, 1995, aged 76. Walters became a fulltime artist in 1966 and in 1971 was awarded a QEII Fellowship. Recognised for his precise geometric abstraction, he had moved to Christchurch in 1976.

## 1996

Hosted by Ngai Tahu, 'Nga Mahi O te Aka o Tuwhenua (the works of the Vine of the Land) New Zealand Maori Culture and the Contemporary Scene' opened at Canterbury Museum and featured work by twenty Maori artists.

The first 'Art in the Park' was held in Hagley Park under the title of the Canterbury Eco-Stone Sculpture Symposium in March. Organised by Lorraine North of Professional Art Services, the Symposium featured fourteen professional artists (including Iosefa Leo) who made work from Oamaru stone in response to the Canterbury landscape. The works were later sold by auction. Public participation is an important part of Art in the Park and an increasingly international focus has been made possible with the assistance of the Sister Cities programme and ASIA 2000.

A competition was organised by the Christchurch-Seattle Sister City Committee to select a sculpture to commemorate this Sister City relationship, and a design by sculptor Chris Booth was chosen.

The Bob's Your Uncle artists' quarter was established in Gloucester Street by artist

Brendan Ryan. The building was eventually demolished by the Christchurch City Council to make way for low-cost housing in 1998.

The Christchurch City Council agreed to pay \$9.6 million for the former Sheraton site on the corner of Montreal and Worcester Streets. The Trust Bank Canterbury Community Trust contributed \$3.8 million with two conditions – that the grant should be returned if the project did not proceed and that 40 per cent of the site be used as a sculpture park.

The Peacock Fountain was reinstated in the Botanic Gardens in April. It was built and erected in the Gardens in 1910 from a bequest from the estate of J.T. Peacock, a local and national politician, but was dismantled and put into storage in 1949. For its return to the Gardens, 158 new castings had to be made out of 309 original cast iron pieces.

Renovation to the Canterbury Society of Art (CSA) marked a change in direction for the Society. It reopened on 18 June 1996 as the Centre of Contemporary Art (CoCA). This was the most radical change for the gallery since it moved from the old gallery in Durham Street to Gloucester Street in 1968. New priorities were signalled by the purchase of most of the heritage collection by the McDougall Art Gallery in 1995 through major fundraising. Then-Director Nigel Buxton described the gallery's new vision as being 'a dynamic and vibrant centre that embraces the diversity of contemporary cultural production.'<sup>34</sup>

An 'ArtLaw' seminar discussing current



Sculptor Iosefa Leo at the Eco-Stone Sculpture Symposium, 1996.  
Photographer: Jane Wyles.

legal issues for visual artists was held in Christchurch in July and was the final initiative of the South Island Arts Project (SIAP). SIAP re-formed as The Physics Room Trust, a gallery located in the Christchurch Arts Centre, with an exhibition/educational programme administered by a 12-member Board of Trustees drawn from the professional, academic and visual arts communities of Christchurch. The Physics Room later shifted to the old central Post Office building on the corner of Lichfield and High Street in 1999 and has published a magazine, *LOG Illustrated*, since 1997.

Christchurch artist Peter Robinson represented New Zealand as part of a 'waka collective' of eleven artists at the Second Asia Pacific Triennial in Brisbane. The other artists, divided into male and female waka, were Chris Booth, Brett Graham, John Pule, Ben Webb, Bronwynne Cornish, Judy Millar, Ani O'Neill, Lisa Reihana, Marie Shannon and Yuk King Tan.

'Landmarks: The Landscape Paintings of Doris Lusk' was guest curated by Grant Banbury and Lisa Beaven at the Robert

McDougall Art Gallery.

The Gallery also presented an exhibition of the selected works of Vivienne Mountfort.

'The Harmony of Opposites', a survey exhibition of the work of abstract artist Don Peebles curated by Justin Paton, opened at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery and later toured to other New Zealand venues.

Te Toi Mana Maori Art Gallery, a co-operative art studio focussing on contemporary Maori art, opened in the old Riki Rangi Carving Studio in the arts centre.

'IDentikit', a series of ten exhibitions was held at, and organised by, the High Street Project, with each artist representing different notions of identity of particular interest to them.

Grant Lingard, known for work which questioned prejudice and gender stereotyping, died in Sydney in November at the age of 34. Lingard studied at the University of Canterbury's School of Fine Arts and helped to establish the James Paul Gallery in 1985. He worked in Christchurch for eleven years before moving to Sydney in 1989. William J. Reed also died in 1996.

The Campbell Grant Gallery opened on the corner of Madras and Lichfield Streets with Grant Banbury as its Director. The opening exhibition was of paintings by Robert McLeod, made between 1994 and 1996.

*Taurapa, Christchurch/Seattle*, the Sister City sculpture by Chris Booth of greywacke and chrySTALLINE sandstone, was completed in June 1997 on the banks of the Avon River in Cambridge Terrace.

As part of the McDougall's biennial schools' exhibitions programme, 'Youth Make Their Mark' was so successful it subsequently travelled (in 1998) to Japan as part of a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary cultural exchange with Christchurch's Sister City, Kurashiki.

Laura van Haven was appointed as the new Director of CoCA, following the resignation of Nigel Buxton. A major retrospective of work made between 1976 and 1996 by abstract painter Eion Stevens was exhibited at the gallery.

An important overseas exhibition, 'Dragon & Phoenix: the Textiles of Southeast Asia's

Chinese Communities' largely drawn from the National Gallery of Australia's collections, was organised by the McDougall Art Gallery as a major Festival of Asia event, acknowledging Christchurch's multi-cultural community.

'US and Us', an exhibition jointly presented by New Zealand and United States embroiderers to raise the profile of textile art, opened at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

'Thinking About Contemporary Art', a major group exhibition identifying trends in contemporary practice through the work of twelve major New Zealand artists, opened at CoCA. Curated by Julian Bowron, it was part of the 1997 Christchurch Arts Festival.

From the Queensland Museum, 'Ellis Rowan: A Flower-Hunter in Queensland' was organised by the Robert McDougall Art Gallery as a complement to 'Flowers into Landscape', the first major exhibition of the work of Margaret Olrog Stoddart since 1935. The Gallery also hosted 'Elements of Doubt', a major survey exhibition of work by Canterbury printmaker Barry Cleavin.

1997



'Out of the Blue', an exhibition of contemporary Pacific art by 13 artists, opened at the Salamander Gallery. Featuring sixty artworks, the show was initiated by gallery director Simon Sonius, artist Fatu Feu'u and the Tautai Trust to provide exposure for Pacific Islanders' work in the South Island.

The School of Art and Design at the Christchurch Polytechnic (which took over from the Technical College in 1965) became accredited in 1997, allowing it to offer a Degree course in Design. The institution is now known as the Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology.

The Linwood Community Arts Centre opened in November 1997, with a group

exhibition entitled 'New Beginnings'. The Centre is run as a partnership between the Christchurch City Council and Te Whare Roimata, with the intention of supporting work by local artists.

The third Cranleigh Barton Drawing Award was won by Richard Lewer.

Artist and lecturer at the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts, Maxwell (Max) Hailstone, died on 24 January in a car accident in Ohio, USA, aged 54, while visiting Miami University as a guest lecturer.

Lady Margaret Frankel, née Anderson, one of the founders of the progressive arts circle, The Group, and the Risingholme pottery workshop, died in Canberra at the age of 94.

## 1998

A major exhibition 'Hotere out the Black Window', concurrent with 'The Legendary Lee Millar – Photographs 1929–1964' confirmed the McDougall's position as the most visited public art gallery for the fourth successive year.

'Skywriters and Earthmovers', an exhibition of work by seven contemporary artists with Canterbury connections, was opened at the Art Annex to celebrate the tenth anniversary of operations. The featured artists were Peter Robinson, Chris Heaphy, Séraphine Pick, Tony de Lautour, Grant Takle, Bill Hammond and Shane Cotton.

In June, Scottish-born painter Leigh Martin was appointed as the Artist in Residence at Rangī Ruru Girl's College, the

first position of its kind at a New Zealand Secondary School. After a period of five years, the Artist in Residence programme at the Christchurch Arts Centre was reinstated with funding from the Christchurch City Council and The Community Trust. The first recipient of the revived Residency was Lizzie Cook, performer/entertainer.

The city's increasing multi-culturalism was acknowledged with 'Reckoning with the Past: Contemporary Chinese Painting' at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, supported by ASIA 2000 Foundation.

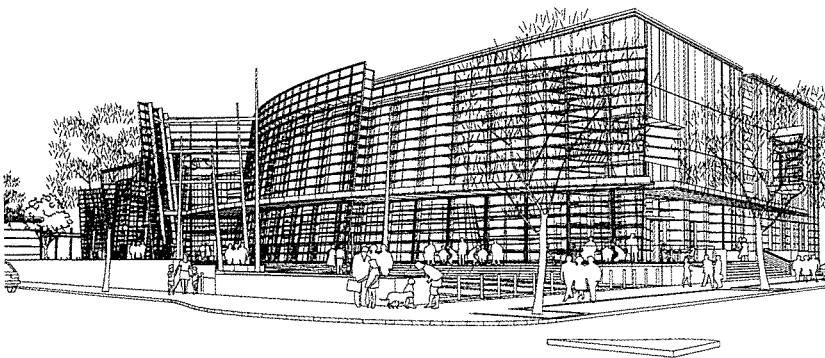
Christchurch artist Colin Luxton won the Visa Gold Art Awards for 1998. His winning drawing was exhibited with works by the other finalists at the McDougall Contemporary Art Annex later that year, the first time the Award exhibition had travelled to a South Island venue.

'B.W. Mountford, Architect' at the McDougall acknowledged the centenary of the death of New Zealand's pre-eminent colonial architect.

A competition for the design of the new Christchurch Art Gallery was held between July and August 1998. By the deadline, 94 submissions from throughout New Zealand had been received. In September the panel of assessors, which included Thomas Dixon (convenor), Professor Daryl Le Grew, Tony Preston and Albert Louman, selected five finalists to further develop their designs for

Christchurch Art Gallery. Southwest elevation. The Buchan Group Ltd. 2000.

Reproduced courtesy of the Buchan Group Architects.



Stage 2. The final decision was based on the design's ability to demonstrate the best overall response to the city council's approved brief and objectives. The appointment of The Buchan Group as architects for the new Gallery was announced on 25 November.

The national touring exhibition 'Goldie', was the Gallery's major summer 1998/99 show.

Several significant art projects commenced, co-ordinated by Art 2000. This was an advisory group of Turning Point 2000, chaired by Cr Anna Crighton, whose vision was 'to foster closer relationships within the community as we look back at the past, celebrate the present and look forward to the future'.<sup>32</sup>

Neil Dawson was commissioned to design and construct the 18-metre-high *Chalice*, which is due to be installed in Cathedral Square in March 2001, consisting of 9 varieties of native leaves from trees which once grew in Cathedral Square.

Philip Trusttsum was invited to paint a mural, *Passport to the New Millennium*. A hundred and forty panels and 84 metres long it was unveiled on 7 December 1999 at the Christchurch Convention Centre. The mural was planned to be dismantled and sold by panels, but sponsorship by the community and Christchurch City Council enabled its retention for civic ownership.

The McDougall offered two rare and valuable exhibitions in 'Life in the Emperor's Tomb', (ceramics & sculpture in the T.T. Tsui Gift of Chinese Art from the National Gallery of Australia) to acknowledge the 1999 Festival of Asia, and 'Dürer and Renaissance Print-making' (from the Art Gallery of South Australia).

Another art project excited debate in 1999. The Otira 'Oblique Project', co-ordinated by Julaine Stephenson and funded by Creative NZ, involved work by 35 national and international artists in and around the semi-deserted Otira township. It caused some controversy, with the new township describing *Oblique* as a 'Government-funded joke'.

'Edwyn Temple – Artist' at the McDougall gave new emphasis to a hitherto little-known, but creative, colonial chronicler.

Tony Paine was appointed Director of the Christchurch Arts Centre on the resignation of Dr Paddy Austin.

Sir Tosswill Woollaston, one of New Zealand's foremost Expressionist painters, who had attended the Canterbury College School of Art briefly in 1931, died aged 88 on 31 August, 1998

Bing Dawe was awarded first prize in the Wallace Art Award (\$24,000) for his kauri and steel sculpture, *Figure and Eel*, similar to works that featured in the McDougall's survey exhibition of Dawe's sculpture, 'Acts of Enquiry', in 1999.

The 1999 Arts Centre Artist in Residence, Michel Tuffery, staged a dramatic bullfight between two, life-size, tin bull sculptures, in the Arts Centre on the evening of 24 July to launch the Christchurch Arts Festival. One of the bulls made during his residency, *Povi Christikeke*, was later purchased by the Robert McDougall Gallery.

The Arthouse gallery, situated on 292 Montreal Street, opened under the directorship of Norma Dutton and Peter Gregg with a focus on work by contemporary New Zealand artists.

The Christchurch Anglican Church commemorated 150 years of Canterbury settlement by gifting a sculpture to Christchurch. Terry Stringer's design for a bronze, *Risen Christ*, was chosen.

Acknowledgement of exciting develop-



1999

**Dawson, Neil**  
*Chalice*, photo montage, 2000.  
Commissioned by Turning Point 2000 and gifted to the City of Christchurch.





**Trusttum, Philip**  
*Passport to the New Millenium*  
 (mural installation View) 1999.  
 Collection: Christchurch City Council.  
 Courtesy Philip Trusttum and N.C.C.  
 (N.Z.) Ltd.

ments in contemporary work was made with the McDougall Annex's exhibition 'Hiko! New Energies in Maori Art' and then reinforced in July with 'Peter Robinson: Installation'.

The Robert McDougall Art Gallery held a major retrospective exhibition, 'Heaven and

Blood', of the work of important Canterbury expressionist painter, Alan Pearson.

The Art and Industry Biennial Trust was launched in August 1999. It has commissioned artists to produce major works to enhance public spaces.

The fourth Cranleigh Barton Drawing Award was won by Lorraine Webb.

Warren Feeny was appointed the Director of CoCA, following Laura van Haven's resignation.

Respected inter-media artist Di ffrench, who had been Trust Bank Artist in Residence in 1991, died in Dunedin, aged 52, on 25 May. A filmmaker, sculptor, performance artist and photographer, ffrench was highly regarded for the unique photographic process developed in her cibachromes.

## 2000

Art 2000 initiated Bridge 2000, a foot and cycle bridge across the Avon river. Christchurch sculptor Andrew Drummond was awarded the commission for his controversial design, *From Here to There*, a cylindrical steel structure sheathed in brass, designed to represent the past and the future.

Philip Trusttum's design for Tapestry 2000, another Art 2000 initiative, was selected from four invited artists. The weaver chosen was Marilyn Rea-Menzies from the Christchurch Tapestry Workshop. On 25 August, 2000, the 15 metre tapestry was cut from the loom by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Helen Clark.

Art 2000 also endorsed 'Colloquium', a multi-media art project organised and presented by the Robert McDougall Art Gallery in association with the University of Canterbury, with support from Creative NZ. 'Colloquium' comprised three major exhibitions held at the McDougall Contemporary Art Annex: 'Piano/For $\acute{e}$  – Phil Dadson', 'Intervention – Post-Object and Performance Art 1970-1985' and 'Light and Illusion – A Retrospective of Di ffrench'. It also included an international four day Symposium on the theme of Post-Object and Performance Art from the 1970s and beyond.

To celebrate the city's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary much original research was done on artists from the founding days to the present and highlighted in a series of seven 'Canterbury

Vignette' exhibitions at the McDougall. These commenced with John Gibb and Alfred Walsh and were followed with Charles Kidson, Leonard Booth, Grace Butler, Archibald Nicoll and Richard and Elizabeth Wallwork.

'Canterbury Art on Tour', curated by CoCA in collaboration with the McDougall Art Gallery, toured work by New Zealand artists to Canterbury secondary schools. The artists represented included Catherine Manchester, Michael Reed, Simon Edwards, Colin Luxton, Barry Cleavin, Paul Chapman and Kate Rivers.

In May, the Robert McDougall Art Gallery received \$6.474 million towards funding of the new Christchurch Art Gallery in a special arts funding boost package from the government. The Prime Minister and Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, the Rt. Hon. Helen Clark, described the Gallery's collection and standard of display as 'simply outstanding and a national treasure'.<sup>33</sup> Two fundraising committees – the Major Gifts (chaired by Ros Burdon) and the Community Gifts (chaired by Hilary Langer) – established 18 months earlier by the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, reached \$12.5 million towards their fundraising goal of \$13.05 million.

In May, Judith Gifford celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the Brooke Gifford Gallery, the first professional dealer gallery in Christchurch.

'Canterbury Painting' in the 1990s



exhibited in June, celebrated the diversity of painting in Canterbury during the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Artists included Don Peebles, Julia Morison, Shane Cotton, Joanna Braithwaite, Neil Frazer, Alan Pearson, Bill Hammond, Luise Fong, Saskia Leek, Jude Rae and Séraphine Pick.

Arts professionals and practitioners were consulted on issues facing the arts by 'Heart of the Nation' representative Councillor Paddy Austin and Chair Hamish Keith in Christchurch on 27 April. 'Heart of the Nation' was a project initiated by the government to report on the vision of the arts in New Zealand for the next ten years.

In July, the Christchurch Polytechnic hosted a symposium on South Island craft, supported by Creative NZ, entitled 'ConneXion: Connections and New Directions in Object Art'. This was complemented by an exhibition at CoCA, 'Objects with Meaning: New Directions in South Island Craft', which featured the work of 22 artists in a range of media including fibre, ceramics, harakeke, metal and jewellery.

The Kiosk (corner of High and Manchester Streets), initiated by the Oblique Trust, offered a venue for emerging contemporary artists to exhibit their work 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Exhibits focused on digital technologies, video and sound.

Art and Industry 2000 launched its Bien-



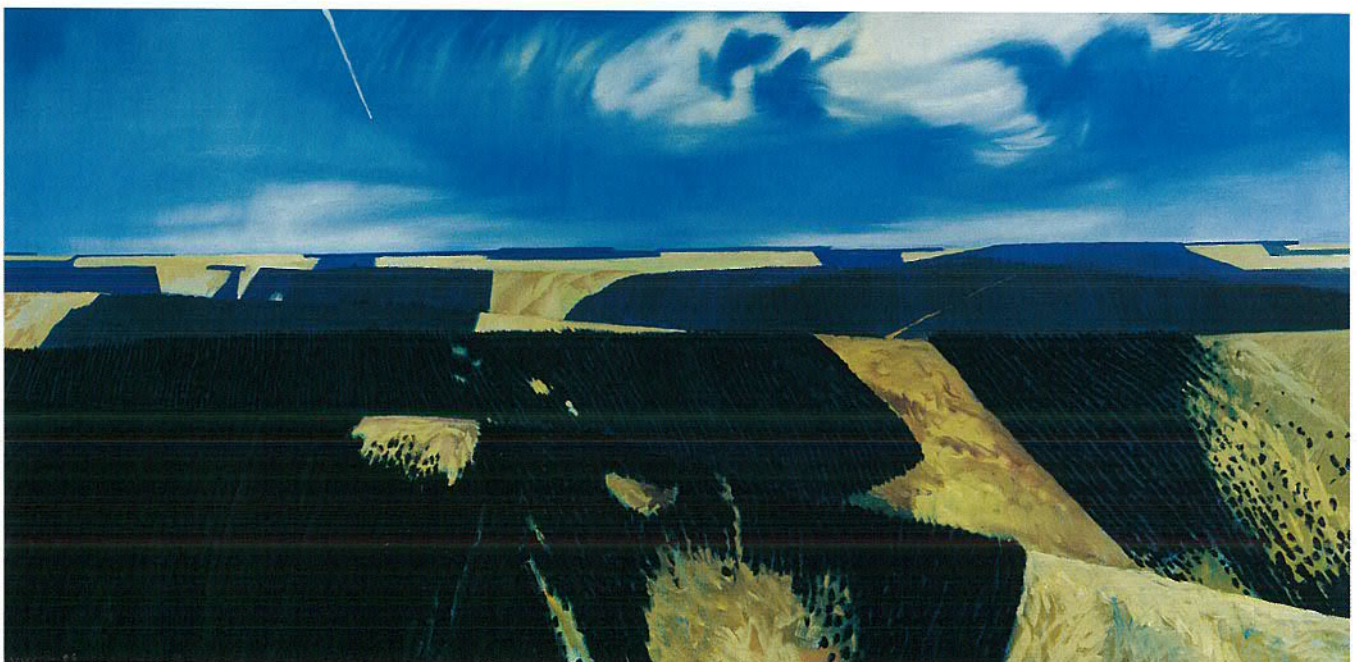
*Canterbury Painting in the 1990s*, Robert McDougall Art Gallery, June 2000.

nial Festival of Contemporary Visual Arts with an official opening by the Hon. Judith Tizard at the Christchurch Convention Centre on 30 September. The festival of art programme included: 'Monument to a Lost Civilization', an exhibition by Ilya and Emilia Kabakov at CoCA; 'Asiasi: Michel Tuffery', an installation and performance in the Arts Centre and 'Register/Test Pattern: Leigh Martin', an exhibition at the Physics Room.

Bill Culbert was selected to design a neon sculpture, *Blue*, for the facade of the Christchurch Convention Centre. In keeping with the brief, *Blue* consists of 100 metres of blue neon, reflecting varying degrees of light and shadow.

The exhibition of finalists from the inaugural NCC Art Award, co-ordinated by Lorraine North from Professional Art Services and supported by NCC and Re-designing

**Sutton, William, A.** (1917–2000)  
*Plantation series No. 2*, 1986,  
oil on canvas.  
Collection: Robert McDougall Art Gallery.





Resources, was held on 25 June. The winner of the competition for art works in secondary materials was awarded to Katharina Jaeger.

This was the last full year of exhibitions for the McDougall Contemporary Art Annex before its closure to prepare for the shift to the new Gallery. The Annex will close on 14 January 2001 with the retrospective exhibition of Di ffrench 'Light and Illusion'.

A forum organised by Creative NZ was held on 7 June to facilitate discussion on the arts in Canterbury between the Hon. Judith Tizard (Associate Minister of Arts, Culture and Heritage) and representatives of the local art community.

Blessings for the new Christchurch Art Gallery took place on 1 September, the sesquicentenary of the blessing of the new Christchurch settlement in St Paul's Cathedral, London. Ngai Tahu held a private ceremony to bless the site prior to Dean John Bluck blessing the project in the Christchurch Cathedral. One of the significant aspects of the project will be a large sculpture, *Reasons for Voyaging*, by Christchurch artist Graham Bennett. The sculpture, developed in consultation with the building's architect, David Cole, echoes traditional navigational systems and vessels in an informal grouping of poles with dramatic aerial elements.

In October 'Treasures from Christ Church, Oxford: Old Master drawings and rare works

in precious metals' opened at the McDougall. A rare and remarkable selection of 16th, 17th and 18th century drawings and college and cathedral gold and silver, it marked both the city's sesquicentenary and the end of the McDougall's temporary exhibition programme.

Also in October the city's key cultural institutions hosted the first ICOM (International Council of Museums)/CECA (Committee for Education and Cultural Action) Conference ever held in New Zealand. Convened by Tony Preston, Director of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, its theme of 'Culture as Commodity' attracted 160 museum education specialists from 17 countries and highlighted issues of indigenous culture and national identity, particularly relevant to the Pacific rim.

Respected Canterbury painter, W. A. (Bill) Sutton, died on 23 January. Born in Christchurch in 1917, he lectured for 30 years in Fine Arts at the University of Canterbury. In 1980 he received a CBE and was a patron of the Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. For more than six decades Sutton was a major figure in Canterbury art as a painter, teacher, supporter and mentor. His contribution, influence and generosity will be appropriately acknowledged in a major retrospective exhibition of his work scheduled for the opening of the new Christchurch Art Gallery in 2003.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *The Press*, 28 April 1951, p.2
- <sup>2</sup> Pamphlet *A Proposed New Zealand Arts Council* by E. J. Doudney and Russell Clark, 3 April 1954
- <sup>3</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>4</sup> *The Press*, Christchurch, 1 April 1955
- <sup>5</sup> *Fired Clay: The Story of the Canterbury Potters' Association*.
- <sup>6</sup> *The Press*, 20 February 1959
- <sup>7</sup> *Landfall*, September 1949, p.139.
- <sup>8</sup> *The Press*, 1 March 1962, p.15
- <sup>9</sup> *Carl Sydow (1940-1975): Memorial Exhibition*, Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch, 1979. (p. 1)
- <sup>10</sup> *The Press*, 6 February 1965, p. 16
- <sup>11</sup> *The Star*, 8 June 1966, p. 16
- <sup>12</sup> *The Star*, 3 March 1966, p. 1
- <sup>13</sup> *The Press*, 26 July 1967, p. 1
- <sup>14</sup> *The Press*, 29 July 1967, p. 1
- <sup>15</sup> *The Star*, 25 July 1967, p. 1
- <sup>16</sup> Rudolf Gopas 1967
- <sup>17</sup> *The Press*, 1 July 1968, p. 10
- <sup>18</sup> *The Press*, 25 September 1974, p. 3
- <sup>19</sup> *The Press*, 5 December 1974, p. 15
- <sup>20</sup> T.L.R. Wilson *Christchurch Star*, Wednesday July 9, 1975.
- <sup>21</sup> *Gallery*, July 1981.
- <sup>22</sup> Brett Riley, *The Star*, 19 October 1983, p. 12
- <sup>23</sup> G. T. Moffitt, *The Press*, 16 November 1983, p.15.
- <sup>24</sup> 'Julia Morison: Art as the History of Oneself' *Art New Zealand* 39, 1985, p. 47.
- <sup>25</sup> John Coley, *The Press*, 15 May 1984, p. 8
- <sup>26</sup> *The Press*, 22 July 1987
- <sup>27</sup> *The Star*, 4 December 1987, p. 1
- <sup>28</sup> *Here and Now*, exhibition catalogue, McDougall Contemporary Art Annex, 1988
- <sup>29</sup> Vivienne Stone, *Public Practices*, South Island Arts Projects, 1994
- <sup>30</sup> Elizabeth Caldwell, *What Now? Art for an accelerated culture*, *Art New Zealand* 79, 1996
- <sup>31</sup> Nigel Buxton, quoted in *The Press*, 18 June 1996
- <sup>32</sup> Turning Point 2000 brochure, November 1996.
- <sup>33</sup> Helen Clark, Ministry of Arts and Culture press release, May 2000.



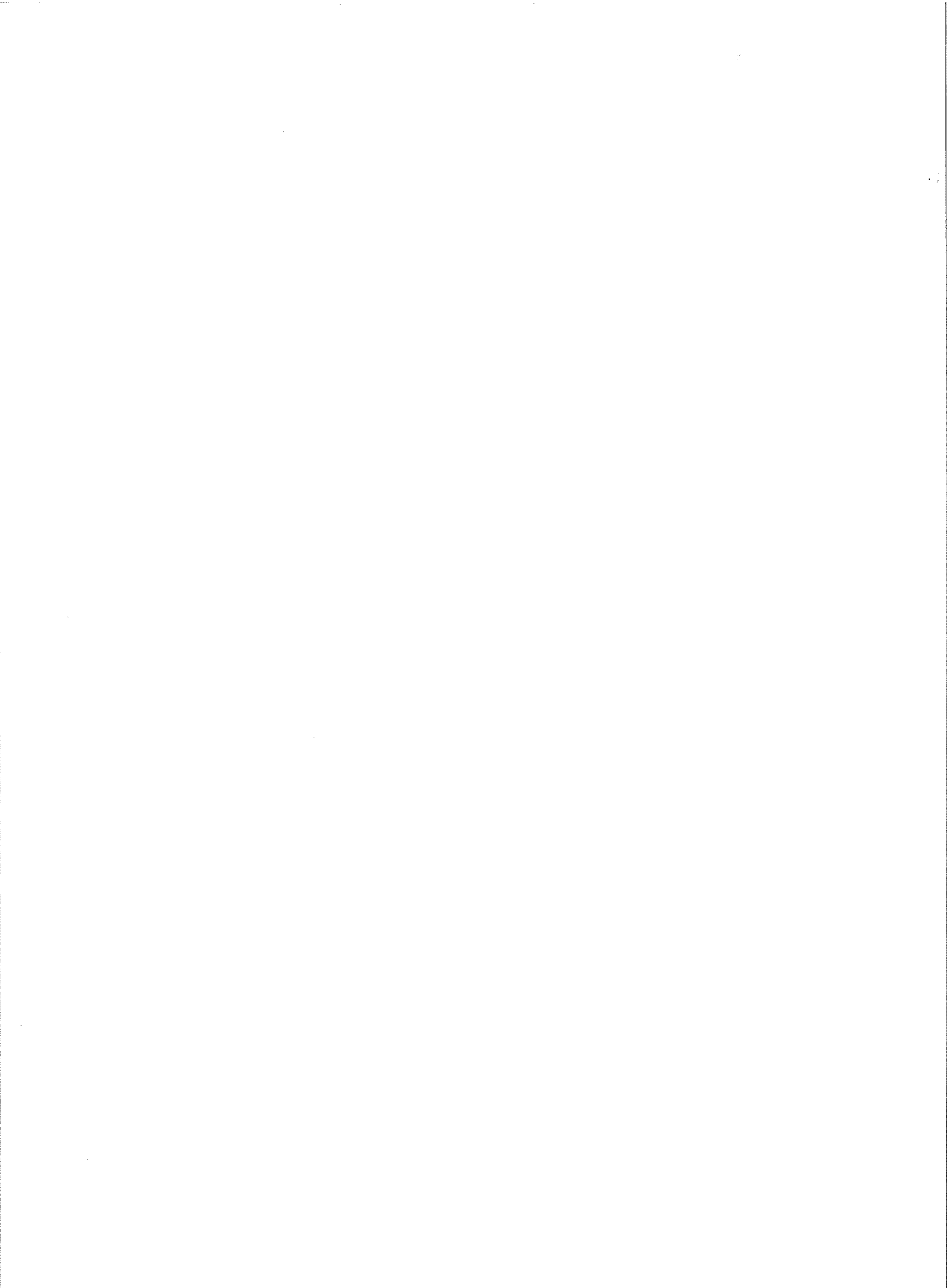
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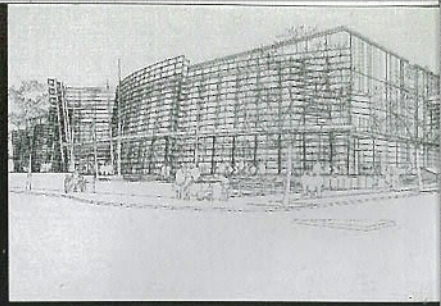
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