

LIBRARY TREASURES

NEW ZEALAND ART WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE

CANTERBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY

EXHIBITED AT THE C.S.A. GALLERY GLOUCESTER ST.

9 FEBRUARY- 5 MARCH 1989.

LIBRARY TREASURES

NZ Art Works from the Canterbury Public Library C.S.A. Gallery 9th February - 5th March 1989

Origins of the collection

The Canterbury Public Library's collection of original art works was started by Ron O'Reilly (1914-1982).

Ron O'Reilly was appointed as City Librarian in 1951 and during his period here made many innovative changes. He mechanised the circulation system, introduced a free lending service and instigated a lending collection of records and paintings.

He had a keen interest in philosophy, literature and New Zealand art and developed personal friendships with many artists including Doris Lusk, Olivia Spencer Bower, Colin McCahon and Toss Woollaston. During his time in Christchurch Ron was deeply involved in the local art scene. He arranged many exhibitions in the library one such being McCahon's "The Wake" in 1959.

He liaised with other galleries in arranging the loans of paintings for other exhibitions, and for a period was art critic for the Press and picture buyer for the CSA Gallery.

In 1953 the Library started its hire service of framed art prints, a selection of 80 reproductions which was confined to works by artists of importance in the history of painting, both old and modern masters.

Shortly afterwards the Library's collection was augmented by two substantial gifts, one from the Redfern Gallery, London of 34 original lithographs by British artists and the other, 39 prints from French cultural funds.

In 1955 the City Council approved extension

of the picture loan service to include original art works by local artists. The maximum purchase price was to be 19 guineas and because of this limitation the artists were often persuaded to sell their work at reduced prices. The prospect of having one's work on such public display was also an inducement to the artist to sell at a reasonable price. By 1960, 50 originals had been acquired. The paintings were selected by Ron O'Reilly at exhibitions, galleries and by visiting the artists in their homes. The Group Shows at the Durham Street Art Gallery provided a useful opportunity for previewing selections along with Gallery 91. and the CSA.

By 1968 when Ron O'Reilly left for Wellington, the collection included 125 New Zealand original paintings. Barbara Collie, currently head cataloguer at the Library continued the tradition of attending exhibitions and visiting local artists to purchase works. In 1981 when purchasing ceased the collection consisted of 297 works.

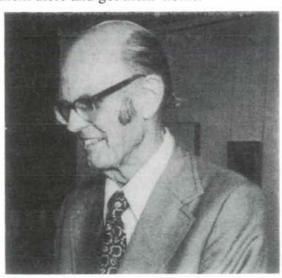
Over the years many of the works have increased considerably in value and some are now housed at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery for reasons of security and preservation.

This exhibition is intended as a tribute to Ron O'Reilly whose insight and astuteness benefitted the New Zealand art community. It will also enable the people of Canterbury who are no longer able to borrow these works to see the collection.

Some reminiscences about Ron O'Reilly from John Stringleman.

" A delightful experience occured when Colin McCahon sent him a painting. I think from memory he gave it to him and Ron had it on the wall of his office. It was a little difficult to interpret but Ron interpreted it as a lake with reflection in the lake. He could explain it all quite clearly. Then he must have had second thoughts about this, because one day I went into his office and there was the painting up the other way, you see. I said to him, "Ron what's the story about this? "Oh, he said looking a bit shamefaced, I asked Colin and it's actually a kauri tree and it goes that way! Sure enough it was clearly what it was. We had a good laugh about that on plenty of occasions.

In the 60's Ron was given two years leave of absence to act as a visiting professor to a library school in Nigeria and at that stage he had never been out of New Zealand before. He had no sort of idea about what was entailed in air travel. The day came and he was leaving Christchurch to fly to Nigeria via Auckland. We took him out to the airport and as we got ready to go, he produced his luggage which apart from his hand luggage and a suitcase, consisted of two great paintings, one a McCahon and one a Woollaston. He couldn't bear to be parted from them and he dragged these all the way to Nigeria as cabin luggage. However he got them there and got them home."



Ron O'Reilly

Exhibition catalogue

- Angus, Rita 1908-1970
 Cape Kidnappers (ca. 1956)
 Watercolour 14¹/₂" x 22"
- Banbury, Campbell Grant 1957-Window reflection 1979
 Mixed media 12" x 12"
 Shown: Brooke Gifford Gallery in own show 1979.
- Bensemann, Leo Vernon 1912-1986
 Rain over Puponga 1978
 Oil on board 18" x 16"
 Shown: Brooke Gifford Gallery 1979.
- Bracey, Edward Nicholas 1936-No. 1 Black May 63.
 PVA 47 1/2" x 38 1/2" Shown: Group show 1963.
- Bracey, Edward Nicholas 1936-Waikato winter landscape PVA on paper 14 1/2" x 20"
- Brooke, Andre 1908-1988
 Harbour no. 2
 Oil 47" x 29¹/₂"
 Shown: Group show 1960
- Brown, Nigel Roderick 1949
 Driveway painting no. 10. 1974
 Oil 24" x 19"
 Shown: Moller's Gallery, Auckland 1975.
- Chaytor, Susan
 Bush landscape, birds 1965
 Oil 35¹/₂" x 47¹/₂"
 Shown: Durham St. Art Gallery 1965.

- Clairmont, Philip Anthony 1949-1984
 Interior of living room 1972.
 Coloured ink, dye and graphite 21¹/₂" x 29¹/₂"
- Clark, Russell Stuart 1905-1966
 Head
 Bronze fibreglass sculpture 11" high
 Shown: Durham St. Art Gallery
 1964.
- Coley, John 1935View of Grafton Gully
 Oil 16¹/₂" x 23¹/₂"

 Toured with NZ collection of paintings to USSR 1959.
 Shown: Group show 1961.
- Cowan, Shona 1940-Still life with teapot 1963 Oil 29" x 23¹/₂"
- Cumming, William Walter 1933-Garden 1976 Acrylic 22" x 22"
- Deans, Austen 1915The Rangitata, sunny 1978
 Watercolour 10" x 14¹/₂"
 Shown: "A family affair" C.S.A.
 1978.
- Fife, Ivy Grace 1903-1976
 Porters Pass, West Canterbury 1965
 Watercolour 21" x 29"
- Fleming, Rona Ngaio (Thompson) 1901-1975
 The Drawbridge, Heathcote. 1957. Oil 19¹/₂" x 23¹/₂" Shown: C.S.A. Autumn exhibition 1958

- Fomison, Anthony Leslie 1939-The Maori and the Pakeha 1963 Diptych 21¹/₂" x 29"
- France, Patricia 1911-The Picnic 1977
 Watercolour 14¹/₂" x 13¹/₂"
- Geddes, Anthony Paul 1947-Group of trees 1971
 PVA 27 1/2" x 351/2"
 Shown: C.S.A 1972
- Gopas, Rudolph 1913- 1983
 Boat harbour 1961
 Watercolour 10¹/₂" x 10"
 Shown: Gopas exhibition, Durham St.
 Art Gallery 1962
- 21. Gopas, Rudolph, 1913-1983 Landscape Oil 27 " x 35" Shown: Group show 1960
- 22. Gopas, Rudolph 1913-1983 Sleeping woman 1959 Oil 33" x 29³/₄" Shown: Group show 1959
- 23. Gopas, Rudolph 1913-1983
 That light of the sun 1977
 Handtinted photocopy 15" x 11"
- 24. Graham, David Hubert 1928-1972 Pegasus Bay 1961 Watercolour 10" x 14¹/₂"
- Hanly, Patrick 1932-New Order 23 Part II 1963 Oil 43" x 30¹/₂"

- Hanly, Patrick 1932-Showgirl and gentleman 1960 Monotype 19" x 26"
- 27. Henderson, Louise 1912-Memory 1970PVA 15" x 22"Shown: C.S.A. at her own show.
- Henderson, Louise 1912-Woman on sofa
 Coloured lithograph 13" x 18"
 Purchased: Group show
- Hope, Esther 1885-1975
 Wintertime, Mt. Sefton
 Watercolour 15¹/₄" x 22³/₈"
 Shown: C.S.A. 1959
- Lusk, Doris 1916-Hills from Springfield 1961 Watercolour 14¹/₂" x 22" Shown: Group show 1961
- Lusk, Doris 1916 Late afternoon, Nelson Province
 Oil 23³/₄" x 29"
- Lusk, Doris 1916 State Hydro, Tuai, Waikaremoana
 Oil 26¹/₂" x 17³/₄"
- McCahon, Colin 1919-1987
 Kauri tree landscape
 Oil 30" x 22"
- McCahon, Colin 1919-1987
 Red and black landscape 1959
 Solpah 26¹/₂" x 17¹/₂"

- 35. MacFarlane, Quentin 1935-Last snow 1960 Duco lacquer 30" x 23¹/₂" Shown: Group show 1960
- MacFarlane, Quentin 1935-Marine sketch
 PVA 32¹/₂" x 34"
 Shown: C.S.A. 1966.
- Mannir.g, Dorothy 1925-Interior no. 1 Oil 17³/₄" x 13¹/₂"
- Moffitt, Gilbert Trevor 1936-Embrace 1967
 Oil 14¹/₂" x 14"
 Shown: Group show 1967
- Paul, Joanna 1945-Bedstead 1975
 Oil 12¹/₂" x 48"
 Shown: "Women's Art" Robert McDougall Art Gallery 1975.
- 40. Peebles, Donald 1922-Composition 1958 Oil 36" x 32" Shown: Gallery 91 1959
- 41. Spencer-Bower, Olivia 1905-1982 Beeches Watercolour 18¹/₂" x 22"
- 42. Spencer-Bower, Olivia 1905-1982 The dive 1958 Watercolour 20⁵/₈" x 33" Shown: Group show 1959

- Stoddart, Margaret 1865-1934
 Sugar Loaf, Cashmere
 Watercolour 17" x 18¹/₂"
- 44. Sutton, William Alexander 1917 Three Chairs Oil 22¹/₄" x 32³/₄"
- 45. Thompson, Sydney 1877-1973 Autumn on the Avon Oil 8¹/₂" x 10"
- 46. Tole, John 1890-1967 Landscape with eminence 1947 Oil 14" x 16"
- Trusttum, Philip Spencer 1940-Drawing
 Pen and ink with wash 9¹/₂" x 8¹/₂"
- 48. Trusttum, Philip Spencer 1940-Interior 1973 Oil on hardboard 24" x 24¹/₂"
- 49. Warr, Malcolm 1939-Karaka 1965 Oil 24" x 21" Shown: Group show 1965
- 50. Weeks, John 1888-1965 Still Life 1956 Oil 11¹/₂" x 9³/₄"
- Woollaston, Mountford Tosswill 1910-Apparition of a man 1964 Watercolour 15" x 12"

- Woollaston, Mountford Tosswill Hokitika River 1957
 Oil 17¹/₄" x 22⁵/₈"
- Woollaston, Mountford Tosswill Two white chairs Oil 22³/₄" x 17⁵/₈"

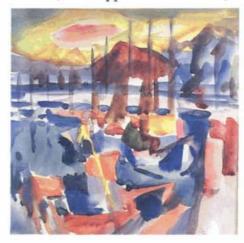
Convenor: Jill Richardson Research: Anne Drent Paul Sutherland Cover and poster design:

Thanks to the staff of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery and the CSA for their assistance in mounting this exhibition.

Simon Coley



Woollaston, M. Apparition of a man, 1964.



Gopas, R. Boat harbour, 1961.