



Bulletin

The Robert McDougall Art Gallery

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

Number 26

March/April 1983

ISSN 0111-1426

Bumper Attendances in 1982

Visitations to the Gallery totalled 101,105 when counting ceased on December 31, 1982. The figure represented a 16% increase in numbers attending the Gallery over the 1981 figure and was the fourth highest recorded since the McDougall's opening in 1932.

Excitement mounted among the staff as it became apparent that attendance tallies could reach the magic 100,000 mark, but good crowds in the post-Christmas holiday period boosted numbers and it was a young visitor from Queensland, Miss Shirley Booth, who was the 100,000 visitor. She received the gift of a print by Christchurch printmaker Kathy Anderson. A further 1,105 persons visited the gallery by the time counting ceased at the month's end. The total figure for the preceding year, when a drop in attendances was experienced by art galleries and museums throughout New Zealand, was 85,891.

An estimated 8,254 students and visitors from various institutions and organisations came to the gallery in groups during the year, an increase of almost 25% on the previous year's figure of 6,237.

Several factors could account for the increase in attendances. A varied and interesting programme of exhibitions means that there is something fresh to see at the Gallery but greater numbers of educational visits, the banners on Rolleston Avenue showing the Gallery's location and greater advertising has led to a greater awareness of the Gallery's presence in the community.

The 1983 target is again 100,000 visits with the year off to a flying start with a remarkable 11,396 attendances recorded for the month of January, almost twice that of January 1981's very respectable figure of 6,581.

The Robert McDougall Art Gallery
P.O. Box 237 Christchurch.
Botanic Gardens, Rolleston Avenue,
Christchurch 1.
791-660 Extension 484

Retirement of Miss Barbara De Lambert

Miss Barbara de Lambert, Reception/Information Officer, retired in early February.

Barbara joined the Gallery staff in 1974 and worked with Brian Muir to bring about the improvements to the Gallery and its services which occurred during his period as Director.

Barbara took works from the collection to schools in the region and organised exhibitions with material drawn from the Gallery's holdings, in a number of South Island centres.



Barbara de Lambert at the farewell tea.

In 1975 Barbara assisted with the preparation of "The Impressionists" exhibition, writing the catalogue notes. She also carried out research and contributed to the quarterly "Survey" published by the Gallery.

Widely travelled, Barbara taught art in Great Britain, Australia and was Art Mistress at Rangi Ruru School before coming to the McDougall. It was natural that education should be one of Barbara's chief concerns. She made many visits to schools speaking about the gallery and its collections. More recently, as Information Officer, Barbara has been the first contact the public has made with the Gallery both by telephone and in person. In this capacity she has answered innumerable queries from visitors.

Barbara's retirement will not mean inactivity. She has been closely involved with the Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery besides being a keen gardener and animal lover.

Her colleagues wish her a happy retirement and hope that through the Friends her close involvement with the Gallery will continue into the future.

Art Talks

This year the Gallery's weekend concert programme will be extended by a series of informal lectures we are calling our 'Art Talks'. In these we will have the opportunity to meet and to hear a number of artists, art historians and art people who can offer special background and insight into selected Gallery exhibitions.

An Art Talk will be offered each month on a Sunday afternoon and admission will be free. An outline of the programme which needs to be flexible to take full advantage of special opportunities as they appear will be available at the Gallery desk and we are sure Gallery supporters and friends will find the *Art Talks* a thoroughly rewarding and enjoyable component of the 1983 OutReach programme.

Six works by G.T. Moffitt have been presented to the gallery by Mr J. Summers with assistance from the 'Everyman' Fund.

Donors to the 'Everyman' Fund Suite of 6 paintings by G.T. Moffitt recently presented to the Gallery:

Mrs Nola Barron, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Mr N.H. Buchanan, Mr P.D. Dunbar, Mr & Mrs J.M.D. & W.E. Hall, Miss Valerie Heinz, Mrs Doris Holland, Dr R. Jackaman, Mr J. Knox, Dr & Mrs I.J. & L.E. Lochhead, Mr R. Lucas, Mrs S. McAuliffe, Mr & Mrs B.K. & B.M. McLachlan, Mr & Mrs A.R. & G. McLean, Mr & Mrs A.W. & U.C. Ryan, Mr P.J. Skellerup, Mr John Summers, Mr W.A. Sutton, Mr & Mrs T.F. & E.J. Thompson, Mrs Margaret Wood, Mrs Faith Wright, Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

**Greer Twiss, A Survey 1959 — 1981:
March 18 — April 18**

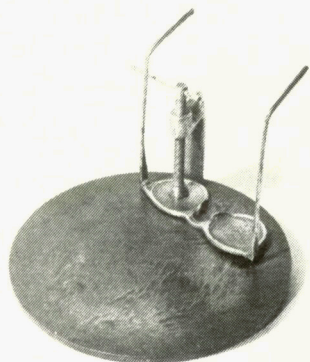
This exhibition of sculpture and drawings by Greer Twiss, organised by the Wellington City Art Gallery, offers us a rare opportunity to see a comprehensive survey of work produced by one of New Zealand's leading sculptors.

During the twenty years surveyed we are shown a number of changes in style, technique, subject matter and treatment of materials as a number of interesting ideas and developments are explored. Central to these has been a consistent concern with movement, the way in which we perceive things and the visual, mental and language relationship between the different ideas and objects. Over the years the works have become more abstract but they are still clearly related to familiar devices and tools.

In the earlier works we see Twiss exploring the movements of athletes with straining figures, muscles stretching to breaking point and expressed in the fluid brass forms of a lost wax casting. In later works the ambiguities in the properties and appearances of different materials are explored as soft elements, knotted ropes, cloth and cushions are direct cast in hard metal.

The most recent series '*Tripods*' form a fitting climax to the exhibition. The human figure having gradually been reduced and finally removed is now evoked by reference to simple tools. In commanding long-legged constructions "too tall for human use, and the elements on top... have no obvious function — yet the total aesthetic is utilitarian, with elements all usable objects..."

Greer Twiss was born in Auckland in 1937. He attended the Auckland School of Art between 1956-59 graduating with a Diploma of Fine Arts. In 1965 he was awarded a Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council travel grant which enabled him to study foundry techniques in Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. In 1966 he joined the staff of the School of Fine Arts in Auckland where he is now Head of the Sculpture Department.



Full stop clamp 1974, Greer Twiss.

**Ewe and Eye, Barry Cleavin,
April 26 — May 28**

The Christchurch printmaker Barry Cleavin has on many occasions been labelled as a controversial artist and his prints, though well received by critics, have been labelled "self-indulgent", "willful" and occasionally even "offensive" or "pornographic".

The incisiveness of his vision and a certain savagery and taste for the exotic which he brings to his finely figurative images are often combined with a fine sense of humour. As the catalogue says, this exhibition of works from 1966-1981 "does not celebrate any special event, a birthday, a change of course in the work. Instead it has been seized as an opportunity to pause in mid flight, to take stock of what has happened to date, to become more familiar with one of the country's most forceful artists and to reassess our notions of what Cleavin's work is about".

The biting comment and pithy statement is traditionally the distinctive element of the print maker's art. Christchurch viewers will be given the opportunity in the 150 prints and 10 drawings assembled in this exhibition to consider their own responses to Cleavin's edge or bite.

Acquisitions:

The following works have been recently purchased.

Untitled

Catherine Anselini,
Pit fired Porcelain.

Hole Slip Stream,

Neil Dawson,
Rock, wire mesh, enamel paint.

Finale 1982 Demolition Series,

Doris Lusk,
Acrylic on Canvas/Board.

Salamander 1981

Mervyn Williams,
Acrylic on Canvas.

Untitled,

Theresa Maguire,
Acrylic on Canvas.

Marching Girls,

Paul Radford,
Pencil/Acrylic on Paper.

Untitled,

Claudia Pond Eyley
Screenprint, hand coloured.

Oceania,

Gordon Crook, (Woven by Lesley Nicholls),
Tapestry.

A Gust of Wind,

Anthony Geddes,
Acrylic on Board.

**Bustin at the McDougall
April 6 — May 8**

Debra Bustin is a Wellington artist who has rapidly gained a widespread reputation for the high energy installations and happenings she has created over the last eighteen months. She is a much talked about young artist whose environments provoke strong reactions. Her work is difficult to describe, as is any work of originality, but "total" art gives an approximation of her walk-in, wrap-around installations that attempt to envelope the viewer. The Bustin experience involves space, painted imagery and touch and from what we have heard of her earlier exhibitions, it is a memorable experience. We are pleased to be able to bring Debra Bustin's very individual art to Christchurch.

From the Gallery Diary 1966-1982:

This concludes the series of jottings from the Gallery's diaries over the past 50 years.

1966 March 14 The sculpture '*The Bather a Fragment*' purchased finally after much controversy.

July 20 The first security alarm system was installed.

July 25 Preview of the touring Marcel Duchamp exhibition held. This exhibition became the subject of much controversy.

1968 January 30 The Christchurch Press reports "McDougall ranked second to Auckland in showing travelling shows".

March 6 Mr H.H.C. Palmer, the gallery custodian retires after thirty years.

1969 July 2 Mr B.D. Muir appointed Director on the retirement of Mr W.S. Baverstock.

1971 November 12 The Society of Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery formed.

1972 June 26 Portrait of Mexico Exhibition opened. Attendances were a record for the gallery up to that time.

1974 May 25 The Wizard offers himself as a living work of art. The offer is refused on the grounds that a living work of art would be impossible to maintain in its original condition.

1978 September 19 Dr T.L. Rodney Wilson appointed Director.

November 29 Excavations commence on basement storage extensions.

1980 September 5 Opening of *Ikon-Inspired Art* exhibition.

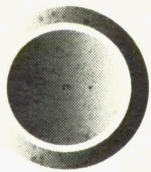
September 22 John Coley appointed Director.

November 11 Opening of the exhibition '*A Century of Modern Masters*' by the Duke of Kent.

1981 August 11 Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery Incorporated.

1982 February 2 The new Conservation Laboratory is opened.

June 16 The Gallery celebrated its Jubilee.



Newsletter

Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery Inc

Annual General Meeting

The second Annual General Meeting of the Friends will be held at 8.00 p.m. on Thursday 24 March in the Gallery. We are sure that members will wish to know of the progress of their Society in the first full year of its incorporation and we look forward to meeting you all there.

At one of last year's coffee mornings Gerrit van der Lingen, a member of the committee spoke on "the joys of travel, artwise". No one knew quite what to expect, and no one was prepared for the vivid, kaleidoscopic entertainment he presented. He will repeat his talk after the business of the evening is concluded, and then we can mix socially over supper and wine.

Coffee Mornings

The second coffee morning of the year will be on Wednesday 16 March at 10.30 a.m. when Julie King will speak on the work of Margaret Stoddart. Those who were present at last year's Annual General Meeting will recall Mrs King's account of Henriette Browne and can look forward to an equally fascinating and informed account of Miss Stoddart's life and paintings.

The following Coffee Morning will be on Wednesday 20 April, when Doris Lusk will be the speaker. She will tell us about her last visit to Europe and the effects upon her work of her experiences there.

New Members:

W.R.N. Thompson,
E & D Beardsley,
Mr and Mrs C.W. Caldwell,
Dr & Mrs H.A. Livingston,
Ms K. Manhire,
Chris Glasson,
A.D.L. Tapley,
Tom Taylor.

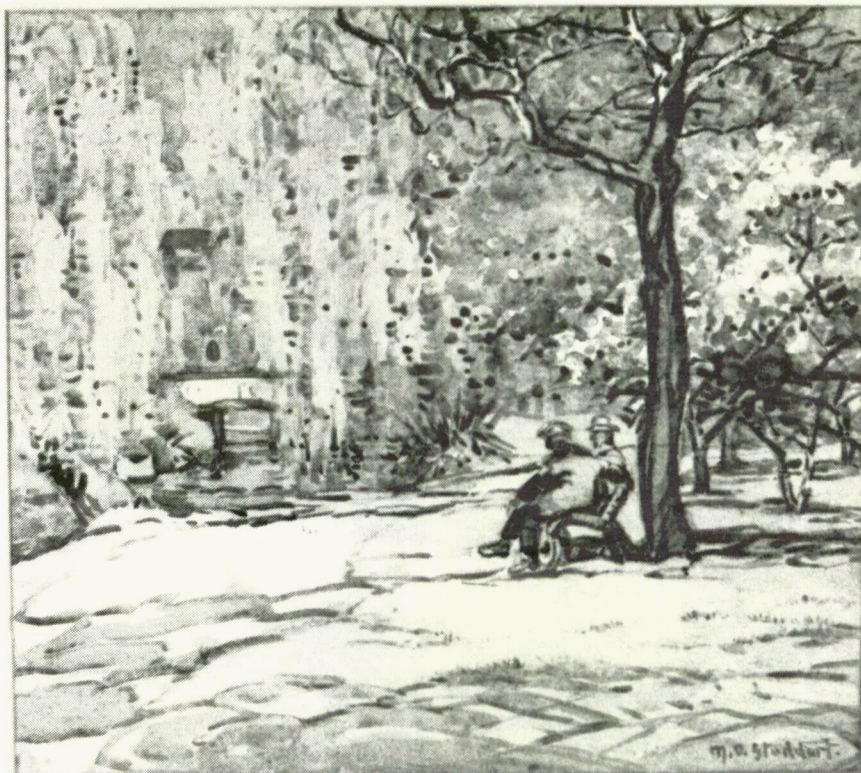
P.O. Box 237, Christchurch
Botanic Gardens, Rolleston Ave.,
President — Robert Erwin, 558-675
Secretary — Pat Unger, 487-482
Treasurer — Anne Crighton, 557-737

Friends Christmas Gathering

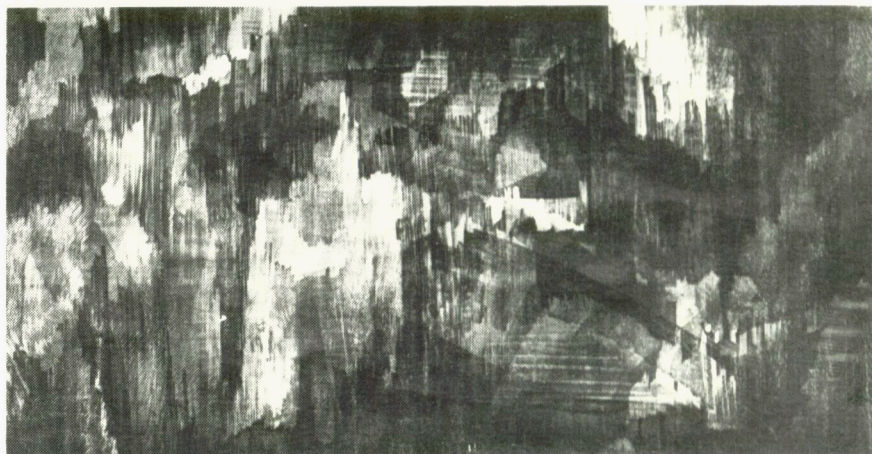
This proved to be a very happy evening as well as an important one for the Society. Mrs Stirrat, one of our two first Life Members, presented to the Gallery, on behalf of the Friends of the McDougall, the first work purchased from our Acquisition Fund, a watercolour by Margaret Stoddart. A second work, a splendid woodcut by a young artist, Marty

Vreede, was also given to the gallery by your Society.

The whole occasion was a festive one; a new colourful exhibition — *Seven Painters — The Eighties*; and two brackets of songs, including of course some carols delightfully sung by the Aurelian Singers. All in all this was a most pleasant evening, the kind people seemed reluctant to conclude.



Spring on the Avon 1925, Margaret Stoddart.



Untitled 2/5 impression, Marty Vreede.

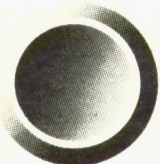


Coming Events

The Robert McDougall Art Gallery

March — April

- March**
- 1 **Colin McCahon — A Singular Vision** until March 16.
The Camera and Dr Barnado until March 27.
Craft from the Collection
Recent acquisitions and Works on Paper
Helen Darby — Canterbury Review until April 3.
Robert Jesson until March 20.
 - 6 **Gallery Concert Amici Orchestra.** Haydn, Symphony No 47, and Respighi.
Conducted by John Pattinson, 3.00 p.m.
 - 16 **Friends Coffee Morning.** Julie King will speak on the work of
Margaret Stoddart 10.30 a.m.
 - 18 **Greer Twiss Opening** until April 18.
 - 20 Works by Ralph Hotere from the Collection.
 - 24 **Annual General Meeting of Friends of Robert McDougall Art
Gallery** 8 p.m. followed by Gerrit van der Lingen's "The Joys of
Travel Artwise."
- April**
- 1 **Greer Twiss** until April 24.
Helen Darby — Canterbury Review.
Works by Ralph Hotere from the Collection.
Craft from the Collection.
 - 6 **Bustin at the McDougall** until May 8.
 - 10 **Gallery Concert,** Farandol Dancers 3.00 p.m.
 - 17 **Art Talk:** Julie King will speak on Henriette Browne's *La Lecture de
la Bible* 3 p.m.
 - 20 **Friends Coffee Morning.** Doris Lusk will speak on her last visit to
Europe and the effects on her work of her experiences there.
 - 26 **Barry Cleavin, Ewe and Eye Exhibition** until May 28.



**Friends of the Robert McDougall Art
Gallery Inc.**