



Christchurch City Council



The Robert McDougall Art Gallery

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Robert McDougall Art Gallery
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Art and Organised Labour



Art and Organised Labour February 1–March 8 1992

Art and Organised Labour, is the first major thematic survey of New Zealand working class art to examine complex issues of cultural identity. This exhibition from the Wellington City Art Gallery testifies to their commitment to explore the nature and diversity of contemporary visual art issues.

Art and Organised Labour has developed around two overlapping concepts of historical moment and identity. The first deals with art and imagery created in response to major historical events in the labour movement in New Zealand—often as a result of protest and struggle.

The other category, identity, explores images produced initially by organised labour and union groups. It represents the ideals and aspirations of the working class. But identity also incorporates art and imagery produced from outside the labour movement—from media, advertising, cartoons, films, paintings and sculpture.

“The exhibition examines the way the image of the working class has built up

and how the labour movement has been depicted” said Curator Greg Burke. “This is not an historical show but it is essential to look at certain historical events which affected collective consciousness. These events drove imagery and imagery comes out of moments of struggle and urgency”.

Frequently the imagery of the union movement was mass produced—photographs, posters or cartoons. They were not made for aesthetic reasons but designed as tools to convey a message.

Art and Organised Labour coincided with the 100th anniversary of the 1890 maritime strike which the Trade Union Movement in New Zealand takes as its birth. The exhibition, a major New Zealand 1990 Project, was organised with the assistance of the Trade Union Education Authority and the Trade Union History Project. It has received substantial financial support from the New Zealand 1990 Commission as well as a grant from the exhibition programme, visual arts, Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand. It is sponsored by Union Shipping Group Limited and New Zealand Stevedoring Company Limited.

Images of Home and Garden

The Robert McDougall's 1991-1992 summer exhibition **Images of Home and Garden** was opened by former Christchurch Mayor Sir Hamish Hay representing the exhibition's sponsors Trust Bank Canterbury on October 24. A large marquee was erected in front of the gallery to accommodate the 350 people attending. Introducing Sir Hamish Hay, Cr Charles Manning, Chairman of the Christchurch City Council's Cultural and Community Services Committee, referred to the considerable logistical exercise involved in bringing together the many works in the exhibition and thanked the sponsors, Trust Bank Canterbury, and all who loaned works or contributed to the enterprise. Sir Hamish referred to Trust Bank Canterbury's previous support for McDougall projects and the appropriateness of the Home and Garden theme for Canterbury People indicated the Bank's continuing interest in future McDougall exhibitions before declaring the exhibition open. **Images of Home and Garden** closes on January 26 1992.



The Director and Staff would like to wish all gallery patrons a very Merry Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.



Mark Whyte/Will Collison
December 12 1991–January 21 1992

During December and January the Robert McDougall Art Annex will present a collaborative installation of kinetic and light sculpture by artists Mark Whyte and Will Collison.

Both artists are former graduates of the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts and have participated in numerous group exhibitions over the past decade.

The installation promises to be a *tour de force* in the sculptural dimension and this new work is keenly awaited.

A preview of the exhibition will be held at 5.00pm on Wednesday December 11. All welcome.

Gavin Chilcott
January 30–March 3 1992

Throughout February works by Gavin Chilcott, the 1991 Trust Bank Canterbury Artist in Residence will be on display at the Annex.

Gavin Chilcott has worked in a variety of media over the years and explored many art forms. As well as painting, drawing and printmaking Chilcott has been involved in designs for furniture, rugs and ceramics.

The works in this exhibition will be mostly paintings, drawings and sculptures completed in 1991 during the term of his residency.

A preview of Gavin Chilcott's work will be held at 5.00pm on January 29 when Friends of the Gallery and Artists will be welcome to attend.

New Members

Helen S. Ballantyne
Ruth Brown
Estelle Henry
Lyn Holland
Mrs H. McMaster
Joan Radcliffe
I. J. Smith
V. N. Strack
Kathleen and Peter Tucker
Phillipa Tucker

Recent Aquisitions

The following works have been acquired:

Jeffrey Harris

Next to Nothing, 1980
Etching 17/50

It must have slipped my mind, 1978
Etching 3/3

Portobello, 1978
Etching 35/50

The Seventh Dream, 1977
Etching 4/40

The Betrayal
Etching 4/45

What a fool, 1980
Etching 4/45

Which Way? 1980
Etching 3/45

Figures in Interior, 1973
Etching 1/5

Crucified Figure and Figures in Landscape, 1977
Etching 15/20

Our Reflection, 1978
Etching 3/45

The Beginning, 1980
Etching 21/30

Supper at Emmaus, 1973
Etching

My dream of the North Island
Etching 17/50

Why? 1980
Etching 29/45

The Departure, 1980
Etching 13/50

Crucifixion, 1973
Etching

On the Road, 1978
Etching

The Party, 1971
Etching 3/20

The Storm, 1980
Etching 1/40

Self Portrait, 1973
Etching

The Growth of a Dead Child, 1977
Etching 9/30

Leo Bensemam

Rain in the Paradise Garden, Takaka, 1979
Oil on Hardboard

Denis O'Connor

The Gorse-King
Limestone sculpture—31 pieces

Martin Whitworth

Alphabet
Acrylic on canvas

Frank Wright

Maori Village
Oil on Canvas

Barry Cleavin

Moeraki—a Place to rest by day, 1991
a series of 10 etchings

Robin White

Postcard from Pleasant Island, III
Screenprint 1/30

Barry Cleavin

From Time to Time
Etching

Barry Cleavin

Operational Profiles
a series of 5 etchings
Presented to the gallery by the artist:

Barry Cleavin

From the Land Sea Air—Moeraki
Etching

From Moeraki, 1991

Etching

Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery Inc.

President—Hilary Langer 348-3982

Vice-President—Margaret Ann Tan 348-6769

Treasurer—Chris Brocket 355-7133

Secretary—Gwen Wilton 663-675

Membership Secretary—Marie Lockey 388-5075



Christchurch Civic Art Gallery Trust

On Friday September 13 the Friends set up a new venture in the arts in Canterbury by launching the Christchurch Civic Art Gallery Trust. Among those present were the three patrons of the Friends—Lady Hay, Lady Diana Isaac and Mr W. A. Sutton, as well as past members of the executive, including Robert Erwin, the first president.

John Coley spoke first, followed by Hilary Langer, and then David Stock, the chairman of the new Trust.

The purpose of the Trust is to benefit the Christchurch public art gallery, presently the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, by accumulating and managing substantial assets in a competent manner. The Trust has wide powers enabling it to accept gifts in whatever form and to manage them in the best interests of the gallery. It would not become involved in acquisition except by way of financial support.

The trustees would promote the Trust's activities in the region, especially to professionals such as solicitors and accountants. Three of the five-member Board of Trustees are well qualified to do this, experienced as they are in law, accountancy, insurance and the management of investment, estates and trusts. They are David Stock, Malcolm Ott and Chris Brocket. The other two appointments are Hilary Langer, representing the Friends, and John Coley as director of the Robert McDougall Gallery. The terms of office of the trustees overlap, and the director's successor in perpetuity must be a person qualified in art museology.

The Friends have given the Trust \$25,000 as an initial grant, and expect to make regular donations in the future.

Speaker of the Month

December—No Meeting

January 1992—No Meeting

February

On February 19, Mary Jane Duffy will talk on "The Christchurch Artist's Collective". Mary Jane is a Masters student in art history, a feminist scholar, and a member of the Collective. Coffee and tea will be served at 10.30am at the main McDougall Art Gallery \$1.50 members, \$2.50 non-members.



John Coley, Chris Brocket, David Stock, and Hilary Langer at the Trust Lunch.



Jenny Shadwell, Gwen Wilton, and Marie Lockey at the Trust Lunch.

Speaker of the Month September

To give her talk about stained glass Rena Jarosewitsch had to come just a few metres from her studio to the Annex. Referring first to a large panel in a private house, she explained the use of machine-blown glass for background and hand-blown for detail, and the balance between opaque and transparent areas. A back-lit internal window for the Housing Commission in Wellington showed a remarkable sympathy with Maori and Pacific colours and forms. She showed a circular window two metres in diameter for a church at Wanaka. She then discussed her greatest challenge—the Mt Erebus memorial in St Matthew's, Auckland. To the main feature of dense white areas she had added such symbolic elements as indications of a map, flowers on the glass, broken forms, and the flight number 901. Turning to technicalities of her craft, Rena showed the effects of bubbles in glass and of gradations and layering. She also told how she had depicted relationship issues on folding screens—problems of identity, decision making and uncertainty.

Speaker of the Month October

Graham Bennett's talk was well timed: his exhibition had opened the night before and his sculpture had been sited just days earlier. These works had come from a three-month residency in 1988 at Nelson Polytechnic. They showed his artistic responses to the Boulder Bank from many different perspectives—geographical, commercial, environmental and prehistorical. The sculpture consists of a forty metre long arrangement of twenty squares of steel beams, with sides of 2.1 metres, each with a diagonal, half containing laminated glass, tinted and reflective. Graham wanted to integrate the vertical, horizontal and the diagonal as essentials of design and as features discernible in the Boulder Bank. Wishing also to integrate the natural and the manufactured, he described the installing of the work at the midwinter solstice of 1991, the rapid rusting, the cold and the storms; and he showed photographs of the structure under the full moon and at sunrise.

Contrasts—An Exhibition of Works by Petrus van der Velden

February 6–April 19 1992

Abel Janszoon Tasman (1603–1659) is a name that is immediately identified with the earliest Dutch contact with New Zealand.

In 1992 the Abel Tasman commemorative year marking the 350th anniversary of the sighting of the west coast of the North and South Islands will be celebrated. The land Tasman sighted was first named Staten Landt and later changed to Zealandia Nova. However, Abel Tasman's visit was just a beginning of Dutch association and influence in this country.

Until the second half of the nineteenth century few people of Dutch descent emigrated here but over the past century this has changed and Dutch born citizens have contributed immensely to the growth of many spheres of New Zealand society and culture.

Many Dutch born artists have established an identity in New Zealand, but few could be said to have made the impact that came from the work of Petrus van der Velden (1837–1913). It is for this reason that when it was decided to mount an exhibition in recognition of the Abel Tasman year, Van der Velden was the obvious choice for Canterbury. Like Tasman his activity though as an artist signalled a beginning, one that put New Zealand landscape painting on a new course of discovery. As an artist Van der Velden was not only able to invest the New Zealand landscape with new meanings but also able to show by example what being a professional meant.

In colonial Christchurch Van der Velden found genteel Victorian society rather narrow in its attitudes and acceptance. It lacked the cultural breadth that he had become accustomed to, and taken for granted in Holland. As a mature artist in self imposed exile in the South Pacific he quickly realised the effects of having cut himself adrift from the stimulus of his Dutch contemporaries. This isolation, often the lot of immigrant artists, drove Van der Velden to try and assert his identity in the country in which he now lived.

In New Zealand the land was the dominating force so it was logical that it was



Parlder Landscape, Petrus van der Velden, c. 1870–1871.

through landscape painting that an identity would be forged. In Holland, Van der Velden was not known as a landscape painter, but rather as a marine artist. His prime concern was people and their interaction with their harsh environment, particularly the sea.

During the years prior to his arrival his response to the lives of people and the sea had given rise to his distinctive *Marken* series of paintings of which the *Funeral* cycle was the most poignant.

Many of the subjects he explored at this time he brought with him to New Zealand and continued to paint. As a member of the Hague School he was able to implant something of nineteenth century Dutch realism. Its effects were first realised in the early work of a number of Canterbury artists among them Sydney L. Thompson, Robert Procter and Raymond McIntyre. However it was through the *Otira* series of paintings begun in 1891 that Van der Velden was able to make a mark by externalising the spirit of the New Zealand landscape. He revealed that it held more for the artist than just its topographical features.

Van der Velden establish an identity in a way that could be said to not really be matched until the emergence of Colin McCahon half a century later.

The Otira imagery was as much symbolic as it was real although Van der Velden may not have initially intended it to be so. In the Otira Valley he made a discovery like Tasman but it is one that Tasman may not have understood. The Otira, Van der Velden found to be a microcosm of what the energy of the New Zealand landscape was all about in its stark brooding, dramatic contrasts. The Otira paintings gave him an individuality as a painter of the landscape that was not always accepted. However the factor that placed him apart from other New Zealand colonial painters in the 1890s was his unwillingness to compromise his work for the sake of social acceptance and it was for this reason he was to remain largely an outsider. He never gained the level of recognition he deserved and felt was his due. He sacrificed a great deal to hold on to his integrity as a professional artist.

The exhibition will explore broadly through selected drawings and paintings the work of Petrus van der Velden both in Holland and New Zealand. It will include several key works from both the *Marken* and *Otira* series. Many are from the Robert McDougall Art Gallery's own collection but others have been borrowed from a number of public and private collections.

Dutch celebrations

It has been announced that Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands may visit the Robert McDougall Art Gallery to view the *Contrasts—Petrus van der Velden*.

European Treasures

Great Paintings from Machiavelli to Monet

The gallery, at the time of publishing the *Bulletin*, is endeavouring to secure the exhibition *European Treasures* from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. All going well we hope to present this major and exciting exhibition during February and March of 1992.

John Coley to attend British Council Course

The McDougall Gallery Director, John Coley, is to attend a British Council organised seminar, "Managing Museums and Galleries in the 90s" in Liverpool and London during November. The list of speakers at the ten day seminar is a "Who's Who" of British Museums' experts including Dr Neil Cossons, Director of the Science Museum, London and Robin Wade, the Museum designer who visited Christchurch in 1979 to advise on the relocation of the Art Gallery. The topics to be discussed embrace a multitude of concerns from art experience for inner city children to the marketing and promotion of museums. John Coley will have a particular interest in learning how British museums have responded to "user pays" philosophy. The course includes several group tours of museums and galleries including the New Tate Gallery in Liverpool, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the recently established Design Museum in London. Following the course, Mr Coley will visit Paris to study the Pompidou Centre, the Musee d'Orsay, the Jeu de Paume and Musee Picasso, and the I.M. Pei alterations to the Louvre, all new developments since his last visit to France in 1976.

Mr Coley's travel is at no cost to the ratepayer, being funded by grants from the British Council, The Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council and the Molly Morpeth Canaday Bequest.

Lynn Campbell's Photographic Conservation Workshop

Lynn Campbell, the gallery's Conservator, has just returned from London where she took part in a photographic Conservation Workshop run by the well-known photographic conservators, Ian and Angela Moore. The workshop included treatments of both negatives and positives from early plate glass Daguerreotypes and Fox Talbot photogenic drawings to modern cibachromes. Identification of all photographic processes, storage, display, the refurbishment of containers was also covered in the two week course.

Lectures were attended at the Royal Photographic Society, one on the photographer Ponting and the other on the Isle of Wight Photographers of the late 19th century.

Lynn also visited the Fox Talbot Museum in Lacock and saw the Annual International Photographic Exhibition held in Bath at the Royal Photographic Society Gallery. Whilst in London, Lynn visited the conservation departments of the Tate Gallery and the British Museum to meet colleagues and learn of new methods and techniques developed in the last few years.

Readers with photographs of interest, either historical or technical, requiring conservation should contact Lynn Campbell who would be interested to examine them.

The Group Assist with Bensemann Acquisition

A painting by the late Leo Bensemann, **Rain in the Paradise Garden, Takaka, 1979** has been acquired with the assistance of funds which were the residue of the activities of The Group, the artists organisation formed in 1927 and disbanded in 1977. Leo Bensemann was a leading member of The Group and the remaining members considered that the acquisition of a work by the artist for the McDougall's Collection would be an appropriate use for The Group's remaining assets and a fitting way of acknowledging Leo Bensemann's contribution to The Group and to the visual arts in Canterbury.

Neil Dawson's Latest Success

Christchurch's Lake Victoria is the subject of Neil Dawson's latest sculpture being exhibited in Adelaide.

The floating sculpture is a "snapshot" of Lake Victoria and the reflection of trees around it, which is suspended between two large concrete shells of the forthcoming Adelaide Festival (February 28-March 21 1992).

We would like to extend our congratulations to Christchurch sculptor Neil Dawson who contributes to secure a very successful international reputation.

Sunday Lecture

On December 8 at 2.00pm Thelma Strongman will give a slide lecture on *The History and Development of Landscape Design International*. The lecture will be held at the McDougall Art Gallery and admission is free.

Coming Events

- December**
- 3 **Implantations** at the Annex closes
 - 4 Wednesday Club 10.30am
 - 8 Sunday Lecture 2.00pm. Thelma Strongman will give the second of her lectures.
 - 8 Friends Christmas Lunch
 - 11 **Will Collison/Mark Whyte** opening at the Annex: 5.00pm. All welcome
 - 12 **Will Collison/Mark Whyte** opens to the public at the Annex
- January**
- 21 **Will Collison/Mark Whyte** closes
 - 26 **Images of Home and Garden** closes
 - 29 **Gavin Chilcott**: Trust Bank Canterbury Artist in Residence opening at the Annex 5.00pm. All welcome
 - 30 **Gavin Chilcott** opens to the public at the Annex
- February**
- 1 Saturday Club, 10.30am
 - 5 Wednesday Club, 10.30am
 - 6 **Contrasts—Petrus van der Velden** opens to the public.
 - 8 **Art and Organised Labour** opens to the public
 - 8 Continuing Club, 10.30am
 - 14 Volunteers Club, 10.30am
 - 19 **Speaker of the Month**: Mary Jane Duffy will speak at main McDougall Art Gallery 10.30am.
 - 20 Kilmarnock Club, 10.30am

Please Note: Gallery clubs do not operate during December and January with the exception of the Wednesday Club in December.