



*The Art of*  
*Petrus van der Velden*

ROBERT MCDOUGALL ART GALLERY

11 NOVEMBER - 10 DECEMBER

1963

## Foreword

For a long time it has been my keen desire to pay respects, in the form of an exhibition, to Petrus van der Velden, and my belief that a worthy tribute was possible—so prodigious was his artistic activity—by assembling some of his work from Christchurch owners. Their kindness in lending is warmly appreciated.

In this retrospective exhibition of the Dutchman's art I have attempted not to concentrate on any one aspect of his work, nor to show equal merit in its variety, but, while opportunity offers, to open many windows on Petrus van der Velden, the artist and the man.

W. S. BAVERSTOCK,  
Director

# P. van der Velden

## INTRODUCTION

In Christchurch where, in 1890, Petrus van der Velden arrived with his wife and family at the invitation of Mr Gerrit van Asch, his friend and sponsor, we have a special responsibility to ensure permanent recognition of a great painter and remarkable man. We must acquire more examples of his best work for the Robert McDougall Art Gallery and all available written records for its archives. The record must be kept "straight". It would seem that at least three of us in writing have extended the period of his life in Christchurch beyond the actual time of eight years plus visits. Can it be that the impact of his colourful personality made the time seem longer? And Van der Velden, improvident though he was, could have told us whether he received £500 or £400 from the N.S.W. Art Gallery for his large (6' x 8') picture, years in the making and altering, and variously called "Disillusionment", "Disillusioned", or "The Sorrowful Future", and how short a time he and his family lived in holiday luxury on the proceeds. If he could visit our Gallery and not be saddened by the ravages of the bitumen he used in his paint, he would perhaps chuckle as he explained that under "Otira Gorge", No. 55 in this exhibition, lies his painting "The Convalescent", for which his friend, Mr H. Fisher, Senr., was about to offer him 100 guineas and which he painted over because he needed a large canvas immediately. No. 61 is a preliminary study for "The Convalescent".

When, in 1947, Mr H. S. Feast, Town Clerk, had an inquiry from the Netherlands about Van der Velden's career in this part of the world, I wrote, *inter alia*, "No artist who has left any country to make his home in New Zealand has made such a deep impression. . . . It was New Zealand's gain rather than Van der Velden's when this gifted painter left his native land. . . . In conversation and in notes scribbled in sketch books, he showed himself an interesting philosopher. . . . In Art his favourite dictum was 'Colour is Light'."

A careful assessment of the Art of Van der Velden, written in 1959 by Mr P. A. Tomory, appeared with valuable research material in the catalogue of 30 paintings toured by the Auckland Art Gallery. This included interesting quotations from letters of Van Gogh to his brother in 1883, from which I quote briefly: "He (Van der Velden) is a real artist and I wish I knew him. . . . I know for sure that I should learn from him. . . . He made a very strong impression on me."

The present exhibition is confined to work lent by Christchurch owners and, with the exception of No. 72, no exhibit was shown in the Auckland touring collection.

W.S.B.



## A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF VAN DER VELDEN

(Compiled from various sources)

Born in Rotterdam, May 5, 1837. Apprenticed to printer and lithographer—became partner. In 1869 at Academy in Berlin. After 30 years of age chiefly occupied in painting and sketching. (Sketch book in our possession dated 1870.) In 1875 invited by Josef Israels to Join Pulchri Studio Group at The Hague (Israels, Anton Mauve, Mesdag, Wm. and Jacob Maris). In 1880 two pictures at Grosvenor Gallery, London. Reputation became well established in many exhibitions. Goupil Galleries, London, bought a number of his works—watercolours selling for as much as 80 guineas. When in the 1880's he entered "The Dutch Funeral" (now in our Gallery) for exhibition, Josef Israels had his own painting removed from its place of honour in the Amsterdam Gallery and replaced by Van der Velden's. In 1890, aged 53, arrived in New Zealand to stay with Mr Gerrit Van Asch, Sumner. Later had studios in Christchurch. Taught and exhibited. On April 29, 1898, left for Sydney where his first wife died in 1899. Sometime before his return he married again. In hospital in Sydney. Returned to New Zealand in 1905. Lived in Wellington. Was in Christchurch in 1907 on visit and, presumably, on other occasions. A self-portrait, No. 29 in this exhibition is inscribed "Wellington, October 19, 1913". In November, 1913, he went with his wife to Auckland and died on the 10th of that month of a heart attack.

# Catalogue

Of Paintings, Sketches and Studies

Measurements are in inches, height before width. Drawings, other than those in pencil or charcoal are designated chalk.

- 1 **STUDY OF DUTCH WATERMAN**  
Pencil Drawing 9 x 5 (1870-1889)  
Lent by Mr C. G. A. Sams
- 2 **CANAL SCENE, HOLLAND**  
Pencil 6½ x 10½ From Sketch Book, 1870-1889  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of Family of  
Mr A. F. Nicoll, O.B.E.
- x 3 **SKETCHES—BOATS AND TREE**  
Pencil 16 x 16 From an 1870 Sketch Book  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- 4 **HEAD OF FISHERMAN**  
Charcoal 17½ x 12½  
Lent by Mr David Langley
- 5 **SKETCHES—BOAT AND FIGURES**  
Pencil 12 x 16 From an 1870 Sketch Book  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- 6 **DUTCH WATERMAN**  
Pencil 12 x 9  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of Mr F. A. Shurrock,  
A.R.C.A.
- 7 **NEAR SUMNER**  
Chalk 7½ x 10½ From an 1890 Sketch Book  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- x 8 **WINDMILL IN HOLLAND**  
Pencil 14 x 16 From an 1870 Sketch Book  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- 9 **TREE STUDY**  
Chalk 10½ x 7½ From an 1890 Sketch Book  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- 10 **PLOUGHING**  
Chalk 6 x 8½ From an 1890 Sketch Book  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- 11 **SANTE**  
Charcoal 27½ x 21  
Lent by Mrs L. M. Best
- 12 **HANDS AND FEET**  
Chalk From an 1890 Sketch Book  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- x 13 **ROADWORK, SUMNER ROAD**  
Chalk 8½ x 7½ From an 1890 Sketch Book  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- x 14 **DUTCH GIRL KNITTING**  
Pencil 18½ x 14½  
McDougall Art Gallery. John Heaton Rhodes Bequest

- x 15 **THE CAVE ROCK, SUMNER**  
Chalk 6 x 10½ From an 1890 Sketch Book  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- 16 **FISHING BOAT**  
Pencil 16 x 16 From an 1870 Sketch Book  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- 17 **STUDY FOR "EVENING IN HOLLAND"**  
(See Reproduction)  
Charcoal  
Lent by Mr W. S. Baverstock
- 18 **STUDY FOR "EVENING IN HOLLAND"**  
(See Reproduction)  
Charcoal  
Lent by Mr Lex Robb
- 19 **TREES**  
Charcoal 15 x 15. From an 1870 Sketch Book  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- x 20 **DUTCH BOYS SMOKING**  
Watercolour 15 x 23½  
Lent by University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts
- 21 **ARTIST AND FISHING BOAT**  
Pencil 13½ x 19½  
Lent by Mrs L. M. Best
- x 22 **STUDY OF BOWSPRIT**  
Watercolour and Pencils 17½ x 23½  
Lent by University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts
- x 23 **BAREND SLUIS WITH VAN DER VELDEN'S BAGGAGE** (See Inscription)  
Chalk 8 x 9  
Lent by Mr B. H. Sluis
- 24 **WINDMILL IN MOONLIGHT**  
Charcoal 19½ by 14½  
Lent by Mrs Ronald Graham
- 25 **AUCKLAND SUBURB**  
Colour Crayons 9 x 12½  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- 26 **W. H. WYNN-WILLIAMS, 1896**  
(First President Christchurch Savage Club 1893)  
Charcoal 21½ x 14½  
Lent by Christchurch Savage Club
- 27 **SCENE IN TRAMCAR, WELLINGTON**  
Charcoal 9½ x 13½  
Lent by Mrs J. M. Louisson
- 28 **OTIRA GORGE**  
Chalk 16 x 12½. Inscribed To P. C. Otira Powell, 1894. From P. van der Velden  
Lent by Mrs N. Haines (Stephen Powell Collection)
- ? \* 29 **SELF PORTRAIT WITH OTIRA BACKGROUND**  
Charcoal 14½ x 10. Dated October 19, 1913, in Wellington. Van der Velden died in Auckland on November 10, 1913  
Lent by Miss D. C. Bates



- ✓ 30 **THE THOMAS WALKER CONVALESCENT HOSPITAL, SYDNEY**  
Chalk and Wash  $6\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ . From an Australian Sketch Book. Van der Velden was in hospital in 1900 McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- 31 **TWO LIFE SKETCHES (The Letter and the Card Game)**. Chalk each  $6\frac{3}{4} \times 9$ .  
From an Australian Sketch Book 1898-1905  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- ✓ 32 **RELAXATION**  
(Presumably fellow patients of the artist, 1900)  
Chalk  $6\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ . From an Australian Sketch Book  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- 33 **FIGURE STUDY**  
Pencil  $14\frac{1}{2} \times 29\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts
- 34 **CONCENTRATION (The Artist on Left)**  
Chalk  $5\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ . From an Australian Sketch Book 1898-1905  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- 35 **TWO LIFE SKETCHES**  
Chalk. From an Australian Sketch Book 1898-1905  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- 36 **AUSTRALIAN TYPE**  
Chalk  $9\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$ . From an Australian Sketch Book 1898-1905  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family
- ? \* 37 **STUDY OF A WINDMILL**  
Oil on canvas  $13 \times 9\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Mr Heathcote Helmore, M.B.E.
- 38 **THE OLD FISHERMAN**  
Oil on canvas  $23\frac{1}{2} \times 19\frac{1}{4}$   
McDougall Art Gallery (From Stephen Powell Collection)
- ? \* 39 **STUDY OF A WINDMILL**  
Oil on canvas  $13 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Mr Heathcote Helmore, M.B.E.
- 40 **FISHING BOAT ON CANAL**  
Charcoal  $21\frac{1}{2} \times 15$   
Lent by Mrs L. M. Best
- 41 **THE DUTCH FUNERAL**  
Oil on canvas  $48 \times 96$   
McDougall Art Gallery.  
Gift of Mr H. C. D. Van Asch
- 42 **WINDMILL IN MOONLIGHT**  
Charcoal  $21\frac{1}{2} \times 15$   
Lent by Mrs L. M. Best
- 43 **FIGURE STUDY FOR "DUTCH FUNERAL"**  
(See large painting)  
Pencil and Sepia. From an 1870-89 Sketch Book  
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family

*This is double-framed.  
On the other side is a charming HEAD OF A BABY*

44 **DUTCH FUNERAL BARGE**

Watercolour 15 x 24 $\frac{7}{8}$   
Lent by Mrs R. C. Jamieson

45 **HENRY JOHN WASHBOURNE**

(Sir Geo. Seymour, 1850)  
Oil on canvas 26 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 19 $\frac{3}{8}$   
Lent by Mrs A. R. Thomas

46 **BARGE ON CANAL**

Watercolour 13 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 21 $\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Mr J. P. Shelley

47 **DUTCH FUNERAL BARGE**

Oil on canvas 31 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 55 $\frac{1}{2}$   
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of Jas. Jamieson  
Family

48 **OTIRA GORGE**

Oil on canvas 23 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 35 $\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Mr W. S. Baverstock

49 **LE BON VIVANT**

Oil on canvas 36 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 29 $\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Mr David S. Cowie

50 **STAR OF BETHLEHEM**

Oil on canvas 15 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 16 $\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Mr H. H. Fisher

51 **THE CARD PLAYERS**

Oil on canvas 33 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 45  
Lent by Mrs H. C. D. Van Asch

52 **OTIRA GORGE**

Oil on canvas 16 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 13 $\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Mr H. H. Fisher

53 **THE MUSIC LESSON**

Oil on canvas 35 x 22  
Lent by Miss Marian E. Thomson

54 **STILL LIFE**

Oil on canvas 22 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 35 $\frac{1}{2}$   
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family

55 **OTIRA GORGE**

Oil on canvas 60 x 84  
Lent by Canterbury Society of Arts

56 **THE BIRTHDAY GIFT**

(Mrs G. D. Greenwood-Helene Cross-1894)  
Oil on canvas 47 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 35 $\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Mrs H. J. McTeigue

57 **STUDY OF AN OLD MAN**

Oil on canvas 8 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 4 $\frac{7}{8}$   
Lent by Mr R. L. Clarke

58 **NUDE STUDY (Early work)**

Oil on card 12 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 19 $\frac{3}{8}$   
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of A. F. Nicoll Family

59 **THE CULPRIT**

Oil on panel 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Mrs Julie Holcroft

60 **LIGHTHOUSE, COAST OF NORMANDY**

Oil on canvas 5 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 16 $\frac{1}{4}$   
Lent by Dr Maurice Louison



- 61 **THE CONVALESCENT** (Study for large picture)  
Oil on canvas  $22\frac{1}{2} \times 17\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Miss Marian E. Thomson
- 62 **STUDY FOR "DISILLUSIONMENT"**  
(Large painting sold to N.S.W. Art Gallery)  
Oil on canvas  $23\frac{1}{2} \times 19\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Mr Geo. S. McKenzie
- 63 **STUDY FOR "DISILLUSIONMENT"**  
Oil on canvas  $16 \times 13\frac{5}{8}$   
Lent by Miss L. F. Fraser
- 64 **RHODODENDRONS**  
Oil on canvas  $7\frac{1}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{8}$   
Lent by Mr L. Pegler
- 65 **GOING TO CHURCH**  
Charcoal  $22 \times 15$   
Lent by Mr J. W. D. Fisher
- 66 **STREET CRIER**  
Oil on canvas  $43\frac{5}{8} \times 34\frac{1}{4}$   
Lent by Mr David Langley
- 67 **GATHERING FAGGOTS**  
Oil on canvas  $15\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{4}$   
Lent by Mr J. W. D. Fisher
- 68 **GERRIT VAN ASCH**  
(Sponsored by Mr Van Asch, Van der Velden  
left Holland to live in Sumner)  
Oil on canvas  $44\frac{1}{4} \times 35$   
Lent by Mr G. Van Asch
- 69 **DROUGHT IN AUSTRALIA**  
Oil on canvas  $16\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Mr David Langley
- 70 **A FAIR**  
Oil on canvas  $43\frac{1}{4} \times 33\frac{5}{8}$   
Lent by Mr David Langley
- 71 **OTIRA GORGE** (See Inscription)  
Charcoal  $24\frac{1}{2} \times 18\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Mrs Ronald Graham
- 72 **POLDER LANDSCAPE**  
Oil on canvas  $9\frac{1}{4} \times 15\frac{3}{8}$   
Lent by University of Canterbury School of  
Fine Arts
- 73 **DUTCH GIRL**  
Watercolour  $12\frac{5}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Mr W. S. Baverstock
- 74 **CANAL SCENE**  
Watercolour  $10\frac{7}{8} \times 8\frac{5}{8}$   
Lent by Mr P. B. Austin
- 75 **KNIFE GRINDERS**  
Watercolour  $12\frac{1}{4} \times 15\frac{1}{4}$   
Lent by Mr Geo. S. McKenzie
- 76 **HARBOUR SKETCH**  
Watercolour  $14\frac{1}{4} \times 20\frac{1}{4}$   
Lent by Miss Marian E. Thomson

cat 43. 1921 sale.

- 77 **WINTER EVENING IN HOLLAND**  
Watercolour  $5\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$   
McDougall Art Gallery. Gift of Mrs Richmond Fell
- 78 **SKETCH OF DUTCH BOY**  
Watercolour  $16\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Mr W. S. Baverstock
- 79 **GIRL GRINDING COFFEE**  
Watercolour  $18 \times 11\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Mr W. R. Lascelles
- 80 **OTIRA GORGE**  
Watercolour  $19 \times 13\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Mr B. H. Sluis
- 81 **LOW TIDE IN HOLLAND**  
Watercolour  $19 \times 13\frac{7}{8}$   
Lent by Mrs N. Haines (Stephen Powell Collection)
- 82 **A KNIFEGRINDER**  
Watercolour  $13\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Miss Marian E. Thomson
- 83 **IN A DUTCH KITCHEN**  
Chalk and Wash  $10\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Miss Marian E. Thomson
- 84 **FOOTBRIDGE IN HOLLAND**  
Pencil  
Lent by Miss Marian E. Thomson
- 85 **AN ARTIST**  
Sepia  
Lent by Miss Marian E. Thomson
- 86 **AT EASE (Rapid sketch)**  
Charcoal  $14\frac{1}{2} \times 21\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Miss Marian E. Thomson
- 87 **DESIGNING A BOAT**  
Pencil  $12\frac{1}{2} \times 18\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Miss Marian E. Thomson
- 88 **VINE LEAVES**  
Watercolour  $10 \times 13$   
Lent by Miss Marian E. Thomson
- 89 **FRIENDS OF THE ARTIST (See Autographs)**  
Pencil and Watercolour  $9\frac{1}{2} \times 13\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Miss Marian E. Thomson
- 90 **ALFRED WALSH (?) SKETCHING**  
Chalk  $21 \times 15$   
Lent by Miss Marian E. Thomson
- 91 **PANEL OF WORKING DRAWINGS, ETC.**
- 92 **THE SATARA PLAYER** (Bequeathed to McDougall Gallery)  
Oil on Canvas  $46 \times 32\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Estate of Late Miss Marjorie Bassett
- 93 **WINTER IN HOLLAND**  
Oil on Canvas  $34\frac{1}{2} \times 23\frac{1}{2}$   
Lent by Mrs L. M. Best
- 94 **INTERIOR OF OLD DUTCH KITCHEN**  
Oil on Canvas  
Lent by Mr C. H. Reece





CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL

**EXHIBITION HOURS**

MONDAYS TO SATURDAYS,

10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

SUNDAYS 2 to 4.30 p.m.