

AUCKLAND  
ART  
GALLERY

XX<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

FRENCH

PAINTING

SEPT - OCT, 1957

XX<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

FRENCH

PAINTING

AUCKLAND CITY ART GALLERY

SEPT- OCT

1957

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are most grateful to Mr. Eric Estorick who has chosen these paintings from his own collection for exhibition in New Zealand.

We must also thank Miss Joanna Drew, of the Arts Council, London, who has supplied details of the paintings and certain facts about the painters.

P.A.T.

# INTRODUCTION

THIS EXHIBITION is not very accurately titled as among the artists represented there are three Belgians and two Spaniards, but since most of the movements of 20th century painting have had their birth in France, we come to regard as 'French' painting anything produced within the influence of Paris.

To many people in New Zealand, most of the artists will be comparatively unknown for 20th century French painting is known only in this country from sporadic reproductions. It is necessary therefore to note that many of these artists have high reputations in Europe.

These pictures come from a private collection and reflect a collector's personal taste, therefore it is invidious to point to names not included, to suggest that a more representative exhibition could have been managed, etc.

All the painters in this exhibition are concerned with the subject, that is there are no abstract works. Since the 1880's the subject in painting has been gradually stripped of its importance and in many cases dispensed with. However, subject painting has never died out and this exhibition in part shows how it has continued through the 57 years of this century. It must be remembered that the painter is not a reporter of facts, but an interpreter and a creator of ideas. Inevitably, in all the arts at all times something must be destroyed in order to create afresh—the phoenix rises from its own ashes. Distortion, mutilation, omissions, additions to known facts or images have changed the face of art since time began. So also is passion the source of all art, the passion of discovery, the passion of creation drives the artist forward—as the scientist is driven forward with no time to consider his own feelings or those of humanity at large. What emerges is a work, perhaps lyrical, perhaps dramatic, perhaps brutal—whatever it is, it contains a synthesis of facts, a fusion of symbols or images which communicate a whole idea, or perhaps only a part of an idea. In no other century have so many ideas been at large, so many influences at play and such swift means of communication available to transmit these things.

In this exhibition there is evidence of all this, showing how many styles can exist together to interpret contemporary life which is a wilderness of tensions and stresses pulling this way and that, like an hysterical bedspring.

The earliest dated picture in the exhibition is 1916, and the most recent 1954, so that it is impossible to imagine that every trend and movement could be represented, even if that were desirable.

One movement is, however, well illustrated—that is Realism. This is a much tattered label and has come to mean a number of things over the years, but what it has very little to do with is the realistic representation of nature. Realism can mean an awareness of reality: Courbet rejected the academic idealism of his time and replaced

it with an unromantic and unidealised representation of life around him. Realism can also mean a sensitivity towards the texture of surfaces, that is, a realist when painting a cliff face will concern himself with distinguishing the hard, eroded faceted surface of the rock from the brittle, shiny hardness of the summer grass that surmounts it. This does not mean that the artist records a mirror, or wax impression of these surfaces, for he must transcribe what he sees and *feels* into paint. Thus a painting is read in the language of paint and the individual objects, or natural forms, lose their actual identity and become a mass in the painting with a certain textured surface bearing various tones of colour. This mass is related to the other masses of the painting so that one admires—not the versimilitude of the artist's rock face, with one in actuality—but the surface, thicknesses, the encrustations, the tones of the paint into which the rock face has been transformed, and how the significance of this surface is clarified by the textural treatment of the surfaces of the other masses. Beyond these two aspects there lies social realism, where the painter concerns himself with the visual territory of certain people—the average mother's domain of her child on all fours in a kitchen jungle of scraped table legs, worn lino, stained tea towels and a tangled pattern of cereal packets—the farmer's yard of discoloured limewashed walls, the brassy sun, the short haired yard dog rolled half-over on its back and the feathers from a plucked fowl floating on the filthy pools of water caught between the ruts of mud.

Sometimes a social group will be examined—miners, peasants, fishermen and so on.

In this exhibition, therefore, there are Permeke, de Smet and Van den Berghe, an older generation working in Belgium among the miners and peasants. Then there are the pre-1939 French group of Pignon, Gruber, Lorjou and Fougeron and the post-war group of Buffet, Reyberolle and Minaux. The emphasis shifts and one existing style or another exerts its pressure. Sometimes the attitude is optimistic, at others pessimistic, but the line remains fairly true towards the awareness of reality.

The other painters may be labelled as expressionists, cubists—and so on. But labelling is unsatisfactory for a painter changes perhaps many times during his lifetime, so that it becomes unutterably complicated and boring to try to pin these artists down as though they were so many lepidoptera on a specimen board.

What links them all together, regardless of style, is their use of paint. It is always sympathetic and they show, as most French painters have always shown, a due deference to the medium and a sensitivity to 'la bonne matière.' For that reason alone, this exhibition should be infinitely rewarding for those who appreciate painting for its own sake.

P. A. TOMORY

# THE CATALOGUE

## PHILIPPE BONNET b.1927

### 1 STUDIO, 1954

Oil on canvas  $51\frac{1}{4} \times 51\frac{1}{4}$  ins

Signed bottom right *Ph. Bonnet* and dated 54

### 2 FISH ON A PLATE

Oil on board  $18\frac{1}{4} \times 21\frac{1}{4}$  ins

## FRANCISCO BORES b.1898

### 3 PICNIC, 1944

Oil on canvas  $15 \times 18\frac{1}{4}$  ins

Signed bottom right *Bores* and dated 44

## BERNARD BUFFET b.1928

### 4 CHICKEN ON A TABLE

Oil on canvas  $47\frac{1}{4} \times 48\frac{1}{2}$  ins

## ANDRE CIVET b.1911

### 5 FOREST, 1950

Oil on canvas  $25\frac{1}{2} \times 32$  ins

Signed bottom right *Civet*

### 6 LANDSCAPE

Oil on canvas on panel  $10\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{8}$  ins

Signed bottom right *Civet*

### 7 SEASCAPE

Oil on canvas  $8\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{3}{8}$  ins

Signed bottom right *Civet*

## ANTONI CLAVE b.1913

### 8 MANIKINS

Oil on canvas  $50\frac{1}{4} \times 77\frac{1}{4}$  ins

Signed bottom right *Clavé*

### 9 SCENERY, FIGURES AND CHAIR

Tempera on board  $14\frac{1}{4} \times 21\frac{1}{4}$  ins

Signed bottom right *Clavé*

## JEAN MARIE CALMETTES b.1918

### 10 NATURE MORTE

Oil on board  $32 \times 39\frac{1}{2}$  ins

Signed bottom right *Calmettes*

GUSTAVE DE SMET 1877-1943

**11** LANDSCAPE, 1916

Oil on canvas 31 × 34 ins

Signed bottom right *Gustave de Smet* and dated 1916

**12** CHURCH AT SCHEVENINGEN

Oil on canvas 23½ × 19¼ ins

Signed bottom right *GDS*

CHARLES DUFRESNE 1876-1938

**13** NU A LA NATURE MORTE

Oil on canvas 21¼ × 32 ins

Signed bottom left *Dufresne*

SYLVIE DUMESNIL

**14** PORTRAIT, 1947

Oil on canvas 25¼ × 20 ins

Signed top right *Dumesnil* and dated 47

ANDRE FOUGERON b.1912

**15** WOMAN, 1944

Pencil and charcoal on paper 19 × 25 ins

Signed top right *A. Fougeron* and dated *xii 44*

FRANCIS GRUBER 1912-1948

**16** NUDE, 1945

Oil on canvas 32 × 39½ ins

Signed bottom left *F. Gruber* and dated 1945 (?)

RAYMOND GUERRIER b.1920

**17** THE LOCKS

Oil on canvas 25½ × 32 ins

Signed bottom right *Guerrier*

EUGENE NESTOR DE KERMADEC

b.1899

**18** NUDE

Oil on canvas 36¼ × 23⅝ ins

Signed bottom right *E. de Kermadec*

BERNARD LORJOU b.1908

**19** CHAIR

Oil on wood 39 × 16½ ins

Signed bottom centre *B. Lorjou*

ANDRE MASSON b.1896

**20** NATURE MORTE

Oil on canvas  $10\frac{7}{8} \times 15\frac{7}{8}$  ins

Signed bottom left *André Masson*

ANDRE MINAUX b.1923

**21** CHAIR

Oil on canvas  $70 \times 24$  ins

Signed top left *André Minaux*

**22** NATURE MORTE, 1949

Oil on canvas  $28\frac{1}{2} \times 36\frac{1}{2}$  ins

Signed top left *André Minaux*

**23** COMPOSITION, 1948

Oil on canvas  $32\frac{1}{4} \times 39\frac{1}{2}$  ins

Signed bottom left *André Minaux*

MICHEL PATRIX b.1917

**24** L'AQUARIUM

Oil on canvas  $15 \times 18\frac{1}{2}$  ins

Signed bottom left *Michel Patrix*

EDOUARD PERMEKE 1886-1952

**25** FARMYARD

Oil on canvas  $25\frac{1}{4} \times 31\frac{1}{2}$  ins

Signed bottom left *Permeke*

**26** COWSHED

Oil on canvas  $31\frac{1}{2} \times 39\frac{1}{2}$  ins

**27** LANDSCAPE

Oil on canvas  $21\frac{5}{8} \times 31\frac{1}{2}$  ins

Signed bottom right *Permeke*

CH. F. PHILIPPE b.1919

**28** NATURE MORTE AU PANIER

Oil on cardboard  $21\frac{1}{2} \times 31\frac{1}{2}$  ins

EDOUARD PIGNON b.1905

**29** HARVESTER, 1950

Oil on canvas  $26\frac{1}{2} \times 36\frac{1}{4}$  ins

Signed bottom right *Pignon* and dated 50



**30 COMPOSITION, 1944**  
Tempera on board 18 × 24 ins  
Signed bottom right *Pignon* and dated 44

**PAUL REBEYROLLE b.1926**

**31 CHAIR, 1951**  
Oil on wood 63½ × 25¼ ins  
Signed bottom left *Rebeyrolle* and dated 51

**A. SEGOVIA**

**32 STILL LIFE WITH FRUIT BOWL**  
Gouache and ink on board 23¼ × 28¼ ins  
Signed lower left *Segovia*

**PIERRE TAL-COAT b.1905**

**33 NATURE MORTE**  
Oil on canvas 19¼ × 25¼ ins  
Signed bottom right *Talcoat*

**34 LANDSCAPE**  
Oil on canvas 12⅞ × 12¼ ins  
Monogram bottom right

**FRITS VAN DEN BERGHE 1883-1939**

**35 LANDSCAPE**  
Oil on canvas 19 × 21¼ ins  
Signed bottom right *F. Berghe*

**36 PORTRAIT**  
Oil on canvas 54½ × 44¼ ins  
Signed bottom right *F. Berghe*

**CLAUDE VENARD b.1913**

**37 STUDIO**  
Oil on canvas 38¼ × 51¼ ins  
Signed bottom right *C. Venard*

# B I O G R A P H I E S

FRANCISCO BORES was born at Madrid in 1898. He studied at the School of Fine Arts there and exhibited first in 1922. In 1925 he moved to Paris. He has had exhibitions throughout Europe, England and the United States.

BERNARD BUFFET was born in Paris in 1928. He worked alone after a short period at l'Ecole des Beaux Arts. In 1944 he was represented in an exhibition of painters under thirty. In 1947, with Lorjou, he shared the Critics' Prize. During the last few years he has been looked upon as one of the major painters of this decade.

JEAN MARIE CALMETTES was born at Wissou, (Seine-et-Oise) France. He was first a student at the School for Applied Arts, where he studied sculpture under Wlerich and Verdier. Later he studied painting with Othon Friesz. In 1942 he formed a painters' group *L'Echelle*. He now belongs to the Realist movement.

ANDRE CIVET was born at Pierrefitte-sur-Loire. He was a pupil of Lucien Simon at the National School of Fine Arts in 1927. He worked at restoration for some time. Since 1943 he has exhibited regularly at the Tuileries Indépendants and at the May Salon.

ANTONI CLAVE was born at Barcelona, Spain, in 1913. First a student of the School of Fine Arts there, he worked as a decorator, illustrator and poster artist until 1936. He fought with the Republican army in the Civil War, escaped to France in 1939 and was interned at Perpignan, where he exhibited some of his work. In 1942 he was awarded a special prize. Since then he has designed both decor and costumes for ballets, including those of Roland Petit, The Paris Opera and in London and the United States. He has illustrated several books, including twenty-four coloured lithographs for *Gargantua*.

GUSTAVE DE SMET was born at Gand in 1877 and died in 1947. He was closely associated with Permeke from early in this century, but his style is lighter in character. He was fully represented in the exhibition of contemporary Belgian art at the Orangerie, Paris, in 1946.

CHARLES DUFRESNE was born at Millemont, (Seine et Oise) France. After being a student at l'Ecole des Beaux Arts, he lived from 1900 for two years in Algeria. Afterwards he took up a teaching post at the Academie Scandinave. Until his death he produced murals for, amongst others, the Palais de Chaillot, cartoons for tapestries and a great many paintings. A room of the Museum of Modern Art, Paris, is devoted to his work. In 1938 an exhibition of his painting was held at the Venice Biennale.

ANDRE FOUGERON was born in Paris in 1912. He earned his living as a metal worker, going to painting classes in the evening. He exhibited first at the Salon des Surindépendants in 1937. He then joined a group which

included *Gischia*, *Pignon* and *Tal-Coat*. In 1946 he was awarded the Prix National. He is represented in the Museum of Modern Art, Paris.

FRANCIS GRUBER was born at Nancy in 1912 and died in Paris in 1948. He worked under Dufresne, Waroquier and Othon Friesz. He was later closely associated with Marchand, Tal-Coat, Tailleux and Giacometti. In 1947, he was awarded the Prix National and in 1949 a retrospective exhibition of his work was organised by Bernard Dorival and Jean Cassou at the Museum of Modern Art, Paris.

EUGENE NESTOR LE KERMADEC was born in Paris in 1899. Although he has been represented in many exhibitions, Le Kermadec has worked a great deal in isolation. His subject matter has been almost exclusively the female nude.

BERNARD LORJOU was born at Blois in 1908. Self taught, he visited Spain in the 1930's. Later he received some encouragement from the sculptor Despiau.

ANDRE MASSON was born at Balaguy in 1896. He studied in Brussels and Paris. First influenced by Juan Gris, he later moved towards surrealism. He visited Germany, the Low Countries, America and Spain, where the Civil War provided him with fresh subjects. He created the decor for the ballet *Tauromachia* by Michel Leiris. He has illustrated books by Gertrude Stein and André Malraux and also designed sets for Jean Louis Barrault's *Hamlet* and Sartre's *Morts sans sepulture*. He is represented in the Museum of Modern Art, Paris.

ANDRE MINAUX was born in Paris in 1923. He has exhibited since 1948 and his style is close to that of Bernard Buffet.

MICHEL PATRIX was born at Cabourg in 1917. After demobilisation in 1941, he worked in the studio of André Lhote. He then joined *L'Echelle*, a group influenced by Othon Friesz. He has had two one-man shows in New York. In 1949, he was awarded one of the prizes for young painters. He is represented in the Museum of Modern Art, Paris.

EDOUARD PERMEKE was born in Antwerp in 1886 and died in 1951. He worked most of his life in Ostend, studying at Bruges and Gand. He was associated with Van der Berghe and de Smet. He has had a considerable influence on 20th century expressionism, although his work is not widely known outside Europe.

EDOUARD PIGNON was born at Marle-les-Mines (Pas de Calais) in 1905. He has lived in Paris since 1926. He studied first at an evening studio with Civet and others. From 1943 he was friendly with Estève, Fougerson and Le Moal, with whom he studied under André Lhote and Jacques Villon. He worked in Ostend in 1950, his principal subject being miners. Since 1952 he has changed his style and uses a higher colour key. He is represented in the Museum of Modern Art, Paris.

The artists Bonnet, Dumesnil, Guerrier, Philippe and Segovia are young contemporary painters. For Venard, although belonging to an older generation, no biographical details are available.

