

AUCKLAND CITY ART GALLERY

QUARTERLY



JOSEPH WRIGHT

Portrait of Mrs Boyle

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NUMBER ELEVEN — 1959

EDITORIAL

On the 10th October we opened the exhibition 'Eight New Zealand Painters III' in the Wertheim Room. This room, newly decorated, is the last on our list to be altered and painted. It has been a long time since renovations first began but it has been worth the dislocation to our programme, for now our collections and exhibitions can be displayed in a truly sympathetic atmosphere.

ASSOCIATES

Mr Eric McCormick's *Inland Eye* is now on sale, price 3/-. The third Annual Art Lecture, on 10 November, 1959, will be given by Mr Ernest Plishke the well known Wellington architect.

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

Two paintings in the collection, Henri Hayden's *Still Life with Bottle of Bass* (c. 1920) and Caspar Netscher's *Girl with Flowers* (1683) are to be published overseas. The first in a new book on the history of Modern Art by Sir Herbert Read and the second in a monograph on Netscher by Dr Eduard Plietzsch of Cologne.

MACKELVIE TRUST

We are pleased to announce that the Trust has acquired the two missing prints from Durer's SMALL ENGRAVED PASSION, which acquisition

was reported in *Quarterly* No. 10. An error occurred in describing one of the missing prints as B3. This should read B5 CHRIST TAKEN BY THE JEWS.

JOSEPH WRIGHT OK DERBY ARA (1734-1797)

British

PORTRAIT OF MRS BOYLE (*See cover*)

Oil 30 x 25 ins

The Mackelvie Trust, 1956

Wright was one of the more considerable of English provincial painters of the 18th Century. Besides being an innovator of the industrial and scientific subject (Experiment with an Air Pump, Tate), he was also a prolific portrait painter particularly of the gentry of Derbyshire. He was a pupil of Hudson, the master of Reynolds, but the delicacy of the painting in this portrait, is reminiscent of Allan Ramsay. There is evidence here too that the highlights came from lamp or candlelight which Wright, a Romantic, used in his pictures to dramatise the subject.

Wright worked all his life in Derby except for a visit to Italy where he seemed more interested in volcanoes and firework displays than in the conventional studies of a Grand Tour. His chief patrons were the local industrialists, such as Arkwright, which partly explains his interest in scientific and industrial processes.

WILLIAM HODGES (1744-1797), British

SAWREYGILPIN (1733-1807)

TIGERS IN A ROCKY LANDSCAPE

Oil on panel 37 x 43 ins

Purchased 1957 with a grant from The National Art Collections Fund

When this painting was first exhibited at Messrs Agnew & Sons in 1955 it was attributed to George Stubbs. Later William Hodges was credited with the landscape and the tigers to Stubbs. However, the tiger in the background seemed to owe more to the Indian wallpaper variety (imported to England during the late 18th Century) than to anatomical knowledge

which Stubbs certainly had. Nevertheless, the foreground tiger is much more convincing — the appearance of the head being accounted for by the fact that the painting was probably done from a dead animal of which the neck muscles would have collapsed. Comparison with Stubbs' well-known painting of a tiger (Lord Portland) provided serious doubt as to whether he was the artist of our painting.

At the time of writing, we are fortunate to have on exhibition ten paintings of the Pacific by William Hodges, kindly lent by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, which fully confirm that Hodges was the painter of the landscape — details in the foliage and the vege-



tation in the foreground are clearly by his hand. However, he was not responsible for the tiger. But we do know that he exhibited certain pictures in the Royal Academy (after his Indian tour, 1784) in which the animals had been painted by Sawrey Gilpin. viz: 1785; No.

1. VIEW ON THE HILLS THAT DIVIDE THE KINGDOM OF BENGAL FROM THE PROVINCE OF BAHEN: THE ANIMALS PAINTED BY MR GILPIN and again in No. 257. That Gilpin painted tigers is confirmed by the painting TYGERS (R.A. 1802 No. 180). It seems reasonable to suggest therefore that Gilpin was Hodges' co-artist. Gilpin, next to Stubbs, was the only animal painter of his period to rise above the normal competence of the sporting artist.

WILLIAM SCOTT (b. 1915), British
STILL LIFE

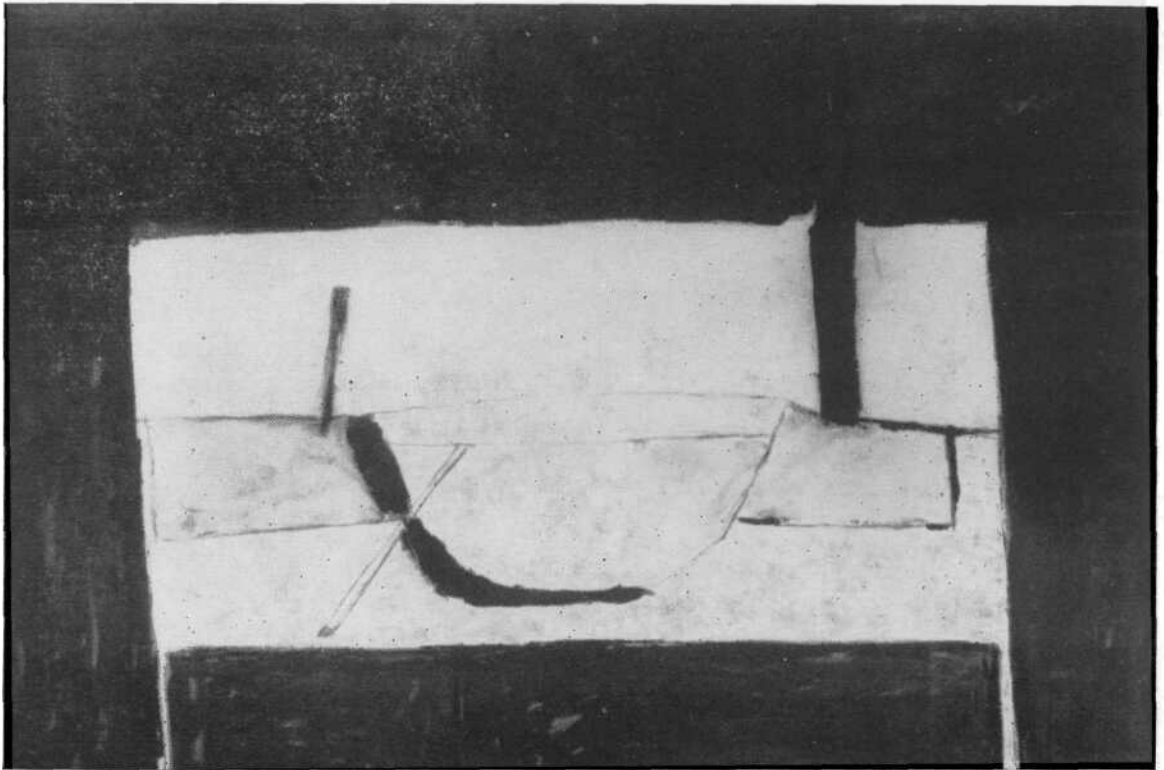
Gouache 19 x 28 ins
Purchased 1959

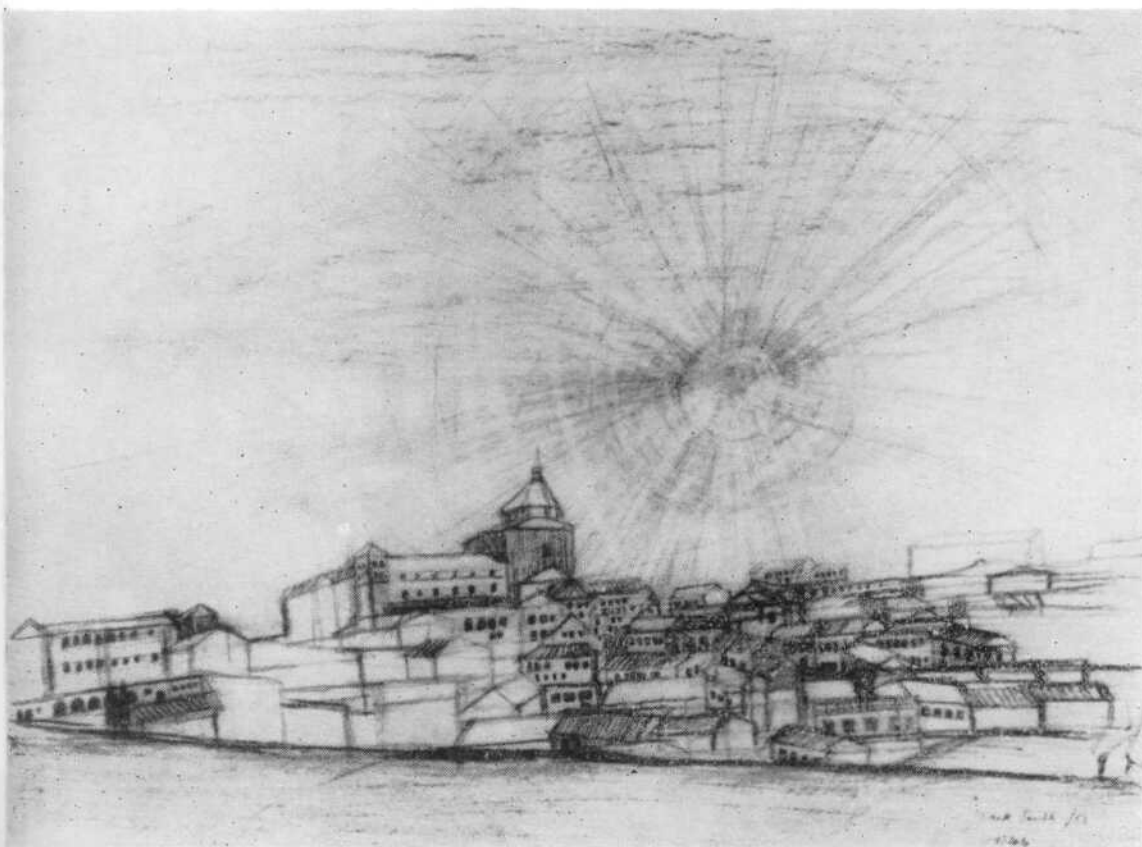
'This powerful and original painter has a strength and directness — that of pure intuition — which quite precludes the soft picturesqueness and prettiness which so much English painting — even of an 'abstract' order — cannot escape. ...

A table haunts all his geometry. The restless pulse of living things everywhere inhabits his forms, pulling them out of the square, out of the straight. ...

William Scot persuades us that nothing is more *real* than these bare yet sensuous pictures which many will dismiss, even now, as 'too abstract.' Patrick Heron *The Changing Forms of Art* Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1955.

William Scott was born in Belfast in 1913. He studied at the Royal Academy School then worked in France for some years. His first London exhibition was in 1942. After the war he taught painting at the Bath Academy of Art and is now senior painting master there.





JACK SMITH (b. 1928), British

TOLEDO

Charcoal 16 x 21J ins

Signed, dated and inscribed '*Jack Smith /54 Toledo*

Purchased 1957

Jack Smith was born in Sheffield and studied at the Royal College of Art, London. His first exhibition was at the Beaux Arts Gallery, London, in 1953 and each year since he has exhibited there. His work has also been shown in a number of national and international exhibitions.

As a painter, Smith came to prominence amongst a small group of realist painters including both Middleditch and Bratby, works

by whom are in the collection. This group showed a strong preference for somewhat sordid and depressing subject matter becoming known as painters of the 'kitchen sink' school. Our Toledo is not typical of this part of Smith's work. It is certainly realist but not with the depressing realism of his more usual subject matter, that of squalor in confined places, that so many of his oils of this same period have. The setting sun reveals the town with a clean bright light.

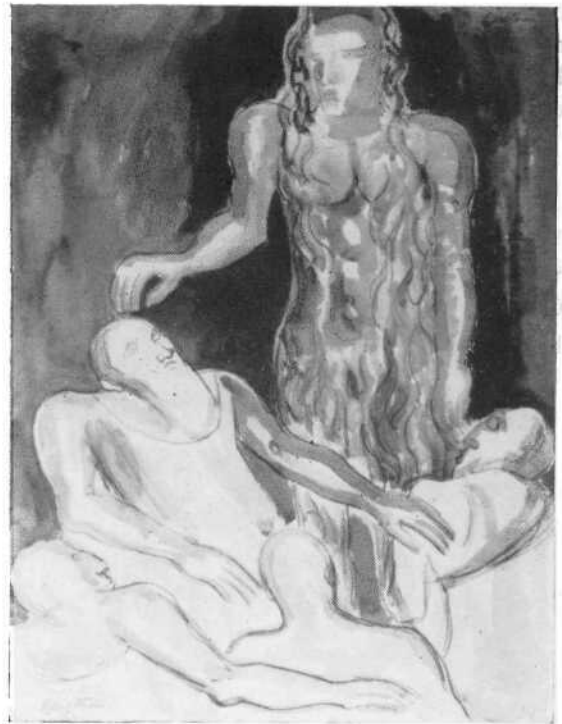
This drawing would appear to be an early move towards Smith's more recent work where light is used as a subject for painting rather than as previously a further means of increasing the depression of closed rooms. Titles of more recent works suggest a change of approach; WAVES OF LIGHT AND SHADOW; LIGHT AMONGST GLASSES AND BOTTLES; SKY.



JACOB EPSTEIN (1880-1959), British
 ABSALOMS PILLAR II Samuel, 18: XVII
 Pencil and watercolour 23 x 171 ins
 Signed *Epstein*
 Purchased 1950

These two drawings, illustrations from the Old Testament, are part of a series made by Epstein in 1930. *Absalom's Pillar* was purchased by the Committee in 1957, and the *Vision of Ezekiel* is part of the generous loan by Mr K. A. Webster, of seven of Epstein's drawings. Four of Mr Webster's collection are from the Old Testament series and three from Epstein's earliest period in the New York East Side.

Epstein, an artist of incredible energy, worked on a number of sets of drawings, among them illustrations from Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mai* and Whitman's *Calamus*. He has written of the Old Testament drawings 'I became so absorbed in the text and in the countless images evoked by my readings, a whole new world passed in vision before me.'



VISION OF EZEKIEL Ezekiel 1: XXVII
 Pencil and watercolour 23 x 171 ins
 Signed *Epstein*
 Lent by Mr K. A. Webster.

Most of Epstein's religious works exemplify the real and the rare artistic capacity for making a personal statement to which a universal significance is added. In these drawings, however, his sympathy with an Absalom deprived of his tomb, is expressed in terms much more personal than universal. He was an artist who suffered considerably at the hands of the popular Press and he notes in his autobiography that the exhibition of Old Testament drawings was greeted with the familiar accusation, of blasphemy.

Jacob Epstein remains a solitary figure in 20th Century English Sculpture and his recent death possibly brings to an end a sculptural tradition beginning with Rodin.

Since 1948 the Gallery has acquired a num-

her of Epstein's works, three pieces of sculpture, PEGGY JEAN, IAN, a lead maquette for the LONDON MADONNA AND CHILD and two other drawings, SUNITA and NEGRESS.

MOLLY MACALISTER (b. 1920), New Zealand
STANDING FIGURE

Coloured concrete 40 ins
Purchased 1959

ALISON DUFF, New Zealand

HEAD OF HILLARY

Cement 16 ins
Purchased 1959

Owing to a lack of facilities for bronze casting in this country, we find a considerable amount of sculpture being done here at the present time is cast in concrete and cement. The two recent acquisitions reproduced on this page fall into such a category. Both were shown a few months ago in an exhibition of Three Auckland Sculptors (Severs, Duff, MacAlister) in the First Floor Gallery, which was inaugurated this year for special small exhibitions. (See *Quarterly* 10).

Both Alison Duff and Molly MacAlister are New Zealand sculptors of some years standing, and both studied at the Canterbury' School of Art under Francis Shurrock. Molly MacAlister has experimented in various directions, but recently, as the result of the coming to New Zealand of a young English sculptor, Anne Severs, she has received a fresh impetus, discernible in this STANDING FIGURE, and is producing work allied to what might be called the rebirth of 'naturalism' in contemporary European sculpture. Alison Duff's HEAD OF HILLARY is the result of a painstaking refinement and enlargement of the elements which go to make up this celebrated mountaineer's head — itself, in its craggy simplicity, a symbol of his particular achievement. Altogether she has modelled five heads of Hillary, of which this is the final, most 'abstract' statement.



exhibition calendar

CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE ART

30 OCTOBER - 22 NOVEMBER

van Der Velden
(1837-1913)

27 NOVEMBER - 24 JANUARY

AUCKLAND CITY COUNCIL PARKS AND LIBRARY COMMITTEE

His Worship the Mayor, Mr. K. N. Buttle.

CHAIRMAN: Councillor F. N. Ambler, OBE.

COUNCILLORS: J. W. M. Carpenter, K. B. Cumberland, Mrs. M. M. Dreaver, MBE, G. F. M. Forsyth,
Hon. W. H. Fortune, G. E. Myers, W. M. Tongue.

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KEEPER: Colin McCahon

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ADMINISTRATION: Miss A. M. Ryburn, Mrs Brenda Gamble STUDENT ASSISTANTS: Hamish Keith, Ross Fraser

FOREMAN: F. Smith

TYPIST: Miss V. Drake

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