

AUCKLAND CITY ART GALLERY

QUARTERLY

Number Seventeen 1961



JOSEPH HERMAN

Miner's Canteen

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EDITORIAL

THIS ISSUE OF THE *Quarterly* is almost completely devoted to the review of works purchased by the Director during his recent tour of Europe; it will illustrate modern painting, prints and sculpture added to the collection.

PAINTING FROM THE PACIFIC

Now on tour through New Zealand, this exhibition of eighty-one paintings from Japan, West Coast America, Australia and New Zealand was shown first in Auckland as our contribution to the 1961 Festival of the Arts.

With this exhibition, New Zealand painting has, for the first time, entered into the field of international exhibitions, and that this should be in the context of an exhibition exploring regional implications is most apposite.

THE GALLERY ASSOCIATES

Membership of the Auckland Gallery Associates has now grown to 425. The Associates have recently broken new ground in sponsoring the production of a play by Mr Frank Sargeson: *A Time For Sowing*. This was played for a highly successful season of six nights, in the Gallery, at the time of the Auck-

land Festival. The Executive Committee has invited Mr Eric McCormick to act as buyer for 1961-62. Mr McCormick, who is well known as a writer of criticism in both art and literature, will be remembered for his talk, 'The Inland Eye,' which was subsequently published by the Associates.

JOSEF HERMAN (born 1911) British
THREE MINERS RESTING (cover plate)
Pen and wash 8 x 10ins 1955
Purchased 1956

MINERS' CANTEEN
Oil on canvas 36 x 48ins 1960
Purchased 1961

Herman once wrote: 'It was with the Welsh miner that I learned to read, out of the particular, the symbolic . . .' But he went on to say that the Welsh miner had no interest for him as a representative of a particular industry. And in an earlier written piece on Yshagyn-lais, the Welsh village where he spent ten years, he wrote that the miners made him think '... of old Egyptian carvings walking between sky and earth, or dark rocks fashioned into glorious human shapes, or heavy logs in which a primitive hand has tried to synthesise

the pride of human labour and the calm force which promises to guard its dignity.'

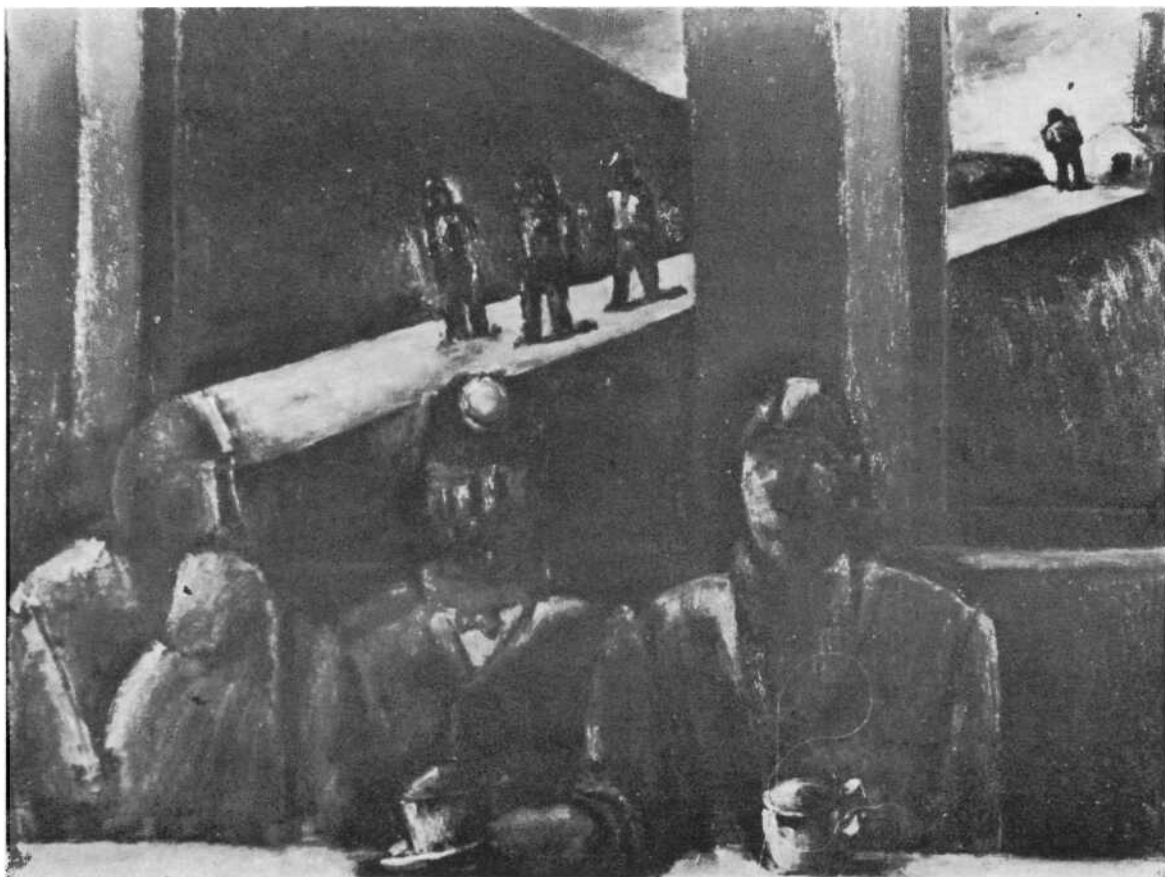
Herman is a humanist, but a painterly one — and his subject plays the part of a 'motif' — the same part, in another way, that Monte St Yctoire played for Cezanne. Thus there is no 'literary' basis to Herman's choice of subject. And although Herman still keeps his house in Yshagynlais, he has lived these last six or seven years in London; the 'motif' remains.

Reproduced here are a drawing of 1955 (cover) and a painting of 1960; and if Goya's etchings have a relevant connection with Herman's drawings — the black against white and the grey washes — Herman's painting, MINERS' CANTEEN, seems also to have a similar quality in colours, and forms of the background

figures, to the *pinturas negras*. Herman of course knows these latter paintings, but there is no conscious dependence on Goya — merely a parity of attitude.

It is also worth mentioning that Herman has a small, but well chosen, collection of Russian and Greek icons — for there is a distinct affinity between their images of dark glowing colours and his own work.

Herman was born in Poland in 1911, living and working there until 1938, when he went to Brussels. In Belgium he came under the influence of Fdouard Permeke. In 1940 he arrived in Glasgow where he spent three years. After a year in London he settled at Yshagylais until 1973 when he went to London. Since then he has been to France, Germany and Spain several times. — P.A.T.





ODILON REDON (18-40-1916) French
 THE BUDDHA
 Lithograph 12J x 9|ins
 Purchased 1961

Odilon Redon devoted some years to work in lithography, a medium to which he initially turned because of lack of a place to exhibit work in colour. Such was his richness of invention in lithography that he might be seen as an innovator of the rank of Daumier in this medium. THE BUDDHA (1895) is among the more important of his lithographs. Redon's interest in the literature and religions of the East owed much to his friendship with Armand Clavaud, a naturalist and a fellow Bordelais; the sources of many of his fantasies Redon acknowledged as the microscope of this *savant*.

'Scrutinising my blacks,' Redon wrote, 'I find that it is especially in lithography that they have their integral and unadulterated

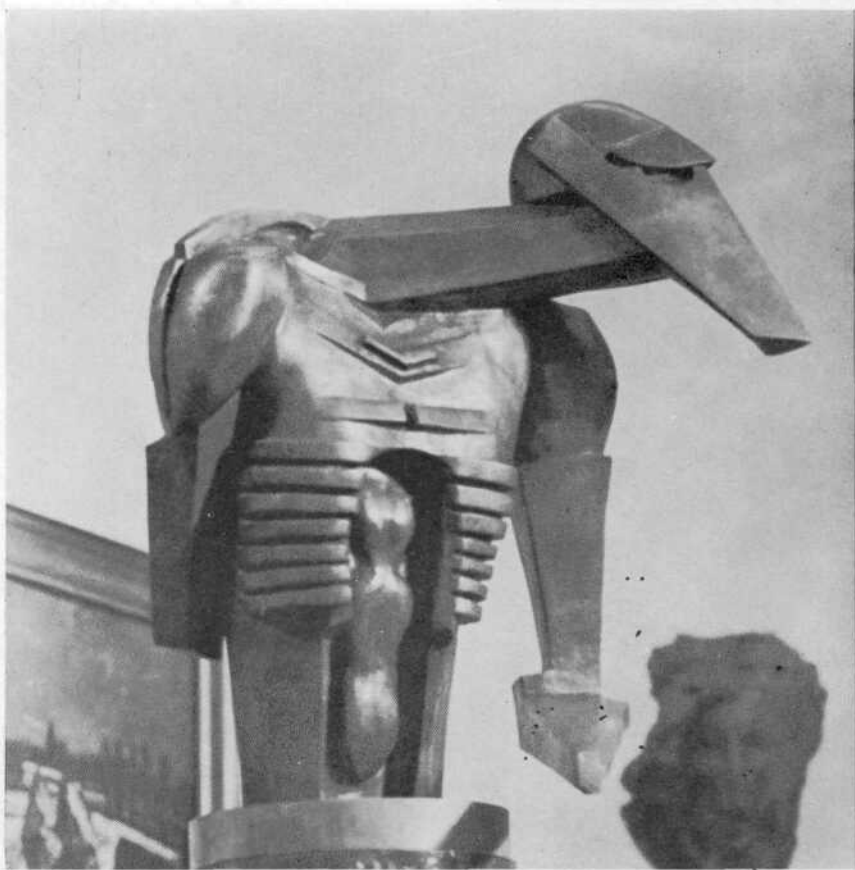
force . . . Black is the most essential colour . . . It conveys the very vitality of a being, his energy, his mind, something of his soul, the reflection of his sensitivity . . . "

Redon's work seems to have much in common with the literary currents of his time; especially with the most important movement in French poetry in the last years of the century: *symbolisme*. Stephane Mallarme, chief initiator and prophet of symbolism, wrote this tribute to Redon in 1891: 'In our silences, you ruffle the plumages of reverie and night . . . What is personal in you issues from dreams. Demonic lithographer, your invention is as profound as certain of your blacks! And you must know. Redon, I am jealous of your titles.'

ARISTIDE MAILLOL (1861-1944) French
 YOUNG GIRL SEATED
 Etching
 Purchased 1961

Aristide Maillol has come to be known mainly for his bronze sculptures. It was in fact imperfect eyesight that turned him to this medium. Earlier in his career he studied tapestry-making, and had his own tapestry workshop at Banyuls. His work too in the sphere of print-making: the beautiful wood-cut illustrations to the Count Kessler edition of Vergil's *Eclogues*, which so appropriately underline the grave pas-





JACOB EPSTEIN¹ (1880-1959)
THE ROCK DRILL
Bronze Height 2ft 4ins (3/3)
Purchased 1961

THE ROCK DRILL, certainly the most important of Epstein's few abstract works, was made in 1912-13. There were in the period from 1912-15, six sculptors: Boccioni, Brancusi, Archipenko, Laurens, Duchamp-Villon, and Naum Gabo who led the movement towards abstraction. If we then look at their first works we find them dated thus: — Boccioni, DEVELOPMENT OF A BOTTLE IN SPACE, 1912; Brancusi,

toral sweetness of the verse; his Daphnis and Chloe series, also cut on wood, and his many other etchings and lithographs; all these illustrate as well his work's characteristics, with its echoes of the discipline and universality of the art of classical Greece.

This simple etching of a profile figure may have been adapted from a sketch in one of the little notebooks which Maillol is known to have filled with endless studies drawn from life and from his own imagination. —R.D.F.

THE PRODIGAL SON, 1915; Archipenko, THE BOXING MATCH, 1913; Laurens, COMPOSITION, 19H; Duchamp-Villon, THE LITTLE HORSE, 1914; Gabo, CONSTRUCTED HEAD, 1915; so, with Boccioni's work, Epstein's ROCK DRILL shares first place in this movement and shows Epstein to be yet another of the great innovators in the art of this century. That Epstein never continued with this direction was probably due to the war—but this fact does not invalidate his major contribution of THE ROCK DRILL to the abstract movement.

Originally mounted on an actual drill the sculpture was later cast, the drill being discarded at this time by the sculptor. This is the last cast to be made of this important work and it was cast in the first month of this year expressly for our collection, in time for inclusion in the Epstein retrospective exhibition shown here in March. The other two casts of this work are at Ottawa and in the Tate Gallery. —C.M.



GEORGES ROUAULT (1871-1958) French
THREE HEADS E A D S S
 Coloured etching and aquatint 11 x 8 ins
NUDE IN PROFILE

Coloured etching and aquatint 12 x 8 ins
 These two jewel-like prints, purchased this year, are the first of Rouault's coloured etchings to enter the collection. They bring to ten the number of this prolific artist's works in the print collection.

During the decade of the twenties, Rouault devoted a considerable portion of his energies to the graphic arts; so much so, that at this period he had little time for painting. In this activity he was encouraged by Ambrose Vollard, who commissioned an extensive series of book illustrations, among them illustrations to Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mai*.

Rouault began the Baudelaire illustrations in 1926, but unfortunately failed to finish the series, completing only a few plates; this is all the more unfortunate since, as Venturi comments, this promised to be a masterpiece of



macabre art. In 1936, however, he returned to this theme, and between then and 1938 produced the second series of twelve etchings and aquatints to which these two prints belong. By this time the direction of Rouault's taste had begun to change and the passionate conviction of social injustice conveyed by his earlier works seems to give way to a more formal, but no less passionate, belief in the dignity of art.

The nude, at once sensual and restrained, seems to exemplify the richness of Rouault's vision, and, like his painting, remains direct and forceful, losing nothing through the complexities of the medium. — H.K.

JACOB BORNFRIEND (born 1904) British
BREAKFAST TRAY

Oil on canvas 18i x 25 ins
 Purchased 1961

Jacob Bornfriend, born in Czechoslovakia in 1904, came to England in 1939 and is now a British subject. He was exhibited in one man



shows by Roland Browse and Delbanco in 1950 and 1952, and in Goteberg in 1953. His works hang in the National Gallery in Prague, in the National Museums in Moravia and Slovakia, and the Southampton Art Gallery.

Bornfreund has gone through phases of cubist and expressionist painting, so that his work, romantic in its premises, combines a cool, rational arrangement with a passionate brushwork.

Jacob Bornfreund has exhibited regularly in London for the last ten years or more. He has painted many flower pieces and still lifes. *BREAKFAST TRAY* seems to mark something of a change in his way of painting; while the earlier style was of dryer paint, applied more thinly, this, picture is fluidly painted, with a much more generous impasto.

EDUCATION THROUGH ART

By Herbert Read. Faber paper-covered Editions. First published in 1943, this work now makes its appearance as a paperback. Herbert Read originally intended his book to be an academic treatise, but, as he notes in his preface to the third edition, in the thirteen years since its first printing, it has become a manifesto for much-needed educational reforms'. •

It would seem that these reforms, in New Zealand at least, appear to suffer from a want of understanding. For this reason it is perhaps regrettable that, as the author remarks, it has not been possible to make the text more attractive to the general reader. However, the wider circulation of a paper-back may do much to remove the misunderstandings obscuring the original thesis.

— ILK.

The Wars in New Zealand

4 August 1961

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