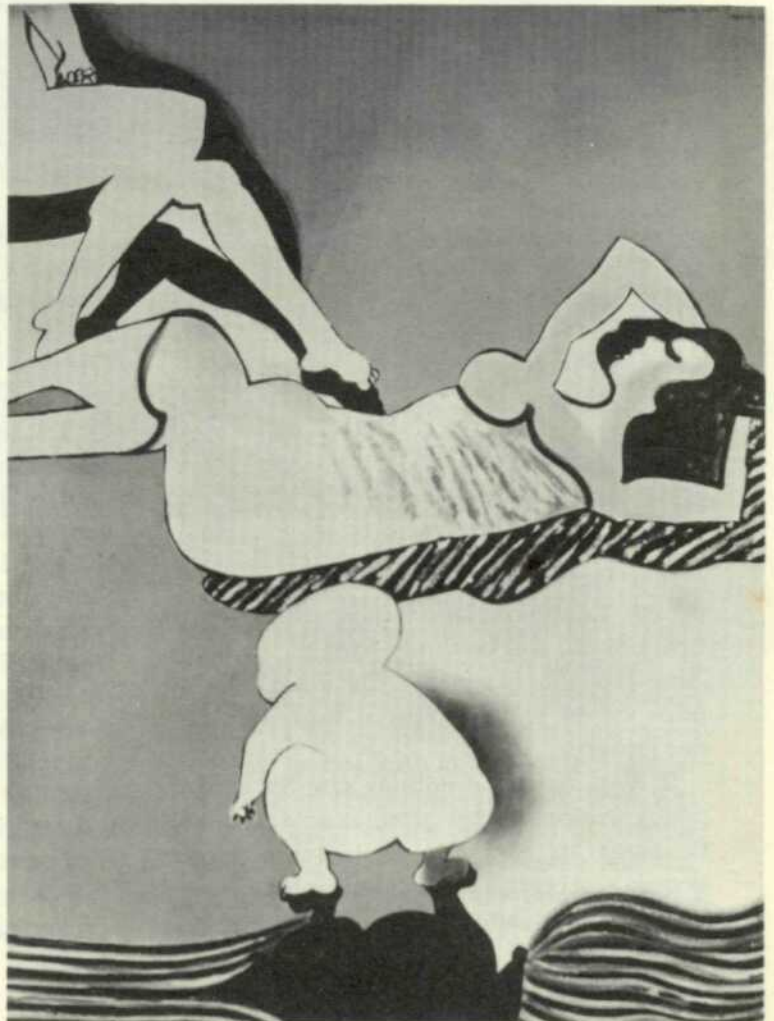


AUCKLAND CITY ART GALLERY

QUARTERLY

Number Thirty-one 1964

PAT HANLY



AUCKLAND CITY ART GALLERY QUARTERLY

NUMBER THIRTY-ONE— 1964

EDITORIAL

In this issue we reproduce several acquisitions for our collection of contemporary New Zealand painting and sculpture. Recently New Zealand artists have had several very successful shows in Auckland, which should please everyone interested in the progress of our own painters.

STAFF

Mr Colin McCahon, Keeper of the Gallery for eleven years, left in August to join the painting staff of Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland. He made a notable contribution to the evolution of this Gallery.

PAT HANLY b 1932 New Zealand

FIGURES IN LIGHT 17

Oil on canvas 50 x 36 inches

Inscribed *Pat Hanly Figures in Light 17/64*

Presented by The Gallery Associates, 1964

DON BINNEY b 1940 New Zealand

PIPIWHARAUAO MATING

Oil on board 47 x 35 inches

Signed and dated *Don Binney 1963*

Purchased 1964

It is likely that whatever emerges from the present confusion surrounding the 'International Style', will be firmly fixed in the image. And it is also likely that the image that appears will be of a very special kind, direct and unequivocal.

If 'Pop' has done nothing else for contemporary painting, it has acted as an anti-romantic purge, its hard-edge or hard-core imagery demands acceptance, or rejection, in its own terms. These international directions have

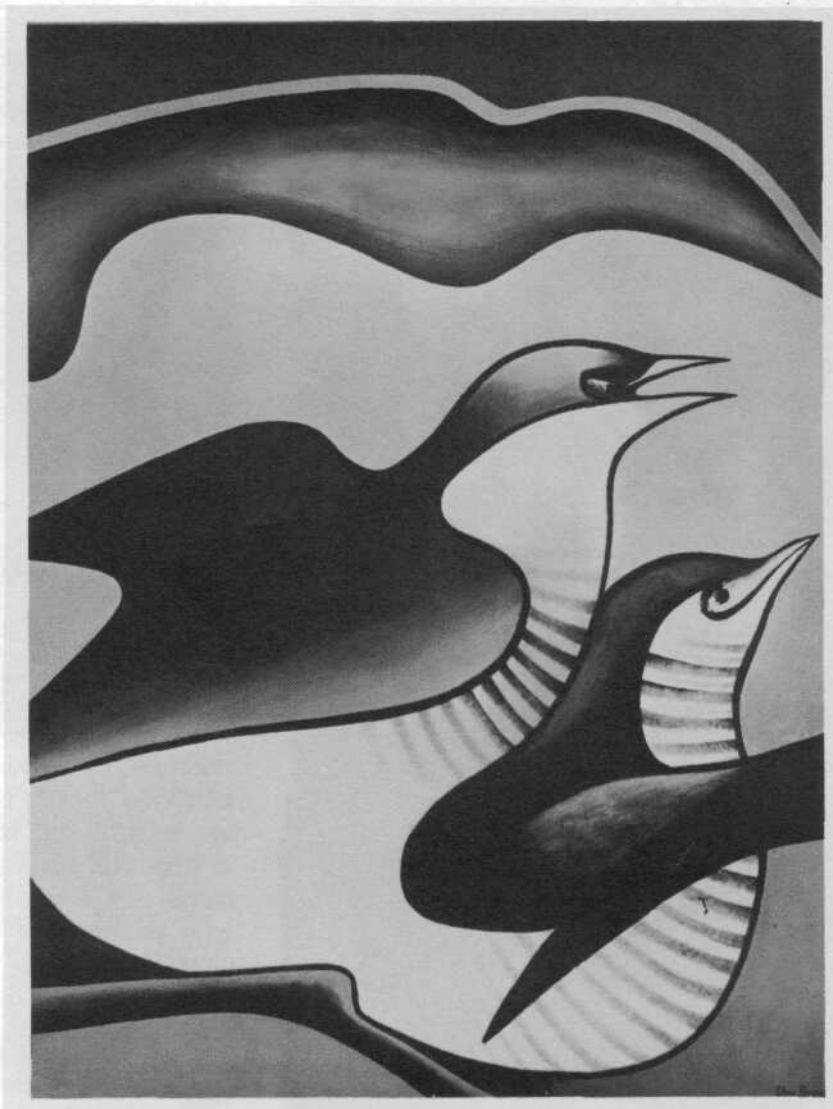
done much to encourage New Zealand painters for, since McCahon's religious paintings of 1947, painting here has been slowly but surely moving towards the same conclusions.

It is necessary to draw some distinction between 'Pop' and popular imagery, for as much as these two are related, the former often appears to be involved in popular language for its own sake. Admass imagery, it seems, has the power to swallow and destroy its own messages.

Don Binney's *Pipiwharauoa Mating*, is painted in popular terms, but is not by any means 'Pop'. Here is all the apparatus of the poster; the birds and the bush of Te Henga have been reduced to a disarming simplicity; Binney's message, however, remains profound and complex.

The painter is right in disclaiming an intention to create any obvious or literary symbolism for New Zealand. He has described these paintings as 'fragments of an intimate environment,' and while this remains the basis of their importance, the toughness of their imagery enables them to transcend the personal.

Pat Hanly returned from England in 1962 overwhelmed by the destructive environment of Europe. The three major series he had painted abroad were all involved with images of disintegration, the *Fire Series*, *Showgirls* and *The Massacre of the Innocents*. After his return, Hanly attempted to sustain the last series, but without a great deal of success: the flayed images of fear and destruction dissipated in the very different emotional climate of New Zealand. The two *New Order* series followed soon after — large luminous abstracts

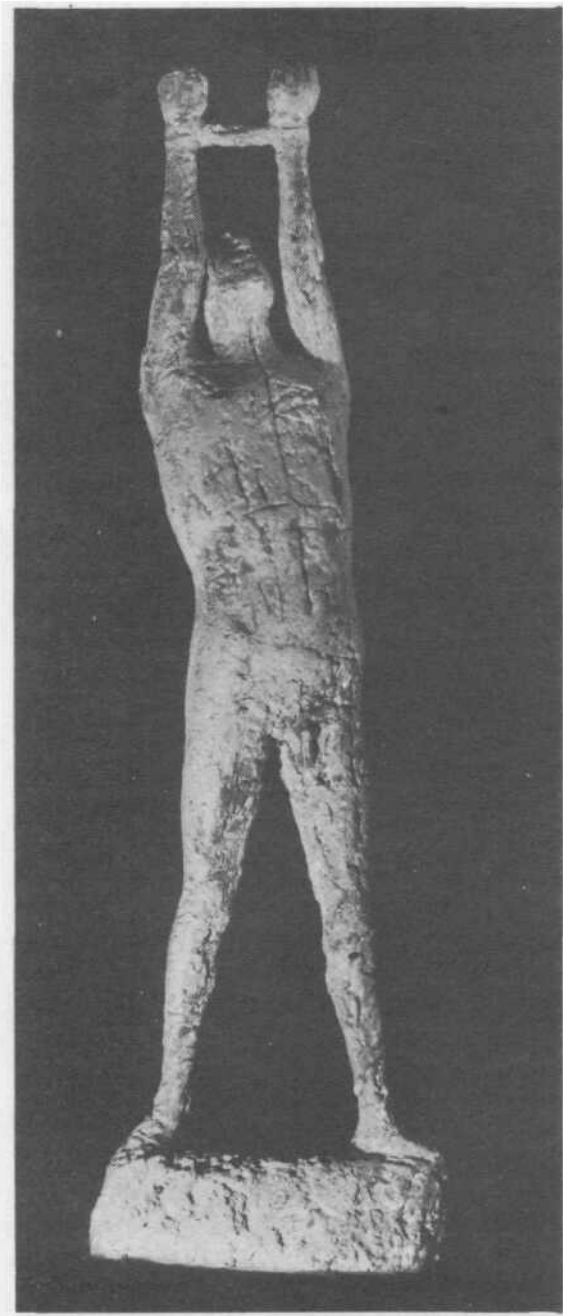


which seem to have been both an attempt to come to terms with the peculiarities of New Zealand light and colour, and an effort to rid the artist of his European imagery.

As a series, the *New Order* paintings were fairly uneven, but they seem to have been a most successful period of adjustment, for the painter followed them with the accomplished *Figures in Light*, his most mature and certain paintings, and in the general context of New Zealand painting, a significant development.

Painters here have generally seemed uneasy when dealing with people; figures have always appeared in and subordinate to landscape. In *Figures in Light*, the figure is both the subject and form of the painting. These solitary nudes and family groups have an indestructible quality. Bathed in the sharp and clean New Zealand light, these figures are icons of survival. As in Binney, the images are direct and flat, the means in a proper relationship to what is painted.

H.K.



ANNE SEVERS b 1931 New Zealand
PRISONER

Concrete height 66 inches

Presented by the Gallery Associates, 1960

Anne Severs' sculpture belongs in that humanist tradition whose successful contemporary ex-

pression one tends to associate with the Italians — with Marino Marini, Emilio Greco, Giacomo Manzù. Such works cannot be divorced from their 'expression' and considered as abstract confrontations in the manner of present day received criticism. The formal means are always seen to be at the disposal of a subjective intent — a desire to express symbolically the artist's emotions concerning man and his situation.

Anne Severs did in fact study with Marini, at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Milan, and in Rome, before her return to New Zealand in the mid 'fifties. If, however, the formal treatment of a constrained, stiff-limbed figure owes much to Marini's inventions, one may see in Anne Severs' work a less consciously elegant shaping intelligence at work.

This seems to make her a sculptor who fits fairly readily into the New Zealand background — though as yet sculpture seems to have been the one of the arts that has least been able to establish itself here in a coherently important tradition. In Auckland at least, with the sole exception possibly of Jim Allen, sculptors with any body of work have tended to remain within what one might call — for want of a better name — the neo-realist school. One of the most promising of the younger sculptors too, Greer Twiss, seems, with his groups of athletes, to prove that the modern revival of an exploration of the human figure in action, that began with Rodin, is by no means a worked out vein.

SUZANNE GOLDBERG b 1940 New Zealand
LANDSCAPE (Desert Road Series, 1964)

Oil on canvas 26i x 36 inches

Purchased 1964

TIM GARRITY b 1931 New Zealand
PAINTING 1963 30i x 22i inches

Watercolour and gouache

Purchased 1964

These two recent purchases of works by two young painters who have figured in a number of the Gallery's group exhibitions of con-



temporary New Zealand painting, a're a welcome addition to this part of the collection.

Suzanne Goldberg has pursued a remarkably consistent line over the years she has been painting. Apart from one foray into the romantic and lyrical (the *Girl and Bird* series, 1962), she has steadfastly limited herself to an exploration of what seems to be almost a metaphysical landscape, whose inspissated textures, revealed by an exquisitely realised light, have only an abstract connexion with her observed terrain.

It is tempting to find the influence of Tim Garrity's studies in philosophy in the especial 'subject matter' of his cosmological watercolours. A planet and its satellite are the centre of sweeping, centrifugally rushing forces whose interior teems with an ambiguous mass of metallic detritus. In *Painting* (1963) there are suggestions too, as in some other works, of a system of wheels and driving belts — a sort of SF machine on some astronomical scale.

R.D.F.



ROBERT ELLIS b 1929 New Zealand
CITY SPANNING THE CANAL

Oil 41 f x 23 inches

Signed and dated *Robert Ellis '64*

Presented by the Gallery Associates, 1964

For some years Ellis has been concerned with the city as an image. Originally it was in three dimensions, straddling a hill, or from street level. But it was always seen as a complex trap, set in the landscape, for humanity at large. Later the aerial view was introduced and developed with innumerable variations. One of these was the identification of the oval city plan with the human cranium; and from time to time this image persists as one sees emerging out of the street plan the 'face' of a city.



It is interesting to recall Leonardo's *Plan of Imola*, which Heydenreich (*Leonardo da Vinci*, p 88, pi.146) describes as '... seen . . . both as a topographical and a pictorial entity. Ellis is not concerned with topography, but with the 'pictorial entity', which the aeroplane has helped to make familiar. This aloof view of urban civilization must make any man reflect on his condition. The same view may be had before the paintings of Robert Ellis, but there can be no aloofness, confronted so immediately with the artist's imagination.

Ellis studied in England, where he was born. He came to New Zealand in 1957 and has lectured at the Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland, since then. He has had four one-man shows, and has works in public and private collections throughout the world.

COLIN MCCAHOON b 1919 New Zealand
HERE I GIVE THANKS TO MONDRIAN

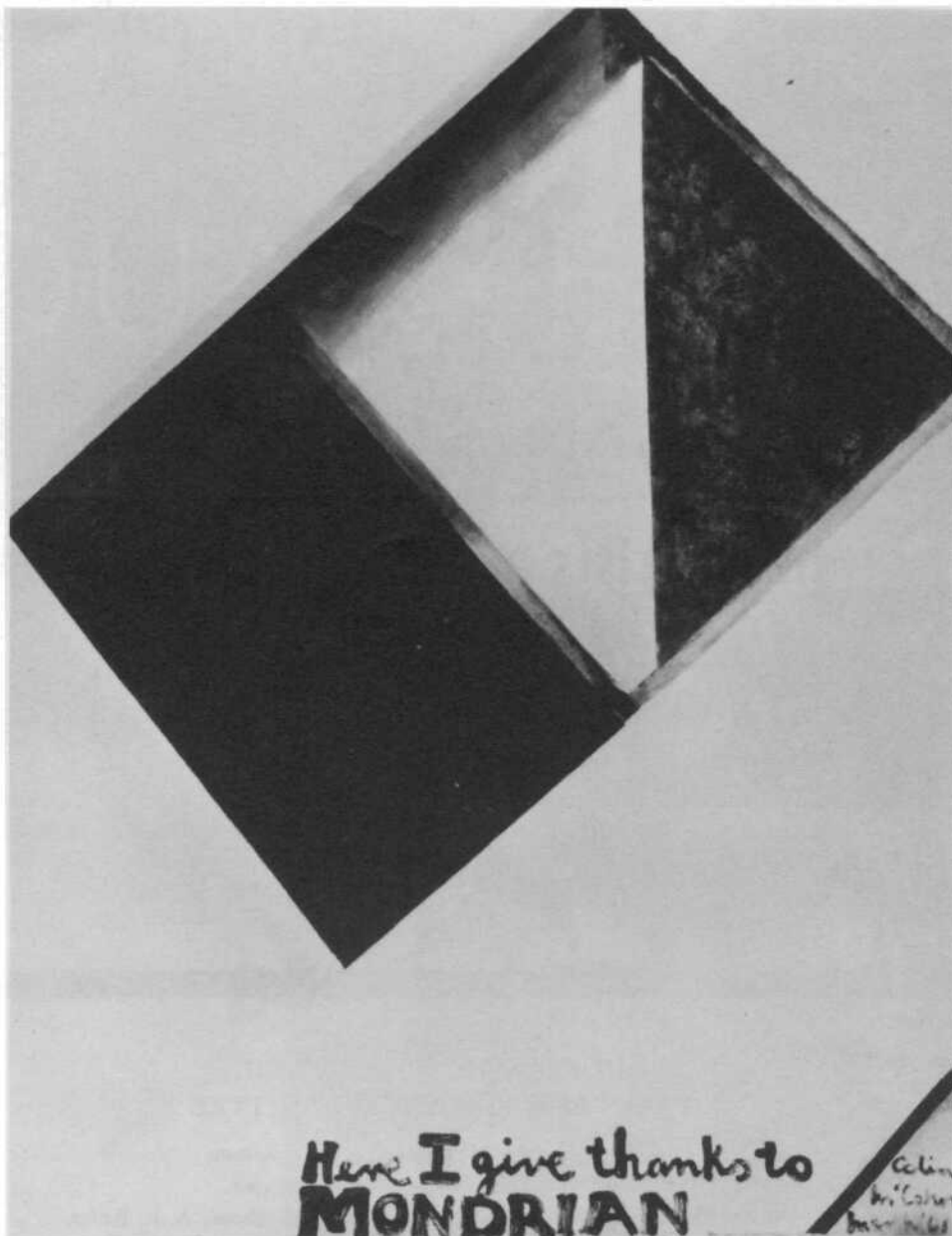
Oil on hardboard 47 x 35 inches

Signed and dated *Colin McCahon March '61*

Presented by The Gallery Associates, 1964

This work was painted in the year that the artist completed his first *Gate* series. Although it does not belong to that series, in composition and intent it does. McCahon's homage to Mondrian is not stylistic but artistic — to the Dutch artist's clarity of vision and statement. McCahon, like Mondrian, developed his art from expressionist foundations, and in the two *Gate* series arrived at his nearest approach to geometric abstraction. Like Mondrian too, McCahon's symbolism emerges as clearly from these series as it does from his more usual figurative works.

McCahon describes his *Gate* as being a way through, and this is apparent in the triangle of light held in the floating rectangle — where it holds the same meaning as does the light horizon in his familiar landscapes of dark hills. McCahon's titles or calligraphic statements are not inscribed but painted on to his pictures, where they assume a proper painterly role. At the same time however, the calli-



graphic style underwrites the subjective nature of McCahon's imagery.

There has been throughout this artist's work a consistent symbol of optimism, represented by the horizon, the white areas in the *Gate* series and more recently the *Waterfall* (1964), which even in his most despairing moments have softened McCahon's more agonised

images.

The important paintings by this artist already in the collection, *On Building Bridges*, 1954 (Quarterly No 8) and *Takaka: Night and Day*, 1948 (Quarterly No 15) support the thoroughly painterly hard and soft, black and white, oppositions, by which the artist sustains his humanist vision.

P.A.T.

exhibition calendar

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