

EIGHT NEW ZEALAND ARTISTS: Binney Ellis Garrity Hanly
McCahon Mrkusich Ritchie Twiss

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In a recent review of a New Zealand exhibition in London, the critic, Robert Wraight, remarked that before seeing the works he had half expected to find something akin to Australian painting. His assumption was reasonable enough, it seems logical to expect two countries of almost identical origins, separated by a mere 1,400 miles of water and facing mutual problems as the only European nations in a predominantly non-European area, to have some common characteristics of expression. It is a fact, however, that the cultural gap existing between New Zealand and Australia is far greater than that between either country and Europe. It is curious to note that the two countries were a great deal closer, culturally speaking, in the nineteenth century than they have ever been since; influential figures of that period are shared by both countries, Augustus Earle, William Strutt and Girolamo Nerli for instance. By the turn of the century, however, the traffic is one way; indeed some quite notable Australian painters are in fact, expatriate New Zealanders.

Since its post-war flowering, Australian painting has become quite well known in this country. It is a sad commentary on the inherent cultural pessimism of New Zealanders that, in some parts of the country at least, Australian painting is a great deal better known than New Zealand painting. The internal isolation of centres of population is perhaps a greater cultural problem here than the well remarked, if fictitious, isolation from European civilisation and enlightenment.

New Zealanders have begun to look towards Australia, initially perhaps with envy, for the rosy glow of the art boom across the Tasman has made this country seem, for artists at least, something of a wasteland. It is important, however, that Australia also knows something of us, is aware of New Zealand's cultural identity, for events are beginning to prove the desperate necessity of mutual understanding. As somebody put it, the legions have returned to Rome, for the future our most urgent problems are likely to be shared.

Consequently the co-operation and generosity of Mr Eric Westbrook in making this exhibition possible is doubly important, it has not only supplied the artists involved with an opportunity to exhibit in Australia, it could also mark the end of more than a generation of isolation.

It is to be hoped that this particular exhibition will be the beginning of a greater exchange of work between the two countries. The scope of the collection is limited, representing only eight artists from the Auckland area, but it should serve as an adequate introduction to contemporary New Zealand painting.

The most enduring image in New Zealand painting has been that of the landscape. Unlike Australia, the landscape here is not positively menacing, it does not offer any marked physical challenge, no deserts, venomous reptiles or vast unexplored wastelands. Certainly, in the South, there are large areas of unexplored forests, but in general the landscape is passive, even indifferent. Possibly this very indifference might supply the reason for some 150 years of obsession. Or more simply the landscape may occupy the central place merely by default, for there has certainly been little else to occupy the artist, or else whatever there was, the Maori Wars, the hardships of colonial life, occupied him in a far more direct sense.

Whatever the reason, the bulk of painting here has been landscape orientated; in the 90's Petrus van der Velden could project into the wild landscape of the Otira Gorge, the romantic expressionist themes which in his native Holland had been reflected in the realities of peasant life, while in the 40's Colin McCahon struggled to set the Passion in the hills and plains of Canterbury and Nelson and later used landscape elements to represent the Passion itself. Since 1958, however, the emphasis has shifted and contemporary painting has increasingly involved itself with more urban themes. Some of these new developments are represented in this exhibition.

The change has come about for a number of reasons, but perhaps among the most significant is the changing attitude of the New Zealanders themselves. They have begun to feel, at last, some kind of identity; the idea that their existence in these Islands is part of an unfair plot to deprive them of the cultural goodies of Europe, is no longer current. It has become more generally recognised that this painting is all we have, all that speaks to us directly, that might arrive at the Universal through our own particular. The imported yardstick now seems less relevant; and once belief is offered, Art must flourish.

HAMISH KEITH

Don Binney

Born Auckland 1940. Studied School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland 1958-61.

Exhibited: Contemporary New Zealand Painting, Auckland City Art Gallery, 1962, 1963, 1964; Paris Biennale, 1963; New Zealand Contemporary Painting and Ceramics, Japan and South-East Asia, 1964; The Group, Christchurch, 1964; One-man exhibitions Ikon Gallery, Auckland, 1963, 1964; Contemporary Painting in New Zealand, Commonwealth Institute, London, 1965.

Represented: Auckland City Art Gallery; Mona Edgar Memorial Collection, Hocken Library, Dunedin; Auckland Teachers' College; Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council; and many private collections.

Teaches art, Secondary School, Auckland.

Don Binney's work represents a transitional stage in New Zealand painting. He stands somewhere between the landscape tradition that has dominated painting here since the early nineteenth century, and a newly emerged urban imagery.

His birds are free to move in and out of the landscape; from the wild beaches of Auckland's West Coast, to the suburbs of the city. Since 1962, Binney has worked consistently at this theme, developing a powerful and unambiguous image. It is, perhaps, not coincidental that Binney should have chosen a subject traditionally representing the longings of the human spirit; many sensitive New Zealanders resent their pastoral origin and yearn for the richness of life in the city. Like many New Zealand painters, there is a strong element of the Primitive in Binney, his style is at times almost naive.

Binney disclaims any intention of creating an obvious or literary symbolism for New Zealand. He has described his paintings as 'fragments of an intimate environment' and while this remains the basis of their production, their tough and direct imagery enables them to transcend the merely personal.

1 NEW SUMMER, TE HENGA

Don Binney 1965
oil on hardboard 35 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 23 $\frac{3}{4}$
Mr & Mrs Stanton

2 COLONIAL GARDEN BIRD

Don Binney 1965
oil on hardboard 71 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 30

3 WAIMANU, TE HENGA

Don Binney 1965 Te Henga
oil on hardboard 32 x 47 $\frac{3}{4}$

4 GREEN AUTUMN, TE HENGA

Don Binney 1965
oil on hardboard 47 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 43 $\frac{3}{4}$

5 TWO FAT BIRDS

Don Binney 1965
oil on hardboard 54 x 23 $\frac{3}{4}$

Robert Ellis

Born Northampton, England 1929. Studied at Northampton School of Art 1944-47; Royal College of Art, London 1949-52.

Exhibited: Royal Academy, Royal Watercolour Society; Royal Artists' International Association; Society for Education Through Art; 1957 Festival of Britain; Contemporary New Zealand Painting, Auckland City Art Gallery 1962, 1963, 1964; New Zealand Contemporary Painting and Ceramics, Japan and South-East Asia 1964. One-man exhibitions 1959, 1960, 1961, 1963, 1964. Sydney 1964, Adelaide 1964, Melbourne 1965; Contemporary Painting in New Zealand, Commonwealth Institute, London, 1965.

Represented: Auckland City Art Gallery, and other public and private collections, Britain, Canada, U.S.A., France, Spain, Egypt and Australia.

Senior Lecturer, School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland.

Despite their European precedents, Robert Ellis' Cities have developed from the artist's experiences of New Zealand. They have been described as 'a complex trap, set in the landscape, for humanity at large'. They could also, perhaps, be described as Utopian, and in this sense they reflect Robert Pemberton's designs for Model Towns for the Happy Colony, 'to be established in New Zealand for the Workmen of Great Britain'.

Ellis' city image has at times, been identifiable with the human cranium; man retreating into complexity to avoid the wilderness around him. A lecturer at the Elam School in Auckland, the painter's influence has been considerable. He is the first local painter to have exhibited widely in Australia.

6 SELF PORTRAIT AS A CITY

Robert Ellis '65
oil on hardboard 47½ x 47½

7 CITY OF CHILDHOOD

Robert Ellis '65
oil on hardboard 35¾ x 29¼

8 THE CITY PASSED BY

Robert Ellis '65
oil on hardboard 35¾ x 29¾

9 CITY OF REMEMBRANCE

Robert Ellis '65
oil on hardboard 47½ x 35¾

10 CITY AT NIGHT-TIME

Robert Ellis '65
oil on hardboard 35¾ x 23½

Tim Garrity

Born London 1931. Spent most of his life in New Zealand. Studied philosophy Canterbury University and architecture, briefly, at Auckland University. No formal training, but worked with Colin McCahon 1962-63.

Exhibited: Contemporary New Zealand Painting, Auckland City Art Gallery, 1961, 1962, 1963; Christchurch Group, 1961; Paris Biennale, 1963; New Zealand Contemporary Painting and Ceramics, Japan and South-East Asia, 1964; Ikon Gallery, Auckland, 1965.

Represented: Auckland City Art Gallery and private collections in Italy, Britain and New Zealand.

Lives and teaches in Bari, Italy.

In his attitude to life and to painting, Tim Garrity is a visionary. It is tempting to find in his paintings a corollary to his earlier studies in philosophy, but it seems more likely that these cosmic landscapes have their origin in some less conscious activity.

He has written: 'Art is perhaps the one thing in life that reserves the right to be nothing . . . a trumpet full of spit . . . a haven, a fortress, and for some people, a prison'.

Although these recent works were painted in Bari, Garrity regards them as an extension of his earlier New Zealand paintings. He regards his journey to Europe as one of self discovery; in Italy he has found himself as a New Zealand painter.

As yet his paintings are little known, he has seldom exhibited. The few that know his work find it profoundly moving, and it is likely that Garrity will mature into a painter of rare power.

11 PAINTING BARI I

T. Garrity 1964
gouache 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 21 $\frac{1}{2}$

12 PAINTING BARI II

T. Garrity 1964
gouache 30 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 22 $\frac{1}{2}$

13 PAINTING BARI III

T. Garrity 1964
gouache 30 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 22 $\frac{1}{2}$

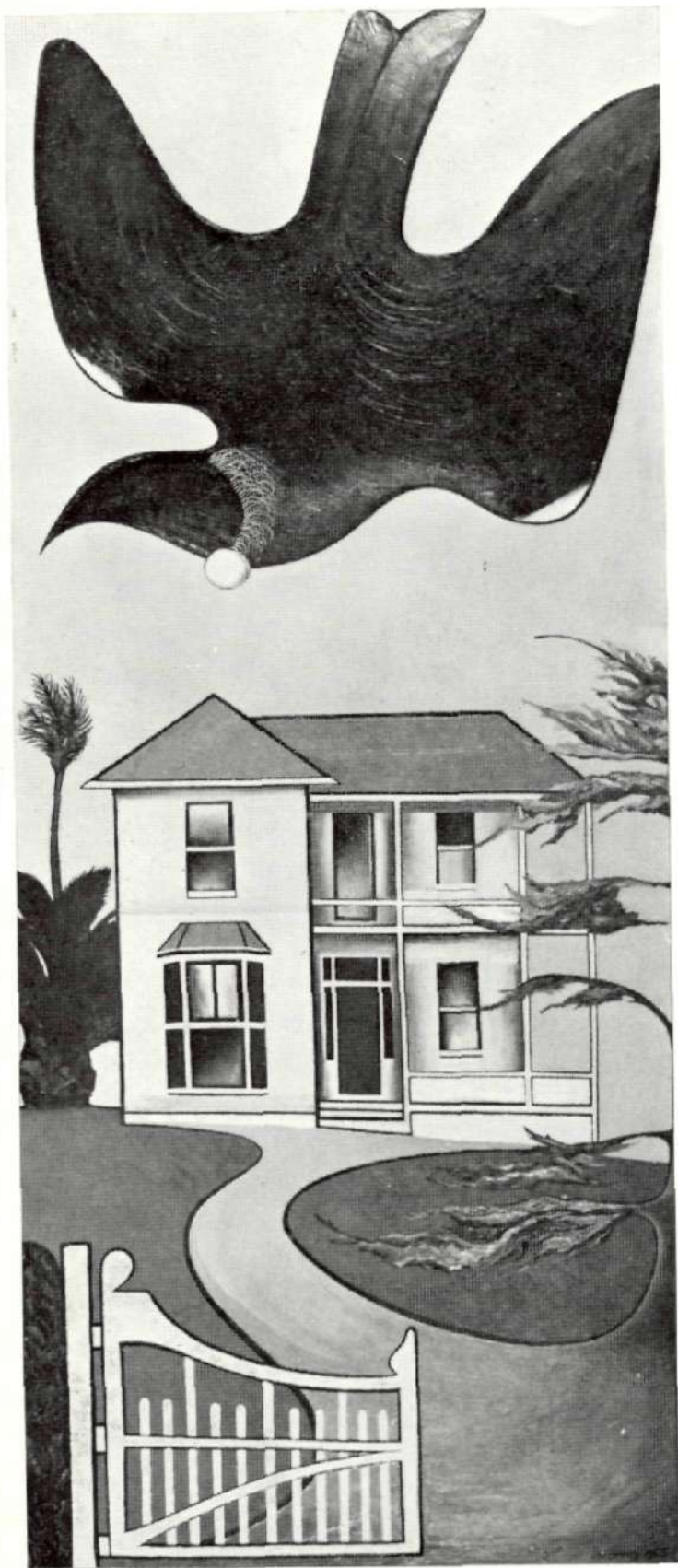
14 PAINTING BARI IV

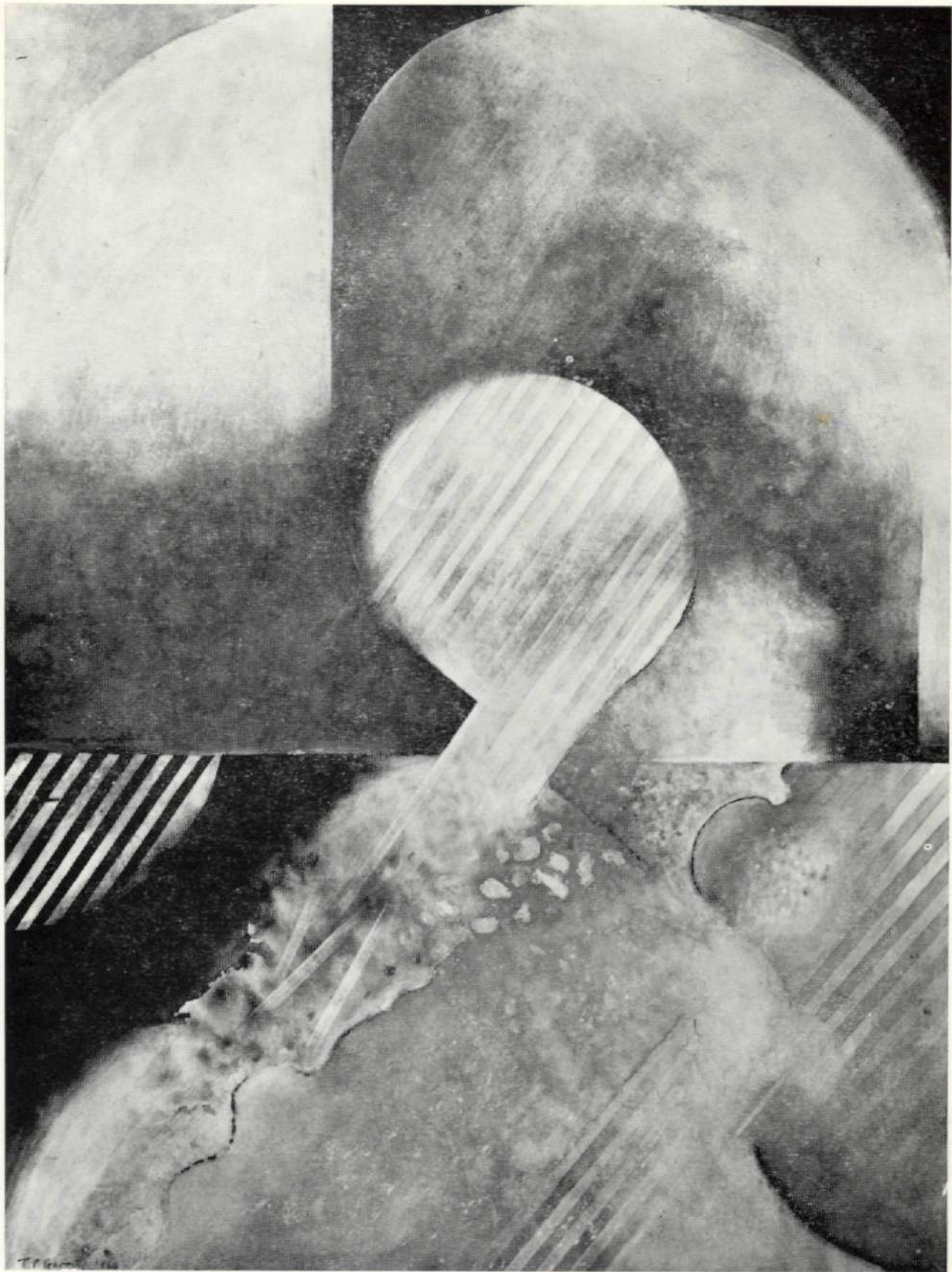
T. Garrity 1964
gouache 30 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 22 $\frac{1}{2}$

15 PAINTING BARI VII

T. Garrity 1965
gouache 30 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 22 $\frac{1}{2}$



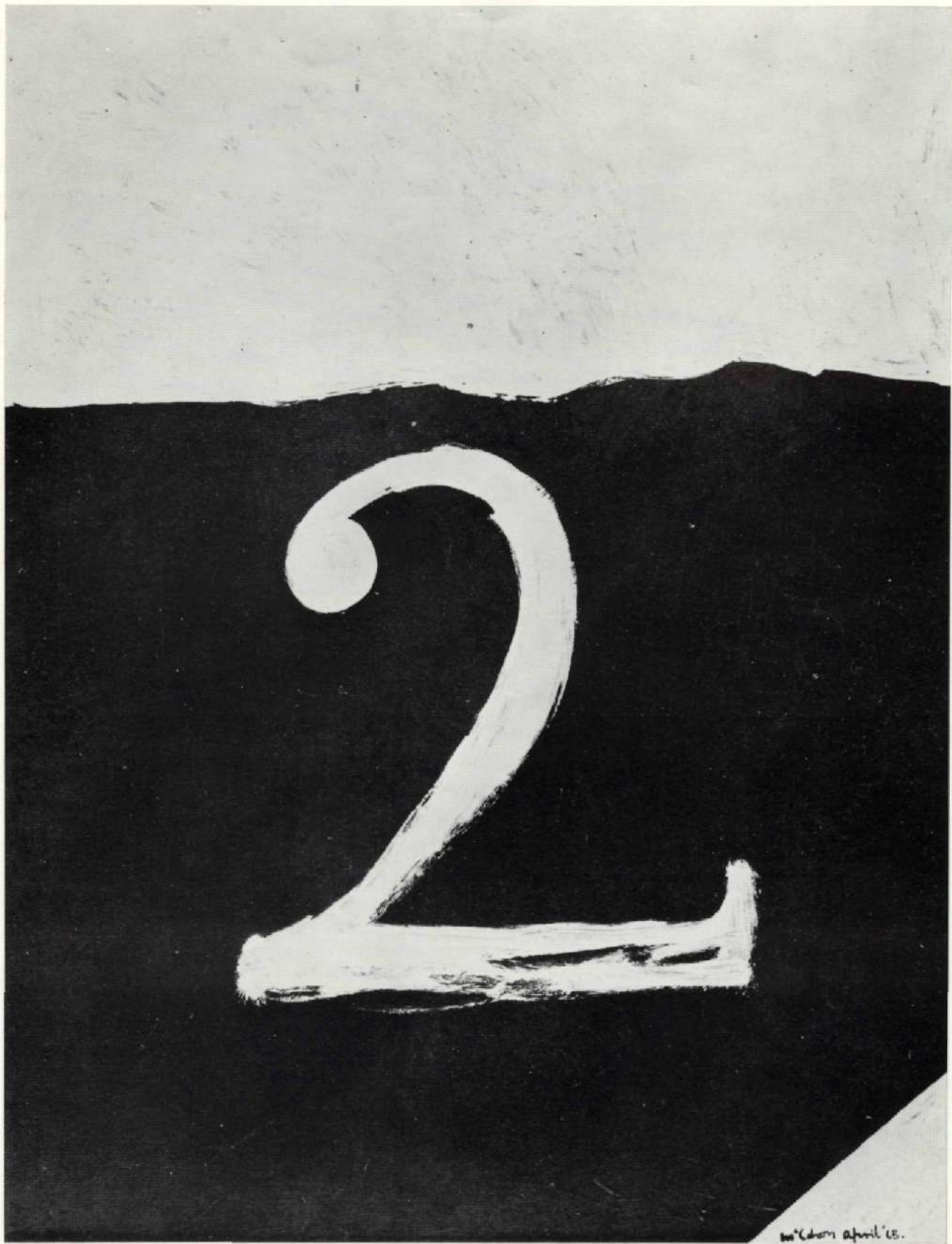


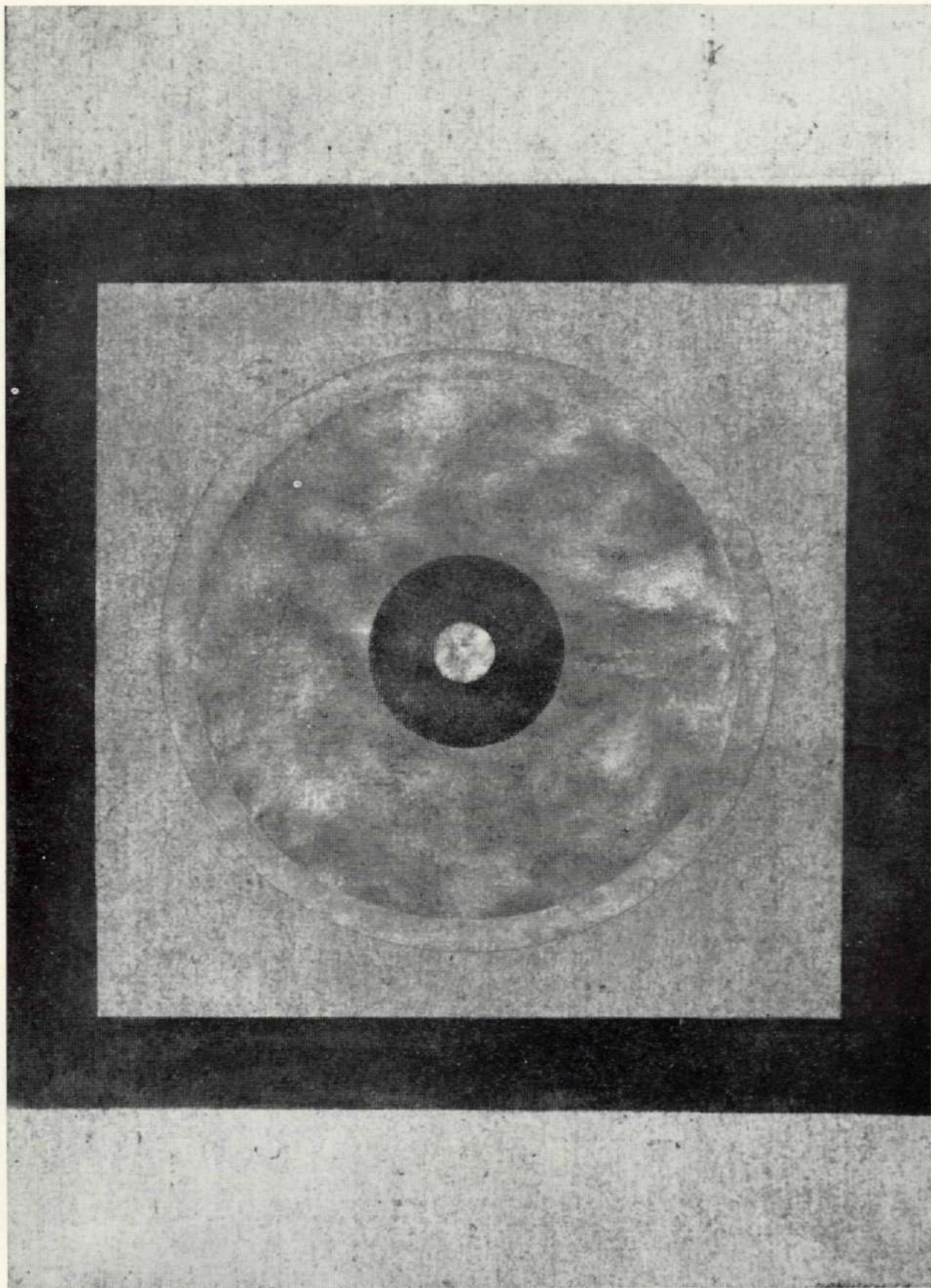


Garrity 14



Hanly 16









Twiss 37

Patrick Hanly

Born Palmerston North 1932. Studied at the School of Art, University of Canterbury for four years and in London, from 1957-62.

Exhibited: London Group; Royal Society of British Artists; Young Contemporaries, London; John Moore's Exhibition; Commonwealth Artists' Exhibition, Edinburgh Festival; Paris Biennale 1963; Contemporary New Zealand Painting, Auckland City Art Gallery, 1962, 1963, 1964. One-man exhibitions: Comedy Gallery, London; Ikon Gallery, Auckland 1962, 1963, 1964; Durham Street Gallery, Christchurch 1963; Centre Gallery, Wellington 1963; Barry Lett Galleries, Auckland 1965; New Zealand Contemporary Painting and Ceramics, Japan and South-East Asia 1964; International Print Biennale, Tokyo 1964; Contemporary Painting in New Zealand, Commonwealth Institute, London 1965. Represented: Auckland City Art Gallery; Durham Street Art Gallery, Christchurch; Ministerial Cultural Relations, The Hague, Holland; and private collections in England, Holland, America, Italy and New Zealand. Lives in Auckland.

During the five years Patrick Hanly spent in Europe, he produced three major series, *Fire*, *Showgirls* and *The Massacre of the Innocents*, all three were deeply concerned with a destructive and menacing environment. On his return to New Zealand in 1962, he attempted, without success, to sustain the third of these series; in the harsh, clear light of New Zealand these ghosts of European despair evaporated. In an attempt at acclimatisation, Hanly produced the two extensive *New Order* series — large luminous abstracts which successfully came to terms with the peculiarities of New Zealand light and colour.

The *Figures in Light* followed soon after, his most mature and certain paintings. These solitary nudes and family groups have an indestructible quality. Bathed in a sharp and clear light, they appear as icons of survival.

The *Girl Asleep* paintings seem to be an extension of the previous series; a more intimate exploration of the human image Hanly has established, and perhaps, the artist's own version of D'arcy Creswell's description of the New Zealanders written in 1929, 'as yet they have no future, but when they do, they will awake to see what realm it was they so rudely and rashly disturbed'.

16 FIGURES IN LIGHT 14

Hanly '64

oil on canvas 50 x 48½

18 GIRL ASLEEP 10

Hanly '65

oil on canvas 31½ x 43

Mr & Mrs Hamish Keith

20 GIRL ASLEEP 19

Hanly '65

oil on canvas 32½ x 39

17 FIGURES IN LIGHT 8

Hanly '64

oil on canvas 40½ x 31½

19 GIRL ASLEEP 17

Hanly '65

oil on canvas 32½ x 36

Colin McCahon

Born Timaru 1919. Lived in Dunedin and studied at Dunedin School of Art. From 1939, lived in Nelson, Wellington and Christchurch, moving to Auckland in 1953 (staff Auckland City Art Gallery). In 1950 visited Australia, and in 1958 the United States of America. First one-man exhibition in 1947, and subsequent annual one-man exhibitions in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. Retrospective exhibition (with M. T. Wollaston) Auckland City Art Gallery 1963.

Exhibited: The Group, Christchurch, regularly from 1948; New Zealand Art, Soviet Union 1957-58; Painting from the Pacific, Auckland City Art Gallery 1961; Commonwealth Art Today, London 1962; Contemporary New Zealand Painting, Auckland City Art Gallery, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964; New Zealand Contemporary Paintings and Ceramics, Japan and South-East Asia 1964; Contemporary Painting in New Zealand, Commonwealth Institute, London 1965; Commonwealth Art Treasures, London 1965.

Represented: Auckland City Art Gallery; Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch, many private collections in New Zealand and overseas.

Lecturer in painting, School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland.

Of Colin McCahon, the poet, John Caselberg has written: 'Portraying paradise and hell, and the light and dark of our lives set in a land of such rare beauty that few of us dare look upon it, for twenty-five years he has spoken as the conscience of New Zealand'.

For an entire generation McCahon has served as an exemplar, proof of the possibility of survival in an environment predominantly hostile to serious art. The exhibition of his *Northland Panels* in 1958, provided a watershed in the development of New Zealand painting. From that point McCahon's kind of courage became more general, the arrivals and decisions to remain began to outweigh the departures. In a very real sense McCahon's *Waterfall* paintings close the bracket on a 150-year tradition of landscape painting; at the other end is William Hodges, on whose waterfalls painted at Dusky Bay in 1773, McCahon's are based.

McCahon has employed writing in his paintings since 1947, it is a sad commentary on the isolation of New Zealand painting that a London critic could recently find in his work, influences of Pop. In his *Northland Panels* he described this country as 'a landscape with too few lovers', a dark place where 'manuka in bloom can breed despair'; if, in 1965, the sky has begun to brighten a little, it is largely through McCahon's own example.

21 WATERFALL TRYPTICH

McCahon Oct '64

p.v.a. on coreboard each panel 72x48

Mr Allan Scott

22 FOUR WATERFALLS 1964

McCahon Dec '64

oil on hardboard 24 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 24 $\frac{3}{4}$

23 SIX 1965

McCahon April '65

p.v.a. on hardboard 48 x 36

24 TEN 1965

McCahon April '65

p.v.a. on hardboard 48 x 36

25 TWO 1965

McCahon April '65

p.v.a. on hardboard 48 x 36

Milan Mrkusich

Born Dargaville 1925. Largely self-taught. Began painting in an abstract manner 1946. First showing of paintings and drawings School of Architecture, Auckland 1949.

Exhibited: Contemporary Artists 1950, 1951; Painting from the Pacific 1961; Contemporary New Zealand Painting, Auckland City Art Gallery 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964; Commonwealth Art Today, London 1962-3; New Zealand Contemporary Paintings and Ceramics, Japan and South-East Asia 1964. One-man shows at Auckland Society of Arts 1957, and Ikon Gallery 1961, 1962, 1965; Contemporary Painting in New Zealand, Commonwealth Institute London 1965.

Represented: The Auckland City Art Gallery; Mona Edgar Memorial, Hocken Library, Dunedin; The Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council; and many private collections in New Zealand.

Lives in Auckland.

Milan Mrkusich is one of the very few successful abstract painters working in New Zealand. Since the early fifties he has refined his images from their original landscape basis, to their present disciplined form.

The world is still present in them, however, sharply contained in the painter's emblems, water and light shift and flow. Mrkusich has carried out a great many public commissions, and he lives solely as a painter and designer.

Later this year he will exhibit, with John Perry and Louise Henderson, in Brussels, Geneva and Paris.

26 EARTH EMBLEM II 1963

Mrkusich '63

oil on canvas 57 x 41

27 ELEMENT II 1965

Mrkusich '65

oil on canvas 34 x 34

28 PASSIVE ELEMENT 1965

Mrkusich '65

oil on canvas 34 x 34

29 EMBLEM XVI 1964

Mrkusich '64

oil on canvas 48 x 34

30 EMBLEM 1965

Mrkusich '65

oil on canvas 48 x 46

Ross Ritchie

Born Wellington 1941. Attended Wellington Technical College Design School for 18 months; otherwise self-taught. Exhibited: Wellington and (with Jeff Macklin) Uptown Gallery, Auckland 1964; Contemporary New Zealand Painting Auckland City Art Gallery 1964; Contemporary Painting in New Zealand, Commonwealth Institute, London 1965. Represented: Auckland City Art Gallery and private collections. Lives in Auckland.

Ross Ritchie is one of the many accomplished young painters who have recently appeared on the Auckland scene. The sources of his imagery are obvious, but the *Garden* series demonstrated his ability to put his borrowings to a very personal use.

A natural painter, Ritchie is likely to mature into a considerable figure in New Zealand painting. His choice of Auckland as an alternative to Europe is indicative of the changing attitude amongst the new generation.

31 RAFF-GAMMON KISS

Ritchie '65
p.v.a. and oil with construction
23 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 35 $\frac{3}{4}$

32 TENNESSEE GIANT PACK

Ritchie '65
p.v.a. and oil on hardboard 71 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 47 $\frac{3}{8}$

33 ORIGIN

Ritchie '65
p.v.a. and oil with construction
71 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 47 $\frac{3}{8}$

34 MARCH

Ritchie '65
p.v.a. with construction 47 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 48 $\frac{1}{4}$
Mr & Mrs Hamish Keith

35 90TH GARDEN

Ritchie '65
oil and collage 47 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 40 $\frac{1}{2}$
Auckland City Art Gallery

Greer Twiss

Born Auckland 1937. Studied Elam School of Fine Arts. At present studying bronze casting in Europe, on an Arts Council award.

Exhibited: Auckland Society of Arts 1963; Mildura Art Gallery 1964; one-man shows, Ikon Gallery, Auckland 1964, Scholes Gallery, Rotorua 1964, John Cordy Limited, Auckland 1965.

Represented: Auckland City Art Gallery; Mildura Art Gallery; and private collections in U.S.A., Australia and New Zealand.

Lives and works in Auckland.

It is perhaps inevitable, that a country's achievements in one field will be reflected in others. Certainly Greer Twiss' bronze athletes have established no world records, but for sculpture, in many ways the Cinderella of New Zealand Art, they have achieved a major break-through.

Not only has Twiss established himself as a sculptor of considerable power and ability, he has done so with an imagery that is widely accessible. In a country that has almost no public sculpture, and few people that feel its absence, the importance of this will be obvious

As yet Twiss has carried out few works larger than the two Auckland Gallery groups, but it appears that an increase in scale would only add to the power of these running athletes and protest marchers. It is likely that on his return from Europe at the end of this year, he will be given an opportunity to demonstrate his abilities as a major sculptor.

36 GROUP OF ATHLETES 1964

bronze 10½ high
Robert Ellis

37 GROUP OF ATHLETES 1964

bronze 13½ high
Auckland City Art Gallery

38 THE BOMB WILL MAIM 1965

bronze 20 high
Auckland City Art Gallery

39 WHEN WILL THEY EVER
LEARN 1965

bronze 9½ high
John Cordy Limited

40 WE LOVE YOU RINGO 1965

bronze 6 high
John Cordy Limited

