

# Quarterly

of the Auckland City Art Gallery

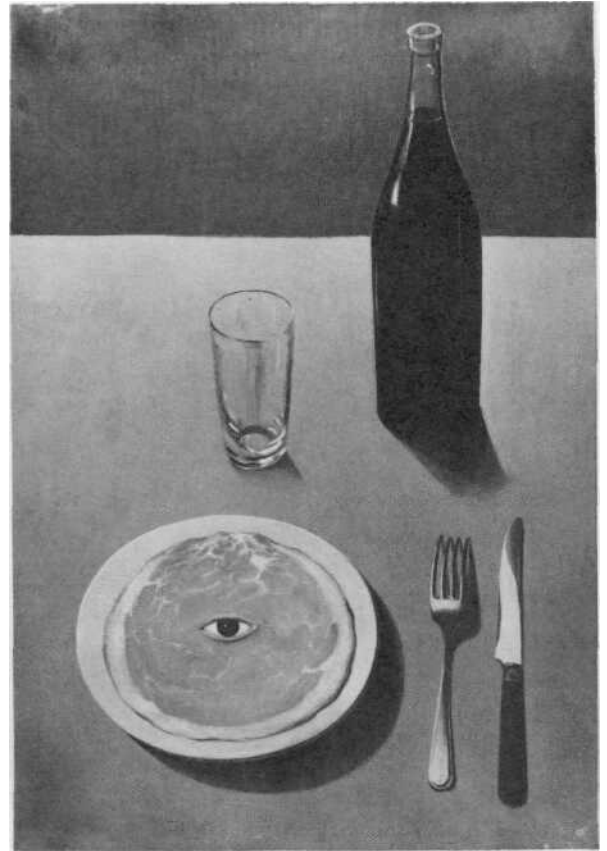
Number Fifty-three/1972



Auckland City Art Gallery

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RENE MAGRITTE *Portrait* 1935 (Museum of Modern Art)

## *Surrealism and the sur-real*

The Museum of Modern Art in New York put together an exhibition which, in the months of July and August, broke all attendance records at the City Gallery.\* Apparently, as people returned repeatedly, some message was being met, pondered, understood.

Diversity of personalities, sharing, sometimes only tenuously, a set of views or aims, was overall the striking keynote. Unity of time was glaringly apparent (only the Arshile Gorky of 1947 undermined the historical context). The wordy or the visual puns, again, gave coherence to the experience. The result was a set-piece, a

\*SURREALISM: an exhibition arranged for the Auckland City Council by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and brought to New Zealand by American Airlines, with the additional sponsorship of *The New Zealand Herald* and *The Sunday Herald*.

period piece. And rightly so.

Surrealism did have its dates, roughly 1924 to 1937. It also had its place, Paris. Hence, the possibility of mounting such a unified display on such a grand scale, so perfectly in accord with the aims and philosophy of New York's Modern: the Guggenheim would have done it quite differently, as would the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris.

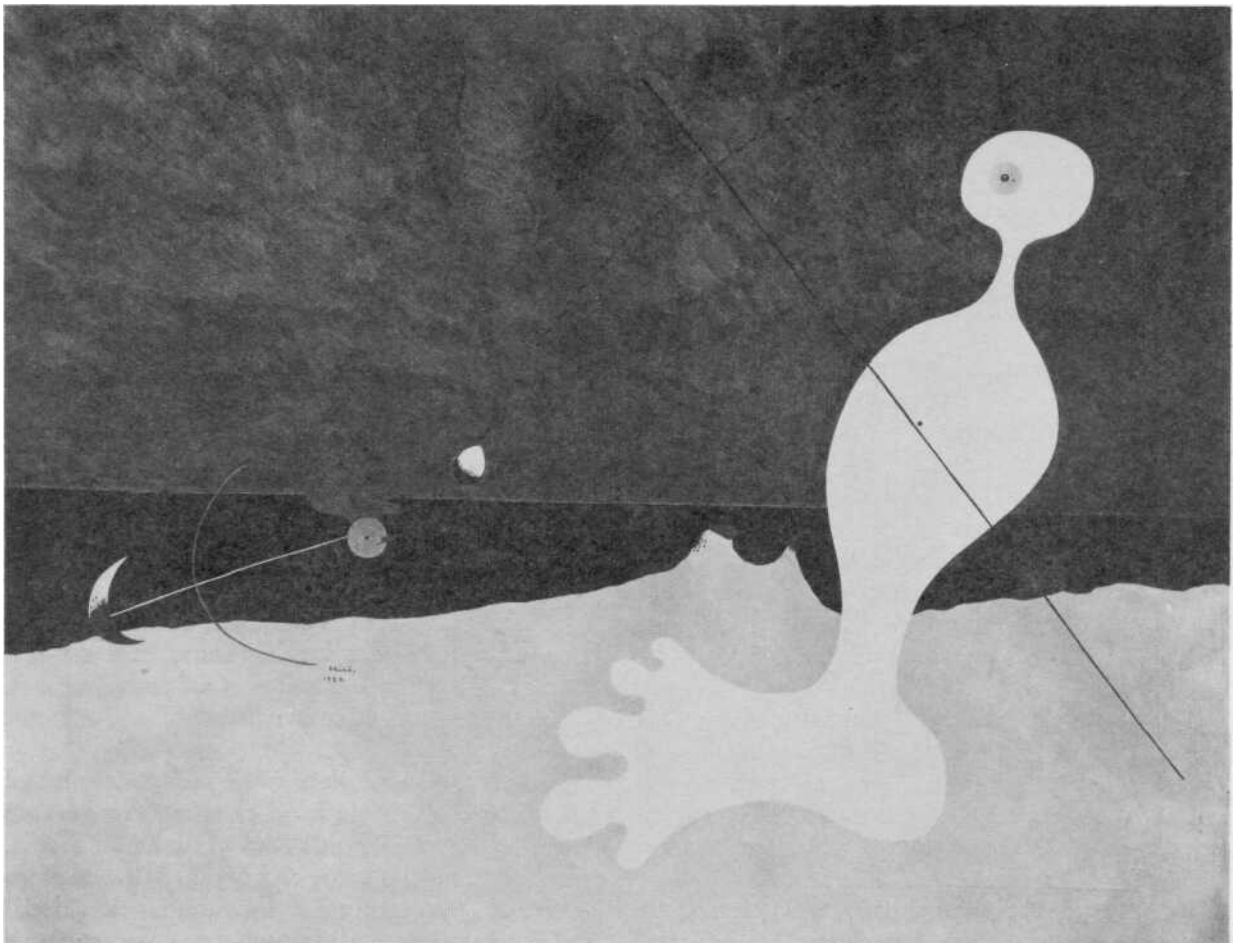
This raises a point. Granted Malraux's notion of the 'Museum without Walls', what might be the Surrealist exhibition closest to perfection if the world's resources could all be called upon? The wealth of it is staggering: the strange joining-in-one-body of man and creature in stone carvings, feared and worshipped around the world over thousands of years, the man-bull Minotaur, the many-breasted Diana of Ephesus. Or, closer to home, what of mobile Maori faces,

fixed in set expressions by tattooing? They are certainly sur-real.

There are, at random, the *Four Seasons* of Arcimboldo (c.1530-1593), four reclining, seemingly-human figures, convincing at a distance and, close up, revealed to be humanoid shapes composed of the fruits and harvestings of each period of the year. The monks of Magnasco (1667 or 1681-1749) don't have the dual illusions of Dali's work, but their dense surroundings challenge Tanguy's light with sombreness, Ernst's dreams with their nightmares.

Ranging round our centuries one thinks of the Last Judgement devils with obscene faces replacing abdomens or other anatomical features, ferocious feral heads, goat-horns, flaming tails, above cathedral doors of medieval Europe, while the gates of hell are the open maws of brutal faces. Are not the various egalitarian *Dances of Death* by Holbein (1497-1543) - and there are dozens of variations on this theme by as many artists - sur-real in the truest sense? Brueghel

JOAN MIRO *Person throwing a stone at a bird* 1926  
(Museum of Modern Art)





ANDRE MASSON *Furious suns* 1926  
(Museum of Modern Art)

(c1528-1569) dreamed terrible other-world fables in response to war and violence, but merely lacked an Andre Breton of his time to codify his intent, though Erasmus (1466-1536) might be thought (*In Praise of Folly*) to do at a pinch. Rubens' lustiness might seem out of place in the same exhibition with the pale Delvaux; but there are those courtly metaphors of hatred, envy, treachery, blue of skin, wild-eyed, being crushed beneath the light foot of Royalty; and the mermaids.

The true Romanticism of the last century was ushered in (and in Paris) by Benjamin West's *Death on a Pale Horse*, as close to Surrealism's scrivener-pope Breton's 'automatic writing' as anything on canvas, a passion of painting from which flows the imagery.

But if Surrealism was wordy, then its poetry did not start with Tzara, Aragon or Apollinaire;

we could well take it back to Aesop or Aristophanes or Homer (Circe's homey little island...). Hans Christian Anderson, prose poet, is a candidate. *Gulliver's Travels* are right in there, and a few thousand others; Poe, of course, or back to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (beautifully engraved, totally sur-real, for Louis xiv in the staid seventeenth century). Don Quixote - but of course.

The boatman of Verhaeren, struggling with the tide and never leaving shore, is a sur-real image, but the critics call him a Symbolist poet, just as they call Gustave Moreau a Symbolist painter.

And if concepts were to be included, what of Zen's 'sound of one hand clapping', the avatars of Indian gods, Egypt's *Book of the Dead*; in fact, what of Chicken Little and Mother Goose, to go from the rare sublime to the familiar ridiculous? Where would it end? For what is being suggested

here, in random capsule form, is that man has always lived in two worlds, not one, as he professes: the tangible and the sur-real.

One last thought occurs. One evening during the Auckland exhibition, the entire Pakuranga Art Club came to visit it. By coincidence the NZBC was making an elaborate production on Surrealism for the new series *Review*. The surroundings were perfect for such an occasion; endless lengths of winding cables, lights being angled, orders ringing out, light-readings being made, people talking to invisible other people

MAN RAY *Le violon d'Ingres* 1924 (Coll. Arne Ekstrom)

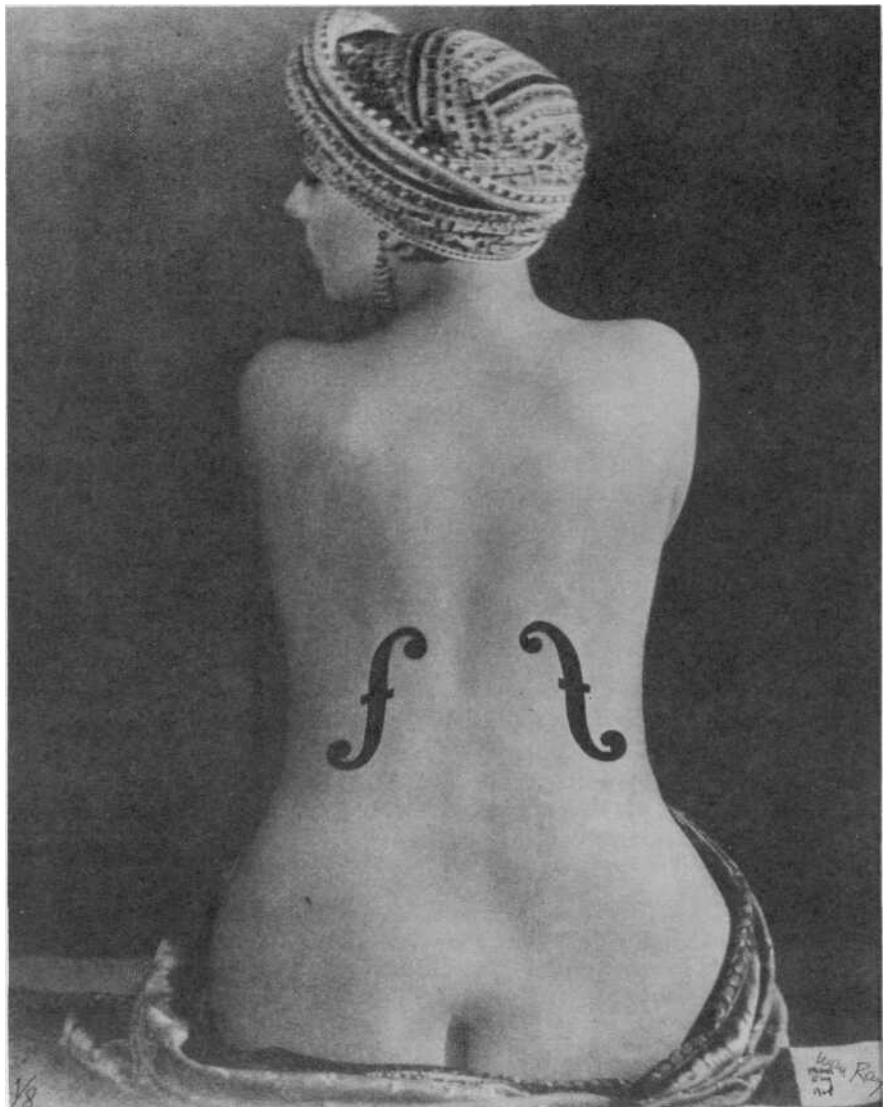
A typical visual/literary Surrealist pun: play on

words, play on forms, play on memories:

Ingres' hobby - the violin; the model's back as violin;

the turban, reminiscent of Ingres' *Odalisques*.

(Photo: Clements)





PABLO PICASSO *Grand air* 1936  
(Museum of Modern Art)

over head-microphones while three gadget-covered cameras rolled here and there with great purpose. It was a 'happening': not one that Breton would have planned (his always ended in destruction). But, assuredly, this was a flawless, unrehearsed yet orderly happening, with Art Club members stepping over wires and discussing paintings and sculpture followed by the single eye of a TV Cyclops - mass-produced. Those moments where purpose and contemplation were fortuitously mixed, might have elucidated Duchamp's multi-layered Cabalistic intent in displaying a 'readymade' bicycle wheel as a work of art. Non-art? Anti-art? Or did he mean to say that the mass-produced, lifted out of context, just as anything in earlier centuries, when introduced into a new context - the dream - could also lead to the sur-real. The difference was and is, Duchamp might have pointed out, that what we can now create impersonally becomes personal if only our perception can be keen enough.

R.T.H.

*A permanent collection of photography  
for the Gallery?*

The Auckland City Art Gallery has been considering for some time the possibility of establishing a permanent collection of photography. The idea coincides with the growing conviction amongst galleries and great art museums overseas that the photographic print should be regarded as an integral aspect of the fine arts.

Aside from its role as document or as a demonstration of technical skill, photography is becoming valued more and more for its aesthetic qualities, which have played an immensely important part in defining the character and meaning of contemporary vision. Galleries which have not taken photography seriously before are now establishing departments in this field, buying prints and arranging exhibitions.

New Zealand has already witnessed several



**DR A. C. BARKER**

*Ohapi lean-to c1870*

3 x 4 ins. The Canterbury Museum

(Illustrated above)

Several items in the Exhibition *Nineteenth Century New Zealand Photographs* depicted the colonists associated with their homes and farms. Often, as in this instance, the images show a rather incongruous relationship between the genteel English sensibility and the rawness of the new land.

**FREDERICK (WILLIAM?) TYREE**

*Maori wedding, Nelson province c1895*

7 x 9 ins The Nelson Provincial Museum

(Cover illustration)

The direct and transparently honest nature of early New Zealand photography is well exemplified in this work. In spite of the difficulties facing the early practitioners - the delays and frustrations of working the new processes of first the wet plate collodion method and, later, the process of gelatine-bromide dry plates - their work achieved a rich and detailed insight into past events which continues to be both informative and visually rewarding to the contemporary audience.

BURTON BROTHERS (Burton Bros.)

*Maori woman in trimmed hat and silk dress* c1879  
7 x 5 ins. The Dominion Museum.

The brothers Alfred and Walter Burton formed a commercial partnership in the late 1860s in Dunedin. This portrait of a Maori lady, with tattooed chin, and dressed in the trappings of Victorian society, is one of a vast number of photographs produced by the firm before its closure in 1898.



internationally important exhibitions. From the Museum of Modern Art, New York, *The Photographer's Eye* was displayed in July and August of 1967, followed by selections from the *oeuvre* of the master photographers Brassai (1899-) and Bill Brandt (1906-). In addition, two shows of particular relevance to this country, *Maori in Focus* and *Nineteenth Century New Zealand Photographs*, provided a visually striking record of our early social history. They were organised in 1970 by the Palmerston North Art Gallery and the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, respectively. To indicate further the considerable interest of local public galleries in fine photography, a recently organised exhibition of work by three of New Zealand's outstanding contemporary photographers, Baigent, Collins and Fields, is shortly to be displayed at the Auckland City Art Gallery.

A comprehensive plan has been compiled by Mr John Turner, formerly photographer-curator at the Dominion Museum, to assist this Gallery in establishing a collection policy. He urges that, owing to the present demand for material in this field, 'an early start should be made to collect photographs, books and related works important to an understanding of the history of photography, while they are still available'.

The proposed scheme, at Auckland, would place special emphasis on New Zealand work, at the same time including good foreign material. Happily, the first category would present the opportunity to offer additional encouragement to our own photographers who have made a sustained and maturing effort within the field. It is inevitable that the early prints would, in certain instances, duplicate those held for reasons of historical documentation by public libraries and museums. The work of such photographers as Dr A. C. Barker, Frank Coxhead and Alfred H. Burton could be considered in this light.

But aside from local material we should, ideally, acquire examples of the work of important nineteenth century photographers, such as Brady and Robinson, followed by Edward Steichen, Edward Weston, Brassai, Walker Evans, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and on to the more contemporary masters such as Bill Brandt and Paul Strand. A point to be resolved in drawing up an acquisition policy is whether examples of the new mixed media, such as collage or synthetic approaches should be included. Does the imagery of Moholy Nagy and Man Ray have



a place in the collection, or should we concentrate solely on acquiring 'straight' photography in the tradition of Steichen, Weston and Sheeler?

Naturally, many aspects need to be taken into account when formulating a collection of photography, but the possibility of this programme for the Auckland City Art Gallery is nevertheless an exciting one. If such a collection is made, the aesthetic experience of the Gallery visitor will undoubtedly be enriched and this, in turn, should contribute to fostering public knowledge of photography and photographers, of the concepts that motivate them, and of the philosophy they impart.

The photographs reproduced here have been selected from the very fine exhibition mentioned earlier, *Nineteenth Century New Zealand Photographs*, displayed at this Gallery during June, 1972.

ANNE KIRKER

DR A. C. BARKER

*Colonel Harrington and friends 1872*

3 x 4 ins. The Canterbury Museum

Dr Barker provided the finest photographic record of Christchurch's first years of development. Although an amateur in this field, Dr Barker nevertheless produced works of considerable aesthetic merit.



## Acquisitions

This list of acquisitions continues from that published in *Quarterly 52*.

Unless otherwise stated, each of these works was purchased by the Gallery.

Pat Hanly, 1932-

1971/12/2 *Everything is beautiful* 1970  
Oil, 47 X 47 ins

Stanley Palmer, 1936-

1971/13/1 *Pohutukawas and island - Mahurangi* 1970  
Engraving, 19 X 24 ins

Stanley Palmer, 1936-

1971/13/2 *Towards Pararaha* 1971  
Engraving, 18 x 22 ins

Francisco Jose de Goya  
y Lucientes, 1746-1828

1971/14/1 *Volaverunt (The Capriccios, plate 61)*  
Etching, 7 x 5 ins

Jean Louis Forain, 1852-1931

1971/14/2 *Le depart de L'Etoile*  
Etching, 6 X 4 ins

Godfrey Miller, 1893-1964

1971/15/1 *Figure Study I*  
Pencil, 10 X 7 ins

Godfrey Miller, 1893-1964

1971/15/2 *Figure Study II*  
Pencil, 10 x 7 ins

Godfrey Miller, 1893-1964

1971/15/3 *Figure Study III*  
Pencil, 10x7 ins

Dorothy Thornhill, 1910-

1971/15/4 *Crouched nude from behind*  
Pen, 8 X 5 ins

Dorothy Thornhill, 1910-

1971/15/5 *Standing nude from behind*  
Pen, 8 X 5 ins

Dorothy Thornhill, 1910-

1971/15/6 *Seated nude*  
Pen, 8 X 5 ins

R. Zusters, 1918-

1971/15/7 *Road clutter*  
Oil, 18 x 24 ins

Tom Green, 1913-

1971/15/8 *Ritual dance* 1970  
Serigraph, 11 x 16 ins

Tom Green, 1913-

1971/15/9 *Feline god* 1967  
Serigraph, 26 X 18 ins

Tom Green, 1913-

1971/15/10 *Hebrides* 1971  
Serigraph, 18 X 24 ins

Tom Green, 1913-

1971/15/11 *North Sea. Night* 1970  
Serigraph, 12 X 17 ins

JOHN BARR CLARKE HOYTE *Coromandel coastal scene*



Jean Appleton, 1911—  
1971/15/12 *Dusk* 1967  
Serigraph, 25 x 19 ins

Jean Appleton, 1911—  
1971/15/13 *Winter journey* 1970  
Serigraph, 16 x 19 ins

Jean Appleton, 1911—  
1971/15/14 *Scribe* 1968  
Serigraph, 19 X 28 ins

All the above works from acquisition 1971/15/1 to  
acquisition 1971/15/14 were presented by  
Mr John Brackenreg

John Barr Clarke Hoyte, 1835-1913  
1971/16/1 *View of Auckland Harbour from Parnell*  
Watercolour, 11 x 21 ins  
Presented by Mr J. M. Smith

John Barr Clarke Hoyte, 1835-1913  
1971/16/2 *Corontandel coastal scene*  
Watercolour, 14 x 26 ins  
Presented by Mr J. M. Smith

Stanley William Hayter, 1901-  
1971/17 *Aerialistes* 1957  
Etching, 13 x 9 ins

Theodore Rousseau, 1812-1867  
1971/18 *Chenes de roche* 1861  
Etching, 5 x 6 ins

Robert Bevan, 1865-1925  
1971/19 *The horse mart* 1920  
Lithograph, 10 X 14 ins

Artist Unknown  
1971/20/1 *Yoshitsune with his attendants*  
Ink drawing, 14 x 29 ins

Toyokuni III (1786-1864) (attributed to)  
1971/20/2 *Scene from the Kabuki Theatre*  
Ink drawing, 13 x 28 ins

Artist Unknown  
1971/20/3 *Four drawings of Samurai, from a series*  
Ink drawing, 36 x 26 ins

Raymond McIntyre, 1879-1933  
1971/21/1 *Evening*  
Oil, 9 x 6 ins

Giovanni Battista Piranesi, 1720-1778  
1971/21/2 *Plan and elevation of a bridge*  
Etching, 15 X 23 ins

Sydney Long, 1872-1955  
1971/21/3 *Moonrise pastoral*  
Etching, 12 X 9 ins

Hiroaki Ueda  
1971/22 *Opened stone* 1971  
Red granite.  
Presented by Firth Industries Ltd

Alun Leach-Jones, 1937-  
1971/23/1 *Divisions III*  
Serigraph, 35 X 35 ins

Alun Leach-Jones, 1937-  
1971/23/2 *Sukra*  
Serigraph, 40 X 31 ins

Gretchen Albrecht, 1943-  
1971/24/1 *Horsemen* 1967  
Pencil, 9 x 14 ins

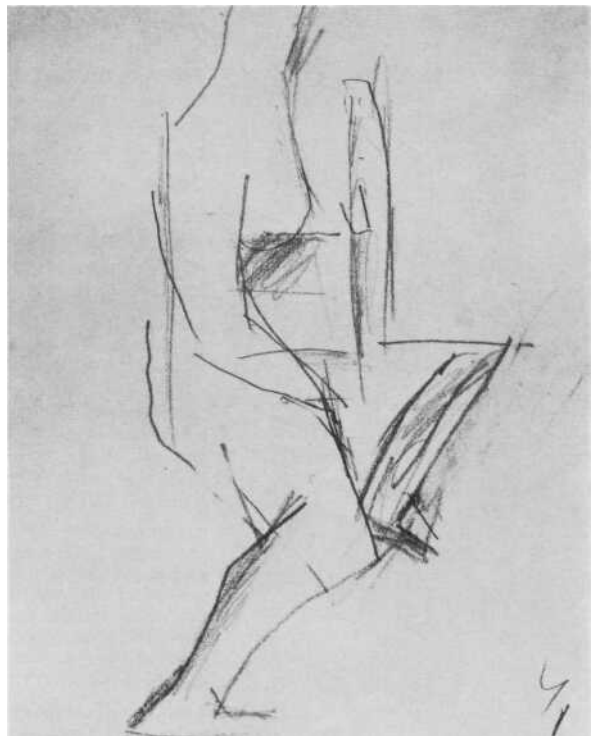
Ross Ritchie, 1941-  
1971/24/2 *Flight* 1971  
Gouache, 29 x 21 ins

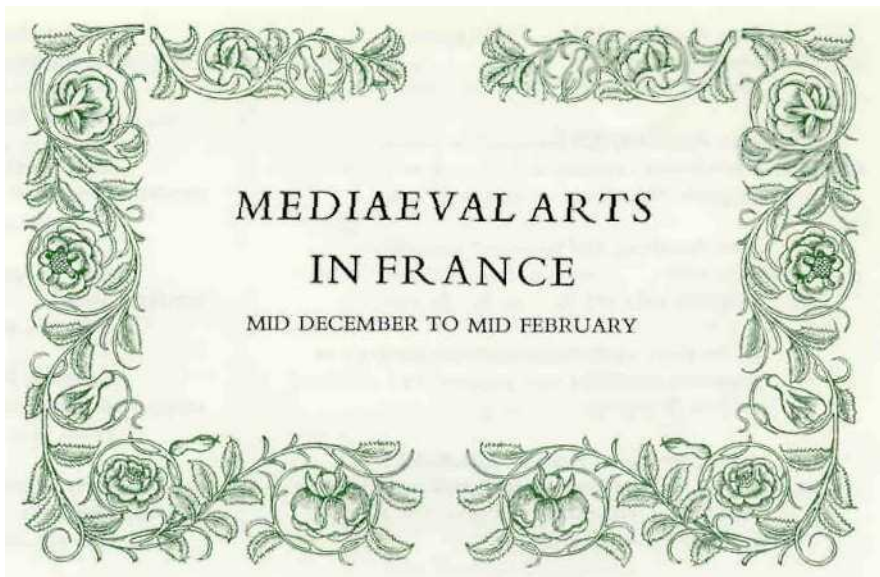
Michael Illingworth, 1932-  
1971/25 *Man and woman figures with still-life and flowers*  
Oil, 30 x 26 ins

John Drawbridge, 1930-  
1971/26 *Calvados No. III* 1971  
Oil, 89 x 65 ins

Colin McCahon, 1919-  
1971/29 *A poem of Kaipara Flat* 1971  
Watercolour, 40 x 26 ins

GODFREY MILLER *Figure study II*





## MEDIAEVAL ARTS IN FRANCE

MID DECEMBER TO MID FEBRUARY

*The Auckland City  
Art Gallery*

**SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE:** His Worship the Mayor Sir Dove-Myer Robinson, JP; Dr R. H. L. Ferguson, *Chairman*; Councillors L. E. Adams; W. J. H. Clark; H. D. B. Dansey; A. J. R. Dreaver, JP; Mrs W. M. Holland; C. M. Kay; E. P. Salmon, OBE, JP; Mrs C. A. Tizard; M. L. Tronson, JP; H. E. Watts, JP.

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:** Geoffrey Rix-Trott, *Chairman Mackelvie Trustees*; John Stacpoole.

**ART GALLERY SUB-COMMITTEE:** Dr R. H. L. Ferguson; Mrs W. M. Holland; Geoffrey Rix-Trott; Mr G. O. Sims; John Stacpoole.

**STAFF:** *Director*, Richard Teller Hirsch; *Curator of Paintings and Sculpture*, Eric Young, BA; *Curator of Prints and Drawings*, Anne Kirker, DIPFA; *Honorary Consultant (Prints)*, Dr Walter Auburn; *Exhibitions Officer*, Peter Webb; *Senior Conservator, City of Auckland Art Gallery*, Eileen Maitland, AHC; *Conservator, National Conservation Service*, Raewyn Cooper, AHC; *Librarian and Editor of the Quarterly*, Ross Fraser; *Secretary of the Art Gallery*, Dorothy J. Wherry; *Programmes and Public Relations Secretary*, Brenda Gamble; *Foreman Attendant*, Laurie Teixeira; *Exhibitions and Graphic Designer*, Ross Ritchie; *Exhibitions Assistant*, Harry Wong; *Senior Attendant*, William Quelch; *Attendants*, Douglas Mitchell, Andrew Milliken; *Shorthand Typist*, Gillian Cottle.

**LOCATION:** The new entrance to the Gallery is off Kitchener Street via the Sculpture Garden and the Edmiston Wing. TELEPHONE: 74650 POSTAL ADDRESS: PO Box 6842 Auckland.

**GALLERY HOURS:** Monday to Saturday 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Friday remains open until 8.30 p.m. Sunday 2 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. Art Gallery Bookshop open daily.

**AUCKLAND GALLERY ASSOCIATES:** The aims of the Associates are to stimulate and sustain public interest in the Art Gallery; to extend the Gallery's influence throughout the community; and to acquire funds through gifts, subscriptions and bequests, for the purpose of adding to the Art Gallery's collection of painting, drawings and sculpture.

Any member of the public is eligible for membership. Members are invited to previews of exhibitions arranged by the Art Gallery, to lectures, discussions, film evenings, and social functions arranged by the Associates. Regular newsletters are sent out, and Members also receive the Art Gallery's *Quarterly*. Further information can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary, c/o Auckland City Art Gallery.

**GIFTS AND BEQUESTS:** Gifts to the Art Gallery in the form of *cash from income* upward to \$100 are allowable for purposes of income tax deductions. Gifts in the form of paintings, or other property do not qualify for such deductions. Gifts to the Art Gallery of money or property would not attract gift duty, and the value of such gifts made during the donor's lifetime would not form part of his dutiable estate. An exception to this is where an intending donor declares a gift to the Art Gallery, but reserves to himself, during his life, an interest in the property so that the full beneficial interest does not attract duty, but the property remains part of the donor's estate and qualifies for purposes of estate duty.

The *Quarterly* is published by the Auckland City Art Gallery, and is concerned primarily with presenting information about works of art acquired by the Gallery.

*Editor:* Ross Fraser.

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