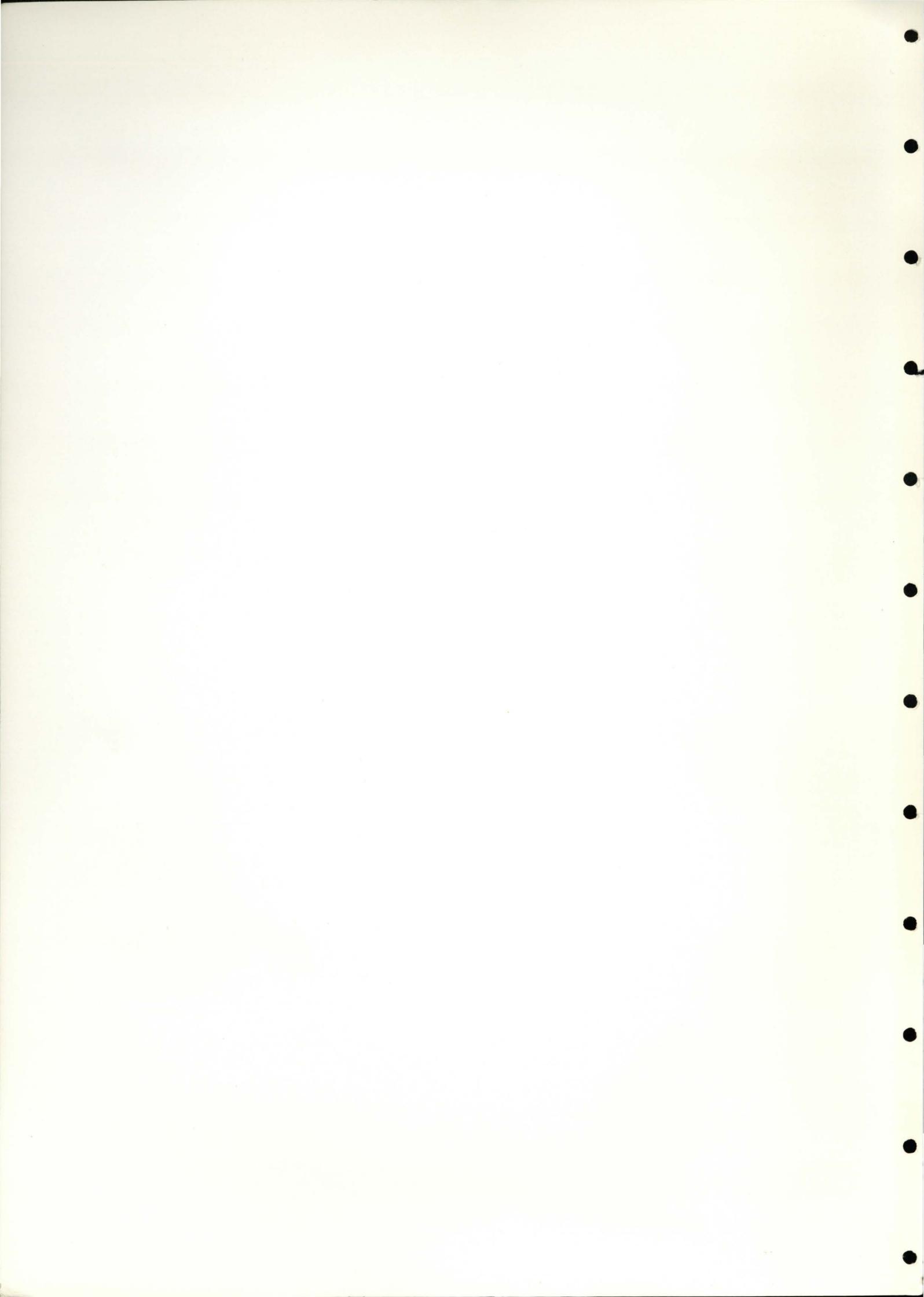


187.
1975

Helen F.V. Scales



AUCKLAND CITY
ART GALLERY

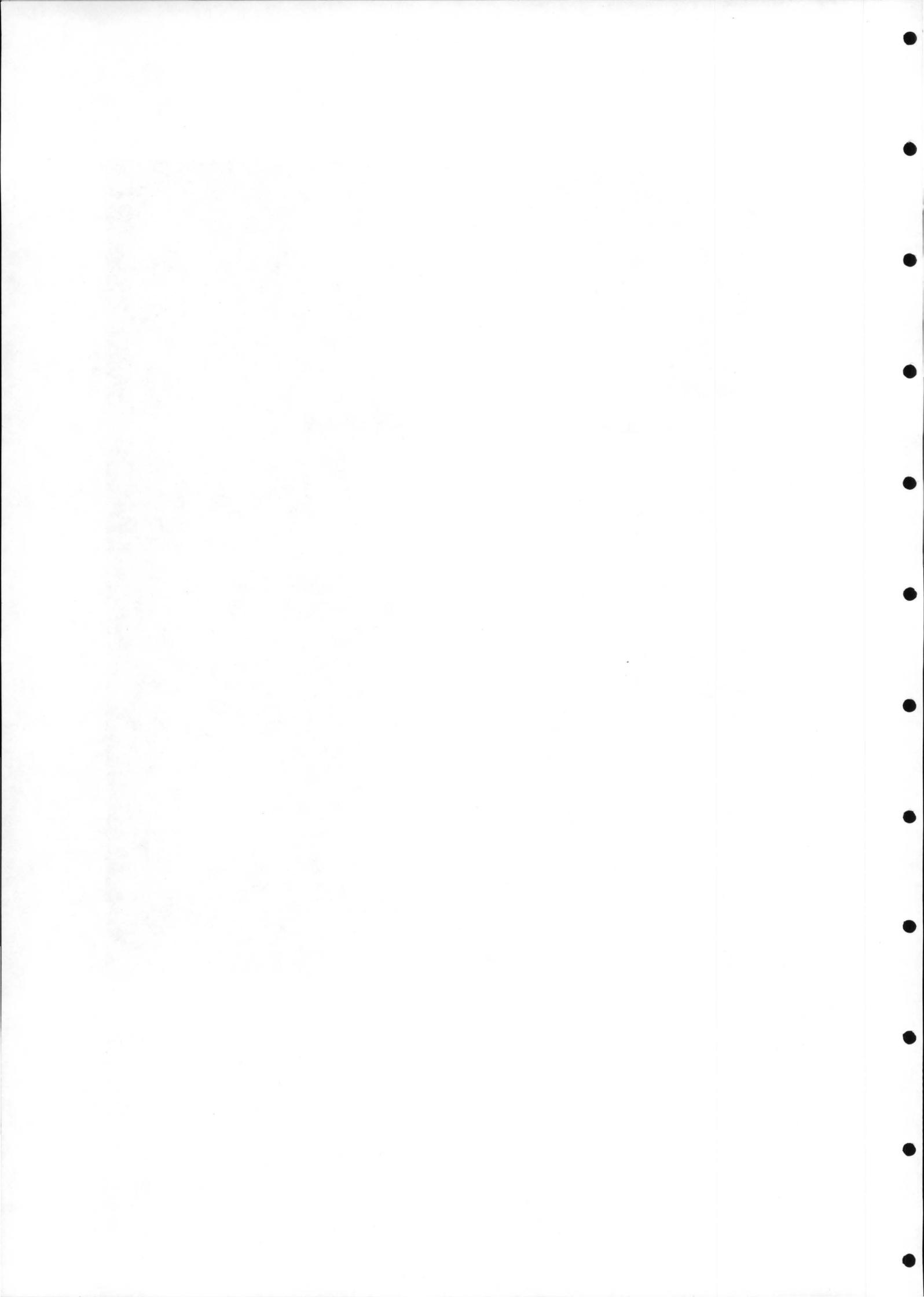
Helen F.V. Scales

Auckland City Art Gallery December 1975

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Helen F.V. Scales. Auckland 1975



FOREWORD

Kim Wright and Barry Lett discovered Miss Scales working in Auckland a year or so ago. She is still painting.

We hope this exhibition will tell people of a lifetime of painting, from her sometimes didactic early work to the poetry of her plum trees and the portraits.

The beauty of her vision comes from her thinking about painting and from the grace and care she gives to her work. Without this, how could the plum trees have grown and the portraits become so real?

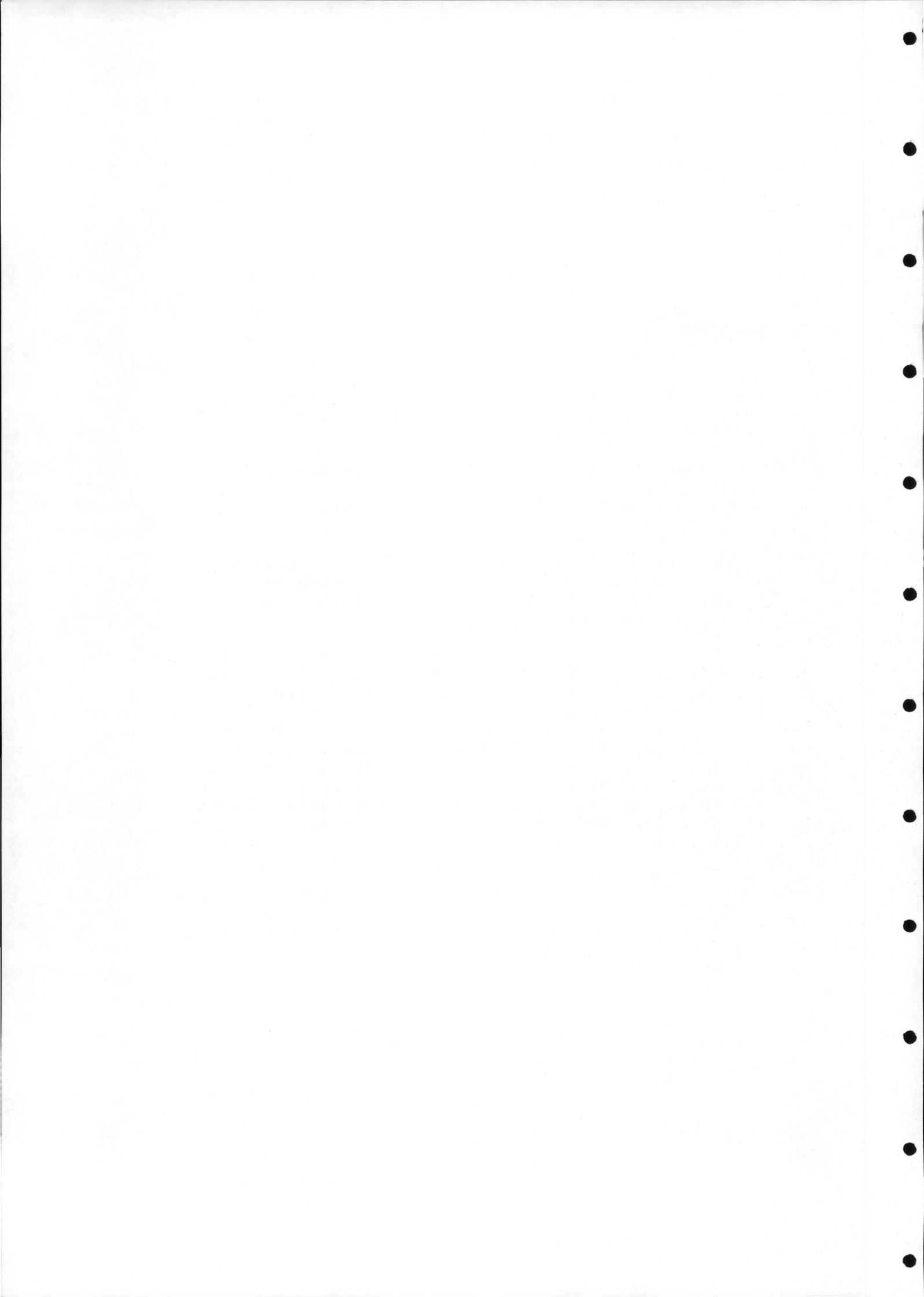
Some of Miss Scales's paintings were shown informally in a friend's home last year but this is her first one-woman exhibition in a public art gallery.

The exhibition has been organised by the Auckland City Art Gallery's Exhibition Department with the additional help of Anne Kirker and Brenda Gamble and the support of the Director, Ernest Smith. I thank all these people and, of course, Miss Scales who made the paintings and who is kindly permitting them to be shown.

Colin McCahon

Auckland

November 1975



INTRODUCTION

"Definitely a lady with a mind of her own..."

(Rodney Kennedy on Miss Scales
in a letter to Colin McCahon,
from Dunedin, 1975)

"...a big white house with rooms to let - I knocked and she called 'Come in' and there she was... pink and blue and straight - painting at an easel with a little flower painting on a chest of drawers - a very sparse room. I sat on the bed when invited and she was charming and we talked easily... What a wandering, independant life! I was full of admiration. A real person..."

(Patricia France on Miss Scales
in a letter to Colin and Anne
McCahon from Dunedin, 1975)

HELEN F.V. SCALES (Known as Flora Scales)

A portrait built up from her reminiscences and a little research.

Miss Scales is a representative of that breed of intelligent, independant 19th century women who set themselves a goal and attained it, regardless of difficulty or disability, which in her case, was persistently poor health.

Born in Lower Hutt in 1888, Helen Flora Victoria Scales¹ was one of a family of five children. Her father, George H. Scales, was a shipping agent. Her three brothers became farmers after their college days but two of them were killed during the First World War. She attended the private school run by Misses E. Barber and B. Richmond on the corner of Pipitea and Murphy Streets, Wellington, as a small child.

In 1908 she left New Zealand for London where she studied animal painting for four and a half years with Frank Calderon² and gained a scholarship. In 1911 a small oil painting titled *Cattle Mustering in New Zealand* was accepted by the Royal Academy.

The following year she returned to New Zealand. The Auckland Society of Arts catalogue to the Annual Exhibition in 1913, included two paintings by Miss Scales: *In a Norfolk Farmyard*, (Cat No.62) and *After a Day's Work*, (Cat No.144). In 1914 the Academy Studio Club, an off-shoot of the Life Class of the Wellington Art Club, took

a studio in Winder's Building on the corner of Cuba and Manners Streets, Wellington. For a subscription of one guinea 34 members were enrolled, including Miss Scales, but her name does not appear in subsequent years. Scholefield records her as working as a V.A.D. for a year in the Lowry Bay Military Hospital during the War.

Her artistic activities in the succeeding years are not clear but the Scales family moved to the Nelson Province after the War to live on an orchard near Tahunanui. She made her home there with her mother and sister for six or seven years before departing again for Europe. Scholefield records a small etching being published in 1922 called *The Wood Cart*, the information being gained from "Art in Australia" 1922.

The year 1928 saw Miss Scales arrive in Paris where she enrolled at the Grand Chamiere Studio and studied with a group of student painters. Tuition was not compulsory but was available if and when required. She studied drawing and painting for a time with a French sculptor and found it "very rewarding".

The next few years she spent in and around Paris and the south coast of France. She recalls visiting the Louvre with friends on Sunday afternoons and being impressed by the work of the French Primitives. "So attractive" she said "I loved the Primitives". An artist whose work she admired was Signorelli³ - "a marvellous draughtsman". At The Musée d'Arte Moderne, Seurat was the painter whose work she most enjoyed; "They were lovely" she said, and Cross⁴ she admired, adding "but he copied Seurat". Many visits were made to the small galleries along the Rue du Seine where contemporary artists' work was exhibited.

Sometime after 1931 and before early 1934, Miss Scales went to Germany to live for nine months as a student at the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts⁵ in Munich, taking the school's curriculum course. She recalls vividly the political atmosphere in Munich at the time and how Adolph Hitler's headquarters there, known as the "Brown House"⁶ seemed to dominate the city. She remembers walking one Sunday afternoon with a friend and having to stand aside while a column of troops marched by, followed by a column of schoolboys. The feeling that war was inevitable pervaded the country. Weekends were spent visiting galleries and the most overpowering memory she has is of seeing the Van Gogh *Self Portrait*⁷ which she describes as "best of all" and an El Greco.

She visited New Zealand again in 1934 and stayed for a time with a friend, Miss Rutherford, at Tahunanui near Nelson. It was during this visit that the artist

M.T. woollaston met her on several occasions as he described in his published art lecture "The Faraway Hills"⁸.

A return to Europe followed and Miss Scales was living in Paris when the city fell to the invading German Army in 1940. She was interned with other British residents at Spa Vitel. There she became ill and spent nine weeks in hospital at Besancon. Her paintings had been left in an English owned warehouse in Paris but she lost them when the warehouse was looted by the German troops.

She was discharged from internment in October 1944 and returned in Paris to live but she was later permitted to leave for England via the Channel Islands. Back in London she lived in Camberley with her mother, sister and niece. She cared for her mother until the latter's death, and then went to live in Cornwall on the south-west coast of England.

Taking up residence in an hotel on the sea front at Penzance, she painted a great deal and took lessons from "kind Mr Stanhope Forbes"⁹. This was immediately prior to Mr Forbes's death. Short visits to the Continent took place in succeeding years. In 1970 Miss Scales returned to London to live where she remained until she left for New Zealand, in 1972, to make her home in Auckland.

Last year she was given two one-day exhibitions in the home of Mrs Joan Williams of Havelock North. These shows took place on April 26 and May 1; 24 paintings were exhibited.

Two of her paintings are in the Hocken Library at the University of Otago, Dunedin. She is also represented in The Dowse Art Gallery, Lower Hutt; Victoria University, Wellington; and in private collections.

I met Miss Scales one afternoon in February this year and asked her if she would tell me some details of her personal life for the purpose of providing notes for this catalogue. Miss Scales, a naturally reserved and charming woman, was very kind and patiently answered all my questions. When asked to comment on her preferences in contemporary painting she said she liked "modern pictures" but would not elaborate on any specific paintings she had seen because she said, "I never criticise young painters I have so many faults myself". A remark very much in character.

Auckland City Art Gallery

Brenda Gamble

REFERENCES:

1. G.H. Scholefield (ed) *Who's Who in New Zealand and the Western Pacific*, 1925.
2. William Frank Calderon (1865-1943). Educated at the Slade School; exhibited at the Royal Academy 1882; third medallist at the Salon de Paris 1910; founder and principal of the School of Animal Painting 1894-1916.
3. Luca Signorelli (1441-1523).
4. Henri-Edmond Cross (real name Delacroix), (1856-1910). Founder, in 1884, of the Salon des Independants. The chief exponent of Neo-Impressionism together with Seurat and Signac.
5. The Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts flourished in Munich from 1915 until 1932, when Hans Hofmann (1888-1966) settled permanently in the United States because of growing political hostility to intellectuals, and as advised by Mrs Hofmann. In the 1915 Prospectus of the School, the following statement appears:
"Art does not consist in objectivized imitation of reality. Without the creative impulse of the artist, even the most perfect imitation of reality is a lifeless form, a photograph, a panopticon."
Hans Hofmann was a symbol of both the international origin of American painting and its subsequent world influence.
6. Brown House, Munich, the headquarters of the National Socialist German Workers' Party during the last years of the Republic.
7. Vincent Van Gogh "Self Portrait" collection: Neue Pinakothek, Munich.
8. M.T. Woollaston "The Faraway Hills", Auckland Gallery Associates (Inc), 1960.
9. Stanhope Alexander Forbes, R.A., (1857-1947). Represented in the Dunedin Public Art Gallery's collection by "Preparations for Market, Quimperle, Brittany", 1883.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the following people for their help in compiling this catalogue:

Miss H.F.V. Scales.

Patricia France; Anne Kirker; Janet Paul (and the Alexander Turnbull Library); Rodney Kennedy; Les Lloyd; Colin and Anne McCahon; Toss Woollaston; Kim Wright and the Hocken Library.



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CATALOGUE

Measurements are those of the painted surface.

Undated works have been given dates by Miss Scales.

1. *Basilica and Lighthouse, St Tropez, Southern France*
Oil on canvas mounted on board. 330x419mm
Overpainted inscription (LL) Signed and dated *F. Scales*
1939, (LR)
2. *Greniar, St Tropez, Southern France*
Oil on canvas. 330x410mm
Signed *H. Scales* (LL) Signed and dated *Flora Scales*
1939 (LR)
3. *Mousehole, Cornwall*
Oil on canvas. 310x230mm, c1950/51
Signed *Flora Scales* (LL) Signed *H. Scales* (LR)
4. *Mousehole, Cornwall*
Oil on canvas. 250x285mm, c1950/51
Signed *H. Scales* (LR)
5. *Bathing Pool, Jersey, Channel Islands*
Oil on canvas mounted on board. 240x322mm, c1955
Signed *F. Scales* (LL) Signed *H. Scales* (LR)
6. *A friend's room in a village near Paris*
Oil on canvas. 260x350mm, c1958
Signed *Scales* (LL) Signed *Scales* left of centre on
stretcher
7. *Farm building near Paris*
Oil on canvas. 260x345mm,
Signed *Scales* (LL) Verso *F. Scales* 1958 *St Genevieve des Bois*
8. *Sunday in Regent's Park, London*
Oil on canvas. 210x270mm, c1960
Signed *H. Scales* (LL) but overpainted
9. *Bry-Sur-Marne near Paris*
Oil on canvas. 270x350mm
Signed and dated *F. Scales* 1961 (LL)
10. *Bry-Sur-Marne, looking towards the Marne Valley*
Oil on canvas. 255x330mm, c1965
Signed *Scales* (LL)
11. *Farm building near Paris*
Oil on canvas. 225x298mm, c1965
Signed *Scales* (LL)

12. *Portrait 1*
Oil on paper, 330x254mm, c1968
Unsigned
13. *Portrait 2*
Oil on canvas. 344x270mm, c1968
Signed *H. Scales* (LR)
14. *Portrait 3*
Oil on canvas. 350x270mm, c1968
Signed *H. Scales* (LR)
15. *Rye, Sussex*
Oil on canvas. 258x345mm, c1969
Signed *H. Scales* (LL)
16. *Boarding house, St Ives, Cornwall*
Oil on canvas. 250x320mm, c1968/70
Signed *H. Scales* (LR)
17. *Boarding house, St Ives, Cornwall*
Oil on canvas. 300x390mm, c1968/70
Signed *Helen Scales* (LL)
18. *Boarding house, St Ives, Cornwall*
Oil on paper. 237x316mm, c1968/70
Signed *Scales* (LL)
19. *St Ives, Cornwall*
Oil on paper. 262x335mm, c1968/70
Signed *Scales* (LL)
20. *St Ives, Cornwall*
Oil on paper. 317x236mm, c1968/70
Signed *Scales* (LL)
21. *St Ives, Cornwall*
Oil on paper mounted on board. 280x343mm, c1968/70
Signed *Scales* (LL)
22. *From Beach Road, St Ives, Cornwall*
Oil on canvas. 275x350mm
Signed and dated *F. Scales 1969* (LL)
23. *From Beach Road, St Ives, Cornwall*
Oil on canvas. 270x340mm, c1968/70
Signed *Scales* (LL)
24. *Bay Landscape, St Ives, Cornwall*
Oil on canvas. 242x300mm, c1968/70
Signed *Scales* (LL) Signed *H. Scales* (LR)

25. *Bay Landscape, St Ives, Cornwall*
Oil on canvas. 260x330mm, c1968/70
Signed *H. Scales* (LL)
26. *Bay Landscape, St Ives, Cornwall*
Oil on canvas. 245x330mm, c1968/70
Signed *Scales* (LL)
27. *Bay Landscape, St Ives, Cornwall*
Oil on canvas. 280x340mm, c1968/70
Signed *Scales* (LL)
28. *Bay Landscape, St Ives, Cornwall*
Oil on canvas. 260x330mm, c1968/70
Signed *Scales* (LL)
29. *Bay Landscape, St Ives, Cornwall*
Oil on canvas. 265x340mm
Signed *H. Scales* and *F. Scales* 1969 (LR)
30. *Anemones*
Oil on paper mounted on board. 330x240mm, c1968/70
Signed *H. Scales* (LL)
31. *Mixed flowers*
Oil on paper mounted on board. 330x254mm, c1968/70
Signed *H. Scales* (LL)
32. *Mimosa and fruit*
Oil on paper mounted on board. 332x255mm, c1968/70
Signed *H. Scales* (LL)
33. *Flowers and fruit*
Oil on canvas mounted on board. 330x255mm, c1968/70
Signed *Scales* (LR)
34. *Orchard with plum tree*
Oil on canvas. 275x350mm, c1969/70
Signed *F. Scales* (LL)
35. *Orchard with plum tree*
Oil on canvas. 270x350mm, c1969/70
Signed *F. Scales* (LR)
36. *Orchard with plum tree*
Oil on canvas. 270x350mm, c1969/70
Signed *F. Scales* (LL)
37. *Orchard with plum tree*
Oil on canvas. 285x355mm, c1969/70
Signed *H. Scales* (LL)

38. *Orchard with plum tree*
Oil on canvas. 260x234mm, c1969/70
Signed *Scales* (LL)

39. *Orchard with plum tree*
Oil on canvas. 270x350mm
Signed *H. Scales* (LR) Verso *H. Scales 1970*

40. *Orchard with plum tree*
Oil on canvas. 245x350, c1970
Signed *Scales* (LL)

41. *Old Boatshed, Hackney, London*
Oil on canvas. 270x345mm, c1970
Signed *H. Scales* (LL)

42. *Still life, London*
Oil on paper mounted on board. 250x320mm, c1970
Unsigned

43. *Still life, London*
Oil on canvas. 270x350mm, c1970
Signed *F. Scales* (LL)

