

AUCKLAND CITY ART GALLERY

QUARTERLY



A View Through the Gallery

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NUMBER TEN — 1959

EDITORIAL

The reproduction on the cover shows the view from the City Gallery, through the Mackelvie Gallery to the Sculpture Court. The curtains, which can be drawn across the glass partition in the foreground were handwoven by Mrs Use Von Randow and have been much admired by visitors.

IMPORT LICENCES

As we reported in our last issue, the Art Galleries and Museums Association discussed the setting up of a pool scheme. At a recent council meeting of the Association, having the full agreement of the Minister of Customs, a sub-committee was set up to administer the licence pool. With most of the institutional members agreeable, the difficulties facing the import of exhibitions and acquisitions will now largely be diminished.

PUBLICITY

It is interesting to note that an article on the Gallery's collection, with twelve reproductions, appeared in the March issue of *The Connoisseur*. The article is displayed in the Entrance Gallery. We must thank the Editor of *The Connoisseur* for his invitation to publish this article.

EXHIBITIONS

The Old Masters' exhibition is now past and we are pleased to record that over 8,000 visitors saw it and 2,000 of them bought catalogues. We still have some spare copies of this catalogue.

To accompany our collection of the Frances Hodgkins collection on its New Zealand tour, we have published an up-to-date catalogue. This catalogue is now available.

At the time of writing our exhibition, *Colonial Auckland*, is showing. The catalogue, compiled by Miss Una Platts, is an invaluable record of the City's early growth.

PUBLICATIONS

As our publications have greatly increased we have enclosed with this *Quarterly* a full list of our major publications, with their prices. We are always ready to post copies not out of print. Details of the catalogues mentioned above can be found on this list.

GALLERY ASSOCIATES

The Associates held a very successful cocktail party during the recent Auckland Festival, when they entertained a number of the Festival artists.

The newly-issued leaflet gives details of the year's activities.

We should like to draw special attention to the fact that the first annual Art lecture, sponsored by the Associates and given by Mr Eric McCormick in 1957, will appear shortly in printed form.

We should like to see a larger membership and present members are urged to bring friends to the various activities and encourage them to join.



KARL KASTEN (b. 1916), American
FRAGMENT OF AUTUMN

Oil on canvas 30 x 40 ins

Signed *Karl Kasten '54*

Presented by Anne and Colin McCahon, 1958

Kasten was born in San Francisco. He studied at the University of California receiving his M A in 1939, later working under Lasansky and at the Hans Hofmann School. He has taught at the University of Michigan and since 1950 at the University of California. Kasten has exhibited at the Chicago Art Institute, Detroit Institute of Arts, The Metropolitan and Whitney Museums, New York, and the San Francisco Museum of Art. In February of this year Kasten was given a one-man exhibition at the California Palace of the Legion of Honour. His FRAGMENT OF AUTUMN is the first painting of its kind to enter a New Zealand collection.

This painting belongs to its time and place

being at once representative of the abstract expressionist movement which developed in the United States after the war and at the same time following the direction of much American West Coast abstract expressionist painting in that distinctly regional figurative and atmospheric elements are used. Kasten's painting is in no true sense an abstraction, it is more a form of realism but not as we have come to use the word in critical praise or abuse of works of art; that is the realism of the coloured photograph, but this is the more human realism of an intense visual experience both understood and recorded with directness and simplicity. The land forms and light of the San Francisco Bay area are remarkably similar to those of New Zealand and so this picture being basically realist fits into its new environment rather more easily than many European paintings tend to.



PABLO PICASSO (b. 1881), French
DEUX FEMMES NUES DANS UN ARBRE
 (Two Nude Women in a Tree)

Etching 14 x 11 ins (E.S.)

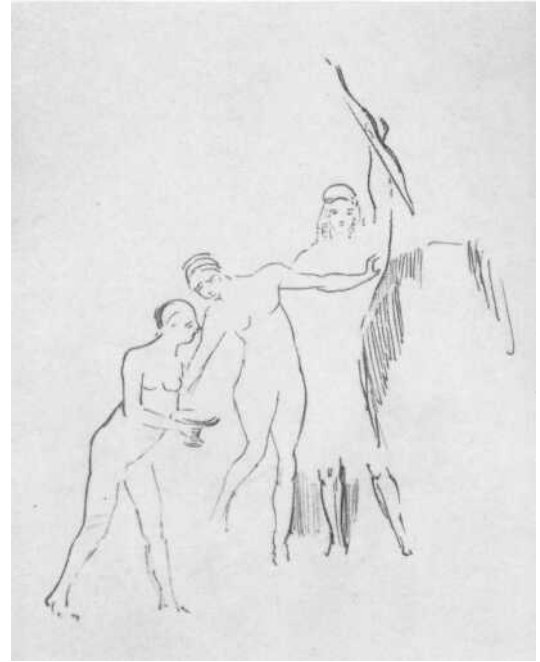
Inscribed 25/100 *Picasso*

Purchased by the Committee, 1958

This etching from what has been called Picasso's 'Ingres Period' exemplifies all those qualities, redolent of Classicism, with which the great modern French painter has caused us to become familiar in this period of his voluminous print-making. Though not specifically Classical or mythological in theme, as is that of Odilon Redon, it is characterised by the chastity of line allied to a grave and pure sensuality which accompany the Arcadian atmosphere of this part of his work.

The gallery has of course several other prints by Picasso in its collection: the early **HEAD OF A WOMAN**; **THE PIGEON AND ITS YOUNG**; and the **SUBJECT FROM THE SCULPTOR'S STUDIO**, to the last of which this latest acquisition will form a complementary companion.

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ODILON REDON (1840-1916), French
IMMÉDIATEMENT SURGISSENT TROIS DÉESSES
 (Immediately Three Goddesses Spring up)

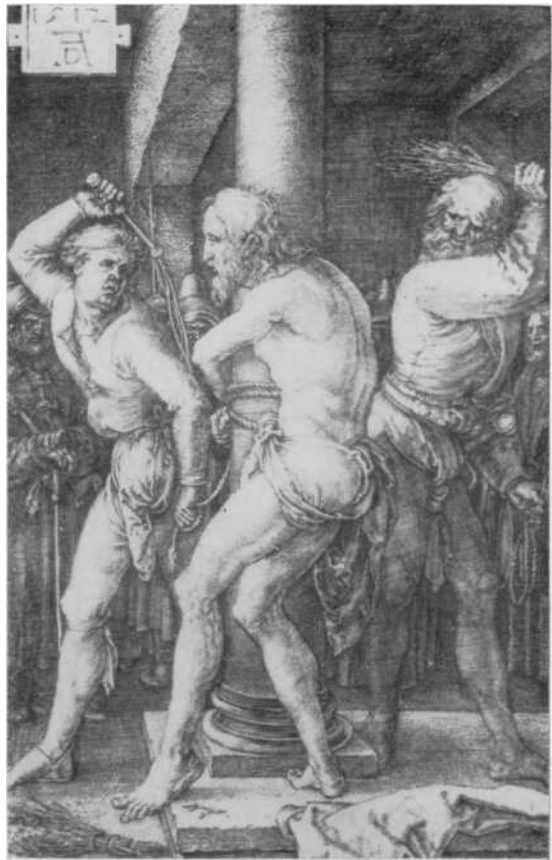
From the *Temptation of Saint Antony*

Lithograph 9 x 6i

Purchased by the Committee, 1958

The above lithograph, the first work by Odilon Redon in the print collection, is perhaps a rarity in Redon's graphic *oeuvre*, in that it has been carried out almost wholly in line. Most of this mystical painter's lithographs are conceived in terms of tone: mysterious smudges of black melt into luminous whites in compositions which have the silence and ambiguity of dreams.

Here we are obviously in a different world from that of Picasso. Redon's rather brooding sensibility engenders a Romanticism in his approach to antiquity which is far in spirit from the near austerity of Picasso's line etchings.



ALBRECHT DURER (1471-1528), German

THE SMALL ENGRAVED PASSION

These engravings by Durer have been purchased recently by the Mackelvie Trust, from a private source in New Zealand. The series is complete but for two plates, the so-called frontispiece, *The Man of Sorrows according to St Bridget* (B.3) and *Christ before Pilate* (B.7). The Engraved Passion which was first published in 1513 appeared two years after the Small Passion, which was a woodcut version. Individual dates of the engraved prints range from 1507 to 1512, and the series as a whole has been highly prized since then. These engravings are far more sophisticated and more restrained than the expressionistic woodcuts. Furthermore they show in a number of ways the results of Durer's important visits to Italy.

Durer visited Venice in 1494-5 as a young man but when he next returned in 1505 he was a world-famous master and entertained as an honoured guest, when the great Venetian painter Giovanni Bellini praised him highly. He also visited Bologna to learn, as he wrote, 'the secret art of perspective.'

Durer's Italian visits and his contact with the art of the high renaissance served to confirm his humanism, although he was too firmly rooted to have his own style altered in any radical manner. The important innovation introduced in this series is the grey middle tone, replacing the original black on white, which thus provided a greater variety of colour between black and white. The care lavished on this particular series and the absence of any text shows that Durer was aiming at the discerning connoisseur, rather than at the popular market.



HAROLD OILMAN (1876-1919), British
MOTHER AND CHILD

Oil on canvas 27 x 20

Signed *Gilman*

Purchased by the Committee, 1952

MOTHER AND CHILD (Sketch for oil)

Pen and black ink, squared and with colour
notes in red. 15 x 10

Inscribed *H. Gilman* (also various colour notes)

Purchased by the Committee, 1957

In 1952 the Gallery acquired this fine Gilman oil painting, MOTHER AND CHILD, through a London gallery, from the Sir Augustus Daniel collection. We were fortunate recently to acquire the study for this picture from Mrs Sylvia Gilman. It will be noticed in comparing the two illustrations above, that the painting was cut down slightly by Gilman from the squared sketch.

Harold Gilman was one of the most notable

painters in the inner circle of 'The Camden Town Group' — a number of artists united in rebellion against the rigid academic standards of the early years of this century in England.

One of its members, Ginner, notably, possessed a considerable knowledge of Parisian theory and practice and it was with him that Gilman visited the momentous 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists' exhibition, organised at The Grafton Galleries by Roger Fry in the last three months of 1912. Gilman himself, a massive confident figure, addicted to dialectic, was impressed so deeply, particularly by Gauguin and Van Gogh, as to feel necessary a fundamental re-examination of his own convictions regarding painting. The later visit to Paris with Ginner and subsequent discussions together with Spencer Gore resulted in a distinctive aesthetic to which all three artists subscribed.



THE FIRST FLOOR GALLERY

The First Floor Gallery was redecorated at the beginning of this year and opened in February with an exhibition of paintings from five private collections. The old stage and dado have been removed and the addition of two screens makes hanging space available for about thirty paintings. The position, lighting and size of this gallery make it ideal for small exhibitions and a series of these have been arranged for 1959. So far, six exhibitions of paintings, sculpture and prints have been shown and five more are planned for the remainder of the year.

With the geographical isolation of the principal centres in New Zealand it is difficult for those interested in painting to obtain any complete idea as to what serious painting is being done throughout the country. Although occa-

sional exhibitions of painting from other towns and the annual Eight New Zealand Painters' Exhibition partially fill this gap, it is felt that they are not sufficient to supply a satisfactory survey. The object of this series is to present a continuous exhibition of contemporary New Zealand art.

The exhibitions up to July have included two groups of painters from Wellington, two from Auckland, three Auckland sculptors and a collection of New Zealand prints. Further exhibitions will include paintings, pottery and sculpture from Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland.

A selective exhibition which will represent most painters who have exhibited during the year and introduce some new painters is being arranged for December.

Always scrupulous and deliberate, Gilman built up over the years an individual style at which he laboured to give it qualities of permanence and dignity. Though he manipulates broad planes, rich mosaics of colour, with

much concern for their abstract qualities he is never unconcerned with the human element in his pictures; almost basically he aims to seize the essence or character of a portion of life and convey it in all subtlety to his canvas.

• exhibition calendar -

CONTEMPORARY ISRAELI ART

28 JULY - 16 AUGUST

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New Zealand Crafts

27 AUGUST - 20 SEPTEMBER
1959

AUCKLAND CITY COUNCIL
PARKS AND LIBRARY COMMITTEE

His Worship the Mayor. Mr K. N. Buttle.

CHAIRMAN: Councillor F. N. Ambler. ODE.

COUNCILIORS: J. W. M. Carpenter. K. B. Cumberland. Mrs. M. M. Dreaver. MBE, G. F. M. Forsyth,
Hon. W. H. Fortune G. F. Myers. W. M. Tongue.

CO-OPTEDMEMBER: Geoffrey Rix-Trott. Esq (Chairman. Mackelvie Trustees)

STAFF

DIRECTOR: P. A. Tomory. MA.

KEEPER: Colin McCahon

ATTENDANTS: T. Page. W. J. Queleh

ADMINISTRATION: Miss A. M. Ryburn. Mrs Brenda Gamble

STUDENT ASSISTANTS: Hamish Keith, Ross Fraser

FOREMAN: F. Smith

TYPIST: Miss V. Drake

RESTORER: C. I. Lloyd