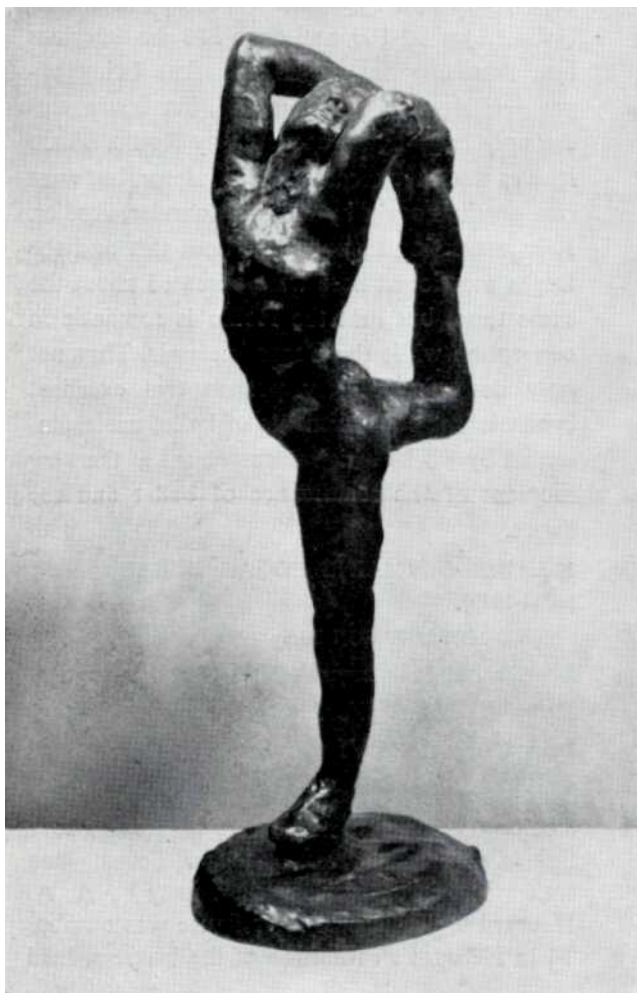


AUCKLAND CITY ART GALLERY

QUARTERLY



AUGUSTE RODIN *La Grande Danseuse*



EDGAR DEGAS *Femme Mettant Son Bas*

AUCKLAND CITY ART GALLERY

QUARTERLY

NUMBER TWO — SPRING — 1956

EDITORIAL

With the reopening of the Mackelvie Gallery we are almost back to normal as far as exhibition space is concerned, and visitors to Auckland will find the pick of the permanent collection on show.

Work will commence soon on the reroofing of the City Gallery, which is the last major operation to be made on the structure of the building. After its completion the Gallery should be able to resume its full-scale activity. However, despite these long disruptions, attendances have not been affected materially.

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

During this year great strides have been made in reframing and mounting the collection. Most of the old frames had been attacked by borer, a most destructive cousin of the European woodworm. We have, therefore, reframed the greater part of the best pictures in the collection.

Mounting to standard sizes has also gone on with the prints and drawings, so that the collections generally are being brought into order. One of the principal difficulties which faces a Gallery of this kind is that which comes from 50 or 60 years of direction by a non-professional staff. Thus the backlog of work of these 50 years is only coped with by the enthusiasm and hard labour of the present staff, who, at the same time, are more than fully occupied with daily routine,

AUGUSTE RODIN (1840-1917)

LA GRANDE DANSEUSE A

Bronze 28f ins No. 3/12 (illus. front cover)
This fine bronze has recently been purchased by the Mackelvie Trustees.

In about 1911, Rodin began work on a series of six figures of dancers. These figures were based on the dancing group formed by Isadora Duncan, who contributed so much to the art of the dance.

The artist's first meeting with Isadora Duncan is recorded in her Autobiography *My Life 1928* (1938 ed.) p. 99-100, and on p. 316 she describes him sketching her pupils (the date being approximately 1913). *Danseuse A*, our figure, was the only large figure executed by Rodin. These studies were never cast by the sculptor, but were cast posthumously by Rodin's founder, Rudier. It is interesting to note that both this and the Degas mentioned here were executed about the same time, but that the Rodin is romantic in conception while the Degas is classic. Thus not only does the Gallery possess two excellent bronzes, but both elements of ballet are represented by works which were created at the very moment of the renaissance of ballet and the dance.

HILAIRE GERMAINE EDGAR DEGAS

(1834-1917)

FEMME METTANT SON BAS

Bronze 18 1/4 ins 29/H (illus. front cover)

Rewald, *Degas, Works in Sculpture*,
New York No. LVI p. 26 rpr. p. 121

This bronze figure of a dancer putting on her stocking belongs to the series of seventy-four figures executed in wax by Degas. Seventy-two wax models were cast posthumously by A. A. Hebrard and this particular figure was number 14 in Hebrard's exhibition of the bronzes, held

in Paris in 1921. The original wax figure belongs to a private collector and was recently exhibited at Messrs Knoedler, New York. (Nov.-Dec. 1955. No. 54 and plate.)

According to Rewald, this work was made between 1896 and 1911. It is one of the finest of all these figures and the Gallery is extremely fortunate to have acquired this work. Other bronzes of the same figure are in the Louvre, Paris (29/P), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (29/A), and Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek, Copenhagen (29/R).

There is no question of Degas being a sculptor of considerable powers, and it is interesting to reflect that all these studies were made mainly to aid his painting. When his eyesight failed (him he was still able through his fingers to create one minor masterpiece after another. In a subject-matter which so easily can and does induce the most sugary forms of sentiment, Degas remains always unsentimental and essentially close to life. A common action is ennobled and monumentalised by his art.

For some of the information given above we are grateful to Mr Helmut Ripperger, who is preparing an up-to-date catalogue of the Degas bronzes, and to Miss Lillian Browse of London.

CASTELLO BATTISTA (c. 1547-1637)

THE CRUCIFIXION

Miniature on parchment 16[^]x 11J ins

Presented by the late Moss Davis Esq., 1927

This interesting miniature was formerly contributed to Appollonio de Capranica, a miniaturist to Pius IV and V. However, stylistically it seems to be much nearer Castello Battista (II Genovese). Reference to a reproduced work of his—a Deposition (vide *Mostra di Pittori Genovesi*, Palazzo Reale, 1938)—is reasonably convincing. The greatest similarities are in the details of the two robbers, the opened fingers of the hands, the details of the ropes which bind them to their crosses and the folds of their loin cloths. There are also parallels in the back-



CASTELLO BATTISTA *The Crucifixion*

ground. Account must be taken of iconographic traditions, particularly in the field of miniature painting, but this could not explain all these points. Castello was born in Genoa about 1547, and in his youth was a pupil of Luca Cambiaso. Sometime before 1590 he was in Spain and miniaturist to Philip II. He returned to his native city in 1590 and remained there until his death in 1637.

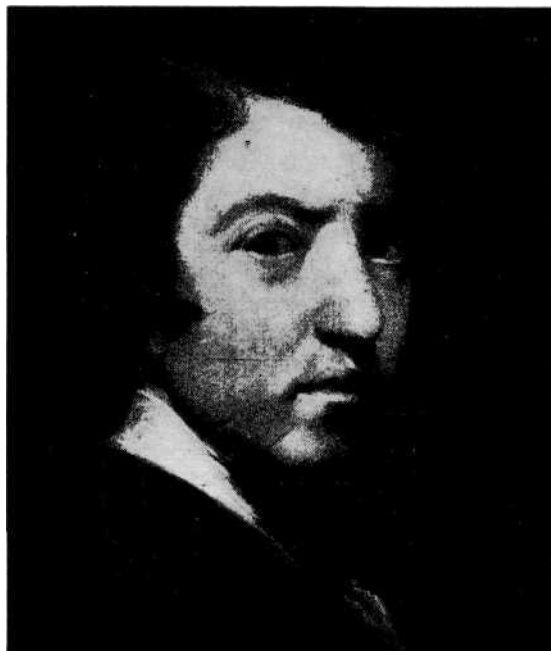
This is the only miniature of this period in the collection except that there are two drawings in the Mackelvie Collection attributed to Giulio Clovio (1498-1578). These represent *The Visitation* and *The Prophet Isaiah and King Ahaz*. Both these subjects are mentioned by Vasari as being included in an office of the Virgin, which was divided into twenty-six scenes. Both have elaborate margins of putti and other figures. A similar type is in the Royal collection at Windsor (Popham & Wilde, No. 241). In a later issue we hope to publish these interesting drawings.

JAMES NORTHCOTE, R.A. (1746-1831)
PORTRAIT OF SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, P.R.A.
Oil on paper on canvas 15 1/2x 11 1/4 ins

The Mackelvie Collection

This small portrait is one of those intimate portraits done by one artist of another which characterises not only the sitter but the age in which he lived. Northcote, through the good offices of his friend Dr Mudge, became Reynolds' pupil in 1771. This portrait must date from about that year, as both the way the hair is dressed and the features conform reasonably well with Reynolds' own self-portrait, painted in 1773 at the age of 50 (Earl Spencer, Althorp), as does, of course, the pose. Northcote was Reynolds' first biographer, and his book contains much racy anecdote on the artist and his time.

Northcote is now under-estimated as a portrait painter, perhaps on account of his commissioned work, but the portraits of his artistic and literary contemporaries are worthy of greater esteem.



JAMES NORTHCOTE *Sir Joshua Reynolds*

ACQUISITIONS

Since our last issue the following purchases have been made and gifts received:—

AUGUSTE RODIN (1840-1917)

A FEMALE NUDE

Watercolour 7 1/2 x 10 1/2 ins

Presented by Messrs Roland, Browse & Delbanco, London

LAWRENCE GOWING (born 1918)

WINDOW AT ROQUEBRUNE

Oil on canvas 20 x 24 ins

Presented by the Contemporary Art Society, London

Purchased by the Library and Art Gallery Committee:—

PABLO PICASSO (born 1881)

HEAD OF A WOMAN IN PROFILE (1905)

Dry point 1 1/2 x 9 13/16 ins (292 x 250 mm)

Geiser G7, b

KNEELING NUDE AND STATUE (1933)

Etching 11 3/4 x 14 1/2 ins (299 x 368)

HENRI GAUDIER BRESZKA (1891-1915)

L'IDIOT (a Self Portrait)

Bronze 8 ins

The following works have recently been purchased by the Mackelvie Trust:—

AGOSTINO CARRACCI (1557-1602)

PORTRAIT OF AN UNKNOWN LADY

Oil on panel 38 1/4 x 28 1/2 ins

CARLO CERESA (1609-1679)

PORTRAIT OF A MAN WITH HIS SON

Oil on canvas 37 x 33-J ins

J. M. W. TURNER (1775-1851)

THE WRECK OF THE MINOTAUR

Oil on canvas 34 1/2 x 26 1/2 ins

JOHN OPIE, R.A. (1761-1807)

PORTRAIT OF PETER PINDAR

Oil on canvas 29 x 24 ins

Presented by Miss N. Hickson, 1944

This portrait, formerly in the collection of Albin Martin, is of Dr John Wolcott (1738-1819), who had a considerable reputation as a literary satirist under the pseudonym 'Peter Pindar.'

Opie painted about eight portraits of Pindar, one of which is in the National Portrait Gallery, London. This one, because of the lack of finish in the background and the lower part of the figure, may have been the original of the engraving which appears in *The Magazine of Art*, 1888, p. 243. The engraving illustrates an article of Peter Pindar's, *Lyric Odes to the Royal Academicians*.

We quote two extracts to demonstrate his style.

Of Reynolds he wrote

Sir Joshua's matchless pieces

Works! that a Titian's hand could form alone.

Works! that a Rubens had been proud to own.

and of Benjamin West, a later President of the Academy, a not so eulogistic account.

The holy Scripture says 'All flesh is grass'

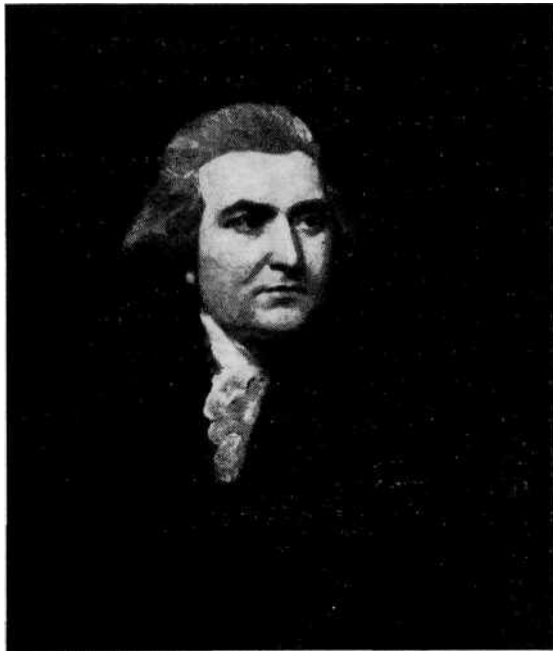
With Mr West, all flesh is—BRICK OR GRASS

Except his horseflesh—that I freely own

Is often of the choicest—PORTLAND STONE.

THE GALLERY ASSOCIATES

The Associates have just completed their first full programme of activities. The outstanding events were the entertainment of the Chinese Classical Theatre; a panel discussion on Realism; and finally a number of films on American art, lent by the United States Information Service. In the past few months over twenty more members have joined the Society. Inquiries about membership (£1/1/0 per year or 10/6 for a country subscription) may be made of the Gallery staff.



JOHN OPIE

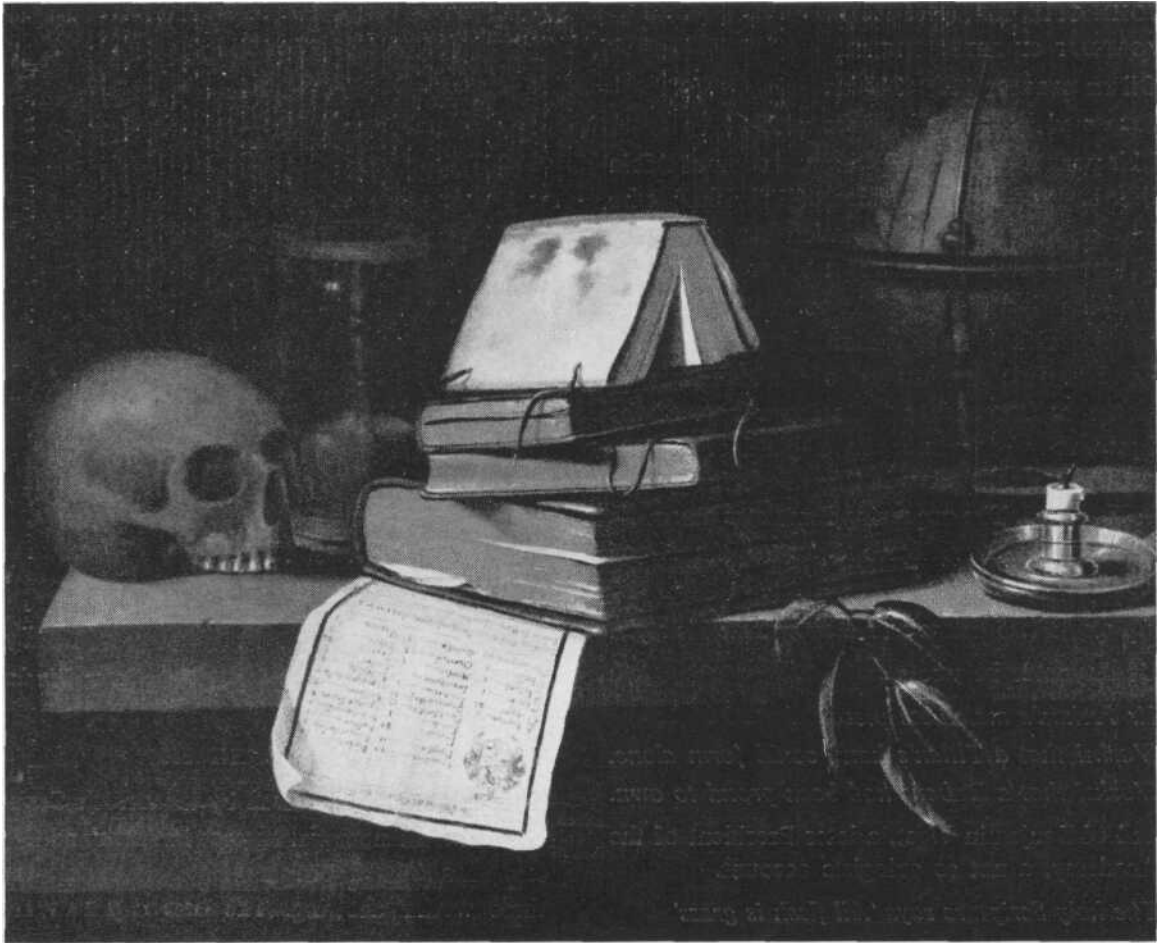
Peter Pindar

THE HENRY MOORE EXHIBITION

This exhibition, organised by the British Council, had a phenomenal success in Auckland. No less than 36,700 people visited it during the three weeks' showing. The best day was the first Friday, during which 5,900 people filled the Gallery from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

It is not often that any gallery can write of a success such as this, and it was immensely heart warming for the staff to witness such a response. There can be no doubt about the lively interest in the arts in New Zealand, or that not nearly enough of the large exhibitions reach this country.

On October 22nd, Sir Paul Sinker, Director-General of the British Council, said that another £55,000 per year was needed to send exhibitions of British art abroad. He also specifically mentioned that there should be one major exhibition sent to the Commonwealth countries per year. One may hope that the attendance figures for the Moore exhibition will aid Sir Paul Sinker's appeal.



EDWARD COLLIER

Vanitas Still Life

EDWARD COLLIER (attributed) (Fl. 1680-1702)

A VANITAS STILL LIFE

Oil on canvas 25 x 30 ins

The Grey Collection

We have attributed this picture provisionally to Edward Collier, who was the principal source for this type of still life in England in the early 18th century, although Waterhouse* makes it clear that there was a considerable export of these still lifes to England from Holland, with English texts and gazettes, and that the name of Collier provides a blanket attribution.

The Vanitas still life was a popular art form in the late 17th century. Its meaning is quite clear; the globe indicates the world and man's

* *Painting in Britain 1530-1790*, p. 78

dominion over it, the books are knowledge, while the hourglass, the skull, the list of casualties and the guttering candle, point to the shortness of life. Most Dutch Vanitas still lifes are more subtle in their allusions to death, and the handling of the paint much less coarse than in this work. So that one may suspect that the artist was certainly English aping the Dutch importations.

The text in the painting reads: —

THE DISEASES AND CASUALTIES THIS WEEK

Abortive 1, Aged 22, Cancer 1, Chilbed 5, Chrisomis 1. Consumption 56.

Convulsion 89, Dropsie 1], Fever 85, Fistula 1, Flox and Small Pox 13, Gripping in the Guts 21, Jaundies 1, Impostume 1, Measles 1, Overlaid 2, Quinsie 1.

Ricketts 4, Rising of the Lights 2, Rupture 1, St Anthones Fire 1, Spotted Feaver, Stillborn 9, Stoppage in the Sto 7, Suddenly 1, Surfeit 1, Teeth 29, Tissick 3, Vapours 1.

Drown'd 2. One at St Dunstan Stepney. And one in a pond at St Mary Islington.



DAVID COX

Coming from Church

DAVID COX (1783-1859)

COMING FROM CHURCH

Oil on canvas 14 x 22 ins

This picture was purchased recently from a New Zealand source. Its pleasant English landscape is very typical of this artist. One wonders if it is the companion to the picture at Birmingham, *The Welsh Funeral*, where the figures are going to church. The restrained style in this painting gives little hint of Cox's impressionistic style seen in his *Rhyll Sands* (Birmingham).

Cox was probably more noted for his watercolours, in which he was particularly successful at conveying atmospheric effects of wind and rain. He was a native of Birmingham, but made excursions to various parts of the country, particularly to Wales.

This quiet landscape will increase our representation of early 19th century English painters.

PICTURES IN NEW ZEALAND COLLECTIONS

We are particularly anxious to discover what pictures are owned privately in New Zealand. Over 100 years have elapsed since New Zealand was settled, and the indications already show that quite a number of interesting works were brought out from England. This process has not stopped. We are therefore hoping that in a year or two we may have heard of enough collections to enable the Gallery to organise not only an exhibition of old masters from private collections, but also of 20th century art. Both the Turner (Quarterly No. 1) and the Cox, reproduced here, were purchased from New Zealand owners, which in a small way demonstrate that there are others of this calibre in North and South Island collections. We hope, therefore, that collectors and others who are interested will keep us informed of the whereabouts of worthwhile pictures.

exhibition calendar

Contemporary Australian PAINTING

THIS EXHIBITION, which will open in Auckland on February 15th 1957, will consist of paintings by the following artists:—

William Dobell	Noel Counihan
Russell Drysdale	Donald Friend
Sydney Nolan	Jean Bellette
Godfrey Miller	Jon Molvig
John Passmore	Leonard French
John Brack	John Blackman
Eric Smith	Charles Doutney

Margo Lewers

STAFF

DIRECTOR: P. A. Tomory, MA.

KEEPER: Colin McCahon, : ATTENDANTS: F. Smith, T. Page

ADMINISTRATION: Miss A.-M. Ryburn, Mrs Brenda Gamble STUDENT ASSISTANTS: John Henderson, Peter Webb

FOREMAN TECHNICIAN: C. Conroy TYPIST: Miss Drake

RESTORER: C.L. Lloyd