

AUCKLAND CITY ART GALLERY

# QUARTERLY



THOMAS BARKER OF BATH

Wood Gatherers

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NUMBER THIRTEEN— 1960

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## EDITORIAL

With a sense of relief, after four years of reconstruction and renovation, we can say that this year will be entirely free of this kind of activity. But in two or three years time the Gallery will again be in the hands of builders and carpenters for then the area now occupied by the City Library will provide additional exhibition rooms which by then will be badly needed.

## STAFF

Hamish Keith and Ross Fraser have now returned from Melbourne where they spent a month working in the National Gallery of Victoria. We should like to thank Mr Westbrook and his staff for providing what seems to have been a most comprehensive programme.

## ART GALLERIES & MUSEUMS ASSOC. OF N.Z.

The Director was elected President for the current year.

## GALLERY ASSOCIATES

The Associates opened this year's activities with an excellent talk by Dr Ursula Hoff, Keeper of Prints & Drawings at Melbourne, on the Gallery's permanent collection of prints. A film show and a formal debate on New Zealand painting have followed. Attendances have been good, but it would be encouraging to see more members supporting these events.

The speaker at this year's Annual Art Lecture will be T. M. Woollaston, the artist. He is represented by several works in the collection, the earliest being dated 1957. He is fifty this year and therefore can look back over the

most progressive period in New Zealand painting.

## LUNCH TIME LECTURES

The recently instituted series of talks on Wednesdays have been well attended and it is gratifying to know that through them, the permanent collection particularly, will become better known to the public.

## THOMAS BARKER OF BATH (1769-1847), British WOOD GATHERERS

Oil on canvas 40 x 51 ins

Presented by Dr Hugh Wansey Bayly, 1940

Thomas Barker is the best known of the 'Barkers of Bath' apparently being the most prolific and assiduous painter amongst this large family of painters. He was a painter of great but unequal powers, his works alternating between near greatness and merely commonplace. His subjects were equally various, landscapes, complicated *genre*, some portraits, and numerous paintings of 'woodmen.'

These 'woodmen' and other of his rustic groups became very popular and were reproduced on pottery and textiles.

Barker exhibited extensively with the Royal Academy, the British Institution, the Royal Society of British Artists and in 1813 published his *Rustic Figures after Nature*. Our painting falls between the two extremes of Barker's work being neither one of his masterpieces nor on the other hand commonplace. That it has been painted with perhaps more impatience than real care is unfortunately apparent in some parts of this work but this deficiency is largely compensated for by the fresh and vigorous handling of the trees.

C.McC.



JAMES STARK (1794-1879)

A NORFOLK BROAD

Oil on canvas 28 x 36 ins

Presented by Dr Hugh Wansey Bayly, 1940  
English landscape painting had always been nourished by the classical tradition of Claude and Poussin on one hand, and the 17th century Dutch landscape on the other, but it is in the painting of John Crome and the Norwich School that the Dutch influence is most strongly felt.

The City of Norwich had in the past owed its prosperity to a flourishing trade with Holland and through the principal port, Great Yarmouth, many paintings by Dutch masters found their way into the homes of prosperous merchants. The landscape too, with its rivers, broads, flat land and mills, lent itself readily to this style. The unity of the painters of Norwich, their common influence and principles,

gave English painting what was possibly its first school.

In his earlier career, at least, James Stark was notable for his allegiance to his master, Crome and the style of the School. Some of his early works fall not far short of the heights attained by Crome, differing only in their lack of breadth or simplicity, but suffused with the same internal glow. A NORFOLK BROAD, painted in 1815, has certain weaknesses and the criticism by Crome in a letter to Stark about this time would apply well to it. 'Do not distress us with accidental trifles in nature, but keep the masses large and in good and beautiful lines., and give the sky, which plays so important a part in all landscape, and so supreme a one in our low level lines of distance, the prominence it deserves, and in the coming years the posterity you paint for shall admire your work.'

H.H.K.



THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH RA

*George Lavington, Bishop of Exeter*

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH RA (1727-1728)

GEORGE LAVINGTON, BISHOP OF EXETER

Oil on canvas 49 x 40 ins

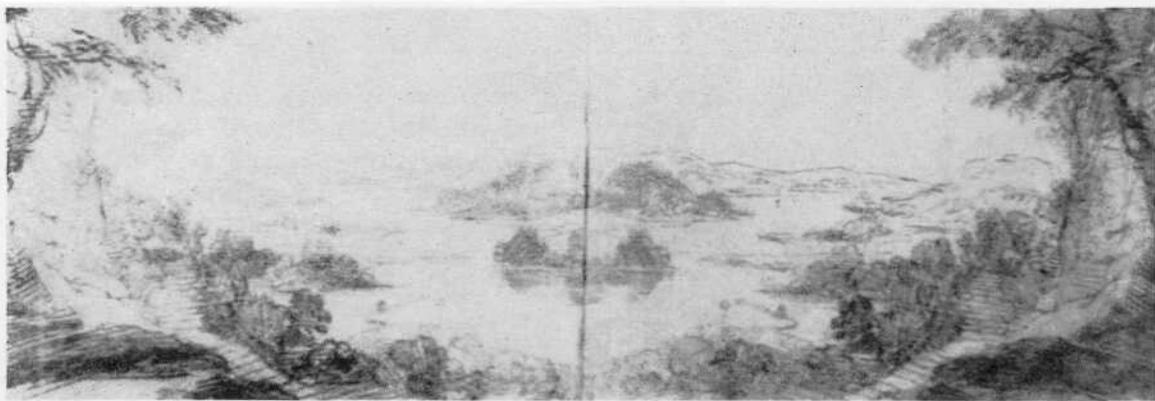
Mackelvie Trust, 1960

This fine portrait has been recently purchased by the Mackelvie Trustees. Its previous history is unknown except that it passed through Christie's last year (24/7[165]). It belongs to Gainsborough's early Bath period. The artist had moved there from Ipswich in 1759.

Compared to the Ipswich portrait (John Sparrowe: Quarterly No.4) this one shows a greater vivacity in the brushwork, particularly in the freely painted surplice. The head, however, shows the hatching strokes employed in the earlier work. There are a number of these portraits in the early '60s and all show Gainsborough's preference for the strong

middle-aged character. It may be surmised that Gainsborough gained the commission to paint the Bishop's portrait through William Jackson, the composer, who was organist and lay vicar at Exeter Cathedral. Jackson and Gainsborough were lifelong friends.

George Lavington (1684-1762) was educated at New College, Oxford, and later appointed Chaplain to George I. He was well known for his Hanoverian sympathies and '(even among his enemies) esteemed a person of admirable natural parts, good manners, sound judgment and of a remarkable sweetness of temper in all conversation.' In 1747 Lavington was consecrated Bishop of Exeter. He was a continuous opponent of Methodism and kept up an exchange of letters and pamphlets with John Wesley. He remained in Exeter until his death in 1762.



ANTOINE WATTEAU (1684-1721)

DECORATIVE LANDSCAPE

Red Chalk (each sheet) 5 x 7 ins

Purchased 1955

It has been suggested by Sir K. T. Parker, through James Byam Shaw, that this is an early drawing by Watteau. It is assumed that the two sheets formed part of a sketch book

and from this one might assume that one sheet was an offset of the other. However, in certain parts of each drawing the line is too incisive to permit this interpretation. Together the sheets provide a decorative Rococo landscape suitable for instance for an over-door. On the verso of each drawing is another, which if they were not so rubbed would show Watteau's great interest in landscape.



ETIENNE AUBRY (1745-1781), French  
THE FORTUNE TELLER  
Brush and indian ink (M/SiIU x 142)

This interesting drawing was purchased by the Committee in 1957. Originally in the collection of Prince W. Argoutinsky-Dolgoroukoff, it was part of an exhibition in the Gallery of 'Costume and Daily Life/ selected for us by Mr James Byam Shaw in London.

Aubry was born at Versailles in 1745 and was a pupil of J.-A. Silvestre and Joseph Vien. He became known for his portraits and genre subjects and, in fact, in the latter, his sensitivity of drawing and skill in composition make him a not inconsiderable figure among the masters of French realist painting of the Eighteenth Century.

One is reminded in looking at this work of the genre drawings of Goya, and indeed,

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it was from Spain that this sort of subject was introduced into France. There is an echo of Goya's fascination with the occult too in the subject: the sinister gypsy with admonitory finger, the lightly brushed in shelf with a skull in the background, the owl perched on the chair back

R D F

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#### THE INLAND EYE

Associates who do not yet have copies of 'The Inland Eye,' E. H. McCormick's 'sketch in visual biography,' the published text of his lecture to the Gallery Associates in 1957, may be interested to know that there are some copies still available at the office — price three shillings. Also available is the Gallery's list of Publications 1954-1959: catalogues, greetings cards and postcards.



HENRI TOULOUSE-LAUTREC (1864-1901)

SUBRA DE L'OPERA (Delteil 151)

Lithograph Purchased 1952

Between 1890 and 1897 Toulouse-Lautrec drew on more than a score of stage productions, as opposed to cafe concerts, for subjects. Although this portrait is titled SUBRA, who was a Parisian ballet dancer of the Conservatoire National de Danse, the subject is more likely to be Sarah Bernhardt as *Cleopatra*, the Egyptian decor in the background supporting this view. She played in *Cleopatra* in 1890.

Sarah Bernhardt (1845-1923) was first noticed in *Le Passant*, at the Odeon in 1869; previously she had made an unsuccessful attempt as a burlesque singer. Her career, interrupted by the Franco-Prussian war, was resumed in 1872 at the Comedie Francaise; from that time she received the world's acclaim as the supreme actress of all time.

EDOUARD MANET (1832-1883)

EVA GONZALES

Etching; only state (Guerin 57)

Purchased 1952

This portrait of Eva Gonzales, the painter, was made in 1870 at the same time that Manet exhibited his portrait of her at the easel (*National Gallery, London*) at the Paris Salon.

Eva Gonzales (1849-1883) who was of Spanish descent, was introduced to Manet by Alfred Stevens, the Belgian artist. She entered the former's studio in February 1869, and the following year exhibited her first picture at the Salon. She was a regular exhibitor until her early death at the age of thirty-four.

It is worth commenting on the characteristic upthrust position of the heads in these two portraits — typical of the concert singer and the dramatic actress of the period. This imperious gesture appears constantly at this time and no more charmingly than in Degas' *BALLET DANCER OF FOURTEEN YEARS DRESSED*

(Tate Gallery)



exhibition calendar

# AUCKLAND FESTIVAL

1960

## Contemporary Australian Art

18MAY-19JUNE

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## Old Master Prints from the Monrad Collection

27 MAY-19 JUNE

### AUCKLAND CITY COUNCIL PARKS AND LIBRARY COMMITTEE

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