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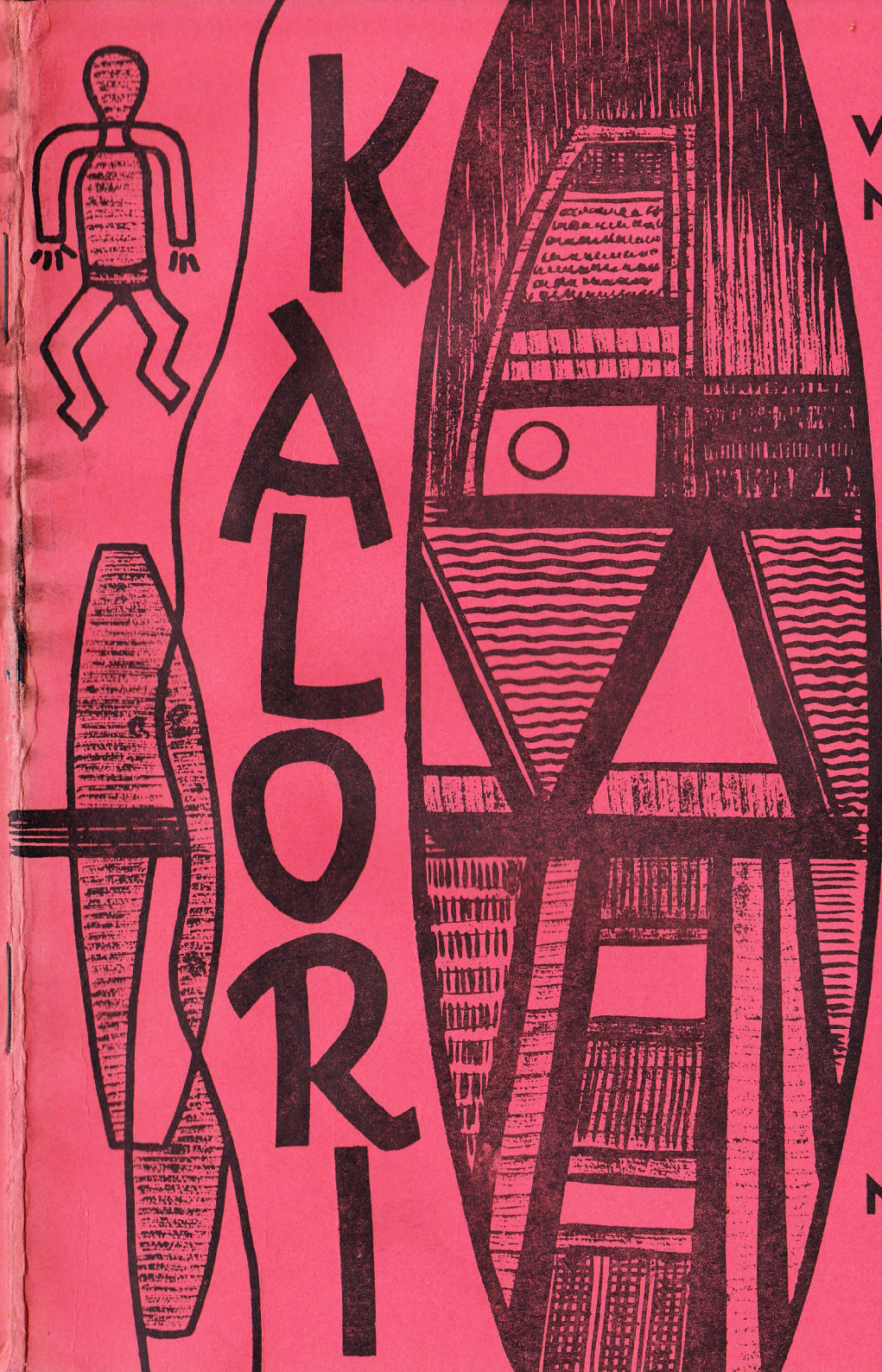

KALORI

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FROM THE PRESIDENT . . .

ART AS A GIMMICK?

I HAVE just been asked to contribute to an exhibition in aid of a kindergarten. There are, currently, exhibitions for Red Cross and St. John's, and I have heard rumours of more for Y.W.C.A., Refugee Year and Aranda Artists. And doubtless there are more in the offing.

I shall waive for the moment the ethics of art as an aid for begging and consider the phenomenon that a show of pictures is a sufficiently popular draw for people to take on the labour and trials of running one to raise money. That's new.

Art is "IN", which is gratifying enough in some ways but alarming in others. Art may be good for popularity, but popularity is not necessarily good for art.

It was popular in Greece and Florence, and thrived on its popularity; but art is an expression of the community that produces it, and the values and standards of that community very materially affect the power of its artists to do good work.

This country is embracing more and more the standards of America, and it may be worth considering America in this regard.

Art is "IN" there, too, and returning gallery directors speak with awe of the splendour of the galleries, their activities and popularity, and the huge sums spent.

Yet it is a paradox that almost the only artists of world standard from this land of bountiful patrons have achieved it outside America, and that some European masters who went to America have faded out and lost their power.

Against this, just across the border from the United States, in hard-up Mexico, is a brilliant school of artists who are leading the world. Life there is still largely primitive, but the artificiality of life in the United States needs no emphasising. It is the land of how to make friends and influence people, and it is the land of high-pressure selling.

Modern selling aims low. Clever men have investigated the mechanism of human behaviour and set their discoveries to work to defeat our resistance.

We are attacked at a sub-rational level, filled with appetities and discontents for things we don't need, and stimulated to a pattern of automatic behaviour like good little zombies.

It is a total war and the weapons are mighty. A constant flood of insinuation, suggestion and tempting pours from press, film, radio, television and even—final invasion—the telephone. A genteel lady rang me at 7.30 p.m. to get my valued opinion of a certain lubricating oil. I wish I had given it!

How far our natural toughness and good sense can withstand this onslaught is hard to say; but it is bound to produce a blunting of our powers of judgment, and a society which is having its intelligence and will systematically undermined is not likely to be in good form for the cultivation of higher powers.

The view that if a thing is profitable it is justified may well prove to be a most disastrous notion and, with this in mind, I feel that this tendency to use art as a gimmick is not something to be encouraged.

John Dowie

R.S.A.S.A.—KALORI

EDITOR : CLIVE KELLY

The next (mid-January) issue of "Kalori" will take the form of a Calendar for 1961, setting out the year's dates of interest to the art world throughout Australia.

SOCIETY NEWS AND NOTES

TWO exhibitions in the Society's gallery next year will celebrate centenaries—one that of the Adelaide Camera Club, the other the School of Art.

One week will be allotted to the Camera Club; the School of Art has applied for a booking in August.

The Society's gallery is practically booked out for the whole of 1961. There will be the Society's own usual four exhibitions, two for the Contemporary Art Society of S.A., and the Wholohan Prize landscape exhibition.

Application has been made for a date for Albert Tucker, back in Australia on a scholarship, who is to have an exhibition in every State. His South Australian show has been tentatively fixed for April 15 to April 29.

Other exhibitors during the year will be Francis Roy Thompson ,W. Dutkiewicz, Max Ragless, Max Birrell, Clive Stoward and John Rowell.

EXHIBITIONS for the remainder of this year are:

Ingrid Erns—November 22 to December 3.

Melbourne Graphic Group—December 5 to December 17.

THE annual Christmas Party will be held on Tuesday, December 20, at 8 p.m. This will also be an opportunity to wish "Bon Voyage" to two of our members of the Council: Leila McNamara, who leaves Adelaide in early January, and Ingrid Erns, who leaves at the end of December. Both are going on visits to Europe.

We are also hoping to show two excellent art films at the Party.

TWO Society members who have recently held successful exhibitions in other States are Francis Roy Thompson, whose show was at the Victorian Artists' Society's gallery, East Melbourne, and Michael Shannon, at the Macquarie Galleries, Sydney.

AT the Annual Meeting of the Society held on Tuesday, October 25, the officers and Council elected for 1960-61 are:

President: John S. Dowie.
Vice-Presidents: Stewart Game, Allan Glover, Alfred Gant, Ingrid Erns.
Hon. Secretary: Lisette Kohlhagen.
Hon. Treasurer: Robert Wreford.
Hon. Minutes Secretary: Gwen Num.
Council: Ronald Bell, Mona Benny, David Dridan, Leila McNamara, Mary Milton, Timothy Messack, Anton Riebe, Mervyn Smith, Donald Spooner, Fred Wendt.
Associates' Representatives: Elaine Wreford and Richard White.
Hon. Auditors: Alfred Gant, Charles Bannon.
Hon. Solicitor: Basil Harford.
Trustees: Fred Wendt and Allan Glover.
Editor, "Kalori": Clive Kelly.
Selection Committee for 1960-61: John Dowie, Ronald Bell, Lisette Kohlhagen, Alfred Gant, Donald Spooner, Brian Seidel, Ruth Tuck.
Runners-up: Mona Benny, Mervyn Smith.

AFTER the Selection Committee has made its choice for all of the Society's exhibitions, I immediately send out notices advising those artists whose pictures have been rejected that they should call to collect them without delay.

In the case of Mrs. W. Douglas Broers ("Kalori", September, 1960), failure to advise her was an oversight, for which I apologise.

—LISETTE KOHLHAGEN

IVOR FRANCIS REVIEWS

TWO RECENT EXHIBITIONS

SPRING EXHIBITION—

IF anyone were undecided whether Mary P. Harris, mystic, were Mary P. Harris, artist, "Moon Enchanted River" and "The Ray of Light" would have put the question beyond doubt.

These were among the most personal and creative works in the R.S.A.S.A. Spring Exhibition. They were skilfully handled in a style that owes nothing to anybody, except the artist herself. It is rare, nowadays, to find an individualist; it is rarer still to find an individualist enjoying recognition as an acceptable artist.

Of Douglas Roberts' two entries, I preferred "Tangled Landscape," but both of them, I thought, were outstanding studies in technique rather than the outcome of great inspiration. On the other hand, Mervyn Smith gave the impression of having cut pieces out of major works for small, uninspired presentation.

James Cant's "The Scrub" is one of the materpieces of his late manner, but needs to be seen in the right moment of light to reveal the subtle shadow, which is the dramatis personae of its composition.

One of the most charming, if less mature, works was Rhonda Thiele's "Turkeys in the Scrub". It combined clever design with rich, harmonious colour to achieve high decorative quality.

Then there were the rather forced, but compelling "Sugar Loafs" by Brian Seidel; Charles Bush's virtuosity, "Arden Street"; a good academic "Child" by Jo Caddy; David Dridan's suave "Survival"; a strong emotive "White Monolith", by Geoff Wilson; a light, but sincere "Web" by Elaine Wreford; S. R. Ball's impressive and promising "Composition"; and two works demonstrating the natural artistry of approach possessed by Barbara Hanrahan.

There were, no doubt, other good pictures which I have omitted to mention, possibly because I was not in a mood to be drawn to them.

Of the sculpture and pottery, I feel we have seen better. Other than an excellent head study of Phyl Waterhouse, by John Dowie, I would like especially to commend Keith Cook's two (underpriced) offerings.

MACQUARIE GALLERIES—

WHILE the Macquarie Galleries Exhibition did not set the Torrens on fire and was, perhaps, a little out-of-humour with the current predilections of Adelaide's "progressives", it was an even showing of the academic side of some of Australia's more notable artists.

This was particularly true of Ian Fairweather, whose pallid "paintings" always convey a giddy effect of bleached summer madness; Adrian Feint, adopting, without accepting, the surrealist convention; Donald Friend, more than ever the aesthetic social realist; Russell Drysdale, minus the "magnificent idea" . . . and, in fact, of nearly all the exhibitors.

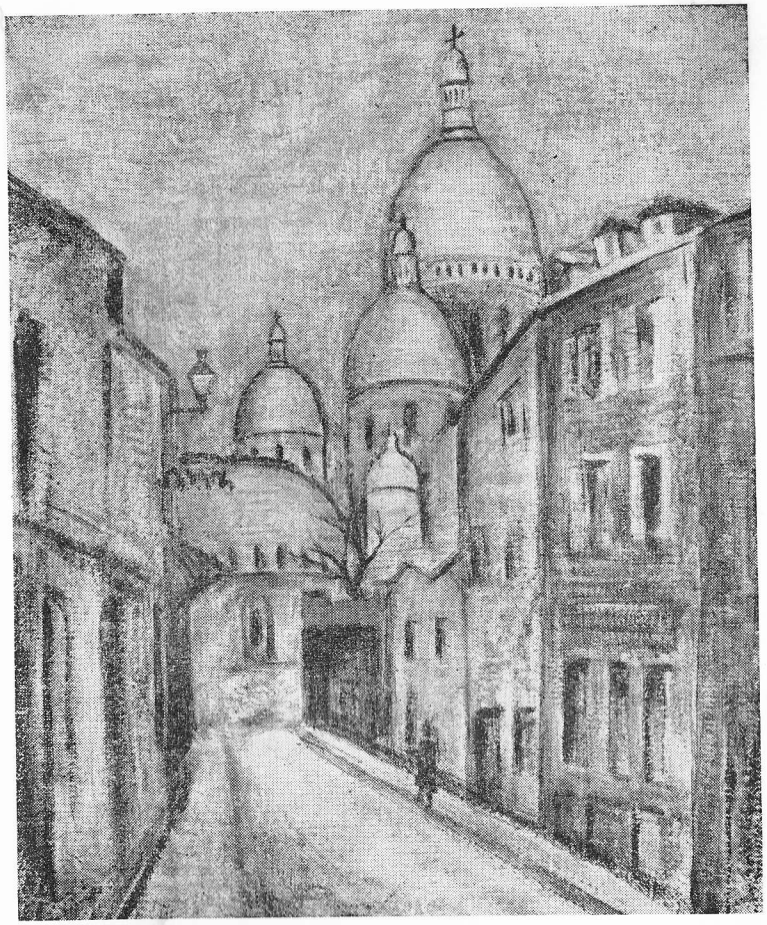
We felt we had seen these pictures of theirs many times before, but never responded with so little consciousness of inward excitement. Someone is surely getting old—they, we, or both of us.

It was more pleasurable, therefore, to light upon a few surprises where, if the approach were no less academic, it was at least new for the artist concerned and, in each case, gave an impression of experience and authority.

Among these were William Dobell's sensitively handled "abstracts", Judy Cassab's "Crowd", Eric Smith's "At Sundown," Jean Appleton's "Red Table with Fruit" (which some art-lovers mistook for her other offering, "The Boat"), and Elaine Haxton, whose work, until this time, we had thought of late to be suffering from tired inspiration.

We were also given the chance to wallow in a little quiet, sentimental, nostalgic memory with contributions from Cedric Flower, Roy Fluke, James Gleeson (albeit now scathed somewhat by Expressionism), Justin O'Brien, Desiderius Orban (one of his best ever), and Carl Plate, recalling that these were once in the vanguard of the invasion of Adelaide by "modern" art.

How time passes! Watch out, Gleghorn, Lynn, Coburn and company! Your science, too, is starting to catch up on invention.



"Montmartre" . . . One of Lisette Kohlhagen's oil paintings in her recent exhibition at the Society's Gallery. This was one of a number of pictures painted by the artist while on a trip abroad two years ago.

THE PROMISE OF YOUTH

ADELAIDE'S Painters and Sculptors of Promise, in their recent exhibition at the Society's Gallery, fulfill our trust in youth—not with violence, but with a blessed absence of complacency, and with lively personality.

From "Cray and Beer" to "Carcase" Anthony Bishop is vibrant in the same way as Rembrandt when he explored the mysteries of a butcher's shop.

If one seeks to rest, Judith Silvester's white boats have drifted on to a beach reminiscent of Van Gogh. It is a pity and a little trifling that bottle and tin happened, too.

In Bruce Vinall's "Lilies" one is conscious of "The force that through the green fuse drives the flower"; and there is an aura of Ruth Tuck in its inspiration.

Still life paintings of glistening fish and crisp paper wrapping are intriguing to compare. The emotional red in the knife handle and dramatic dark of the background in Pauline Gebhardt's "Fish" is most arresting.

There is a live impact in Sonya Bell's "Circus," and lovely old scumbled colour in Margaret Sutherland's "Patawolonga."

In McMahon Terry's "Goods Yard" there is a subdued nostalgia lit by three quiescent slabs of light.

Margo Sweet's "The White Pot" is low toned and of a beautiful harmony. Marilyn Herne, in her "Grey Composition," is a shadow of the bewildering and fantastic horror of a Goya.

Finally one wonders why the large interior was placed so near the door. Except as a colour harmony it destroyed the balance of a well arranged exhibition.

—MARY HARRIS

S.A. IS PROUD OF WILL ASHTON, A GREAT AND ADVENTUROUS ARTIST

By LEILA McNAMARA

WE of the Royal S.A. Society of Arts feel specially proud of the honour of knighthood conferred by Her Majesty, the Queen, this year, on Will Ashton, for his long and distinguished service to art.

He was a Fellow of this Society and a member of the Council for many years.

During his brilliant career, he has had 30 of his pictures hung on the line at the Royal Academy in London. He is represented in all major Australian galleries, and there are nine of his paintings in the National Gallery of S.A.

He is chairman—and was before that for many years a member—of the Commonwealth Government's Art Advisory Board. He was awarded the O.B.E. in 1941, and the Society of Artists' Medal in 1944 for his work for Australian art.

He is a three times winner of the Wynne Prize for landscape. And for eight years, from 1937, he was Director of the National Gallery of New South Wales.

Will Ashton was born in York, England, in 1881, but was taken to Adelaide when he was a baby. His father, James Ashton, was drawing master of Prince Alfred College, and Will was educated there. (The only prizes he won were those awarded for drawing.)

He first went abroad when he was 19, and studied at the St. Ives School of Landscape under Olssen and Talmage, whose influence has always remained with him. After leaving St. Ives, he studied for the next few years in Paris, exhibited in London, then returned to Australia in 1905.

Soon after his return, the National Gallery in Adelaide bought a large oil painting, "Boulevard Montparnasse, Paris", for 150 guineas—and Ashton's reputation as a painter of Continental subjects was established.

He won his first Wynne Prize in 1908, and held many successful exhibitions in various States between trips to Britain and the Continent.

In World War I. he did voluntary work with the Y.M.C.A., driving a car around London, picking up soldiers and driving them to their destination. He delights to tell how once he was tipped sixpence when he was mistaken for a paid taxi driver. Another time, when his wife called to him to come and watch a Zeppelin that was crashing in flames, he was too tired to get out of bed.

Between wars, he travelled and exhibited widely, making his headquarters in Sydney. He has lived for years in an attractive home at Mosman, overlooking Double Bay, where he still paints and keeps an active interest in all art matters.

An excellent summing up of Will Ashton, the artist, was made by Hans Heysen in an article written more than 30 years ago:

"He is essentially an out-of-doors painter . . . It is evident in the manner of approach, the manipulation of his materials; his vision is that of an impressionist; and I feel his happiest work is that which captures a fleeting mood of nature that has inspired him."

Will Ashton is an artist all of whose pictures reveal an adventurous attack in the fields of realism. Looking at them, one feels a tang of the ocean in his seascapes, with their swirling water and foam-drenched rocks; the poetry of the early morning mists of Sydney Harbour with its grey-green colour and light glistening on the water. Busy street and harbour scenes, with their old buildings, and shipping, glow with sunshine.

In his famous pictures of the Australian snow country, one can feel the softness of the snow, see its coolness contrasted against the warm-coloured trees and buildings.

From the painting by William Dargie

Will Ashton was an excellent teacher, full of energy and cheerfulness. I well remember the times when he would stand behind me, looking at my feeble attempts, and say, "You know what I would do if I were you?—scrape it out."

I would feel humbled and depressed, but Will Ashton would soon cheer me up and I would start again and put in greater effort—sometimes with the desired effect.

At other times he would say, "Why did you put that there?"—pointing to some part of my picture. And woe betide me if I said, "Because it was there." He always said, "First be an artist, with good design and true colour values."

The Legend Press of Sydney is bringing out a book on the work of Sir William Ashton, with 20 plates in colour, a Preface by the Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies) and a Foreword by William Dargie, whose fine portrait of the artist is reproduced with this article. It promises to be a worthwhile souvenir of this distinguished Australian artist whom South Australia will always claim as her own.

DRAMATIC LECTURE ON SCULPTURE

THE Talk for September was given by Berend van der Struik, and was called simply, "Sculpture", an unpretentious title that gave little warning of the scope and elaboration of the address.

With characteristic thoroughness, Mr. Van der Struik had carefully prepared his material and presentation, which ranged from specially screened invitation cards and posters on dramatic black paper, to the erection of huge screens in the gallery to mask off a full third of the wall area and provide a well-staged backdrop for about a dozen large sculptures by himself and Mr. Noel McKenzie.

The work being all in pure white plaster, some of it modelled direct in that medium, it made a startling impression against the black screens.

The pieces exhibited included the two works which we saw in our Festival Exhibition, the sensitively modelled portrait of the sculptor's wife, and the large kneeling figure which looked so impressive in the centre of the gallery.

There were, as well, a number of pieces we had not seen before, including a small abstract in cubes and a large torso of plaster modelled direct on wire.

The works very clearly illustrated the lecturer's ideas on sculpture and were supplemented by epidiascope illustrations to show what was good and also what was bad. Most of the sculpture was contemporary, with special emphasis on the work of Brancusi.

The lecture was read from copious notes and was so wide in its scope that it is impossible to make more than a small precis of it here.

Covering logic, psychology, superstition and a host of other topics, Mr. Van de Struik built up a philosophy of sculpture, very pure, very austere, perhaps a little narrow, but always sound—the point that I recall most clearly being that sculpture must not be pictorial. The painter creates effects and illusions, but sculpture is three dimensional and real, and anything in a sculpture that ignores this is weakness and false to this art form.

I personally am grateful to Mr. Van der Struik for presenting this point so dramatically, and for one of the most exciting evenings we have had at the Society.

—JOHN DOWIE

★ ★ ★

PICASSO : "I AM ONLY A PUBLIC ENTERTAINER"

IN a book, "Mirage of Africa," author Alan Houghton Broderick quotes from a book by Giovanni Papini called "Il Libro Vero."

In this appears a "confession" attributed to Pablo Picasso that makes interesting reading—

"In art the mass of the people no longer seek consolation and exaltation, but those who are refined, rich, unoccupied, who are distillers of quintessences, seek what is new, strange, original, extravagant, scandalous.

"I myself, since Cubism and even before, have satisfied these Masters and Critics, with all the changing oddities that passed through my head, and the less they understood me, the more they admired me.

"By amusing myself with all these games, with all these absurdities, with all these puzzles, rebuses, and arabesques, I became famous and that very quickly. And fame for a painter means sales, gains, fortunes, riches. And to-day as you know, I am celebrated, I am rich.

"But when I am alone with myself I have not the courage to think of myself as an artist in the great and ancient sense of the term. Giotto, Titian, Rembrandt and Goya were great painters, I am only a public entertainer who has understood his times and has exhausted as best he could the imbecility and vacuity, the cupidity of his contemporaries.

"Mine is a bitter confession, more painful than may appear, but it has the merit of being sincere."

BOOKS ON TWO HIGHLY INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS

"G. BRAQUE," by John Russell. (Phaidon Press, London.)

"BRAM VAN VELDE," by Samuel Beckett, Georges Duthuit and Jacques Putman. (Grove Press, New York.)

TWO most interesting, vividly contrasted books that are recent purchases for the Society's library are one on Braque, an individualist for whom drama and beauty exist in the visible world, and Bram Van Velde, a modern painter who rules out the possibility of basing his art on the visual.

Braque's individuality comes from his adroit use of subject matter taken from nature to achieve creative design through imaginative pattern and colour.

This book of reproductions—many of them in colour—contains 80 examples of his work, ranging from his early paintings to some that were completed only a few months ago and have not yet left his studio.

The plates well illustrate Braque's love of clarity and order, his basic simplicity, and his lucid, classical development of style.

An informative text, by the well-known art critic and author, John Russell, traces Braque's individuality from his early student days, through his work in Paris before World War I, when the true nature of his genius was still not revealed, to his progressive detachment from the impressionist legacy, and his later creation with Picasso, of Cubism.

"My Cubism," he said lately, "was a means I created for my own use, whose primary aim was to put painting within the reach of my own gifts."

"The handling of paint in Braque's later masterpieces proves him to be one of the subtlest and most resourceful voluptuaries in the history of art," says John Russell.

And, seeing the objects and the subjects Braque loved, set out with such sensuous imagination, readers of this beautifully produced and illustrated book will agree with him.

BRAM VAN VELDE is the controversial Dutch painter whose strange, agonised compositions prompted Georges Duthuit to say: "Bram Van Velde has taken the torch from Matisse's hands to thrust it into the earth and follow wayless ways."

This little book, with its twelve colour plates and nine black and white illustrations, makes a fascinating introduction to this artist, whose singularity of purpose has made him something of an enigma to his contemporaries.

Van Velde himself says: "The world is a mystery, the work of painting helps me penetrate it. What I want to say is too strange, too violent for me to restrain it in word or thought. It wants to appear and I paint it."

—CLIVE KELLY

SIR LAWRENCE BRAGG LIKES TO SKETCH

SIR LAWRENCE BRAGG, O.B.E., F.R.S., who honoured our Society by officially opening the Artists and Sculptors of Promise Exhibition on Tuesday, October 25, is the distinguished son of a distinguished father, who was one of the first members of the Society of Arts.

In the Society's first Annual Report, printed in 1892-1893, the names of Professor and Mrs. Bragg are included.

In the 1896 Annual Report, it is stated that Professor Bragg gave a lecture on colour. Professor Bragg was knighted for his service to science. He became President of the Royal Society in London, which position is now held by his son, Sir Lawrence Bragg, who was also knighted for the fame he has won in the world of science, notably for his X-ray structure analysis.

He was appointed Langworthy Professor of Physics in the University of Manchester in 1919, Director of the National Physical Laboratory in 1937, and Cavendish Professor of Experimental Physics at Cambridge in 1938.

Sir Lawrence Bragg is keen to sketch whenever he has the opportunity of doing so. His mother did some very interesting pictures in watercolour, and I had the privilege of seeing these when I visited Sir Lawrence and Lady Bragg's home in London.

Sir Lawrence Bragg's aunt, Miss Lorna Todd, is a Patron of the Society.

—LISETTE KOHLHAGEN

POSTER COMPETITION FOR ARTS FESTIVAL

A PRIZE of £100 has been offered by The Adelaide Festival of Arts Inc., for the best poster publicising its second festival to be held during March, 1962.

This was announced by the Festival's Chief Executive Officer (Mr. C. C. Wicks) last month.

"We expect the competition to attract many of Australia's best artists," Mr. Wicks said. "It is important to secure a design of high quality to display overseas as well as throughout Australia.

"We are hoping for a gay and festive design, with emphasis on the main attractions of music, art and theatre," he said. "The poster should also aim at attracting Australian and overseas visitors to Adelaide for the two-week festival."

The previous poster was designed by Sydney artist Douglas Annand. His "AA" symbol had proved so successful that it was decided to retain it in all future publicity, including the new poster design.

"However, it should not be the dominant motif," Mr. Wicks said.

The size of the poster has been fixed at 25 in. by 40 in., upright design.

A panel of three judges has been appointed. They are Mr. Robert Campbell, director of the National Gallery of S.A.; Mr. Eric Maguire, of Messrs. Walker, Robertson & Maguire, Melbourne; and Mr. D. G. McFarling, chairman of the Festival Publicity Committee.

The competition will close on January 7th, 1961.

Entry forms and full details of conditions can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary of the Royal S.A. Society of Arts, the National Gallery and the S.A. Government Tourist Bureau.

Entries should be sent to the Chief Executive Officer, The Adelaide Festival of Arts, Box 392, G.P.O., Adelaide. S.A.

ROYAL S.A. SOCIETY OF ARTS, INC.

The Royal Society of Arts exists for the advancement of art generally, to hold periodical exhibitions of works of art, and buy books of contemporary art and old masters and art magazines, thus adding to a well-established library for free use by members.

The Society holds three major exhibitions each year.

Spring—Autumn—Print and Drawing

and two minor exhibitions:

Associates and Lay Members—Painters and Sculptors of Promise

and stages, in co-operation with the National Gallery, the Maude Vizard Wholohan Exhibition.

Sending in dates for all exhibitions are advised well in advance, either by notice or in Kalori.

If you enter for any exhibition, see that each work is firmly labelled with a Form "B" and that all works are listed and numbered on a Form "A" and leave them all in the Council Room on the appointed sending-in day.

These forms may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary. An application by letter from country or interstate member, will receive immediate attention.

You will be notified by letter if any works are rejected and you are strongly urged to remove rejects as quickly as possible, as our storage facilities are very limited.

If you, as a Lay Member, have two works hung in a major exhibition or adjudged meritorious in a minor exhibition you will become an Associate of the Society.

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.

At your request, the Hon. Secretary will give you an application form for membership.

All you have to do is to fill in the form and be proposed and seconded by two members, and your application will be dealt with at the society's next council Meeting.

No qualification is required for Lay Membership, other than an interest in art.

Lay Members have the right to submit work for exhibition without fee.

But they have no vote in the society's matters.

Each year, at the time of the Annual General Meeting, the Fellows meet to decide if any of the Associates are worthy of appointment as Fellows.

If you are a Lay Member only because of your interest in art, and don't want to become a painter by joining one of our Sketch Clubs, then you can still play an active part by attending the Society's openings and the monthly meetings, at which we have a most interesting range of speakers and demonstrators, or you can be heard from as a contributor to Kalori (this, of course, applies to all members).

Subscriptions are as follows: Lay Members, £2/2/-; Associates, £3/3/-; Fellows, £3/3/-; Patrons, £4/4-, payable immediately after election.

The Society's year ends on August 31, and the Annual Meeting is usually held in October. Do make a point of attending, and do nominate anyone else who wants to join the Society.

- A Sketch Club meets to draw from the model on Saturday afternoons from 2.55 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

- The Honorary Secretary (Miss Lisette Kohlhagen) is always in the Council Room on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons if there is anything you want to know or if you wish to borrow books or magazines from the Library. The Society's telephone is 8 1873.

- The Honorary Secretary's telephone is 7 3097, the President's, 31 8575.