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SPACE

by *Geoff Shedley*

Some years ago, Henry Moore was nailed down in his studio by the B.B.C. Television and submitted to the usual series of "everyman" questions about his art. I seem to remember that his small daughter was sitting on the floor squeezing handfuls of clay and observing the results. After much questioning and evading, the final blow came—"And can you tell the viewers, Mr. Moore, why you like putting holes in your sculpture?" Mr. Moore thought for a second and then said—"I think it's because it enables me to see the other side at the same time—or at least, some of it."

I suppose he could have said that the provision of holes gave him "Moore" sculptured surface to the square foot of his particular work in hand, and that he should have said, by creating more space in his object, he was able to display endless new contours enclosing that space.

Moore's approach to holes seems entirely architectural—the enclosing of a space to produce a visual effect. Architectural space can be produced in two main ways. One is the making of an interior—a room—a gallery or an auditorium. Bedrooms and even bathrooms are likewise made by enclosing a space for a certain use of man. The proportions of these spaces are arranged to produce various effects on the observer, and the surface treatments of the floors, walls and ceilings are secondary considerations, although they have been the object (too often the prime object) of designers throughout history. There is nothing more satisfying for an architect to enter than a plain white-washed room in Greece or Italy with no architraves to the doors or windows, no ceiling moulds or skirtings. The placing of the essential holes (I should say perforations) and the shape of the space can be completely satisfying in itself.

The second architectural effect is space created by groups of buildings arranged around a courtyard, such as a city square, or Abbey cloisters, or shopping centre.

To return to sculpture, in Rotterdam this time, Zadkine visited his great bronze figure depicting the bombing of the heart of that city. I was in Rotterdam that day inspecting the devastation and the early signs of replanning the centre. I saw his distorted, desperate, degouted figure of "Rotterdam", with the jagged hole in its belly, reaching upwards as if to call the bombers down out of the night.

The next day I was shown around by the very same city father who attended Zadkine. He walked up to the bronze and said that Mr. Zadkine had expressed pleasure with the siting, the various angles of the sun, the patina—all was well except for the bird's nest. "What bird's nest?" asked my C.F. "That's the whole point," said Zadkine. "There should be a bird's nest in that hole by now—the thing's not complete." I believe that Zadkine was rather worried about that hole—it was a hole that told a story—it was not completely architectural—it told a story of the past and was not the empty centre of Rotterdam filling up with new life?

This hole was not there for the purpose of gauging the distance of the naval from the spine—it was there to tell a story. He had reversed the current sculptural gag. Perhaps Zadkine (if asked) would explain that his bit of 19th Century story-telling is, in fact, "not there"—it's a void.

Now for a little 20th Century story-telling. The Sydney Opera House recently reached a crisis in its somewhat long birth pangs. These labours began in 1957 when Ove Arup, the engineer, found that Utzon's superb freehand creative drawings

of the vast shells forming the roof could not be mechanically justified—they had no geometric definition. The engineer found that each time he rationalised the geometry the “genius” of the design was destroyed. In 1961 the structure was altered and all previous work of 60 to 70 engineers was abandoned. To date, 380,000 man-hours of engineering design have been expended and 2,000 computer hours have gone into the project.

Be that as it may, Utzon has created a space, an environment inside his soaring sail-like shells. In fact, he has created a sculptural “hole” rather than an architectural hole with an internal message as well as an external. This is just about twice as much as Henry Moore and Zadkine had to cope with. There has, however, been an architectural criticism of the Opera House design. It is said that the superstructure is “dishonest” because it does not “express the function but merely camouflages what goes on underneath it.” In other words, the shape of the “hole” inside, as required by sight lines and acoustics, was not expressed externally. This is a severe criticism because adherence to it as a principle tends to sap any creative urge which may produce an architectural work of art of world moving degree. Utzon braved this danger in order to create a massive sculpture floating on the waters of Sydney Harbour.

Up to now, I’ve been chattering about negative parts of solid positive forms—negative but of prime importance. These were the “qualities” I tried to express in the “Rainmakers”. The subject of aborigines was suitable to the district because of the proximity of the ochre pits and the interest of the “Commissioner” in this fading race. The real aim was to make a “hole” by surrounding it with a shell—human figures being rather suitable. The void, approximating an ovoid, depicted the aboriginal race, its strange nobility and its hopelessness gradually tensioning inwards onto the kernel (the vanishing race). The kernel is a stone over which the figures crouch—the sacred stone—which is rubbed with a pearl shell and a faith in the coming of rain. This space has a kernel—a focus—like Zadkine’s bird’s nest—which symbolises here the small remaining speck of hope left to our dwindling aboriginal race, as distinct from the new hope of Rotterdam.

For the more casual observer, a nearby plaque is mounted on a one ton slate with the following inscription:

BEFORE THE DAWN OF HISTORY,
THE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINE
BECAME ISOLATED FROM ALL MEN
AND ROAMED THIS CONTINENT
CREATING HIS OWN ARTS AND CULTURE

TWO OLD MEN OF THE TRIBE
SQUAT OVER THE SACRED RAIN STONE
AND CHANT THEIR AGE OLD SONGS
TO BRING WATER FOR THE PEOPLE
AND FOOD FOR THE CREATURES.



“Rainmakers” by Geoff Shedley. Situated at Christies Beach.

LAWRENCE DAWS RETROSPECTIVE

by Ivor Francis

The world is a very big place and art exhibitions have been going for a very long time, so even if we cannot recall a national retrospective exhibition being given to a living young artist only 39 years of age, it is not to say it has not happened, some place sometime, before.

Laurence Daws is a product of the contemporary age. He has known none of the struggles of such artists as Herman, Dobell, Drysdale, Counihan, Boyd, Perceval Tucker, to name just a few, not forgetting the late Dorrit Black and many other older South Australians, like Douglas Roberts, Jacqueline Hick, Ruth Tuck, Vik Adolfsson and so on, who had to break down cruel public hostility and the opposition of their traditionally-minded and unbelievably spiteful colleagues.

Unlike these artists, he has never experienced an unsympathetic press; had to fortify himself against art critics bent on breaking his spirit with ridicule; suffered personal fear from the actions of an alarmed government determined to stamp out his heresy lest he should instil insidious poison in the minds of art students; or had to withstand the retaliatory tactics of an Establishment determined to protect itself against his supposed attack on the foundations of its art investments.

Daws' only problem has been in finding his own aesthetic in this present age and atmosphere of artistic tolerance. It is very important to realise this in trying to understand the motivating force underlying his work.

This Festival of Arts' Retrospective, therefore, was something of a doubtful compliment to so young an artist, when a retrospective exhibition is an honour usually reserved for the revered elderly and the deceased, when their life's work is done. Daw's short history to date is ably dealt with in the National Gallery's Adelaide Festival of Arts 1966 Catalogue of Special Exhibitions, so there is no need to repeat it here.

Reputations often suffer in retrospective shows, but Daws takes on stature. A strong line of development stems from his academic student studies, "Studio Interior" and "Cast Room", painted a mere fourteen years ago, to the icon-inspired symbolism of his latest period.

First, there were the geometric "grid" landscapes and figure composition for which he became well-known while working in Adelaide, such as "OenPELL", "On the West Queensland Plain" and "Sad Lubra", to be followed by works in which geometrical division became more objectively significant, as in "Dark Salvation" and "Recession of the Equinoxes".

Marked changes coincided with his visit to Italy, ending geometry and introducing the short, exciting but dead-end impressionistic Turnerish phase seen in "Man Pondering the Winter Sun" and "Burnt-out Share Farmer", both for a moment seemingly prophetic for himself.

His discovery of the "Symbol" solved his dilemma, when he entered that important period which produced the "Mandala" sequence and "The Hermit", a powerfully majestic composition.

Now he is occupied with a different kind of symbolism, charged with surrealist overtones, such as the "Faces of Violence". But, as we are warned by "The Green Sapphire", a new dramatic break-through may be his solution to yet another cul-de-sac.

Daws still has a long, enviable lifetime of painting ahead of him. There is no reason to suppose, as some people have darkly hinted, that this early honour he has received in art will adversely affect his future output, any more than early success has disturbed the future work of important men of science.

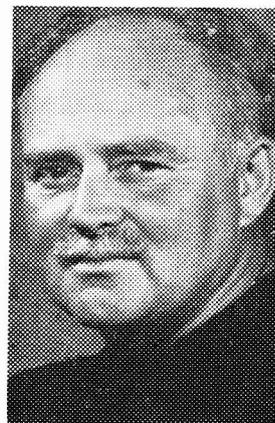


"Mandala V" by Lawrence Daws.

Photograph by courtesy National Gallery

IMPRESSIONS OF MEXICO

by John Dowie



To compress the art history of Mexico into the span of a magazine article is, even if I were qualified to do it, as impossible as putting a gallon into a pint measure. In point of fact, the story is so complex that I was only able to grasp the smallest part of it, and if I attempted to tell you what was what, would make so many howlers that I'd never live it down.

What I will try to do here, is to take you on an art tour over some of the ground that I covered and if I can, to convey to you some small part of the fascination of that extraordinary country. Situated well within the tropics as it is, one would expect to swelter in the approved tropical way, but such are the variations of altitudes that not only are some of the places mild but in the highlands of Chiapas we had fires at night and there was frost on the ground in the morning. This is not to say that it is like that everywhere and there is sufficient Turkish bath to convince you that the cartographers haven't made a mistake. Within the extremes is an immense variety of scenery. Snowy volcanoes like the famous Popocatepetl, lava flows, wide grassy valleys not unlike some of the Flinders range, pine forest, rain forest and hot scrubby flat lands which cover much of the lime stone peninsula of Yucatan. Against these backgrounds moves a varied and colourful population, partly Indian, partly European and a good deal of anybody's guess and with ancient monuments, the mellow Spanish buildings and the rich mixture of squalor with the extreme modernity, one feels much more in the old world than the new. Many times when I could have been in India, not least in the open air meat markets which make vegetarianism such a very comprehensible idea.

Naturally one sees the modern work at its best in the capital and the violent murals of Rivera, Siquieros, Orozco, Tamayo and others of the revolutionary school, are an astonishing experience. Unfortunately, I can't say that I was greatly impressed with what I saw of the current work. It seems to have lost its national character to a great extent and to be following the lead of the U.S. The burning hatred and one-eyed nationalism of the 20's and 30's, while not admirable in themselves, bore strange and impressive fruit in the art that it fostered. The blazing frescoes and mosaics that have become so famous are essentially a school that depends on representation and with the spread of abstraction, is dying out. There is much that one should see in Mexico City, but one thing that one should definitely not miss: the great Museo Antropologica in Chapultepec Park. Firstly, the building itself is a contemporary masterpiece. Daring in conception, lush in materials and extravagant with space in a way that seems almost blasphemous in this pinchpenny age; it is easy to see why it was given the top international award for architecture. The collection in the museum is worthy of the splendour of its housing. Treasures of sculpture, painting, architecture, jewellery and pottery have been gathered from all over central America and displayed to perfection in wonderfully co-ordinated sections. They tell the story of man from his earliest arrival as contemporary of mostodons and toxodontes some 12,000 years ago, through the food gathering and nomadic stage; the earlier development of crops; the beginnings of religion and the building of mounds and temples to the flowering

of several localised cultures and the great achievements of the Teotihuacanos, the Olmecs and Maya, the Toltecs and the Aztecs. These tribes were widely separated and divided by natural barriers of mountain forest and sea, but while they more or less kept their identity, like the Greeks, they were aware of each other and there was exchange of ideas and art forms. One could study the whole field of pre-Columbian art without stepping outside of the museum, very adequately indeed and even if one plans to visit the archaeological sites, a preliminary period there will help to clarify the complexities of schools and periods which are so confusing to the visitor. Like so many things nowadays, research has increased the original estimates of the dates of the Mexican monuments, but it seems that although works in earth and wood must have preceded those of stone, these are probably not earlier than 200 or 300 B.C. and the rise and fall of the Indian civilizations lie between that date and the arrival of Cortes in the 16th century.

One thing that will not be clarified in Mexico City, however, is the air, which, to put it mildly, stinks. The myriad diesel motors of the city burn a vile, unrefined oil and leave a foul trail behind them, often as dense as coal burning locomotives. A pall of this stuff blankets the town and on the finest day it is impossible to see beyond its limits to the famous volcanoes which were once its glory. To escape from the smog is an added incentive to visit the neighbouring sites and the two which interested me most were Teotihuacan and Tula. Teotihuacan lies in the Valley of Mexico some 30 or 40 miles to the north of Mexico City. It was deserted and ruinous when the Aztecs first came from the north sometime in the middle ages and was understandably regarded with awe by them as the work of gods. It is one of the grandest assemblages of monuments and courts in the world, surpassing in scale and comprehensiveness, even the Egyptians. Its two chief works are the pyramids of the sun and the moon, the former covering a greater area than the pyramid of Cheops, though not so high, and with a main processional way of over a mile, flanked on either side by the pyramid podiums of lesser temples, it is one of the most stupendous spectacles I've ever seen. The stupefying labour involved in erecting those structures by a people who had no metal and worked their masonry with stone chisels and hammers, is beyond comprehension. The buildings grew to their present size by a long evolution brought about by the practice of the Teotihuacanos, in common with most other people in this country, of building over all their temples at the end of each calendar cycle so that most of their structures are like an onion, skin on skin, and excavation into them reveals the earlier and earlier buildings. The later ones are not necessarily finer than the old and peaks of classical style are often uncovered under indifferent later work. It seems that all of the buildings in this part and the pavements as well were surfaced with white plaster which was then painted in strong colours with decorative motifs of animals and geometrical patterns, and in their glory must have been a wonderful sight. I tried to populate, in imagination the courts and terraces with the throngs of worshippers and the priests in their gaudy plumes and could only think what Sam Goldwyn missed by being born in the 20th century.

The frescoes, what remains of them, seem similar to the style of other Amerindian painting, conventionalised and decorative with strong outlines; and the sculpture which is mostly confined to early period work in the temple of Quetzalcoatl and Tlaloc is also architectural and repetitive; and though very effective, does not show the subtleties of the Maya sculpture; nor of the Aztecs who were late arrivals here as I have said.

Tula lies sixty or seventy miles to the north west and is of a different culture and a later one to Teotihuacan. Here the Toltecs had their northern capital and erected temples of great originality and complexity. Cylindrical and square columns occur in groves, originally supporting a wooden roof no doubt. Atlantean columns 25 ft. high in the form of warriors stand rigidly on parade at the top of a pyramid and everywhere there is great ornamentation and inventiveness. The Toltecs held wide dominion and their architecture can be seen hundreds of miles away in the subject Maya city of Chichen Itza, in Yucatan and to some extent in other places there. The subtleties of the Maya classic style have succumbed to the fierce barbarity of the Toltecs and their favourite gods, Chacmool the rain god and Quetzalcoatl the feathered snake, turn up here like a signature. The Toltecs though adventurous builders were more interested in effect than stability, and much of their small stone walling has reverted to its original rubble, and been carted away by present day Mexicans to build their less grandiose villages and churches. Perhaps one should not include the churches in this, as under Spanish rule, but mainly native labour, some very grand basilicas and cathedrals were raised in a rich gilded baroque, out of the stones of the pagan past.

Oaxaca was my next port of call, still on the plateau and mild, though brilliant in climate. I went there ostensibly to visit Mitla and Monte Alban, ancient sites erected by Zapotecs in a curious mosaic style in intricate patterns built up out of little rectangular stones much longer than their cross section, which is only a couple of inches square. These stone pencils are inserted lengthwise in the wall with the ends protruding to create textile like designs. I say ostensibly because Oaxaca is a painters' paradise and I spent so much of my time sketching and gazing at the markets and coloured walls of this charming town, that I had time only to see Mitla and to my shame missed the much more important Monte Alban. I consoled myself with the reflection that I had seen a very graphic model of Monte Alman in Mexico City and knew what was there anyway. Travel is so often like this. It is often impossible to see everything and deciding what to leave out is far from easy. Perhaps I may find myself in Oaxaca again and Monte Alban which has stood a thousand years will not be troubled by one or two more waiting for me. I had planned to fly from Oaxaca to Bonampak to see the famous murals in classic Maya style; the best surviving paintings in Mexico; and a sort of American Ajanta. The discovery, however, that the air fare would be about \$150 for a chartered plane, and the report from a recently returned expedition that the paintings had deteriorated and were very hard to see in the dark temple, decided me to stop at San Cristobal Las Casas in Chiapas, one of the points of departure from Bonampak. The climate here is temperate and the Indian population almost untouched in the villages. They have marked regional variations of dress, some wear trousers, others have their legs bare to the crutch; ponchos vary, so do sashes and particularly hats. One clan wears a flat straw like a plate with an absurd little crown and which perches on top of the men's heads with a great bunch of coloured streamers hanging down the back. Market day in las Casas is a wonderful pageant. The streets teem with brown skinned people, their features unchanged from those on the Maya temples, and carrying great loads of produce suspended back from their foreheads on a strap. They carry most things in this fashion, from babies to pottery water pots or sugar cane or maize and their knotty mountaineers' legs bear witness to the strength that it takes. I walked miles here through the grassy hills, well gardened for maize and dotted with the conical thatched houses of the Indians, like African

ones. Wild dahlias and clumps of cactus grow along the paths and roadsides and the tops of many of the hills bear high wooden crosses, some of them in groups of three or four. The simple little churches with their naive decorations are a lovely thing to see and the quiet polite little people, friendly and natural are very very drawable.

Jungle is the natural condition of almost all of the territory of the Maya. Some of it is mountainous as in Guatemala and Honduras, and most of Yucatan is as flat as the Nullabor plain, but high or low, left to itself it rapidly reverts to forest, with the result that although many cities have been discovered, many more are still hidden in dense rain forest. The men who in the dry season, penetrate these places to gather chicle for the chewing gum trade, have been the principal agents of discovery and now and again fresh reports of ruined cities come to the ears of the archaeologists. The phenomenon of a grand architecture hewn with primitive stone tools is wonderful enough in the open north, but how the Maya continued to clear the land, let alone build their cities is something to marvel at. Marvel I did, and to spare at Palenque, my first Maya city. It lies in the foothills at the edge of an immense swamp which from the air stretches to the horizon and must have been built there, because it was the nearest source of stone. Masses of stone in small cubes like cobbles lie on the hill side and without beasts of burden, it was easier to build where the stone was than to cart it away. The hills have been cut and built up to make courts and terraces, aqueducts built and seven or eight imposing temples with high comb roofs and elevated on the usual pyramids, have been cleared and partly restored. Unfortunately, the finished surface and its decoration was in stucco which has succumbed to the onslaughts of heat and rain and little now remains. Even work described by Victorian explorers has in many cases disappeared and some, of course, has gone to museums and collections, a sort of rescue, but one which detracts from the interest of the place. I feel that where possible these pieces should be replaced on the temples by casts. Most of the sculpture at Palenque is in low relief, elegant and true in proportion and richly rococo in ornament; and irresistibly suggestive of some Chinese or Indo Chinese ornament.

The style is certainly unlike other Mexican art and one of the local sports is guessing the origin of the Maya. Anything from Atlantis to the last tribes of Israel have been suggested and so irritated have the archaeologists become that all respectable books on the subject open with a flat declaration that the Maya are native Americans and that they made it up themselves. In point of fact, these reliefs show a greater and more facile realism than either Egyptian or Chinese or for the matter of that, in any other Maya site except Bonampak. Foreshortening was well understood and gestures and hands are depicted with great skill and delicacy. Except in small pottery and such they do not appear to have worked in the round, so their total opus cannot be compared with Egypt, but in their field they reached great heights and I have seen small terra cotta figurines pressed from moulds that were finer than Tanaqua ware. One of the wonders of Palenque is the tomb which in Egyptian fashion lies within the pyramid of inscriptions. To see it you must descend a steaming hot stair, wet and slimy with dripping stalactites overhead, down to a level below the foot of the pyramid where the burial chamber lies and in it a vast monolithic sarcophagus wonderfully carved about the sides and on its massive lid. It is a wonder and as fine as anything of its kind anywhere. The little Cessna plane takes you from Palenque back to Villa hermosa where an

excellent little museum is well worth a visit and where one sees the huge boulder like heads from la Venta. These are said to be Olmec work and as curiosities are of interest. They are about five or six feet high and well carved, but they are all so much alike, great blubbering babies, that I'm afraid I was soon bored with them.

Merida (pronounced merry-da) is the jumping-off place for Chichen Itza and Uxmal and several other Yucatan sites which I was unable to visit. Buses are cheap, comfortable and fast and there is no need to go to the expense of the hired cars which tourist agencies recommend. This is not intended to be a tourist guide but a good many Australians visit Mexico now and it may not be inappropriate to mention here that at the time of the year that I was there (November, December) decent accommodation (a single room and a bathroom) could be had for 25 Pesos in most places. That is about 18/- (\$1.80) a day. As this is much less than most people pay on planned trips, it may be of interest to those who, like myself, must consider such things. I have mentioned earlier that Chichen Itza is Toltec in style. As it is actually, nevertheless a late Maya site, it is something more than a reflection of Tula and in scale and splendour far surpasses that city and in many ways is the most spectacular place in Mexico. Chichen Itza, unlike the old Empire cities such as Palenque and Copan, was a going concern in Spanish times and there are graphic accounts of the life that went on there. This seems to have been rather different from the rather grim picture which I had in mind and while there was the inevitable sacrifice, there was also more than a little pulque, women and song and a contemporary priest considered the Maya to be a boozy and lecherous lot.

Whatever views you may have about such things, Chichen Itza is a wonderful place, more Roman than Greek in spirit and so well preserved and restored that here, more than anywhere I saw, one can appreciate the achievements of these great builders. It was not here, however, nor at neighbouring Oxmal, which in many ways resembles Chichen Itza that I found stimulation as a sculptor. It is only fair to say that some very fine carvings from both places can be seen in the Merida museum, but most of the work is conventionalised and repetitive. The monumental pyramid, the immense ball court like a Roman circus and the general running to size speak of ruthless power and a climate unfavourable to subtleties in art. Totally unlike this, is my favourite city Copan. Great works are here, too, spaciousness and cunning planning, but the prevailing sensation is of man in a civilised environment rather than overawed by his creations. The best things are usually difficult to get and this was the case with Copan. Apart from the complications of crossing two frontiers, Guatemala and Honduras, it entailed flying to the not very interesting capital Tegusigalpa, referred to throughout as Tegoose; flying to San Pedro Sula; flying with luck and landing with more on a sort of sloping tennis court at Santa Rosa de Copan and then driving in a jeep seventy miles of muddy track, strewn with boulders, land slides and swollen rivers to Ruinas de Copan.

Part of its attraction was that I had it to myself, for the isolation and difficulty of approach at that season had kept tourists away and although not sunny, I had no rain while I was there. A wide avenue of lime trees leads through the jungle to the ruins which stand very beautifully in a flat grassed area which is mown by teams of men with machetes. The first thing noticeable is the amount of sculpture here. There would be ten pieces for one elsewhere. Another is that much more of it is in the round or in high relief. It is carved in stone, and except for the effects of vandalism, has on the whole, weathered well. The most characteristic object is

a youthful representation of the corn god depicted as a bust, lips parted, eyes lowered with an expression of infinite hauteur. The heads are very subtle and perfectly realized. The heads at Copan are superb but the bodies less successful and not to be compared with the proportions at Palenque. I got the impression that they were carried out by different sculptors. This is very apparent in most of the stelae for which Copan is famous. These are often incredibly rich in ornament, like the most extravagant rococo, but under this extreme virtuosity is a primitive awkward body, topped by a head of great refinement and sophistication.

The ruination of the American cities is not only the result of deliberate destruction. The corbel vault is a great weakness, as it not only prevents the roofing of wide spaces (most of the rooms are like passages), but makes the walls so top heavy that just a little spreading brings the whole thing toppling. In addition to this, the masonry is usually of relatively small stones which are laid without bonding. That is, without overlapping the vertical joints in alternate courses so that for all their massiveness, the walls cracked easily. It astonishes me that for all their enormous volume of work, they never discovered a simple principle like that which is known to children playing with blocks. The stelae of Copan epitomise the value of Mexico. The date glyphs record a great intellectual achievement; the accurate determination of the year and the invention of a beautiful means of recording it. The noble heads show the great artistic power of their art and the crude bodies the savagery which is still not far below the surface in these parts.

EXTRACTS

We follow John Dowie's travels with more extracts from his letters to Stewart Game; one written on 9th March, 1966, from Lans, Tirol.

"Not really a letter, I'll try to do that later, but thought I'd drop a line to you and through you to the Society to wish you luck with the Festival. It will be going full bore when this arrives, and I hope you all have enough strength to enjoy it as usual. It's usually fun to look back on after the dust has settled.

I have noticed, especially at the Rijks Museum, that a velarium in nylon can be very effective in jazzing up an old fashioned gallery. I think something of the sort might be effective in our gallery which is precisely like parts of the Dutch gallery. Of course it makes an admirable fly and dust collection, too, so one would have to plan for periodical cleanings—but there's no doubt that it looks well.

I've taken a week off here to inspect the snow, but move on to Venice and Athens at the weekend."

Another, dated 24th March, 1966 . . . from Rome.

"As you know, we didn't see all of Rome last time, so I thought I'd drop in for a couple of days to make good our omissions. I leave tomorrow with almost as many as before in spite of an almost non-stop performance. The weather has been kind however, unlike the floods that we had, and the city is looking brilliant (if you can ignore the traffic, which is a bit like trying to overlook the water of Niagara).

My visit has coincided with two important art exhibitions. A huge retrospective of Marino Marini at the Palazzo Venezia, and Quadriennale at the Palazzo d'Esposizione in Via Nazionale. The Marini occupied 3 immense salons for sculpture and painting alone, not counting a separate show of graphic work elsewhere in the palace. He's one of those people who found themselves early and his three main themes, horseman, harlequins and nude women, are the principal. I could almost say the only subject matter of the show. There are, of course, some very sensitive

portraits including one of Henry Moore and another of Strawinsky. I was interested to see that he works a lot in wood and that some of the effects in his bronze which I couldn't understand, come from their being casts of wood carvings. His last works must be in clay or directly modelled in plaster, and are progressively less figurative. The horse collapses on its neck, and the rider falls at all angles on its rump. The general sensation is of disintegration and inspiration played out, and I find these pieces far less interesting than some of the earlier ones.

The Quadriennale is an exciting show, and simply colossal. Every inch of the place is crammed with, on the whole, sparkling work. No one will ever accuse the Italians of not being with it, and all the new things are there. OP. PO'P and teap.

There are pictures done in spots like blown up newspaper prints. There are transferred photographs. There are papers embossed with lace or bows or grass. Moving light effects in boxes. Moving motorised sculptures. Do it yourself sculptures with coloured bulbs and pigeon holes. Pictures in white canvas with a dozen or so razor slashes across it. Not all the work is recent and cubist and vorticist and with di Chirico, surrealist work is there, too; di Chirico looking very tame, and I truly think, inferior in some of this company. In spite of what I have said, the exhibits are far from being all way out, and in fact, I should say that many of the most interesting are fully representational. Of course in so big a show, there's a lot of hero worship and one keeps seeing Grecos and Manzus and Marinis with other peoples signatures. Even Moore and Chadwick have their votaris, but what interested me about the sculpture was that, in fact, none of these famous Italians was showing, yet nevertheless, it is full of important original work.

My great discovery is Floriano Bodini who is one of the most skilful modellers I've seen. He is a portraitist of great brilliance and originality, with more than a touch of caricature and an absolutely savage satire. He has three magnificent busts (if you can call anything so different a bust) and a crucifixion with a group of clerics at the foot (one recognisably John XXIII) which to put it mildly, pulls no punches. I must say that I'd like to see more. The finish and skill and presentation are all high and I must say that as far as modern work goes, this is the most exciting experience I've had since I left home.

The Festival will be over by the time this reaches you, and if you're considering the next one, I thought I'd mention an idea that occurred to me. An art societies exhibition with the principal societies in each capital invited to select a limited number of their best members' works to be shown in Adelaide at the Festival. Each society to have its entries shown in a group."

EXHIBITIONS — JUNE - SEPT. '66

WHOLOHAN

Receiving day—17th June, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Official opening—28th June.

Closing—8th July, 5 p.m.

PRINT AND DRAWING

Receiving day—8th July, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Official opening—12th July.

Closing—22nd July, 5 p.m.

SPRING

Receiving day—2nd September, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Official opening—6th September.

Closing—16th September, 5 p.m.

CRITICISMS of "SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ART TODAY"

Elizabeth Young, "The Advertiser", 9/3/66, wrote:

"South Australian Art Today" is the title of the Festival exhibition of the Royal S.A. Society of Arts which was opened last night in the Society's Gallery, Institute Building by the director of the S.A. Museum (Dr. W. P. Crowcroft).

This is an invitation exhibition, bringing together the work of 22 selected artists. It makes a goodly showing, helped considerably by the sculpture, even if we feel very definitely that a number of artists are missing who should be represented to make the exhibition, which is not limited to members, a true cross-section of the best in S.A. art today. Selection, in fact, is rather odd and arbitrary.

A lot of space is allotted to Lawrence Daws and Brian Seidel (the only exhibitor showing four works) both of whom are holding full-scale one-man Festival exhibitions.

Louis James, for so long overseas and now resident in Sydney, is represented by "Don't Walk", an unusual composition that lacks, perhaps, something of his jewel colour, of the confusion and restriction of a medley crowd waiting at a crossing.

Jacqueline Hick, most distinguished of S.A. women artists, shows two inter-locked figure compositions, linear rhythms glossed with thin fluidity and a return to a more colourful palette.

Mervyn Smith's version of the contentious Sydney Opera House in full wash and limited colour, is an effective simplification, yet lacks impact and build of this artist's drawings of the subject with their intensely vital, nervous line.

The ingenious S. J. Ostoja Kotkowski, who permeates much interesting Festival activity, is showing one of his laboured squares of dazzling illusion. These time-consuming essays are impossible to live with, to contemplate even for a few moments and so, it seems to me, are wastage of a genuine and valuable talent.

Other painters included are Wladys and Ludwig Dutkiewicz, Max Ragless, Robert Campbell, Ruth Tuck with an interesting abstract of Coffin Bay rocks, Douglas Roberts, Francis Roy Thompson, Ron Bell, Geoff Brown, Mary Milton and Geoff Wilson, with two harsh abstractions.

The sculpture is dominated by John Dowle's larger-than-life, sensitively modelled "Joan Sutherland". Forceful contrast is supplied by the stalwart, confronting shields and taut rods of Owen Broughton's "Welded form in Metal", and the imaginative elan of Max Lyle's "Runner". Ieva Pocius and Voitre Marek are also included.

"The News" Guest Critic:

The Royal Society of Arts exhibition "South Australian Art Today" adds stature to the early Festival openings with a lively showing covering both the "new" and the "old wave".

There is an "Op" piece of dazzling intensity of Ostoja Kotkowski; an essay in refracted colour and geometrical precision.

But the most impressive point of the exhibition is the complete return of W. Dutkiewicz with all his subtle impressionist skill. His larger canvas, "Grape Pickers" takes the observer back 10 years to Dutkiewicz's dynamic paintings of figure groupings and glowing abstracts.

Louis James lifts the impact of the northern wall with a major work (unfortunately the frame has buckled), a crystalline rendering of a city street-crossing titled "Don't Walk". James revels in the challenge of controlling a myriad figures in an awkward perspective. This is obviously a painting completed since his return from London, and points to the new direction in his search for a significant local image.

By comparison, the Lawrence Daws "Man on white horse" is a pot pourri of varying techniques, and breaks down in the painting as well as in the calculated clash between the symbol and reality.

Several fine paintings by Francis Roy Thompson, a dramatic pair by Jacqueline Hick, four by Brian Seidel and interesting offerings by Doug Roberts and Geoff Wilson complete the list of mature works.

The "traditionalists", once the strength of the Royal Society, seem to have been banished to the western wall with the idea that together they form an aesthetic unity.

This seems a pity. It adds emphasis to their sense of tranquil remoteness and pointedly suggests an isolation from the main stream of art today.

Ivor Francis in the "Sunday Mail", 12/3/66, heads his article "Repetition in Group Art Shows", and says about Jacqueline Hick's work in another exhibition:

As with all her paintings, especially her notable aboriginal compositions, she again expresses here her own strong empathic identification with human emotion.

It is this quality which makes her work, together with that of Ostoja Kotkowski, the most outstanding and dramatic at the Society of Arts on North Terrace.

If the intention of "op" is to arrange colour and design in order to disturb the senses, then Ostoja has succeeded with the vertigo we experience when gazing at his "Vibra", a dazzling and stupefying psychological composition of contact-paper strips.

That the artist himself has survived the operation is further evidence of man's triumph over the environment provided by modern materials.

Most bewildering thing about this exhibition is its title—"South Australian Artists Today". It is a long yesterday since Louis James and Lawrence Daws worked in South Australia.

On the other hand, where in this exhibition are all our very present dynamic notables, including the younger up and coming?

This is a typical parish-pump exhibition by the old brigade, and no kidding—but there is some good work, all the same.

Among the highlights are the painting and print-making of Brian Seidel, whose one-man show is being held at White's Studio Gallery, Beaumont Common.

Seidel has developed steadily since he first attracted attention by winning a place in the all-Australian Dunlop art award 15 years ago. Since he return from United States and London, following a Fulbright Scholarship, he has established himself as one of our most interesting and dedicated developers.

TUTORIAL APPRECIATION

There must be many among the lay members of the Society who read with excitement the notice of proposed tutorial classes to be held at the close of 1965 and until April 1966. Once again, I suffered the frustration of being a country housewife and not being able to attend as often as I could wish, but decided to seize such a wonderful opportunity as fully as I could.

Mr. Gordon Samstag set the ball rolling with a trio of lessons on Thursdays, commencing on 28th October. We were, from what I could see, all keen but not very experienced, but Mr. Samstag's gentle encouragement and very able advice had good results. I felt that for me the advantage was felt not in what I did at the class, but in work I tried later, and I can well believe that we all improved for having attended.

My only other participation was in the composition classes given by Jacqueline Hick. Here again, the keenness of the members was obvious and the help received of great value. A special treat for us was a preview which we were given of the Society's Festival Exhibition. This, as part of the set of lessons, was of lasting interest.

Although I cannot comment on the other Tutorials, I know they must have been as welcome to those who attended, as my few classes were to me. I congratulate the Society on the undoubted success of this programme and the choice of its tutors, and on behalf of all who attended, thank them for their efforts. To spare one's valuable time to help less experienced and skilled fellow artists was indeed a generous gesture, and one in which I hope I can share again in the future.

—Eulalie Lucas.



One corner of the R.S.A.S.A. Festival exhibition, "South Australian Art Today".

FIFTY YEARS ON

by *Mary P. Harris*

CATALOGUE OF THE ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, 1913.

He was sure it was a masterpiece, an old master: exquisite angels in a golden sky; a woman air-borne, wafted upwards in her voluminous garments; below, that solid line of earth figures, dramatic, amazed as if an astronaut had really landed on the moon. But an authoritative friend pointed out that if it were really an incredible find, discovered in a junk lot rolled up, fit to be delivered to Sothebys for inspection, there would be some cracks in the painting, and some dimming of its radiance. It was then my friend found the catalogue in the odd lot and carelessly thumbing over "Catalogue of the Art Gallery of South Australia, 1913", made his supreme discovery; No. 331 "The Assumption" after Titian. Purchased 1912. Criticism in those gracious days was more spacious. The catalogue offers a description on the page facing the illustration of Titian's supreme masterpiece.

"What holds our attention in the work is worthy of interest; what is less interesting soothes one like the accompaniment of a piece of music finely conceived in its melody, finely sustained in its progression and broadly scored. We are conscious of a beautiful and effective pattern of colour, which delights us from the first and which gives stability of effect to a picture which, at once simple in detail and in its emotional appeal, represents an unrivalled apotheosis of the Virgin and a poem of light and colour."

In this jet age the words quoted have an eloquence, a timelessness, no longer found in our modern critiques. I turned page after page of this 1913 catalogue, so strangely come into my hands and pictures haunted me like Masfield's

"Friends with the beautiful eyes that the dust has defiled,
Beautiful souls who were gentle when I was a child."

There was R. B. Nisbet's "November Evening" No. 239. He painted in my home town in Scotland when I was a child. He was to me as Hans Heysen to young Australians. The mystic "November Evening" gathered me in. "Stonehaven" No. 229 by Fettes Douglas with its huddle of roofs by the shore where pebbles and rocks were hard, slippery yet fascinating to children's feet.

"An Idyll of Edinburgh" No. 284, by James Paterson; the rugged beauty of Salisbury Crags and enduring pine trees brought strength from the beloved past. But these old favourites are all of Scotland. I turned to another favourite "Spinning" No. 185, by Segantini, the hermit artist, who painted the eternal snows of the Italian Alps. When life was difficult, he became a swine herd. Like Walt Whitman, he would have said:

"I think I could turn and live with the animals, they are so placid and self-contained;

. . .
Not one is dissatisfied—not one is demented with the mania of owning things;

Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thousands of years ago."

The luminous, gentle eyes of the white cow in the dim stable, seem to have gathered the peace of Alpine solitudes; and the lantern which lights the woman spinning is like the lantern which Christ carries in Holman Hunt's "Light of the World".

In 1913, before the first world war, "The Bride" by D. Y. Cameron No. 298, gazes into the mirror of her future and of ours, and her veil is like the light from

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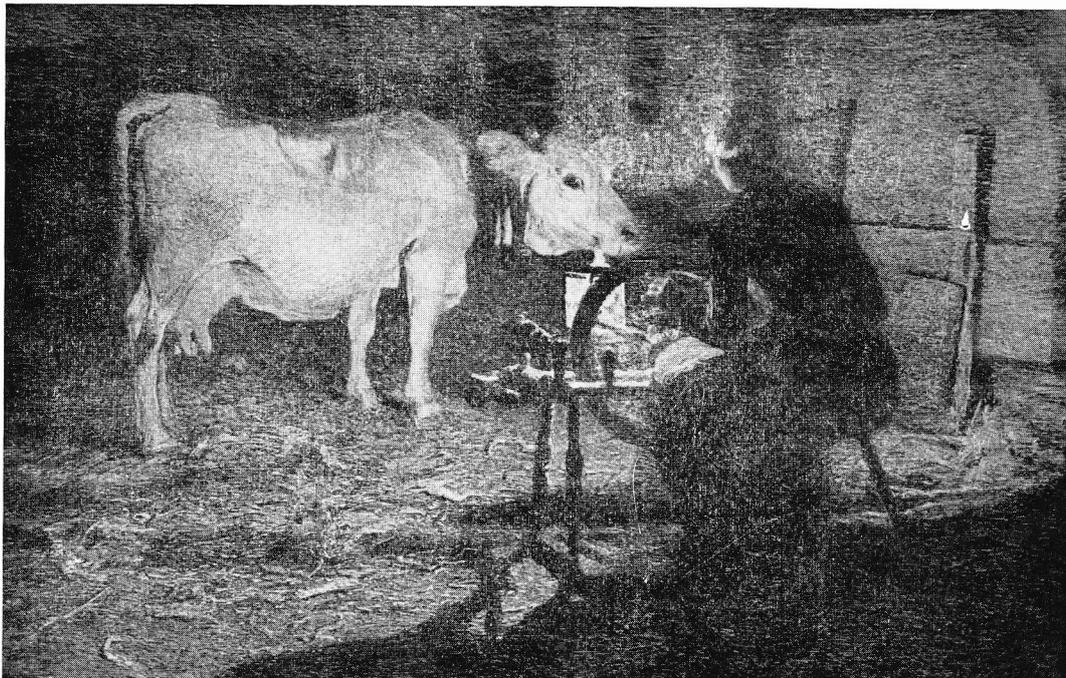
the stars which take billions of years to reach the Earth through that mirror is haunting. This 1913 Catalogue of the S.A. Art Gallery, brought to my friend knowledge of his discovery of a copy of Titian's "Assumption of the Bride of Heaven". Diligently he pursued the history of his find. The picture was originally sold to a hairdresser who admired the frame. According to the catalogue, "This reproduction was a commission to the Association of Italian Artists, Florence, by the Board of Governors of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery of South Australia. Purchased 1912." Thus, being sold by the Art Gallery Board, Titian's "Assumption" was dismantled, the picture discarded as junk, while the frame made a delightful mirror in a hair dressing salon, framing the faces of how many devoted Australian women of our day and generation?

With increasing nostalgia, I turned from the catalogue of 1913 to that of today. The first illustration my eyes lighted upon was the Mediaeval conception of St. Martin sharing his cloak with a beggar, in the presence of Saint Nicholas—Bishop. This fine work was discovered in a packing case with a false bottom at Port Adelaide and came to the National Gallery via Port Adelaide Institute. It seems as if the bottom, too, had fallen out of civilization. There are Bishops today, in the tradition of St. Nicholas, who ask the well nurtured nations to share their cloak with the under-privileged. Is it nothing to you, all ye who pass by?

I think it was in the second world war that a discomfited soldier awoke to find he had used Botticelli's "Primavera" as a bedrest! So much for a work of art for which safety is sought. I remember Hans Heysen long ago telling me of his first sight of Botticelli's "Primavera" or "Coming of Spring". When shall we know again in this dis-located and distorted age the Renaissance of the World and the presence of the Goddess of Beauty? Whenever the malevolence of Picasso's "Guernica" pursues me:

"Their wisecracks have seen the electric light in the west and come to worship" . . .

I let the years depart from me and stand in the Old Gallery before Segantini's "Spinning".



"Spinning" by Segantini. *Reproduced by courtesy National Gallery.*

ITEMS OF INTEREST

We congratulate **Laurence Daws** for having won the \$1,000 T. E. Wardle invitation art prize in Perth. His winning picture was titled "Incident at Anakie IV". Competition judge was "New Statesman" art critic Robert Melville.

Jeff Smart, who has recently spent approximately two years in Italy, was commissioned by the Italian Government to go to Western Australia to do drawings and paintings. He was in Adelaide for four days during the Festival in March, then he returned to Sydney. Jeff was at the opening of his exhibition at the South Yarra Gallery on 19th April, after which he flew back to Italy.

Running concurrently with his show at the South Yarra Gallery, was a survey exhibition in connection with Moomba at the Melbourne National Gallery. Jeff Smart with Donald Friend, Justin O'Brien and David Strachan, each showing 8 pictures. In 1962, Jeff Smart had work included with Australian paintings in the Tate Gallery, London. He had a one-man exhibition at the Macquarie Galleries, Sydney in 1963 and also had a one-man show at Gallery 88 in Rome in 1965. He is to exhibit at the Redfern Gallery, London later this year.

We heard that **Alex Leckie** has returned to Scotland. He is teaching at the Glasgow School of Art.

The President's Social was enjoyable. **Lisette Kohlhagen** told us of her recent travels and showed slides. There were some very interesting ones, including interiors of the new Coventry Cathedral, etc., etc. After having seen Lisette's slides, Isabel and Kath Drummond made up their minds to go for a "round the world" trip. They sail on 5th June.

Victorian artist **Clifton Pugh**, who went to Mexico last August, has had a 16 painting exhibition—a series of "visual reactions" to penitents at a Church in Mexico—which was almost completely sold within a few days of opening at St. Louis, Missouri. (*Newcastle "Morning Herald"*.)

Sidney Nolan and his wife returned to Sydney on 15th April. They'd just spent seven months travelling the East, followed by a five months' trip to the U.S.A. where their daughter Jinx works with the United Nations. The Nolans are now heading outback. (*Sydney "Sunday Telegraph"*.)

Late in April, the Newcastle City Gallery had an exhibition, "Portraits 1965", which featured a selection of paintings from three separate prize exhibitions: the Archibald, Gallaher and Portia Geach. **Jacqueline Hick** had a self-portrait hung with the latter group. (*Newcastle "Sun"*.)

Ailsa Whitty, our previous editress, left Canberra for London at the end of April.

John Dowie left London on 14th February. In a letter to his friend Ted Colley, written from Athens, Greece on Easter Monday, 11th April, John Dowie mentioned that he had worked on a head of Lord Florey in Oxford. He had also seen Shirley Keene, Laurence Daws, "Tas" Drysdale, etc., etc. John concluded with a P.S. that he was leaving for Istanbul that day.

It was interesting to hear "The Local Scene" a talk on 5CL at 9.45 p.m. on 28th April, about "Sculpture in S.A.". **Max Lyle** spoke and **Geoff Shedley**, who concluded with an extract from a letter from John Dowie written in Greece, which said, "I must tell you about the bronze Athene at the Piraeus museum in Philhelanos

Street. I tell you this because you will not get the information in Athens and only with difficulty in Piraeus. I enquired at the Archaeological Museum, I drew pictures at the Archaeological Museum, I acted bronze Athenus at the Archaeological Museum, and three separate people directed me to that miserable little marble copy of Phideas Athena. Finally, I found the location of the Piraeus museum, past gipsies with dancing bears and lots of 'Never on Sundays'. When I arrived I could have howled. There she lies, perfect; inlaid eyes intact. The bronze, the most sumptuous green and she's stretched out flat, coated with the original earth, a clod in her hand and not a blasted thing has been done to her since she was found in 1959. The most wonderful female statue from the classic world, treated like a bit of pottery awaiting classification.

I won't go on. I understand that there's some dispute with the Athens Museum and this is regarded as an excuse.

FIRST LIFE CLASS

How hesitant this day I came
 With inept hand, inexpert eye,
 And filled with inexplicable shame
 That I should feel so foolish, shy
 To view a form so like my own
 I'd lived my life with
 Yet not known.

Preoccupation brought its blessing—
 Charcoal, paper, drawing pins—
 Quick darting looks at first confessing
 Doubts, and hiding shame-faced grins.

But suddenly the eye and hand
 Found solace in the curve and shape,
 Judged distance, saw the lie of land
 And recognized a new landscape.

All doubts dissolved, all thoughts absorbed:
 The bone beneath the flowing flesh
 Became the stone that lies beneath
 The soil that roots and trees enmesh.

The cleaving curve of breasts became
 Twin symbols of old earth's refreshment:
 While down those shadowed valleys lay
 Sweet promise of the land's fulfilment.

As abstracted shapes evolved
 Veils lifted, light delighted me—
 All merged in one immortal pattern—
 Woman, Earth, Infinity.

—BERYL LAURA MARTIN

THE SKETCH CLUB

It was some time during 1949 I think, that I started going to the sketch club on Saturday afternoons, at Mona Benny's invitation. A lot of leading S.A. artists were there: Dorrit Black, Ruby Henty and Lisette Kohlhagen. The latter two used to keep us entertained as they exchanged notes. It was a very well attended session and being new to the scene, other names I didn't know then.

Upon my return, after nine months in Cairns in 1951, I was shocked to learn of Dorrit Black's death in her new little car.

The scene changed and Ludwig Dutkiewicz came along for quite a time. Mary Milton also joined us about '52 or '53. John Dowie returned from London and it was an enthusiastic gathering. After those few years, I did not get along very often owing to family ties, and with spasmodic visits the scene changed continuously. During recent years, different ones have been in charge: Mary Milton, Peg Marchant, Fred Wendt (who makes a beaut pot of tea) and now Mary is looking after things again.

I managed to get along again recently for the first time this year, and it is very relaxing to sit peacefully drawing from 2.15 to 4.30 p.m., the cost of which is still 2/6.

More members should take advantage of this opportunity to practice, with good models, drawing from life.

—Betty Jew

[P.S. There are a lot of gaps in this little story. Would anybody like to fill some in?—Ed.]

Book Review

“MODERN CERAMICS”

A Spring Book by Karel Hettes and Pravoslav Rada, is one of the most comprehensive and fully illustrated ceramic books that I have had the privilege to devour.

The value of its comprehension is amply shown by the 301 pictures of ceramic works, 66 of which are in full colour, of the worlds leading ceramists and excellently tells the story revealingly, of the gigantic strides that have taken place in the world of today's artist potter.

Potters the world over have been mentioned, their marks have been made by the trends they have developed, also the potters who have been influenced by these trends; great names, but what is more, great pots.

The basis of the illustrations was taken from the International Exhibition of Contemporary Ceramics, held at Prague 1962, New York 1958, Ostende 1959, and Buenos Aires 1962. This is excellent coverage but the exhibitions were not entirely representative.

I say this, not really knowing who has been left out. There are pots from 32 countries, yet there is not one from Australia; yet by comparison with works seen in Australia, they more than favourably compare with those overseas.

There is a wonderful trend that is distinctively Australian in style, showing a vitality of form, texture and glaze, yet has the personal touch of the artist potter.

The written contents of the book provide an insight to what has gone before, such as part I, “The Source of Modern Ceramics, Art Nouveau” and its exponents.

From here, it develops further into part II of the potters who gave us industrial design from the arts and crafts; especially Bernard Leach, whose expression went beyond the Western Influence and devoted so much to the poetry, craftsmanship and love that Japanese gave to ceramics.

Part III devotes itself to the ceramic art since 1945; of artists like Léger, Picasso, Miro and Lureat who, not potters by profession, yet were attracted to this medium for its essential qualities of permanence and the scope it gives for colour more than for the form of the medium such as plasticity and uniformity. Experimenters followed such as Braque, Cocteau, Dufy and Van Dongen and these people continued the trend which influenced sculptors, architects and artists of other media.

When one thinks of ceramics and its influence on history, how it is one of the most ancient of all man's creative activities, preserved in museums are pots which often are our only evidence of human life in pre-historic times, when it was purely functional and how it has developed to provide for our practical and aesthetic needs, and has gradually shown that man has subordinated the demands of function to those of artistic expression.

One thing remains—exhibitions of ceramics in Australia are too individualistic. There must be another Australia-wide exhibition, and why not go further and have an International Exhibition.

Quite frankly, our Festival of Arts could well be the ideal venue. It would be too big for a society and should be handled by the Festival Committee.

—Harry Marchant

JUNE 1966

Kalori celebrates 7th Birthday.

Please send contributions to the Editress, 7 Le Hunte Avenue, Prospect, before 30th July for the next issue of Kalori.