

# NATIONAL ART GALLERY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1938.

## GENERAL.

Ten meetings of the Committee, in addition to a large number of meetings of sub-committees, which meet frequently as occasion arises, were held during the twelve months under review.

The period has been a busy one for the Art Gallery Management Committee and the staff. A number of special loan exhibitions were held during the year. The value of such exhibitions in maintaining interest in the Gallery and in furthering the public's appreciation of art is inestimable. Since the opening of the Gallery the Committee has been fortunate in having had so many opportunities of obtaining collections of overseas pictures for exhibition. To the many New-Zealanders who are unable to travel to see at first hand the works of British and foreign artists, such exhibitions are particularly welcome.

With the limited funds at its disposal, the Committee feels that the results achieved have been most satisfactory. The large attendances at exhibitions indicate that interest has been stimulated and maintained, and that from the point of view of public appreciation art has definitely advanced.

## EXHIBITIONS.

The following exhibitions were held during the year :—

*Exhibition of Old Masters.*—A collection of fifty-five old masters, mostly of the Dutch and Flemish schools of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, was exhibited in the Gallery for one month in June and July. The thanks of the Trustees are due to the National Loan Collection Trust, London, who lent the pictures, which were sent to New Zealand through the Empire Art Loan Collections Society. The exhibition gave the public an opportunity of seeing pictures by old masters examples of whose work are rarely seen in this country. It was a most interesting exhibition and was fully appreciated by visitors. Included in the selection were paintings by Nicholas Bergen, Canaletto, Albert Cuyp, Van Dyck, Van Everdingen, Greuze, David de Heem, Van der Heyden, Hogarth, Van Huysum, Gabriel Metsu, Van Ostade, Rubens, David Teniers, and Van der Velde.

*Etchings from Twenty-one Gallery.*—Simultaneously with the exhibition of old masters there was shown in the Gallery a collection of etchings by modern British and foreign artists, kindly lent by the Twenty-one Gallery, London.

*Exhibition of Engravings.*—During August and September His Excellency the Governor-General, Viscount Galway, lent for exhibition a collection of his mezzotints and engravings. The collection contained beautiful prints by such renowned artists as Guiseppe Marchi, James Watson, David Lucas, Richard Earlom, John Raphael Smith, Valentine Green, and John Dixon. The Trustees wish to express their thanks for the loan of these works, and to record their appreciation of the kind and practical interest which His Excellency has shown in the Gallery since its opening.

*British Present-day Printing.*—In August and September an exhibition of British present-day printing, arranged by the Graphic Arts Committee, was shown. The collection comprised pictorial posters by famous British artists and a comprehensive display of examples of modern printing.

The exhibition was a result of a visit to England by Mr. L. T. Watkins, Wellington, Chairman of the Graphic Arts Committee. The Trustees desire to record their thanks to Mr. Watkins and to the British Federation of Master Printers for their kindness in collecting the exhibits from various railway and tourist companies, printing houses, and other business firms in England.

The exhibition had a wide appeal for commercial artists, printers, and the public generally, and was undoubtedly of educational value. It has since been lent by the Management Committee to the authorities of the Galleries at Wanganui, Auckland, and Napier, and is to be offered to the Galleries of the South Island.

*“ Contrast ” Collection of Reproductions.*—The “ contrast ” collection of facsimile reproductions consisting of sixty reproductions of pictures by old masters and modern painters, was exhibited during January and February. It is part of the collection presented to the National Gallery by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The pictures are arranged in groups of two or of three with an old master hung beside a modern painting of a similar subject, the idea being to show influences and contrasts.

The Art Galleries of New Zealand are indebted to the Carnegie Corporation of New York for generously offering to provide funds to send the collection on a tour of New Zealand Art Galleries. The offer has been gratefully accepted, and the Management Committee is arranging an itinerary.

*Road-safety Posters.*—During December a collection of entries for the road-safety poster competition, organized by the Transport Department, was shown in the Gallery.

*Canadian Contemporary Paintings.*—In March and April an exhibition of ninety-six Canadian contemporary paintings, sent on a tour of the British Dominions by the National Gallery of Canada on behalf of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, was shown. The project was sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation of New York as part of its programme of assistance to the arts and sciences in the British Empire. This was the first exhibition of Canadian paintings held in New Zealand. It constituted a representative collection of the work which is being produced by Canadian present-day artists, and demonstrated that Canada has produced a number of talented painters with a fine sense of colour and design.

The Management Committee has undertaken to arrange the New Zealand tour of the exhibition. The thanks of the Trustees are due to the Carnegie Corporation of New York for generously paying the expenses of the exhibition and to the authorities of the National Gallery of Canada for organizing the collection and for lending a number of their national pictures.

*Other Exhibitions.*—The New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts held its usual autumn and annual exhibitions in its Gallery during the year. In April, Mr. S. J. Lamorna Birch, the eminent Royal Academician, held an exhibition of his New Zealand and English paintings in the Academy's Gallery.