

# N.Z. ARTISTS IN LONDON

(By Airmail—Special to "The Listener")

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FOR many years London has been familiar with the work of a few New Zealand artists working here: the late Frances Hodgkins, James Boswell, the lively Art Editor of *Lilliput* who recently showed a collection of drawings brought back from a visit to his old home, and that great and lovable cartoonist David Low. These artists have made their names here and we have not thought of them particularly as New Zealanders, so that it was interesting to see a selection of work reproduced in the *Studio* magazine last year from artists living in New Zealand, and now to have a representative collection of works from young artists who, for the most part, have come here since the war to study in our schools—some of them on ex-service bursaries.

The exhibition is at New Zealand House in the Strand, well displayed in the entrance hall, and it is evident that New Zealand regards this period of study here as of great importance for the enrichment of its visual arts. It is with this in mind that the exhibition should be considered.

There are some two hundred works—paintings in oil, tempera, and water-colour, sculpture, lithographs, wood-engravings, pottery, hand-printed textiles and designs for advertising and display.

The paintings vary from the unskilful but lovingly honest search for the imitation of Nature in W. Barr's small oil paintings to the accomplished but arbitrary picture-making of Patrick Hayman, whose five paintings seem to be the product of one experience and convey one mood. Between the extremes of Barr and Hayman there are transcriptions of everyday life in Wel-

lington's streets by Pearl West, a poetic realist, and the more lyrical poetry of Francois de Mauny, who has been painting in France and Bristol, and who lectures in London art schools. The influence of France is perhaps too evident in two of Roberta Villaincour's water-colours, essays in the manner of Cezanne and Renoir, but a sensitive and searching self-portrait shows that she is strong enough to absorb these lessons without being subdued. She has also a beautiful example of incised lettering in oak, the fruit of her apprenticeship to an expert woodcarver in New Zealand.

Kim Stoddard, an Associate of the Royal College of Art, shows intimate and carefully considered studies of heads and still life groups. Here is a painter genuinely concerned to find true equivalents in paint for the subtle relationships of tone and colour in the thing seen, very different from the pictorial reporting of Roy Dickison, Valerie Beere, Marie Lenahan, or Austen Deans, who achieves in his painting of "Trottscliffe Church," a remarkably exact interpretation of an English morning scene. His ambition, he says, is to build a home in the back-country of New Zealand and there to search for "... some real and vital need in the world of today, and of the future,

that artists, and no one else, can supply."

Of the painters represented Max Walker shows most clearly the influence of his New Zealand environment. The luxuriant growth of the trees in his "Stewart Island" spills over into "Spring in Chiswick" and "Pembroke Crescent," as though these staid London streets had been placed in a botanical forcing house.

Kathleen Browne has a lithograph of the High Commissioner, the Rt. Hon. W. J. Jordan, and a lively and topical print of London urchins begging "coppers for the guy." She came here some years before the war, trailed from school to school looking for a place—the schools were almost as crowded then as now — and finally reached the Chelsea Polytechnic, where she had climbed the stairs with her out-size portfolio when the fire bells clanged and she was swept down again by the rush of students to a roll-call in the street. But she climbed the stairs again, was accepted by the school, and later was awarded a bursary by the Royal Academy.

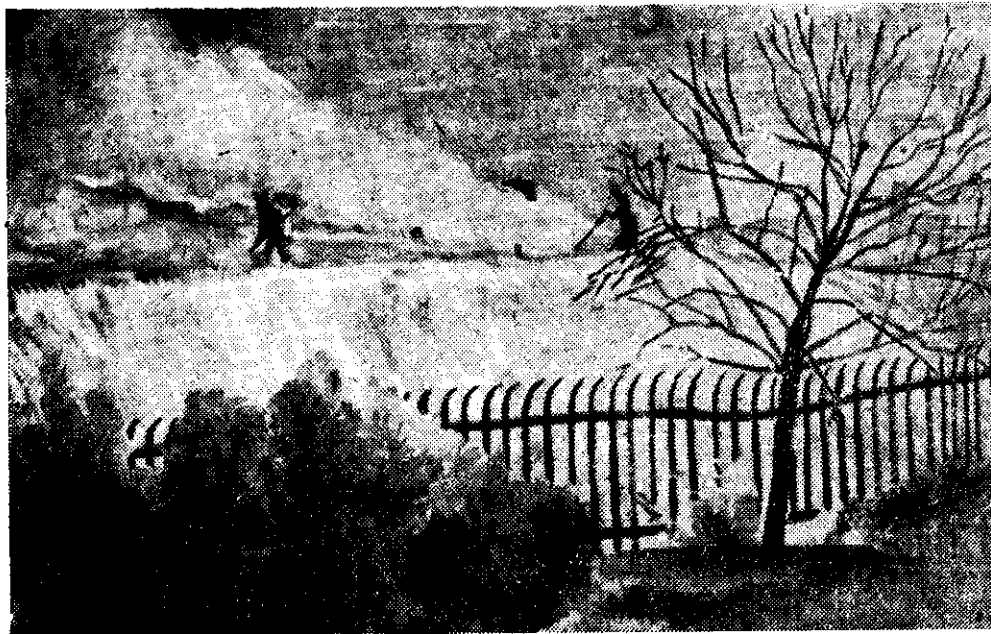


ABOVE: "Lamb" (plaster), by Esther Belliss. RIGHT: Portrait of the Rt. Hon. W. J. Jordan (lithograph), by Kathleen Browne



The sculpture shown is mainly, limited to heads, with a few small figure studies, but is of a high level. A child's head in white plaster by Esther Belliss is very much alive yet classically restrained within the proper limits of the medium. She stresses the importance for the artist of being able to see the works of the masters, and has been able to visit the galleries in Paris, Florence and Amsterdam. "These brief experiences have broadened our views and understanding of art more than could any amount of study in our own country," she says. She is aware too of the theory that "... New Zealand and other countries to which Europeans have emigrated should develop their own in-

(continued on next page)



"BURNING LEAVES," a watercolour by Francois de Mauny (son of Leon de Mauny, Conductor of the 2YA Concert Orchestra)