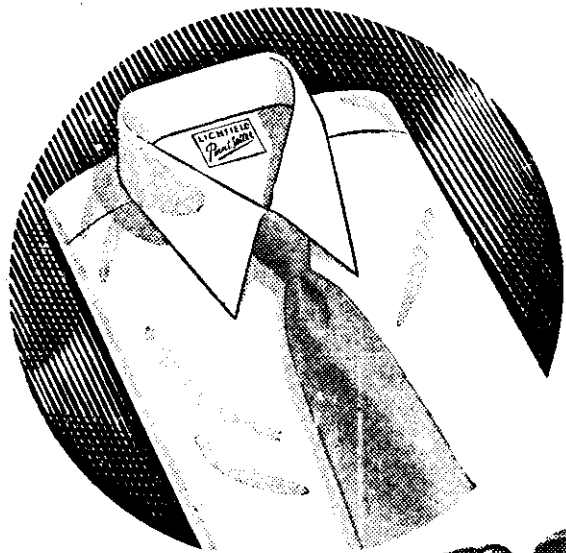


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P.10.

The Story of Modern Art

"IT is easy to talk about the arts in a sort of vacuum, as though they exist in a vacuum, somehow apart from the world. But, of course, the arts are products of men and women like ourselves, and they cannot help but mirror the times in which their creators lived." In these words Eric Westbrook, Director of the Auckland Art Gallery, explained to *The Listener* his approach to a series of seven talks on the history of the visual arts, in what we call the Western world, for the past fifty years or so.

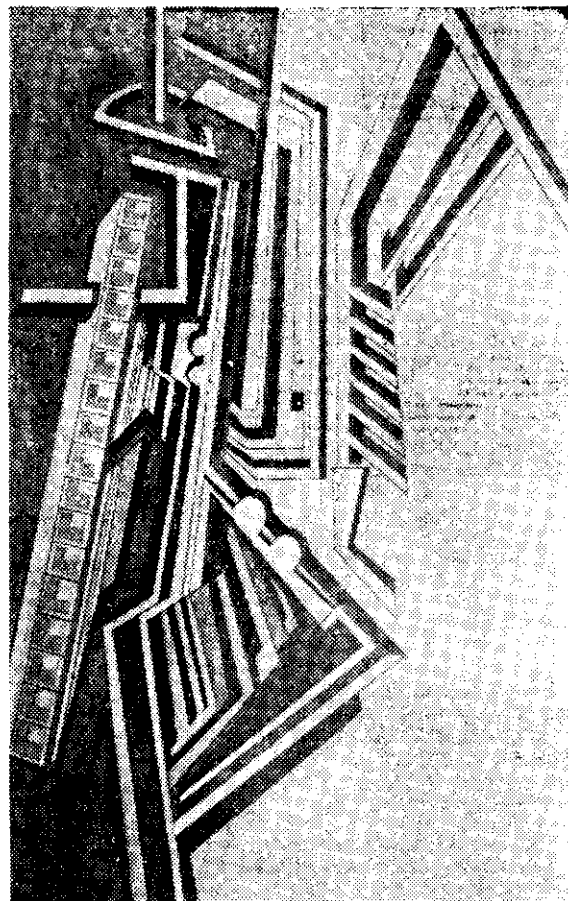
Called *Mirror of the Age*, this series will be heard from 1YC at 8.0 p.m. on Mondays, beginning with an introductory talk on June 15. Mr. Westbrook will cover the period a decade at a broadcast, setting the arts against the social background of the times and relating them to changes in thinking and feeling. His subject headings will include "The First Decade" (1900-10), "Art in War—and War in Art" (1911-20), "Dance Little Lady" (1921-30), "Movements and Manifestos" (1931-40), and "Cultivate Your Garden," which will deal with present-day trends.

"This is a convenient but to some extent artificial method," says Mr. Westbrook, "for naturally the arts cannot be divided off into neat little packages as completely as that. Works from the same period, even the same country, may show startlingly different characteristics, and some examples of what we call 'modern' art may have been painted quite a long time ago.

"Sometimes it is claimed that artists are prophetic. That is probably nonsense, but the truly creative artist is particularly perceptive of the age in which he lives, whereas the bulk of the people are not. Thus work of about the period 1911-1920 reflects the conflict—and there is a conflict in the world of art itself, with a widespread turning to surrealism and abstract forms on the one hand, and on the other an angry conviction that the 'moderns' are deliberately setting out to be obscure, or perverse.

"Then follows a time of relief and gaiety. After 1930 there is an astonishing change of attitude, evidence that the post-war period is over and that another pre-war period has begun. There is a sobering up, with artists taking tremendous interest in political movements, particularly of the Left."

The Second World War decade brought a period of official patronage—on the whole enlightened patronage—which lasted until after the Festival of Britain, and with the fall of France British art ceased to be fed with inspiration from Paris, British artists had to



"COMPOSITION," a gouache by Frederick Etchells, in the British Council display of modern British drawings now touring N.Z.

find their own feet, and there was a tendency to look back to British traditions.

Today's trend, Mr. Westbrook thought, was strongly back to abstract painting, "suggesting, perhaps, a concentration on settling our own problems."

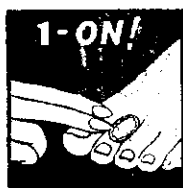
The Boy From the Bush

THE veteran Australian comedian George Wallace, well known to New Zealand vaudeville followers as The Boy from the Bush, will be amusing ZB listeners shortly in a new radio-comedy series, *The George Wallace Show*. In the boom days of vaudeville, George appeared often in New Zealand theatres on the Fuller circuit. His bashed hat, check shirt, and baggy pants became as familiar and as popular as the light-hearted liberties he took with his scripts. Frequently an interjection *ad lib* from George would hold up the show until his fellow performers could control their laughter.

Since vaudeville went into decline George Wallace has become solidly entrenched in radio, and recently he went to England to introduce BBC televisioners to "The Boy from the Bush" and "Sophie, the Sort on the Bus." Before that his only overseas performances had been in New Zealand and with an entertainment unit in Japan.

Off stage George has been farmer, canecutter, boxer, blacksmith's striker, artist, toy-maker, bandleader, pit-boy, and handyman in a travelling show. His best boxing story concerns the time he

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