

Wystans choice

T.A.C.O

**The Politics of
Exhibition**

T.A.C.D.

THE POLITICS OF EXHIBITION

10 MAY 1963

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION

Over the past several months, certain individuals have repeatedly contacted the undersigned person and requested that certain information be made available to them in connection with their work in the art industry. The only individual who has been contacted has been one of several persons who are believed to be connected with the art industry. It is noted that the information requested is of a confidential nature and is being furnished to you for your information.

Very truly,
10 May 1963

T.A.C.O.

THE POLITICS OF EXHIBITION

18 MAY - 19 JUNE 1983

GOVETT-BREWSTER ART GALLERY
QUEEN STREET, NEW PLYMOUTH

Over the years various Directors at this Art Gallery have vigorously defended the established policy and practice that limits the access local artists have to displaying their work in the Art Gallery. The only criteria ever really applied has been one of quality control. This exhibition does not indicate any change in attitude in this respect, it simply throws open the question for discussion yet once again.

Dick Bett
16 May 1983.

THE POLITICS OF EXHIBITIONS

This exhibition is about the politics of selection and the exhibition process as it is practiced, and as it is determined by policy, at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery. It is also about the frustrations that such a policy and practice present to local artists.

When the Art Gallery and the Taranaki Artists Co-operative first seriously began discussing the reality of a T.A.C.O. exhibition two areas of conflict immediately arose.

One aspect of this conflict is the policy and practice of the Art Gallery which determines that no single work of art should be exhibited without a process of selection to ensure high quality control. In addition, policy determines that the emphasis in the design of the exhibition programme should be to bring contemporary art of National standard to the attention of a local audience.

The second area of conflict was that of a philosophical question affecting the T.A.C.O. membership. Namely, being a co-operative in the true spirit of the meaning, could the group submit to a selection process which may well have eliminated various members from the exhibition.

Without fully resolving that question the Art Gallery and T.A.C.O. agreed to invite Wystan Curnow to come to New Plymouth, to select an exhibition of art works by T.A.C.O. artists from the Renonsense 4 exhibition, held on the 16 and 17 April last. Wystan Curnow came and did his selection which, along with his comments, are here presented. His selection did not in fact represent all T.A.C.O. members. The results of this process proved quite acceptable to the Art Gallery but, as it turned out, proved not so acceptable to the T.A.C.O. membership who then declined to be involved in the exhibition. The Art Gallery offered to re-negotiate the situation.

After a most amicable meeting between the Art Gallery and representatives of T.A.C.O., it was resolved to present an exhibition with a quite different focus, rather than no exhibition at all. The focus shifted from being simply an exhibition displaying a selected range of T.A.C.O. members art works to an exhibition focusing on the politics of exhibitions. Perhaps even, a review of present Art Gallery exhibitions policy and practice.

The exhibition as now displayed and documented here, presents Wystan Curnow's selection and a presentation of documentation by the Art Gallery and, a selection of one work by each T.A.C.O. member, selected by themselves, with accompanying documentation.

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Dick Bett
16 May 1983.

I would like to thank T.A.C.O. and the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery for the opportunity to take part in the remarkable 4th Renonsense event and to choose a T.A.C.O. show from members' work displayed at that event.

Making such a selection is rather like judging a competition and something I'd not done before. So it was a new and interesting experience. That members' works were scattered throughout a free-for-all (well almost, there was a dollar hanging fee I think) exhibition of local art affected the way they were seen. And while T.A.C.O. tended to stand out somewhat in quality it did less so in terms of style. The range of style was wide; pretty well everything 'new' from the late 19th century to the 1950s - nothing much later than that.

To some extent the choice was out of my hands. There were fourteen T.A.C.O. artists with up to five works each - out of that I was to make a show. I would have to pick a significant percentage of what was there, and a significant range, in terms of variety of work and the number of artists represented.

Some T.A.C.O. members are markedly more accomplished than others. Some have gained experience of their media and are in full command of it, some are still establishing that command and it shows. Some leave you with the impression that they think art is only 'subject matter', some that its only "technique".

I am impressed by the energy - I must be careful how I use that word - T.A.C.O. represents. New Plymouth is in the spotlight in many ways. It is more significant than its size would suggest. The dialogue between the Govett-Brewster and T.A.C.O. which this show represents, that between local and visiting artists at the Renonsense event, - these are somehow typical of New Plymouth's uniquely active art worlds.

Wystan Curnow
19 April 1983.

WORKS SELECTED BY WYSTAN CURNOW

1. Dale Copeland

EAT YOUR HEART OUT 1983
Black and white photograph
235mm x 235mm

2. Dale Copeland

FETISH
Colour photograph
290mm x 500mm

3. Waldo Hartly

AND THERE YOU HAVE IT 1983
Acrylic on canvas
1180mm x 1040mm

4. Paul Hutchinson

CONTAINER OF ANIMALS 1983
Oil on hardboard
1200mm x 1010mm
Not For Sale

5. Paul Hutchinson

PHEASANT MOON 1983
Colour pencil on paper
332mm x 290mm
Not For Sale

6. Paul Hutchinson

CONTAINER OF PEGS 1982
Oil on canvas
1067mm x 1210mm
\$450

7. Mark McLachlan

UNTITLED 1983
Painted and varnished wood
312mm x 300mm x 85mm
Not For Sale

8. Wayne Morris

FIRST PEOPLE SERIES TRIPTYCH 1983
Mixed media
300mm x 805mm
300mm x 696mm
300mm x 753mm
Not For Sale

9. Tom Mutch

FILM STAR 1983
Acrylic, pastel, charcoal and
felt tip pen on canvas
1290mm x 865mm

10. Tom Mutch

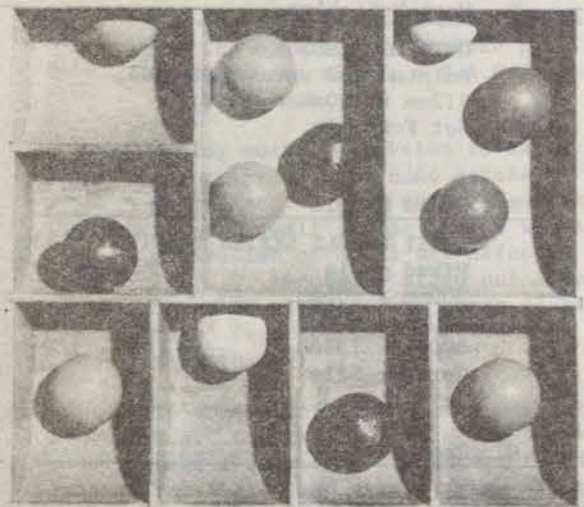
INTERIOR 1982
Acrylic, pastel, charcoal and
felt tip pen on canvas
1380mm x 1325mm

11. Tom Mutch

INTERIOR 1982
Acrylic, pastel, charcoal and
felt tip pen on canvas
1210mm x 1140mm

7. Mark McLachlan

UNTITLED 1983



12. Rene Shone

WIRED No 3 1983
Cotton cloth and wire
1280mm x 300mm
Not For Sale

14. Michael Smither

8 VIEWS FROM BACK BEACH 1983
Oil on hardboard
1480mm x 1200mm
Not For Sale

13. Michael Smither

WALK ON THE BEACH 1983
Oil on hardboard
1200mm x 992mm
\$900

15. Gabrielle Stachl

BIT OF SHAKESPEARE 1982
Acrylic on hardboard
885mm x 584mm
\$350



T.A.C.O

The Politics of
Exhibition

Artists choice

I.A.C.O.

THE POLITICS OF EXHIBITION

1980 - 1981

COURTESY OF THE ART GALLERY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

T.A.C.O.

THE POLITICS OF EXHIBITION

18 MAY - 19 JUNE 1983

GOVETT-BREWSTER ART GALLERY
QUEEN STREET, NEW PLYMOUTH

THE POLITICS OF EXHIBITION

In the game Politics the aim is confrontation through alternatives. In the narrow sense "political", the confrontation of two or more ideologies in the form of parties of diverging points of view, e.g. National, Labour, Social Credit, S.U.P., and you the voter.

However as with all ideologies, within the superset are subsets - varying shades of grey - areas that permit the dance of negotiation. More recently the contenders being "Think Big", vs "Think Conservation", "Right-hand Government" vs "Left-hand Unionists". Politics presented in this fashion can easily be seen "the THING WE VOTE for". How then does the scene of confrontation (politics) and art (the artist personified) merge at this local level or rather how does the artist manage to become embroiled in game politics.

On an individual level the attitude of the artist/painter/photographer/sculptor/etc, unless the artist unabashedly is involved in making a political statement through their work, such as David James "Rothman series" ¹ Political feelings and attitudes need not arise. The artist is intent then on putting the conceptual sentence or "message that I see in the work" ² together as clearly and precisely as possible within the framework of restrictions imposed by concept.

A landscape painter such as Peter Lambert is interested primarily in the scene as seen by him. Probably the only remotely political thought to float through his head that could be tagged political would be that painting on location is superior "to sitting in an office" ³ or Rene Shone whose beautiful soft sculpture is faced "with Humour" ⁴. Again and again when confronted about political attitude in art the artist maintains that "my art is my statement as an artist not as a writer" ⁵ or politician.

In reference to the paintings in this exhibition "Politics of an Exhibition" Are they Political? No they are not; in conversation with the individual perhaps. The title is than a misnomer? In short NO, the artist confronts the politics in art when the emphasis shifts from the work of art relationship to the aspects of relationship concerning finance and exhibition of the art as "work" as in this present situation.

Lee Morgan
16 May 1983.

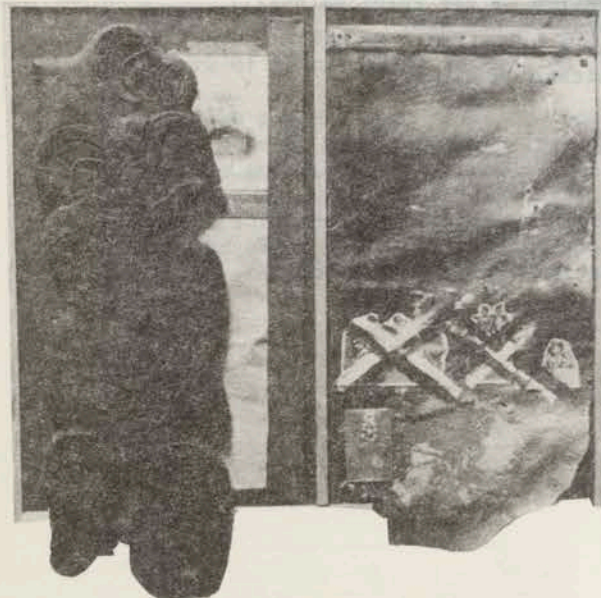
1. David James "Rothman Series" Exhibited Renonsense ⁴.
2. David James - in conversation on his painting/art.
3. Peter Lambert - on politics on his art.
4. Rene Shone - on politics in her art.
5. Michael Smither - in politics in his art.

WORKS SELECTED BY ARTISTS



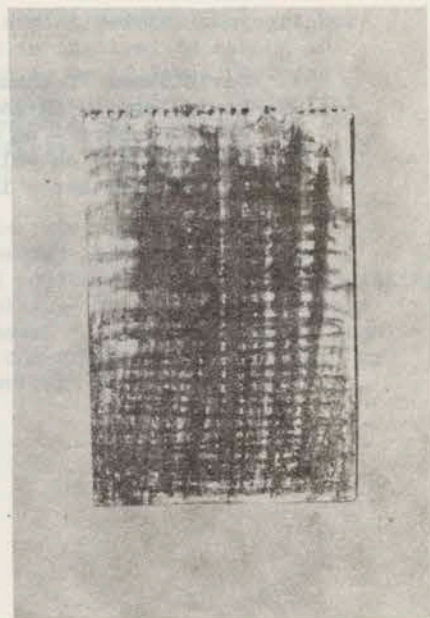
1. Dave Brown

UNTITLED EGMONT
Acrylic on canvas
512mm x 600mm
Collection of Wayne Morris & Sandra
Not For Sale



2. Wayne Morris

FIRST PEOPLE SERIES#
Assemblage
560mm x 650mm
\$150



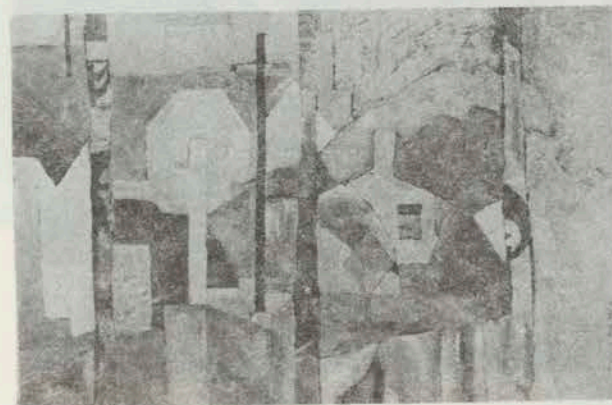
3. Orlando Gibbon

SUNSET
Pastel on paper
150mm x 230mm
Collection of artist
Not For Sale



4. Paul Hutchinson

MIRROR
Oil on board
1250mm x 1155mm
Not For Sale



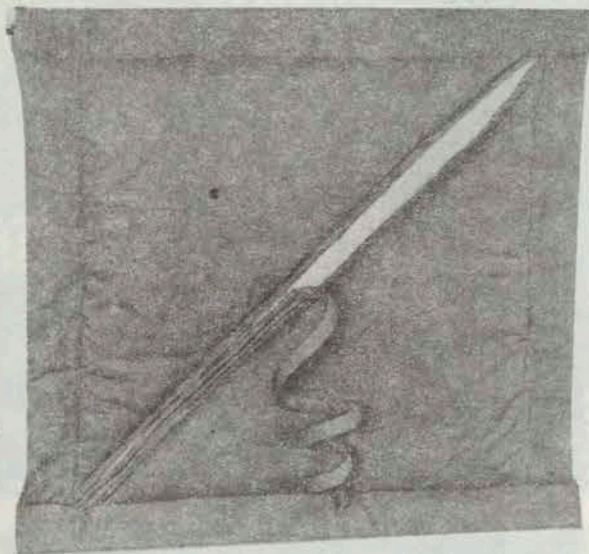
5. Gabrielle Stachle

UNTITLED 83
Oil on board
600mm x 895mm
\$350



6. Peter Lambert

NOVEMBER MISTS
Oil on canvas
470mm x 610mm
\$300



7. Rene Shone

WIRED No 1
Applique
650mm x 730mm
Collection of Jack Irving &
Bridget Western
Not For Sale

8. Tom Mutch

ROCK AWARD
Colour pencil on rock
130mm x 260mm
Collection of artist
Not For Sale

9. Mark McLachlan

MT TARANAKI AND RENONSENSE ARTISTS
Collage
270mm x 300mm
\$250



10. David James

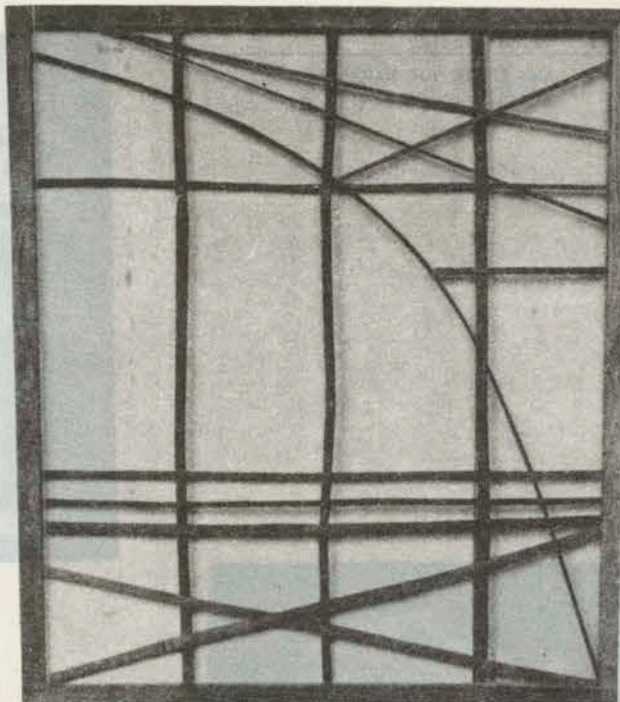
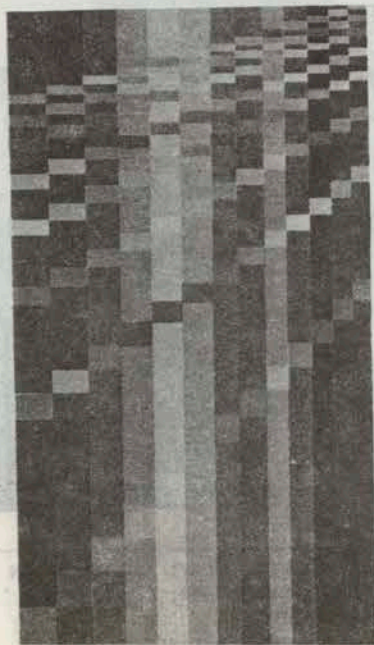
BAMBOO FRAME WORK
Bamboo and wood frame
1045mm x 910mm
\$200

11. Michael Smither

HARMONIC COLOUR CHART
Silk Screen
640mm x 450mm
Collection of Thomas Smither
Not For Sale

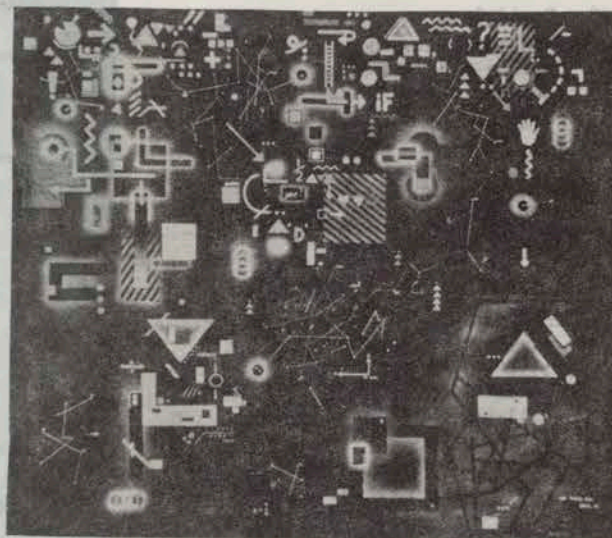
12. Marianne Muggeridge

GREY LYNN
Oil on board
960mm x 990mm



13. Waldo Hartley

AND THERE YOU HAVE IT
Acrylic on Canvas



WALDO HARTLEY



14. Dale Copeland

ICON
Mixed Media
460mm x 390mm
\$185



15. Lee Rolajae Morgan

DAD (DRAWING A DAY) AN INVITATION
TO AN ARTIST DIARY
Mixed Media
Collection of artist
Not For Sale

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Michael Hartley
1930
Acrylic on Canvas
1961

Lee Rolajae Morgan
1930
Mixed Media
1961

Dale Copeland
1930
Mixed Media
1961

Waldo Hartley
1930
Acrylic on Canvas
1961

