



EDGAR MANNFIELD

Edgar Mansfield is creating an art form based on the idea of animism. The term is applied to the ancient and primitive belief that any natural inanimate form which suggests living form, must possess some of the spirit of that living object.

Animism is so timeless and universal that it could be almost called an instinct. Animism appeals to the imagination in a way which was already developed in pre-historic days by the caveman who was inspired by the relief-kind forms of his walls and not seldom developed out of these, pictures of animals or forms of nature in a rather accidental language of line and form. The origin of cave art may well lie in chance variations of colour on the rock surface which suggested animal forms and thus acquired magical power. Animism is "seeing of known and unknown beings, produced by imagination", to give an example: the child will imagine he sees beings in the moon, in the shadows, in the fire. Although knowledge has now replaced the superstition of magical power transference, both children and adults still see the same associations, whether it be a face in the moon, adventures enacted in the fire, living forms in driftwood, or figures in coastal rocks; the names of many rock formations bear witness to this.

Mansfield is producing three dimensional sculptured adventures which evoke in the imagination the suggestion of life—of any life form, not merely human form but also of birds, animals, plants, fish, to give only a few examples. They are all, however, abstract forms which may suggest but never attempt to describe. Edgar Mansfield's work fulfils the requirements of both dynamic form and beauty. His sculptures, which he calls "animism", get to the root of the subject and expose the essential quality of it

Mansfield is in fact the first sculptor from New Zealand to achieve recognition abroad and to be given one-man exhibitions in this country (U.K.). Edgar Mansfield, sculptor, painter and designer often disregards fashionable trends when the fulfilment of his art is at stake. He is paving the way to a better understanding of contemporary art and his contribution will be of lasting value. It is his achievement that while a few have used found objects, or created man-abstract forms, Mansfield has embraced all living forms, and has subjected the "found object" of animism to the aesthetic discipline and imagination of the artist's sensibility.

J. J. de Lucio Meyer
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CATALOGUE

1.	Animism	5	1/6	17"	Bronze
2.	Animism	13	6/6	24"	Bronze
3.	Animism	17	1/6	9"	Bronze
4.	Animism	28	1/6	10"	Bronze
5.	Animism	52	2/6	4½"	Bronze
6.	Animism	59	3/6	11"	Bronze
7.	Animism	60	1/6	18"	Bronze
8.	Animism	61	3/6	6¼"	Bronze
9.	Animism	63	2/6	7½"	Bronze
10.	Animism	66	3/6	6½"	Bronze
11.	Animism	67	1/6	36½"	Bronze
12.	Animism	67	3/6	12"	Bronze
13.	Animism	70	2/6	10"	Bronze
14.	Animism	74	1/6	31"	Bronze
15.	Animism	78	1/6	8½"	Bronze
16.	Animism	84	1/6	7"	Bronze
17.	Animism	85	1/6	8½"	Bronze
18.	Animism	90	1/6	6"	Bronze
19.	Animism	93	2/6	32"	Bronze

GOVETT-BREWSTER ART GALLERY

QUEEN STREET - NEW PLYMOUTH

28th APRIL - 18th MAY 1972

EDGAR MANSFIELD

Born in London 1907. Settled in Hastings 1911, Napier, 1965. Formal art training Napier and Dunedin, and teaching Certificate. Taught art and crafts at Feilding High School, 1929-1933. Work changed from naturalistic to abstract in 1929.

Went to London in 1934 to study design and crafts (Central and Camberwell Schools of Art and Reimann School of Design).

British Forces 1941-46. Returned to Hastings for one year. Taught design and colour to trade students at London College of Printing, 1948-64 returning home for a few months leave of absence every four years. Since 1964-69 spent four months annually in London casting and exhibiting.

Abstract design and painting has been, since 1930, the creative background, prelude and source of all forms and experiments applied or developed in other media and exhibited.

SCULPTURE, 1950: Developed slowly from tactile and magical properties suggested by Napier Beach driftwood, allied with painting and binding experiments in surface, line and evocative abstract. The intention is to give pleasure as tactile surfaces and constantly changing line (edge) movements, and to stimulate the unique imagination of each observer—hence no title except "animism" and a number.

ONE MAN SHOWS: Goldsmiths College; Mercury Gallery, London, (BBC televised) 1964; Napier Art Gallery; Hastings Public Library, 1965; Centre Gallery, Wellington; Hamilton Art Gallery; Palmerston North Art Gallery; Dunedin and Christchurch Art Galleries, 1966; Alwin Gallery, London, 1967; London College of Printing, 1969; "All Hallows" City of London; Napier Art Gallery; Hastings Library, 1970.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS: Qantas "N.Z. Artists" London, 1964; Mercury Gallery, Commonwealth Institute "Biennale" 1965; Alwin Gallery; Roland Browse and Delbanco, London, 1967; Bristol Art Gallery "Royal Commonwealth Festival"; Alwin Gallery, 1968; Guest Exhibitor N.Z. Academy of Fine Arts (televised) 1970 W.N.T.V.I. Televised for "On Camera", 1970.

COLLECTIONS: Napier, Wellington & Dunedin Art Galleries, Victoria University, Weir House, Dept. of Foreign Affairs, Hastings Public Library and private Collections in N.Z., England, Germany, U.S.A. and Australia.