A History of Collection Development at the Suter Art Gallery, Nelson, 1896-1997

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Abstract

The dissertation outlines the history of the collection at the Suter Art Gallery and traces patterns of collecting and collection growth there. The broader New Zealand historical, sociological and museological context of the collection is considered and discussed with reference to literature on collecting in other New Zealand institutions. The influence of shifting cultural fields and their effect on collecting at the Suter Art Gallery is considered. Reassessment of the collection and changes in collecting practices at the Gallery are examined with reference to specific events and influences. The extent to which the collection is representative of the growth and development of the arts and artistic production in the Nelson Region is discussed. Unique characteristics of the collection are identified and discussed. Possible directions for the future of collecting at the Gallery are outlined.

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Introduction

There has been an increasing awareness in New Zealand and overseas that our understanding of art institutions and their collections can be greatly enhanced by detailed historical analysis. Although studies of individual art museums have been available and the centennial anniversaries of some museums have encouraged publications, there has been until recently no systematic study of the growth and status of collections in smaller regional art museums.

In 1992 B.Mare completed a valuable study of three regional art museums in the lower North Island (Govett-Brewster, New Plymouth; Manawatu, Palmerston North and Sarjeant, Wanganui) In 1996 Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust published a history by R.Fea and E.Pishief which added to the literature about regional museums in New Zealand.
The Suter Art Gallery, Nelson, is a small regional art gallery with its origins in the late nineteenth century. Operated by a private, self-perpetuating trust, (The Bishop Suter Art Gallery Trust Board), its history and collection have been largely unstudied.

In 1996 the writer completed a Research Practicum in association with the Suter Art Gallery to ascertain future storage requirements for the collection. This led to an interest in and many questions about the history of the collection.

The Suter Art Gallery Trust Board appointed its first director in 1976. A new director was appointed in 1995. While curators were employed from 1976-1991, there has been no curator's position at the gallery for the last seven years. Exhibition and maintenance work is carried out by a small staff with volunteer assistance. Selections of works from the collection are displayed intermittently throughout the year. The collection usually remains in storage and overcrowded conditions there make access difficult.[1]

A written policy for "acquisitions and donations", and "deacquisition" was adopted for the collection in 1989. An accessions register has been in use since the Gallery's inception However many questions about how the collection was formed and what factors influenced its development are largely unanswered. This study attempts to understand the dominant influences and how informal policy has operated in regard to collection development. A review of art-historical and museological literature, interviews, data analysis of the collection and a search of archival resources such as Gallery minutes formed the basis of the research. As some material in the minutes is of a confidential nature not all information was available for the purposes of this study and some events have been omitted at the request of the Director.

The collection at the Suter Art Gallery is the central subject of the study.
Pomian defines a collection as "a set of natural or artificial objects, kept temporarily or permanently out of the economic circuit, afforded special protection in enclosed spaces, adapted specifically for that purpose and put on display" [2] The motivations for collecting are various and according to Wittlin fall into six groups. Wittlin's analysis suggests that collections can be a form of economic hoarding or may be the embodiment of social prestige. Objects may be collected for their magical powers, for their expression of group loyalty, for the stimulation of curiosity and inquiry or as a means of emotional experience. All of these factors have an influence on the formation of art collections. [3]

The history of collecting has been a complex one. Collecting is an essential function of museums and remains a primary justification for their existence. The process of collecting within institutions is equally complex. In art museums especially there is a strong element of opportunism in collecting which stems from the nature of art itself. Unique and irreplaceable individually created objects are its subject. [4] Local history and personalities play an important part in the shape and quality of any collection. Each collection is therefore as unique as the works that constitute it.
Lack of singularity or consistency in museum identity or collecting strategy makes comparative studies somewhat limited in helping us to develop an understanding of collections. Research has generally focused on similarities between collections and their development from a single historical antecedent. Hooper-Greenhill suggests that there has been difficulty in accommodating a "plurality of histories" [5] which restricts the possibility of analyses, understanding and articulation of present practices. Hooper-Greenhill maintains that recognition of the uniqueness of historical manifestations would allow for the possibility of change by providing some tools for rereading the past. It would also make clear that meaning and interpretation in the art gallery context are not constant.

This study is not intended as a comprehensive history of the Gallery and collection. Rather than developing a comparative or narrative approach, this study attempts to illustrate how notions about the purposes of collecting within the institution have been influenced by its wider social context. Discussion of the collection's development centres on phases of change and reassessment of collecting. The historical, social and cultural construction of the gallery is acknowledged. The study attempts to discern guiding motivations for particular collecting practices. Statistical analysis of the collection is provided where appropriate.

The first section of the study discusses the museological context within which the origins of the Suter Art Gallery collection is placed. Approaches to the discussion of collection history and a theoretical framework are outlined. The early development of collections and public art museums is discussed and issues central to art museum development are examined.

Section two outlines the early development of New Zealand collections and the specific social context within which the Gallery originated. The relationship of the Gallery to the development of other cultural institutions in the Nelson Region is explored. The role and influence of international exhibitions and other entrepreneurial exhibitions on the development of the collection is assessed. The period up to 1940 is covered.

Section three focuses on the period 1940-1970 and the gradual acceptance of modernism and the resulting reassessment of collecting fields. Related educational and infrastructure developments which influenced collecting are discussed.

In the final section the period up to 1997 is outlined and contemporary issues are examined. These include the rise of professionalism, economic influences and deaccessioning and the recent development of new collecting fields at the Suter Art Gallery, ceramics and New Zealand contemporary art. Women's art and Maori art are discussed in the context of post-modernism and its changing interpretations and collecting fields. Possible future directions for collecting are discussed.

Major bequests and gifts to the collection are listed in the appendices. Works which could be considered key works in the collection are also listed. Aspects of the collection have been statistically analysed and this information supports the text where appropriate. The conclusion outlines the unique characteristics of the collection and patterns of collecting. Possible new directions and the relationship of policy to collecting practices are considered.

It is hoped that the information and analysis presented will promote an deeper understanding of the uniqueness of the institution and its collection. Recognition of the possible strengths and weaknesses of the collection and collecting practices may lead to the development of a defined future strategy for collecting and collection management at the Gallery.

1. The Museological Context

To the public, art museums and the ways in which they collect and display artwork have a largely unquestioned place. Museum visiting too is an accepted ritual in contemporary post-modern society. [6] Because they are so well established and familiar, the ways in which art museums collect and represent art to the community seem obvious. Institutions have an interest in simplifying their histories and replacing them with versions that serve their own purposes. This is reflected in writing on the art museum in western society which has generally taken the form of chronological histories or of the personal, partisan approaches of professionals.[7] Over the last decade this pattern has begun to change.

Museology is attempting to expose museums to critical study and develop new perspectives about museums and the roles they play in society. There is a recognition that collections and exhibitions of art by museums are shaped by particular assumptions that originate in the fundamental purposes and historical growth of museums in our culture.[8] These assumptions are not explicit. Discovering the fundamental purposes art museums and their collections serve in our communities requires analysis of the social and cultural construction and reproduction of museums, collections and their relationship to parent societies. As Grana states, "The deeper questions of the art museum's role may not be answered until we know the manner in which the present appropriates the past". [9]

An understanding of the art museum can only be achieved through acknowledging the historical, social and cultural construction of museums and their collections. This involves developing biographies of the main characters, a knowledge of the social, political and ideological conditions that influenced them and the functions the museum was designed to serve.

This study employs the notion of changing cultural fields as an analytical tool for the analysis of influences on the collection. This approach is shaped by European and English analyses developed by theorists such as Bourdieu who suggested that the art museum is shaped by the "struggle for distinction". [10] Bourdieu's theory is essentially that certain groups monopolize the definitions, valuations and access to certain symbolic products in their own interests, which are perpetuated through education. [11] Art museums are therefore a self-perpetuating system of controlled meanings in which only a minority can partake.

Fyfe draws on this analysis of cultural production and on the idea of the historical gestation of the cultural field but suggests that other dimensions of classification such as community and control also structured the art museum. [12]
Bennett further develops these ideas in the discussion of historically changing notions of "the public" and the way these have affected access to institutions. [13] The idea of the cultural field in this discussion focuses on the historical gestation of cultural fields within wider society and relates these to specific developments within the institution and its collection.

While the development of museum art collections may be seen as simply a gathering together of works of art in an institution over time, a museum collection can be viewed alternatively as, "the meeting point of structure and agency". According to Fyfe, art museums and their collections represent coalitions of interests; artists, donors, trustees, directors, curators, educators and administrators. The shifting balance of power between these as interwoven with state and society constitutes the "cultural field". [14] A cultural field can be further described as an abstraction that acknowledges wider cultural influences such as global, political and social fields as mediated by the state, infrastructures and actors to produce a particular climate of belief.

Conflicts which have arisen over what are seen as the proper uses of art collections are ongoing and are at the heart of art museums as institutions. One reflection of the conflict over changing cultural fields is the ongoing reassessment or reinterpretations of works in collections that may lead to stylistic displacements or ultimately to deaccessions. For example, at certain times art works may be seen as irrelevant to a collection and be deaccessioned. Later changes in the cultural field may involve reassessment of these works and their importance to the collection may be recognised in a different way. An important tool for analysis of the history of art collections then is an awareness of different cultural fields that influence the way a collection develops. Changing cultural fields are reflected inside the institution in changing practices and attitudes toward collecting and may have ongoing implications for museums seeking to "forge a singular institutional identity". [15]

Historically there have been many motivations for the formation of collections. Bennett describes the variety of functions that art collections have fulfilled as either demonstrations of royal power, symbols of aristocratic or mercantile status or instruments of learning. [16]

The earliest art collections evolved from princely collections of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Beginning in the eighteenth century public art museums appropriated, developed and transformed the central function of the princely gallery. [17] By the eighteenth century public art museums included the Louvre, the Medici Collections in Florence, the Vatican Museums and the Dresden Museum. Public access, in the sense the term is used today, was still restricted. These museums placed objects which had been kept in private seclusion into new, open, public contexts and the viewer was no longer a subject but a citizen. [18]

The public national gallery organised on art-historical principles was an outcome of the French Revolution as was the belief that citizens should have access to collections. Although the collection at the Louvre was not the first princely collection to be transformed into a public art museum it was the most politically significant, influential and attractive to art-minded citizens of other countries. The desirability of having a public art museum was widely appreciated. Public art museums were seen as evidence of political virtue demonstrating the benevolence of the state or municipality or the civic mindedness of leading citizens. [19] Duncan states that they "make the state look good, progressive, concerned about the spiritual life of its citizens, a preserver of past achievements and a provider for the common good". [20]

Development of public art museums also involved a reassessment of the way art was displayed. In the princely gallery, paintings and objects were understood as luxurious decorations, reflecting status and intellectual aspirations. With the changed cultural field, art objects were transformed from objects of material wealth to objects of spiritual wealth. They became art-historical objects which were seen as products of individual and national genius. Pomian states that,

> "shifts in artistic and historical preoccupations, altered not only the corpus of objects endowed with meaning and therefore with value, but also the framework within which they were displayed and the principles governing their layout". [21]

The new art history approach provided a coherent set of meanings upon which the public art museum could structure itself. Art as it is now thought about only came into being in the nineteenth century, with the discipline of art history and the birth of the museum. [22]

British municipal art galleries of the late nineteenth century were established with the aim of contributing to general education and entertainment rather than appealing to a specialised audience. Waterfield mentions that galleries were formed by proudly civic minded collectors

who donated their private collections. Statements were frequently made about the "desirability of educating the masses and giving them the opportunity to appreciate the possibility of a better life through the medium of art".[23] This is true of museums in America and Europe too. Einreinhofer states that in America there was a strong belief in progress and that humanity could be improved intellectually and morally through proper education. [24] A new didactic, systematic approach to the display of art was developed during this period influenced by the desire to display rational thought processes. [25]

A common form of governance was organisation as non-profit corporations under the control of private self-perpetuating boards of trustees. Art museum trusteeship was often synonymous with wealth and status yet also stressed the moral dimension of the fine arts; confirmation of the superiority of democracy and Christianity. Jarves and others in America were convinced that, "the display of great art could not only elevate the masses but also would have a practical benefit in terms of improved design in manufacture". [26]

By the beginning of the twentieth century art museums experienced overcrowded exhibition spaces and many were having trouble fulfilling the demands placed on them. During the nineteenth century many museums had proposed two collections: one for the public, the other for study purposes. Creation of more space was essential. Bazin mentions that the building of storerooms and selling of collections were suggested as possible solutions to overcrowding. [27]

In the first decade of the twentieth century specialized art museums began to appear in large American cities and this led to the discussion of professional issues in museums associations such as the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) which was formed in 1916. The relative importance of preservation and education in museums was openly debated. Museum figures such as J.C. Dana advocated the use of public collections for educational purposes. Others such as B.I.Gilman and J.P.Sachs felt that the true art museum kept the sanctity and safety of the art object as its primary concern. [28] The 1920s saw museums attempting to meet the demand for higher quality, more educational and selective exhibitions and for a contextual approach to the display of some objects.

In the early 1900s museums associations were exploring means to turn museums into social "instruments". In what was to be one of the major debates about the place of museums in society Theodore Low urged that museums should become social instruments disseminating information and communicating values. [29] According to Orosz, Low's ideas of accessibility, usefulness and educational value stemmed from, "the period of social change which occurred between the Wars; the ascendancy of mass culture beginning in the 1920's, the Depression and the rise of Fascism and Nazism" [30]. The debate manifested the "difficulty of treading the fine line between democratic sentiments and professional standards in the museum world" .[31] The argument remains central to criticism of museums today as "elitist" institutions.

In 1934 Dewey published "Art as Experience". Dewey's theories about the universalism of the aesthetic experience and the responsibility of a democracy to build opportunities for creative expression into its educational practice inspired many museum professionals to view the art museum as an active environment for public art education. The debate developed further into conflict over art classification. For Dewey the greatest obstacle to aesthetic understanding was the accepted classification of art objects made by professionals, possessed by institutions, or bought and sold under rules of the cultural market. Dewey believed that art museums risked being incomplete if they limited themselves to original works - models, photos and written commentary were introduced.[32] As a result of museums holding more temporary, thematic and contemporary exhibitions and related activities, public gallery spaces were increased whereas storage space was not and often became inadequate.

In the 1940s questions about the role of institutions and their collections were intensified by war and financial constraints. Despite the public interest in and demand for education, many institutions insisted on the need to preserve cultural heritage and to expand the aesthetic experience. Here another conflict is apparent in ongoing tension between the external democratic functions and internal professional traditions. Grana states that this appears in at least two forms, between museum staff and the public and between the objects and their viewer. [33] Conflict represents the process of change in the cultural field. Changing attitudes to art that associated it more closely with the purposes of education and democratisation conflicted with "pure aesthetics" and the internal needs of the institution for the preservation of collections.

The social concerns of the 1960s and 1970s intensified contradictions at the heart of art museums. Questions were asked about the appropriateness of an institution often concerned with the needs of a small group of knowledgeable individuals or an elite rather than the public at large. The art museum became the target of renewed public criticism more than any other

type of museum. Government support for the arts during the 1960-70s brought with it the requirement for the provision of greater public access and the need to attract new audiences.

Economic recession in the mid-1970s caused retraction in museums' operating and acquisitions budgets. This financial crisis resulted from changing economic philosophies (The New Right and Economic Rationalism) and increased pressure to reduce central and local government expenditure. This has been one of the most critical and central issues in the period since the 1970s. All major issues have been aggravated by dwindling resources and increased reliance on internally generated income, public resources, public and corporate subsidies. The resulting increased demand for accountability has expanded and complicated the role of trustees and professionals in all types of museum. This has required much closer monitoring of expenditure and greater caution where expansion was considered.

Stricter ethical and professional standards have been encouraged by the need for greater accountability. In New Zealand a Code of Ethics and Guide to Professional Practice was adopted by AGMANZ (Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand) in the late 1970s.[34] There has been increased influence of art sector professionals and continued questioning of art museums and their collections. [35] One major result has been competition between the collections and public programmes. Pressure to conform to public taste was also apparent in purchases for collections. Conforti suggests that organisations were kept from testing innovative approaches to acquisitions and encouraged a tendency to buy recognised names in familiar fields and that although unfashionable artists and fields might represent the best collecting opportunities there are only so many under-appreciated works that a museum's trustees and public will support. [36]

Post-modernism in art museums is characterised by a determination to present a broad view of culture and to avoid previous art historical hierarchies. There is a return to an older attitude that a work of art is a product of its times or a personal expression. Crimp states that,

> "The term post-modern describes a situation in which both the present and the past could be divested of all historical determinations and conflicts. Art institutions widely embraced this position, using it to reestablish art as autonomous, universal, timeless."[37]

The debate about preservation versus education is turning into a debate over the role and influence of the art museum in the defining of western culture and challenging its traditional approach to the presentation of diverse cultural artifacts to expanding and interdependent world communities. The changing cultural field has led to significant reassessment of past attitudes to art and artists as well as a growing awareness that art museums should attempt to include a wider community. This has resulted in shifts in attitude particularly to minorities and to women artists. [38]

Art museums which had their origins in princely collections are complex institutions involved in complicated processes of classification and reassessment of art, which affect the way institutions collect and display works of art. By examining institutions themselves, their representations of history and the ways their histories are represented we may come to a clearer understanding of the development of collections. [39]

A study of the history of the Suter Art Gallery Nelson provides an opportunity to assess how changing cultural fields have affected one institution and its collection.

Introduction and Section 1 end notes

1 Taylor J.M. 1996
2 Pomian K. 1990 :9
3 Wittlin A. 1970
4 Lord G.and Lord B. 1991 p111
5 Hooper-Greenhill E.1992 :7
6 Grana.C. 1971 :97
7 Shapiro M.S 1990 :39
8 Duncan C. in Karp L. and Lavine S. 1991 :90
9 Grana .C 1971: 97
10 Bourdieu P. and Darbel A. 1991
11 Bourdieu P. 1984
12 Fyfe G. in Pearce S. 1995 :34
13 Bennett T. NZ Museums Journal 12 :34
14 Fyfe G. ibid p 34
15 Meyer K. E 1979 :19
16 Bennett T.ibid :93
17 Bazin G. 1967 :129-139
18 Bennett T.ibid :91
19 Duncan C. in Karp I. and Lavine S. 1991 :28
20 Duncan C ibid :19
21 Pomian K.1990 :273
22 Crimp D.1993:98
23 Waterfield G. 1991:23
24 Einreinhofer N . 1997 :29
25 ibid
26 Meyer K. E. 1979
27 Bazin G. 1967 : 265
28 Alexander P. 1979 :36
29 Low T. 1942
30 Orosz J. 1990:240
31 ibid :252
32 Grana C. 1971 :135
33 ibid
34 MAANZ Code of Ethics and Guide to Professional Practice 1994
35 Mare B. 1992 :166
36 Conforti M. 1989 :38
37 Crimp D.1993 :18
38 Alexander E. 1979 :35
39 Crimp D.1993:18

2. Early Developments

Origins of New Zealand Collections

Although museums and their collections are currently often defined by their representational practices they are more clearly understood through examination of their evolution in the wider social context. Understanding the evolution of collections may inform choices being made today. This discussion does not attempt to provide a complete narrative account of the history of the Suter Art Gallery and collection but attempts to provide a framework for understanding collection development.

The early development of art museums and their collections in New Zealand followed a pattern common to the museum movement in other colonial countries such as Australia, America and Canada. [1] The essential structure of early museums, art galleries and their philosophies originated in the emergence of the museum movement in Victorian England. The concerns of class, politics, education, social trends and culture were transported to colonial New Zealand by settlers in the 1840s and following years. [2] Industrialisation in Victorian England had encouraged social and economic reform. A common concern that the working classes should have the opportunity to receive education, particularly in relation to arts and culture, was reflected in the museum movement.[3]

Efforts were made in the United Kingdom to provide opportunities for working class access to the arts. The arts were believed to have an educational, civilising and morally uplifting effect on the population. [4] Borzello comments that by the 1880s a theory had developed about the power of art to improve cultural aspects of the lives of the poor and the poor themselves, a form of "cultural philanthropy". [5] Collections were seen as a resource for education, improvement and democratisation. They became a focus of nineteenth century idealism rather than the expression of the personal tastes and interests of the educated and the dilettante. [6]

New Zealand museum collections originated from several sources. Often a collection developed outside an institution. A significant bequest from such a collector could form the basis of, and rationale for, a new museum. Collections were also associated with Philosophical Institutes and Mechanics Institutes whose main purpose was to encourage education. Mechanics Institutes originated in Scotland in the early nineteenth century and were started with the aim of educating and improving working men's skills for industry. Philosophical Institutes were based on the philosophy of the Royal Society of

London founded in 1866 which aimed to encourage the promotion, discussion and learning in arts and sciences. [7]

Although the institute movement had weakened by the 1900s and its emphasis changed to lecturing and demonstrating rather than collecting, the growing museums movement often retained these early collections and the moral attitudes associated with them. While the early institute movement was one model for collection development the other main source of collections came from the efforts of local artists and art societies. [8] In the 1880s and 1890s art societies became a major vehicle for the development of art collections and indicated the aspirations of members for cultural development in the colony. [9]

In nearly all cases galleries were preceded by art societies with a significant collection already formed. The existence of a collection often became a major tool in the push for the building of a gallery. [10] The New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts (established in 1889) followed the pattern of earlier art academies, specifically those established during the nineteenth century in the United States of America. [11] Motivated by civic and national pride, these collections frequently became the basis of future art museum collections. [12] Attitudes adopted by those responsible for collections of pictures were attitudes largely conditioned by the liberal thinking of the 1890s. They still influence our thinking on the role of art galleries today. Entwisle states that "The idea of instruction and of attempting to raise the cultural level of the general public, was rarely questioned". [13] The composition of the collection was seen as important. Some kind of balance between overseas and local, traditional and contemporary was thought desirable. [14] In an editorial written in the Otago Daily Times in 1906 the view of the importance of public collections is clear,

> "the educative value of a public collection of paintings by artists of renown is incontestable and great and.. no modern city can justly claim to have provided adequately for the instruction and elevation of its inhabitants which does not make the sight of good pictures and the sound of good music accessible to them". [15]

Thomson states that New Zealand's first museums and collections were created in stable communities prosperous enough to afford them. [16] At the end of the nineteenth century Nelson was one such community.

Early Development of Nelson's Cultural Institutions

The written history of the development of cultural institutions in Nelson is limited. Allan's book "Nelson: A History of Early Settlement" (1965) remains the most extensive survey and has been added to recently by McAloon's "Nelson: A Regional History" (1997). Neither publication documents the establishment of the Bishop Suter Art Gallery or discusses the development of cultural institutions in detail but it is possible to gain an appreciation of general social conditions from these publications. Neale's "Nelson Suter Art Society 1898-1989" (1989) provides important background information about the formation of the Gallery.

At the same time as the museum movement was developing, the planned settlement schemes of the New Zealand Company led by Edward Gibbon Wakefield were taking place. Wakefield's political philosophy and theories of colonisation centred on attempts to create ordered, civilised and self-sufficient settlements. [17] Nelson was to be an experimental model settlement organised by Wakefield and the New Zealand Company. In 1841 with Edward Wakefield's younger brother Arthur acting as the Company's agent, the planned Nelson settlement was started.

The decade was described by Allan as one of "economic and political dislocation" [18] during which thousands of people left Europe in search of a better life in the New World. Under Wakefield's plan the "transplanted Englishman" was not to be an exile from "the arts and manners of good English society" nor from the political and educational institutions. [19] This enthusiasm was demonstrated by settlers destined for Nelson who formed the firm intention to establish the first Nelson cultural institution while on the ship Whitby in May 1841. The Nelson Institute was established as the "Nelson Literary and Scientific Institution" for the encouragement of scientific investigation and diffusion of knowledge through development of an extensive library. The Institute was intended to provide "a cultural centre for the colony" [20] and was possibly the first museum in New Zealand. Although it is recorded that books, manuscripts and other items were accumulated it is uncertain when The Institute's collection of objects started, as early records were destroyed by fire in 1906.[21] The first confirmation of collecting at the Nelson Institute is recorded in 1859. [22]

Mechanics Institutes were also established as a "working men's" equivalent of the Philosophical Institute. The Nelson Institute reading room and library operated as a type of a "gentleman's club" throughout the 1840s but in the 1850s the Nelson Institute

adopted a more democratic approach and it assumed an educational role to a wider public. In its new role it provided for the interests of a wider social grouping and was able to continue successfully.[23] Sheets-Pyenson states that colonial museums set out to educate and morally uplift the middle and lower classes and this is validated in the early "Nelson Institute, Library and Museum" developments. [24]

Reluctance of the Colonial Government to assume any responsibility for the Nelson settlement, which had been advertised by Wakefield as "self-sustaining", encouraged locally initiated institutions to become well established earlier than in the rest of New Zealand. These included churches, schools and two newspapers, "The Examiner" and the "Nelson Evening Mail". The Nelson School Society which opened many schools in the Province was established by Matthew Campbell in 1843.
An Amateur Musical Society was established in 1853 as well as a Philharmonic Society which were later to become the Nelson School of Music. Nelson Boys College opened in 1856 and the Girls College in 1883. In 1864 the Nelson Institute announced the intention to form "The Nelson School of Arts", however there is no further mention of this development until 1866 when an attempt to start a "School of Fine Arts" and a "School of Drawing" was mentioned.[25] The Nelson Institute also occasionally exhibited paintings and chromolithographs in the 1860s and onward. It appears that interest in art and art teaching ran parallel with Nelson Institute interests for some years and until the formation of the Bishop Suter Art Gallery finally separated these.

Administrative separation from Marlborough in 1859 had reinforced Nelson's isolation and independence as a province, although generally the 1860s -1870s was a time of stability for Nelson. The 1870s and 1880s was a time of economic recession for New Zealand as a whole but in Nelson the period was generally characterised by improved living standards. The wealth of the community came from expanding manufacturing, entrepreneurial and commercial activities. The economy of the region was largely based on its position as a commercial centre and port. Fruit growing and processing began to be important along with cropping and lamb fattening. For the size of its population, which was approximately 6600 in the 1880s, the Nelson Region had a well developed infrastructure and commercial centre.

The 1890s were notable for wide ranging political and social debates, principally dealing with women's suffrage, liberalism, socialism and temperance. Nelson celebrated its Jubilee Year in 1892 and in 1893 women voted in the elections for the first time. [26]

McAloon notes that despite fluctuating fortunes, the Nelson Region appeared to be a case study in "Colonial success" with its future as a regional distribution centre assured. [27] Nelson experienced "unprecedented prosperity" in the twenty-five years up to the end of World War One especially after the turn of the century. Population during this time expanded and amenities improved. [28]

As Thomson mentions, an early start to a museum in New Zealand often ensured richer collections, more generous endowments and a status in their developing communities which later institutions had difficulty in obtaining. [29] When the community in which they were built was the seat of provincial political power he states, a museum was a symbol of growing maturity and often the only centre for serious scientific research. Although the Nelson Institute had an early start serious collecting practices were not confirmed there until 1859. The Nelson Institute did however precede the Suter Art Gallery as an establishment by nearly sixty years. This has had important historical implications for the Suter Art Gallery as did the earlier establishment of The Nelson School of Music (in 1894) which allowed it to quickly become, "The jewel in the city's cultural crown". [30]

The Nelson School of Music was supported by F.G. Gibbs, Headmaster at Nelson Central School, wealthy merchant J.H. Cock and Mayor Trask [31] and was largely funded through the generosity of Thomas Cawthron and the collaboration of Gibbs and Cock. All three men were extremely energetic and influential in the early development of Nelson facilities. Gibbs' influence was extensive and his involvement with the School of Music, the Nelson Institute and later the Suter Art Gallery was very important. Cawthron donated and loaned large sums to both the Nelson School of Music and the Nelson Institute. He later provided funding for the establishment of the Cawthron Institute which was to become an important base for scientific research in support of local industry and particularly agricultural practices in the region. The Cawthron Institute began research activities in 1920. [32] Cawthron's interests lay mainly with science and the development of a natural history collection. His influence is not as strongly felt in the establishment of the Suter Art Gallery, although he did provide some early finance for the Gallery in the form of a loan.

The establishment of an active cultural life and four independent cultural institutions in Nelson in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century must have required considerable financial and human resources. The Bishop Suter Art Gallery was established in a prospering and culturally lively community in 1899.

The Foundation of the Suter Art Gallery and Collection

In 1866 Bishop Andrew Burn Suter succeeded Bishop Hobhouse as Bishop of Nelson. According to McAloon he was "a London Vicar of decidedly evangelical persuasion, and thus was thoroughly acceptable to Nelson opinion. A robust, hardworking and capable scholar and administrator, he was also a frequent and popular speaker on religious matters but also on history, geography and literature. He was President of the Nelson Philosophical Society. Suter became regarded as perhaps Nelson's most influential citizen by the later 1870s" [33]
Bishop Suter was an art enthusiast and amateur artist with wide ranging interests in culture and in this role he formed the Bishopdale Sketching Club in 1889 as its President and critic. Foundation members were Colonel Benjamin Branfill, his daughter Miss N Branfill, Mr. J H Nicholson and Miss Nina Jones.

Suter's attitude to art and sketching in particular is reflected in parts of the address he made at the first Annual General Meeting of the Sketching Club when he said,

> "It is an art which teaches while it is being exercised, which multiplies the pleasure, beauties and attractions of life. It elevates and improves our surroundings, and its moral teachings are those of truth, patience, perseverance, discernment and love." [34]

He expressed a typically Victorian attitude to art which was tied to ideas of truth, beauty and the educational and morally uplifting.

On Suter's death in 1895 it was decided at the suggestion of Mrs. Suter that a gallery would be built as a memorial to him. A close relationship developed between the gallery trustees and the Sketching Club which in 1901 changed its name to the Suter Art Society. [35]

The Bishop Suter 'Memorial' Art Gallery was built in 1898 and opened in 1899.
It was an extension to a Schools' Society building (The Matthew Campbell School) on the present site in Bridge Street, Nelson, which had been in use since 1844. A small Mines Department building was also incorporated in the building.(see Appendix V). The extension was made possible by gifts of property from Mrs.Suter and the Nelson Schools' Society as well as general subscription from the people of Nelson. The building

was to hold the Bishop's personal collection of paintings including twenty-six by his friend John Gully that his wife gifted to the people of Nelson.

The founding Trust Deed of 1895 expresses the purpose of the land being held as "the promotion of art in the City of Nelson" and "as a site for the purposes of an Art Gallery for the City to be called The Bishop Suter Art Gallery". The Bishop Suter Art Gallery Trustees Act, 1896 states that, the Trustees were to "establish and endow an art gallery."[36] This remained the only known written intention of the Gallery's purpose until the late 1980s.

At the first recorded meeting the Trustees Bishop Mules, Messrs. Maginnity, Pitt, Cock Trask and Fell resolved that all Suter's pictures should be removed to the Bishop's School as soon as arrangements could be made. In September, 1896 after some five months, a committee of Selanders, Pitt, Trask, Fell and Cock recorded that, "provision was to be made for vesting school sites in the Suter Art Gallery and for incorporation".[37] With the beginning of state funded education in 1857 various sites which had belonged to the Nelson School Society were no longer required. These sites were to be administered by the Trust Board for the benefit of the Art Gallery.

The Newspaper 'The Colonist' of June 2nd 1896, reported that the old School Society building would be given for the use of the Gallery by the Trustees "considering that such a Gallery will be educational in its tendencies, while they believe that the work they are now carrying on may be performed elsewhere." It was considered that this "generous offer" led to the early opening of the Bishop Suter Art Gallery and that it would "add another attraction to the city and one that will certainly be appreciated". [38] It can be seen that the community held the view that the gallery would be educational in its purpose.

The School Society Trustees stipulated that a Portrait of Matthew Campbell (who had started the School Society in 1843) should be hung in the Gallery by its Trustees. The foundation stone was laid on November 14th 1898. An oil by Kirkwood gifted by Mrs. Hunter Brown was the first presentation made to the collection after the initial Suter Gift.

The Early Growth of the Collection

The initial meetings record the core of decision makers as being Bishop Mule, and Messrs. Pitt, Cock, Fell, Graham, Selanders and Trask. These men had in common that they were well integrated into their community and played important roles within it.

Financial and practical concerns were taken care of during the year of establishment. In 1899 Fell and Pitt were authorised to arrange a loan of 500 pounds at 5% from Thomas Cawthron on the security of the property at Bridge Street. [39]

Original Trustee Branfill died in 1899 and a collection of his art work was later held at the Gallery. Minutes from May 4th 1899 record discussion of practical matters about hanging of pictures and construction of battening. All paintings would be on display as was usual at this time. A paid custodian for the Gallery was to be arranged before the opening on August 31st 1899.

Early acquisitions reflect an open attitude toward collecting. Paintings, photographs, reproductions and occasionally other items such as memorabilia were donated to the Gallery. The original Suter Gift itself contained photographs and chromolithographs as well as paintings and this pattern for donations continued well into the twentieth century. Photographs of statuary and scenery which were part of the Suter Gift were arranged for exhibition in May 1901. A reproduction of "Burnham Beeches" which was also part of the gift was framed. Bishop Redwood donated a collection of photographs in 1899.[40] Coloured engravings and photographs of famous pictures were shown at the first exhibition of the Bishop Suter Art Society. Until the 1950s reproductions were exhibited in the Gallery and were regarded as an important educational resource.

Loans continued to be accepted and in October 1899 Miss D.K. Richmond of the Richmond Trust offered thirteen watercolour pictures by her father, J. C. Richmond, for loan. This collection was formally accessioned in 1935 after being gifted by the Atkinson Estate with the specific condition that the collection be permanently hung in the Gallery. A further J.C. Richmond painting was donated by the Nelson Institute (this painting was recorded as missing in 1994).[41] Local artist Nina Jones was appointed Secretary to the Board in 1901 and remained in the position until 1926. She was active in the attempt to establish an endowment fund.

In 1902 the influential Frederick.G. Gibbs was appointed a Trustee and by 1903 the influence of his educational philosophy was felt. The middle room was to be let to the Education Board for teachers' art classes which involved about fifty-seven teachers. The arrangements were made by Gibbs himself. The Gallery was also let for a medical conference in 1903 and for other uses such as piano lessons and privately run art classes. [42]

A portrait of John Oldham was presented by Mr. and Mrs. John Oldham showing further early associations of the gallery as a memorial place. A memorial "Portrait of Bishop Suter" by M.Tripe was unveiled in 1903. [43]

During this early period of establishment there appear to be clear purposes in the running of the Gallery. The Gallery was well used by the Art Society. Trustees acknowledged the Art Society in 1907 for the efficient way the Gallery was managed by them and for their work in arranging events and displays. Resigning Trustees were replaced by common agreement of all Trustees.

The first significant monetary bequest was made in 1910 when twenty-five pounds was received from the Snodgrass Estate. Two pictures were purchased with the Snodgrass bequest in 1911 and another painting offered by Mrs. Snodgrass was accepted. During this time arrangements were made for the visit of Lord Plunkett, Governor General on February 21st 1910 for the unveiling of a memorial tablet and Portrait of Huria Matenga painted by G. Lindauer. Huria Matenga and several others from the Wakapuaka Pah had successfully rescued all but one of the passengers from the stricken ship Delaware in 1863. She was a local heroine. In 1913 Hemi Matenga, Huria's widower left £300 to the Gallery which became available in 1925.

By 1910 the collection contained eighty-six items, twenty-six oil paintings, thirty-nine watercolours and eleven other items. The insurance value of the collection was 660 pounds. 91% of the collection had been donated to the Gallery.

Donations of paintings continued to be made. During the period 1900-1914 thirty-nine items entered the collection. Analysis of the Suter Art Gallery acquisitions records shows that seven pictures were donated by the Suter Art Society and included a C.F.Goldie, E.Tripe, C.N. Worsley and W.Wright. A further ten pictures were donated by individuals. One painting entered by public subscription and three were purchased by the board. [44]

It is notable that during this early period artwork donated and acquired was primarily by artists painting in New Zealand and of New Zealand landscape. This followed a national trend during this period. [45] Strong local associations such as historical events (Huria Matenga) or being the work or collection of trustees (as with the collection of works by Branfill) was another trend. A gift from the Art Society of a C.N. Worsley, sourced at the International Exhibition in 1905 is the exception for this period.

Although no acquisitions were made between 1914-1918,[46] after the outbreak of World War One, it appears to have been an active time for the Trustees. Gibbs initiated the first decision to select from various articles in the art gallery and decide what was "worth keeping". These articles were to be stored in the back room in an area screened off for that purpose (the first storeroom). The rest were to be disposed of in a manner deemed most suitable to the community. "Articles" does not specifically indicate paintings and may relate to other objects, photographs and reproductions. Early preservation work was carried out on three large Gully watercolours. In 1917 all pictures except heavy ones had been taken down and cleaned, hangings were examined and walls brushed and the paintings were rehung.

There is an indication that selection criteria were being used in acceptance or rejection of works for the collection at this time although the criteria are not made clear. An example of this is the offer of a landscape painting (of a subject near Motueka) by a Mr. Barker which was refused as Trustees, "did not consider the picture suitable for the Gallery". [47]

In 1918 acquisitions to the collection started again. Two works were purchased and a further group of Branfill works was donated. Trustee Fell died and his wife gifted three pictures he had painted to the Gallery. The D.K.Richmond and two Van der Veldens works bequeathed by Fell continued a tradition of Trustees and their families to gift artwork to the collection.

In 1919 the Trustees anticipated a visit from the Minister of Internal Affairs. The Trustees planned to request a grant for Gallery funds making this the first attempt to secure funding for the Gallery from sources outside the community. The outcome of this approach is not recorded.
The Annual Report for 1919 also records that two paintings by Miss Emily Harris were loaned to the Gallery by the Art Society showing the Art Society's early support of women artists. [48]

In 1921 the early mortgage to the Cawthron Trustees was paid off and was refinanced at six percent interest to Nina Jones. This is the first indication of the involvement of the Board in providing finances from their private sources for the Gallery. Despite the Depression the Gallery seems to have achieved financial stability at this time with the picture purchase fund in credit. This was assisted by a significant bequest of 1000 pounds which was received from William Besley (a Nelson sailmaker) in 1922 .The bequest stipulated that interest on the bequest money was to be spent on picture purchase, making this the first endowment. In the same year the Art Society was asked to nominate two members to be associated with Trustees in selection of the next picture to be purchased by Trustees which demonstrates again the close working relationship of Trustees and Art Society. There was a further presentation by a Trustee when Cock presented two "valuable pictures" by John Gully ("Manapouri" and "Wangapeka Valley") and two by F. Evans ("A Cornish Fisherman" and "An old Cornish Woman").[49]
Purchases were made from the Besley Bequest funds. These were a watercolour titled "Near Mount Cook" painted by C.N. Worsley, an etching of tree ferns by T.Lloyd and an oil of the Southern Alps from the West Coast by C. Blomfield. A watercolour of Astrolabe was presented by the artist Blomfield.

Work on collection care continued. Pictures were again all taken down and all frames cleaned. The oil paintings were rubbed with wax and turpentine and some frames were repaired. New backs of straw board were used to replace wooden backing affected by borer.

The Cultural Field of British Academic Art

In 1924 in a departure from usual purchasing procedure Mr. Cock was authorised on behalf of Trustees to purchase in England further pictures with funds from the Besley Bequest.[50] This marks an important point in the collection's history and in the following period more purchases of British work were made rather than locally based work. This change appears to have been a consequence of the influence of international exhibitions and dealer galleries initiating the importation and exhibition of English work particularly during the period 1920-1940.

The international exhibition movement and the influence of the dealer gallery system stand out as important factors in the development of New Zealand art collections and the Suter Art Gallery collection in particular.

Before the advent of international exhibitions in New Zealand public art collections consisted primarily of donated works of New Zealand art. [51] While this remained true of the collection at the Suter until the 1920s, exhibitions which occurred in New Zealand featuring collections of primarily British art had a noticeable effect on attitudes to art and what was considered worthy of collecting.

At the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibitions held in Dunedin 1889 -1890 Dunedin Public Art Gallery set a precedent by purchasing works by British artists in the exhibition. The New Zealand International Exhibition of 1906-7, held in Christchurch, was the fourth of five International Industrial Exhibitions held in New Zealand before 1940. 1135 works by British artists were exhibited at this exhibition. Representatives from Adelaide and Sydney came to view works for purchase for public galleries placing pressure on galleries in New Zealand to purchase. [52] Further influential collections were brought to New Zealand in 1912 and 1914 by John Baillie, an expatriate London art dealer who selected 400 British paintings to tour New Zealand. Some of these works were purchased for the proposed National Art Gallery and many for the newly opened Sarjeant Gallery. [53] After closing in Wellington the exhibition was toured south.

The new exposure to British academic art stimulated a dissatisfaction with New Zealand art. Calhoun states that, "local art was faced with an enthusiasm for British and continental painting which often lacked discrimination while at the same time the work of New Zealanders was viewed with patronising disparagement" .[54] Referring to the Academy of Fine Arts collection in Wellington, Calhoun also states that whether work was purchased was often based on the artist's status in the Royal Academy.
This changing attitude to art explains the place of British art in the Suter collection until the 1940s and in many other New Zealand collections such as those at Hawkes Bay, Sarjeant and Aigantighe Galleries and announces a major change in the cultural field.

The development of entrepreneurial interests in the promotion of art already reflected in the Baillie Collections of 1912 and 1914 became more overt in the 1920s. Before 1914, art society exhibitions were the main way for both amateur and professional artists to show their work to public audiences. However an increasing tension between amateur

and professional artists during this period meant that private exhibitions were becoming more common.
Compared with the pre-war period, in the 1920s and even more noticeably in the 1930s, public art galleries purchased fewer and fewer works of New Zealand artists. Acquisition of art by British artists was now dominant.

The National Art Association of New Zealand was critical of this trend and claimed that New Zealand artists should be encouraged. [55] In 1927 the Suter Art Society passed a resolution urging the Trustees to purchase, as circumstances permitted, paintings by New Zealand artists. [56] In the same year Trustees Fell and Cock were to visit England and were empowered to buy artwork with the amount available in the picture purchase fund. They later purchased Russell Flint's "Athene's Yellow Wrap" for 120 pounds. This was the first major purchase made overseas. Meanwhile a John Gully painting had been offered for purchase from the estate of Bishop Mules and had been declined. [57] While it is possible that consolidation of the Gully Collection was not seen as important at this time, the refusal may have been due to the strong interest in British Art during this period.

In 1930 a further purchase related to the dealer system was made. A collection of watercolours was brought out from England by Dean Askew and was shown at the Gallery from which Tuke's "The Bathers" was purchased. [58]

Money from public subscription and the Besley Bequest was used to purchase Robert Johnson's "Near Nowra N.S.W." This purchase was made from John Haley of Fine Arts New Zealand Ltd. by Trustee Duncan in 1930. In 1931 Dean Askew offered to bring over to Nelson a second collection of pictures sent to him by a London dealer. Three works from the exhibition sold but were not purchased for the collection. [59]

It is noted that in 1932 a letter was received from Frank Emanuel of London stating that he had shipped 167 etchings at the suggestion of Cock for exhibition in Nelson and other centres. [60] The exhibition was opened on October 5th 1932 by Lord Bledisloe. The Suter Art Society purchased three etchings and presented them to the Gallery (works by Blundell, Osbourne and Van Abbe).

Businesses such as McGregor Wrights in Wellington had provided services to art galleries, such as restoration work, framing and art supplies but dealer galleries (galleries representing artists and selling art works) did not operate in New Zealand until the 1920s.

Edwin Murray Fuller established one of the first dealer galleries in New Zealand in 1920. Between 1920 and 1940 both he and his wife Mary were influential figures in art life in Wellington. Both were at different times on the Council of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts in Wellington and Mary Murray Fuller was on the management committee of the National Art Gallery. The Fullers represented artists such as A. Nicoll, H. Linley-Richardson, N. Welch, F. McCracken, W. Robert Johnson, J. Weeks, T.A. McCormack, D.K. Richmond and F. Scales. In the 1930s the business also included some of England's well known artists such as Lamorna Birch.

The Murray Fullers organised many exhibitions between 1928 and 1940 in which were included 2000 works of contemporary British art. They "sought to educate New Zealand artists and art audiences by offering the work of "eminent" artists from HOME" [61] in the belief that a national style would only develop through contact with work of European and British trained artists. Works were selected mainly from those credited by the Royal Academy.

The exhibitions were "commercial in essence but blended with altruism" and were described as an "unimpeachable source" from which to purchase works of art. [62] While this attitude was generally well accepted some objections were raised. W.H. Allen was concerned that art societies and galleries would confine their purchases to safer and older academicians. There was comment in Art in New Zealand in March 1932 that the Murray Fullers' selections kept to safe and well established names. [63] W.H. Allen commented that "the collections of British art that come to this country from time to time frequently include works that are unwanted elsewhere." [64]

Exhibitions were set up as true examples of contemporary British art but were really selected within narrow parameters.[65] This had a significant restraining effect on the purchase and recognition of New Zealand art. The Empire Loan Collection Society was organised by the Tate Gallery to show a wider field of art and exhibitions. It commenced in 1934 and played a part in acceptance of new developments in art in New Zealand. A wider selection of arts was included in these exhibitions such as graphic arts, miniatures and craftwork as well as paintings. However membership of the Empire Art Loan

Collections Society was not taken up by the Suter Art Gallery Trustees as it was thought that membership was too expensive. [66]

The effect of the Murray Fullers' exhibitions is clearly demonstrated at the Suter Art Gallery. In 1933 an exhibition of etchings and paintings by British artists was held at the Gallery by Mrs. Murray Fuller. Two pictures were purchased from the exhibition. These were "Lavoir en Provence" by New Zealand expatriate painter Sydney Thompson and "Golden Spray" by Julius Ollsson later exchanged for his "Golden Afternoon".[67]

In 1939 Mrs. Murray Fuller presented a painting by Lamorna Birch and also procured for the gallery an oil, "Sangers Circus" by Harry Fidler R.B.A. "a well known English artist". She had arranged the donation via Dr. Mills of Edinburgh (Fidler's niece). Minutes record that five pictures shown at the Murray Fuller exhibition "have been secured". [68] Included were Lucy Kemp-Welch's "A Logger's Fire", "The Shrine" by La Thangue (gifted by H.R. Duncan and described as "one of the most valuable and probably the most admired of all the collection, with its brilliant scenery and atmosphere" [69]) and Terrick Williams A.R.A. "Dover from the Sea". The minutes record that, "The Suter Gallery has been enriched by no less than five of Mr. Murray Fuller's collection".

In 1940 further works were purchased from the Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand and International Art. The exhibition, organised by Mrs. Murray Fuller through the National Art Gallery and Department of Internal Affairs, reached Nelson at the end of 1940. [70] The purchased works were "The Viaduct" by Harry Watson R.W.S, "A London Studio Interior" by H.D. Richter D.O.I., R.B.A. and "Ludlow Castle" by Frank Brangwyn R.A. Funds from the Bartel and Besley Bequests were used to purchase these works. Mrs. Murray Fuller also arranged a donation of a drawing from the widow of Harry Watson .

It was noted that "on account of war conditions no special exhibitions were held during 1940 .. but the Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand and International Art, which was held at the Gallery, was a great success" [71]

The New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition held in Dunedin in 1925-6 indirectly brought another work into the collection in 1940. The work "Paysage du Cher" by Prevot-Valerie had been purchased from the 1925 Exhibition by Sir George Wilson and was later purchased by the Trustees.

While presentations of art from the community added twenty-two pictures to the collection during the period 1930-1940, these were usually works of local artists with associations with the Gallery such as C.A. Sadd, D.K. Richmond and Gully.

In the period up to 1940 the collection at the Suter Art Gallery was strongly influenced by the trend in international exhibitions, pro-active dealer systems operating from England and finally and most noticeably, by the series of exhibitions organised by the Murray Fullers with whom the Gallery established a close relationship with an element of patronage.

It is clear that collecting and in particular purchasing by the Trustees was influenced by a developing awareness of the social acceptability of works by artists with affiliations to the Royal Academy, whose work was being collected by other institutions in New Zealand. They were works which upheld the notion of art as the creation of individual genius rather than local art or the New Zealand landscape painting genre and led to the rejection of the possibility of a wider field of collecting that included craft and photography.

By 1940 there were 205 artworks in the collection. The collection included seventy oil paintings, ninety-two watercolours and forty-two works in other media, photographs, reproductions and objects. 188 or 92% of these works had been gifted to the Gallery by Trustees, relatives of deceased citizens, the Art Society and the general public. Ten works had been purchased by the Trustees with funds from the picture purchase fund which was accrued from bequests and donations. In the early period of collecting before World War One, the majority of purchases and gifts were of New Zealand produced watercolour artwork of New Zealand subjects. (See Appendix VI) The ratio of works by female to male artists in the pre-war period was 1:18. In the period to 1940 the ratio increased to 1:6.

By the 1920s the pattern of collecting had changed from the development of a collection with local associations and locally produced artwork, such as the work of J. Gully and J.C. Richmond to a preoccupation with acquiring British Academic art. The period up until the 1940s was largely concerned with the consolidation of this trend.

Section Two end notes

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68 NEM 22 March 1929

69 NEM 4 June 1940

70 NEM 25 March 1941

3. Modernism

The Acceptance of Modernism: a new cultural field

The influence of international exhibitions had begun to fade by the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand and International Art in 1940. Collecting at the Suter Art Gallery during the Second World War was marked by a significant bequest from Mrs. C.Y. Fell which included works by J. Nairn, E. Atkinson, J. Richmond, O. Merton and T. Somerscales and by the addition of two further P. van der Veldens. Purchases were few and relatively conservative (a C.N. Worsley, S.Thompson and N. Welch).
The loyalty to British art demonstrated by wartime acquisitions overshadowed the growth and acceptance of modernism in New Zealand. Described as "compulsory loyalism" by Sinclair, this support for wartime fund raising through the purchase of traditional art was marked at the Gallery in 1941 by the acquistion of work by Marcus King and Duncan Darroch from the Artists Patriotic Exhibition. Funds from the Besley bequest were used for the purchase. [1]

By the 1930s European modernism had assumed an international character. While an accurate definition of what constitutes "modern" art is an art historical project, the term modernism has come to be understood as an attitude to art rather than a style of art. Brown describes modernism as,

> "art which calls attention to what it is that makes art, accepting that a painting is made on a flat surface, constructed of line, shape, colour, texture and pattern. It is distinguished from realism which is based on naturalism in art." [2]

These changes in artistic practice and understanding led to a development of new forms of art originating in the early twentieth century.

Systematic and broad collections of modern art had begun in America with the opening of the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1929. However no European museum was systematically collecting modern art at this time. Amongst Avant Garde artists there was a growing attitude that museums were obsolete. [3] In New Zealand in the 1920s and 30s collecting was marked by relative dormancy even in the established galleries.[4] In his 1935 speech, "Ideals of Nationhood" Lord Bledisloe stated that there was a lack of expert knowledge and vision in art galleries which he described as the inhibiting factor to

growth of a sound art gallery movement in this country. [5] According to Brown a static outlook on art gallery management was characteristic of the time. [6]

It has also been noted by Brown that for artistic practice too it was a period of relative stasis. [7] Few painters had experienced direct association with modern art movements in Europe and contact with and understanding of European art movements was influenced by a "determination to follow a variant form of what they considered was the British tradition of reasonableness in the visual arts." [8] An artist who had had significant contact with modern art in Europe was Mina Arndt. After returning to New Zealand in 1914 she exhibited widely including with the Suter Art Society on many occasions. An active teacher, she lived in Motueka from 1917 and ran summer painting schools in association with artist and teacher Hugh Scott. She was Vice President of the Nelson District National Art Association. However her work was not purchased for the collection. In 1927, after her death, a painting "Mother and Child" had been presented by her husband Leo Manoy. In 1960 two works were donated followed by a further important collection of six works in 1961. All works were donated by her descendants May and John Manoy. [9]

A growing awareness of the need for individuality and originality among artists resulted in the formation of the New Zealand Society of Artists in 1933.[10] Although the Empire Loan Collection Society, which started touring exhibitions in 1934, had played a part in leading to a wider acceptance of modern art by the New Zealand public for the period of World War Two, the appreciation and practice of modernism in New Zealand remained much as it had been in the 1930s. A.R.D. Fairburn commented that at this time there was an "almost total lack of even moderately good examples of modern art in the country's public art collections". [11]

Modernism in art practice in New Zealand was not clearly apparent until the late 1940s.The influence of developments in art education which brought about changes in attitude to collecting fields and the influence of the activities of Nelson Suter Art Society are discussed in subsequent subsections.

It is notable at the Suter Art Gallery that the departures from a traditionalist tendency in collecting came from gifts rather than from purchases. In 1941 a permanent loan of a painting by Rhona Haszard by the Suter Art Society shows an early and singular departure from the reliance on British art. The painting was "Sardine Fleet, Brittany" painted in 1926. Brown comments that New Zealand artist Rhona Haszard created the

most interesting examples of modernism in New Zealand prior to 1930. This work was recorded as an acquisition in 1958. [12]

The Trustees purchase, in 1947, of a traditional painting by N. Welch and engravings by W. Wright shows a slow acceptance of purchasing work with a modernist approach. In 1947 W.H. Allen and Easterfield resigned from the Board. They were replaced by Mr. Harry Atkinson and Dr. David Miller. Atkinson was a strong supporter of modern art and his influence helped to make the way for the collecting of more modern artwork. He recommended that the Board should purchase more New Zealand contemporary artwork in particular the work of J. Weeks and T. McCormack. The Board resolved not to become a member of the newly formed Association of Art Galleries and Museums as this would entail expense "without any commensurate advantage". [13]

It is the anonymous presentation and reluctant acceptance in 1949 of a gouache named "Ruined Mine, Wales" of 1932 by Frances Hodgkins that marks a beginning of a change in the collecting field. Minutes record that the painting (chosen from two possible gifts of Hodgkins' paintings) would be accepted "on the condition that the painting "Ruined Mine, Wales" is offered to the Gallery free of charge save for the cost of framing and mounting". Trustees Dr. Miller and F. Gibbs "strongly dissented" [14] but the majority agreed to acceptance. [14]
The subscribers felt that "the Suter Art Gallery should have an example of the work of one of "our most famous New Zealand painters". It is also recorded that "she is now generally accepted as one of the greatest English contemporary artists". [15] The picture was hung by itself on a screen in the middle room of the gallery for about a month. [16]

It may be coincidental that by 1950 both Dr Bett and F.G. Gibbs had resigned from the Board. The Gibbs resignation was recorded at the same time as it was reported that the Hodgkins painting "The Pleasure Garden" would be available for showing at the Gallery later in the year. Gibbs had been a Trustee for forty-five years and Secretary for twenty-five years so it seems possible that the controversy may have prompted his resignation at this time. It seemed to him that art and music too were "developing the cult of the ugly". [17]
Gibbs had taken a very active role in the Gallery for fifty years and he felt that a younger generation was needed to cope with the new ideas and developments. By the 1950s changes in collecting patterns at the Gallery are obvious.

The debate between modernists and traditionalists over the merits of collecting modern art became focused and controversial in Christchurch during 1948 and 1949 over Frances Hodgkins' painting "The Pleasure Garden". Shand suggests that Hodgkins was the only possible international figure that New Zealand could claim as "some guiding light" for the establishment of a sense of culture that was unique to New Zealand. [18] The acceptance of the Frances Hodgkins at the Suter Art Gallery follows on the tail of the controversy over "The Pleasure Garden" which caused problems for the Robert McDougall Trustees. Initially six paintings were selected and shown in Christchurch in 1948. However it was later revealed that the majority of the Canterbury Society of Arts' Council had decided not to purchase any of the six paintings.[19] The painting was bought in 1949 in the year of Hodgkins death by public subscription by members of the Canterbury Society of Arts. It was offered to the Christchurch City Council for hanging in the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. The offer was declined and councillors expressed views unfavourable to modern art. Dunedin Public Gallery also initially refused to purchase any of Hodgkins work.[20] However the oil "Still Life with Fruit Dishes" was bought privately and donated.

The "Pleasure Garden" was exhibited around New Zealand in "galleries and retail stores" including the Suter Art Gallery in 1950 along with seven other examples of her gouache and watercolour works. [21] Paintings were lent by local residents and covered the period 1896 to mid 1940s. Included was "Marie" loaned by George Nordstrom which was later presented by Nordstrom to the Gallery. (Hodgkins and Nordstrom earlier had exchanged paintings) . The picture swelled attendances and "greatly improved door takings and picture sales". [22]

The "Pleasure Garden" was finally accepted for the Robert McDougall collection in 1951, three years after first reaching Christchurch. McCormick comments that "the factions which clashed over the hanging of "The Pleasure Garden" in 1949 were to be found in other centres and that it demonstrated the "oppressiveness" of the artistic milieu in New Zealand at the time. [23] Shand suggests that the "Pleasure Garden" incident may be viewed by future art historians as the point from which to date New Zealand's emergence from a colonial status in the arts. [24] At the Suter Art Gallery the acceptance of "Ruined Mine, Wales" was a significant event in the history of the collection.

Lady Mabel Annesley and E.R. Neale were appointed to the Board in 1949 to replace F.G. Gibbs and Dr. Bett. Lady Annesley was an English working artist whose main interest was in print making. She lived in Nelson and Takaka for a short period after the

War. Exhibitions of her woodcuts and linocuts were brought to the gallery by the Council for Adult Education. A significant group of her works is held in the collection. Lady Annesley brought with her a new set of connections and expectations. Irvine Major who remains on the Board in 1997, was also appointed at this time. Other Trust Board members at this time were Cock, Fell and Atkinson. This appears to have been a period of renewed energy at the Gallery. Work on maintenance of the collection increased and there was discussion of a quantity of damaged works "stored in the back room which should be gone through with a view to disposal". [25] Trustees were active in reassessing the condition of works and their suitability for the collection or for rehanging. They also sprayed the walls around the hanging pictures with DDT to overcome a problem with cobwebs. [26]

The Nan-Kivell collection of thirty eight lithographs from London was exhibited in the Institute Room in 1952. It is not noted why they were not hung at the Gallery.The lithographs "created a lot of interest and resulted in many sales of work by well known British Contemporary artists".[27] Mr. Nan-Kivell donated four prints to the Art Society. Entwisle mentions that a substantial gift to Dunedin Public Art Gallery of 152 prints by contemporary British artists by Rex Nan-Kivell of the Redfern Gallery, London allowed a "cautious advance into the mainstream of European Modernism" in Dunedin. [28]

The Suter Art Gallery became a member of the Contemporary Art Society of London in 1950. A letter to the Secretary of the Contemporary Art Society from the Trustees demonstrates a definite change in attitude to collecting, "The trustees are most anxious to take the fullest possible advantage of this opportunity of adding to the Gallery further representational examples of the work of contemporary artists...I think it would be fair to say that the vast majority of our pictures are of the Victorian era, either in date of execution or in inspiration and that it is only in the last three or four years that we have been able to do our duty to the public by hanging works that could be called modern in outlook. Membership of the Contemporary Art Society (CAS) has allowed substantial additions to the collection". [29]

The associations and knowledge of Lady Mabel Annesley were important in establishing this relationship. Membership of the CAS had a significant effect on the collection for the next twenty years and twelve important works came into the collection from this source. In 1952 Lady Annesley was given permission to spend 125 pounds (from the Easterfield bequest) for suitable pictures although the choice was to be finalised by the Board. She was also to choose pictures from the CAS allocation. Allocations were made yearly to

member institutions. Works could be chosen if a Gallery representative was able to be at the Gallery when allocations were made.

The picture chosen for the Easterfield Bequest was "March Landscape" (the Trustees later renamed this work as "Early Spring Landscape") by William Gear. The choice was approved by Tom Easterfield (son of Easterfield) and was endorsed by the CAS and Sir Philip Hendy. The Gear proved to be a very controversial choice.
At the same time a lithograph by Le Brocquy was also selected and accepted by the Trustees. Three further works by Le Brocquy selected by Lady Annesley were not accepted by the Trustees and were purchased by Lady Annesley herself. Adlers "Seated Woman" and two Hermes works on paper were also purchased by the Trustees at this time.

Controversy over the Gear purchase began when Miss Tomlinson of the Art Society wrote expressing her disapproval of the choice for the Easterfield Bequest. A heated discussion took place in the Nelson Evening Mail. A well known local conservative, A.N. Field, wrote that the acceptance of the Hodgkin's painting was questionable but the purchase from bequest money of "March Landscape" required justification. The work was described as "a formless spattering of paint over a canvas, and, so far as it resembles anything, can best be described as a weird or decomposed linoleum pattern put in a frame." [30]

Constance Atkinson replied that the Director of Auckland Art Gallery, Eric Westbrook had publicly and personally congratulated the Trustees upon the acquisition of the Hodgkins and Gear when he visited Nelson at the request of the British Council in December 1952. The debate continued with "Commonsense" writing that before the advent of the "extreme school of modern art the criterion of a good work of art was that it should represent the appearance of reality".[31] The qualities and beauty that the artist finds in nature should be embodied in material form. Modern abstract art was likened to "a deception that could be readily dispelled as the child dispelled the deception of the king's new clothes fairytale." Many opinions were expressed about modern art. "Oriwa" wrote that, "Art is not an imitation of nature, but the imposition of the artists perception upon what he sees." [32] The view of "For Real Art" was that, "It does seem that some of our modern artists are suffering from a new complaint, painters- delirium tremens". [33] "Old Hand" commented that, "None can doubt that the world at large finds its high and enduring pleasure in traditional, not abstract art", and concluded that "..those who spent public money on March Landscape did the community poor service".

This was the first controversial acquisition to the collection and views expressed demonstrate that the public felt that although they were not directly involved in collecting at the Gallery, where gifts of public money were concerned they felt a need to comment . The Gear was later defaced, scribbled on in pencil and a resolution was made to glaze it to preserve it from further damage. [34] A letter was received from Lady Annesley on December 17th 1952 expressing her wish to resign. However the Board was concerned that the resignation be deferred. [35] In 1953 her resignation became final. Her resignation was prompted by the rejection by the Board of some of the other works she had purchased.

It would be possible to conclude that the Nelson public and Suter Art Gallery Trustees were enlightened in their acceptance of the Hodgkins in 1949. It may be that Hodgkins' career had been followed and understood by the community and it is certain that paintings by her were held in private collections locally as they were shown in the exhibition. The 1949 exhibition showed how her work had developed and may have made her mature works more understandable to the public. It is also possible that the public controversy in Christchurch over the "Pleasure Garden" rallied the Nelson public to show that they were progressive. Two members of the board are recorded as objecting strongly to acceptance so it seems curious that the community at large did not express its opinions about modernism at this time.

Rather than the Hodgkins the Gear painting seems to have been a watershed for the debate over modernism and marks an important turning point for the collection.
In 1953 there were changes to the Board with C.H. Broad resigning and W.Jaques taking up the position of Secretary. G.L. Wells became a member in 1954.
Cock made a donation of 100 pounds for picture repairs, cataloguing and rehanging. An application was made to the Nelson City Council to increase the annual grant to 100 pounds. It appears that the need to improve the gallery was a concern at this time. The Annual Report for 1953 records Major reporting on proposals for improvement of the gallery - rehanging of pictures, storage of pictures, improved lighting and ventilation. The possibility of having a catalogue printed was also discussed.
It is interesting to note that "as members of the City Council" Jaques and Neale were able to increase the annual grant from 50 to 100 pounds in 1956. [36]
While acquisition of modern works remained slow, further modern acquisitions did follow such as a McCahon painting presented by J. Caselberg in 1955. The return of this painting was requested in 1963 as it had not been hung. The request was declined. [37]
Purchases were made of two paintings by J. Weeks and two by T. McCormack .

The collection of modern works in a wider range of media was continued by allocations from the Contemporary Art Society (Gwynne Jones, Norris, Wood, Gross) and purchases such as Biese and Rouault lithographs. Further lithographs were purchased from the New Editions Group (by Rothenstein and Piper). A screenprint by Leger and an etching by Young were presented by H.T. Atkinson (a Trustee and supporter of modern art) in 1958. In 1959 three drawings by M.T. Woollaston were examined for possible collection but a decision was deferred although Woollaston had been working in the Nelson area since the 1930s and no examples of his work were held in the collection at this point.[38]
A significant presentation of six modern works with a value of 1000 pounds was made in 1959 by Mrs. Mollie Steven, a member of the Suter Art Society (MacKenzie, Gross, Hitchens, Uhlman, Bott and Wynter) From the 1950s there is noticeable trend to the collection of works in a variety of media within the fine arts category (linocuts, wood and copper engravings, etchings, dry points and lithographs).

By 1956 New Zealand was beginning to experience new influences and changes in the cultural field. Modernism had become increasingly associated with abstraction and non-objective art. American art was becoming a significant cultural influence.[39] New Zealand artists Weeks, Field, Perkins, McCahon, Woollaston, Mrkusich and Walters had difficulty in having their paintings accepted for public display during this period. A new more international outlook led to an abstract painting style which used New Zealand imagery and icons in a new way. By 1956 Walters had begun to evolve a style of painting which acknowledged Maori culture by utilizing the koru motif. Many of these artists were not represented in public collections at this time and were only represented at the Suter in the 1970s, often after their work was donated.

This tendency was reflected in other galleries in New Zealand. The Dunedin Public Art Gallery in the 1950s articulated a concern with developing a collection of "acknowledged merit" rather than an occupation with the new and less acceptable New Zealand art.[40] In Hawkes Bay in the 1950s Bestall is described as having a personal preference for European and British art over New Zealand art. There was still a common belief that British art was superior to New Zealand art. Little purchasing of regional artists occurred in Hawkes Bay in the 1950s.[41] At the Suter Art Gallery it was only in the 1960s that a change in attitude to collecting contemporary New Zealand art work occurred.[42]

In the twenty years between 1940 and 1960 collecting at the Suter Gallery had undergone significant changes. The War years had been largely static for the development of the arts in New Zealand and the effects of modernism were only beginning to be felt at the end of the decade. Significant and controversial works of art were brought into the collection in the early 1950s. These changes were brought about through a gradual acceptance of modern art and a renewed recognition of the importance of New Zealand art. While changes in Trust Board membership were an important factor in bringing about change, other agencies were involved. These were educational initiatives in New Zealand and their local application and the work of the Nelson Suter Art Society.

The influence of art education

In Nelson the acceptance of modernism and its reflection in collecting at the Suter Art Gallery is connected with educational developments. While the association of museums with education has been close, external forces for education have also had a strong influence. [43]
The inclusion or exclusion of aspects of culture from the syllabus are known to have a wide influence on cultural development. Spoonley et al. comment that educational policy decisions made in the 1950s led to a renaissance of interest in Maori language, arts and crafts. [44] Involvement of Suter Art Gallery Trustees and Art Society members in educational developments had always been strong and many of the original Trustees had education as a central interest in their public lives. This interest in education seems to have been a dominant theme in the history of the Gallery.

In New Zealand, art education was affected by the philosophies and practices of teachers who arrived in New Zealand from the 1880s onwards. The arrival in the 1890s of Nerli, Nairn and van der Velden was very important.Their importation of the French Barbizon painters' philosophy of naturalism was unsettling for some colonial painters. The solid nature of New Zealand painting and teaching had been epitomized by Archibald Nicoll who taught at Elam and the Canterbury Society of Arts with Cecil Kelly, and Linley Richardson who taught in Wellington. Their attitude was that observation, formal study, drawing and draughtsmanship were essential to an artist's training. [45]

In the 1890s the Education Department was controlled by a liberal government. Secondary education became universally available. At this time The School Society disbanded in Nelson making its building available for the new Suter Art Gallery. Local Education Boards extended their involvement with art schools such as Elam School of Art and Design, Canterbury School of Art as well as Wellington and Dunedin art schools. In common with art societies the period 1906-1910 was a very dynamic period in the art educational field.

There was increased educational activity during the twenties with educational experiments in many countries which began in the war years.[46] The Minister of Education, J. A. Hanan, undertook a Commission of Enquiry in 1912. One of his recommendations was the extension of technical education and grading of teachers. New developments in art education were influenced by John Dewey, a prominent American educationalist, who saw educational value as a combination of the aesthetic and moral. His book "Democracy and Education" published in 1916 stressed the integration of art as part of the school curriculum for its educational, moral and democratic value.

A 1938 editorial in Art in New Zealand stated,

> "It may not be generally realised that one of the most potent factors in the development of art in this dominion has been the policy of the authorities responsible for technical education in New Zealand of encouraging adequately trained and fully qualified art instructors to come here from overseas." [47]

In 1919 William Saunderson La Trobe was appointed Superintendent of Technical Education. His immediate aim was to improve the quality of art instruction in New Zealand and to train art teachers. The La Trobe Scheme started in 1922. In 1925 W.H. Allen and R.N. Field arrived to teach at Dunedin Technical School.

Field has been described by Peterson as a key figure in the emergence of modernism in New Zealand.[48] Despite established conservative attitudes and the suspicion of modern art in general, Field was able to bring about significant changes in art appreciation and attitudes to art education. Field offered an alternative to the conservative teaching of Nicoll and others. His associate Allen had resigned from the directorship of Dunedin School of Art (at the Technical School) in 1930 and gone back to England, but in 1934 he returned to Nelson as art teacher at Nelson College. [49] The influence of the La Trobe Scheme and educational developments began to be felt in Nelson.

W. H. Allen was very influential during the time he spent in Nelson. He was President of the new Association of Art Societies, President of the Suter Art Society from 1941-46, held a position on the Board (from which he resigned in 1947) and taught at Nelson College (preceding Irvine Major who took over the position in 1949). Allen's influence was felt mainly through his teaching and educational involvement but also through his encouragement of modernism and his contacts with young New Zealand artists such as Kennedy, Maclennan, Woollaston, Hamblett, McCahon, Dickinson and Lusk.

The continual advocacy of teachers gradually brought changes to the curriculum at higher levels and art was recognised and became established as a subject. This led to a much more aware public and school leavers who were interested in art and encouraged the arts infrastructure to develop. [50] Irvine Major saw the effects of this locally and stated that after the War there was tremendous demand for art education and adult classes. He personally taught four adult classes (and organised a further one) a week at one stage. [51]

Art and craft teaching continued to develop in Nelson in the 1950s. Cliff Whiting and Lawson Fraser were working as art specialists for the Education Department in the Nelson Region. Because of their association with Maori culture a resurgence of interest in aspects of Maori culture began to be felt. Training classes in art were run for primary school teachers in a Collingwood Street premises at this time. Molly Stevens was also involved in children's art education and carried out a project teaching in remote North Island settlements.

Figures such as Allen, and later Major and Stevens, made modern art more acceptable to the community through an educational approach. The influence of educational initiatives were far reaching for the community and these were reflected in broadened attitudes to art and to the role of New Zealand art. This response developed from general developments in educational theory and practice. Changes in the educational structure and initiatives in Nelson and their effect on collecting were tied to shifts in the cultural field. While not reflected in immediate changes to collecting patterns, changes were reflected in the broadening of Suter Art Society activities and in Art Society contributions to the collection.

The role of the Nelson Suter Art Society

Because the Art Society and the Gallery Trust Board had members in common there was Art Society representation on the Board of the Gallery from the beginning. The Art Society provided a source of voluntary assistance for Gallery activities before the employment of a Director in 1976. Although the Art society had no role in decision making it is difficult to separate the direct effect that the Art Society had on the collection. Art Society loans and gifts have officially formed only 2% of the collection. [52] However many significant works have reached the collection indirectly from Art Society sources. The most notable of these works is the group of six contemporary works gifted by M. Steven in 1959 (see page 37) Art Society gifts appear to have been more supportive of work with New Zealand and local origins. As early as 1919 the Art Society is recorded as loaning two Emily Harris paintings to the Gallery.[53] Works donated by M.Naylor mentioned later in this section also illustrate this point.

The foundation of galleries in New Zealand was often closely related to associated art societies. Most major art societies developed during the 1870-1890s . In the main centres, the Auckland Society of Artists was founded in 1869, in Dunedin the Otago Art Society in 1875, the Canterbury Society of Arts in 1880 and Wellington Art Society in 1882. The smaller South Canterbury area formed an Art Society in 1895.[54]

Art societies helped create a general public awareness of art and provided a background for serious developments in painting after 1890. They provided a forum for the idea shared by New Zealand cultural groups that one of the amenities essential to a city was a "sturdy art gallery". An art gallery was seen as a "symbol of civic pride and aspiration, educational in function but also morally elevating". Existence of a permanent collection became a powerful tool in the gaining of support of the art societies for the establishment of galleries. [55] The usual justification for formation of the art society was its educational role and the provision of services similar to that of a public art gallery including the acquisition of works for permanent collections. [56]

As in other galleries many of the key figures on the Suter Art Gallery Trust Board were also involved in the Art Society and their development was strongly linked. This relationship has been fundamental to the growth of the Gallery and its collections. The Society has made significant donations to the permanent collection over the years. At times the only source of revenue for gallery activities was from exhibitions promoted by the Art Society.[57]

Although the Gallery became an independent entity with a new constitution in 1932, the Gallery remained financially dependent on the Art Society. In 1978 this relationship was formalised with an agreement which acknowledged the assistance of the Art Society and granted the Art Society guaranteed use of the Gallery exhibition space for two annual exhibitions and use in perpetuity of the McKee Gallery, Grabham Studio and its storeroom. While financial dependence is no longer a factor in the relationship, the Gallery continues to play a supportive role in maintaining the McKee Gallery and giving assistance in exhibition work.

When art societies formed at the end of the nineteenth century definitions of art tended to be broader than the academic definition of art which prevailed in the galleries. Well into the 1900s the ideas generated by William Morris continued to influence the definition of art. In the early 1900s the acceptance of art and craft was supplanted by a growing trend toward viewing the artist as individual genius and a redefining of art as fine art. One of the most significant contributions of the Arts and Crafts Movement was the conviction that the old academic distinction between fine and minor arts was no longer applicable because all forms of art had a place in everyday life. [58] As a direct result of the British craft exhibited at Christchurch International Exhibition in 1906 the idea of the inclusion of handcrafts in exhibitions was accepted by most art societies and there was often a section for arts and crafts in annual exhibitions.(see Appendix V) Drawings and etchings were also displayed for their own intrinsic worth. The naming of later art societies such as the Napier Society of Arts and Crafts (founded in 1924 with Hipkins as president) suggests a broader attitude to art. [59]

In March 1932 a resolution was proposed by Hugh Scott of the Suter Art Society that "in future, exhibitions should have an Arts and Crafts section". This would include sculpture, modeling, metal work, art needlework, weaving and allied crafts. In September 1932 a successful exhibition was held in which enamel work was prominent. Metal work and needlework also drew comment. [60]

Before 1914 art societies were the main venue through which professional and amateur painters showed their work to the wider community. However tensions began to develop between professional and amateur artists. These may have been related to the growing differences in attitudes to art, a broad versus narrow view. By the 1920s private exhibitions were becoming more frequent. This began increasingly to weaken the internal structure of most of the societies. [61] A decline in interest in art societies occurred from the early 1920s and was the result of changing social and artistic patterns.

The growing awareness of the need for professional and amateur separation was one aspect of changing patterns and it resulted in the formation of the New Zealand Society of Artists in 1933. Control of this Society was to remain with its artist members. Its ideal was to

> "encourage original art and the development in artistic achievement among New Zealand artists, to interest the public in the "living" movements in art and foster the understanding and appreciation of original work; to encourage and assist students in the same directions". [62]

The association grew out of dissatisfaction with established institutions which at this time were purchasing and supporting British academic art.

1930 saw the formation of the New Zealand Association of Art Societies. In Nelson the 1932 affiliation with the Association and the decision to hold art unions had major repercussions for the Society and caused a rift in art circles which took some years to mend. The introduction of art unions and incorporation was particularly controversial, with many older members objecting strongly. Art unions are a lottery system where artworks may be won from an exhibition. They were seen by some as a form of immoral gambling.

A proposal had been made by Trustee Fell in 1917 to hold art unions and Gibbs had strongly objected. [63] Gibbs resigned from the Art Society. In 1938 the name of the Society changed to the Nelson Suter Art Society Incorporation and changes in personnel were made causing controversy that involved the whole community. Mann comments that "a certain bitterness in regard to the Society survived until after the Second World War".[64]

The old agreement with the Gallery under which the Society was largely involved in collecting funds for the Gallery ended. At that time the Society had contributed about 450 pounds to the Gallery and several valuable paintings. [65] The Gallery had therefore lost some of its financial support. In the early 1940s Gibbs tried to get support from the Carnegie Corporation but found that to do so the Trustees would have to employ a full-time curator and receive a minimum amount from municipal subsidies and endowments.[66] The failure to procure funding from the Carnegie Corporation and to involve a full-time curator at this time was critical to the future development of the Gallery and collection.

The Art Society continued to develop by expanding its educational approach. By affiliating with ANZAS it became eligible for "Rota Exhibitions". Exhibitions were made up from work collected by the parent society from all art societies.[67] The 1933 Rota Exhibition included craft exhibits: pewter, brass, Limoges enamel work and marquetry. There was some dissatisfaction that a number of leading New Zealand artists had not been represented as this had been the principle object of the scheme. [68]

There was growing criticism by the Suter Art Society of the Gallery at this time. A comment was reported that "a considerable number of pictures on the walls of the Gallery are not of a quality that entitles them a place in the Gallery". [69]

The Society continued to act as an important agency for art education and in 1936 the Society opened an exhibition of children's art which was claimed to be the first of its kind held in New Zealand. In 1937 Allen proposed starting an Art Club which was to be held in the Institute Room for discussion, criticism and demonstrations of art. The Club was successful and met monthly sometimes at Nelson College, where discussions were held about the possibility of gaining a Carnegie Grant. [70] Allen also lectured, explaining reproductions of masterpieces of contemporary art. A Sketch Club was developed where working members met once a month and this continued for a number of years.

World War Two led to a disruption to activities and in 1942 the Nelson Suter Art Society went into recess. An Annual General Meeting was not held again until 1946. Allen became President of ANZAS and also became the Art Society's representative on the Board when the Trustees agreed in 1942 to co-opt a member of Society on to the Board.

Donations to the collection from Art Society sources continued. Miss M. Naylor presented two pictures to the Society, one by Hugh Scott and one by Rhona Haszard which were possibly part of the late Hugh Scott's private collection from the Nelson School of Painting which had been taken over by her.

In 1947 Allen took leave of absence from his position at the College but did not return. Irvine Major took the position as Head of the Art Department at Nelson College 1949-1982 and Trustee of the Suter Art Gallery from 1952 to the present day. [71]

By the 1950s the Art Society was revitalised and the decade was a very active one for members of the Art Society. Some interesting innovations occurred. In 1952 at the March exhibition an innovation was a pottery section made up of articles lent by Nelson residents. It is not clear whether the pottery was New Zealand in origin.
By 1953 the Association of New Zealand Art Societies was no longer organising Rota Exhibitions and the Art Society decided to invite guest artists to replace the Rota Exhibitions. Director of the National Art Gallery, Mr. S.B. Maclennan opened the Autumn Exhibition in 1953 and displayed his own work. The Spring exhibition in 1954 included eight guest artists and films on a wide variety of topics were shown. In 1956 the Society began to write articles for the newspaper on pictures in the Suter Art Gallery collection. [72]

The influence of teachers continued to be strong. Miss A.M. Davies (later Mrs. M. Steven) was a teacher who after training in Christchurch visited Canada and the United States. She studied at the Toronto Art Gallery and Children's Art Centre and later at the Hammersmith School of Art in London. She specialised in teaching art to children and for two and a half years worked with East Coast Maori. In 1952-53 she was in charge of Preparatory Department of Nelson College for Girls. She also gave lectures locally and was very involved in the Art Society. [73] Mrs. Steven later presented six works by leading English and Continental artists to the collection. [74] Among those whose association with the Gallery was through the Art Society were Mrs. Grabham (F.V. Hall) and Rex Marple.

Over the years much thought and effort were spent on publicity and membership drives. Often the motivation was to allow improvements to the Gallery to be made such as lighting, bays and general care of the collection, storage racks, remounting and reframing of some of the older pictures including works by John Gully.

Development of crafts in early sixties was New Zealand wide and the Nelson development of a crafts industry was paralleled in Hawkes Bay and the Coromandel. In Hawkes Bay the development had strong associations with the "Pottery Group" which in the sixties organised workshops with Blumhardt, Castle and others as tutors. [75] In Nelson this movement was fostered initially by Art Society. The art society purchased the first ceramic work for the collection (a ceramic sculpture by Muriel Moody). However the broadening attitude to art and possible new collecting fields was not taken up by the Gallery at this time nor was it reflected in immediate changes in collection development.

The sixties

In the 1960s collecting at the Suter Art Gallery developed a more structured and active nature. There was a redefinition of the collecting direction which was expressed in the preparation by the Trustees of a list of New Zealand artists whose work they intended to collect.

Management and reassessment of the collection continued. Some paintings were selected for destruction. [76] Among these were two van der Velden's ("An Alpine Valley" and "Heathcote Summit"). Four further paintings were to be destroyed two of which were by G.L. Seymour. A painting by van der Velden named "The Wishing Well" was presumably also destroyed as it was recorded as "not to be catalogued". [77]

Significant gifts included the John and May Manoy presentation of a collection of six artworks by Mina Arndt. In 1962 a painting by Edward Fristrom was presented by Mr. D.H. Shortt. The Kidson Bequest which included five Gully paintings was also received.

The Board at this time consisted of Adams as Chair, Tomlinson, Hodgson, Jaques, Jones, Major, Parr and Wells.[78]

Issues for discussion in the early sixties included the proper supervision of the gallery, which was becoming a problem. A suggestion was made by Board members that the Gallery cut back its hours to those hours where supervision by volunteers could be arranged. The need for the provision of conveniences was also discussed. [79] In 1964 a "Friends of the Gallery" group was proposed by the Board as Gallery redevelopment was becoming a pressing need. The level of concern over the state of the storeroom was increasing and it needed replacement. The Art Society offered to initiate fundraising for this purpose.
In 1963 the first definite policy statement about acquisitions is recorded. [80] The main points are that works of art by New Zealand painters should be purchased, and when funds permitted, the purchase of prints and other works by overseas artists should be made. Major was asked to prepare a list of New Zealand artists whose work should be represented in the collection. The formulation of this policy which remained informal, (that is it did not become part of a public document, collections policy statement until 1989), demonstrates a growing awareness of the advantages of operating within a policy structure.

Acquisitions for the mid 1960s included Lanyon's "Dark Beach", a CAS allocation, McDiarmid's "Pear Tree", Sutton's "Behind Canterbury" and Major's "Land Form Series 1" which were all purchased. Gifts included Mervyn Taylor's "Kingfisher", Stoddart's "Roses" and Sir John Illot's gift of etchings. A further John Gully was presented. The artist Louise Henderson presented a painting by J. Weeks.

In 1965 the guest speaker at an Art Society opening, Mr. Russell Bond, (a Wellington art critic and journalist) commented that at that date the National Art Gallery did not have one painting by McCahon or Woollaston in its collection and complimented Society on its openness to abstract art. [81] The Gallery was developing a reputation for progressiveness and openness to new developments. The collection did at this time have a work by McCahon received by gift although no works by Woollaston entered the collection until 1971. The reputation for openness probably came from the involvement of prominent artists in Art Society exhibitions which was seen as demonstrating an openness to modernism at a time when other Art Societies were criticised for not being so. Between 1968-70 guest artists who supported and exhibited with the Art Society included M.T. Woollaston, L. Henderson, J. Drawbridge, P. Hanly, M. Moody, E. Mayo, B. Brickell and D. Blumhardt.

The mid 1960s was a time of interchange with speakers, tutors and art work from all over New Zealand. Neale commented that the aim of the Society to reach out into the community and foster an awareness of art in its various forms was being achieved. [82] By 1966 serious fundraising for extensions to the Gallery began. The Art Society also began "outreach exhibitions" in Motueka in 1969 and 1970 and again in 1977.[83]

By 1966 attendances at the Gallery were estimated to be between 12,000 and 15,000 however the City Council would commit no further help than a increased annual grant. [84] In 1968 the grant remained at 400 pounds, the same as the previous year. Involvement and concern from other Galleries and commentators is noticeable in the late sixties reflecting a growing professional network in the arts in New Zealand. Maynard of the Govett-Brewster Gallery, New Plymouth, suggested in 1969 that the conservator Lloyd in Auckland might be able to restore the van der Velden's held in the collection. It was possible that AGMANZ (The Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand) would meet half the cost of conservation. During the same period G. Docking, an art historian, expressed concern at the condition of the Suter Art Gallery and the Campbell Portrait in particular.[84.1]

Ceramics in Nelson

Until the 1960s New Zealand had been an extension of the European and British economy. Since the 1960s there has been an attempt to reorientate to the Pacific and Asia which has been reflected in the arts sector. New Zealand had been influenced by new British and American media influences. Social movements of the sixties led to new directions for the Gallery and collection growth for the next 30 years.
Since the mid 1960s global changes, social breakdown and political unrest led to an attitude to art that began to encompass new materials and ideologies and to cross disciplinary and cultural boundaries. This period also saw a reemergence of the arts and crafts movement with some artists collaborating or working collectively and a growing dissatisfaction with the "artist as genius" interpretation of art. [85] The revival of interest in crafts was a world wide phenomenon. In 1964 the World Craft Council was formed reflecting the resurgence of interest in craft.The World Craft Council New Zealand Chapter was also formed during the 1960s. Visual arts had become an important part of the school curriculum and in New Zealand the abundant supply of local clay and wool meant that crafts based on these materials could easily be introduced into schools with little expense. [86] The Department of Education also organised adult education classes during the 1950s and 60s in response to the increasing public interest in pottery. Although there is little written generally about this movement as reflected in New Zealand and Nelson some publications describe individual Nelson craftspeople and their artistic production in detail. It is apparent that some communal artistic activities flourished in the region of which the most notable were the ceramics industry and potters associations.

Pioneer potters in New Zealand had begun to build kilns in the 1940s and 50s. Mirek Smisek arrived in Nelson in 1951 and after some experimentation with clay types decided to make pottery a full-time occupation. He became one of New Zealand's first full-time potters. Barry Brickell, Len Castle and Terry Barrow also arrived to explore for clay and contribute to discussion about pottery development in Nelson. In 1958 Smisek was asked to teach at Nelson Technical School. Large numbers of adult students also took classes. In the late 1950s and 1960s Suter Art Society members became interested in his work and others took up pottery. Nancy Barnicoat took up studio pottery in Nelson and in 1959 replaced Smisek as tutor at Nelson Technical School. A District Art and Craft Advisor for the Education Board, Lawson Fraser, was an important early influence in getting pottery established in the region. [87]

In the 1960s increasing numbers of English craftspeople immigrated from the United Kingdom, partly in response to social unease about the threat of nuclear war. Harry and May Davis arrived in Nelson in late 1962. Their pots were sold as "Crewenna" pots. [88] Jack and Peggy Laird arrived in 1964 and established the Waimea Pottery. They set up an important apprenticeship scheme which played a major role in introducing formally trained potters into the district. Many went on to establish their own potteries in the region. [89] By 1964 pottery was a special feature at the Art Society Spring Exhibition. Smisek organised a drive to purchase a Moody ceramic sculpture for the gallery collection which was accessioned in 1969 making it the first ceramic in the collection. [90] One of most successful fund-raisers was the yearly Handcraft exhibition involving an admission charge and demonstrations. These continued during Christmas holidays and every year until taken over by the Gallery after the appointment of the Director. By 1972 the demonstrations were so popular that 300 attended one opening. Potters emerged as an important force, including Laird, Barnicoat, Vine, Vendelbosch, McGlashen and Macmillan. Warren states that,

> "the seventies was a boom time for pottery in Nelson.
> It was a time when many people were questioning society's expectations and values and opting for a return to a basic self-sufficient life." [91]

The independent pottery groups which were to play a major part in the development of pottery in Nelson became established. (Craft Potters Nelson 1973, Motueka Pottery Workshop 1974, Nelson Community Potters in 1976 and Nelson Potters Association in 1979). By the 1970s weaving too had become an accepted feature of exhibitions.

To make space for expanded activities, in 1972 the old wooden storeroom was demolished to make room for an extension to the middle gallery, a lecture room and storeroom.

Many of the directions the Gallery would follow in the 1970s and beyond were developed by the Art Society in the 1950s and 60s. There was an educational emphasis, outreach programmes, associations with professional artists, galleries and associations in Nelson and in other areas. Activities had grown to the extent that the employment of a Director was inevitable. [92] By 1968 up to twelve exhibitions a year were being hung by the Trustees.

The Gallery and Art Society relationship was critical to collection development. In Nelson the working membership was particularly strong and consistent with important local artists and teachers involved.

This had a definite effect on the collection as some of the most important and landmark works in the collection came through Art Society membership, the Steven's Gift for example. The Art society also established a broad approach to arts and crafts and regular craft exhibitions were held as well as fundraising sales of pottery. Some important joint purchases (with Trustees) were made, such as the Bancroft sculptural piece, a departure from the mainstream of collecting. Later a Moody ceramic sculpture was purchased by the Art Society on the encouragement of potter Smizek. [93]

Financial separation of the Art Society from the Gallery is a recent phenomenon and is reflected in the decrease in the number of works accessioned from Art society sources Since 1969 no works have come directly from this source. [94] Separation is related to the growth of professionalism, employment of the first director, and redevelopment of the Gallery.

In the period 1940-1970 collecting at the Suter Art Gallery changed from a preoccupation with collecting British academic art to a gradual acceptance of modernism as seen in the collection of a work by Hodgkins and the controversial purchase of the Gear painting. A move toward collecting modern art was consolidated by membership of the CAS and by other donations of art. Collecting continued at a steady rate throughout these years. Gifts and bequests from all sources in 1940 made up 92% of the collection. In 1970 these made up 85% of acquistions, while purchases accounted for 11% up from 5% in 1940. A trend to extend the field of collecting is reflected in an increase in works other than traditional paintings to 33% of the collection in 1970, from 20% in 1940 (see Appendix VI, Graphic 4).The ratio of female to male artists increased slightly from 1:6 in 1940 to 1:5 in 1970.

Section Three end notes

1 Sinclair K. 1959 : 240
2 Brown G.1975 :29
3 Brown G ibid :29
4 ibid :24
5 ibid
6 ibid
7 ibid
8 ibid :12 :24
9 SAG Acquisitions Register
10 Brown G. 1975 : 55
11 Brown G. in Art NZ : V30:31
12 SAG Acquisitions Register.
13 SAG Minutes 19 July 1947
14 SAG Minutes 19 Aug. 1949
15 NEM 13 Sept. 1949
16. SAG Minutes 8 Sept. 1949
17 Mann S. 1977 :135
18 Shand P.1990 p40
19 McCormick E. 1954 :225
20 Shand P. 1990 :41
21 NEM 14 Oct. 1950
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23 McCormick E. 1954: 257
24 Shand P. 1990 :54
25 SAG Minutes 30 Mar. 1950 and 15 Oct. 1951
26 SAG Minutes 5 Feb. 1950
27 SAG Minutes 1950
28 Entwisle P. 1990
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30 SAG Minutes Dec 6 1952.
31 SAG Minutes Dec 9 1952
32 SAG Minutes Dec 11 1952
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34 SAG Minutes 18th March 1953
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37 SAG Minutes 14 Feb. 1963
38 SAG Minutes 24 Feb. 1960
39 Brown G 1975 :54
40 Entwisle P. 1990
41 Fea R. and Pishief S.
42 SAG Chairman's Report 19 June 1963
43 Zolberg V. 1986
44 Spoonley P. et al 1982 :373
45 Brown G. 1975 :30
46 Bateman 1992 :359
47 Art New Zealand no 40 June 1938 :187
48 Peterson A. Manawatu Art Gallery 1989 :39
49 Art in New Zealand 4 December 1931 :122
50 Taylor J.M. interview with Irvine Major 1997
51 Ibid
53 Appendix Graphic No
54 Keith H. Tomory P and Young 1968 : 5 2
55 Trevelyan J 1988 :18-19
56 Calhoun A. 19 :9
57 Brown G. 1972
58 ibid 1972 :22
59 Fea R. and Pishief S. 1996 :18
60 Neale J. 1989 :16
61 Brown G.1975 :7
laurencelaurencelaurrenccce62 Art in New Zealand no 21 Sept. 1933 :24
63 SAG Minutes 1917
64 Mann S. 1977 :131
65 SAG Annual Report 31 Dec 1932.
66 ibid

67 Neale J. 1989 :17
68 ibid :19
69 ibid :20.
70 ibid :24
71 Taylor J.M. interview with Irvine Major Aug. 1997
72 Neale J 1989 :40
73 Taylor J.M. interview with Irvine Major Aug. 1997
74 SAG Acquisitions Register
75 Fea R and Pishief 1996 :66
76 SAG Minutes 30 Nov. 1960
77 ibid
78 SAG Minutes 30 Nov. 1960
79 ibid
80 SAG Chairman's Report 19 June 1963
81 Neale J. 1989: 55
82 ibid
83 ibid
84 SAG Minutes 1966
84.1 SAG Annual Meeting Minutes 15 April 1970 p98
85 Beatson P. and Cox S. in Spoonley et al 1982 :357
86 Blumhardt D. and Brake B. 1981 : 2
87 Taylor J.M, interview with Irvine Major Aug. 1997
88 ibid
89 Warren J. 1992 :20
90 SAG Acquisitions Register
91 Warren J. 1992: 23
92 Taylor J.M. interview with Irvine Major Aug. 1997
93 SAG Acquisitions Register
94 SAG Acquisitions Register

4.Contemporary Issues 1970-1997

This section examines the development of the collection from the 1970s to the present day. It covers the shifts that have occurred in collecting practices as a response to further changes in the cultural field. The first consideration is the development of arts infrastructure and professionalism in the arts in New Zealand and the Gallery's responses to these. Major initiatives of the period, the Gallery redevelopment, the start of the ceramics collection and the Goodman-Suter Biennale are discussed and their effect on the collection is examined. The ways in which the Gallery Trustees and the first Director responded to the changing circumstances of this period are discussed with deaccessioning examined as a response to economic pressures. The changes in collecting brought about by the new Director and the effect of post-modernism are outlined. Issues considered are the place of women's art and Maori art in the collection. The future of collecting at the Suter Art Gallery is discussed. The section ends with main conclusions.

Professionalising the Institution

The development of the arts infrastructure in New Zealand and increased professionalism after World War Two created an environment where employment of a Director at the Suter Art Gallery was eventually a necessity. Increasing professionalism in the arts in New Zealand from the 1960s onwards affected artistic and museum practice and was connected with a burgeoning arts administration and funding infrastructure. Although professionalism in the arts was not as highly developed in New Zealand as in England or the United States of America the trend was marked in the 1970s by the public expectation of higher standards. [1] There was also increasing public involvement in the arts at local and national levels.

The developing infrastructure supported the growth and development of Gallery relationships with other institutions such as other public and dealer galleries, educational institutions, polytechnics and art and craft schools. At the Suter Art Gallery the Art Society was particularly active in fostering relationships with artists and other institutions, as has been discussed above.

A marked rise in the level of funding and the development of a network of public and semi-public administrative institutions occurred during this period. At the local level since

the 1960s, municipal authorities were actively encouraged to promote cultural activities and to provide cultural facilities such as art galleries and theatres. With the Department of Internal Affairs as an umbrella organisation, quasi-autonomous bodies such as the Queen Elizabeth the Second Arts Council (recently reconstituted as Creative New Zealand) were established with its associated network of local arts councils. In Nelson the Nelson Provincial Arts Council formation preceded the Act which established the Arts Council structure nationally. There were rising levels of involvement and funding by local authorities. Between 1977-78 there was an increase of a third to 3.5 million dollars in arts spending for the whole country. [2] Considerable regional variation existed however with Palmerston North spending well above average and Nelson spending below it. [3]

In 1976 the Suter Art Gallery Trust Board employed its first director, Mr. Austin Davies. This was followed by the employment of professional staff (a curator) and gradually other Labour Department subsidised workers. The Gallery ceased to exist solely on voluntary assistance (largely from Nelson Suter Art Society sources) as it had since establishment. The possibility of more funding from the Department of Internal Affairs was an added incentive for possible extensions to the building and joint-funding for collection purchases. These significant changes meant that Gallery expansion became a certainty.

New Director Austin Davies brought to the position a wide variety of work experiences. He had not worked in museums previously, did not have museum training and admitted that he was "not a perfectionist about museum standards". His background was in teaching art and design. [5] He trained and taught at Liverpool University Art School and London Polytechnic where he had studied for fifteen years. Davies was involved with art societies in Liverpool, at the Walker Art Gallery, and was Secretary of the Art Society there. His involvement with John Moore and the subsequent establishment of the John Moore Art Award and National Exhibition gave him a strong feeling for what patronage could do in the arts. The Goodman-Suter Biennale was later patterned on this experience. Austin Davies commented that he made no distinction between art and craft but he believed that to be "art" innovation was required. [6]

Austin Davies had no background in the study of New Zealand art history although the name Hodgkins was familiar to him before his arrival in Nelson. He stated that he knew little about New Zealand art in general or the contemporary scene but made an effort to educate himself through visiting galleries.Through the Arts Council he acquired names of acclaimed New Zealand artists and visited some of them in Auckland. Davies made his

first purchase on behalf of the Gallery before taking up the position (an Albrecht purchased from RKS Gallery in Auckland.)[7]

Davies was aware that the Art Society had had a significant part in setting up and organising some acitivities in the Gallery, as is often the case. He saw the Art Society as the core group of supporters in a small community, the ones with a basic interest in the gallery. In his experience galleries often "shrugged off the art society" after gallery formation. Aware that this could be a cause of suspicion, he arranged in conjunction with Tony Doogue (President of NSAS) a mechanism to reduce the likelihood of conflict with the Art Society. There would be an Art Society representative (the President) on the Board and the Director would be on the Art Society Committee although they would not have voting powers.

Plans for major redevelopment of the building began in 1976. When the new Director arrived at the Suter he saw that "it was inadequate" particularly in the storage of the permanent collection and in the lack of appropriate control of environmental conditions in which works were shown (leading to high UV levels and fluctuating humidity). He recognised that the collection could be "a weapon". In New Zealand terms he saw it was a good collection with exceptional work by Gully, Richmond and others. He believed that storage was substandard and could provide a reason to galvanize the community for modernisation. Austin Davies also saw that the "only way forward was to buy contemporary works as other works were too expensive" and this formed an important part of his unwritten collecting strategy. [8]

While in 1972 modest improvements had been made with demolition of the old wooden storeroom to make an extension to the middle gallery, a lecture room and storeroom, Davies began a much more ambitious programme of improvement. He began a campaign to develop the Gallery on the same site and in 1978 demolition of some parts of the old building and construction of major extensions to the Gallery began. Primary objectives of the gallery redevelopment were the upgraded care and display of the permanent collection which was known to be deteriorating rapidly due to constant temperature and humidity fluctuations and through the effects of daylight. Maximization of the location and premises to ensure the widest possible use by the public and realisation of tourist potential was also considered very important. A design would be developed which would allow the building to operate with a minimum of staff and a minimum of running costs and with maximum flexibility. [9]

The idea of multi-dimensional galleries had been developing in New Zealand for some time. In Hawkes Bay "Music in the Gallery" had been encouraged by Director Munro. Extensions including a theatre and lecture hall officially opened there in 1977.[10] During this period rampant inflation was affecting the budgets of many institutions and admission charges began to be charged. In 1971 the Director of Leicester Department of Museum Studies, R. Singleton who was visiting Hawkes Bay Museum stated that the worldwide trend was to public service, organised with the needs of the community in mind. He also mentioned growing acceptance of public responsibility for financing of art galleries and museums. [11]

In line with this trend the Suter Art Gallery was to be developed as an artistic centre rather than just an art gallery. To meet these objectives major requirements were considered to be a new picture storage room and gallery with full climatic control, facilities for loading, unloading, carrying out repairs and construction. Adaptive and multi-functional spaces and the incorporation of additional public facilities including an entrance foyer, display and sales area, film and theatre events and a restaurant (revenue producing) were also included. Various user groups were consulted during the development of the brief including the Art Society and theatre groups. The new complex was completed and opened in 1979.[12]

In 1987 a further theatre extension to the building was approved. The new theatre was to be a space for lectures, seminars, films and performances and would accommodate one hundred and fifty people. A small cafe facility and new toilets would also be built. Space under the theatre would be used as a new picture store area. Further alterations were carried out in 1992 when the restaurant was extended.

The new Gallery was financed by a Nelson City Council grant and an Internal Affairs grant through the Art Gallery and Museums Association of New Zealand Grant Scheme A grant was also received from the Sargood Trust of Dunedin. Public subscription made up the balance of the amount raised. Mr. Highet, the Minister of Internal Affairs, announced a $20,000 grant towards the extensions. However there was a funding shortfall despite a successful fundraising campaign and this had long-term repercussions for the collection.

During Austin Davies' tenure as Director two major initiatives in collecting occurred: the growth of the ceramics collection and the Goodman-Suter Biennale.

Collecting Initiatives : Ceramics and the Goodman-Suter Biennale

Davies saw that pottery was a significant growth industry in Nelson whereas a parallel development in weaving was not, in his opinion, as significant. He felt that weaving was not innovative but rather traditional in the English mould. There were fifteen or so people making a living potting at this time according to Davies. [13] Background to the development of ceramics in Nelson has been discussed in detail in Section 3.
Davies saw ceramics primarily as a way of raising money for the Gallery.The Art Society had previously organised very successful craft and pottery sales. Sales raised a large amount from the first Gallery organised show in 1976. Davies believes this acted as an impetus for more people to take up ceramics. Gradually potters wanted to be more selective about what was sold and became involved in exhibitions through the Potters Association. They also began to donate works each year which was the start of a significant rate of ceramics collecting. Various pieces were also purchased by the Trustees. A small permanent display of ceramics was mounted in the foyer. There is no indication that a formal decision or policy was developed which expressed the additional collecting field or collecting strategy for ceramics.

The ceramics collection reflects fine-art orientated pieces rather than domestic ware which has been so much part of production in Nelson. Some potters such as Harry and May Davis espoused an attitude to their work that was strongly against elitism of any sort and concentrated on domestic ware. The collection may be seen as mainly reflecting a fine art orientation with emphasis on international styles and expectations. Many potters undertook overseas training and judges for major competitions were often from outside New Zealand.

The ceramics collection was opportunistic whereas the Goodman-Suter Biennale was purposefully set up to put contemporary works into the collection.
Ceramics were collected because they were affordable and the collection reflects the crafts movement because it could afford to. Clay was seen as very much part of Nelson and unique to it whereas other crafts (weaving and jewelry) were not.[14] Photography was not accepted as a collecting field.

In 1986 a major initiative and innovative art competition started at the Suter Art Gallery which was funded by the Goodman Group to the extent of $30,000 every two years. [15] It was broadly based and designed to benefit the collection of the Suter Art Gallery and other galleries chosen by lottery and was to ensure a high standard of art and prestige. Other directors involved in the selection of works would receive one third of the funding for their own acquisitions from the show instead of prizes being awarded. This was designed to reduce the element of competition that is at the heart of many art sponsorship schemes.

Every two years both invited artists and other artists (an open section) were invited to submit works (paintings or wall hung constructions). Works from the open section were selected with approximately a quarter being accepted. Purchases were to be determined by the needs of participating institutions' collections as much as by the inherent quality of the works available. The Biennale was specifically designed to develop a collection of contemporary works and was an important element of Gallery collecting strategy at this time.

Many contemporary New Zealand works came into the collection through the selection process. These were works by Bennett, Burton, Dashper, Gray, Radford, Ian Scott, Woollaston, Ritchie, Collins, Ellis, Zusters, Banbury, Cleverley, Crossman, Gregory, Hunter, Lander, John Scott and McFarlane.[16]

The Biennale attracted some criticism. In the view of Orme the two gallery directors involved each year became "crucial gate-keepers" and their curatorial decision making structure and procedure raised some questions and concerns. Gender balance was one issue raised. Only 19 of the 51 works hung were by women artists and only one piece represented was bicultural in nature.[17]
Austin Davies observed that he felt his responsibility was "only to select the best" and these other aspects of representation were not considered. Austin Davies maintained that he was not a strong supporter of "affirmative action" initiatives but that the quality of work selected was his main concern. [18]

A further significant addition to the collection was made in 1979. This was the "Austin Davies-Woollaston Collection" of 101 of Woollaston's watercolours and drawings. This donation by the artist consolidated the collection of Woollaston works which had grown to five since the first entry from the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation Award in 1971, and was mainly due to gifts from the artist.

Throughout the time Davies was director purchases by the Trust Board increased significantly. Works were contemporary in nature frequently with local associations such as Bathgate, Burton, Evans, Gibbs, Joyes, Hill, Caselberg, Parker, Major and others. Works by recognised New Zealand contemporary artists were also purchased during this time (Clairmont, Hanley, Moffit, Maddox, Frizzell, Ellis, Walters, Hunter, Fomison, Cleavin and others). Historical works were added to the collection by gift at this time and included further works by Stoddart, Worsley, Sherwood, Yeames, van der Velden and Gully. Further works were acquired by gift including three McCahon paintings in 1984 gifted by Woollaston. [19] This was an energetic period of consolidation of the collection, new initiatives in collecting and rapid expansion of Gallery facilities.

The Funding Crisis and Deaccessioning

Rapid expansion of facilities at the Suter Art Gallery during the 1970s and 1980s had repercussions for the collection. The funding crisis which resulted led to a period in which the collection was reassessed and some works deaccessioned. While the development of a tighter collecting policy requiring disposal of works which are deemed minor or irrelevant to a collection may be justified, museum standards require procedures to be established for this process. At the Suter Art Gallery, policy for acquisitions and deaccessions was approved in 1989 and a final amendment was made in 1993. (see Appendix II)

Deaccessioning has become a controversial topic of debate for museums internationally since the 1970s. One of the major challenges resulting from professionalism and the growth of accountability during the seventies and eighties, it has increasingly been a topic of discussion in museum literature.[20] In New Zealand the discussion of museum ethics also started in the early seventies. [21]

Professionalism, accountability and ethics are closely connected. Public accountability is seen as fundamental to professions in general and to the museum profession in particular. A number of museums and art galleries in New Zealand have the status of an Incorporated Society or Trust but are primarily funded from one or more local bodies. These include Gisborne Museum and Art Centre, Hawkes Bay Cultural Trust, Manawatu Art Gallery and Southland Museum and Art Gallery. Affiliation with local authorities has made accountability essential for those institutions funded and managed by councils.[22] The Suter Art Gallery Trust Board had not been able to secure a satisfactory affiliation and ongoing adequate funding from its local authorities and has remained largely under the control of a private, self-perpetuating trust board.

As has been discussed above, rapid expansion of the building and staff numbers during a time of inflation led to a funding shortfall and produced an ongoing funding crisis at the Gallery.[23] During the period between the 1970s and 1990s funding pressures increased. Although this was true for all museums and galleries at this time, at the Suter Art Gallery additional pressures arose from debts resulting from building extensions and decreases in projected income. Attitudes to the collection appear to have changed during this period, with references to the collection as an asset under conditions of financial pressure.[24]

In an article published in 1990, Mare reported that an "English Enquiry" in 1964 concerning the sale of works of art by public and semi-public bodies decided that,

> "when a work of art is given to a museum or gallery for general exhibition the public thereby acquires rights in the object concerned and these rights cannot be set aside. That is, the museum and gallery authorities were no longer owners of their collections but merely guardians responsible for carrying out the donors' wishes." [25]

The MAANZ Code of Ethics and Guide to Professional Practice, 1990 also states that,

> "There must be a strong presumption against the disposal of items in the collection of a museum except in particular circumstances, each of which should be covered by an approved policy, which sets out procedures, and is available as a public document". (Clause 3.1)

It also states that any decision to deaccession should be the responsibility of the Governing Body of the museum not its officers (Clause 3.4) and that a museum should never use its collections as security to raise funds. (Clause 3.5)

A leading museums' authority on deaccessioning, Malaro, stresses the importance of procedural guidelines for deaccessioning which encourage informed decisions to be made. She also states that decisions concerning deaccessioning are to be made in light of what is perceived to be in the best interests of the public.

> "When one acts in a trust capacity for a beneficiary one is legally accountable. The museum's deaccessioning procedures should require complete documentation of all relevant matters and its indefinite retention."[26]

An outline of deaccessioning at the Suter Art Gallery during 1970s-1990s shows that financial pressures were such that the value of some works to the collection was reassessed. While policy was slowly put into place as the awareness of ethical considerations increased, the effect on the collection was considerable.
The following account of this period outlines some deaccessions recorded in Gallery minutes and the reasons given for them. Although this period of the Gallery's history has ended with the employment of a new Director, the issues that led to the deaccessioning

have not been resolved. It is possible that the fact that there is no publicly acknowledged, written policy and procedure for the safegaurding of public gifts may have affected the attitude of local authorities and individuals whose commitment to funding the institution is sought. It is acknowledged by the writer that research of Gallery minutes only provides a partial or limited account of decision making processes and that dissent on the part of individual board members is rarely recorded.

While the collection had undergone reassessment, rehanging and sorting as early as 1914 [27] and again in 1954 when mention was made of "separating the sheep from the goats", deaccessioning in the 1970s was of a new nature.[28] In 1974 "culling out" of pictures in the storeroom had been carried out by a subcommittee.[29] Those pictures to be disposed of had been put into two categories, for immediate and for discreet sale. Some had already been sold by Gordon Burke after being restored. Anything sold or removed was to be recorded in the acquisitions book. Nine works were recorded as sold in 1975 including works by D.K. Richmond, Hugh Scott and Branfill, Nina Jones and two Gully's of uncertain attribution. [30]

In 1975 a possible sale for the Yeames copy "Dawn of the Reformation" was suggested and was agreed to by the Board. [31] It was later discovered that the Yeames was an original painting rather than a copy. It was recovered damaged from Melrose House where it had been on loan. Sales of old pictures which were considered "unsuitable for gallery purposes" are mentioned.[32] In March 1976 the minutes record that it was suggested that van der Velden's "Otira Gorge" be sold since it was deteriorating rapidly in the Gallery's uncontrolled temperature conditions. A Worsley was also recommended for sale as it was "of poor quality and not likely to be shown". The possible sale of the Nina Jones Collection was also discussed. In June 1976 a figure of $7,750 was given by dealer Chote for a group of pictures suggested for sale. The van der Velden was estimated by valuers at Webb's Auctioneers to be likely to sell for $18,000 and the Russell Flint watercolour for $10,000. It was agreed that the Flint should be disposed of and it was later sold for $5377 at Christies. The van der Velden was to be returned as there was no firm buyer for it.

In 1976 it was proposed that "a list of paintings for sale and for loan be drawn up".[34] Two van der Veldens were destroyed because "overheating had damaged them beyond repair" and it was suggested "that the two remaining may have to be sold before they become worthless".[35] An offer was made by a member of the public to buy paintings from the collection (two Gully's and two Richmond's) which would be paid for in stages

and would be housed at the Gallery for next twenty years. This was gifted work and the sale would raise $26,000.[36] In 1977 this offer was withdrawn and the sale did not proceed.

Plans to raise money through picture sales continued in 1976 with the suggestion that $100,000 could be raised which could create an investment fund.[37]
Dunbar Sloane Auctioneers offered $7,500 for two Richmond's, a Kirkwood and Payton. It was advised that Worsley's "Manawanui" and Thompson's "Lavoir en Provence" should be retained. [38]

There was Trustee discussion in 1976 about the "issue of disposal of paintings for money" and that "it should be established that this was a legitimate method of fund raising". The Board felt that a policy should be formulated for deaccessioning. [39]

In 1977 possible legal problems over a proposed sale of the Nina Jones collection of 200 plant drawings were to be investigated. It was found that the Nina Jones Bequest contained a codicil which meant that it was not possible for any of her paintings to be disposed of. [40] These works were later transferred to the Nelson Provincial Museum which the Board had no objection to as "they were of slight artistic merit".[41] Nina Jones was Secretary to the Trustees for many years and an important figure in Gallery history.

Attitudes to deaccessioning appear to have changed over the years 1976-77.There was a growing awareness of a need to refine aims and formulate policy. The introduction of ethical codes for museums began during this period. The AGMANZ (which later became MAANZ) Code of Ethics was introduced in the 1970s.
It was decided that any further picture sales be deferred until after fundraising for the Gallery refurbishment was finished. In 1978 it was proposed that funds from sales of lesser works be invested in an endowment fund to obtain guaranteed income and the income to be used to add to the permanent collection. [42] Further sales of small works continued.

In 1980 the Board agreed that "only as an extreme move should any paintings be disposed of to raise funds". Three works were set aside for possible disposal if there was a funding shortfall that September. A scheme was discussed where work could be sold to local businesses on a "buy back" basis. [43]

Financial pressures continued and there was no increase in support from the Nelson City Council. In 1981 the Suter Art Gallery minutes record Councillor ElmaTurner as declaring in a Nelson City Council meeting that "neither the Gallery nor the collection was a matter of concern to most councillors" as issues such as the Gallery Extension, the new Nelson Public Library and water supply were of first priority.

The Directors Report for the year ending 1981 stated that he was very aware of very many problems to be overcome before the Gallery was established as a fully professional institution.[44] He also stated that fundraising was not appropriate for the Director and that the Gallery was the responsibility of the community. The Director presented a copy of the AGMANZ Code of Ethics to the Board in April 1981.

In 1982 the Gallery was facing a loss of $50,000 not covered by grants. The Director was trying to initiate a pottery export business to raise funds. It was agreed that the Council should be pressured again to accept responsibility for the Gallery. In 1982 the Gallery was self-supporting to a greater extent than any other New Zealand Gallery and was receiving much less in funds. [45]

In 1985 Marjorie Naylor left a third of her estate to the Gallery and all of her works, some of which were to be kept for the collection and the rest sold at a Gallery exhibition. Works sold realised $17,000 and drew comments of dissatisfaction from the community over the way works had been sold.[46] Austin Davies commented that "it was important that we did sell them because we needed the money".[47]

Curator Julian Bowron resigned in 1985. He cited lack of overall policies and clearly defined responsibilities as the reason. Bernie Stokes was appointed to the position. At this time the Theatre extension was suggested. There was an expectation that the Theatre would provide funds to the Gallery and not require extra funding.
In May 1985 the possibility of further sales of selected paintings from the permanent collection was discussed briefly again although several Trustees voiced strong opposition. [48] The Chairman asked the Director to prepare a report on which paintings might be sold.[49]

In December 1986 minutes record that $68,000 of bequest funds were to be put towards capital improvements. It was reported that interest earned on investments was increasingly being diverted to the building overdraft.[50] The question of paintings sales was raised again in 1988. [51] The Director was asked by the Board to draw up

recommendations on the possible sale of some works in the collection, but outside the mainstream of New Zealand art. Proceeds from their sale would be used for restoration, storage and display of works and for additions to the collection. It was stated that a clear written statement of the Gallery's acquisition policy would however be required by the Trustees to assist them in decision making. [52] In April 1987 minutes record that "many trustees had misgivings about the sale of paintings, particularly those given or bequeathed to the Gallery and there was some value placed upon examples of non-New Zealand art as a valuable part of our collection".

At the Annual General Meeting in November 1988 a formal policy for Acquisition and Sales of Art was presented, redrafted and finally adopted in February 1989. A subcommittee of the Director and a Trustee was to decide all matters to do with bequests, acquisitions and deaccessions.and to make recommendations for Trust Board approval.

In 1989 door sales, exhibition and events profits were all below budget and this meant that the Curator could not be replaced. Davies was dismissed by the Board but was later reinstated in 1990 with a performance related contract.

In 1990 the possibility of selling "Ship Cove" also known as "Cook's Cove" was suggested by the Director. A key work in the Suter Art Gallery collection, the painting is a very important early New Zealand work by Webber, Captain Cook's artist on his New Zealand exploration of 1777. The painting which was completed in 1788 had been donated in 1931 by Sir Francis Dillon Bell a prominent citizen with local connections. Proceeds from the sale were to be used to pay off the overdraft and the stated intention for the balance was that it be invested to fund a curator for the Gallery. At the time the Board and Director stated that the painting would be kept in better conditions at the National Gallery and that as it was a painting of national interest it would be better placed in the National collection. In January 1990 minutes record that Webber's "Ship Cove" was sold to the National Art Gallery, Wellington for $326,000. [53] The Director commented that he, "knew of no art gallery anywhere which does not both acquire and dispose of works as an ongoing process. This transaction by special arrangement with the National Gallery ensures that it is permanently available at any time to display at the Suter." [54]

The sale of the Webber caused public concern and comment. Errol Shaw who had been a curator of the gallery commented that,

> "no responsible public art gallery sells its major art work. Imagine the Louvre selling the Mona Lisa, the Australian National Gallery selling Blue Poles or the Te Awamutu selling Uenuku. Such works are pivotal to the gallery's identity, together with reputation both national and international, as custodians of cultural heritage."

He described the Webber as, "our earliest and most valuable art treasure" [55]

The present Director of the Suter Art Gallery, Helen Telford commented in 1997 that,

> "The sale of the work was controversial. It precipitated further debate in the museum world about professional responsibilities for collections held in trust and helped to develop heightened professional awareness of what was appropriate deaccessioning and what was not. It also contributed to an increased climate of caution and care with rationales and processes for disposing of works of art from collections". [56]

Public concern was expressed about the governance of the Gallery. In a letter to the Nelson Evening Mail of February 10th 1991 Bishop Peter Sutton stated that, "a self-perpetuating board with no responsibility to account for its stewardship belongs to the Victorian age." and that "patrons are entitled to see progress made in issues of accountability."

As a response to public concerns about gallery management and to address issues of accountability a Management Committee was set up in 1991.The Management Committee was to broaden the base of representation on the governing body. Two representatives from the Patrons of the Gallery (later renamed Friends of the Gallery), two from the Art Society and two from Nelson City Council were appointed.
At this time the collection was valued at $1.5 million. A Trustee described the Gallery as "income-poor and asset-rich" and stated that the sale of Ship Cove was welcomed [57]. Davies commented that "the sale was for the benefit of the community at large but the Board hoped no further paintings would be sold". The Nelson Evening Mail reported Davies as stating that the Suter Art Gallery was not planning to sell increasing numbers of its more valuable paintings to improve its tight position. Davies was responding to

"suggestions from local people who told the Mail the Gallery could be preparing to sell more of its collection". "While the gallery was constantly reassessing its collection , it did not plan to increase sales to offset any financial difficulties it had". [58]

In March, 1991 a selection was made from the collection of English paintings and estimates were obtained from Christies. The seven displayed to the Board at a meeting were estimated to be worth $40-$50,000 however not all paintings were selected for sale. [59] On July 16th 1991 it was recorded in Trust Board minutes that Sir T. Woollaston approved of the deacquisition of two McCahon paintings he donated on the condition that his donation of 101 drawings to the collection remained. However he requested that the funds should go to an endowment fund. The McCahon works were sold in 1991.

In 1994 the Director's report stated that,

> "In the past we have culled works .. from the permanent collection to fund capital works..though this is not an ideal solution to the funding of renovations and extensions it was the only option open...I draw the Boards attention to a new development which needs a lot more debate since it involves ethical and moral if not legal implications. Currently under consideration is the proposal that the Board now draw out a list of art works which can be disposed of to fund the annual shortfall.... to keep the place going!"
> "Our prime raison d'être is to preserve and hold the collection for future generations. Historically this collection is unique...selling off works to fund the running costs cannot in my view be justified on any grounds whatsoever. To sell off works for this purpose would jeopardize the integrity of the Board".

The Director retired in 1995. [60]

The amount of work deaccessioned appears to be connected to the governance of the museum as a private self-perpetuating trust. Although throughout New Zealand museums a variety of positions are held on many key ethical questions where deaccessioning is concerned, only the Govett-Brewster has carried out a significant amount of publicly acknowledged deaccessioning, and this is part of its policy. The Sarjeant and Manawatu have been very reluctant to deaccession and agree that it should only be undertaken to improve the collection and not for money. There is a

general agreement that funds generated in this way can only be used for purchases.[61] Information about deaccessioning practices in other regional galleries is not currently available. At the Suter Gallery deaccessioning has largely been carried out without open public debate or adherence to policy and procedures.
Deaccessions are outlined to illustrate the alteration of the collection and how the collection came to be regarded as an asset under increasing pressure from financial considerations. Although Gallery minutes do not reflect all debate and comment, assessing the collection as primarily an historical and community based and generated entity did not appear to be a central issue. Deaccessioning also demonstrates how changing cultural fields can result in reassessment of collections which change the values placed on works. Works which may be important to the collection because they represent a community and collecting history may be seen as irrelevant if purely art historical meanings are given to them.

Employment of the first Director was associated with major gallery expansion and growth of the collection but it had not ensured professionalism in gallery practices. There was no firm, publicly acknowledged commitment to written policy and procedures during this period and movements toward professionalism and its associated ethical requirements were largely confounded by economic imperatives.

Post-Modern Collecting

During the 1990s new collecting fields are being emphasised in museums. These include contemporary works in many media, photography, art with ethnic origins in particular Maori and Pacific based work. The intellectual appreciation of works is growing and the presentation and interpretation function of the museum is more important. The public is being made more aware of the relativity of aesthetic judgments that colour the meaning, intent and reception of works of art. [62] Aesthetic value is mixing with historical and cultural value in the art museum context, and the lines between art and anthropology are blurring and collections will increasingly reflect this.

Since the 1960s there has been a shift of focus away from ideologies of the past towards a more flexible attitude which characterises post-modernism. Encounters between different tendencies and directions in the visual arts are able to coexist without blocking each other. [63] In the 1980-90s this new framework has allowed women artists and minorities more equal representation or recognition of the need for representation.

As Kirker expresses this, "We have consistently witnessed a strong challenge to the so-called "high art" aesthetic, and increased emphasis is being placed on artmaking which may not be permanent and which included the notions of collaboration, process, change and growth." [64]

The 1980s also saw New Zealand's first women directors of public art galleries. [65] A new Director for the Suter Art Gallery was appointed at the beginning of 1994. Helen Telford's work experience has been largely at Dunedin Public Art Gallery and she has a background in social anthropology. She measures the institution against professional standards acquired during work in Dunedin. These standards were based in the ethical codes of MAANZ and in training such as AGMANZ workshops and in wider professional contacts.

Helen Telford is concerned that although the building programme has been a major achievement, what goes on inside the building in public programmes, collection care and development are the most important aspects of the Gallery. She notes that the collection was stored in "appalling" conditions and saw that the institution was driven by the need to make money rather than by professional considerations. In her view, the need to survive had skewed the operation of the Gallery toward money making public programmes and facilities at the expense of the collection and its care. [66]

Collecting strategies were implicit throughout the early years of collecting she believes, and were demonstrated for example by the development of the Gully collection after the initial Suter Gift for example. Another implied strategy is in the collection of commemorative portraits such as Lindauer's portrait of Huria Matenga.
Building on existing strengths of the collection has been an unwritten strategy and has been both opportunistic and directed. [67] The growth in the collection of New Zealand and foreign prints has been directed and may reflect the purchasing ability of the Gallery or the way that such work presents little risk in terms of financial investment. While Helen Telford understands that other institutions may be similar in their aspirations and in the influence of benefactors and donors she feels that the Suter is unique in the length of time collecting has been carried out.

The fact that works by artists who have lived and worked in the Nelson area have been collected is also important. Helen Telford believes that the collection should be strongly based in art which relates to its locality. Art works which have come from the region or have an association with it such as the Gully and Woollaston collections are what makes the collection unique in her view. [68] Building on existing strengths will be central to future policy. The emphasis will be on work which reflects the arts and crafts practice of important artists working in the Nelson region. Collecting will also attempt to fill gaps in the representation of artists who lived and worked in the area in the past such as Lusk, Heaphy, Fox and Barnicoat. It is intended that the ceramics collection will be similarly strengthened by the addition of works. Collections which are already substantial will also be enhanced as finances allow. Among these are the Mina Arndt and Clairmont collections.

Helen Telford also believes that building a broader relationship with the community is important and this should be reflected in collecting practices. It is a Trust Board objective to have a reviewed collecting policy in place by March 1998. This will be developed by the Director and a Trustee and others as necessary.

Reassessment of the Place of Women's Art in the Collection

Works acquired since Helen Telford became Director reflect a desire to redress some imbalances which have occurred in the past. [69] An important work by Allie Eagle was selected to complement the Goodman-Suter Biennale group of works and to sit beside the Alexis Hunter work as an expression of the women's movement.
Allie Eagle is a senior New Zealand artist who was not represented in the collection. She has been a central figure in the 1970's women's art movement in New Zealand and exhibited with the opening exhibition at the Women's Gallery in Wellington in 1980. The 1996 work titled "We still are, we still are" refers to an earlier work entitled "Oh yes we will resist, we will resist" and to watercolour paintings made in the Marlborough Sounds by John Kinder in the nineteenth century. The work opened up opportunities for revising perspectives on colonial landscape painters. This significant acquisition was one of the first by the new director and marked an important community occasion, a Women's Art Auction to raise funds for a women's refuge house in Nelson.

The representation of women in the collection is an area of interest for the new Director and reflects changes in the cultural field which are making the reassessment of the place of women's art in collections a topic of debate.
There is little recorded debate about the role and representation of women in museums in New Zealand. Mare states that in New Zealand little attention has been given to "deconstructing the museum from a feminist perspective".[70] However some important contributions towards this have been made in discussing the role of the female artist in New Zealand society and in reassessing collections in light of findings. [71] Most recent literature in New Zealand has focused on examining this attitude and reassessing the role public collections have played in formulating the accepted history of women's art in New Zealand.

Entwisle contends that a comparison of New Zealand painting during the early period of gallery formation in the 1880s and for the next forty or so years after this with Australia, Canada and South Africa and even Britain reveals a "striking difference". [72] Women are almost totally absent from the record in the first three countries and figure only occasionally in secondary roles in Britain. He states that by comparison New Zealand painting was virtually dominated by New Zealand woman until the end of the Second World War. The reasons for this he believes, are inextricably bound up with the early success in 1893 of the movement to secure the franchise for women and the related earlier success in giving women more nearly equal access to higher education.

Entwisle believes that one of the most distinctive characteristics of art as a social phenomenon in New Zealand last century was the willingness to contemplate the "new and almost unknown importance of women in painting". [73] However only a thorough analysis of holdings in permanent collections can show whether women were recognised in the way that Entwisle assumes.

The Suter Art Gallery's collection of works by women is not a clear reflection of artistic production in the region nor does it provide a representative collection of works by New Zealand women artists in general. Of women painters and sculptors with work in two or more public collections in 1977 the Suter held work by twelve out of a possible 149.[74] Among these noted artists who worked in the Nelson area at some time in their careers not represented in the collection are: Sarah Greenwood (whose collection is held at Nelson Provincial Museum) Rita Angus, Doris Lusk and Flora Scales. Work by Emily Harris came into collection on loan in 1919 six years before her death and 34 years after her work had been exhibited at the New Zealand Industrial Exhibition 1885. [75]
Other artists such as Greenwood and Harris have collections in the Nelson Provincial Museum as their work was seen as important historically but not artistically. Nina Jones' collection of work was largely rejected because of its "domestic type of production". Some women artists developed a high degree of professionalism in art yet on their return from overseas were not acknowledged. Accessions have often lagged far behind the working artists production, as in the case of Mina Arndt who lived, worked and exhibited in the region until 1926 but whose work only reached the Suter Art Gallery's collection by donation of her family. [76]

Public collections in New Zealand demonstrate discrepancies in the number of works by men and those by women which are held. The nature of the artists' imagery has had something to do with this. As Kirker comments, during the last fifteen years contemporary galleries sought;

> "strong authoritative canvases and sculpture of a solid and permanent nature. Men fulfilled these expectations more readily than women and were thus collected more readily. The work with female authorship that was acquired tended to fit into a male ideology. Awareness of this situation paved the way for alternative contexts through which to evaluate female artists." [77]

This is true for the Suter Art Gallery. The Goodman-Suter Biennale is particularly dominated by large scale canvases by male artists. Work by female artists acquired through the Goodman-Suter Biennale totaled five or 25%.

A table of acquisitions and spending over a five year period 1972 -1976 in five art galleries shows that from a total of 131 New Zealand paintings purchased only one in seven were works by women. The proportion of women represented in Auckland City Art Gallery purchases and donations in 1970 was the same ratio. [78] An examination of Suter Art Gallery holdings shows that the proportion of male to female work was 7:1 in 1896. Over time this proportion has changed and it can be seen that since the influence of feminism the proportion has changed from 4:1 in 1985 to 3.5:1 in 1996, twice the proportion of a hundred years before. In 1985 20% of the collection was made up of work by women, similar to the proportion at the Sarjeant and Manawatu which had 23% and 19% respectively for the period 1980-1991. The Govett-Brewster held 37% for the same period which was due largely to Cheryll Sotheran assuming the Directorship and pursuing a proactive policy for the acquisition of work by women. [79] At the Suter Art Gallery since 1992 works by women artists represent 23% of acquisitions. [80]

Biculturalism and new collecting fields

Most writers have not dealt with the artwork of Maori and some have stated that this work cannot be carried out by non- Maori. [81] In general, artistic production by Maori has until recently been collected and displayed in an ethnographic or typological context. [82] However since the advent of the international exhibition "Te Maori" attitudes have begun to change. Since the 1980s there has been greater attention paid to Maori artists and increased numbers of exhibitions which feature Maori art within an "art" context. Commitment to and increased awareness of the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi in particular as it applies to local authorities has been one aspect of this change. The MAANZ Code of Ethics also takes the Treaty of Waitangi as a central principle.
It is not possible at this point to see whether this is reflected in increased acquisitions to collections in other centres although Mare does state that while the Sarjeant, Manawatu and Govett-Brewster have in place policies which define them as bicultural institutions, "as far as their collections are concerned these galleries are still struggling to put those policies into practice". [83] The previous director of the Suter Art Gallery expressed his disinterest in pro-active attitudes to collecting artwork by women and Maori. [84] This appears to be reflected in collecting practices as few significant works by Maori artists were collected during his period of directorship. An exception is a work by R. Hotere.

One work with historical Maori associations is the portrait of "Huria Matenga" by Lindauer which has been an important point of contact between the Gallery staff and local iwi with frequent visits by descendants to view the painting. A significant recent group of works by Sally Burton which centres on the Wreck of the Delaware and is associated with the Lindauer portrait of Huria Matenga has been purchased by the Ngati Tama Trust and remains housed at the Gallery on loan. [85]

Since becoming Director Helen Telford has shown an inclusive attitude to the wider community including Maori, art students and women. The recent (1997) exhibition "Whakatu in Your Eyes" initiated and curated by Andrea Rewiti-Davis of Ngati Kuia descent featured invited artists who created works for the exhibition in response to the Nelson environment. A kauri sculpture by Fred Graham has been selected for the collection from this exhibition.

The Suter Art Gallery has made certain acquisitions in the last three years which point to a cooperative and more open attitude to the inclusion of Maori works in the collection. One such work is a J.B. Ford print acquired in 1996. The imagery refers to Isaac Gilsemans' recordings of Golden Bay in 1642.

Future of collecting at the Suter Art Gallery

The Suter Art Gallery was established as a collecting institution for the promotion of art in the Nelson region and the present Director believes that developing the collection and caring for it is a core function and goal. This is reflected in the recently completed strategic statement. However collecting is dependent on the availability of funds for purchasing and this will be a critical factor in the future direction of collecting. Helen Telford states that,

> "if realistic funding cannot be achieved for the Gallery - if responsibilities cannot be met because of lack of finance, then the trustees and the director are failing their ethical responsibilities and the Suter has to face the fact that it is not in the art museum business" . [86]

If funds allow, retrospective collecting may play an important part in collecting at the Suter Art Gallery in the future. There is also the possibility that wider collecting fields could be included to make the collection more representative of artistic production in the region. The present Director intends to begin to collect in broader fields than ceramics

and fine art. The recent acceptance of four weavings from the 1970s by R. Lumsden, a former teacher at Nelson Girls College was an indication of this intention. It is also possible that there will be increased involvement with New Zealand Wearable Art. Jewelry production has been important in the area and could also be included. However an over-riding concern is "how can a potential addition to the collection be used" [87] and how a work will go alongside the existing works from the collection "to tell stories".

Works on paper and prints will remain an important collecting area because the Gallery's modest means and its position as a regional gallery ensure that collecting historical or large contemporary works is usually beyond the Gallery's means. Works on paper continue to enter the collection through donation. A significant gift was made in 1996 by Gordon Crook of twenty-three of his screenprints. [88]

Helen Telford also believes that the collecting strategy should be open enough to reflect eccentricity or allow for the acceptance or purchase of unusual private collections which form in the region. Careful thought needs to be put into the development of policy for the future growth of the collection, particularly in understanding what it is that distinguishes the Suter Art Gallery collection from other regional collections. [89]

Changes in the cultural field since the 1980s have led to a reassessment of the representation of the history of art particularly in the dominance of male and European creeds which are represented in art galleries in New Zealand. Recognition of the need for reappraisal of collections and the ways they represent the community is now acknowledged more widely and is reflected in changing attitudes toward collecting at the Suter Art Gallery.

The collection is only representative of the growth and development of the arts and artistic production in the Nelson Region to a limited extent. Although no extensive study has been carried out of artistic practice in the region there are several important arts figures who are not represented in the collection who have worked and lived in the area. Among these are Sarah Greenwood, Rita Angus, Doris Lusk and Flora Scales. Two works by Scales has recently been acquired. Early work by Woollaston and McCahon who lived and worked here for periods as early as 1928 is also unrepresented. This area requires more study.

The ceramics collection reflects part of a large resurgence of interests in arts and crafts which was part of a national movement during the 1960-80s. The collection does not comprehensively represent this development or the unique nature of it in Nelson. The emphasis is strongly on "art" pieces rather than on a representative collection of works from the major potters who have worked in the area. At the present time acquisitions in this area have almost ceased.

In the Nelson region the arts and crafts movement was expressed not only in pottery but also in weaving and jewelry. These areas have not been collected although in 1996 four pieces of weaving were acquired. There is one bone carving in the collection.
At the present time analysis of the collection shows that significant changes have occurred in the period since the 1970s. Most notable among these changes have been a broadening perspective on possible collecting fields and a move to collect retrospectively in a way which seeks to redress past imbalances.

Because the current catalogue and acquisitions register do not record an accurate present total of works in the collection, figures for the present time are analysed entirely from acquisition registrations. Approximately 47% of the total collection has been acquired since 1970. The total number of works accessioned increased from 390 in 1970 to 833 in 1997. The female to male ratio of works in the collection has increased from 1:5 in 1970 to 1:3.5 in 1997. In 1997 watercolours constitute 23.5 % of the collection compared to 36.5 % in 1970. Oil paintings are 19% of total acquisitions. Ceramics now constitute 13.5 % of the total collection. The proportion of works donated has changed significantly with a reduction from 84% in 1970 to 69% in 1997.
Purchases to 1997 make up 30 % of the collection. In 1970 10% of works acquired were purchased. This shows a considerable change from the early period of collection development up to 1940 when 96% of the collection had been donated. The 137 works deaccessioned or recorded as missing since 1970 constitutes a loss of approximately 16 % of the total acquisitions to the collection. .

Conclusions

Although it was part of the general Victorian museum movement which occurred in the late 1800s the Suter Art Gallery is in some respects unique as an early provincial art museum. Its unique qualities are defined by the nature of the collection which originally formed the Gallery, that is the initial gifts and bequests which have had a strong effect on shaping the collection. The works of Gully and Richmond are the dominant feature. This influence was strong enough to be remarked on by H.D. Skinner of the Otago Museum who commented as late as 1955 that the Gallery was "still very much a Gallery of Gully and Richmond". [90]

The Suter Art Gallery initially followed a national tendency to collect locally acquired and produced art as was the case in many other New Zealand public art collections up to the First World War. This may be understood as a settlement phase cultural field which affected every Gallery established during this period. Trustees provided funds and facilitated contact with external agencies and created the political and financial environment for the ongoing work of the institution. The collection was made up of works donated by local residents and was of predominantly New Zealand subjects painted by New Zealand colonial painters.

A second phase of collection development was influenced by a major change in the cultural field which occurred as the result of international exhibitions from the early 1900s and dealer-based touring exhibitions which were important after World War One. These exhibitions shaped the perceptions of the kind of art to be admired and collected. All New Zealand art collections about which information is available were affected by this collecting field. At the Aigantighe Art Gallery in Timaru, South Canterbury where collecting began in 1909, the preoccupation with purchasing British and European art was shaped by the same concern that "good British art be purchased". [91] The Sarjeant Gallery in Wanganui which was founded at the end in World War One also perceived itself as part of the British museum tradition and focused on collecting British academic art. Significant numbers of early purchases were made at the Baillie collection 1912-14. [92] Hawkes Bay Museum and Art Gallery was also affected by the same influences with a noticeable amount of British and European art being purchased until the 1960s [93] At the Suter Art Gallery collecting British academic art also became a preoccupation.

Although the Gallery Trustees were receptive to the influences of touring exhibitions they failed to respond energetically to other opportunities which arose. The possibility of external funding from the Carnegie Institution occurred in the late 1940s however the Trustees decided against employing a curator which was a condition of the Carnegie grants scheme. Pursuit of funding from the local authority base was also a requirement but this does not appear to have been actively and persistently sought. Neither was membership of the Empire Loans Collection Society taken up which would have allowed access to a wider range of contemporary European art. Similarly membership of the newly formed professional body AGMANZ in the 1947 was not seen as important or of any particular advantage. Why the Trust decided not to take up membership of these agencies is an interesting question. Certainly financial hardship was part of the Gallery's history from the 1930s onward. These early decisions may be related to a particularly "Nelson attitude" of independence which is reflected in personalities such F.G. Gibbs and in the early development of Nelson cultural institutions. This attitude of independence developed from the regions early experiences as an isolated community. The personal financial involvement of Trust members, for example Nina Jones, in the Gallery may have also encouraged a spirit of independence.

A third pattern of collection development began to emerge as the influence of changes in the field of education gradually created a population more receptive to modern art. This encouraged a gradual acceptance of modern art in New Zealand in the 1950s. Throughout the late 1940s and 1950s active art education and the Nelson Suter Art Society were important agencies in Nelson which encouraged this change. New personalities such as W.H. Allen, Lady Mabel Annesley, H. Atkinson and Irvine Major and influences such as Contemporary Art Society membership also increased local exposure to modern art and helped to develop new collecting patterns. An interest in New Zealand art was revived and more local art was collected from the 1950s onwards.

The 1960s was a time of development in the arts infrastructure in New Zealand. Galleries which were established during the sixties such as The Manawatu and Govett-Brewster modelled themselves on the American modernist art museum. Other New Zealand galleries such as the Sarjeant redefined their image and philosophy at this time and began to focus on the serious collecting of New Zealand art. All three galleries established written collections policies in the 1960 and 70s. [94] At the Suter Art Gallery there was a renewed recognition and acknowledgment that the collection could be primarily based on work by New Zealand artists both contemporary and historical.

In 1963 a provisional policy was discussed which suggested the purchase of art works from New Zealand artists in general and when funds permitted the purchase of prints and other works by overseas artists.

The !970s brought a realization that the Gallery now required a professional director and in 1976 the first director was employed. This constituted a major turning point for the Gallery and collection. A new collecting field was established in 1969 with the ceramics section. A period of rapid redevelopment of the Gallery started in 1976 and continued into the 1990s. Purchasing of an extensive group of contemporary New Zealand artworks occurred in conjunction with the Goodman-Suter Biennale.
The redevelopment coincided with significant economic changes within New Zealand and worldwide. The Trust had been unable to establish consistent financial support for the Gallery and a period of deaccessioning, partly in order to raise funds for the Gallery operation, began in the 1970s and continued into the 1990s. From 1970s onwards there was rapid development of the arts infrastructure and local authorities generally began to assume a greater responsibility for the funding, operation and management of institutions. This was due to increasing economic pressures and the gradual emergence of professionalism within New Zealand museums which in turn placed greater obligations on city councils. The Sarjeant, Manawatu and Govett-Brewster are all governed in part by local authorities and the Hawkes Bay Museum and Art Gallery by a Cultural Trust. The Suter Art Gallery has been unable to enter into a sustained economically supportive relationship with local authorities. This has had long term affects on the collection. One major effect was economic crisis and the response of deaccessioning. The collection was reassessed and a number of artworks left the collection.

Until 1989 the Suter Gallery had no publicly acknowledged, published policy statement, or acquisitions and deaccessioning policy. In May 1996 the Management Committee adopted a Strategic Plan which outlines Gallery intentions for the collection and for the future of collecting. Until recently the Gallery and the Trustees have therefore allowed collecting to be influenced by various changes in cultural fields which have occurred since the inception of the Gallery and these are expressed in the shape of the collection. The Gallery management has continued as a self-perpetuating private trust made up primarily of businessmen, educators and professional members which is not broadly representative of the community. In the 1960s institutions with professional staff began to reorientate their institutions in more clearly defined directions. At the Suter Art Gallery care and development of the collection became secondary to financial considerations and revenue generating public programmes.

At the present time (late 1997) work is being carried out to ensure that collection policies are developed and the Gallery will publicly state what its purposes and intentions are and how these will find their expression in the collection.
As Mare suggests, in the future boards and staff members will have to define collecting goals more carefully, making choices based on curatorial resources, institutional collecting tradition and ambition as well as market realities. [95]

Examining the history of collecting at the Suter Gallery has made the collection more understandable in terms of its place nationally and regionally. Works which appear to have little connection to the artistic tradition of the Nelson Region are found in the collection because they reflect changes in cultural fields which have occurred over the last one hundred years. Their acquisition was not part of a policy of local and New Zealand representation with which collecting is now occupied. However these works do form part of the history of collecting. It is important for galleries to properly assess collections in light of history especially when decisions are being made about the collection's future.[96] There is also a need to be sensitive to the acquisition of works representing a new cultural consciousness.

A post-modern study of the collection history allows us to recognise that art finds its way into collections for many reasons, not only the political and aesthetic. Paintings are placed in collections as a form of record as the early landscape work in the collection may have been. Works are also a form of historical commemoration associated with Gallery events for example the Portrait of Matthew Campbell, the personal work of Trustees and other bequests. Collecting is also a form of public commemoration as is the case with the painting of Huria Matenga. Religious devotion may also play a role as can be seen in the Yeames and other works. Art works can also be purely an exploration of creative possibilities in a collective or individual sense.

Weil has also commented that works can function in manifold ways and that the principle function that a particular work of art performs may change over time.[97] The critical point is that how a given work is categorised at a given time depends upon how the surrounding society is using a work at a particular time. The acceptance of this interpretation has important implications for the management and understanding of collections. Protection of collection integrity may be encouraged through a more thorough knowledge of their formation and particular circumstances of growth. We need

to recognise that ideas of excellence and mediocrity are mediated by their particular cultural field.

Museums and their collections shape the way we relate to our past and our present. At the same time the museum exists as an historical entity shaped by its own past. It holds a history of itself as well as of the culture from which it collects. The ongoing interplay of both internal and external influences constantly redefines aesthetic culture. Art museums, their management and staff are involved in this continual process of change.

Because collections are formed through the complex influence of cultural fields and their meeting with structure and agency, and in order to avoid the overwhelming influence of the present and of fashion, it is critical that an ethical and policy framework exists to shape the way in which a museum responds to issues of collecting, funding, governance and resources. This will enhance the protection of cultural property collections from the needs of the present and the dominance of a particular cultural field.

Section Four end notes

1 Beatson P. and Cox S. in Spoonley P. et al 1982: 368
2 ibid : 361
3 ibid
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5 Taylor J.M. interview with Austin Davies Aug. 1997.
6 ibid
7 SAG Acquisitions Register
8 ibid
9 Taylor J.M 1996
10 Fea R and Pishief S. 1996 :74
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12 Taylor J.M. interview with Austin Davies Aug. 1997.
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15 Pitts P. in Art NZ 38;32-34
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Appendices I-VI

I. Major Gifts and Bequests
II. Acquisitions and Donations Policy
III. Key Works
IV. Plan of the Suter Art Gallery
V. Photographs
VI. Graphs 1-4

Appendix 1: Major Gifts and Bequests

One aspect of the Suter collection which makes it unique is the proportion of work bequested and gifted. Gifts to the Sarjeant, Govett- Brewster and Manawatu galleries make up only 30% of their acquisitions. Bequests of art works have also been few. Most acquisitions are purchases. At the Suter the proportion of gifted and bequested works was 69% (more than two-thirds) in 1996. This proportion has similarities to the collection at the Aigantighe Gallery in Timaru where two-thirds of collection was presented over the years [1]

There have been several major donations of art to the Suter collection the most significant being: the initial Mrs Suter's Gift in 1895, Atkinson gift 1935, C.Y. Fell Bequest 1918, Nina Jones Bequest 1925, S.B. White Bequest 1928, Besley Bequest 1922, Bell gift 1931, Bartel Bequest 1939, Mrs. C.Y. Fell Bequest 1943, Easterfield Bequest 1952, Mrs. M Steven Gift 1959, Miss M. and Mr J. Manoy Gift 1961, Miss Kidson Bequest 1961, Sir John Illot Gift 1967- 1969, M T Woollaston Gifts 1978-84, Miss Gladys Bisley Bequest 1982, Crook Gift 1995, Suter Art Society Gifts 1895-1969. All have contributed significantly to the development of the collection and its unique qualities. Ten of these donated groups have one or more works deaccessioned or missing [2]

1 Trevelyan J 1988

2 SAG Acquisitions Register.

Appendix II.

Suter Art Gallery Acquisitions and Donations Policy

(adopted by the Suter Art Gallery Trust Board 21.O4.89)

All matters to do with the implementation of this policy shall be decided by an acquisitions sub-committee consisting of the Director together with a representative of the Trust Board.

It shall be the policy of the Trust Board as finances permit or bequests are offered to:

- Acquire significant examples of contemporary NZ art.
- Extend on the existing strong collection of early NZ watercolours by acquiring where possible, and by accepting where offered.
- Accept significant donated works by NZ artists and significant works by non-NZ artists, especially where those can be seen to relate to, or have had influence on, NZ artists
- Represent in the collection, significant works by local artists.
- Reflect the strong regional interest in ceramics by acquiring a representative collection of works by local, national and international craftpersons.
- Not accept works considered to be of insufficient artistic merit where conditions prevent the disposal of such works.

Regarding de-acquisition it will be the policy of the committee to:

- Dispose of no work while the donor is alive without consent
- Dispose of no work without Trust Board approval on each occasion
- In principle, deacquisition shall apply only to those works considered to be of insufficient artistic merit, and shall normally only take place to make space for new acquisition (*sic*)
- Allocate proceeds from sales only to a)conservation of works
  b) storage of works
  c) new acquisitions

Gifts of bequests:(*sic*)

The sub-committee shall be empowered to accept any bequests or gifts in the form of a work or works so long as they conform to the policy

Only exceptional items of considerable merit may be acquired which fall outside the acquisitions policy.

In considering bequests the sub-committee shall 1) not be bound to accept bequests of inferior merit 2) not be bound to display any work.

Adopted 21.04.89
Amended 25.03.93

Appendix III.

Key Works suggestions

Key works are defined as those works which occupy a special place in the collection for historical and art practice reasons.As this study has demonstrated further research may alter the interpretation of the place of various works in the collection.

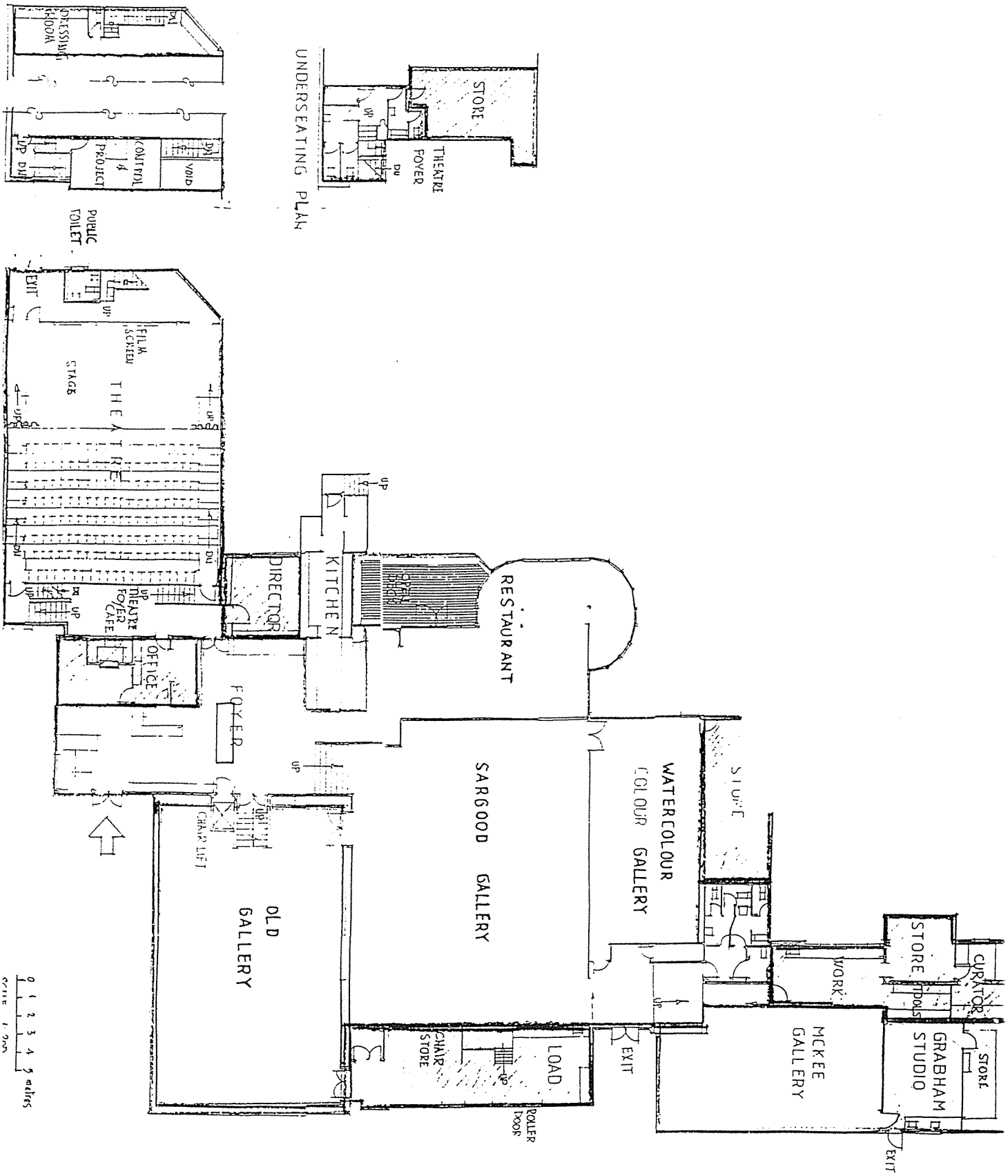
Collections
Gully Collection
Branfill Collection
J.C.Richmond Collection
Arndt Collection
Annesley Collection
Stoddart Collection
Contemporary Art Society Collection
Woollaston Collection
Stevens Collection
Goodman Suter Collection and associated works
Ceramics Collection

Works by these individual artists
Tripe- Portrait of Bishop Suter
Lindauer-Portrait of Matthew Campbell
Lindauer-Huria Matenga
Goldie
D.K. Richmond
Van der Velden
Nairn
Allen
Thompson
Haszard
Hodgkins
Gear
Le Brocquy
Adler
Kemp-Welch
Hermes
Rouault
Chagall
Leger
McCahon
Johnston
Merton
Clairmont
Fomison
Walters
Eagle

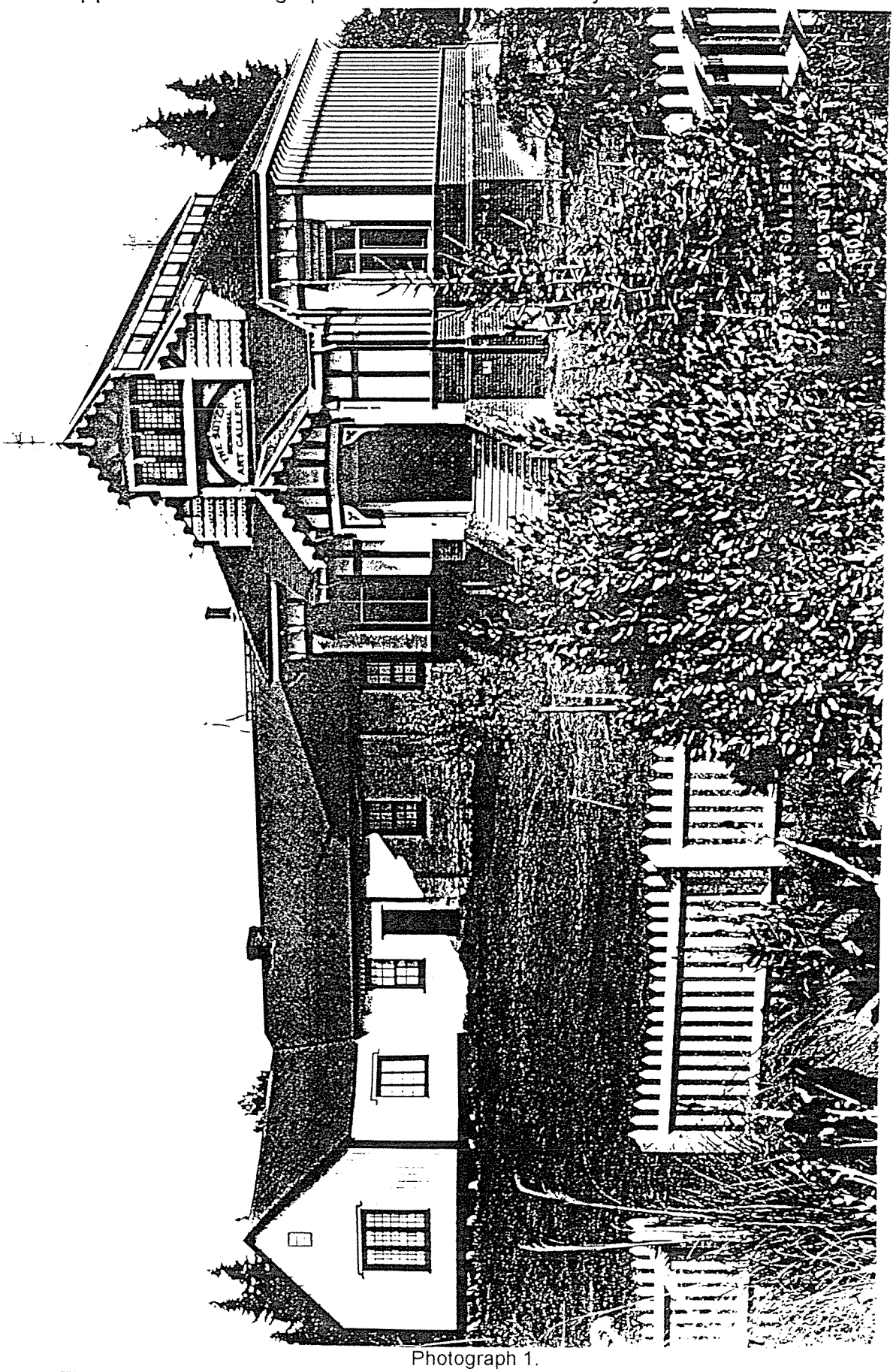
Many works with local associations should also be considered among these are:
Burton, Belton, Bathgate, Major, Parker, Joyes, Marple, Scott and Evans

Appendix IV. Plan

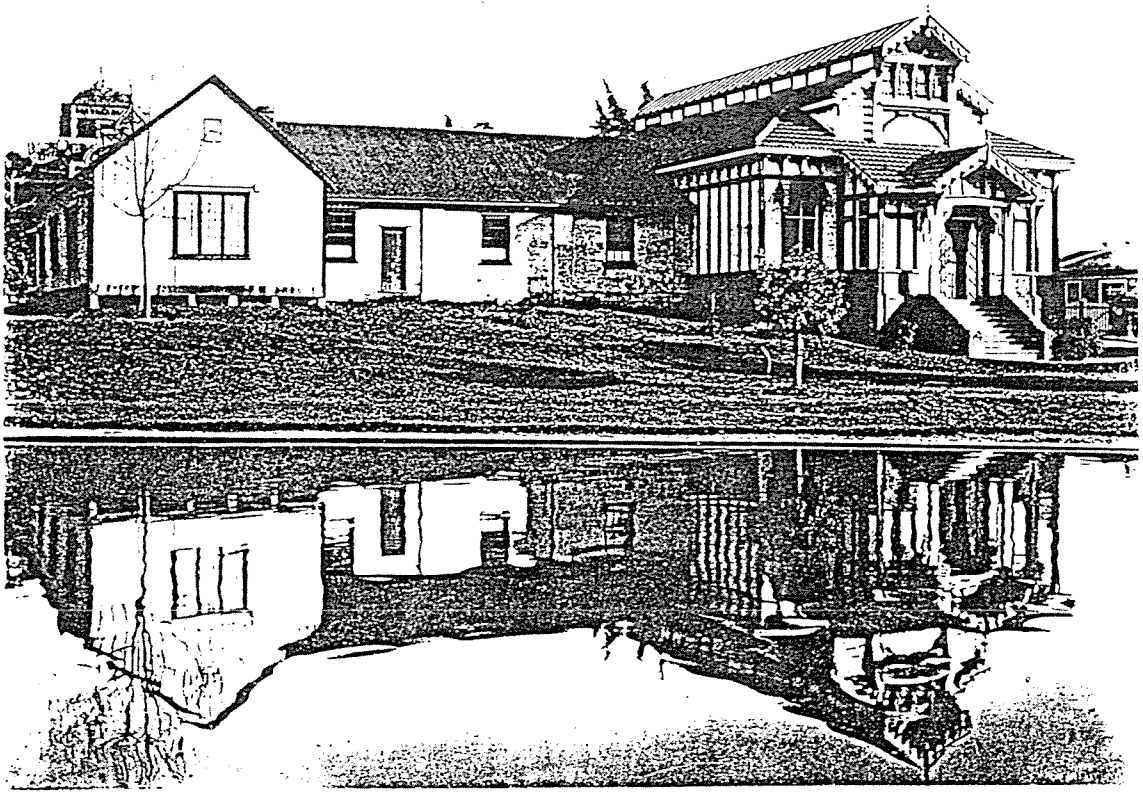
Plan of the Suter Art Gallery showing "the old Gallery", the only remaining part of the original building.



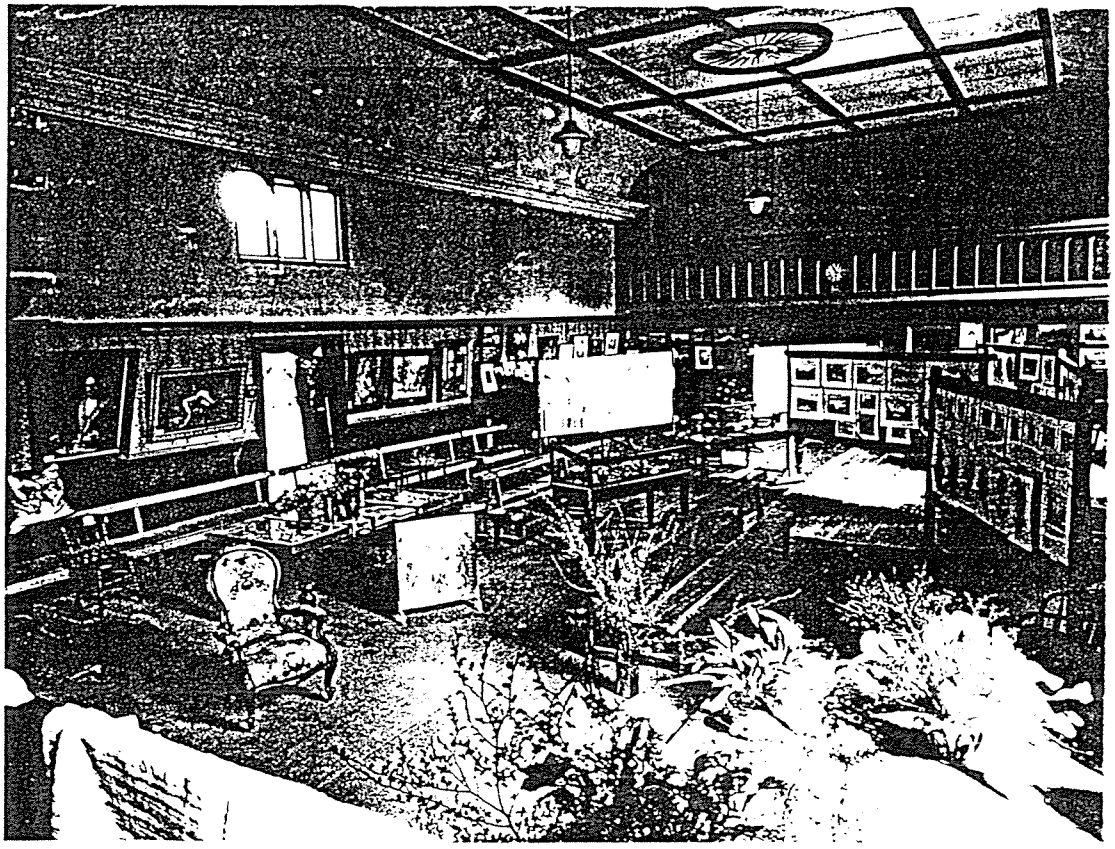
Appendix V Photographs of the Suter Art Gallery



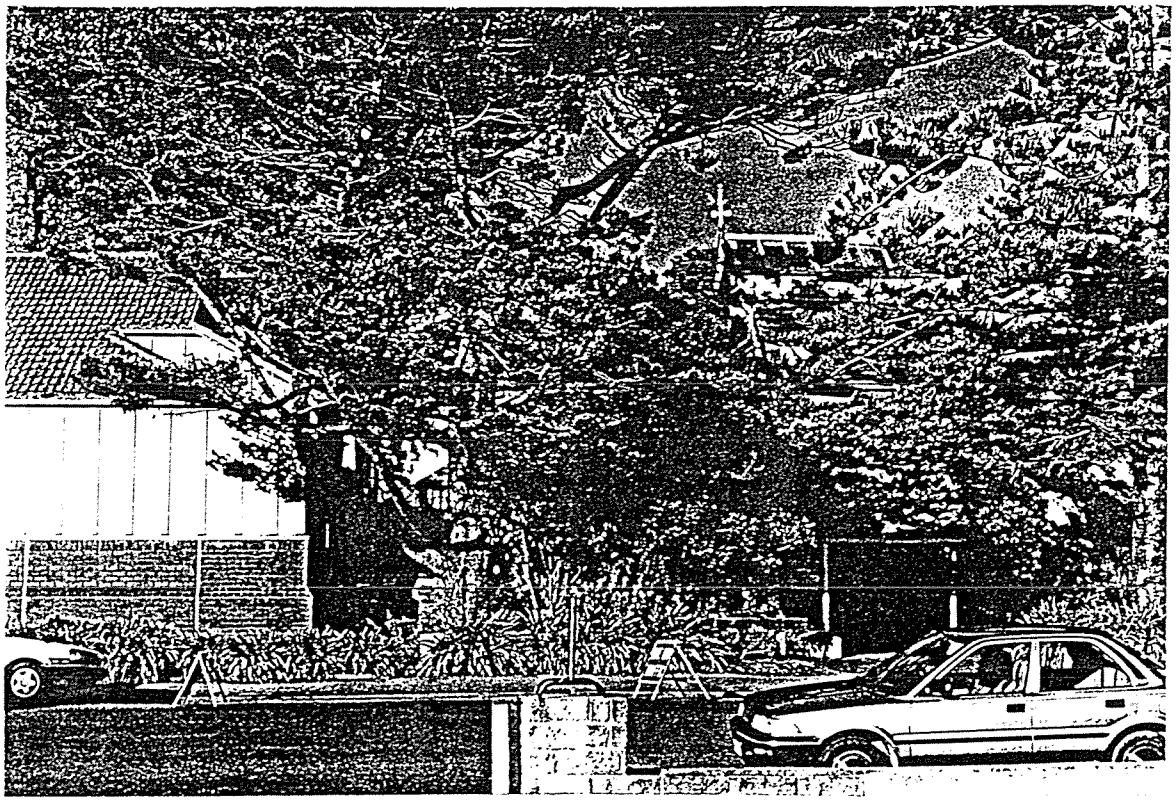
Photograph 1.
"The Suter Memorial Art Gallery". Three buildings made up the first Gallery. From the left the School of Mines building, the School's Society building and the Suter Art Gallery. Bridge Street is to the right of the building.
Photograph from the Tyree Studio Collection © Nelson Provincial Museum.



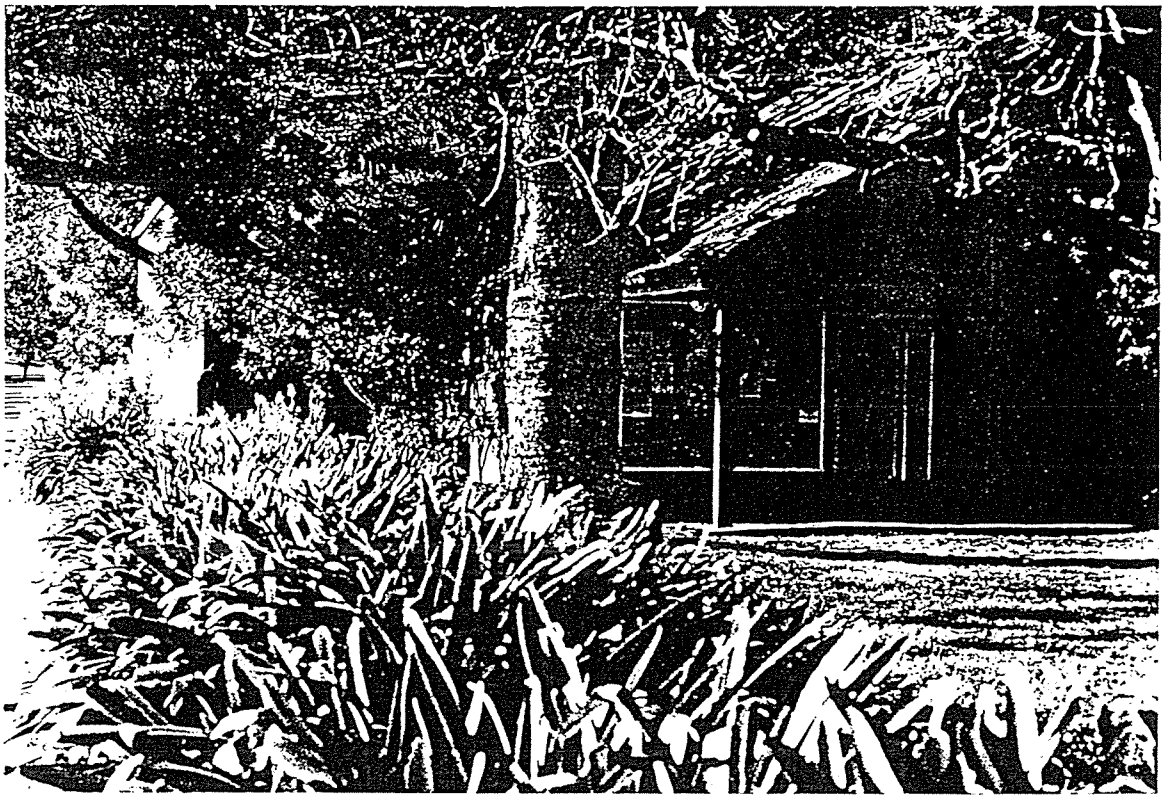
Photograph 2.
An early photograph of the Suter Art Gallery .The tower visible behind the Gallery is the Provincial Government building now demolished. The pond is in Queen's Gardens which have been developed adjacent to the Gallery. It was often called the "eel pond".
Photograph from the Kerr Collection ©Nelson Provincial Museum.



Photograph 3. Suter Art Gallery Exhibition in the Provincial Hall 1932.
Craft can be seen on display including furniture, decorated tin work, floral work and embroidery.
Photograph from the Kingsford Studio Collection © Nelson Provincial Museum



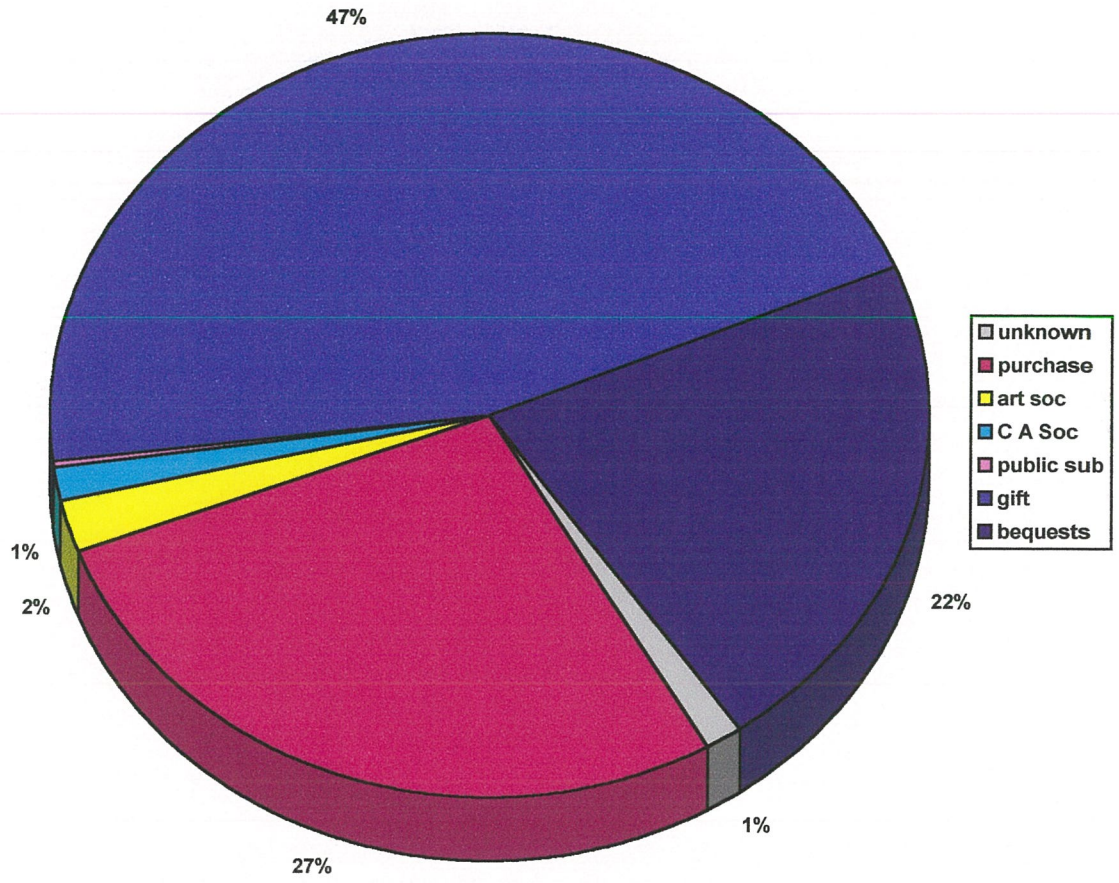
Photograph 4. The Suter Gallery as seen from Bridge Street. To the left is the theatre extension and to the right the entrance and "old gallery"



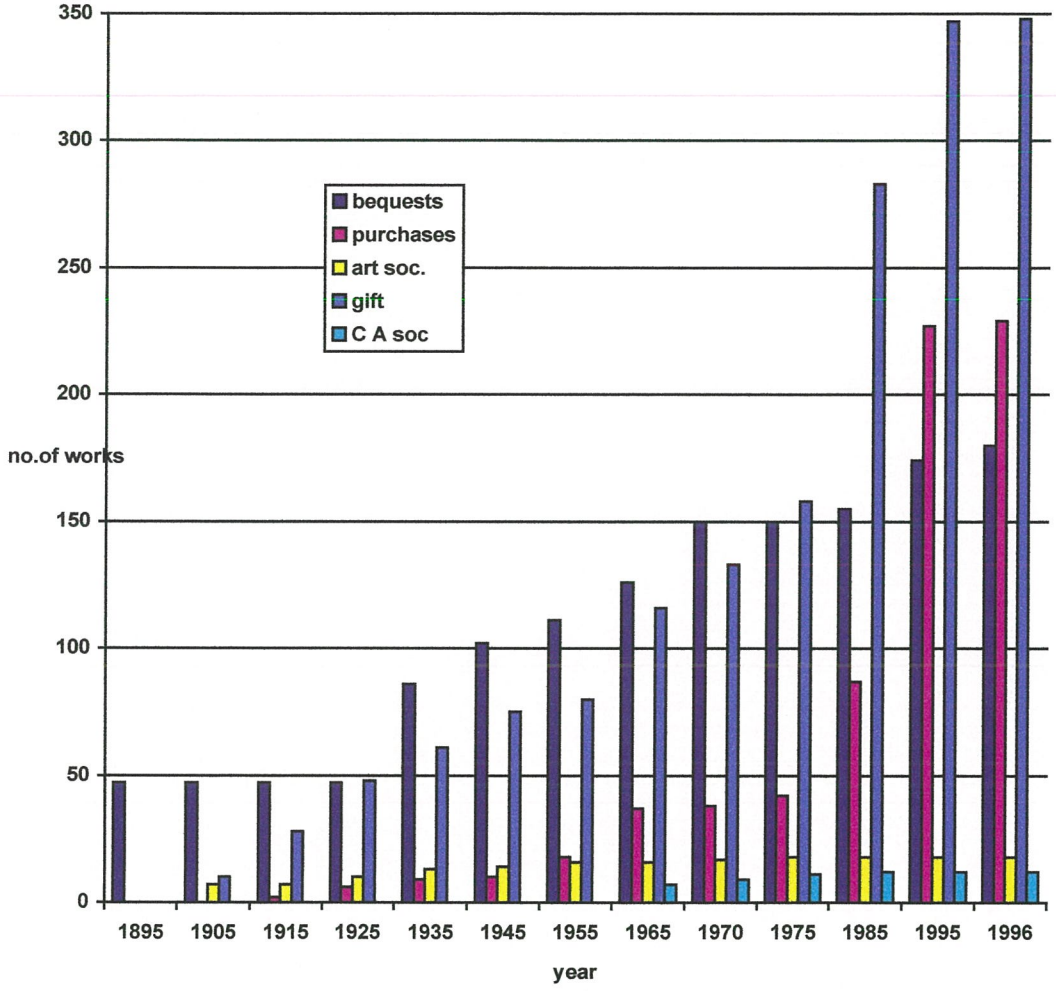
Photograph 5. The entrance to the Gallery on Bridge Street, Nelson

Appendix VI.

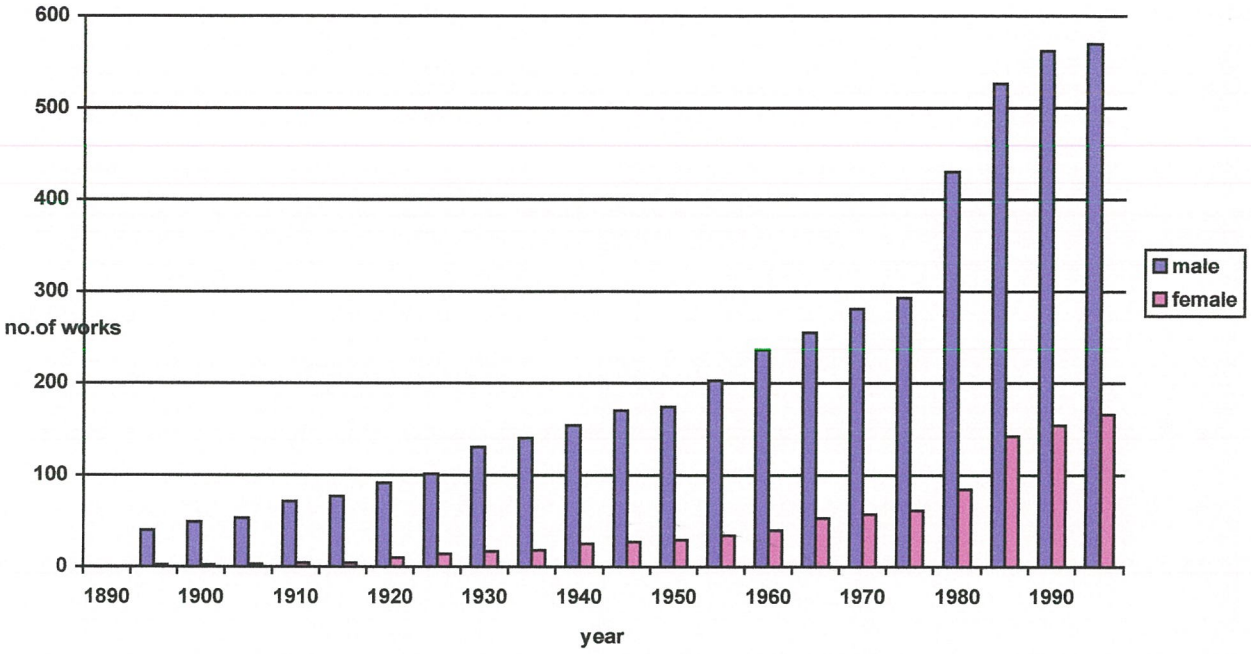
Graphics 1-4



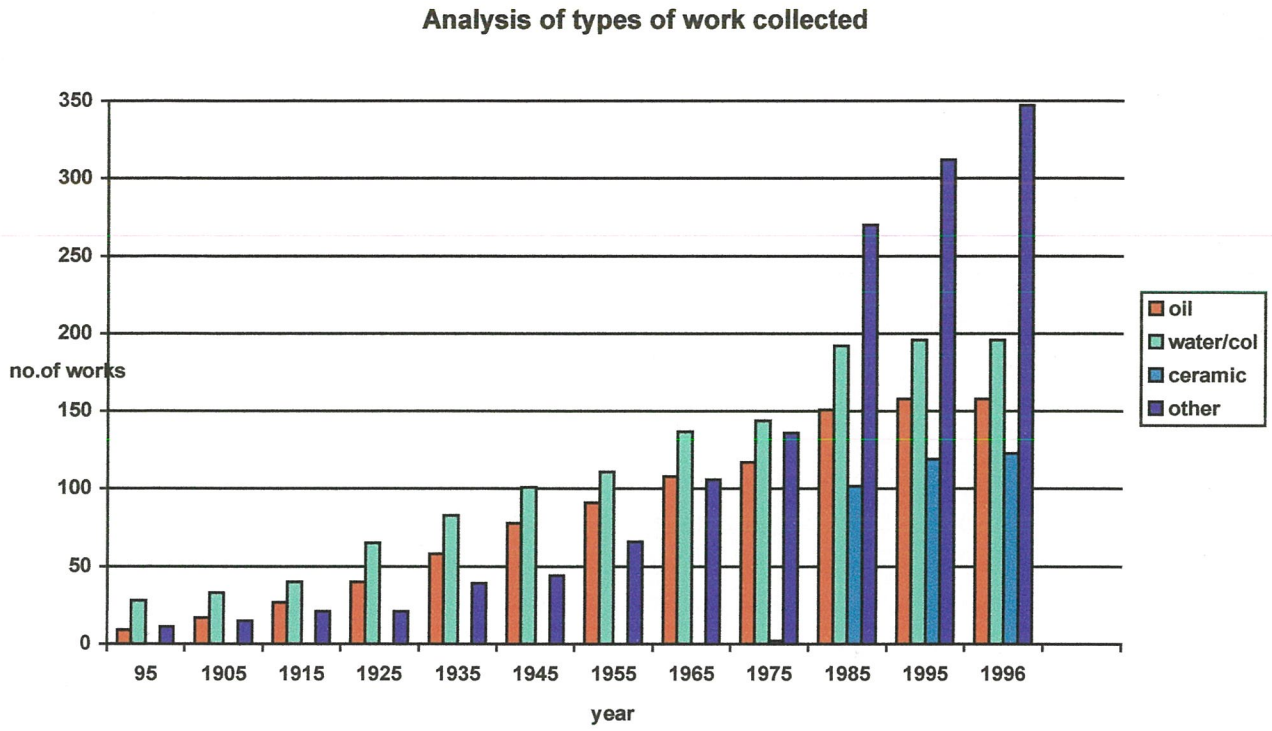
Graphic 1: Acquisition Sources at the Suter Art Gallery 1996



Graphic 2: Acquisition Sources 1895-1995



Graphic 3: Gender Balance of acquisitions: Suter Art Gallery 1895 - 1995



Graphic 4: Collection growth by type

Other = other media (acrylics, mixed media works, prints, drawings and sculpture)
Since 1985 these categories have overtaken the traditional collecting fields of oil and watercolour works and now constitute over 40% of the collection.

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