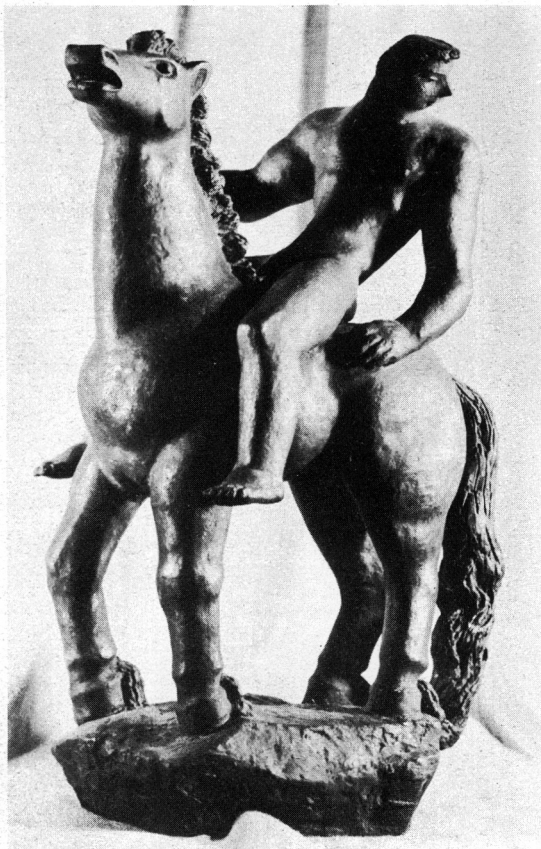




The Quarterly Bulletin
of the
National Gallery of Victoria

VOL. V No. I
1951



This issue of the Bulletin is devoted entirely to recent acquisitions by contemporary Australian artists and craftsmen.

LYNDON DADSWELL MAN AND HORSE
Bronze. Height 36 in. Felton Bequest, 1950

(Detail shown on front cover)

wood or stone. It is built up or cut away to form an image. This image must contain a vital force to be of any value, otherwise the work can be dead and useless, but sculpture that contains a vital force of life can live through the ages.

A master is a thinker. He has no need to be influenced by the past and is free to express himself as he wishes. Henry Moore is an example. His work vibrates with life and strength. We possess two of his pieces: both typical and architectural in treatment.

Two seated terra-cotta figures by Professor Frank Dobson are solidly modelled and characteristic of his rather heavy style, which is aped by many of the students of today.

The four pieces by Jacob Epstein stand out. They are so vital that any works placed alongside look dead and empty.

Under the same impulses we have some splendid works by our contemporary Australian artists. "Man and Horse" by Lyndon Dadswell, which is illustrated here, is typical of his versatile style which differs with his moods. Each expression is well handled and the results strong. "The Lizard" by Clive Stephens is a stone come to life; Daphne Mayo is represented by a torso which is vitally modelled, and the sensitive head of a "Besharin Boy" by Tina Wentscher are all worthy of special mention.

Being isolated we have every opportunity of expressing a type of sculpture uninfluenced by past civilizations, a type which breathes the spirit of Australia.

OLA COHN.

WILLIAM DOBELL BOY WITH A DOG

Oil on board, 8¼ in. x 5 in.

Purchased 1951



Contemporary Australian painting is varied in both subject matter and technique. We find much that is reminiscent of and inspired by 19th century British and European thought, and on the other hand much that is closer in intention to 20th century influences.

It is significant that in the latter the romantic theme is abandoned in favour of the harsher aspects of the Australian scene. The pleasing picturesque has become a little jaded and her face-lifting no longer stimulates the younger painters.

This is healthy and as it should be, although in turning to the city slums, the derelict ghost towns, the dead eucalypts and the over attenuated men and women of the back country for subject matter, many contemporary painters risk creating, by constant repetition, a new tradition which may become rather boring and a little trite. The whole business of painting revolves on producing a work of quality that will stand the test of time.

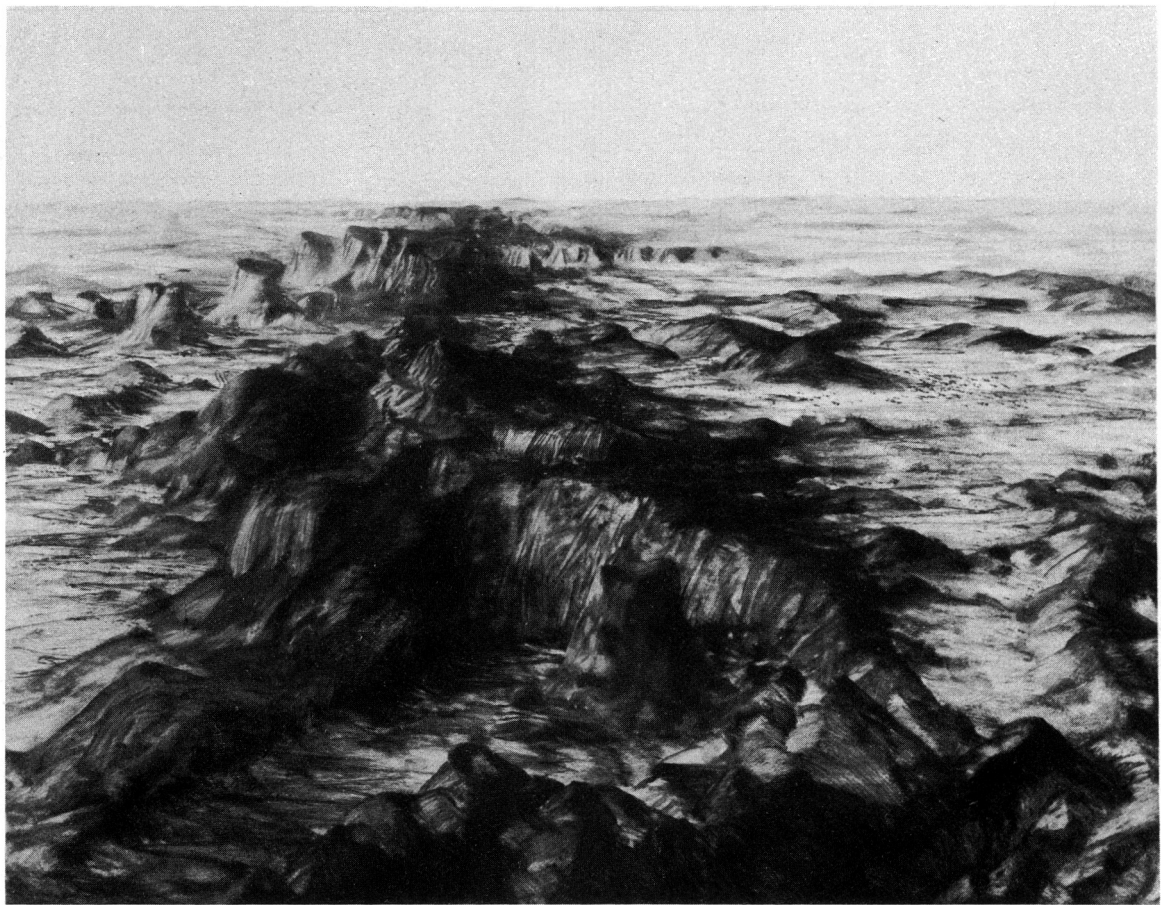
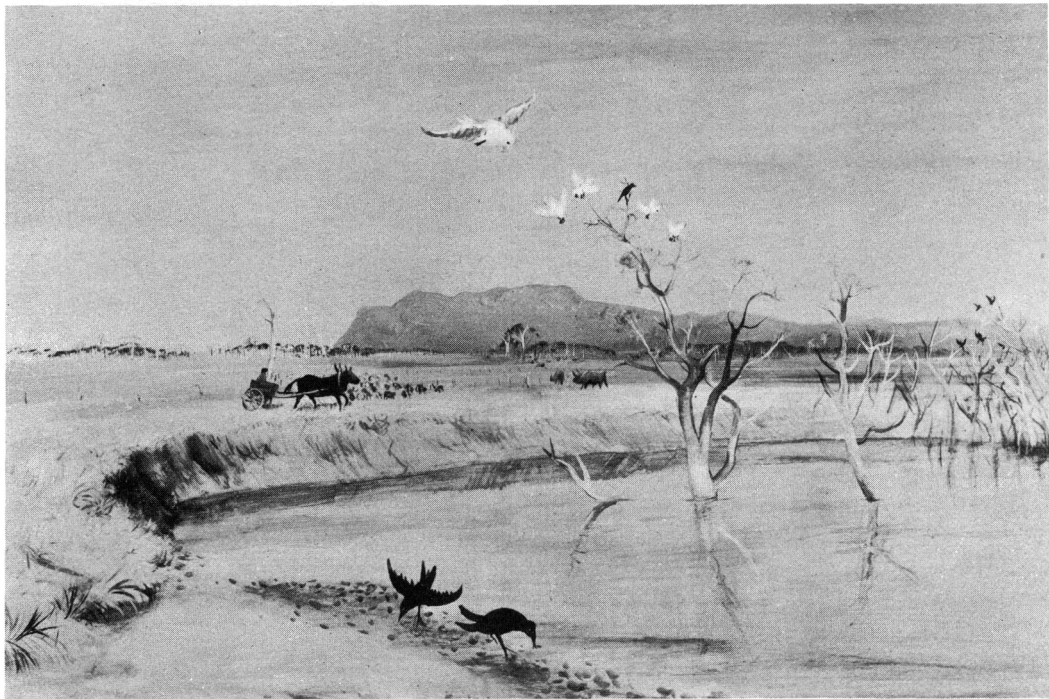
In this issue of the Bulletin we reproduce three works by contemporary painters which show distinct individuality in both subject matter and attack.

William Dobell is in the forefront rank of our painters today and has won his right to paint wherever he finds inspiration. His "Boy with a Dog", although only a sketch, shows his knowledge of draughtsmanship and his sensitive handling of paint.

Sidney Nolan, after going through various phases, has won his spurs in such pictures as "Durack Range" and gives a new version of the little known desert country and stark desolation of the mountain ranges of the far north.

Arthur Boyd, one of the younger school of whom we expect much, and who was strongly influenced in his early work by Brueghel, has turned his attention to the local countryside, with interesting results. His pictorial comments on the life and work of the settler on the land are fresh and stimulating in showing us a new version of an old subject.

ARNOLD SHORE.



TOP
ARTHUR BOYD IRRIGATION LAKE, WIMMERA
Oil on board, 32 in. x 48 in. Purchased 1950

LOWER
SIDNEY NOLAN DURACK RANGE
Oil on Masonite, 36 in. x 48½ in. Purchased 1950



R-110-26

RUSSELL DRYSDALE

TWO FIGURES

Pen drawing, 10 in. x 13½ in.

Purchased 1950

The ideals of topography and illustration pre-eminent in the work of the first generation of Australian artists were superseded in Buvelot's pencil drawings by an attention to tonal effects in simple, intimate, rural subjects.

Greater emphasis on pure line appears in the work of Tom Roberts, who was the only consistent draughtsman of the Heidelberg School. Robert's drawings are sketch book notations, quick studies in fastidiously put down, rather "straight" lines, with emphasis on verticals and horizontals which also form the structural skeleton of his paintings.

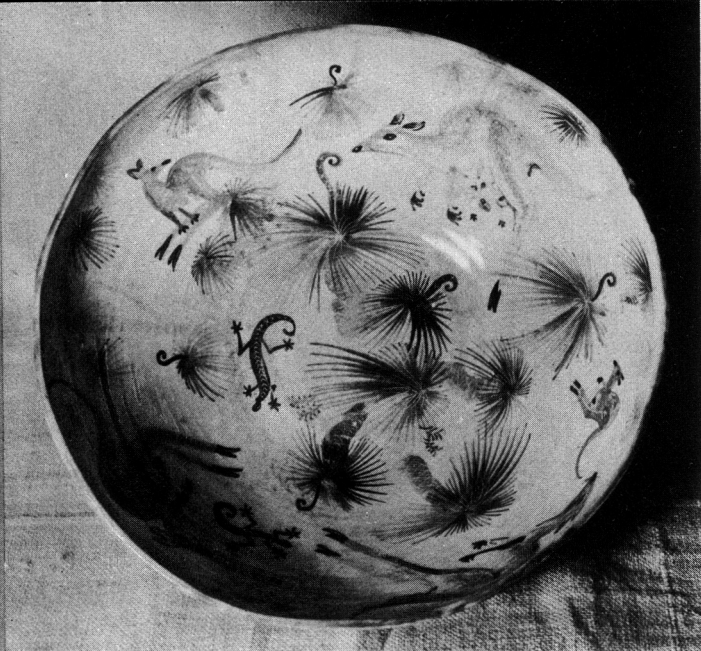
In the 'nineties and early nineteen-hundreds the Sydney Bulletin played an important part in stimulating draughtsmanship in Australia. Phil May, Hopkins, the Lindsays, Will Dyson and later David Low drew for the Bulletin and often showed a close acquaintance with English illustration such as the work of Charles Keene.

One of the most important draughtsmen of the early twentieth century in Australia was George Lambert, who had been made conscious of the importance of sure and thorough skill in drawing during his stay abroad.

The predominantly impressionist outlook of painters between the two wars is reflected in an ebb in the output of line drawing. The greater number of drawings in the Print Room Collection are by the hand of artists of the present generation. The return to emphasis on form which is part of the modern movement finds its equivalent expression in a return to the appreciation of line. Drysdale's *Two Figures*, reproduced here, represent the new trend in an authoritative way. In pure line he aims at the clear statement of formal relations; all turning points of form such as knees, elbows, the juncture of neck, chin and shoulders have been stressed; line thus symbolizes form and does not aim at imitating texture, or effects of light and shade. But Drysdale's line not only symbolizes form — it remains an aesthetic factor in its own right. The lines reveal in their movement the rhythm of an individual hand and combine to a harmonious dark pattern on the white sheet of paper.

This personal element also appears in the studies of William Dobell, the architectural subjects of Len Annois, the severely controlled line drawings by Eric Thake and others. In all these works of present-day draughtsmen the illustrative element, the "object represented", recedes in importance behind the artistic form, the method of depiction. This was true of draughtsmanship of the best periods of the past. But while the standard set by classical drawing, for example, demanded an objective, flowing ease and regular beauty of line, the line of the present day artist is as individual and personal as his handwriting.

URSULA HOFF.



BOWL, pottery, interior, with a design of kangaroos, goannas and blackboy plants.

From the MERRIC BOYD POTTERIES, John Perceval and Neil Douglas. Purchased 1950

ILLUSTRATED BELOW:

1. BOWL, pottery, terra cotta with high blue glaze inside. ALLAN LOWE
 2. COVERED JAR, pottery, with blue-green mottled glaze. KLYTIE PATE
 3. BOWL, stoneware; fluted, Korean type Celadon glaze. HUGHAN
 4. BOWL, pottery, decorated with fish design. S. HALPERN
 5. BOWL, pottery, decorated with aboriginal motif design. CARL COOPER
- Purchased 1950

Australian pottery has in the main derived its inspiration from two sources — Chinese pottery and aboriginal painting.

The Kent Collection of Chinese Pottery in the National Gallery has stimulated many potters and some of the stoneware by Hughan is at first glance almost indistinguishable from Korean pottery, and the same strong influence is seen in the shapes used by Klytie Pate and Allan Lowe. Hughan by careful experiment has achieved a quality of glaze which is all too rare and which distinguishes his work: The Korean type bowl in the Collection reveals this quality.

In the desire to produce pottery which is "Australian", other potters have turned to aboriginal painting and introduced these as motifs for their designs. Carl Cooper uses both the earth colours and the designs of aboriginal art in his work. The Boyd potteries work shows the use of Australian flora and fauna in the painted decorations of Neil Douglas.

The third and least obvious stimulus is seen in the work of S. Halpern which expresses the feeling of European peasant pottery. In the best pieces, like the bowl purchased for the National Gallery, the rough textured clay, the subtle design and the depth of the glaze combine to give a result which is new to Australian pottery.

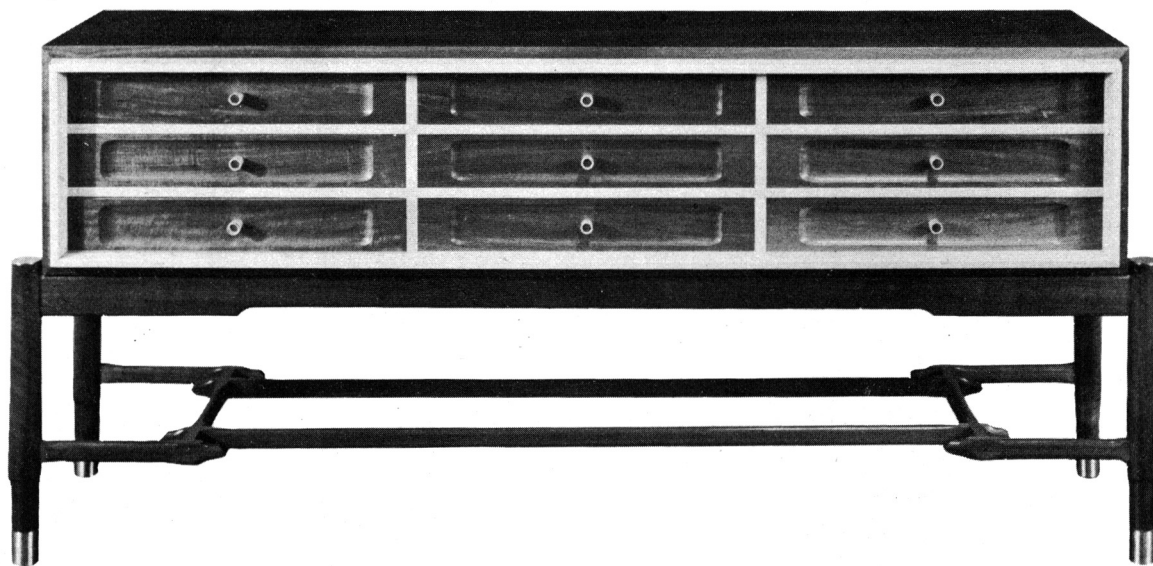
The purchasing of the pieces, now being shown in the Verdon Gallery, marks the beginning of a collection of Australian pottery which will bring before the public the best work of our potters.

ROBERT HAINES.



For the most part current trends in furniture making in Australia have fallen into three classes: the reproduction of the "period" often unsuited to the Australian conditions of living; the mass production in putty and plywood, suited to the minimum income but tasteless and badly made; and the so called modern, of bombastic shapes and crude workmanship. There is a fourth, which is all too rare, the production of the true modern: in so far as, working in Australian woods, the artist craftsman adapts these, in styles and designs of his own creative mind, to the conditions of living in Australia in the twentieth century. The artist craftsman follows in design the theory that even Chippendale was modern in his own time and that the reproduction of period pieces is not the way in which to furnish for the twentieth century. This fourth group can again be divided, first those who make individual pieces especially designed for a particular place, purpose and person, and secondly the designing of furniture to be later mass produced. It is obvious that the second type will not have the same attention given to detail and finish and that the first will be more exclusive because of just those things. It would seem that this has always been so, and not only in furniture. The making of an individual piece by an artist craftsman depends for its quality not only on the basic good design but on the small variations which stamp it an individual. The two pieces of furniture by S. Krimper on view in the end bay of the Latrobe Gallery are examples of the artist craftsman. His furniture has well defined characteristics which, while making it distinctly his, shows his affinity with the great makers of furniture of the past. He claims furniture as a creative art, and the clarity, unity and harmony of his pieces, resulting from a basically simple line with variation, repetition of motif and restrained ornamentation, bear out his ideas in fact. His work is a unified whole and separate pieces of it are his expression of this creative impulse which makes his furniture an important contribution to the representation of living in Australia in the twentieth century.

ROBERT HAINES.



SHALLOW CHEST WITH DRAWERS ON STAND, *Australian Cedar, framed in Silver Ash. Designed and made by S. KRIMPER.*

Purchased 1948

RECENT ACQUISITIONS TO THE ART GALLERY INCLUDE:

OILS

Green, Silver and Gold	Murray Griffin	Purchased
Portrait of Robert Wharten	William Dobell	Purchased
Boy with a Dog	William Dobell	Purchased
Beyond the Park, Lilydale	Harry Rosengrave	Purchased
Girl with a Fish	Ian Armstrong	Allan R. Henderson Donation Fund

WATERCOLOURS

Forest of Fontainebleau	Leonard L. Annois	Purchased
Capel Curig, Wales	Leonard L. Annois	Purchased

ART MUSEUM

Bowl, pottery, made by S. Halpern — Australian	Purchased
Sampler, needlework on linen by Sarah Burch, 1778	Purchased
Cabinet, walnut, Italian Renaissance	Felton Bequest

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Umbrella, Victorian Period	Presented by Mrs. H. S. Feakes
Paisley Shawl	Bequeathed by Mrs. C. A. Buick
Five Siamese Objects	Presented by George Maxwell McGowan, Esq., of Emu

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