

NEW ZEALAND PHOTOGRAPHY

35c

September-
October 1972





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New Zealand Photography

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EDITOR & PUBLISHER
Bruce Weatherall
29 Wyndrum Avenue
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AUCKLAND EDITOR
John B. Turner
43 Woodside Road
Mount Eden

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Phototypography
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COVER: Photograph by Ans Westra

Editorial

This issue of *New Zealand Photography* is almost entirely a review issue. Reviews of two recent photographic exhibitions and a preview of a book are the three major features which take up most of the magazine. This has been done because it is felt the book and the exhibitions effectively define where photography in New Zealand is as a medium of expression here and now towards the end of 1972. The photographs must not, repeat not, be regarded as the ultimate in fine photography; the photographers themselves would be the first to affirm that there is much more they want and hope to do. But these photographs say how far we have come, where we are now and hopefully where we are going and how much further we have to go. In particular, I would urge readers to study most carefully Tom Hutchins' review of the recent exhibition at the Barry Lett Galleries in Auckland. We welcome Tom back to the sparse ranks of our contributors after his year's leave from his job as senior lecturer in Photography at the University of Auckland School of Fine Arts. His review is about much more than the exhibition itself; it says a great deal about photography in general and the present state of New Zealand photography in particular. We hope it will stimulate others to develop their own similarly acute judgment about photography.

Apology

The last issue of *New Zealand Photography* was a bit of a disaster, largely because of editorial incompetence. For a start, a piece of type from the issue before somehow landed on top of the editorial page and announced that it was issue Number 10 for May-June 1972, instead of Number 11 for July-August. A similar blue on p. 30 announced the dates relating to the Arts Council awards a year late: they should have been 1973 and 1972, not 1972 and 1971 as printed. There were several minor errors. Then, many copies were very badly printed; this has been taken up with our printers, who assure us they'll do their best to see it doesn't happen again. But we must apologise to contributors, especially Clive Stone, for what was done to their fine photographs. We hope this issue will be very much better.

New Look

If you think this issue looks much better than previous issues, the credit goes to our new typesetting by John van Hulst. We had good service at reasonable cost in the past from the Universe Press Agency, but we felt the time had come to spend a bit more of our slender resources on improving our typography. John van Hulst feels about typography the way we feel about photography, and as well as quality his advanced computerised phototypesetting establishment has given us much more flexibility than we've had in the past. We hope you appreciate the results too.

Bruce Weatherall

In this issue:-

Ans Westra's New Book

Photographs at the Barry Lett Gallery

Photographs at the Universities Arts Festival

BOOK PREVIEW

NOTES ON A PRELIMINARY TOUR OF ANS WESTRA'S COUNTRY, IN THE COMPANY OF THE PHOTOGRAPHER

NOTES ON THE COUNTRY I LIVE IN.

Photographs by Ans Westra, with text by James K. Baxter and Tim Shadbolt. Alister Taylor Publications, Wellington, 1972. Paperback, 128 pages, 133 photographs. Price \$2.95.

The country Ans Westra lives in is an intensely personal place. For a start, it is a country of people, rather than of places and things. It conforms to no stereotype of what New Zealand is, or, what New Zealanders are. It is not the scenic wonderland of mountains, bush, coastline and thermal wonderland seen in glossy coffee table books or Tourist and Publicity Department brochures. And the people conform to no stereotype of who "New Zealanders" are. Nor is any attempt made to show all facets of the New Zealander. This was why the originally projected title of the book *The New Zealanders*—was eventually rejected. The respectable middle class people of suburbia hardly figure at all in Ans Westra's country, even though she herself lives in a house in Wellington's Karori, than which no New Zealand suburb is suburbier. But neither are the inhabitants of her country all the Barry Crump characters of back-country bush and farm; they do appear, perhaps more acutely seen than ever before, but Ans Westra's country is predominantly urban. Then again, it is not always the country of the urban youth counter-culture, even though youth is strongly represented in the photographs, and even though the writers of the text and the publisher are prominent members of the counter-culture.

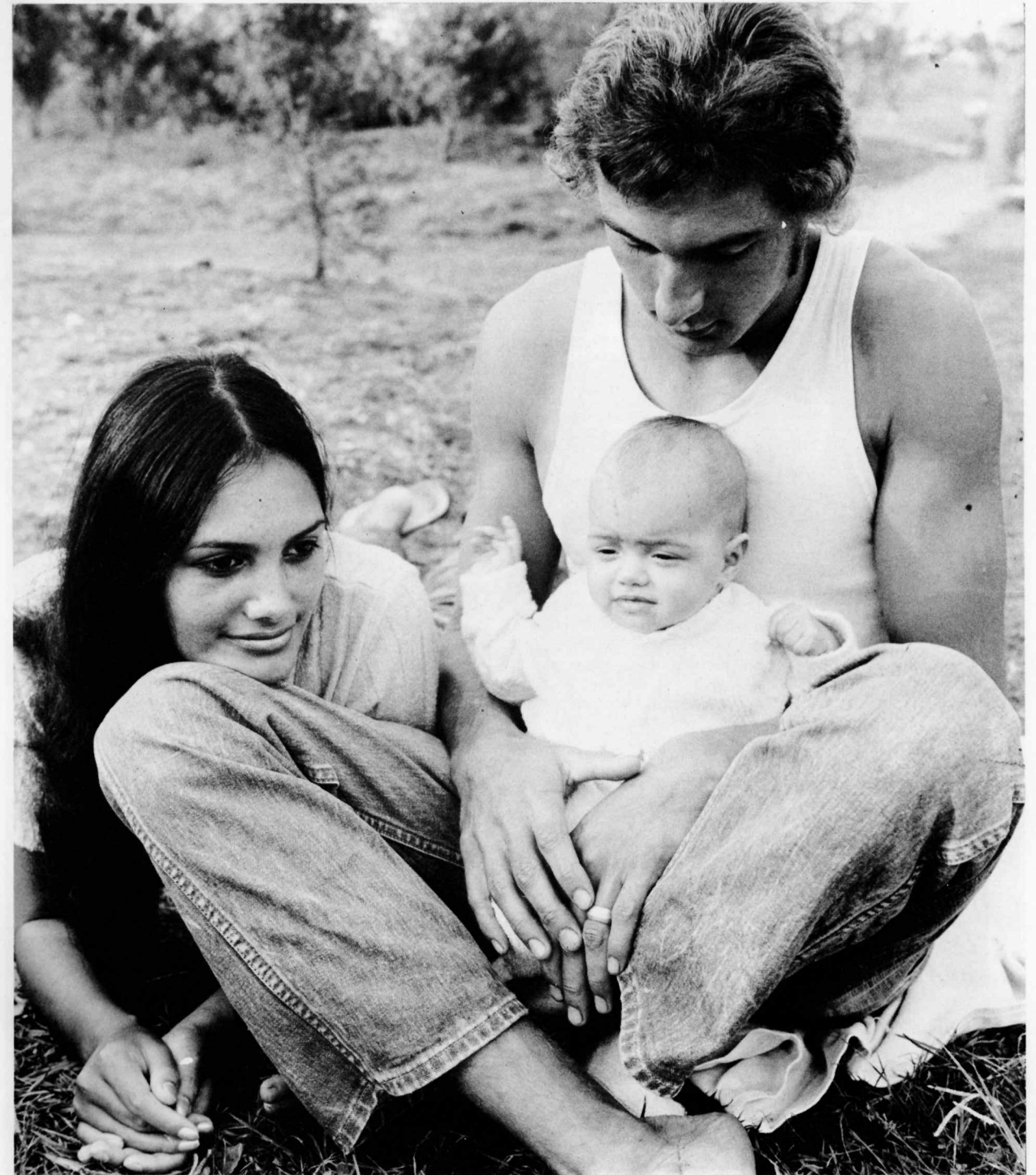
Ans Westra's photographs span many, but not all, aspects of New Zealand society, because they document her personal view. In her own quite simple words, she photographs the people she likes. And this has meant young people, Maoris, working people, old people. The people of rural and back country New Zealand, of the inner city, of public bar and street demo.

Why she likes and photographs these people, and not the respectable suburban middle-class New Zealander, is not because she is necessarily anti-establishment or anti-middle class on principle. The reasons become clearer when she talks about the photography with which she made her name as New Zealand's outstanding contemporary photographer. This was her photography of the Maori people which led to her books *Maori* and the controversial *Washday at the Pa*. Living and working amongst the Maori people of the East Coast, she found subjects with whom she could easily work. They were and are warm, friendly people, willing to accept her and invite her into their homes so she could get to know them and they her. She could become involved with her subjects as people and could gain an understanding and sympathy with them which made it possible for her to make photographic statements which satisfied her.

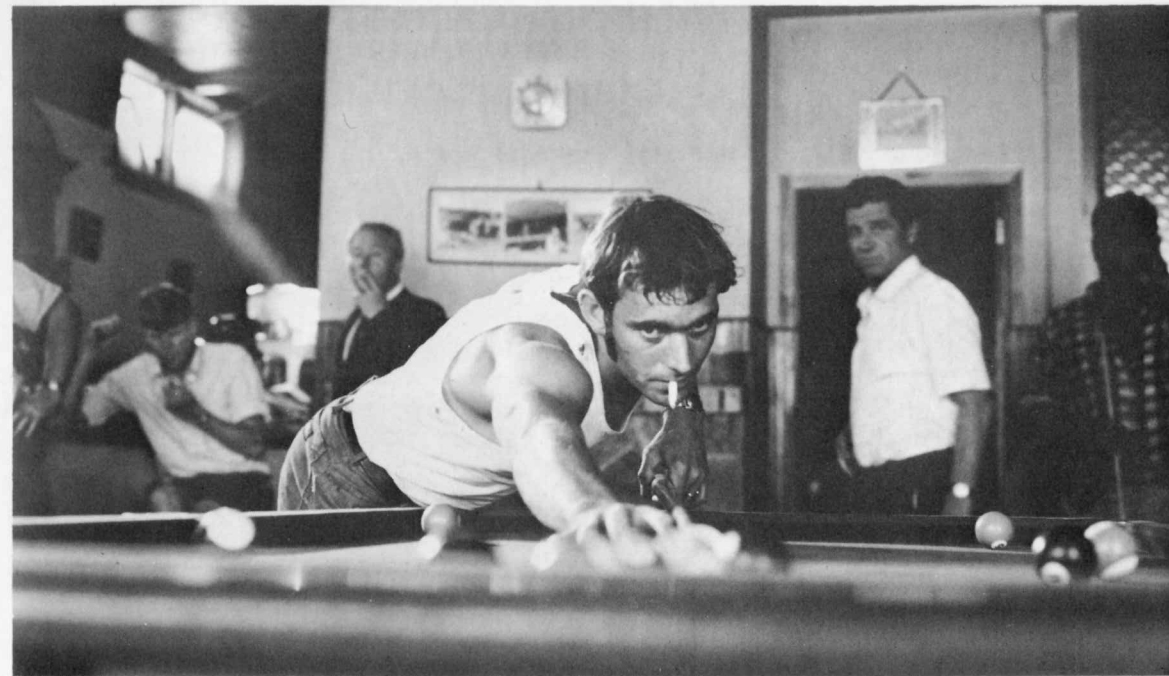
But when she set out to photograph a wider New Zealand community, it was not so easy. Your ordinary suburban middle-class New Zealander is not a particularly outgoing person, and does not readily accept strangers and outsiders. Ans Westra could not get close enough to them, could not get to know them well enough, to be able to make about them the sort of statement she tries for in her photographs. In her life, and therefore in her photographs, the suburban middle class could not really become part of Ans Westra's country. Getting away from the more "respectable" aspects of New Zealand life has not meant that Ans Westra has produced another documentation of harsh reality, of the seamy side of life. Far from it. The photographs in the book are of real people all right, but they bubble over with life, with vitality, with humour. Much of what many people like to think of as the real New Zealand does not appear in the book; conversely much of what many people would prefer not to think of as typically New Zealand does appear. Let's face it, in our own way we all live in different countries. Ans Westra has documented hers, in the fullness of its real and vigorous humanity.

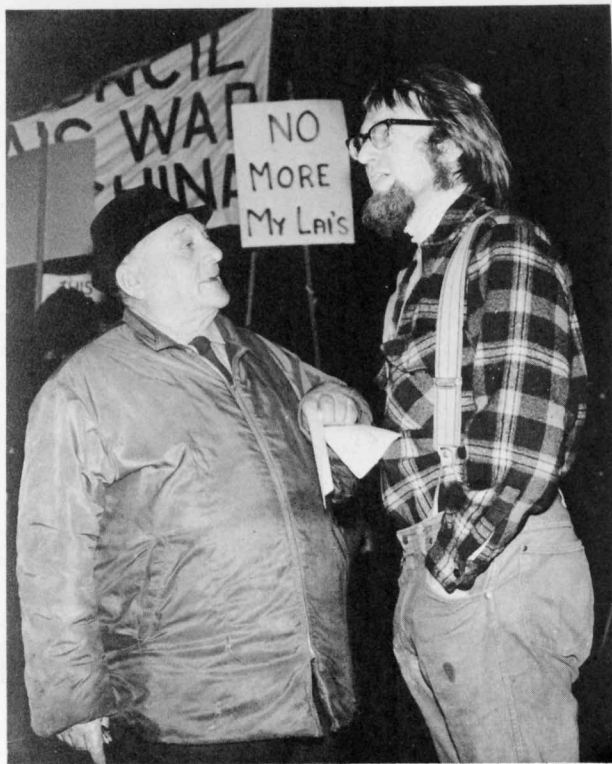
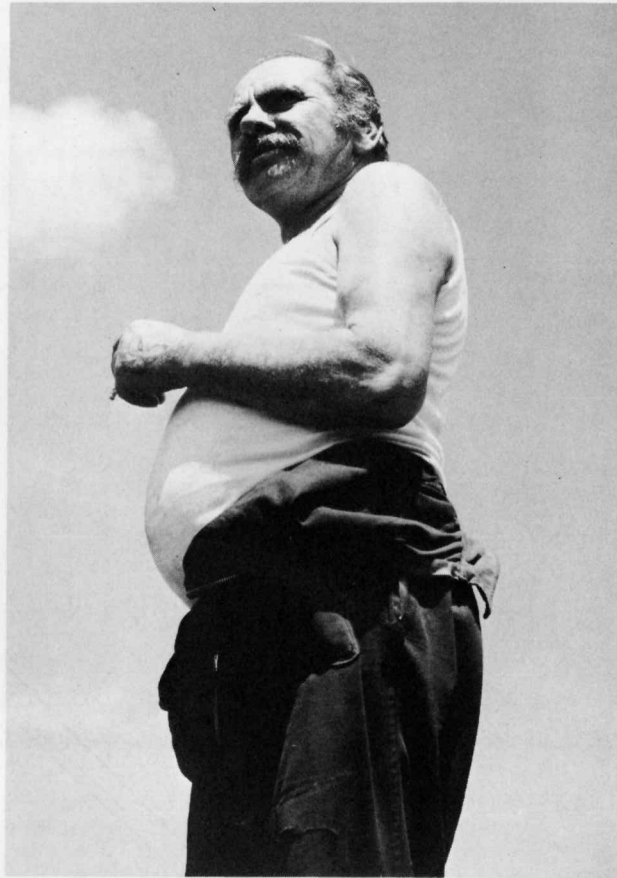
Notes on the Country I Live In was started two years ago with the help of a Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council grant. This enabled Ans Westra to travel New Zealand for two months taking photographs for the book. Another Arts Council grant is supporting publication of the book. Between these two grants, Ans Westra worked as a free-lance photographer to support herself and her son Eric, and at the same time continued working on the book whenever she could. This preview has been written from a look at the preliminary layout of the book, and from conversations with Ans Westra herself. So I cannot comment on the book as published, nor on the text. These will, I hope, be covered in a critical review to be carried in a forthcoming issue of this magazine.

Bruce Weatherall









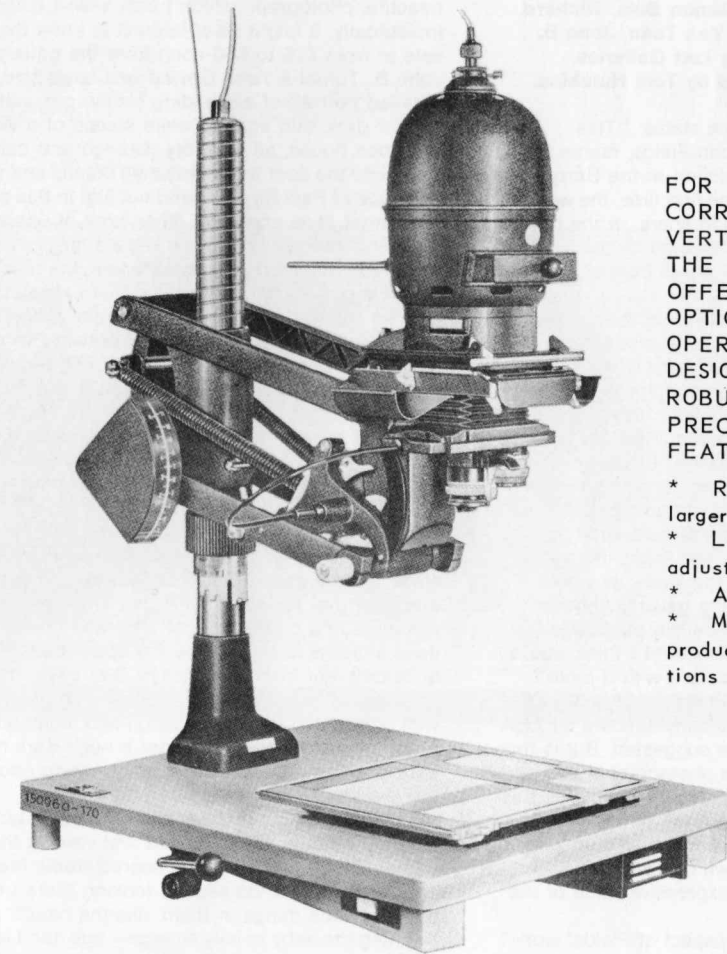
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GALLERY EXHIBITION

PHOTOGRAPHS by Gary Baigent, Simon Buis, Richard Collins, John Fields, Mac Miller, Do Van Toan, John B. Turner and Ans Westra, at the Barry Lett Galleries, Auckland, July 17-18 1972. Reviewed by Tom Hutchins.

The Introductory Note to the catalogue states: "This invitational exhibition, arranged by John Fields, marks the first time photographs have been exhibited at the Barry Lett Galleries. It also brings together, for the first time, the work of eight of our best contemporary photographers, in the form, essentially, of small one-man shows selected by the photographers..."; in other words, 58 prints from eight photographers.

Three photographers have only six prints each, the rest eight. It may be unfair to make general comments on the work of any one on such a small sampling. But there is obvious consistency in some of the sets of prints. John Fields for example, appears to be making a statement about isolation and togetherness throughout his six prints. They are not the kind of quiet, beautifully printed interiors or landscapes previously seen from him. They are more contrasty with a strong human content more associated with photojournalism. Two are available—light, shallow-depth-of-field strongly-blurred-by-action shots which have raised the comment in some viewers as to whether they are the kind one would expect in the "Fine Arts" context of the gallery. Another picture of city pedestrians walking frieze-like past an anonymous wall has been cropped from what I think was a more interesting and more complex picture with a more complex top background of shapes and space. This seems to indicate the primacy of his intention to communicate through the whole set of prints the idea I have suggested. But is this "non-aesthetic?" I don't think so. The photographer can and should choose his own terms of communication, whether this fits into a stereotype of what is "Fine Arts" or not. The question of whether a dealer gallery will sell such work or not because it doesn't look "arty" is its own operational concern, but ultimately it doesn't bear on the expressive value of the work.

For me at least, it is good to see an aspect of Fields' work I hadn't seen before, and I look forward to seeing how he combines his "fine arts" meticulous technique with direct human situations in future work.

More in the "mainstream" style of fine photography is Do Van Toan. He has one picture of an elderly female psychiatric patient which is a direct and movingly questioning portrait. But *Otama Bay Rocks*, *Coromandel Stream*, and *Disused Maori Church*, *Coromandel Peninsula* have rich tones and fine detailed renderings of materials and surfaces. They show a mature response to tangibles of the mood of New Zealand places. The rocks at Otama Bay are fantastically textured areas, going right into the swirling sea, and Toan has made a

beautiful photograph which I only wish I could afford. Incidentally, it might be of interest to know that prints are for sale at from \$25 to \$50 each from the gallery.

John B. Turner's *Vena Govind* is a large-size, exquisitely detailed portrait of a standing Indian girl, with a sensuous play of dark skin against white stucco of a Wellington suburban house, all superbly detailed and convincing. One looks into the door and sees small details and senses also the influence of Paul Strand—and not just in this print. There is a big-format style about his other work of uncompromising realism presented with great regard for print quality. His *Symond's Building, Johnsonville* is a fine bit of New Zealand observation with the swooping cutout swimsuit girl advertising sign on the roof of a suburban corner shop. This is a documentary in the best sense of Walker Evans, with genuine New Zealand content. It has been criticised as not being as formally composed as an "art object" should; and it is true there is a slight cramped feeling on the left edge, as though there is a greater distractive element deliberately left out. But this is a very small compositional defect in a photograph which is not on about "ART" but about our kind of life and environment.

Gary Baigent's pictures are large, mostly serene and sometimes with odd touches of stangeness, like the one of a store dummy gazing out of a deserted back-alley window in an effect that suggests an Atget. There is also a touch of nostalgia in a quiet image of a railway timetable with its still, deep shadow falling across the upper part. His pictures are quite different from the *Unseen City* days; they are finely detailed, without the action and blurred life of the book, but with an assured subtlety of vision and technique. A large beer advertisement seen from under a huge dark motorway structure has a surrealistic quality, which generally typifies the overall delicacy of his selection.

Mac Miller has four pictures in a series on a birth (is it his own child?). (*Editor's note: yes.*) At first viewing they appear a bit unordered with some of the unpredictable bustle of this natural event. But on second looking there are some very beautiful little things in them, like the hands of the nurse awaiting the baby to fully emerge—one hand is professionally resting, quite assured, the other is beginning to stretch nervously out to help the new small person, if needed. The series shows from an uncompromising frontal position the genuine joy of this small miracle. His picture of a church door at Cambridge seems a bit heavily one-sided in its composition with three heavy shadows cutting across the building's shapes. But his other two, of an old Masonic Hall at Raglan, and a detail from a rail truck at Cambridge, are fine observations.

I find Ans Westra's pictures the least complicated. They are simple, personal and direct, but some avoid depth of feeling. This is not true of a picture of a woman tending a grave in a

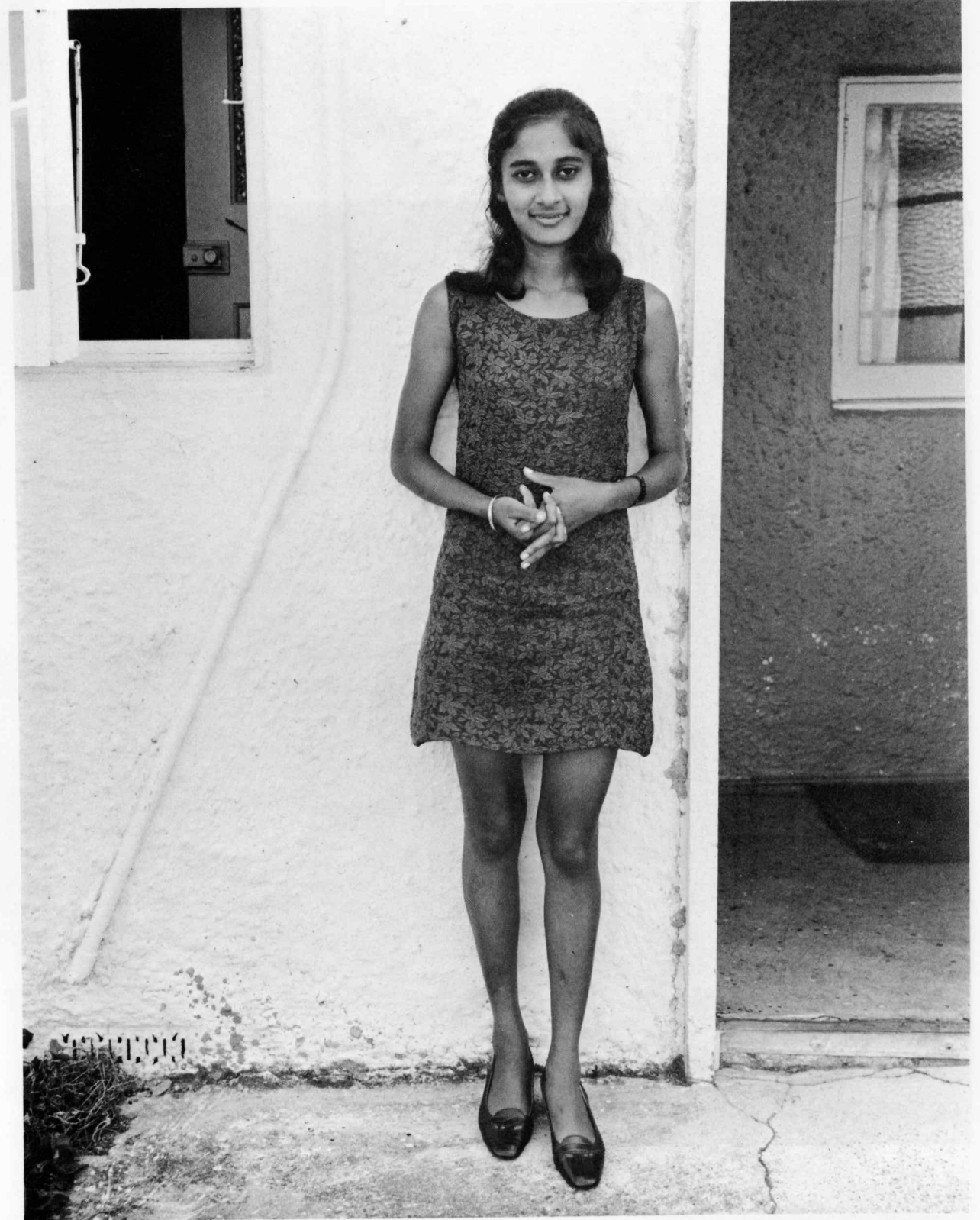
Continued on p. 21



John Fields—Auckland, 1969



Do Van Toan—*Otama Bay Rocks*, 1971



John B. Turner —*Vena Govind*, Wellington, 1969



Gary Baigent—*Newmarket, Auckland, 1972*



Mac Miller—*Birth*



Ans Westra



Simon Buis—Here's King in Your Eye, 1972

wide county cemetery, rendered with full detail and conviction. She has another very powerful direct portrait of a Maori child, taken in 1963. Her *West Coaster* portrait is a fine shot of an engaging pot-bellied old character, shot from a very low angle. But the angle itself makes it seem forced. Maybe this was the only available camera position. But with a touch of complexity in the strange image appearing on his hand (is it a tattooed face, or something drawn?) we are made to feel that some supporting details should be there, perhaps a touch of his background instead of the blank sky. Her picture of a young couple, with the girl holding up a pebble for them to look at on a wide shore scene has been described locally as "undigested sentiment". I don't find it so. There is nothing sentimental about young New Zealanders together on their coast. But I do find that the two elements, the couple and their setting, are too evenly balanced. In its formal stability of equal emphasis the picture has an old-fashioned "pictorial" feeling which some might see as sentiment, whereas I see it as a design defect. She has a more complicated structure in a picture of two young boys looking for something (insects?) in a shady margin near a suburban beach store. This is a completely spontaneous shot of childhood, but it has an interesting breakup of the area by poles, powerlines, the shop's shape, the foreground grasses, etc. There is a beautiful shimmer from the iron roof of the shop which suggests a typical summer holiday memory. But as in the print of the young couple, the tones are a bit too soft for my liking. Having said that, it is still a genuine piece of New Zealand experience she is presenting.

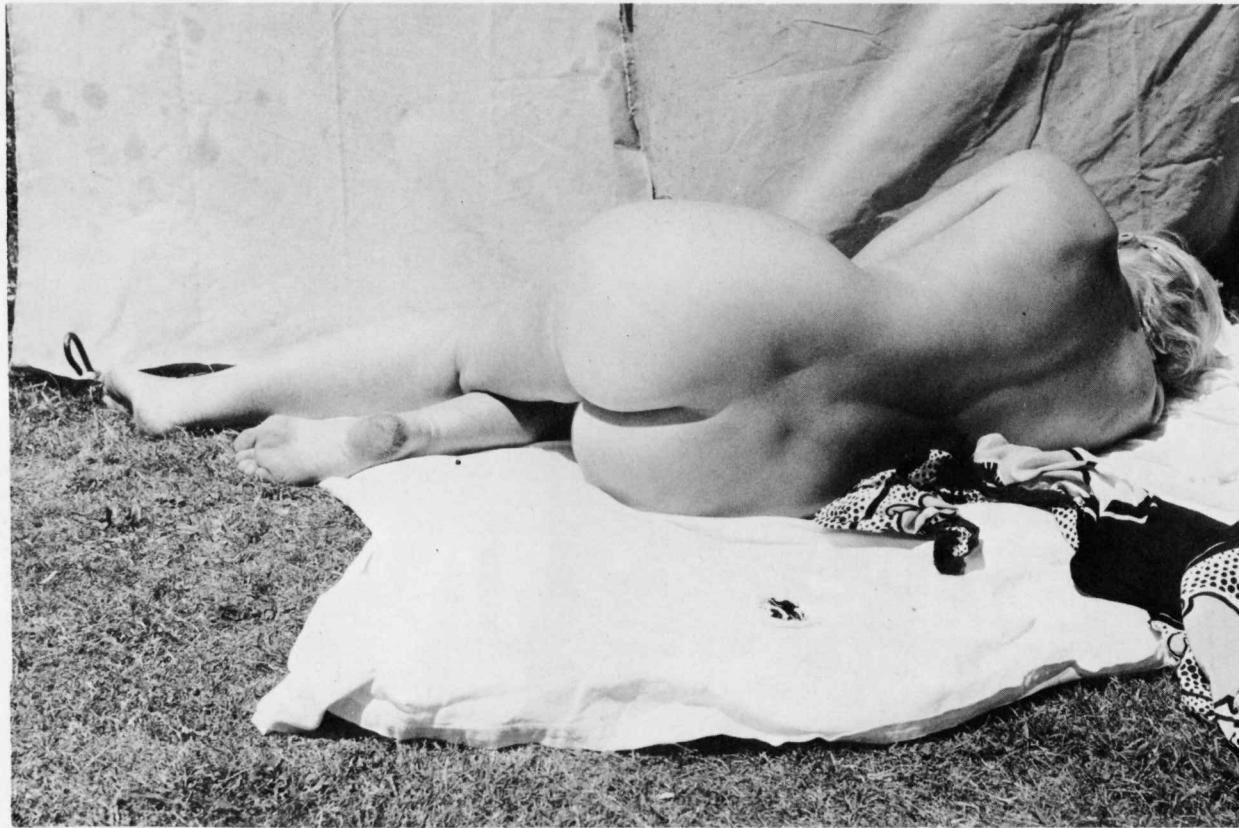
Simon Buis seems the least concerned of this group with "art". His pictures show an eclectic and happy approach to photography which he apparently enjoys spontaneously and without any doctrinal considerations. His picture of a small boy appearing to fall head first into a sand hole works on several levels. At first it seems like a happy quick candid shot. Then it seems to suggest the danger and imagined horror of a small child being sucked down into the earth. It also has the surreal quality that an instant of time gives to a photograph when natural forces seem suspended. There are also slightly odd elements in some of his other prints. An elderly couple, posed, sitting formally on chairs on a lawn, appear to be central in the shot. Then one notices they are on one side. There is a suggestion of something odd from this simple fact. The feeling that one knows them quite well and therefore doesn't have to look closely for detail is shattered when one realises the details are missing, through softness of focus or movement blur. The picture becomes ambiguous, slightly annoying, and therefore more interesting. Similarly he has a closeup outdoor shot of a conventionally pretty young woman. She has however a slight out-turning of one eye. This small detail upsets us, shatters our own conventional superficial response to "another pretty girl shot", and we begin to look at the real unique person there.

With great gusto Buis has tried a big put-on, send-off or put-down (I'm not sure) in a huge print (about four feet by three feet) called *Here's King in Your Eye*. It seems to be about the half naked, loll-about youth pop culture of manufactured images and cut-out personalities. The young man in it seems to be called "King". To me it seems an attempt at satire, and to some extent it works. But the coarseness of its print quality (from the sheer size) detracts from the message. It is certainly the least expected print in the show. Maybe it was a good anti-art antidote which the exhibition could stand anyway. Right at the other end of the scale in print size was the set by Richard Collins. They were small prints, all of delicate tonal quality, quite unlike anything else shown. They appear almost on the border of being under-printed. But they are delicate and glowing, with superbly controlled printing of quite

magical quality. They made the strongest set shown. *Nasturtium* is a close-up of a few overlapping leaves, each with a fine radiating framework of light veins, and each with a more delicate light line running around the irregular edges of each leaf. This is not just a "design" picture. It is an image which says "This is beautiful, it is infinitely precious, to be retained for all time." That is what Collins' other prints said too. Pictures of things, people and experiences of a deeply personal nature. His prints speak in almost a whisper of the love and beauty their images hold for the photographer. I have sometimes told my students that photography speaks best when it speaks quietly. Here is a superb example; a set of prints so filled with the awe of life within the immediate reach of anyone prepared to listen to its quiet intimations. I admit I am responding to the whole set. Their close display and the uniformly delicate tonal appearance compelled it. I see that the same garment near the glorious nude body of *Marie* was wrapped round the charming little girl *Rebecca* on a wide summer beach, one at Freeman's Bay, the other at Pakari. Both people were actually in harsh sunlight, but here the effect is of softness and delicacy of light. *Marie* has some temporary shelter (a tarpaulin or sheet?) for privacy, and a slight litter of cast-off clothes; *Rebecca* has a slight dark tangle of clothes around her feet, and a blur of movement in her backlit sunshade. Both, one feels, come from real life. Other subjects are two old houses in Grey Lynn with a suggestion of the fretwork "lace" behind a big gum tree and stark power pole in a growing no-man's land of creeping industrialisation of an old suburb. They are photographed with the same respect as a similar old wall of another wooden house with a rumpled iron roof edge. *Mr Ross* is a full length, casual portrait of a lean man in his garden. Although apparently informal, it is tightly framed with a lean one feels is typical of the man. A kindly but honest portrait. Collins' prints are not all objectively dead sharp, as he had been seeking some time ago when he worked in large format. Most were 35mm pictures with slight softness and grain. But subjectively they give the appearance of sharpness and fineness of detail by the extreme delicacy of their tones. This is not a technical gimmick, but a necessary element in the kind of emotional communication achieved.

As I write the word "charming" it occurs to me that perhaps even it may be discredited now. We seem reluctant to admit that we can be charmed any more; we must always nowadays play things cool, look for the cerebral and avoid accusations of tenderness or sentiment. This may be the reason why the art world generally in Auckland has failed to see these photographs for their own sake. "Glorified snapshots"; "don't advance the medium"; "where's the intellectual content?"; "not avant-garde" are some of the comments I've heard from interested people. The important thing about this show is that it is speaking so quietly it is really saying something quite shocking: that at this stage of its own development, New Zealand photography is not the least bit concerned with the trends and hangups of contemporary painting and sculpture. These photographers are taking an honest and personal look at their own environment, which is New Zealand's life now, not the art of New York, Los Angeles or London. It seems to me that these photographers are doing a necessary thing, in coming to terms with their own immediate life (and by that I mean their domestic and primary experiences) through the basic strength that their medium has—the ability to see things as they really are. Rather than hoping it would repeat what painting and sculpture are doing, largely under influences not originating in New Zealand, the art world generally should welcome this genuine, indigenous movement which, speaking so quietly, confirms the independence of its medium.

Tom Hutchins



Richard Collins—Marie, Freeman's Bay, Auckland, 1970



Nick Evans-Freke—Auckland, February 1972



Andrew Stewart

FESTIVAL EXHIBITION

THE NEW ZEALAND UNIVERSITIES' ARTS FESTIVAL PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION AND CATALOGUE; Auckland University, August 1972. Reviewed by Max Oetli

Annually, University students launch an overloaded little paper boat known as "Universities Arts Festival". A ship of fools, it is allowed to float precariously for a week or so, laden to the bulwarks with an unstable cargo of Pure Culture.

Usually a Good Old Photographic Salon is stowed away in the hulk, selected in terms of Acceptances and Prizewinners. Varied, gutsy photos usually, from Landseer/H. P. Robinson bonbons to grainy, lucky darkroom freaks, bubbling off their mounts in eloquence and forming pretty surface patterns of hypo as they dry in uneven light.

Last year at Massey an attempt was made to disguise the whole thing as a real photographic exhibition. This year, the aim was a quality show, and what we saw was certainly the best of its kind ever mounted. The pictures, their presentation and the catalogue all revealed an uncompromising and consistent effort to show us the best available.

Every photo in the show, eighty of them by thirty photographers, was mounted on white card and carefully displayed for easy access and visibility. In past years the trend was to crowd too much on the walls, A. & P. show style; this year the show erred a little in the other direction. A full-plate print, no matter how good, looks lost on a six by four foot board. Most of the prints selected were quite small and very carefully worked up to give us the best possible access to some situation which the photographer found important.

Allan McDonald's work was one example of this, by no means the only one. His photos are ambitious, impeccable and small,

often involving us with one person, visible or implied in a complicated context. We immediately have come to grips with what he perceived, even if initially it seems gratuitous, as in the picture of a child, prophetic, pointing at a semicircle of men with another man asleep behind it. Bottles and beer cans litter the ground. Curious, real.

John Milne's work shows another facet of the show, its unmistakable New Zealand quality. A felled forest in silent dignity, a greengrocer's shop with women flocking towards a pile of sunlit fruit. A young man fills his pipe at a railway station as a goods train rumbles out. The assuredness of both subject and photographer here remind me of Hine's work fifty years earlier. Doubtless the man's bowler hat helps.

Jim Payne, Andrew Stewart, Gill Chaplin, Len Wesney and Harvey Bengel all show interpretations of the fact, there and then on the islands. The photo as a personal document presented for our interpretation. Alan Leatherby's work seems a little more detached. His approach suggests a study of Walker Evans; buildings and interiors speaking a language of their own which can readily be understood. Visible evidence. Michael Baigent's interpretation of the land seems to represent another extreme, real by the nature of the medium yet somehow lost, indescribably remote, leading nowhere.

The photos of people, interesting in themselves, again showed a wide variation within the essentially similar "straight" style of most of the work. At one end of the spectrum were Clive Stone's impeccable portraits. It was almost as though the camera was a mirror. A man laughs in the doorway of his workshop, relaxed, hat in hand. A lady stares at her image, lost in her own thoughts. Pensively, a man in an expensive-looking interior scratches his ear. The



Owen Young

mirror caught him unawares. Owen Young's strong and sympathetic portrait of an Asian lady showed a good spontaneous response. Still further along the spectrum were more or less pavement portraits. John Milne's man with a bowler hat has already been mentioned. Peter Emerton also had a curious photo—a man smiling a little uneasily, with a bunch of hydrangeas in his hands. Not as well printed, but strong as factual statements were photos of men in the street by Alan Webster and Susan Wilson.

More people, yet again differently treated by Nick Evans-Freke, who shows a detached curiosity about their context. A beautiful example showed ball-playing Maori boys poised on the edge of a playing field which seems to be infinite. His other photos imply interesting questions about the actual significance of people in a landscape. They seem not only to have been left there like lost property in long grass but for some obscure reason to be out of scale as well. Andrew Stewart's photos of a similar genre were somehow less convincing, a little contrived looking. His more personal portrait of a mother and child carried much more weight. The camera's ability to contextualise as Evans-Freke has done is shown in a different way in Liz Brook's cinematic looking beach picture (time and space capsule with

housewife, wind, seagulls, nuns and alas bad spotting), and in Andrew Milne-Allan's curious extensions of reality. Someone imprisoned a Fiat 500. Rouault is alive and doing graffiti in Auckland phone boxes. Someone cut a scarecrow policeman in half in Japan: Roger Leach saw it. A bird energetically whirrs up from a still pond: Bryan James made a picture out of it. Cameras everywhere and people behind them. Paul Armstrong saw a duck behind a screen door in the back garden.

An unfortunate omission from the catalogue is Ben Boer's nudes, beautiful both in themselves and as examples of their genre. His approach is personal and very lively, his prints exemplary. In the context of the show they were a little difficult to approach initially, especially in their use of multiple exposure and the studio situation, from both of which most younger photographers tend to shy away. A few words about the catalogue. The editing was consistent, whittling the number down to 42 reproduced prints and the quality is superb. (I'm a little dubious about the type sizes used but let's not niggle.) As always, some of the rougher photos seem to have been rescued by reduction and careful printing to give the collection even more uniformity of quality than in the exhibition. The catalogue is a very good dollar's



Allan McDonald

worth. Two gripes though; firstly what and where and when are most of the pictures? Is this enigmatic reticence really so necessary in a medium so closely allied to physical manifestations of reality? And who were the photographers? Biographical details would have been useful.

To sum up, the show is important and definitely worth becoming familiar with. It represents a rejection of the usual camera-club oriented hotch-potch of past Arts Festivals, at the possible expense of some youthful spontaneity and vigour. To fulfil its function it should go on tour around the country's campuses. Already it has opened many people's eyes to further possibilities in this popular medium.

M. C. Oettli

Exhibition organisers Do Van Toan and Paul Armstrong also organised and edited the 48-page booklet *Photographs, Universities Arts Festival*. The booklet contains 41 well-reproduced photos by 28 photographers. It should shortly be available from University Bookshops, and is available now at \$1.10 post paid from John B. Turner, c/ School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland, Private Bag, Auckland.

A Personal Note from the Editor

It may be a hangover from a minor personal involvement with the establishment of the first Universities' Arts Festival at Otago University 15 years ago, but I feel the quality of

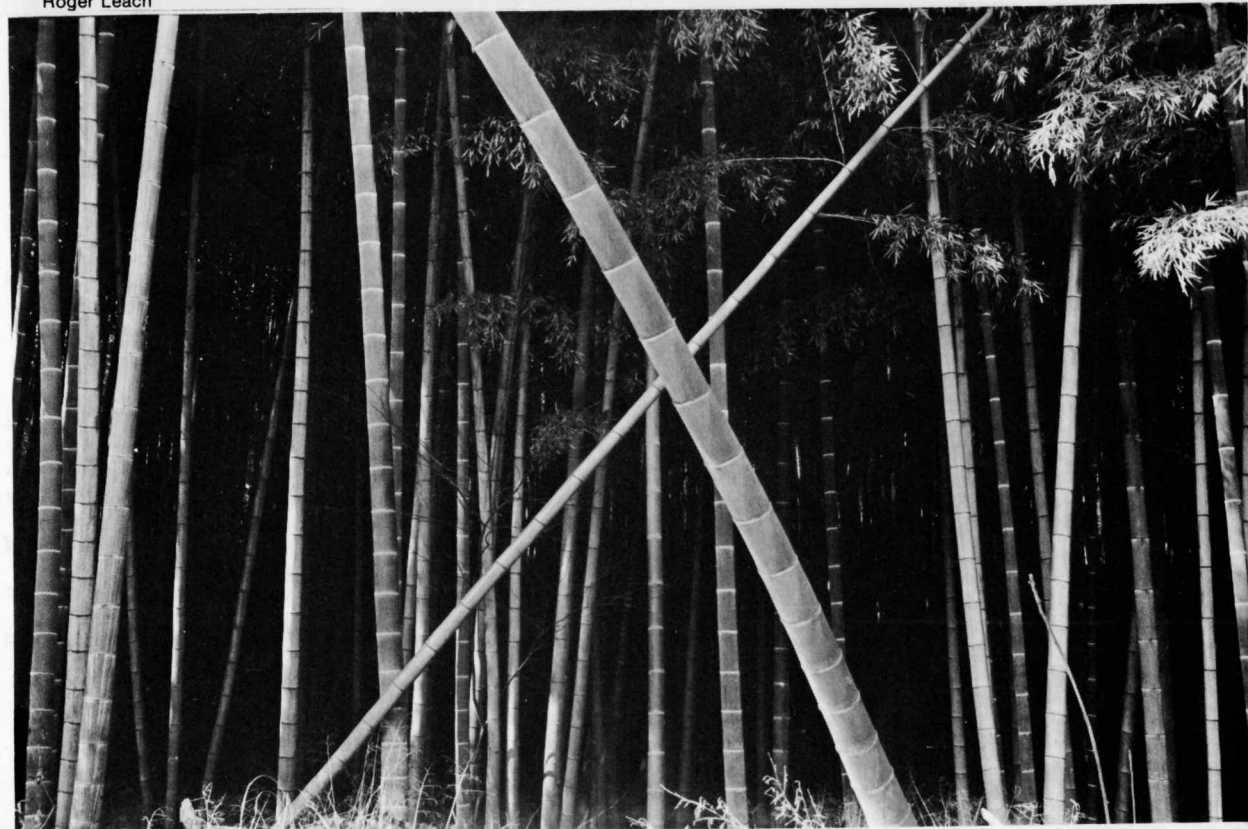
the Photography Exhibition at this year's Festival was achieved at the expense of principle. Frankly, I feel a fraud was perpetrated on the viewing public, as a number of the photographers exhibited were not students and had no connection to speak of with the Universities. To my mind, the "uncompromising... effort to show us the best available..." went too far when it went beyond the Universities for exhibitors. Of the nineteen photographers named in this review, at least six are not University people; there may be more, as I do not recognise all the names or know the status of all those I do know. I've been told only about a third of all exhibitors were students. As the reviewer says, the exhibition is no doubt "...a rejection of the usual camera-club oriented hotch-potch of past Arts Festivals..." but if this latter is the only sort of exhibition student photographers alone can produce, then the organisers should be honest enough to either do the best they can with what is available from the Universities, or refuse to mount an exhibition at all. Neither in the catalogue nor in the exhibition was any effort made to distinguish between University and non-University photographers, so viewers are likely to be deceived into thinking photography in the Universities to be much better than it really is.

Bruce Weatherall



John Milnes—Rotorua, 1971

Roger Leach



Help Wanted

Less than two years ago photographers were asking why there were so few photographic exhibitions in this country. The answer was simple. The photographers themselves had been neither ready to exhibit their own work, nor prepared to encourage or help others exhibit theirs. The exceptions (those who did exhibit publicly) are notable; whether their shows were good, bad or indifferent. This magazine has reviewed, previewed or otherwise featured more than a dozen exhibitions since its inception in May 1970. Of the nine New Zealand shows, six showed contemporary work. That's getting better. But how many did we miss? And how many did you see? Our primary aim is to show what's going on in New Zealand photography. To chronicle, if you like, the work and ideas current in photography among serious practitioners today, and to remind us of what has been done before. This, we believe, done from a critical standpoint (which has been lacking from local photographic magazines for over 60 years), is the best way we can help raise the standards of New Zealand photography. The rest is up to you. We desperately need critics and writers of ability to review shows, books, and other activities, not to mention bringing important early photographers to light. There seems to be no shortage of exhibitions any more, as can be seen from this issue, but people willing and able to review them are few and far between. Max Oettli's *Night Out*, a fine show of about 30 photographs was shown at the Manawatu Art Gallery from about mid-July to mid-August

this year, so we believe. Did it really happen? The photographer couldn't get to see the installation himself, so naturally hoped for a review to tell him what it was like. Nothing happened. As far as we know, the exhibition wasn't reviewed, and therefore might as well not have happened. What's the point of having a show if one gets no feedback except the gallery director saying it was successful? Surely there was somebody in Palmerston North competent enough to review Max Oettli's show? (We aren't a newspaper, so there's still time.) It's not just the photographer who misses out if his show isn't reviewed, but also other photographers—too often the very people who would benefit most from the exposure. That's where we come in. If you know of any exhibitions or other photographic activities planned for your district, please let us know as well in advance as possible, so we can give them advance publicity. Our reviews aren't supposed to do that; they give you a chance to compare your reactions to somebody else's. If you miss a show, the review should indicate what to expect if you can catch it elsewhere, and where to kick yourself for missing it at first hand. Many photographic shows are comparatively easy and inexpensive to travel, so smaller galleries and even camera clubs can show them at little cost. Why not ask your local gallery or club to get Max Oettli's *Night Out*, or Do Van Toan's show? Contact the originating gallery for loan details, etc. (We will publish their addresses in future issues.) And do us and yourself a favour—let us know when the show is due in your town, and get somebody to review it for the locals. We welcome copies of any reviews you may do or see.

John B. Turner

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CRITIQUE

Raymond Hanlon of Dunedin sent in six photographs of six different subjects: a grove of macrocarpas, feathers scattered on coastal rock, a demolition scene, an amputated tree, a railway siding from the road, and a railway overbridge at night. What can one make of such a variety when the photographer isn't leaning over one's shoulder explaining his pictures to death?

For a start, there are no people in his photographs, although their presence is evoked in an indirect and sometimes critical way. People amputated the tree. People are ripping down what apparently was once a magnificent building. People built and work around the railway yards. The eroded rock seems the exception until its centre takes on the appearance of a face. I'm not 100 per cent sure that the photographer saw a face there, or that it's supposed to be viewed as a horizontal picture; but it looks right that way. There is a sense of isolation and concern about these photos.

Secondly, the photographs share common technical defects which stamp them as the work of somebody still coming to grips with the camera. Of the three pictures reproduced here,

the tree, and the coastal rock work best. Both were reasonably well-seen initially but lack staying power. Neither is as incisive as it first appears to be.

The sawn-off tree is slightly out of focus, which puts unnecessary additional emphasis on the sharply defined telegraph pole and wires in the middle distance, and weakens the illusion that the wires are also connected to the tree. The direct association of the tree to the distant telegraph poles seems important to the idea which I gather is something about the way perfectly fine trees are cut up by man, their branches amputated and replaced by crossbars, metal arms and sodium vapour lamps. The big tree might not end up that way but it seems completely helpless and useless—but not out of place, in that barren man-made landscape.

The picture of the rocks is unsharp all over—through slight camera shake. I don't mind the large feather in the centre of the picture, as if the photographer might have placed it there. It looks natural to me even though it's in such an obvious position. But it is a pity that the texture of the rock itself, which is scattered with tiny feathers, is so poorly rendered. The lighter feathers disappear into the brighter areas of rock—a fault which might be remedied in a properly exposed and developed print with black, instead of gray shadows. All of these prints in fact suffer from slight underexposure, or, more likely, underdevelopment, so there are no rich blacks. A common fault where photographers are over-anxious to turn on the darkroom light.

The demolition scene offered numerous opportunities for good photographs. The once handsome wood-and-plaster entranceway is seen to be shattered. It bares its bones of brick. The front rounded archway leads across the gutted interior to a second archway which frames a huge gaping hole in the other side of the building—a strange and unnerving sight. Further on, across an apparently vacant lot, the side of another building can be seen. It seems to be more than just visually next in line.

Unfortunately, this picture suffers from all of the handicaps of the first two. Camera shake, insufficient depth of field, and dull printing team up to pull the picture down with the building. (Rough justice?) Instead of presenting a considered, direct view of the damaged, once dignified old building, the photographer shot off a furtive frame as if the building threatened him. He wasn't sure how much he wanted to get involved with it's fate.

The gutted building was rich with shapes, texture, architectural details and associations with the past. Like most subjects well seen, it could have yielded dozens of fine photographs. But now it's gone forever. That's why it's a pity it wasn't recorded with a steadier hand and more forethought. Raymond Hanlon seems to have plenty to say with his camera. Closer attention to his craft should help him say it better.

John B. Turner

Readers are invited to send in not more than six photographs for criticism in this column. Pictures are selected on the basis of applicability to other readers. More detailed criticisms will be sent to the photographers concerned.

Prints should be between about 5x4 to 8x10 inches, unmounted and clearly labelled with name and address of sender. Be sure to include a post-paid self-addressed envelope for return of prints and ensure that they are firmly packed. For simple and lightweight protection wrap prints in paper or an envelope and tape to centre of a considerably larger sheet of stiff cardboard.

Complete the sandwich with a second cardboard sheet and tape corners for added strength where it's needed most.



BACK NUMBERS

Most back numbers of *New Zealand Photography* and its predecessor *Photographic Art & History* are still available at 25c a copy or \$1 for four or more from New Zealand Photography, 29 Wyndrum Avenue, Lower Hutt. The main features in these issues are:

- No. 2. Historical: The missing Daguerreotypes; Early Hastings Photographs; The Maori in Focus exhibition; Photographer of the Kauri-Tudor Collins; Hill & Adamson Calotypes in Dunedin. Contemporary: Photographs by Mac Miller and John Daley.
- No. 4. Historical: The "Nineteenth Century New Zealand Photographs" exhibition; The History of Photography exhibition at the Otago Museum; Early Auckland photographer J. N. Crombie. Contemporary: "Photography, A Visual Dialect" reviewed.
- No. 5. Historical: A Colenso Daguerreotype and other photographs from the Hawke's Bay Art Gallery & Museum; Photographs by G. Leslie Adkins; Two camera collections. Contemporary: Photographs by Keri McCleary; Hamilton's "Photography 71" exhibition; Bernie Hill Obituary; W. Eugene Smith Book Review.
- No. 6. Historical: J. W. Chapman-Taylor Photographs; Contemporary: The BALM Awards; Photographs by Alan Koinik, John Fields, Do Van Toan. Book Review: Bruce Davidson's "East 100th St."
- No. 7. Historical: Hardwicke Knight's "Photography in New Zealand" reviewed; Photography a Century Ago—D. L. Mundy; More on J. N. Crombie. Contemporary: Photographs by Gary Baigent and Ken Foster; Books, "Cartier-Bresson's France" and "A Land Apart; the Mount Cook Alpine Region" reviewed.
- No. 8. Historical: Photographs by James McDonald. Contemporary: Photographs by Richard Collins, Allan Leatherby; The Nude—Photographs by Roger Leach, reviews of E. J. Bellocq's "Storyville Portraits" and Bill Jay's "Views on Nudes"; Books You Probably Couldn't Buy for Christmas.
- No. 9. Historical: A Mundy Album. Contemporary: Photographs by Keri McCleary, Max Oetli, Cave photographs by Lloyd Homer; "New Photography USA" exhibition preview.
- No. 10. Contemporary: Photographs by Simon Buis, Walter Logeman, Mike Hammersley, Allan McDonald; The BALM awards; reviews of the Bill Brandt exhibition, Newhall's "Airborne Camera" and Victor Keppler's autobiography.
- No. 11. Historical: The Earliest Landscapes. Contemporary: Photographs by Clive Stone, Jim Payne, John Milnes and Harry Foster. Two "Life Library of Photography" books reviewed.

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News & Notes

WORKSHOP

Last January a highly successful 10-day workshop in photography was held at the University of Auckland's 1972 Art and Design School, at the School of Fine Arts. Open to advanced workers in black and white photography, the course emphasis was on personal expression and the development and refinement of techniques in field and darkroom work. Work was viewed and discussed, films and slides were shown to supplement demonstrations and criticism. The work of major 20th Century photographers such as Cartier-Bresson, Strand, Weston, Adams and younger photographers like Lee Friedlander and Danny Lyon, plus important early and contemporary New Zealand photographs were studied and discussed. Nude models were available and field demonstrations were given with Polaroid Land materials. The class was limited to 12 students admitted by portfolio. The tuition fee was \$30.00. Tutors were John B. Turner, John Fields, Do Van Toan and Simon Buis. It is hoped a similar workshop will be run from about 8 to 17 January 1973 in Auckland. If there is sufficient demand it may also be possible to run a shorter course in Wellington, but that is yet to be decided. To aid planning of venue and programme, would interested photographers please contact John B. Turner, 43 Woodside Road, Mount Eden, Auckland 3. (Telephone 601-206). Please indicate age, photographic experience and particular interests, i.e. photojournalism, large-format work, etc.

NOTED WITH PLEASURE

We were delightfully surprised to see that Mac Miller of Hamilton had a photograph published in the August 1972 *Camera*, the first time for many years a New Zealand photographer has featured in that prestigious Swiss magazine. Mac Miller was one of the first photographers to be published in our magazine, and has been one of our keenest supporters. We hope many more New Zealanders submit work to such outstanding international publications.

EXHIBITION CALENDAR

AUCKLAND. City Art Gallery: *New Photography U.S.A.* (New York Museum of Modern Art) Tentative schedule for February 1973. See preview *New Zealand Photography* March-April 1972. *Three New Zealand Photographers* (Richard Collins, Gary Baigent and John Fields) is now scheduled for July 1973 and will probably open in Wellington in February 1973.

LOWER HUTT. Dowse Art Gallery. Ans Westra retrospective: November 24 1972-February 11 1973.

HAMILTON. Waikato Art Gallery. *Four Hamilton Photographers:* Corynne Bootten, Ken Foster, Bryan James and Mac Miller. November 29 to December 17 1972.

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