***The state collections of colonial New Zealand art:
intertwined histories of collecting and display***

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Abstract

This thesis explores the collecting and exhibiting of colonial art (before 1908) by New Zealand's state institutions: the Colonial (later Dominion) Museum; the Alexander Turnbull Library; and the National Art Gallery. It recovers evidence of the provenance of works of art within the state collections and accounts for acquisitions in terms of the ideological interests they serve, interests which reflect the intellectual concerns of the key individuals and the historical and political circumstances within which they worked. It examines how works of art were displayed in the institutions themselves, and in other exhibitions, including international exhibitions, both locally and abroad, from 1865 to 1940. This allows for analysis of the 'use' to which colonial art was put by the state, while investigation of the related contemporary discourse provides evidence of its reception and interpretation by critics and audience.

This study employs a variety of analytical strategies, including: the place of class in relation to the colonial art world; the aesthetics of 'space' and the practicalities of exhibition in the colonial period; the shifting ground of what constitutes 'art', in particular 'New Zealand art', in the period under study; and the fluctuating, often problematic, status of much colonial art as both 'information' and as 'art'. Consequently, while informed by international scholarship, this thesis needed to adapt models formed for the explanation of metropolitan museology to accommodate the unique nature of the colonial experience in New Zealand. It concludes that, in contrast to many European institutions, the state was largely content to use New Zealand's art as information—as illustration of the colony's natural wonders and resources—and that no real attempt to define a national art history was initiated until the centennial celebrations of 1940.

Significantly, this thesis does not just consider the evolution of *one* state institution. Rather, it recognises that the histories of New Zealand's cultural institutions—Museum, Gallery and Library—require a consideration of their development in relation to one another. This reveals a history of interconnectedness that reflects the complexity of colonial culture, and which ironically prefigures the challenge posed by colonial art to the postmodern descendent of the Museum and Gallery—the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

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Abbreviations

In the text, and where practicable, the key institutions dealt with will be referred to as follows:

Museum	Colonial, Dominion and National Museum
Gallery	National Art Gallery
Academy	New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts
Library	Alexander Turnbull Library

In referencing the following abbreviations will be employed:

<i>AJHR</i>	Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives
ANZ	Archives New Zealand
ATL	Alexander Turnbull Library
Board	Board of Science and Art
CAG	Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu
<i>DNZB</i>	<i>Dictionary of New Zealand Biography</i>
IA	Internal Affairs
NZAFA	New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts
NZI	New Zealand Institute
<i>NZJH</i>	<i>New Zealand Journal of History</i>
<i>NZPD</i>	<i>New Zealand Parliamentary Debates</i>
Te Papa	Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa
TPA	Te Papa Archives
<i>TPNZI</i>	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute</i>

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1: Collecting histories

*Icons Nga Taonga opens the doors on the collections of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. ...From McCahon's paintings to the Britten motorcycle, from waka taua to the plants collected on Cook's first expedition, from Phar Lap's mighty skeleton to an embroidered colonial sampler, these items come from all areas of the museum. Each has a significant story to tell, and together they offer a fascinating glimpse into the life and history of New Zealand.*¹

Icons Nga Taonga: From the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa is Te Papa's first publication to draw attention to its national collections in a comprehensive manner.² (fig a) A highly polished product, at times this text is overly aware of its limitations and 'curatorial' decisions. While it is open about the blurring of boundaries between the disciplinary divisions, based on its philosophy of 'integrated collections', this does not account for why some objects are raised to the status of art and feature in the 'Art' section, and why others serve as largely illustrative devices elsewhere.³ For example, the extensive colonial archive of historical photography held by Te Papa is not granted its own overview, even though it is managed as a separate aspect of the visual culture collections; instead, examples illustrate the History section among others. Colonial art is likewise underrepresented in the 'Art' section, as is nineteenth-century British art, despite the fact that these formed the basis of New Zealand's inaugural national art collections. The degree of amnesia that *Icons* reveals in relation to this historical legacy caused Roger Blackley to question the possible motives behind this, asking 'could this have to do with discomfort over the museum's own colonial histories?'⁴ Indeed, it is that very lack that reveals the need for further research and historical documentation of the under-investigated colonial New Zealand art collections in Te Papa.

Te Papa is a compound institution that has a unique ancestry resulting in a richness of collections that transcends those of galleries and museums that have evolved in a more singular and defined manner. Born of a much-debated union of New Zealand's

¹ Te Papa Curatorial Team, *Icons Nga Taonga: From the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2004), inside front cover.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., viii. See Roger Blackley, "Cabinet of Curiosities," *New Zealand Books*, August 2004, for an insightful review of *Icons*

⁴ Blackley, "Cabinet of Curiosities," 7.

National Art Gallery and National Museum, Te Papa's collections are historically linked to those of another institution, the Alexander Turnbull Library.⁵ The potential richness and the complexity of the evolution of these state collections, particularly those of colonial New Zealand art has, however, been little investigated.

Over the last 20 or so years, a distinct body of work has developed that has placed the social, political and historical relations that structure the museum under close inspection. This work has closely analysed the activities of collecting, classification and display, using tools drawn from the wider humanities and social sciences. The publication of two anthologies in 2004, one edited by Bettina Messias Carbonell, the other by Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago, bears further witness to the wealth of investigation, theorising and debate that this subject has aroused over the last few decades.⁶ Issues of representation are at the centre of the relations between postmodern theory and art. The new museology has called for the examination of the ways that museums create meaning, and encouraged a theorising of cultural institutions and their exhibitions that reveals them as ideologically determined and influencing structures.⁷

In the case of Te Papa, founded on the notion of biculturalism, there has been widespread debate surrounding the 'postmodern' institution itself. The area that has received the most attention both in scholarship and display has been the collection and display of Maori artefacts. This reflects the impact of literature produced since the 1980s in light of postcolonial theory, that has served to assess the way that ethnographic artefacts have been and continue to be collected and exhibited in such institutions, and

⁵ The National Museum was founded in Wellington in 1865 as the Colonial Museum under the directorship of James Hector. It became the Dominion Museum in 1907 and the National Museum in 1972. The National Art Gallery was opened in 1936 and the Alexander Turnbull Library was bequeathed to the state in 1918, opening to the public two years later in 1920.

⁶ Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago, eds., *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004) and Bettina Messias Carbonell, ed. *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts* (Malden, Oxford, Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).

⁷ Key texts that have examined the evolution of museums, in particular, their function in relation to the state are Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), Carol Duncan, *Civilising Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum," *Art History* 3, no. 4 (December 1980), Gordon Fyfe, *Art, Power and Modernity: English Art Institutions, 1750-1950* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), Andrew McClellan, "Nationalism and the Origins of the Museum in France," in *The Formation of National Collections of Art and Archaeology*, ed. Gwendolyn Wright (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1996).

how they may or can be re-empowered in these contexts.⁸ Indeed, one of Te Papa's key strategies has been to recover the status of ethnographic artefacts, and this is foregrounded in the introduction to *Icons*:

Te Papa, as a museum, can be seen as an effort to redress the injustices of the past arising from the ways in which taonga were lost to those who had created them.⁹

Thus, the museum partakes in a narrative of redemption. As Ben Dibley identifies, recent museum analysts have tended to argue that:

Despite a history deeply implicated in an imperial, bourgeois and phallogentric order, the museum is an institutional form that can be redeemed from this legacy of racism, classism and sexism...in some way or another, the institution can be reformed so that it can overcome the exclusions of the past and realize its true democratic vocation.¹⁰

The redemptive strategies of postcolonialism have meant that, while ethnographic artefacts have been re-evaluated and re-presented in co-operation with communities to better reflect their status and participate in this democratic vision, their historical counterparts have frequently suffered in comparison. The European works of art produced contemporaneously with the collecting of ethnographic artefacts in the colonial era, *colonial* works of art, have received uneven evaluation in postcolonial times. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those works of art that have received renewed attention have been those that represent Maori and Maori life. For example, in exhibitions at Te Papa such as 'Made in New Zealand: Ko au te whenua, te whenua ko au Stories of art and identity', Charles Frederick Goldie's painting of Maori was presented as exemplifying the 'dying race' ideology. Here, Edward Said's Orientalist theory was applied to reduce Goldie to a

⁸ A number of edited books have brought together writings on the subject of the re-evaluation of ethnographic artefacts with regard to their collection and display in the postcolonial era. See, for example Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, eds., *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), Flora E. S. Kaplan, ed. *Museums and the Making Of "Ourselves": The Role of Objects in National Identity* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1996), Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn, eds., *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998) and Anthony Kiendl, ed. *Obsession, Compulsion, Collection: On Objects, Display Culture and Interpretation* (Alberta: Banff Centre, 2004). All of these compilations include chapters relating to New Zealand Maori and the collecting or exhibiting of taonga. See also Amiria Henare, *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁹ Te Papa Curatorial Team, *Icons*, xii.

¹⁰ Ben Dibley, "The Museum's Redemption: Contact Zones, Government and the Limits of Reform," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 8, no. 1 (2005): 6.

producer of exoticist and racist stereotypes that served to emphasise the dominance of imperial culture.¹¹ This is despite recent scholarship that has provided alternative ways of accounting for the paintings that consider them sites of potentially rich and complex cultural exchange, or as artefacts that may mean for Maori in ways that have not been recognised by Pakeha.¹² Colonial art thus occupies a problematic space within New Zealand's state collections, revealing the difficulties encountered in reconciling the subtleties of postcolonial research with the realities of exhibition and display.

Te Papa does have its histories of research and publication, but aside from R. K. Dell's centennial history of the Dominion Museum written in 1965, there is little scholarship that investigates the state museum, or more specifically its histories of collecting and exhibition.¹³ Most research of this nature has been undertaken in the academic sphere. For example, the narrating of nation has been addressed in Megan Jane Davies "“Telling the New Zealand Story”: national narratives in three long-term exhibitions at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa”,¹⁴ and John Michael Gore's 'Representations of History and Nation in Museums in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand – the National Museum of Australia and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa', which examines museum development in these two settler societies, investigating the evolution of new histories as museums seek to aid the construction of

¹¹ See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978). While groundbreaking in its approach, it has since been criticised for merely replacing a celebratory discourse of imperial 'progress' with a condemning one of imperial 'destruction', predicated on the notion of unchallenged Western dominance in the presence of a silent 'Other'. See John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) for an evaluation of Said's 'Orientalism' in relation to the visual arts.

¹² See Roger Blackley, *Goldie* (Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery in association with David Bateman, 1997) and Leonard Bell, "Looking at Goldie: Face to Face with 'All 'E Same T'e Pakeha'," in *Double Vision: Art Histories and Colonial Histories in the Pacific*, ed. Nicholas Thomas and Diane Losche (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) for a consideration of Goldie's work that acknowledges and reveals the complexity of cultural exchange in our colonial histories, rather than reducing them to a one-sided power dynamic reinforcing stereotypical binary oppositions. In his paper titled 'Surviving Goldie', Roger Blackley also presented an account of the way that these portraits function as ancestral embodiments for Maori, a function inconceivable to many Pakeha who have conceptualised them as exoticist and racist images. See Roger Blackley, "Surviving Goldie" (paper presented at the Art Association of Australia and New Zealand Conference, Pre/dictions: the role of art at the end of the millenium, Victoria University of Wellington, 1999). A wider range of investigations along this line are presented in Nicholas Thomas and Diane Losche, eds., *Double Vision: Art Histories and Colonial Histories in the Pacific* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

¹³ R. K. Dell, *Dominion Museum 1865-1965* (Wellington: Dominion Museum, 1965).

¹⁴ Megan Jane Davies, "“Telling the New Zealand Story”: National Narratives in Three Long-Term Exhibitions at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa" (MA in Media Studies, Massey University, 2001).

postcolonial national identities.¹⁵ The relationship of Maori and taonga to museums has been investigated in Paul Tapsell's thesis 'Taonga: a tribal response to museums',¹⁶ and Conal McCarthy's thesis, 'From curio to taonga: a genealogy of display at New Zealand's national museum, 1865 – 2001', traces the changing evaluation of taonga in the National Museum throughout its collecting and exhibiting histories.¹⁷

While Te Papa's online database of pictorial material is in a state of perpetual development, only recently in *Art at Te Papa*, has an attempt been made to provide an overview of the art collections.¹⁸ Exhibitions at Te Papa today often come and go without the accompaniment of descriptive catalogues, meaning they can easily evade retrospective investigation by future researchers. Historically, texts have been produced that have attempted to recover aspects of the Gallery's history. A review of the National Art Gallery's collection under Luit Bieringa's direction in the 1980s prompted several exhibitions and publications. Of relevance to my thesis is the catalogue *Aspects of New Zealand Art 1890-1940*, which, particularly in an essay by Ann Calhoun, addresses the role of the donor in building the national collection of art.¹⁹ On a similar note *Portrait of a century: the history of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts 1882-1982* describes the Academy's role in collecting works of art for the future National Art Gallery in Wellington.²⁰ It is important to acknowledge, nonetheless, that since its opening, the presentation of art at Te Papa has been a subject of great debate; however, this discussion has largely been played out in the media.²¹

¹⁵ James Michael Gore, "Representations of History and Nation in Museums in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand - the National Museum of Australia and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa" (PhD in History, The University of Melbourne, 2002).

¹⁶ Paul Tapsell, "Taonga: A Tribal Response to Museums" (PhD in Anthropology, University of Oxford, 1998).

¹⁷ Conal McCarthy, "From Curio to Taonga: A Genealogy of Display at New Zealand's National Museum, 1865 – 2001" (PhD, Victoria University of Wellington, 2004).

¹⁸ This year, 2009 has seen the publication of *Art at Te Papa*, the first book to provide an overview of the combined art collections of the Museum and Gallery as they are constituted in present-day Te Papa. See William McAloon, ed. *Art at Te Papa* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2009).

¹⁹ *Aspects of New Zealand Art 1890-1940: From the Collection of the National Art Gallery*, (Wellington: National Art Gallery, 1984).

²⁰ Robin Kay and Tony Eden, *Portrait of a Century: The History of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts 1882-1982* (Wellington: Millwood Press, 1983).

²¹ There was, for example, an extensive debate played out in the media over the initial 'visual culture' exhibition at Te Papa, 'Parade', eventually leading to its de-installation and replacement with 'Made in New Zealand' in 2001. A critical evaluation of 'Parade' is provided in two articles by Paul Williams. See Paul Williams, "Parade: Reformulating Art and Identity at Te Papa, Museum of New Zealand," *Open*

As is the case with history and ethnography, much of the scholarship produced in relation to the art collections has been of academic origins. The experience of audience has been investigated by Rebecca Marshall in ‘Visitor perceptions of art exhibitions: an examination of two different ways of exhibiting art at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa’²² and more specific aspects of the print collections have been addressed in Julianne Malpas’ ‘An incurable collector: the print collection of Sir John Illott’ and Mathew Norman’s ‘The Print Collection of Bishop Monrad (1811-1887)’.²³ Two recent essays have addressed different aspects of the photography collection: one the development of the historical photography collection in Te Papa,²⁴ and the other focussing specifically on the work of Daniel Louis Mundy.²⁵ To date, there has been no comprehensive assessment of the colonial New Zealand art collection within Te Papa and its role in the formation of a ‘canon’ through exhibition and display. Further, the complicated evolution of Te Papa’s collections and their intertwined relationship with other state collections, particularly those of the Alexander Turnbull Library (Library), is one that awaits investigation.

The Turnbull has its own written histories, most of which have focussed on the man behind the collection, Alexander Turnbull himself,²⁶ and the history of the library and its relationship with the state.²⁷ Once again, there has been little scholarship that investigates the histories and nature of the art collection. The most comprehensive

Museum Journal 3, no. May: Policy and practice (2001) and Paul Williams, “Te Papa: New Zealand’s Identity Complex,” *Journal of New Zealand Art History* 24 (2003).

²² Rebecca Marshall, “Visitor Perceptions of Art Exhibitions: An Examination of Two Different Ways of Exhibiting Art at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa” (MA in Museum and Heritage Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, 2003).

²³ Julianne Malpas, “An Incurable Collector: The Print Collection of Sir John Illott” (MA in Art History, Victoria University of Wellington, 2005).

²⁴ Athol McCreadie, “Collecting Photographs: The Development of Te Papa’s Historical Photography Collection,” *Tuhinga* 20 (2009).

²⁵ Lissa Mitchell, “Promotional Landscapes: D.L. Mundy’s ‘Photographic Experiences in New Zealand’,” *Tuhinga* 20 (2009).

²⁶ For an evaluation of Turnbull alongside his contemporary collectors, Dr Hocken and Sir George Grey, see E.H. McCormick, *The Fascinating Folly: Dr. Hocken and His Fellow Collectors* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1961). For a comprehensive biography of Turnbull himself, see McCormick, *Alexander Turnbull: His Life, His Circle, His Collections* (Wellington: Alexander Turnbull Library, 1974).

²⁷ C. R. H. Taylor, *The Alexander Turnbull Library: A Brief Description* (Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1951) details the main contents and bequests to the library. A. G. Bagnall, “A Troubled Childhood: ‘The Nucleus of a National Collection’,” *The Turnbull Library Record* 3, no. 2 (1970), prepared for the jubilee of the library, gives a more historical overview of the library which is developed even further in Rachel Barrowman, *The Turnbull: A Library and Its World* (Auckland: Auckland University Press in association with the Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1995).

evaluation of the Alexander Turnbull Library's pictorial research collection was published in 1978 in a series of special articles in *Art New Zealand*.²⁸ Penelope Campbell's thesis 'Collecting the Pacific: Joseph Banks, Alexander Turnbull, Rex Nan Kivell' addresses a much-neglected aspect of Turnbull's collecting, that of ethnographic artefacts. Campbell accounts for his collecting within an amateur, antiquarian framework that contributed to the formation of national institutions as well as to the ways in which ethnographic objects were stored, displayed and interpreted over the years.²⁹

Taking into account the gaps in the research and literature outlined thus far, I wish to place my study within a socio-cultural framework that investigates the critical fate of colonial New Zealand art as it has been collected and displayed in these three state collections: National Museum, National Art Gallery and Alexander Turnbull Library (now part of the National Library of New Zealand). When did colonial New Zealand art become considered worthy of collection? Who was collecting it and why? By what means did colonial New Zealand art enter the state collections? How and why has the classification of what may be today considered colonial New Zealand art shifted over time? How have the state institutions contributed to the formation of a canon of colonial New Zealand art through exhibition, commentary and criticism? And what has been the critical fate of this collection over the years? These are the questions I wish to address in my thesis.

The literature that provides background to and frameworks for investigating these questions is that concerned with the cultures of collecting, as well as the exhibition and display of works of art in museums and galleries. Much of this literature has emerged from the European context. Therefore it is also necessary to locate my study within the more scant literature that has more specifically addressed our particular colonial context, while being cognisant of the fact that the uncritical imposition of those European models onto the local context may be incommensurable.

²⁸ "The Alexander Turnbull Library and Its Pictorial Research Collections," *Art New Zealand* 9, no. February/March/April.

²⁹ Penelope Campbell, "Collecting the Pacific: Joseph Banks, Alexander Turnbull, Rex Nan Kivell" (MA in Art History, Victoria University of Wellington, 2002).

Collecting histories

To assess the true wealth of a nation, one does not call in an accountant; rather, one should consult the archaeologist and the antiquarian, the Finder and the Keeper.³⁰

In her account of the National Museums of Scotland, Jenni Calder states that the real resources of a nation are its people and that their stories are uttered through what they have left of themselves to posterity, ‘to be unearthed by the archaeologist and cherished by the antiquarian and *illuminated* by the scholar’ [my italics]. That is not to say that the artefacts make the nation, but that it is those things that are made by people for people that ‘speak most clearly of the *quality* of the people’.³¹ Such a perspective buys into the methodological viewpoint that has pervaded art history, that if objects could be made to ‘speak’, we would have a clearer understanding of their meaning – read singularly – which would shed light on the people who produced them, the author or artist. The work of any author/artist becomes reflective solely of their *experiential* world – how they saw, observed, interpreted and depicted – the world around them.³² The art historians or critics in this context become cast, as Donald Preziosi puts it, as the ‘sacerdotal semioticians or diviners of intentionality on behalf of a lay congregation’.³³ In other words, they have the power to illuminate the object and the intention of its maker(s). The basic premise of art history historically, then, is that artworks express something definite, grounded in authorial intention, which can be interpreted by a qualified analyst to produce an objective reading.

This largely biographical mode of analysis came under critique in the second half of the twentieth century, informed by structural and poststructural theories. This had many tangents, including Roland Barthes’ iconic text, ‘The death of the author’, which displaced the site of interpretation from that of the author to the reader, stating the ‘birth

³⁰ Jenni Calder, ed. *The Wealth of a Nation: In the National Museums of Scotland* (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 1989), vii.

³¹ Ibid.

³² See Michel Foucault, “What Is an Author?,” in *Critical Theory since 1965*, ed. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee Florida State University Press, 1986), as well as Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author [1968],” in *Music/Image/Text* (Great Britain: Fontana/Collins, 1977) for their insights into the definition and roles of the author-function.

³³ Donald Preziosi, *Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 31.

of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author'.³⁴ Likewise, the application of semiotic theory to art denied the possibility of there being one reading or meaning for a work of art, arguing instead that art is like a text, which can be read in a multiplicity of ways, informed and influenced by knowledge of the circumstances of production, as well as the reader's own contextual moment. This approach foregrounds the notion that our position as interpreters 'within the ideological struggles of our own time, is both the basis and the medium for our interpretation of the past'.³⁵ The Archimedean point sought by Erwin Panofsky, from which one could objectively analyse the history of art, is no longer seen to be viable.³⁶

Consequently, the development of this 'new art history' along with a 'sociology of art' has highlighted the need for art historians to shift their focus from being primarily concerned with *aesthetics*, from formal and iconographic analyses, to consider objects within the social, historical, political, economic and artistic context of their production.³⁷ These approaches understand art as being part of an ideological process, whereby works of art are not understood as being autonomous, but as both reflective and constitutive of their productive processes and environments.

It is from such a theoretical context that the 'new museology' emerged in the last two decades of the twentieth century.³⁸ For too long, museums, galleries and their

³⁴ Barthes, "The Death of the Author [1968], 148."

³⁵ Keith P. F. Moxey, "Semiotics and the Social History of Art," *New Literary History* 22, no. 4 (1991): 999. See also Mieke Bal, "Seeing Signs: The Use of Semiotics for the Understanding of Visual Art," in *The Subjects of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Mark A. Cheetham, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, "Semiotics and Art History," *Art Bulletin* 72, no. 2 (1991).

³⁶ Erwin Panofsky, "The Concept of Artistic Volition [1920]," *Critical Inquiry* Autumn (1981).

³⁷ T.J. Clark, Griselda Pollock and Linda Nochlin are but a few of the names associated with the new art history. A critical evaluation of the 'new art history' is provided by Jonathan Harris, *The New Art History: A Critical Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001). For a thorough evaluation of the nature of a sociology of art see Vera Zolberg, *Constructing a Sociology of the Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Janet Wolff, *Aesthetics and the Sociology of Art*, ed. T. B. Bottomore and M. J. Mulkay, *Controversies in Sociology: 14* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983) and Wolff, *The Social Production of Art* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1981).

³⁸ See for example Peter Vergo, ed. *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion Books, 1989), Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff, eds., *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994) for a range of essays addressing the museological discourses of exhibition and display, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992) and Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* on the role of museums and their relation to modernity, Duncan, *Civilising Rituals* on museums as ritual structures and Gwendolyn Wright, ed. *The Formation of National Galleries of Art and Archaeology* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1996) for a consideration of the relationship between national collections and nationalism.

collections had been left out of sight of the critical gaze, treated as hallowed spaces that conveyed eternal and universal truths through the non-ideological arrangement of their contents. A consistent feature of the new museology was to 'problematised' the evolution of those institutions and their collections which had formerly stood as icons of cultural authority, protected by ideas of national tradition and understood as being 'above' any practical, political, economic or social concerns.

One outcome has been an interest in the study of collections themselves as *artefacts*, rather than restricting the field of study to the artefacts held within the collections. Such an approach is grounded in sociological theory, whereby collections are not considered as neutral compilations of objects, but entities that have evolved out of and been actively constructed in a particular historical moment(s) informed by the aesthetic attitudes, political climate, economic circumstances of the times. Collections are also increasingly recognised as strongly influenced by the personalities involved in their making. As Stephen Bann notes, there is a certain irony in the fact that while, in studies of art and literature, the author was pronounced dead, 'no-one was particularly preoccupied about the "authors" of museums and collections'.³⁹ He suggests that the genuinely creative move of recent discourse has been to 'bring back into debate the subjective agency of the collector, not to reinstate a naïve notion of direct communication but to emphasise the discursive element which was inevitably involved in any such sustained public role'.⁴⁰

Collecting has a lengthy genealogy, but its association with public exhibition and display is more recent. From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, the variously named *studioli*, *kunstkammern*, or cabinets of curiosity served as sites to house collections of works of art, curiosities and/or scientific objects, and are often cited as the origins of the modern museum. In these settings, collecting was an activity largely dominated by those in positions of power or wealth, particularly aristocrats, religious leaders and merchants. These collections could serve a variety of functions; to symbolise royal or religious

³⁹ Stephen Bann, "Art History and Museums," in *The Subject of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Mark A. Cheetham, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 240.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

power; to secure cultural capital, thereby affirming the collector's superiority;⁴¹ or to visually demonstrate the collector's knowledge.⁴²

However, Tony Bennett argues that these princely collections occupied a distinctly different cultural space to those of the future public museum of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These were contexts that were primarily linked by the fact that they were socially *enclosed* spaces with *limited* access.⁴³ They also tended, prior to the eighteenth century, to be organised according to principles of similarity, to 'demonstrate ... the resemblances that drew the things of the world together'.⁴⁴ Applying Michel Foucault's epistemological terms, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill rationalises this approach as representative of the Renaissance *episteme*, which gave way in the eighteenth century to the classical *episteme*, whereby displays began to be arranged by new principles of classification, namely the scientific taxonomies.

In the realm of the arts, Gordon Fyfe identifies a corresponding shift in the activities of collectors, suggesting that from the eighteenth century on, the demands of taste meant that a collector had to progress beyond the mere act of collecting alone.⁴⁵ In terms of status competition, the stakes were raised, 'giving advantage to the distinction of rational connoisseurship over a more primitive virtuosity'.⁴⁶ Thus an approach to collecting that made critical distinctions based on the application of intellectual standards, was favoured over one that valued those objects for their capacity to stimulate 'wonder' or delight'. Fyfe asserts that this shift represents part of the long-term 'civilising process', as delight in the curious was replaced by a rationalised taste in the arts. This shift in collecting activity can also be correlated with Pierre Bourdieu's theories of taste, as they locate in an historical moment the Kantian distinction between the fetishistic impulse and the pure eye. Thus cultivated taste (based on 'hidden' knowledge) could serve as a

⁴¹ Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 38-39.

⁴² Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 93.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 92-94.

⁴⁴ Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, 15-16.

⁴⁵ Fyfe, *Art, Power and Modernity*, 56.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

marker of status, of the collector in possession of a cultivated habitus, in contrast to the ‘barbarous’ (read popular) taste of the general public.⁴⁷

As Bennett notes, however, there is a second epistemic shift that leads most directly to the discursive space of state collections and the public museum. This is the shift from the classical to the modern *episteme*, whereby things ‘ceased to be arranged as parts of taxonomic tables and came, instead, to be inserted within the flow of time, to be differentiated in terms of the positions accorded them within the evolutionary series’.⁴⁸ In his study of collecting in Paris and Venice, Krzysztof Pomian observes an initial instance of a shift to this rationale for collecting in late eighteenth-century Italy, where collecting based on aesthetic value was replaced by collecting with ‘historical’ intent by some collectors who aimed to build up a genealogy of Venetian painting and drawing over time.⁴⁹ This signalled the shift from collecting the wondrous to the normal, from an interest in the evocative to the educative and, as Graeme Davison so aptly expresses, resulted in the ‘banishment of unicorns’ from collections and museums.⁵⁰

Thus, the histories of collecting are intimately bound with those of knowledge itself, and Susan Pearce goes so far as to suggest that ‘collections, therefore, do not merely demonstrate knowledge; they are knowledge’.⁵¹ So in line with notions of taste and distinction, knowledge itself can act as a kind of wealth, and can accumulate as cultural capital for its holder. Collections and the act of collecting can therefore act as markers of status but, as psychologically oriented studies show, are also theorised as being implicit in identity formation.⁵²

⁴⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, Alain Darbel, and Dominique Schnapper, *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and Their Public*, trans. Caroline Beattie and Nick Merriman (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 109-10.

⁴⁸ Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 96.

⁴⁹ Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500-1800*, 208.

⁵⁰ David Goodman, “Fear of Circuses: Founding the National Museum of Victoria,” in *Representing the Nation, a Reader: Histories, Heritage and Museums*, ed. David Boswell and Jessica Evans (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 259.

⁵¹ Susan Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 111.

⁵² A range of essays in John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, eds., *The Cultures of Collecting: From Elvis to Antiques - Why Do We Collect Things?* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1994) investigate the nature and reasons for collecting. This is also addressed in Philipp Blom, *To Have and to Hold: An Intimate History of Collections and Collecting* (Woodstock and New York: The Overlook Press, 2003).

The stor(i)ed object

Collecting comes to mean collecting precisely when a series of haphazard purchases or gifts suddenly becomes a meaningful sequence. This is the moment when a self-conscious narrator begins to 'tell' its story, bringing about a semiotics for a narrative of identity, history and situation.⁵³

Mieke Bal suggests that a collection only becomes a collection when it is rationalised as meaningful by the collector in a narrative discourse. Thus the 'storying' of the object is as crucial to its place in a collection as the 'storing' of it, but as Pomian emphasises, this is dependent on its removal from the realm of utility.⁵⁴ One of the first critics of museums, Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy, noted the fact that the object in the museum was 'lifted from its original function, displaced from its birthplace, and rendered foreign to the circumstances that gave it significance'.⁵⁵ As both Preziosi and James Clifford note, museology and museography are rooted in the notion of 'representational adequacy', whereby the object on exhibition is understood as a fragment taken out of its cultural and historical context, but which then assumes the role of 'standing in' for an absent and fuller whole.⁵⁶ The object consequently exists as a specimen, an example of a class of like objects, and can be used for 'scientific' investigation or examination, a tool for the production of useful knowledge.

There is a general belief that objects should be 'safe' in a museum; that they somehow operate outside those zones that result in changing ownership or epistemological meaning. Theodor Adorno referred to an object as 'dying' once it enters the museum, which seems in its linguistic derivation to bear more than a passing resemblance to the mausoleum.⁵⁷ Robert Harbison elaborated more dramatically that '...in order to enter, an object must die, and a non-museum object chosen for a museum

⁵³ Mieke Bal, "Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting," in *The Cultures of Collecting: From Elvis to Antiques - Why Do We Collect Things?*, ed. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1994), 101.

⁵⁴ Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities*, 8.

⁵⁵ Paul Jnr Mattick, "Context," in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. Robert S Nelson and Richard Schiff (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 70.

⁵⁶ Donald Preziosi, "The Art of Art History," in *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Donald Preziosi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 517 and James Clifford, "On Collecting Art and Culture," in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1988).

⁵⁷ Theodor Adorno, *Prisms [1967]* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1981), 175.

is enviable like a maiden chosen for sacrifice.’⁵⁸ However, it has since been countered that the decontextualisation of the object, the primary strategy of power in the practice of museology and museography, means that objects become open to being classified, arranged, displayed, inscribed or storied in a multitude of ways. Donald Preziosi therefore rejects any implication of stasis, favouring the metaphor of the museum as *archive*, a term which implies that a process of classification and ordering takes place within its structure and collections. The archive is a ‘critical instrument’, a ‘dynamic device’, whereby all specimens may be graded, calibrated and accounted for in terms of their, ‘variations in continuity and continuities in variation and difference’.⁵⁹ The museum is therefore not a passive storehouse or a cultural tomb, but an active site where objects are situated as components of the Enlightenment project of commensurability.

In Preziosi’s theorising of the museum as an archive, no object exists as ‘outside’, instead all are imagined as being exotic, charming or fascinating distortions of a classical, central European standard or canon.⁶⁰ The possibility of alternative canons or standards does not exist; rather all objects are seen as approximating or attempting to get close to the European ideal. Indeed, Preziosi believes that ‘the power of the museum lies precisely in its ability to elide alternative signifying practices’.⁶¹ In this ‘time capsule’, and using the ‘modern’ ordering system, art became the universal standard against which all products (and peoples) of all times and places could be plotted on the same hierarchical scale of aesthetic, cognitive and ethical progress, an evolutionary ladder so to speak, that led unquestionably towards the presentness and modernity of Europe.⁶²

Preziosi’s theorising supports the fact that in the very act of collecting, museums participate in the enshrinement of ‘authentic’ objects and their entry into a canon of sorts. But the power relations that underlie canon formation are perhaps understated here. The European ideal that Preziosi refers to can, in the case of this thesis, be understood as the canon of art history. This is a rigid hierarchical system, which, as Christopher Steiner writes ‘... is only meaningful, and perhaps only powerful, insofar as it *excludes* a large

⁵⁸ Robert Harbison, *Eccentric Spaces* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1977), 147.

⁵⁹ Preziosi, “The Art of Art History,” 517.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 520.

⁶¹ Preziosi, *Rethinking Art History*, 69.

⁶² Preziosi, “The Art of Art History,” 513.

body of what are deemed noncanonical and, therefore, inferior materials.’[my italics]⁶³ The canon is an abstract construct, conceived of as the result of objective judgements of taste and distinction, but exposed in revisionist histories as a ‘structuring structure’, which is in a continual process of reproducing itself while carefully concealing the subjective and arbitrary tracks of its formation. The canon, like collections, is not a stable entity, but subject to shift and change.

James Clifford observes that much research on collections to date has brought ‘collecting and display sharply into view as a crucial process of Western identity formation’.⁶⁴ In the nineteenth century, private collections were increasingly opened to the public or co-opted by the state and the modern museum was born. Thus, one great achievement of modernity was to transfer this process of identity-formation from the level of the individual to the level of the state, harnessing collections and displays to notions of national identity. Studies have been undertaken, and called for, that seek to reveal the genesis of the museum as complicit with the development of nation-states and the maintenance of class systems.⁶⁵ Through the materiality of the objects held in state collections, there is a point at which the intellectual basis of nationalism, the invention or the imaginings of a nation-state, can be embodied, made realisable and rooted in their social and historical locations.⁶⁶ Hence national collections of art and other artefacts have the ability to shape and stand as referents for the modern nation-state. By implication the idea of national identity comprises, as Anthony D. Smith articulates, ‘both a cultural and a political identity and is located in a political community as well as a cultural one’.⁶⁷ Art and politics are inextricably entwined.

The complicity between the art museum and the emerging nation-states is clearly articulated in Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach’s article, ‘The Universal Survey

⁶³ Christopher B. Steiner, “Can the Canon Burst?,” *Art Bulletin* 78, no. 2 (1996): 213.

⁶⁴ Clifford, “On Collecting Art and Culture,” 144.

⁶⁵ For example: Bourdieu, Darbel, and Schnapper, *The Love of Art*, Fyfe, *Art, Power and Modernity*, Duncan and Wallach, “The Universal Survey Museum,” Nick Prior, *Museums and Modernity: Art Galleries and the Making of Modern Culture* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2002), Wright, ed. *The Formation of National Galleries of Art and Archaeology*.

⁶⁶ Francoise Forster-Hahn, “Shrine of Art or Signature of a New Nation?: The National Gallery(ies) in Berlin, 1848-1968,” in *The Formation of National Collections of Art and Archaeology*, ed. Gwendolyn Wright (Washington: National Gallery of America, 1996), 79.

⁶⁷ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 99.

Museum'.⁶⁸ They state that 'museums embody and make visible the idea of the state'.⁶⁹ Since the transformation of its princely art collection into the public art museum, the example of the Louvre in France has served as the prototype for national art galleries. Here, the iconographic programme, as analysed by Duncan and Wallach, was reorganised to position France as the 'true heir of classical civilisation'.⁷⁰ Consequently, the outline of art history embodied in the installation acted as a precursor to the pre-eminence of French art in the nineteenth century and, as the 'host nation', French art took pride of place at the peak of 'man's' progress.

Museography, or art history, is therefore the device that 'actively reads, composes and allegorises the past'.⁷¹ It provides the supposedly 'neutral' and disinterested frame within which all human products could be classified and fixed in their proper places to illustrate the historical novel of the new modern nation-state. As James Clifford also notes, both museology and museography demonstrate that the world needs to be presented in a coherent, rational and orderly manner, which in hindsight appears natural and inevitable.⁷² The museum as an archive may have the potential to foster myriad random encounters with its specimens, rather than the single, linear narratives that are traditionally formed.⁷³ However, the institutions and their discourses favoured orderly, informative meaning formation over random access to better serve the social and political formation of the modern nation-state. The dialogues formed thus acted to legitimise the paradigms of cultural uniqueness and progress (technological, social and ethical) of Europe as compared with Others.⁷⁴ By making the visible legible, art history also acts as a navigational instrument, providing the user with safe and clearly illuminated access

⁶⁸ Duncan and Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum."

⁶⁹ Ibid.: 449

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Preziosi, "The Art of Art History," 511.

⁷² Clifford, "On Collecting Art and Culture," 144. See also Timothy Mitchell, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order [1989]," in *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Donald Preziosi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), who considers how the process whereby the world is offered up as a spectacle, a fiction, conditioned the way that Europeans were able to comprehend the world. He suggests that travellers, encountering the 'real' Other in their own space and time were unable to make sense of the chaos that constitutes reality without first transforming it into a picture or view. Having been presented with the specimen, the fragment as representative of a greater extramuseological state of affairs, the 'whole' confronted in its unedited form was incomprehensible.

⁷³ Susan A Crane, ed. *Museums and Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 4.

⁷⁴ Preziosi, "The Art of Art History," 517.

routes into and through the museological space.⁷⁵ The visitor is enlightened as to their own and their nation's unique and singular past, and is given the means to define themselves in the present, while simultaneously being directed forward to an ideal point of fulfilment in the future.

The Colonial Context

What, then of the role of state collections in the colonial context? The interrelationship between national art galleries, national collections and national art needs further investigation to see how the evolutionary narrative, as outlined by Preziosi, Duncan and Wallach and McClellan, can be transposed to the colonial setting. According to Andrew McClellan, the incorporation of the work of native artists⁷⁶ in the national collection transforms 'a passive inheritance of mainstream values into an active participation and contribution to that civilisation'.⁷⁷ The celebration of national genius, as represented by the works of those artists, is therefore a crucial aspect in the formation of national identity.⁷⁸ Not only does it reinforce the idea of the existence of a distinct 'national character', but it also identifies the nation state as the heir not only to Western civilisation but also to the modern tradition.⁷⁹ It may be argued that in the nineteenth century, museography and museology artificially organised a past in order to create meanings that individuals and groups could assimilate to cope with modernity, to foster a new collective identity.⁸⁰ Consequently, the relationship of national art to a national art gallery and to

⁷⁵ See Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, "The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual: An Iconographic Analysis," *Marxist Perspectives* 1, no. 4 (1978). Duncan and Wallach have investigated the Museum of Modern Art for the way it prescribes a set route for the visitor that emphasises the principal moments and turning points of the history of modern art, a route that simulates a process of spiritual enlightenment (34-35). This provides an example of the persistence of the authoritative voice of museography within the museological space in the twentieth century.

⁷⁶ In New Zealand, the term 'native' is problematic in this context, referring more readily to the indigenous inhabitants of the land, Maori. Stephen Turner acknowledges the problematic cultural identity of the Pakeha settler in colonial New Zealand, suggesting that it is 'neither British, nor European, nor properly indigenous, and depends on actively acknowledging or engaging with history. See Stephen Turner, "Settlement as forgetting," in *Quicksands: foundational histories in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand*, ed. Klaus Neumann, Nicholas Thomas and Hilary Ericksen, (Sydney: University of New South Wales, 1999). 20-38.

⁷⁷ McClellan, "Nationalism and the Origins of the Museum in France," 29.

⁷⁸ Smith, *National Identity*, 74-75.

⁷⁹ McClellan, "Nationalism and the Origins of the Museum in France," 29.

⁸⁰ Crane, ed. *Museums and Memory*, 6.

the forging of national identities is posited as seamless, particularly in the example of the Louvre, but in nations where there is a less developed 'national art', this relationship becomes problematic. What emerges in many cases is a certain ambiguity implicit in the definition of a national gallery – as Francoise Forster-Hahn writes, 'should it be a shrine to *national* or a showcase of *international* art?'

⁸¹

The implications of this question can be further explored in what has naturally served as a model for the development of museums in our local context, the example of Britain's National Gallery. Slow to evolve in comparison with other European states, the National Gallery opened in its Trafalgar Square location in 1836. Here, the collection was strongly focussed on Old Masters, eventually arranged according to an 'art-historical' hang, thus 'symbolising the nation united under presumably *universal* values'.⁸² In an effort to create a new and different symbol of nationhood the National Gallery of British Art, (the Tate Gallery) opened in 1897. Founded on Henry Tate's bequest, the National Gallery of British Art featured works produced by British artists born after 1790 (although J. W. M. Turner and John Constable were excused from this restricting birthdate).⁸³ In its opening catalogue, Lionel Cust, then Director of the National Portrait Gallery, attempted to define the characteristics of British art, but also addressed or questioned what might constitute a National Gallery of Art:

What is a National Gallery of Art? Is it a 'National Gallery' containing works of art, or is it a gallery containing 'National Art'? Most people would reply that it only means a gallery belonging to the nation, such as we are familiar with in Trafalgar Square. ...And yet, if we turn to our neighbours on the Continent, we find that they do not take this view everywhere. ...In both Paris and Berlin ... a distinct effort is being made to maintain and encourage a school of native artists by the collection and exhibition of their works in some building belonging to the nation.⁸⁴

This ambiguity underlay much of the debate surrounding the establishment of a National Gallery of British Art, and is less articulated or debated, but I believe underlies the

⁸¹ Forster-Hahn, "Shrine of Art or Signature of a New Nation?," 82.

⁸² Duncan, *Civilising Rituals*, 47.

⁸³ Although, as Gordon Fyfe illustrates, the question of what constitutes 'British Art' was not altogether clear. The Chantrey inquiries, which debated the purchases made for the national collections from the Chantrey Bequest, raised the following questions: Was art produced in Britain British, even if by a foreigner? Should Van Dyck, therefore, who had painted in England, be exhibited in Trafalgar Square or at the Tate? What of Scottish and Irish art? See Fyfe, *Art, Power and Modernity*, 149-50.

⁸⁴ Lionel Cust 'A National Gallery of British Art', cited in Brandon Taylor, *Art for the Nation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 129.

evolution of such institutions in the colonies. Britain differed from the majority of its European counterparts in that neither an aristocratic, religious nor state collection was willingly turned over to the people in an act of political democracy. These collections were zealously guarded by their owners; instead, it was the mercantile class that provided the foundational collections for the national galleries.⁸⁵ The models set in place in Britain and the debates and dilemmas evolving over the collection and display of British art consequently resonate in the colonial context.

It is worth attempting to establish what the pre-conditions for the development of a state collection, or for the establishment of national museums and galleries of art, might be. Duncan and Wallach identify national *pride* as a crucial element in the establishment of a national art museum.⁸⁶ Alan Wallach identified two preconditions for the generation of national collections and the establishment of national museums and galleries of art in the United States: the existence of a ‘centralised state power that has the ability to *create* and *sustain* national institutions’; and the experience of a ‘*need* for a national gallery and a national collection’[my italics].⁸⁷ I would concur that the intersection of these three aspects – pride, capability and need – are founding necessities for the establishment of such institutions, but that, as Wallach identifies in relation to the United States, the chances of these three pre-conditions co-existing in the colonies prior to the twentieth century was slim. In addition to these pre-conditions, I would also suggest another, which is the presence of a collection, or body of works that could serve as the basis for a national collection. As was the case with Britain, the colonies had neither an aristocratic, religious, nor state collection that could be turned over to the people in a democratic gesture.

⁸⁵ Duncan addresses this difference in Carol Duncan, “Putting The “Nation” In London’s National Gallery,” in *The Formation of National Collections of Art and Archaeology*, ed. Gwendolyn Wright (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1996). She notes that the Louvre is an institution saturated with revolutionary and democratic meaning, yet the National Gallery in London by comparison seems sorely lacking in political and historical fullness. She examines the social role that art played in both royal and genteel circles (used primarily for self-interest and promotion) to attempt to explain England’s continued lack of support for a public art institution.

⁸⁶ Duncan and Wallach, “The Universal Survey Museum,”?

⁸⁷ Alan Wallach, “On the Problem of Forming a National Art Collection in the United States: William Wilson Corcoran’s Failed National Gallery,” in *The Formation of National Collections of Art and Archaeology*, ed. Gwendolyn Wright (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1996), 113.

While the development of New Zealand's cultural collections naturally took as their model that of 'Home', following the London institutions such as the British Museum, the National Gallery and the Victoria and Albert Museum, the reality of existence in the colonies meant that an easy replication of their collecting and exhibiting strategies was difficult to emulate in the developing colonial states. The chances of a highly developed sense of national pride coinciding with the necessary resources and experience of a need to establish such institutions, was unlikely to occur until the practicalities of colonial settlement were resolved. However, museums and galleries had an essential role to play in the perceived 'civilisation' of any given colony, which meant that at a certain point in their development the establishment of such institutions did become crucial to the formation of a colonial and eventual national identity.

In his lucid text on the relationship between museums and modernity, Nick Prior identifies three trajectories of the evolution of spaces of visual display in relation to particular social imperatives and the configurations of rule: pre-modern absolutism, eighteenth-century enlightenment and nineteenth-century bourgeois modernity. He proposes that if, as is commonly suggested, the Louvre represents the *locus classicus* of museum development, then the National Gallery of London, the English model, is once removed and the National Gallery of Scotland, the Scottish model, is twice removed.⁸⁸ I would argue that the colonial model is thrice removed and as yet has not received a similar degree of scholarly attention as to its evolutionary trajectory.

Ann Galbally, Susan Sheets-Pyenson, Tom Griffiths and Chris Healy are among the few authors who have attempted to account for the distinct nature of the development of the museum collections in the colonies, particularly in Australia.⁸⁹ In her account of the National Gallery of Victoria, Galbally identifies its initial aims as civilising and moralising, and suggests that only later did it become intimately connected with attempts to define and reinforce a specific cultural identity. Likewise, Healy identifies the absence

⁸⁸ Prior, *Museums and Modernity: Art Galleries and the Making of Modern Culture*.

⁸⁹ See Ann Galbally, *The Collections of the National Gallery of Victoria* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1987); Galbally, *The First Collections: The Public Library and the National Gallery of Victoria in the 1850s and 1860s* (Parkville: The Museum, 1992) on art galleries and libraries; Susan Sheets-Pyenson, *Cathedrals of Science: The Development of Colonial Natural History Museums During the Late Nineteenth Century* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988); and Chris Healy, *From the Ruins of Colonialism: History as Social Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) on colonial museums.

of *history* and of *nation* from nineteenth-century Australian museums as a key point of difference from their European counterparts. The focus tended to be on scientific specimens and even when historical material was on display, ‘the state was not the locus in the very definite way in which the nation-state was central to the modern European museum’.⁹⁰

However, Galbally and Healy do note that although not connected with forging national or cultural identities, and in contrast to the European model, there was a dual focus in colonial museums and galleries on collecting items that would both reveal the uniqueness of the particular place as well as refer back to the settler’s country of origin.⁹¹ The gallery and the museum therefore became sites within which the juxtaposition of things European and colonial could be explored.⁹² In the case of the art museum, this juxtaposition seldom functioned in favour of the colonial, and the question over the worthiness or otherwise of the work done by colonial artists has long been a point of debate.⁹³ The tendency to assign much nineteenth-century colonial art to purely ‘topographical’ or ‘historical’ functions meant that primarily libraries, not galleries, collected such art. As far as the process of canonicity was concerned, this suggests there were institutional boundaries between museum, gallery and library that actively excluded those works of art defined as topographic or historical from achieving canonical status. However, as Preziosi asserts:

One simply cannot today *be* a nation-state, an ethnicity, or a race without a proper and corresponding art, with its own distinctive history or trajectory which “reflects” or models the broader historical evolution of that identity – which bodies forth its soul.⁹⁴

This statement implies that *national* art is essential to the claim to exist as a nation state. At some stage in a nation’s development therefore, the collection and display of one’s national art becomes a crucial component of history and identity making. But at what stage in a colony’s history does one identify the existence of what might be considered a ‘national art’? As early as 1865, in reviews of the ‘New Zealand Exhibition’, staged in

⁹⁰ Healy, *From the Ruins of Colonialism*, 86.

⁹¹ Galbally, *The First Collections*, 9.

⁹² Healy, *From the Ruins of Colonialism*, 85.

⁹³ Galbally, *The Collections of the National Gallery of Victoria*, 35.

⁹⁴ Donald Preziosi, “Collecting/Museums,” in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. Robert S Nelson and Richard Schiff (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 290.

Dunedin, New Zealand art (that produced either by colonists or those in New Zealand) was singled out as holding its own in comparison with the British art. On the eve of New Zealand's centenary in 1940, A. H. McClintock outlined a genealogy of the history of art in New Zealand, yet he also stated in his evaluation of this corpus that '...it is quite apparent that at the present time New Zealand is far from possessing an art truly national...' ⁹⁵ The changing and at times paradoxical nature of such evaluations will be a subject of investigation in this thesis.

Colonial collecting

While the museum is associated with the public and the state, and with a condition of permanence, collecting – which provides its contents – is usually understood as a private and impassioned pursuit. The museum expresses a detached mastery over the objects and fields of knowledge that constitute its strengths; the collector, who may become the museum's donor, has a personal pre-occupation, frequently of a surreptitious or illegal kind. ⁹⁶

So observes Nicholas Thomas on the traditional divide between the so-called 'objective' acts of the museum and the somewhat more personally driven, subjective acts of the collector. It seems, however, that in the colonial context museums and galleries were often strongly driven by one dominant, committed and passionate personality, blurring those boundaries between private and public. Indeed, it is this strong interdependence of public and private that sets apart the evolution of collections and institutions in the colonies. This stands in contrast to the relationship between the private and public collecting activities that Pomian observes in his study of collectors in Paris and Venice, where the state tended to devalue these individuals and their passions. The appreciation of the cultural role of private collectors may have its precedent in the shift in the collecting scene occurring in Britain in the nineteenth century. As Arthur MacGregor notes, in the Victorian era '...both public institutions and private collectors of middling

⁹⁵A. H McClintock, *New Zealand Art: A Centennial Exhibition* (Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1940), 16.

⁹⁶ Nicholas Thomas, "Licensed Curiosity: Cook's Pacific Voyages," in *The Cultures of Collecting: From Elvis to Antiques - Why Do We Collect Things?*, ed. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1994), 116.

rank [were] making significant inroads into territory formerly dominated by the aristocracy.’⁹⁷

I have noted that in continental Europe the monarchy and aristocracy were primarily responsible for founding public institutions, whereas in Britain private sources were more often drawn upon. This trend was also apparent in the colonies. Galbally notes that collecting practices in the colonies were based on the inheritance in Australia of a British Museum model for the collecting of visual arts, whereby painting and sculpture formed part of a non-specialised collection and was housed in a museum or a library complex. An alternative collecting practice was carried out by local art societies, which based their practice on the model of the London National Gallery.⁹⁸ But while these models were emulated in the colonial context, as Sheets-Pyenson describes, there were inherent difficulties in trying to assemble significant collections in the colonies. Thus the survival of the museum movement in the colonies can largely be attributed to ‘the skill and energy of the curatorial staff’, which could spell ‘the difference between success and failure’.⁹⁹

In the case of the Colonial Museum, James Hector was the opening Director in 1865 and stayed in this role for 38 years until 1903. As was the case with most colonial museums, Hector’s collecting emphasis was on scientific specimens, particularly those that represented the geology and flora and fauna of New Zealand. Consequently, the purposeful development of these collections under Hector may be seen to parallel the mapping of the land, operating both metonymically, to represent the land, and metaphorically, to symbolise its potential, while the collecting of art occurred in a less intentional manner.¹⁰⁰ The Alexander Turnbull Library similarly evolved from the dedicated passion of one individual. Best known as a bibliophile, Turnbull left his collection of books, manuscripts and works of art to the state in 1918.¹⁰¹ Turnbull was

⁹⁷ Arthur MacGregor, “Collectors, Connoisseurs and Curators in the Victorian Age,” in *A. W. Franks: Nineteenth Century Collecting and the British Museum*, ed. Marjorie Caygill and John Cherry (London: British Museum Press, 1997), 6.

⁹⁸ Galbally, *The First Collections*, 10.

⁹⁹ Sheets-Pyenson, *Cathedrals of Science*, 19.

¹⁰⁰ Rebecca Duclos, “The Cartographies of Collecting,” in *Museums and the Future of Collecting*, ed. Simon J. Knell (Aldershot, Hampshire, Great Britain, Burlington, Vt: Ashgate, 2004), 85.

¹⁰¹ Turnbull also donated his artefact collection consisting of almost 1200 Maori and Polynesian objects to the Dominion Museum between 1910 and 1918. See Campbell, “Collecting the Pacific”, 47.

also an amateur collector of ethnographic artifacts and has been characterised by Campbell as antiquarian. Tom Griffiths has extensively addressed the importance of the amateur and antiquarian collector in the colonial context, as one who was often belittled by the ‘professional’ historians of academia, but who nonetheless provided important ‘popular’ histories that have been re-evaluated in recent years.¹⁰² Turnbull’s art collection began in 1889 and by 1895 he had ‘set out to collect everything he could that related to New Zealand in printed, manuscript or pictorial form.’¹⁰³ Thus, while the concept of antiquarianism is usually associated with collecting of artefacts, in Turnbull’s case, his active concern to collect early art relating to New Zealand and Polynesia provides a fleshing out of the antiquarian desire to construct a genealogy of place, mapping the European gaze of the colonised land from first contact to settlement. Turnbull’s collecting practices also reflect the tendency that Peltz and Myrone observe for antiquarians to invest ‘equal value in both visual and textual evidence’.¹⁰⁴ The National Art Gallery represents a less singularly driven enterprise than the Museum and the Library, but was a similarly cooperative venture between private collectors and the state and, perhaps as a consequence, was an institution that slowly struggled into existence over a prolonged gestation. The New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts acted as a trustee of the embryonic National Collection from 1897 to the opening of the National Art Gallery in 1936.¹⁰⁵

I propose that the three state collections of colonial New Zealand art under consideration evolved along different paths, following different models of collecting practice, with different goals. The strategies of collecting differ from one of a more accidental nature in the early years of the Museum, to the antiquarian and genealogical

¹⁰² See Tom Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors: The Antiquarian Imagination in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 219-25. As Peltz and Myrone note, the contribution of antiquarians to modern culture is a potentially rich area of enquiry. However, whereas in the European context this collecting practice was displaced by professionals in the nineteenth century, Griffiths argues for the persistence of this mode of collecting into the twentieth century in the colonies. See Martin Myrone and Lucy Peltz, eds., *Producing the Past: Aspects of Antiquarian Culture and Practice 1700-1850* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 1-13.

¹⁰³ “The Alexander Turnbull Library and Its Pictorial Research Collections,” 34.

¹⁰⁴ Myrone and Peltz, eds., *Producing the Past: Aspects of Antiquarian Culture and Practice 1700-1850*, 5.

¹⁰⁵ The Fine Arts Association of New Zealand was founded in 1882 and became incorporated as the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts in 1889. See Kay and Eden, *Portrait of a Century*. and Ann Calhoun, “The Acquisition of New Zealand Art for the National Collection: The Place of the Donor,” in *Aspects of New Zealand Art 1890-1940* (Wellington: National Art Gallery, 1984).

approach of the Library, to the over-riding interest in aesthetics in the case of the Gallery. However, given that the histories and legacies of these state collections regularly intersected and intertwined, I propose that it is necessary to study them in relation to one another in order to fully investigate the state collections of colonial art. Consequently, it is necessary to define the scope of objects that will enter this study under the definition of colonial 'Art', as well as some of the problems involved with the implications of such classificatory distinctions.

Colonial 'Art'?

The neatly woven trajectory that Preziosi identifies in the co-dependent histories of museums and museography (art history), which married art to the political needs of modernity and the nation state, has been unravelling in the postmodern era – its omissions and exclusions have been exposed. The assumed rigidity of the enlightenment project, of classifying and cataloguing the objects in a collection according to scholarly rationale, has lost favour. Further, on examining the histories of objects *within* these institutions it becomes apparent that the boundaries of museological categories are prone to slippages of objects between one category and another. Thus, as the new museology has made clear, any idea of 'stasis' is not true or even possible in the museum context, and it has become commonplace to assume that the meaning and 'use' of artefacts are continually transformed.¹⁰⁶

Bourdieu approaches the question of classification from a sociological perspective – by actively investigating the histories of the institutions of art. He suggests that acts of classification do not occur innately, but are essentially hierarchical, stating:

... struggles over definition (or classification) have *boundaries* at stake (between genres and disciplines, or between modes of production inside the same genre) and therefore, hierarchies. To define boundaries, defend them and control entries is to defend the established order in the field.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Charles Saumarez-Smith, "Museums, Artefacts, Meanings," in *The New Museology*, ed. Peter Vergo (London: Reaktion Books, 1989), 9.

¹⁰⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1996), 225.

There is a distinct problem however, underlying the boundaries and the power struggles within and without the field of 'Art'. That is that the concepts used to consider works of art and their classifications are characterised by extreme indeterminacy, and the terms used to discuss art, although drawn from a common language, assume an 'extreme vagueness and flexibility which ... makes them completely resistant to essentialist definition'.¹⁰⁸ In direct reference to the literary and artistic fields, Bourdieu stipulates that they are 'characterised ... by a weak degree of codification, and, by the same token, by the extreme permeability of their boundaries'.¹⁰⁹

In his discussion of the Victoria and Albert Museum, Harbison draws the reader's attention to the confusion of the space and the problematic arrangement of objects – where it seems that disorder reigns over order.¹¹⁰ This recalls the preface to Foucault's *The Order of Things*, where he famously begins by quoting a passage from Borges that lists the division of animals in a 'certain Chinese encyclopaedia' including '...b) embalmed, c) tamed, d) sucking pigs, e) sirens...'.¹¹¹ The apparent randomness of this leads Foucault to conclude that 'nothing is more tentative, nothing more empirical (superficially at least) than the process of establishing an order among things'.¹¹² He goes on to question the capacity of projects of classification:

When we establish a considered classification ... what is the ground on which we are able to establish the validity of this classification with complete certainty? On what "table", according to which grid of identities, similitudes, analogies, have we become accustomed to sort out so many different and similar things? What is this coherence – which, as is immediately apparent, is neither determined by an *a priori* and necessary concatenation, nor imposed on us by immediately perceptible contents?¹¹³

In spite of Foucault's identification of the arbitrary nature of classification, he recognises nonetheless that taxonomia aims to be a qualitative mathesis. The earliest classifications of art attempted to emulate scientific taxonomies. Works were described by medium, separating drawings and prints from paintings, and an objective,

¹⁰⁸ Bourdieu, "The Historical Genesis of a Pure Aesthetic," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 46 (1987): 205.

¹⁰⁹ Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, 226.

¹¹⁰ Harbison, *Eccentric Spaces*, 144-145

¹¹¹ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* [1970] (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), xvi.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, xxi.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

connoisseurial approach was applied to the study of art.¹¹⁴ Similarly, authors writing on the systems of classification of indigenous art suggest that scholars of, for example, African art, have often turned to methodologies developed in the natural sciences, basing their classification on careful description and analysis.¹¹⁵ But while it may be possible to determine by analysis the age, the chemical make-up of the paint, through formal description the style and composition of the painting, these factors alone do not constitute solid ground for drawing a set of works together in an impermeable classificatory grouping. For as Paul DiMaggio writes, the attempts to define and classify art according to such criteria, ‘impose *normative* order on systems of classification that are *socially* constructed’.¹¹⁶

Until now, I have used the words ‘object’ and ‘artefact’, to refer to those items that have been characterized within the discourses of collecting and exhibitions. However, I have stated that I am concerned to investigate the formation and fate of a *canon* of colonial New Zealand art.¹¹⁷ I have already described a ‘canon’ as a constantly shifting entity, concerned more with processes rather than objects. Indeed, Michael Camille has suggested that canons are created ‘not so much out of a series of worthy objects as out of the possibilities of their reproduction’.¹¹⁸ Consequently, while museums may play one role in the canonization of objects simply through the act of collecting, which confers a degree of authenticity upon the object, they play another and perhaps more important role in this process by making certain works available through exhibition, discussion and publication. In my evaluation of colonial New Zealand art in the state collections, I will be paying attention to the *processes* that have rendered certain works more visible than others in New Zealand’s art history.

Key theoretical tools in this analysis are Bourdieu’s sociological frameworks for studying the field of art, and approaches to the study of exhibitions as informed by theories of space. While I will often be dealing with discrete histories of individual items,

¹¹⁴ Bernard Berenson and Giovanni Morelli are the historical figureheads of such a scientific, connoisseurial approach to the study of art.

¹¹⁵ Suzanne Preston Blier, “Art Systems and Semiotics: The Question of Art, Craft and Colonial Taxonomies in Africa,” *The American Journal of Semiotics* 6, no. 1 (1988/1989).

¹¹⁶ Paul DiMaggio, “Classification in Art,” *American Sociological Review* 52, no. 4 (1987): 441.

¹¹⁷ By ‘colonial’ I propose to consider that art produced in New Zealand or by New Zealand artists up to 1907 when New Zealand was granted Dominion status.

¹¹⁸ Michael Camille, “Prophets, Canons and Promising Monsters,” *Art Bulletin* 78, no. 2 (1996): 198.

it is the role that they play within the greater social, political and institutional context which will come under scrutiny. This means the work of art is not treated as an autonomous object, instead, its history within the collection and as an exhibition item is of interest. Just as I have stated my intention to study the collections themselves as artefacts, I follow an analytical approach that considers ‘exhibition installations as representations’.¹¹⁹ For exhibitions are the crucial sites in which works of art accrue meaning within a public space, enter the marketplace and elicit critical responses.¹²⁰ They are sites where processes of social distinction can be enacted, particularly when considering the role of citizens who supported the local art market and oversaw the rise of institutions. The space of the museum is acknowledged as an ideologically loaded space, which, it is claimed, constitutes its various “subjects” through its arrangements. These include the ideal citizen of the state,¹²¹ the colonial subject,¹²² the self-disciplinary subject¹²³ and the enlightened elite.¹²⁴ As Nick Prior states, the museum ‘purposefully frames space and people in space according to historically and ideologically specific conditions’.¹²⁵ Thus, an attention not just to the arrangement of exhibitions, but to the spatial relations of the gallery and museum, is central to this study.

As far as my definition of ‘art’ is concerned, I maintain an awareness of the shifting natures of the boundaries of what might be considered ‘art’. It is therefore necessary that I define here the range of works within the state collections that concern me in this study. A recurrent tendency in postmodern and postcolonial critiques of the museum has been to deconstruct these modernist and teleological classificatory systems and to ‘flatten out’ the distinctions between ‘art’ and ‘artefact’, between ‘art’ and

¹¹⁹ A most comprehensive study of one institution’s installation history is Mary Anne Staniszewski’s, *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1998).

¹²⁰ Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World’s Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988); Karp and Lavine, eds., *Exhibiting Cultures*; Robert Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century of Progress Expositions* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993); and Mitchell, “Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order [1989].”

¹²¹ Duncan and Wallach, “The Universal Survey Museum.”

¹²² Annie E. Coombes, “Museums and the Formation of National and Cultural Identities,” *Oxford Art Journal* 11, no. 2 (1988).

¹²³ Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*.

¹²⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Sociology of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984).

¹²⁵ Nick Prior, “The High within and the Low Without: The Social Production of Aesthetic Space in the National Gallery of Scotland, 1859-70,” *Cultural Logic: an electronic journal of marxist theory and practice* 2, no. 2 (1999), <http://clogic.eserver.org/2-2/prior/html>.

‘craft’.¹²⁶ Several recent studies have curiously reinforced the traditional boundaries of art and artefact/craft. For example, after an interesting account of the Great Exhibition in *Art for the Nation*, Taylor reigns in this divergent tangent and announces ‘But our subject is the exhibition of art’.¹²⁷ Jeffrey Auerbach questioned the appropriateness of this definitive statement, countering ‘Surely it’s time for “art” to include more than just painting’.¹²⁸ In a manner similar to Taylor, Nick Prior dismissed the collections of the British Museum as constituting works worthy of a picture gallery, stating that it ‘contained no paintings beyond those that illuminated aspects of natural history or science’.¹²⁹ Duncan, however, acknowledges that while the British Museum may not originally have been conceived as having an ‘art collection’, today ‘it contains several aesthetically installed galleries of objects now classified as “art”’.¹³⁰

The privileging of the ‘fine arts’, particularly oil painting and sculpture over crafts or decorative arts, or indeed over the lesser media of watercolour and engraving, preceded the establishment of museums and galleries. It was born of artists’ attempts to gain respect and status as practitioners of a ‘liberal art requiring imagination and education as well as manual training and dexterity’.¹³¹ This distinction was reinforced in the training programmes of academies and subsequently taken up by museums and galleries, meaning that oil painting and sculpture were dominant media collected and exhibited to the exclusion of many other forms of artistic production. However, the scope of that which I shall consider to be ‘Art’ in this study will not be bound by these traditional and hierarchically informed categories. In keeping with Te Papa’s current approach towards categories as exemplified in their website and *Icons*, and taking into account recent re-evaluations, I will widen my scope to include work previously dismissed as ‘scientific’, ‘topographical’ or ‘historical’ in nature, as well as photography.

¹²⁶ Janet Catherine Berlo and Ruth Phillips, B, “Our (Museum) World Turned Upside Down: Re-Presenting Native American Arts,” *Art Bulletin* 77, no. 1 (1995): 6.

¹²⁷ Taylor, *Art for the Nation*, 71.

¹²⁸ Jeffrey Auerbach, “Short Review: ‘Art for the Nation: Exhibitions and the London Public, 1747-2001’,” *Victorian Studies* (2001): 494.

¹²⁹ Prior, *Museums and Modernity: Art Galleries and the Making of Modern Culture*, 94.

¹³⁰ Duncan, *Civilising Rituals*, 142.

¹³¹ Andrew McClellan, ed. *Art and Its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millenium* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), xv.

This approach is particularly pertinent in New Zealand, where watercolour, not oil painting, was the medium of choice for exhibition and collection in the colonial period. The preference for watercolour reflects both ideological shifts in the British art world as well as the practicalities of production in a colonial context. By the mid-nineteenth century, watercolour painters had ‘coalesced as a professional grouping’ and were able to challenge the monopoly of the Royal Academy in the art field.¹³² This was concurrent with the emergence of landscape as a genre that could carry the same power as history painting, further undermining the traditional hierarchies of the academy. An interest in landscape was also heightened by the romantic temperament, which fostered a new relationship between the artist and the natural world, as well as an emergent tourism among the bourgeois classes.¹³³ Views of places and sights executed by both amateurs and professionals became desirable, not only as souvenirs, but also in exhibitions. Gordon Fyfe goes so far as to suggest that ‘as interpreters of topography and landscape, water-colourists provided an iconography for the nation-state and gave substance to the imagined communities of England, Wales and Scotland’.¹³⁴ Thus, the prominence of this practice in New Zealand in the colonial period must be seen as an extension of the emerging watercolour tradition in Britain. Further, the medium was well-suited to working ‘en plein air’ and could be quickly, easily and cheaply executed to provide views of the ‘new’ country.

Photography similarly has played an important role in New Zealand’s colonial art history. The status of this medium was ambiguous in its early years. To many Victorians photography was indeed seen as the ‘perfect marriage between science and art’, but this caused difficulties in classification as photography was often seen as attempting to occupy two different camps.¹³⁵ There were those who were predominantly concerned

¹³² Fyfe, *Art, Power and Modernity*, 88.

¹³³ See Malcolm Andrews, “Nature as Picture or Process,” in *Landscape and Western Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) for a consideration of the changing relationship between ‘man’ and ‘nature’ during the nineteenth century.

¹³⁴ Fyfe, *Art, Power and Modernity*, 87.

¹³⁵ James Ryan, R., *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualisation of the British Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), 17. See also Anthony J. Hamber, “A Higher Branch of the Art”: *Photographing the Fine Arts in England 1839-1880* (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1996), 285 who discusses the fact that from the 1860s on, photography was increasingly used for nationalistic purposes, to document masterpieces and monuments, so they could then be appreciated in exhibitions distanced from their original contexts.

with photography as a branch of science. The fact that the first museums in the colonies were devoted to recording and illustrating progress and documenting the lie of the land meant that photography was an essential part of collections from their inception. Photography was seen as an ideal medium to record this ‘virgin’ land, demonstrating an apparent ‘intertwinement between the history of European colonisation in New Zealand and the history of the medium of photography’.¹³⁶ In *Icons*, the presentation of colonial photography provides a case where postmodern re-evaluations are inconsistently applied and the boundaries of classification appear to be blurred. Under Te Papa’s classificatory divisions, colonial photography has an ambiguous status, existing on its own in a ‘Historical Photography’ collection, but simultaneously being re-united with the ‘Art and Visual Culture’ collections. Consequently, it continues to be erratically reassessed, for while a Burton Brothers’ photograph is raised in status to feature in the ‘Art’ section of *Icons*, elsewhere photography serves primarily as an historically illustrative device.

An approach that considers a wide-ranging definition of the arts is necessary in this study because of the problematic realm that some works of art have occupied in the state collections’ histories. This is particularly the case with works that may have been classified as of ‘scientific’, ‘topographic’ or ‘historical’ value. Indeed, one of the key concerns of this thesis is to unpack the problematic division of ‘art as information’ from ‘art for art’s sake’. In *Icons* the artefacts are discussed and ordered according to the current disciplinary divisions in Te Papa – Nga Taonga, Art, Natural History, History and Pacific – but few examples of colonial art are found in the ‘Art’ section; instead, they are dispersed throughout the divisions. These divisions, then, constructed to lend order to an institution, prove to be incapable of containing objects, and instead are revealed to be permeable membranes that artefacts can easily traverse. It is important to note that this permeability existed not only *within* the state collections but also *between* state collections. Problematic objects that refused to ‘fit’ could be passed between institutions resulting in value shifts and changing evaluations.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Gregory Burke, “Second Nature,” in *Second Nature: Peter Peryer, Photographer*, ed. Gregory Burke and Peter Weiermair (New Zealand; Zurich: Edition Stemmle, 1995), 9.

¹³⁷ For example, in 1920 William Gordon wrote to Horace Fildes that he had sold *Te Inoi a te Ariki* (*The Lord’s Prayer in Maori*), (fig 94) a unique, handcrafted watercolour, to the Dominion Museum. At some stage in its history, this work, which eludes definitive classification, was actively devalued by a removal from the Dominion Museum to the Alexander Turnbull Library where it is currently classified as a

While institutions may have their histories of forgetting, that effectively erase these stories, a written culture records the shifts and re-evaluations that have occurred over time. Consequently, it is not just a passive process of remembering that takes place within a museum through the display of its collections, but one of *re-membering*, as Preziosi writes:

Museums do not simply or passively reveal or ‘refer’ to the past; rather they perform the basic historical gesture of *separating out of the present* a certain specific ‘past’ so as to collect and recompose (to *re-member*) its displaced and dismembered relics as elements in a *genealogy* of and for the present.¹³⁸

This thesis then, in a manner analogous to Preziosi’s description of the museum’s re-membering, will delve into the archive to ‘collect and recompose’ the various genealogical narratives of New Zealand’s colonial art history. Having noted Te Papa’s apparent amnesia regarding its complex and intertwined histories, it is my concern to restore attention to the fate of the state collections of colonial New Zealand art. This is a new approach which foregrounds the historical connectedness (and, arguably, co-dependence) of these collections and challenges their apparently ‘distinctive’ natures. Indeed, I argue that their ‘distinctiveness’ only arose out of modernist concerns for territorial boundary marking in the 1930s. My aim, therefore, is not just to provide an empirical account of what was collected when and by whom, but to explore the ‘lifecycle’ of the state collections to evaluate their participation in the critical establishment of a canon of New Zealand colonial art.¹³⁹ I also bring a new methodological approach to the study of these collections by considering the works of art contained within not merely as autonomous objects, but in terms of how particular artists, collectors and historians have put colonial art to work in exhibition and discourse. The lens of the exhibition—the primary site of reception for works of art—offers an alternative methodology for a more nuanced account of the history of colonial art in the state collections, one that might refocus attention on the complexity of colonial

manuscript, a classification that effectively negates its status as colonial art. See thesis conclusion for further discussion.

¹³⁸ Preziosi, “The Art of Art History,” 511.

¹³⁹ Saumarez-Smith, “Museums, Artefacts, Meanings,” 20-21.

culture.¹⁴⁰ While exhibitions have been a focus of traditional art history, especially for the study of individual artists, the potential offered by the exhibition as a key to understanding the intricacies of an historical moment has not been realised within local scholarship.¹⁴¹

My sources include the archives of the institutions, the Museum, Library and Gallery, and relevant correspondence between key personnel. Encounters with the objects in the collections have informed my research, and one of the most fruitful historical sources is the newspaper press, which chronicles the social and cultural world of colonial New Zealand most effectively. Where they can be reconstructed through archival resources, including descriptions and/or visual documentation, the nature of exhibitions and their installations are a focus of my study.

Chapter two analyses the collecting histories of colonial New Zealand art within the Museum, Gallery and Library from the opening of the Colonial Museum in 1865 to the opening of the National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum in 1936. By tracing the history of collecting over this period trends can be identified and questions are raised over the classificatory boundaries of those institutions. Chapters' three to five cover the same chronological territory but shift the focus from acquisition to exhibition and discourse, with key exhibitions serving as turning points for each chapter. Chapter three, covering the period from 1865-1889, considers the early recognition of an art that could be described as 'colonial' in exhibitions and their accompanying discourse and focuses on one of the primary state vehicles for the exhibition of New Zealand's culture and commerce, the nineteenth-century international exhibition. Chapter four traces the period from 1889-1907 and analyses the gradual historicising of colonial art as the turn of the century approached and the subsequent anxieties that arose over the lack of support for the arts in New Zealand. Chapter five continues from 1907 up to the opening of the

¹⁴⁰ Postcolonial texts that have complicated the historical narrative include Barringer and Flynn, eds., *Colonialism and the Object*; Leonard Bell, *Colonial Constructs: European Images of Maori 1840-1914* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1992); Nicholas Thomas, *Possessions: Indigenous Art/Colonial Culture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999); and Allan Wallach, *Exhibiting Contradiction: Essays on the Art Museum in the United States* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998).

¹⁴¹ Local studies include John Mansfield Thomson, ed. *Farewell Colonialism: The New Zealand International Exhibition Christchurch, 1906-07* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1998) and William Renwick, ed. *Creating a National Spirit: Celebrating New Zealand's Centennial* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004).

National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum in 1936 and closes with a close study of the exhibitions and publications associated with the centennial celebrations of 1940.

Fig b. Overlooking the intersection of Lambton Quay and Bowen Street, Wellington, 1929, black and white photograph, ATL: 1/1-000698-F

This photograph reveals the close proximity of the state institutions, Library, Museum and Gallery in the early twentieth century. The Turnbull Library was the second building on the left up the hill, the Museum, to its right on Museum St, and Parliament buildings on the left of the photograph. The Academy Gallery was several hundred metres behind the position of the photographer on Whitmore St.

2: The state of collecting

*Saturday, August the first, marks the realisation of a great idea, that of providing both for the present and for the years to come, a fitting national home for the art and museum treasures of the country ... The building is worthy of its purpose. It remains for us to see that it shall now and in the future contain exhibits only of the highest standard and true national interest.*¹

These words, spoken by Wellington Mayor T. C. A. Hislop commemorated the long-awaited opening of the National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum in 1936, a building that was truly worthy of the nation as well as its collections, which had been amassing since 1865. New Zealand could finally lay claim to a state Museum and Art Gallery, marking a notable moment in its ‘cultural’ and ‘national development’.² It seems that re-branding of the Alexander Turnbull Library in the mid 1930s as a ‘state institution’, rather than the semi-private library it had previously been, must also be understood in this climate of public access to the nation’s collections.³ Hislop’s words drew attention to the requirement that collecting activities adhere to standards of ‘taste’ and ‘relevance’, but it is now understood that these qualities and their definitions may shift over time. Collections are open to interpretation and reinterpretation, they may grow through the acquisition of certain objects, while others may be excluded or de-accessioned. This chapter, then, is concerned with the thematics of collecting and collectors, and will introduce the key players – the institutions as well as the individuals – that shaped the origins and evolutions of the three state collections of colonial New Zealand art.

Renamed the Dominion Museum in 1907 and the National Museum in 1973, the Colonial Museum opened in 1865 under the direction of James Hector.⁴ While Hector was not actively interested in collecting ‘art’, the museum nonetheless acquired works by gift or bequest as well as through active commissioning and purchase. Its collecting of

¹ T. C. A. Hislop, cited in *National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum: Souvenir Catalogue of Pictures and Works of Art for Opening Exhibition, August, 1936*, (Wellington: Blundell Bros, 1936), 5.

² Ibid.

³ See Rachel Barrowman, *The Turnbull: A Library and Its World* (Auckland: Auckland University Press in association with the Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1995), 63.

⁴ For ease of reference I will refer to the Colonial, Dominion and National Museum as the Museum (distinguishing between them when necessary), the National Art Gallery as the Gallery and the Alexander Turnbull Library as the Library in this and subsequent chapters.

colonial New Zealand art in the early years, at least, may be characterised as ‘accidental’, with more strategic approaches being taken by subsequent directors. The Alexander Turnbull Library, established in 1918, had an intertwined history with the Dominion Museum, but the nature and evolution of its collections followed a different path. Based primarily on the book collection of the bibliophile and collector Alexander Turnbull, the acquisition by Turnbull in 1915 of important works from the 1840s by New Zealand Company artists formed a solid basis for the collecting of works of art relevant to New Zealand’s history. With its emphasis on ‘art as information’, the Library had a very different collecting agenda from the National Art Gallery. The founding collection of the Gallery consisted of works held in trust by the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts (Academy) and gifts or bequests from individuals, and its focus was on ‘aesthetics’. The pre-history of the Gallery is inextricably bound with that of the Academy, so this organisation forms the focus in this chapter.

However, these collections were far from static entities, and instead were separated by highly unstable and permeable boundaries. As they were all nominally ‘state’ collections, problematic objects that refused to ‘fit’ could be passed between institutions, resulting in value shifts and changing evaluations. A fourth space of a more transitional nature through which works of art from the state collections also passed was the Parliament Buildings, specifically the General Assembly Library. This space, which today continues to maintain and develop its own collection, will also enter the discussion where relevant.

In this chapter I investigate key acquisitions, or trends in collecting activity, that shed light on the particular historical moment, inevitably informed by the aesthetic attitudes, political climate and economic circumstances of the time. I deal here with the period up to the opening of the Gallery and Museum in 1936, by which time each of the three collections had a clear public role to play. As described, I conceptualise these collections as *organisms*, in order to examine their lifecycles: their growth and decay through their histories of accessions and de-accessions, both planned and arbitrary. Collections are also strongly influenced by the personalities involved in their making. Therefore the “authors” of these collections will be introduced, so that their “subjective

agency” might be brought back into play.⁵ This will allow me to explore the extent to which these seemingly distinct, yet historically intertwined, state collections evolved along different paths, following different models of collecting practice with varying goals that were, I will conclude, only firmly set in place after the opening of the Gallery and Museum in 1936.

The Colonial Museum

In the summer of 1893 F. A. Bather took a long sea voyage and surveyed the museums of the British Colonies in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. His report was presented at the 5th Annual General Meeting of the Museums Association in Dublin in 1894 and published in the proceedings under the title ‘Some Colonial Museums’. In it he wrote of the Colonial Museum in Wellington:

One of the best-known fossiliferous beds in New Zealand is known as the Curiosity Shop bed, and one of the most popular forms of entertainment in the colony appears to be the scientific lecture interspersed with stereoptician views and comic anecdotes. It seems as though, in its endeavour to merit the name “Colonial”, this Museum has taken these two features as its models. Even in the cases the things are badly arranged, and the labels, if found at all, are often attached to the wrong specimens.⁶

Bather concluded rather scathingly that the ‘...national Museum, the presumed headquarters of the country’s scientific and intellectual activity’ was ‘the worst-managed institution of the kind in probably the whole of the Southern hemisphere’. This evaluation compared unfavourably with those of the Canterbury, Auckland and Dunedin museums and notably, under the section evaluating ‘Technique’, normally used to describe the display initiatives in each institution, Bather merely wrote ‘.....’⁷

⁵ Stephen Bann, “Art History and Museums,” in *The Subject of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Mark A. Cheetham, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁶ F. A. Bather, “Some Colonial Museums,” in *Museums Association: Report of Proceedings with the Papers Read at the 5th Annual General Meeting, Held in Dublin, June 26-29, 1894*, ed. E. Howarth and H. M. Platnauer (Sheffield and York: Museums Association, 1895), 208.

⁷ Ibid.

By 1893, Sir James Hector (1834-1907) (fig 1) had been in charge of the Colonial Museum for nearly 30 years and was to stay in this position a further ten until 1903.⁸ Hector was appointed Director of the Geological Survey and Colonial Museum in 1865, following the cessation of his employment as Director of the Geological Survey of Otago from 1861 to 1865. In Otago, Hector worked with a team of skilled staff who accompanied him on expeditions: Richard B. Gore as clerk, John Buchanan as draughtsman and William Skey as analyst. These men went with Hector to Wellington, where they too were employed by the Geological Survey and Colonial Museum.

The Colonial Museum was the first institution of its kind in New Zealand. It differed from the emerging museums in other provincial centres as it was firmly placed in the service of the Government.⁹ Hector outlined his understanding of the role of the Colonial Museum in a lengthy letter to the Colonial Secretary in 1866, which formed the basis of his first report on the Museum in 1866, as well as the preface to the Catalogue published in 1870.¹⁰ This described Hector's ideological framework for the Museum, and needs to be considered before assessing the role art had to play within it. He began by stating:

One of the most important duties in connection with the Geological Survey of a new Country is the formation of a Scientific Museum, the principal object of which is to facilitate the classification and comparison of the specimens collected in different localities during the progress of the Survey.

By this means only is a reliable basis obtained for a general system of geological nomenclature, the value, proof and application of which to the development of the country depends mainly upon the preservation of minutely recorded information respecting the history of individual specimens.¹¹

⁸ James Hector was knighted in 1887 following his involvement in the New Zealand Exhibition held in Wellington in 1885, a preliminary showing of the colony's contributions to the Colonial and Indian Exhibition held in London in 1886. In 1903 the Government offered retirement with pension to officers in civil service over the age of 65. Hector was 69 by this time and asked for relief of duties from 1 July 1903. See Hector to Hon. R. Seddon, Prime Minister, 2 May 1903, MU465, vol. 9, p. 10.

⁹ Hector was the highest standing scientist in Government service, and was responsible at various periods for the Meteorological Department, the Wellington Time-ball Observatory, the Botanic Garden of Wellington, the standard weights and measures and the Patent Office Library. See R. K. Dell, 'Hector, James 1834 - 1907'. *DNZB*, <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>, accessed 10 March 2008. See "Displaying Natural History: Colonial Museum" in *The Amazing World of James Hector*, ed. Simon Nathan and Mary Varnham (Wellington: Te Awa Press, 2008) for a summary of Hector's years at the Museum.

¹⁰ See James Hector, "Memorandum Concerning the Colonial Museum," (*AJHR*, 1866) and Hector, *Catalogue of the Colonial Museum, Wellington, New Zealand* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1870).

¹¹ Hector to the Colonial Secretary, 28 August 1866, MU465, vol. 1, p. 198

Hector elaborated that he understood museums could be divided into two classes – scientific and popular – and that his would fulfil the expectations of the former. He stated that such a division ‘is now clearly recognized in England, and its adoption has been strongly recommended in the re-arrangement of the Natural History collections in the British Museum’.¹² This may have been Hector’s understanding, but the ‘new museum idea’ that evolved in the latter half of the nineteenth century advocated such a division *within* the same institution, so that research might be carried out *in addition to* popular instruction. This idea was first articulated by Dr. John Edward Gray in 1864, when he stated that every museum had two purposes, ‘first, the diffusion of instruction and rational amusement among the mass of the people, and, secondly, to afford the scientific student every possible means of examining and studying the specimens of which the museum consists’.¹³ Sir William Flower advocated an approach and design by which this dual purpose could be achieved in one museum,¹⁴ but Hector obviously saw them as quite separate and unable to be accommodated under one roof:

In this respect a scientific Museum differs from one intended only for the popular diffusion of natural science – the former being a record office from which typical or popular museums could be supplied with accurate information instructively arranged ...¹⁵

In Hector’s mind the Colonial Museum was to operate as a central point, from which information could be supplied to the provinces:

... it is with this view that the Colonial Museum should be formed, not as a rival, but to assist the local typical museums, the establishment of which should be encouraged in all the principal centres of population for the purpose of giving instruction respecting the resources and natural history of the country, as well as acting as a stimulus and guide to local research in those branches of knowledge.¹⁶

¹² Hector, “Memorandum Concerning the Colonial Museum.”

¹³ Gray, quoted in Sir W. H. Flower, *Essays on Museums and Other Subjects Connected with Natural History* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1898), 37.

¹⁴ Ibid. Flower succeeded Richard Owen as Director of the Natural History Museum in London. His plan for the arrangement of an ideal natural history museum is based on the concept of organising museums around the dual purpose of popular education and research. To this end, study exhibits were separated from exhibition materials and the emphasis in display was based on the belief that less is more – the best specimens were exhibited accompanied by informative labels. See Susan Sheets-Pyenson, *Cathedrals of Science: The Development of Colonial Natural History Museums During the Late Nineteenth Century* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988) for a consideration of the changing practices in natural history museums in the nineteenth century.

¹⁵ Hector, “Memorandum Concerning the Colonial Museum.”

¹⁶ Ibid.

Hector saw his institution as potentially short-circuiting the pattern of exchange that usually reinforced the power relations between the metropolitan centre (Britain) and periphery (the colonies). Tony Bennett suggests that science was normally advanced in the metropolitan centres, as specimens sent from the peripheries to the centre were disconnected from their originating contexts. They could then be re-organised in new contexts and combinations, often making new relations perceptible in the process. Consequently, metropolitan museums functioned as ‘centres of calculation’ where information was analysed and processed, and which could “act at a distance” on a variety of peripheral locations, providing the intellectual frameworks within which the activities there could be organised’.¹⁷ Bennett concludes that peripheral museums (such as those in the colonies) lacked the ability to become ‘centres of calculation’, rendering their role in the emerging networks of science and government a subordinate one. Consequently, he observes that in Australia, colonial scientists and organizations largely restricted their activities to collecting raw data, which was sent Home for ‘authoritative analysis and interpretation’, perpetuating their dependence on the Metropolitan centres.¹⁸

While Hector often relied on international intellectual exchanges to validate conclusions, he obviously saw that there was important scientific work that could be carried out in the colonial centre independent of the metropolis and that as Director of Geological Survey, his institution was responsible for the first-hand analysis of specimens.¹⁹ That his work in this regard was highly valued is evidenced by the number of decorations bestowed upon him throughout his career.²⁰

Hector’s high ambitions for the Geological Survey and Colonial Museum meant that as early as 1866 he was arguing for increased resources for staff and displays. And

¹⁷ Tony Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory: Evolution, Museums, Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 21.

¹⁸ Ibid., 32. This view is validated in the history of the Australian Museum, where Strahan notes that the early collections of the museum were acquired solely for display, specimens being sent back to England for research purposes as there was a lack of experienced scientists to describe and study the natural resources. See Ronald Strahan, *Rare and Curious Specimens: An Illustrated History of the Australian Museum 1827 - 1979* (Sydney: Australian Museum, 1979).

¹⁹ Hector’s ongoing correspondence with Sir Joseph Hooker of Kew Gardens was often preoccupied with discussing the correct identification of species. See Juliet Hobbs, “‘My Dear Hector’ Letters from Joseph Dalton Hooker to James Hector 1862-1893,” in *Technical Report 31*, ed. John Yaldwyn and Juliet Hobbs (Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 1998).

²⁰ Hector was made a FRS in 1866, awarded the Order of the Golden Cross (1874), CMG (1875), the Lyell Medal of the Geological Society (1876), and in 1891 the Royal Geographical Society’s Founder’s Medal. See Dell, “Hector, James 1834-1907, *DNZB*.”

even though Hector had warned that without the instructive arrangement of specimens museums could lapse into ‘unmeaning collections of curiosities’, Bather’s criticism in 1893 suggests that the Colonial Museum had succeeded in fulfilling Hector’s prophesy.

Building a ‘collection of curiosities’

How was it that the Colonial Museum came to represent, in Bather’s eyes, the very type of collection Hector so adamantly wanted to avoid in his early years as Director – the ‘curiosity shop’? By the time Bather visited, the Museum maintained a ‘type’ collection of geological specimens, but the remainder of the collection was less comprehensive.²¹ A focus on building collections in the area of the director’s interests is not unusual in the early histories of museums, and Hector had clearly outlined his rationale for the institution in his initial reports. Nonetheless, as the ‘national’ Museum, it naturally served as a repository for a wider range of works, including art.

The emphasis on scientific research that Hector proposed would seem perhaps to render a consideration of the place of art in the Colonial Museum irrelevant, but art was a tool of science, and partnerships between scientists, surveyors and artists were necessary. For example, John Gully worked as draughtsman for the Nelson provincial survey office and also produced watercolour paintings from sketches by Julius von Haast to illustrate his scientific lectures²², while John Buchanan acted as draughtsman for Hector. Hector himself is listed in Una Platts’ *Nineteenth-century New Zealand Artists* as an ‘accomplished watercolourist’, and the museum was regularly sent watercolours by various surveyors, including William Cooper and George Sturtevant.²³ The degree to which these ‘scientific’ illustrations have been re-evaluated as art has, however, been partial and inconsistent.

²¹ The geological collection aimed to be both locally and internationally comprehensive, as Hector maintained relationships with foreign institutions and individuals, such as Spencer F. Baird at the Smithsonian, and acquired specimens through exchange and purchase.

²² See Janet Paul, “Twelve Watercolours of Glaciers in the Province of Canterbury: An Account of the Collaboration between Julius Von Haast and John Gully in the Eighteen-Sixties,” *Art New Zealand* 8, no. Summer (1977-78).

²³ Una Platts, *Nineteenth Century New Zealand Artists: A Guide and Handbook* (Christchurch: Avon Fine Prints, 1980), 122.

There was also an art historical precedent for the close alliance between art and science in the nineteenth century, informed by advances in the natural sciences and made visible in the writings of John Ruskin. Ruskin advocated that ‘science was a means whereby the artist could *see* natural objects as they were, not simply by their outward *aspects*, but as J. M. W. Turner saw them, being a “master of the science of *Essence*”’.²⁴ This approach was underpinned by theology, and drew on Alexander von Humboldt’s theory of aesthetics, which required that the artist be a scientist, committed to accurate observation and that for the visual arts ‘landscape painting becomes the principal mode of expressing the unity of knowledge’.²⁵ While the theological aspect of this humanistic approach was destabilised by Charles Darwin’s evolutionary theories later in the century, the interrelationship between science and art had impacted irrevocably upon both disciplines. In specific relation to early natural history museums, it has been commented of Charles Willson Peale’s enterprises in America, that to ‘to single out natural history as a separate entity in the museum seemed to distort the rich, complex sensibility that Peale, like his contemporaries, had toward art, science and the environment’.²⁶

Because of this integral relationship between art and science, the Museum fostered the production of images that might contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge, and by doing so, the progressive colonisation of colonial New Zealand.²⁷ In particular, it supported the publication of reference texts that would serve to illustrate the natural history of the colony. In 1867, Hector sought financial assistance from the Government on behalf of Walter Buller to enable the publication of *A History of the Birds of New Zealand*. (fig 2) Hector wrote that ‘...the importance of such a work has

²⁴ Ruskin quoted in Gordon Brown, *Visions of New Zealand: Artists in a New Land* (Auckland: David Bateman, 1988), 40.

²⁵ On the relationship between landscape, science and art see Stephen Jay Gould, *I Have Landed: Splashes and Reflections in Natural History* (London: Vintage, 2002) especially chapter 5 ‘Art meets science in *The heart of the Andes*: Church paints, Humboldt dies, Darwin writes and nature blinks in the fateful year of 1859’, Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting 1825-1875* (New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1980) and Malcolm Andrews, “Nature as Picture or Process,” in *Landscape and Western Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

²⁶ Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, “Entrepreneurs and Intellectuals: Natural History in Early American Museums,” in *Mummies, and Mastadons: The Emergence of the American Museum*, ed. William T. Alderson (Washington D. C.: American Association of Museums, 1992), 26.

²⁷ ‘Progressive colonisation’ is the term given by James Belich to the extremely fast transformation of ‘raw’ New Zealand into a mature socio-economic state from 1840-1880. Knowledge of raw materials of the colony was essential to this process, hence the importance of the enterprises of the Colonial Museum. See James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1996), 329-60.

been advocated by Gould, Newton, Solate and other eminent naturalists ... who urge that a work of this description should be completed and in the hands of the colonists without delay, as the native birds are becoming rapidly extinct'.²⁸ He argued further that:

The proposed work would also have a practical utility, as the accurate information which Mr Buller's experience will afford, respecting the habits, feed and distribution of the birds indigenous to the colony will be a valuable guide to the acclimatisation of imported species, on the performance of which the success of this colony as an agricultural and pastoral country will in some degree though indirectly depend...²⁹

Hector had negotiated a Government contribution of £300 towards the cost of publication provided Buller would '...dispose of the collection of birds, upon which the descriptive portion of his work is founded, to the Colonial Museum, which would be the most fitting place for its preservation'. He did admit, however, that £300 might have been an over-estimate of the real value of the collection, due to the number of common species and duplicates represented:

Nonetheless as being the type collection containing the actual specimens which form the ground work of what will be the standard book on the Birds of New Zealand I would strongly urge that they should be purchased for the Museum with the stipulation that the Government should receive in addition to the collection of birds, say 25 copies of the work for distribution to the various public libraries on the Colony...³⁰

Here, Hector's concern for the Museum to act as a point of distribution and in a supporting role for other provincial organizations is clearly evident. As well as encouraging financial support of Buller's publication on the ornithology of New Zealand, the Museum was also the source from which Buchanan produced a survey work titled

²⁸ Hector to Colonial Secretary, 20 July 1867, TPA: MU465, vol. 1, p. 353. The Acclimatisation Society was founded in 1874 and came under the umbrella of the New Zealand Institute. It aimed to co-ordinate the introduction of species to New Zealand. The confused relationship between acclimatization of introduced species and conservation of indigenous species is highlighted by Hector's response to an inquiry by the Premier in 1892 on the subject of 'Government reserves and management of with regard to conservation of birds', where he recommended that the members of the current Acclimatisation Society would be best suited to manage these reserves as they would be '...the persons who have most interest in such work, and they possess the necessary organization.' Hector to Honourable the Premier, 11 January 1892, TPA: MU465, vol. 7, p. 51.

²⁹ Hector to Colonial Secretary, 20 July 1867, TPA: MU465, vol. 1, p. 353.

³⁰ Hector to Colonial Secretary, 2 August 1870, TPA: MU465, vol. 2, p. 65. The collection was purchased for the Colonial Museum and entered its collections in 1871, however, most of this collection perished in the nineteenth century. A recent article uses Buller's collection to document the decline and extinction of endemic New Zealand birds. See Sandy Bartle and Alan J. D. Tennyson, "History of Walter Buller's Collections of Birds," *Tuhinga* 20 (2009).

The Indigenous Grasses of New Zealand, published with government support in three parts between 1878 and 1880.³¹ (fig 3) He was, however, less forthcoming with support of Georgina Hetley's proposal to produce a series of illustrated drawings of New Zealand plants. In November 1884, Hetley wrote to Hector, citing the support of Auckland Museum director Thomas Frederick Cheeseman, requesting government assistance towards the 'expenses of an expedition to Nelson and the Southern Alps to paint the Alpine flowers...' She added that because '... the dried specimens lose their colour and do not show the beauty of the flowers, the painted ones could be kept with the dried collections in the Wellington museum and if done sufficiently correctly they might eventually be used to illustrate a work on the Flora of New Zealand.'³² Hector replied 'Sorry no fund available for purpose' by telegraph on 28 November 1884. In response, Hetley amended her request to a free pass on the railways as 'Mr Cheeseman had said it had often been done for people collecting specimens &c...'³³ Hector again replied in the negative, suggesting that a parliamentary vote would be required and that there was no chance of one being obtained at that time of year.³⁴

Despite Hector's lack of support, Hetley did gain a free rail pass and published *The native flowers of New Zealand* in three parts in England between 1887 and 1888. On her return to New Zealand she exhibited her pictures at several venues in Australia and New Zealand, including the Auckland Museum and the General Assembly Library in Wellington.³⁵ She had not given up on Hector, however, and approached him in 1893 regarding the purchase of 60 of her drawings for £150, suggesting that the proper place

³¹ John Buchanan, *The Indigenous Grasses of New Zealand* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1880). It was proposed by the House of Representatives on 29 June 1876 that £400 be advanced to 'defray the cost of a work on native grasses with nature-printed plates of each grass, and a description thereof'. 'House of Representatives, Wellington, June 29', in *North Otago Times*, 1 July 1876, p. 2. The original specimens and drawings from which the prints were made are in Te Papa's Natural History collections. See Te Papa Curatorial Team, *Icons Nga Taonga: From the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2004), 133.

³² Georgina Hetley to Hector, 26 November 1884, Auckland, TPA: MU95, box 1, item 207.

³³ Hetley to Hector, 1 December 1884, TPA: MU95, box 1, item 208.

³⁴ It is regularly claimed that Hetley received prompt support from the government in this project, but this was apparently not the case. Hetley's writing was very persuasive and she may not have invested all her energy in Hector, instead applying for assistance from a number of sources.

³⁵ A notice in the *Taranaki Herald*, 12 October 1895, 2 describes the exhibition of Hetley's paintings in Sydney and laments the failure of the Government to acquire them for the Imperial Institute.

for her original drawings was the ‘Imperial Institute’.³⁶ Hector declined, a decision he should have regretted as Bather’s report commented favourably on the botanical collection at Christchurch Museum, which was described as ‘chiefly remarkable for some flower-paintings by Miss M. O. Stoddart and Mrs Hetley’.³⁷ This comment is also noteworthy as it is the only direct reference to specific artists’ works in Bather’s evaluation of New Zealand’s museums. Hector nonetheless continued to be unresponsive to Hetley’s requests. When, in the 1890s, he was developing a new book on the Flora of New Zealand, Hetley again appealed to Hector’s good nature, writing:

You were so kind when in Auckland last year and promised to help me when in your power ... may I remind you that you said after seeing my book that you would like to have my plates for the new Flora when the grant was given ...³⁸

The reasons for Hector’s persistent refusal to support Hetley’s work can only be surmised, but Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker’s unwillingness to vouch for Hetley’s work would undoubtedly have been a key factor.³⁹ In 1886 Hooker wrote to Hector that Hetley ‘has been here several times about the publication of her drawings and wants me to write a voucher for their accuracy, but this I cannot do. There are no dissections and the delineation of the floral organs is utterly hazy ... I have gone most carefully over them

³⁶ Hetley cited some weighty names in her support of her work, such as John Ballance and Sir Patrick Buckley. See Hetley to Hector, 24 April 1893, TPA: MU95, box 8, item 137. The Imperial Institute opened after the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, London, 1886, on the suggestion mooted in a memorandum written by Sir Julius von Haast. This memo is reprinted in chapter LXVII ‘The Imperial Institute: Haast leads the way’, of H. F. von Haast, *The Life and Times of Sir Julius Von Haast: Explorer, Geologist, Museum Builder* (Wellington: H. F. von Haast, 1948), 950-64. There he suggested that a permanent Colonial Museum in London might serve to ‘keep the colonies before the English public in their and its own interest’. See also G. Alex Bremner, “‘Some Imperial Institute’: Architecture, Symbolism, and the Ideal of Empire in Late Victorian Britain, 1887-93,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 62, no. 1 (2003) and Mark Crinson, “Imperial Story-Lands: Architecture and Display at the Imperial and Commonwealth Institutes,” *Art History* 22, no. 1 (1999) for accounts of the early history, architecture and display of the Imperial (later Commonwealth) Institute including their symbolic, institutional and ritual functions.

³⁷ Bather, “Some Colonial Museums,” 204.

³⁸ Hetley to Hector, 16 February 1894, TPA: MU95, box 9, item 274. The work to which Hetley was referring was Thomas Kirk’s *The Student’s Flora of New Zealand*, published posthumously by the Government in 1899.

³⁹ It is worth noting that the esteemed nineteenth-century Australian botanical painter, Ellis Rowan, similarly had difficulty finding a market for her work during her lifetime. Following her death in 1923 Rowan’s collection of over 900 drawings was purchased for £5000 by the Australian Government. They are housed in the Pictures Collection of the National Library of Australia. http://www.nla.gov.au/exhibitions/ellisrowan/the_collection.html, accessed 31 July 2006.

here twice.⁴⁰ This lack of metropolitan approval would have sat heavily with Hector who may as a consequence have discounted her work for natural history publications.

Both Buller's *Birds* and Buchanan's *Grasses* were reproduced using the nineteenth-century technologies of lithography and chromolithography, which continued to rely upon the artist's hand for the execution of the original drawing.⁴¹ Hector was aware of contemporary developments in reproductive media and outlined the pros and cons of introducing photolithography to New Zealand in a memo in the early 1870s. Having viewed some 'beautiful specimens of the process' by Mr Noone 'not only of maps and plans but of engravings of pictures by some of the great masters', Hector nonetheless felt the quality of photolithography was inferior. He commented that while it was still being worked on as a process, it could not '... at present produce good results from photographs of natural objects or from drawings where the shading is continuous and not broken up into lines.'⁴² The Government did adopt the use of photolithography, heralded by the arrival of Herbert Deveril in Wellington in 1873 to take charge of the photolithographic department of Government Printing Office. Despite Hector's high regard for Deveril,⁴³ in 1878 he employed Mr F. C. Pierard 'to make woodcut illustrations for a series of popular works on the Natural History of the Colony for the use of schools and for the better illustration of scientific reports'.⁴⁴ He argued that woodcut reproduction would not only be cheaper than lithography, but 'that well cut wood blocks of natural history objects constitute a valuable property as they can be reproduced in successive works.'⁴⁵

The Colonial Museum therefore played an active role in supporting the production of certain illustrated reference works, indicating Hector's appreciation of the value of images to learning, particularly in relation to natural history. At the time these

⁴⁰ Hooker to Hector, 19 October 1886, TPA: MU147, box 6, item 152.

⁴¹ Although, in the case of Buchanan's work, he also used the technique of 'nature printing', whereby the pressed specimen itself was inked and impressed upon the surface of a lithographic stone. See the description of the process in Te Papa Curatorial Team, *Icons*, 133.

⁴² Hector to George Sission Cooper, Colonial Under-Secretary, 1871, TPA: MU465: vol. 2, p. 292

⁴³ Hector wrote a reference for Deveril for the Minister of Land and Works in Tasmania, stating that '...he possesses unrivalled skill in the art of photolithography and [that] I greatly regret that he had to leave the Government...' Hector to N. J. Brown, 27 December 1883, MU465, vol. 5, p. 154

⁴⁴ Hector to the Premier, 25 June 1878, TPA: MU465: vol. 4, p. 172. William Francis Gordon acted as Pierard's assistant. See examples of their work in Te Papa, *Engravings cut upon akeake wood*, 1874-5, woodcut, presented to the Dominion Museum by W. F. Gordon, 1930, accession no. 1992-0035-2030(a-f).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

were conceived as documenting and advancing the knowledge of the natural resources of New Zealand. Aside from this ‘in-house’ production of images, mostly linked to scientific projects, very few purchases of works of art were made between 1865 and 1903. One of the largest early acquisitions of images for the Colonial Museum was ‘56 photographs, mounted, of New Zealand Scenery by Mr Mundy’ in 1869.⁴⁶ (fig 4) The amount paid is not recorded, but this event is remarkable as it appears, judging by the entries in the Annual Reports, to be the only major *purchase* of a series of works of art during Hector’s directorship. Two other purchases are noted: a framed certificate from the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in 1887; and in 1901 a purchase of eight photographs of Maori carvings and five sheets of mounted photographs of the cave at Cape Runaway from E. Spencer in Auckland.⁴⁷

Daniel Louis Mundy was the earliest photographer to base his practice on making views of New Zealand, rather than relying on studio-based work such as portraiture. He travelled extensively throughout New Zealand from the late 1860s and advertised his prints in a ‘pre-publication subscription series’, a strategy William Main suggests was instrumental in attracting the patronage of individuals such as Hector.⁴⁸ Also, in the early years of the museum, a comprehensive series of works that would illustrate the country could be well put to use to decorate the museum. The fact that the first museums in the colonies were devoted to the process of recording and illustrating progress, as well as documenting the lie of the land, meant that photography inevitably formed an essential part of collections from their inception. Aside from this purchase of Mundy photographs, it appears that Hector preferred to put money towards projects that he saw as fulfilling his vision for a Scientific Museum, rather than works of art that seemed to him to belong more properly in a library or gallery setting. For example, in reply to Mr A. F. Hill’s offer to sell an oil painting of *Lambton Harbour, Wellington 1816* [sic], Hector wrote:

⁴⁶ See James Hector, ‘1868-69 – Fourth Annual Report on the Colonial Museum and Laboratory’, (Wellington: Government Printer, 1869).

⁴⁷ This is likely to be a misprint of C. Spencer. Charles Spencer was a photographer with whom Hector maintained a working relationship from the 1880s.

⁴⁸ William Main, ‘Mundy, Daniel Louis 1826/1827? - 1881’. *DNZB*, <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>, accessed 3 April 2008.

I regret that the Museum has no fund from which such a purchase could be made. One of the Public Libraries or the Art Society's Gallery would be the place for such a work of art...⁴⁹

On the whole, due to the problem of funds, the primary avenue by which the Museum enriched its collection of works of art was through gifts, bequests and deposits, which were listed separately in the Annual Reports of the Museum along with the name of the individual who donated or deposited them. This raises the need to consider the rationale that made the museum a site of deposit or donation for works of art. It was not unusual for museums to have wide-ranging collections as part of their educative scope, or to act as a collecting point for works of art in lieu of a national art gallery. For example, the British Museum in London had an extensive art collection, and the South Kensington Museum served as the first site of collection of 'national' art, with the acquisition of the Sheepshanks collection in 1858.⁵⁰ Therefore, in colonial Wellington, those who contributed to the collections of art could have done so to demonstrate their philanthropy, both towards the educational and civilising aims of the museum, and also in the hope that their contributions might form the nucleus of a national art gallery, were such an institution to be established. It is here that a consideration of the role of class in colonial New Zealand society is illuminating.

In the literature on New Zealand's history, the issue of 'national identity' has tended to dominate discussions. As Peter Gibbons writes, '...with the development of the nation regarded as the primary narrative, the colonial period becomes a precursor to the era of nationhood, and colonization, inaugurating the colonial period, becomes an episode in the early history of the nation'.⁵¹ The emphasis on national identity in New Zealand's cultural history has had several limiting effects. Firstly, the study of canonical works has been primarily informed by the belief that they are implicated in the formation of these identities, based on the assumption that 'the work of artists and writers offer special interpretative access to the national culture'.⁵² Gibbons argues for a consideration of such works (as well as a wider range of cultural artefacts) from a 'colonization

⁴⁹ Hector to the Agent-General, London, 25 June 1901, TPA: MU465, vol. 8, p. 507.

⁵⁰ Brandon Taylor, *Art for the Nation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 71-73.

⁵¹ Peter Gibbons, "Cultural Colonization and National Identity," *New Zealand Journal of History* 36, no. 1 (2002): 6.

⁵² Chris Hilliard, "Colonial Culture and the Province of Cultural History," *NZJH* 36, no. 1 (2002): 82.

perspective', by examining them in the frame of colonisation instead of 'nationhood/national identity/nationalism'.⁵³

A second major consequence is that the issue of class has been largely absent from New Zealand's historiography. As Jim McAloon writes, 'In the absence of acceptably clear expressions of class consciousness before 1890, colonial New Zealand was portrayed as a society in which class was largely irrelevant.'⁵⁴ Recent scholarship has refocused attention on this neglected aspect of New Zealand's social and cultural history. Of relevance here is Francis Lucien Reid's investigation into issues of class and professionalisation in relation to the New Zealand Institute (Institute), an organization set up by the passing of the New Zealand Institute Act of 1867 as a central body for the scientific societies in New Zealand's provincial centres.⁵⁵ The Institute took over management of the Museum in 1867 by Government Act, meaning that both institutions fell under Hector's management. Alongside his concerns to centralise New Zealand's scientific output in Wellington, the Institute strove to give science in New Zealand 'a firm colonial, as opposed to a provincial or inter-colonial/Australasian, focus.'⁵⁶ Reid argues that the Institute should be understood as a 'class-based and class-defining institution' as it tied together the 'diverse intellectual activities of New Zealand's colonial elite'.⁵⁷

Activities associated with such societies, as well as museums and galleries, have been theorized as participating in the formation of social elites. For example, Carol Duncan has emphasised the use of high culture by individuals to identify themselves as members of the United States elite to secure both 'their political base and social prestige.'⁵⁸ Kate Hill's recent analysis of municipal museums in England argues that these arenas were important for the 'formation of social identities and hierarchies' of those in a position of control – the councillors, staff and donors.⁵⁹ However, she points

⁵³ Gibbons, "Cultural Colonization and National Identity," 7.

⁵⁴ Jim McAloon, "Class in Colonial New Zealand: Towards a Historiographical Rehabilitation," *NZJH* 38, no. 1 (2004): 3.

⁵⁵ Francis Lucien Reid, "'The Democratic Politician Does Not Concern Himself with Science': Class and Professionalisation in the New Zealand Institute, 1867-1903," *Tuhinga* 16 (2005).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*: 21.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Carol Duncan, *Civilising Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 54.

⁵⁹ Kate Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums, 1850-1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 143.

out that in this context they were also important in the formation of middle-class identities as well as being a locus of middle-class leisure. Yet in New Zealand, an analysis of this aspect of cultural history has been downplayed in favour of a misguided investment in the myth that colonial New Zealand was a democratic and classless society.

In defence of Hector, who was largely dismissed by twentieth-century historians as an ‘autocratic empire-builder and the New Zealand Institute he managed as elitist and ineffectual’, Reid argues that this close alliance between the political sphere and the social elite was essential to the continued funding and support of the sciences in colonial New Zealand.⁶⁰ The Institute was essentially populist, a fact that invited critique from those who advocated for the professionalisation of science, but that also probably ensured its survival during the economic depression of the late nineteenth century. Thus the topics of discussion maintained a greater breadth of interest than might have been allowed were it a strictly professional scientific body. This is evidenced by T. B. Gillies’ 1873 address to the Auckland Institute, where he suggests:

...literary or artistic contributions are not foreign to the aims of our society, that, indeed, they would intend to increase the interest in it...For there is a solid value in popularity when allied to usefulness.⁶¹

Despite this encouragement, a study of the papers presented and published in the *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* reveals only one paper that specifically focuses on the ‘fine arts’.⁶² Hooker similarly stressed to Hector the importance of maintaining good public and popular relations to ensure continued support for science, expressing the strategic benefits a little more bluntly:

I am heartily glad you have started the Museum at Wellington; there is nothing like a Museum and gardens to screw money out of the public for science. Every shilling we have here has been through the popularity of the Gardens and the Museum, and diverted thence on pure science.⁶³

⁶⁰ Reid, “Class and Professionalisation in the New Zealand Institute,” 28-29.

⁶¹ T. B. Gillies, “Auckland Address,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* 6 (1873).

⁶² See James Edward Fitzgerald, “On the Nature of Art,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* 2 (1869).

⁶³ Hooker to Hector, 13 January 1866, Hobbs, “‘My Dear Hector’,” 65.

The support of the colonial elite was essential both to the Institute and, I would argue, to the Museum, and the act of offering works for the collections by donation or deposit was one example of the mutually beneficial relationship that existed between institution and individual: the Museum acquired works for its collection and the individual acquired public evidence and display of their cultural capital. Donations and deposits for the Museum were accepted by the Institute and acknowledged by receipt in the Institute's name. Key acquisitions were often showcased by Hector at the Wellington meetings of the Institute, which were written up in the local newspapers, thereby adding to the potential for public recognition.⁶⁴ The conditions of deposit, drafted by W. B. D. Mantell, similarly acknowledged the donor/depositor, and stated that: the articles remained the property of the depositor, absolving the curator of responsibility in case of damage; that the articles could be placed for exhibition as the curator saw fit, with a card with the word 'deposited' attached; and that the article could be removed subject to a fortnight's notice by the depositor or the museum.⁶⁵

The symbiotic relationship between the museum and the cultural elite can be observed by a brief consideration of the origins of works of art entering the museum collections from 1865 to 1903. Broadly speaking, the contributors to the collections can be broken into two groups: the producers who received endorsement of their own practice, either scientific or artistic, by having their work accepted into the museum; and those who gave works in their possession and might therefore be seen to be contributing from a sense of philanthropy.

As noted, a number of the contributors were surveyors. Although his contributions were not listed in the Annual Reports, William Cooper, surveyor on the West Coast of the South Island, communicated regularly with Hector and sent him watercolour sketches throughout the 1870s. (fig 5) Cooper was self-deprecating regarding his work, writing in 1875 of some sketches of Milford that he had forwarded to Hector:

⁶⁴ For example, in 1890, C. R. Carter donated a library of books relating to New Zealand to the New Zealand Institute which came under the care of the museum and later were transferred to the Turnbull Library. This generous gift to the public was noted in newspaper reports. See 'Wellington Philosophical Society: Annual Meeting', *Evening Post*, 20 February 1890, 2.

⁶⁵ W. B. D. Mantell, 'On the question of deposits in the Colonial (now Dominion) Museum', TPA: MU206, box 2, item 10

...they are regular abortions, the bad thing being that I cannot do drawings to order, the stimulus won't come when it is wanted and you have to suffer accordingly. However I send them as indications of the nature of the scenery and not as works of art at all.⁶⁶

Nonetheless, he continued to send works to Hector, both solicited and unsolicited. For example in 1902 he sent three copies of Rotomahana sketches taken in 1879, somewhat belatedly suggesting 'I thought they might be interesting to you in view of the catastrophe of '86'.⁶⁷ Likewise, Augustus Carl Ferdinand Koch of Napier, artist, draughtsman and surveyor, sent images to Hector, including five photographic views of Rotomahana in 1867, and a further seven in 1872.⁶⁸

The majority of images acquired permanently by the museum were photographs and the subject of these was primarily New Zealand scenery. By 1890, the museum collection consisted of some 300 photographic views by Daniel Louis Mundy, the Burton Brothers, John Nichol Crombie and Josiah Martin among others, many of which were gifts from the artists themselves. Hector acknowledged the donation of 20 mounted photographs of Otago scenery by the Burton Brothers in 1871, thanking them for this 'very interesting presentation'.⁶⁹ As suggested, such donations may have arisen from a desire to have oneself represented in the 'national' institution and by doing so, to increase one's profile and potential for future commissions. Alongside scenic wonders, transformation of the colonial landscape was documented and entered the iconography of many views of New Zealand, particularly those by Herbert Deveril of the government printing department. Deveril documented bridges, government buildings, hospitals, schools, roads, goldmines and mining as well as the natural wonders of Rotomahana and the Southern Lakes region.⁷⁰ (fig 6) Charles O'Neill, Civil Engineer, sent photographs of the Tramway he designed at Thames goldfield as well as the local government buildings,

⁶⁶ William Cooper to Hector, Westport, 10 February 1875, TPA: MU94, box 2, item 151.

⁶⁷ Cooper to Hector, 19 Dec 1902, Croxall, TPA: MU95, box 13, item 39.

⁶⁸ See 'Annual Report on the Colonial Museum', 1869-70 and 1870-71, (Wellington: Colonial Museum and Geological Survey Department). Augustus Koch appeared on the first roll of the Fine Arts Association of New Zealand in 1882, and was also on the first Council of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts. See Robin Kay and Tony Eden, *Portrait of a Century: The History of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts 1882-1982* (Wellington: Millwood Press, 1983), 19-25.

⁶⁹ Hector to Burton Brothers, 28 July 1871, TPA: MU465, vol. 2, p. 264

⁷⁰ In the 1877-78 Annual Report it was reported that 122 photographs of New Zealand scenery were received by the Museum from the Public Works Department. It is probable that these are those works by Deveril exhibited at the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1876. Deveril's five volumes of 'Views in New Zealand' were originally held in the Parliamentary Library but are now in the ATL, Photographic collections, PA1-f-173 through PA1-f-177.

indicating the progress of small communities. Hector also received a set of copies of photographs of the machinery at Thames goldfields from Henry Severn of Grahamstown, which were exhibited at the Vienna International Exhibition in 1873.⁷¹ These images would have complemented Hector's scientific interests, as well as those of the state, demonstrating the exploitation of the natural resources that his exploratory work enabled.

While photographs were by far the most commonly donated works of art, paintings and sculpture were also gifted to the collections and were more often presented by an owner than a maker. This indicates that there might have been a greater degree of prestige perceived to be attached to the donation of a painting compared with a photograph. The correspondence from the Hon. Henry Scotland to Hector in 1878 suggests this was the case. Scotland offered a 'very fine copy of Raffaelli's *Vergine detta del papeggio*' that he had purchased at the Museo Nazionale in Naples. He was willing to present it in the '... hope it would form the nucleus of a future gallery of pictures', adding that '...I really have no room for it in my own house and it would be too great a sacrifice to present it to so very primitive a museum as that at Taranaki.'⁷² I would suggest that it was less the 'primitive' nature of the Taranaki Museum, or the lack of room in his own home, than the degree of prestige invited by presentation of a work of art to the 'national' institution, as opposed to a provincial one, that motivated Scotland to present the painting to the Museum.

Other donations were less worldly in their aims and suggested that the donor saw the works as having a rightful place in the museum's collections due to their historical or local relevance. However, the information documenting these gifts is often minimal. In 1868 Charles Rooking Carter donated two views by Charles Heaphy, one of Wellington and one of Nelson, but there is no further detail of the exact sites or the medium, suggesting they were most likely lithographs made by Thomas Allom after Heaphy's drawings. The first painting to enter the museum was gifted by Sir William Fox in 1872. It is recorded that it was by Gustavus von Tempsky but no title is documented in the Annual Reports. Current records, however, identify this gift as *On General Chute's*

⁷¹ Severn to Hector, 24 June 1873, TPA: MU94, box 2, item 161

⁷² Hon Henry Scotland to Hector, 27 February 1878, TPA: MU94, box 3, item 353.

March, West Coast, c. 1866.⁷³ (fig 7) Von Tempsky had approached Hector in 1867 asking him to ‘push’ the paintings he was sending to Wellington for sale by raffle and which Robert Pharazyn was arranging to exhibit at the ‘Club’:

I don’t know how far your artistic conscience will permit you to act cordially in the pushing of mediocre pictures into your Wellington world, but I hope you will see at least a sufficient number of good points in them to permit your voice of friendship, for me, to overrule the niceties of your artistic acumen.⁷⁴

He also asked whether Hector could ‘...get one or two subjects painted for your museum – if you find my style creditable enough for this purpose’.⁷⁵ This insistence on Hector’s artistic acumen is interesting, as the Museum’s collections suggest Hector was not interested in the arts. However, it appears that it was his definition of his institution as a scientific museum – not a popular museum and not an art gallery – that rendered the role of ‘fine arts’ external to his professional concerns.⁷⁶

Paintings tended to enter the Museum as deposits, possibly due to the anticipation of a future national art gallery as the eventual destination. Prior to the establishment of any kind of local art society or gallery, the museum served as a temporary exhibition space and a number of watercolour landscapes were deposited in association with these events. In 1867 W. T. L. Travers deposited seven watercolour paintings by John Gully of scenes in the South Island, and Charles Decimus Barraud deposited seven watercolour paintings in 1867 followed by a further 16 in 1868, untitled, but presumably similarly scenic in subject.⁷⁷ The first donation of portraits to the Museum was made by Mr G. R. Stephenson of London in 1867. These consisted of individual ‘photograph in oil’ portraits of George, Robert and G. R. Stephenson and two Parian busts of the Stephensons, father and son, by Wyon. The Stephensons were instrumental in developing the railroads in England; George invented the steam engine and Robert was a civil engineer who

⁷³ Te Papa wall label, *Made in New Zealand*, May 2006.

⁷⁴ Von Tempsky to Hector, 29 June 1867, TPA: MU94, box 1, item 404

⁷⁵ Ibid. For a more detailed explication of von Tempsky’s letter to Hector, see Leonard Bell, “A Letter from Von Tempsky,” *Art New Zealand* Spring, no. 21 (1981). See also Bell’s account of von Tempsky in Bell’s *Colonial Constructs: European Images of Maori 1840-1914* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1992).

⁷⁶ In subsequent chapters I explore Hector’s involvement in New Zealand’s embryonic art world and exhibitions, revealing that his participation in this sphere fulfilled the needs of his *social* rather than *professional* world.

⁷⁷ See ‘Annual Report on the Colonial Museum’, 1867-68 and 1868-69, (Wellington: Colonial Museum and Geological Survey Department).

designed and implemented many of the major routes. Such a donation represents the strong desire for role-models in the new colony, for these individuals stood for all that the new colony did – innovation and progress. Looking to Home for role-models and leaders was quickly supplanted by a desire to seek such figures within New Zealand, and from 1880 on, all the paintings deposited in the Museum were portraits of prominent individuals who had been or were still directly involved in New Zealand's history. These included: the 'Molesworth' portrait, by C. Landseer, deposited by Sir W. Fitzherbert in 1881; an oil painting depicting Sir David Monro, deposited by C. Monro in 1883; a lithographic portrait of Admiral Stokes, deposited by himself in 1883; and two oil portraits by Henry Moreland Gore of John Buchanan and Walter Baldock D. Mantell deposited by the artist in 1886.

The collection of these portraits within the museum represents on one hand the beginnings of a nationalist impulse towards amassing official portraits of notable individuals, prominent either in the scientific, political or contemporary context. On the other, they embody the self-definition of social elites in the public sphere. While the Admiral is the 'odd man out' in the above collection of portraits, both by medium and by subject, he was nonetheless an important figure in the physical mapping of New Zealand, as the captain of the *Acheron* which made the first hydrographical survey of the coast in 1849-50. The others are linked by their involvement in New Zealand politics or scientific bodies – Monro, Mantell and Buchanan were all founding members of the Institute – as well as their involvement with the Museum.

The Government also contributed to this body of works: the Colonial Secretary deposited William Beetham's portrait of *Dr Isaac Featherston and the Te Atiawa Chiefs (Hon Wi Tako Ngatata MLC and Honiana Te Puni)*, 1857-58 in the Museum in 1881 (fig 8), the native minister deposited a portrait by Gottfried Lindauer of *Te Manihera Rangitaka-i-waho*, 1880 (Te Papa: reference 1992-0035-1687) and the Minister of Justice deposited a portrait of Henry St. Hill, former magistrate, in 1888. The result, had all the works been placed on display, would have amounted to an early portrait gallery of prominent colonial figures. The presentation of the Lindauer portrait, however, represents something other than a class or status relationship being played out and instead carries a political message. The portrait was presented by Ropata Manihera, son of Te Manihera

Rangi-taka-i-waho, at the conclusion of his father's tangi. It was to be forwarded to John Ballance, through Mr E. S. Maunsell, with an 'assurance of the continued loyalty to the Queen of England and the Government of New Zealand of the Wairarapa Maoris'.⁷⁸ In this way the gifting of the portrait acted as a kind of political contract between Maori and Pakeha.

Paintings may also have entered the Museum as deposits due to an awareness of the limitations of display space in the Museum as well as its less-than-ideal conditions. Space limitations plagued successive directors, and in 1870 it led Hector to recommend the transfer of the Monrad collection of engravings by Old Masters to the General Assembly Library, stating '...I find that the Monrad engravings cannot be shown in a satisfactory manner in the Museum in the present limited space...'.⁷⁹ He was not advocating a banishment of the works from the public sphere, but insisted they should be transferred on the '... understanding that they are found in a cabinet form for reference.'⁸⁰ Even if there had been space for adequate display of works of art, the physical conditions in the Museum were far from satisfactory. For example, in 1888 Gore inquired on behalf of Captain Gilbert Mair whether the Museum would accept two large oil paintings on deposit.⁸¹ Mantell replied that if Captain Mair was not deterred by the risk of exposure of the portraits 'to "dry rot" introduced by a former picture...we shall be most happy to receive the deposit'.⁸² These two paintings were by Mair's wife, Eleanor Catherine Sperrey, and were described as 'life sized portraits of Sir Wm Fitzherbert and of Mr Carpenter of Wellington'.⁸³

Sperrey's portrait of *Sir William Fitzherbert* c.1880s (Te Papa: 1992-0035-797) remains in the Museum (although it bears witness to the deleterious effects of long term storage), as do the Lindauer and Beetham portraits, along with those of Buchanan by Gore (Te Papa: 1992-0035-1685), but many of the deposits were withdrawn. Some have not survived the test of time: the portrait of Henry St Hill was destroyed in 1965, the

⁷⁸ T. W. Lewis to Hector, 22 June 1885, TPA: MU2, box 11, item 4.

⁷⁹ Hector to the Under Colonial Secretary, 10 July 1870, TPA: MU465, vol. 2, p. 170.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Gore to Mantell, 26 October 1888, TPA: MU94, box 6, item 638.

⁸² Mantell to Gore, 27 October 1888, Ibid.

⁸³ Gore to Mantell, 26 October 1888, Ibid. For a description of Sperrey's practice see Vial, Jane. 'Sperrey, Eleanor Catherine 1862 – 1893'. *DNZB*, <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>, accessed April 2007. The current whereabouts of Carpenter's portrait is unknown.

annotation in the Fine Arts Register of the Museum noting that it was ‘found in very bad condition, oil paint flaked away, just chin, mouth, body and hand remain’.⁸⁴ Some can be located in other collections – Gore’s portrait of Mantell is in the Turnbull and there is a version of the lithograph of Admiral Stokes in the Hocken Library. Their withdrawal and redistribution, along with the nature of the art acquired by the museum during Hector’s directorship outlined above, reflects the inadequacies as well as the ambivalent attitude towards the appropriateness of the museum as a repository of art. It also reflects the greater social and political situation of which the museum was part. The relationship of the museum to the state necessarily brings us back to Hector’s early vision of the institution, which described its primary function as a ‘Scientific Museum...to facilitate the classification and comparison of the specimens collected in different localities during the progress of the Survey’. The support of the state depended on the museum’s ability to assist with developing resources which could be exploited to advance the economic growth of the colony.⁸⁵ Thus its focus was on works of art, primarily photographs, that illustrated the country and its transformation through the processes of colonisation, and not ‘art for art’s sake’. This focus was, however, to shift in the early years of the twentieth century, and is manifest in the ambitions of the new Director from December 1903, Augustus Hamilton.

A National Maori Museum

In 1902 the Native Minister, James Carroll, tabled a paper in Parliament titled ‘The Maori Antiquities Act, 1901’.⁸⁶ The Act, authored by S. Percy Smith and Augustus Hamilton, related to the proposed establishment of a National Maori Museum and to the restriction on the removal of Maori ‘antiquities’ from the country. The question of a Maori museum was raised several times in Parliamentary debates the following year, as

⁸⁴ Fine Arts Register, Dominion Museum, Te Papa, n.p.

⁸⁵ Alan Smith considers that New Zealand’s early national institutions were created as ‘agencies of government for pragmatic reasons ... rather than primarily for the embodiment of national identity’. See Alan Smith, “The State and National Identity: The Role of Cultural Institutions in Fostering a Distinctive New Zealand National Identity” (Research paper, MA, Victoria University of Wellington, 1992), 26.

⁸⁶ ‘The Maori Antiquities Act, 1901’, *AJHR*, G – 8, 1902:1-4

was the question of who would fill the post of Director of the Colonial Museum, with Augustus Hamilton emerging as a clear favourite who could address both concerns:

(The Hon Mr. Carroll)...Pending the appointment of a suitable and capable man as curator, who could take the whole matter in hand _____

Mr T. Mackenzie _____ Mr Hamilton

The Honourable Mr. Carroll said he would like to see that gentleman put in the position and, although the appointment was under the control of his colleague the Honourable Mr McGowan, he hoped the gentleman referred to would be the one entrusted with the work...⁸⁷

Hamilton's was a strategic appointment and one that markedly shifted the evolution of the collections. (fig 9) In his first *Bulletin*, published in 1906, Hamilton noted that his appointment marked the ending of the close association of the three institutions that had 'grown up together' under Hector's control: the Geological Survey, the New Zealand Institute and the Museum.⁸⁸ The Institute became an independent organisation by Parliamentary Act in 1903, the Geological Survey, along with the collections of minerals and fossils and the laboratory, remained under the Mines Department, and the Colonial Museum was placed as a department under the Colonial Secretary. Hamilton's *Bulletin* was the equivalent of Hector's 1866 letter and memorandum, in which he summarised the current state of collections and publication histories of the various departments that had been associated with the Museum, and outlined the direction he saw the Museum taking under his leadership.

Hamilton was directed by the Government to pay 'special attention to the collection of a representative series of specimens of Maori art and workmanship', following the parliamentary discussions regarding the Maori Antiquities legislation and the concern to preserve and record 'historical facts relating to the Maori race'.⁸⁹ Hamilton and S. Percy Smith had tabled a response to the Maori Antiquities Act recommending the establishment of a National Maori Museum in Wellington.⁹⁰ This ambition underlay Hamilton's ambitions as director, and he immediately set about

⁸⁷ Wednesday 29 July 1903, *NZPD*, Vol CXXIV, 28 July – 21 August 1903: 63.

⁸⁸ Augustus Hamilton, "Colonial Museum," in *Bulletin* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1906), 4.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁹⁰ S. Percy Smith and Augustus Hamilton, "The Maori Antiquities Act, 1901 (Suggestions, Correspondence, Etc. In Connection with)," *AJHR* G-8 (1902). Wellington newspapers reported positively on the desire to retain Maori work in New Zealand and provide accommodation for it. See 'Maori Art Treasures', *Evening Post*, 23 July 1901, p. 4. Auckland was, however, more critical of the desire to locate a National Maori Museum in Wellington. See *Evening Post*, 7 October 1901, p. 5.

acquiring a ‘representative series’ by purchasing several private collections of Maori artefacts, including the Hill collection, the Butterworth collection and the Hammond collection. In tandem with building the museum collection of artefacts, Hamilton also sought to acquire works by artists such as George French Angas, Charles Frederick Goldie, Gottfried Lindauer, Gordon Horatio Robley and Wilhelm Dittmer, that both described and recorded facts about the Maori.

In tracing his acquisition of such works, light is shed on Hector’s common annotation on letters offering works of art for purchase – ‘no fund available’ – and also on the fact that only one purchase of a work of art (Mundy’s series of photographs) was made during Hector’s directorship. What becomes evident early in Hamilton’s directorship is that the factor limiting purchases was not so much a *lack* of funds, but the *nature* of the objects on which funds were able to be spent. This was made explicit when Hamilton arranged to purchase two paintings by Wilhelm Dittmer, *Revenged* and *Defiance*, 1904 (Te Papa). The Superintendent of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts had trouble honouring the forwarded voucher for £59.14.1 as the vote proposed to be taken, ‘Purchase of specimens for the Museum’, would not cover the purchase of the paintings.⁹¹ In order for the payment to be made the wording on the voucher had to be altered to read ‘Purchase of specimens, *paintings etc.*, for museum’ (my italics).⁹²

Six further paintings were purchased from Dittmer for the Museum collection, a purchase that provides an opportunity to speculate on Hamilton’s appreciation of the Maori worldview, particularly in respect accorded portraits in Maori society. The paintings in question were portraits of leading people of the Tokaanu district, including the paramount chief te Heuheu Tukino V, Tūreiti, titled *Mana* (Te Papa: 1992-0035-1252) and were based on studies Dittmer had made in that region. (fig 10) On his return to Wellington, when he worked in a studio in the Museum, these paintings were exhibited for sale at the McGregor Wright gallery. Hoping to secure the paintings for the Museum, Hamilton wrote to the Colonial Secretary that he had just been informed by te Heuheu that:

⁹¹ Superintendent of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts to Hamilton, 2 September 1904, TPA: MU158, folder 1, item 10.

⁹² Hamilton, 29 September 1904, TPA: MU158, folder 1, item 10.

...when these people sat for their portraits for Mr Dittmer they did not understand that he would offer them for public sale to anybody. They understood that they were to be for the Museum or some public institution. I am informed that they are very much displeased at the thought of the pictures passing into unknown hands. There are six pictures that Te Heuheu wishes to save and the artist has consented to sell them for a relatively small sum of £100. Te Heuheu desires that the government should at once secure these pictures for the Museum or other Departments.⁹³

Further, he noted that the government should agree to this arrangement, as te Heuheu had presented six 'large and valuable carvings to the National Maori Museum' when he had visited Tokaano.⁹⁴ Through the purchase a fair exchange could be had: six paintings for six carvings. This could also be seen to respect the feelings of te Heuheu and other Maori towards the nature of portraiture, whereby a likeness was not just a representation of an individual but an embodiment of that person or ancestor who could be addressed as such. The thought of such taonga passing into unknown hands on the open market was for many Maori, as Blackley observes, an 'obscenity'.⁹⁵ On a more cynical note, one wonders whether a degree of complicity could have existed between Hamilton and Dittmer in negotiating this purchase, as it served both their interests very well: Hamilton acquired portraits of Maori for the Museum and the artist received payment for his works.

Hamilton's efforts to secure paintings by Goldie were less successful. Only one week after writing on behalf of te Heuheu, he began petitioning the Colonial Secretary for the government's approval to begin negotiations with Goldie to purchase or commission paintings of old Maori chiefs for the National Maori Museum. According to Hamilton there was little doubt '...from any technical point of view that Mr Goldie paints the best pictures of this particular kind ever painted in the colony'.⁹⁶ Goldie offered either original paintings (with copyright) for £200, or copies 'which will be facsimiles of the originals and which for your purpose if I may suggest will be quite as good as the original', for £80.⁹⁷ 'No action' was taken by Cabinet to purchase any Goldie works, a

⁹³ Hamilton to the Colonial Secretary, 11 August 1905, TPA: MU158, folder 1, item 10

⁹⁴ Ibid. The presentation of the carvings by te Heuheu was acknowledged in Hamilton, "Colonial Museum," 20. In *Icons*, the *Portrait of Te Heuheu Tukino* is reproduced dated c. 1900 and records that its acquisition history is unknown. See Te Papa Curatorial Team, *Icons*, 11.

⁹⁵ Roger Blackley, "Surviving Goldie" (paper presented at the Art Association of Australia and New Zealand Conference, Pre/dictions: the role of art at the end of the millenium, Victoria University of Wellington, 1999), 138.

⁹⁶ Hamilton to the Colonial Secretary, 18 August 1905, TPA: MU152, folder 5, item 68

⁹⁷ Goldie to Hamilton, 20 February 1906, Ibid.

decision that was repeated on a subsequent recommendation by Hamilton in 1910.⁹⁸ Blackley suggests that may have been the result of ‘lukewarm support from other Maori placed highly in Government’, namely Sir James Carroll and Sir Apirana Ngata.⁹⁹ The asking price, £200 for one painting, when six portraits had been acquired from Dittmer for half the price, may also have influenced the government’s decision. Price was also a significant factor in the failure of the Museum to secure works by Lindauer from the Henry Partridge collection. In 1913, Hamilton wrote that:

It would indeed be a great pity if this gallery of paintings were lost to the people of New Zealand. They, of course, are not pictures of the very highest art, but they are extremely faithful and in many cases the only representations of celebrated chiefs and men of importance in New Zealand history.¹⁰⁰

While he strongly advocated the purchase of the paintings, Hamilton acknowledged that the price was ‘so high as to be prohibitory’, and that ‘unless a lower price could be named I am afraid it would be no use to approach the owner Mr Partridge’.¹⁰¹

Hamilton was equally unsuccessful in gaining government support for the purchase of preserved heads from Major General Robley. However, he did make a large purchase of 70 watercolours from Robley in 1905, mediated by T. E. Donne, then Superintendent of the Tourist Bureau in London.¹⁰² Hamilton felt these sketches were ‘... of special interest from a Maori point of view and have the advantage of being drawn on the spot about 45 years ago’.¹⁰³ Two drawings by Robley were later purchased in 1909 from Robert Blair for £5 each, *Giving up arms at Tauranga* and *Beach at Maketu Pa*, and Robley regularly approached the Museum personally or through friends, such as Horace Fildes and William Francis Gordon, to offer his works for sale. Further purchases were made – of six drawings in 1914 and drawings of moko apparently not included in

⁹⁸ Hamilton to the Minister for the Interior, 1 November 1910, TPA: MU152, folder 5, item 68

⁹⁹ Roger Blackley, *Goldie* (Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery in association with David Bateman, 1997), 46.

¹⁰⁰ Hamilton to Under-Secretary, Internal Affairs, 6 January 1913, TPA: MU95, box 16, item 50.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. The price was not noted in Hamilton’s letter but it is likely it was in the range of the amount that was negotiated with the Auckland Art Gallery, £10 000. The Partridge collection was ultimately gifted to the Auckland Art Gallery in 1915, on the proviso that the people of Auckland raise £10 000 for the Belgian relief fund. This was achieved in several weeks. See the Auckland Art gallery website, www.aucklandartgallery.govt.nz, as well as the account of the Partridge collection in Bell, *Colonial Constructs: European Images of Maori 1840-1914*.

¹⁰² Hamilton to Donne, 12 October 1905, TPA: MU14, folder 1, item 7. Hamilton recorded that £50 was paid for 73 sketches, which differs from the published number of 70 in Bulletin 1.

¹⁰³ Hamilton to the Colonial Secretary, 4 October 1905, TPA: MU95, folder 14, item 60.

Robley's book in 1916 – but thereafter, caution was advocated in relation to Robley's offers. Elsdon Best warned in response to an offer of 40 'unique' drawings for £20 that, 'It is rumoured that General Robley has a habit of reproducing his own sketches several times, hence it will be necessary to ascertain whether or not we already have any of the series offered'.¹⁰⁴

As well as making strategic purchases of artefacts from collectors and works of art from artists themselves, Hamilton was very effective in drawing on the internal relations in government to enhance the museum's collections. For example, in 1909 he asked Donne whether the oil painting of the Maori chiefs Hongi and Waikato as well as the 'two smaller heads of Maori', then in the Tourist Bureau, could be 'deposited in the National Maori Museum'.¹⁰⁵ These were presumably the portraits by James Barry in the possession of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) that had come to Donne's attention in 1905, when he was visiting London in connection with the New Zealand International Exhibition of 1906-7. On his return to New Zealand, Donne wrote to the CMS asking whether they were prepared to sell the three paintings which, he emphasised, were of 'historical interest ... as artistically they are not of special value'.¹⁰⁶ The CMS exceeded expectations by gifting the paintings to the New Zealand Government on the understanding that they were to be exhibited in one of the public buildings of the colony and that 'a suitable note be attached to them as being the gift of the Church Missionary Society to the Colony, in which its mission work has so long been carried on'.¹⁰⁷ Donne commented in 1907 that the three paintings, *The Reverend Thomas Kendall and the Maori chiefs Hongi and Waikato*, 1820 (ATL: G-618) (fig 11), *Teeterree, a New Zealand chief*, 1818 (ATL: G-626) and *Tooi, a New Zealand chief*, 1818 (ATL: G-608), would be hung in the new Museum once it was built. In the meantime they were hung in the Tourist and Health Resorts offices; a placement that he felt was neglecting the conditions on which the gift was made. In response to Donne's support of Hamilton's request, the Minister of the Tourist and Health Resorts replied that the paintings 'were

¹⁰⁴ Elsdon Best, 15 July 1920, TPA: MU14, folder 1, item 7.

¹⁰⁵ Hamilton to Donne, 22 March 1909, TPA: MU152, box 6.

¹⁰⁶ Donne to Secretary, CMS, London, 27 October 1905, ANZ: Tourist and Health Department files (TO), series 1: 8/8: Barry's painting of Hongi and Waikato.

¹⁰⁷ Secretary, CMS to Donne, 15 June 1906, Ibid.

safer in Tourist Office than in Old Museum'.¹⁰⁸ Ironically, while being moved to the safe of room no. 3 for storage, one of the paintings, *Teeterree*, was badly damaged.¹⁰⁹ Eventually, it seems that the two smaller portraits were deposited in the Museum, as a memo from James McDonald, Acting Director of the Museum on Hamilton's death, requested approval to have them, along with the portrait of Francis Alexander Molesworth, consigned to W. F. Colley, a visiting English picture restorer. McDonald stated that 'cleaning, restoring and re-varnishing are urgently needed', particularly due to the fact that these '...canvases are of historical interest to the Dominion'.¹¹⁰

The paintings, which are currently housed in the Library, re-entered institutional consciousness in the 1930s through Horace Fildes, who provided information for the editor of *Marsden's Lieutenants* concerning the presentation of these paintings to the New Zealand Government by the CMS in 1906.¹¹¹ Fildes also identified the contemporary location of the group portrait:

Some two years ago, as it was being advised in official publications that the group portrait was still in London, the writer made enquiries which resulted in its being located in the office of the General Manager of the Department of Industries and Commerce, Tourist and Publicity, Wellington.¹¹²

In 1936, a descendant of the Reverend T. Kendall, T. Kendall Williams, corresponded with Walter Reginald Brook Oliver, director of the Dominion Museum, suggesting he should try to secure the group portrait for the new Museum.¹¹³ Oliver did track down the painting in the office of the Assistant General Manager of the Tourist and Publicity Department, but could not gain permission for the painting to be removed to the Museum, settling instead for a photographic enlargement for display with the 'other historical pictures in the Museum'.¹¹⁴ According to the Library database, the group portrait remained in the Tourist and Publicity Department 'until the 1930s' when a new

¹⁰⁸ Annotation on Donne to Minister of Tourist and Health Resorts, 22 April 1909, ANZ: TO, series 1: 8/8: Barry's painting of Hongi and Waikato.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ MacDonald to Under-Secretary, DIA, 25 November 1913, TPA: MU14, folder 1, item 6

¹¹¹ See Appendix A in John Rawson Elder, ed. *Marsden's Lieutenants* (Dunedin: Coulls Somerville Wilkie, 1934), 261.

¹¹² Taylor to Under-Secretary, 1 February 1949, ANZ: Internal Affairs files (IA), Series 1: 124/118: Enquiry re paintings of Hongi, Titore and Tuhi [sic].

¹¹³ T. Kendall Williams to Oliver, 11 August 1936, TPA: MU2, box 11, item 4.

¹¹⁴ Oliver to Williams, 26 August 1936, Ibid.

director ‘decided the library was a more appropriate home’.¹¹⁵ Papers in Archives New Zealand reveal, however, that it was active soliciting by Clyde Taylor, the Turnbull Librarian, that lead to the painting being deposited in the Turnbull. In 1949 Taylor wrote to the Under-Secretary quoting from Fildes’ Appendix in *Marsden’s Lieutenants*. He suggested that since the two other pictures were already in the Turnbull, ‘an effort should be made to have this one added to the others’.¹¹⁶ The General Manager of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts conceded and, following the completion of necessary repair work, the painting was dispatched to the Turnbull.¹¹⁷ The movements of these paintings between the state collections emphasises the regular flow of works of art between departments as well as the absence of strict boundaries of ownership. The Library assumes provenance of the two smaller portraits is via Donne in the 1920s, but records indicate they were the property of the state, not Donne himself.¹¹⁸

As well as attempting to draw on local resources, Hamilton also secured relations with individuals who could act as agents for overseas purchases. Donne left the Tourist Bureau in 1909 and had a subsequent career in London working for New Zealand’s diplomatic representatives. From this time he was also approved to act as a purchase agent for the Museum with £50 to be made available to him for this purpose from the High Commissioner.¹¹⁹ Hamilton’s process of acquiring material relating to Maori therefore parallels Hector’s in relation to Geology in its desire to build up a ‘typical’ and ‘representative’ collection using local and global resources to do so. Their difference in focus resulted from their personal interests, as well as their relationship to, and the perceived ‘usefulness’ of the Museum to the state. While the development of the collections and the research undertaken during Hector’s directorship was associated with the investigation into and exploitation of natural resources, Hamilton’s was concerned with preserving aspects of Maori culture. This occurred contemporaneously with increased attention being paid to Maori affairs in Parliament: the Maori Lands Administration Act and the Maori Council Act were both passed in 1900, and throughout

¹¹⁵ See information on Tapuhi for reference number: G-618.

¹¹⁶ Ibid

¹¹⁷ General Manager Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, to Under-Secretary, 25 February 1949, ANZ: IA, Series 1: 124/118: Enquiry re paintings of Hongi, Titore and Tuhi

¹¹⁸ See the provenance records for the paintings in the Turnbull database, Tapuhi.

¹¹⁹ Hamilton to Donne, 14 June 1909, TPA: MU152, box 3, item 91.

the early part of the twentieth century efforts were being made to further the successful assimilation of Maori into 'civilisation'. The irony was that this was occurring in tandem with the erroneous belief that Maori were a dying race, and that their history needed to be conserved to prevent the loss of knowledge. As James Belich writes, Maori '... culture and history was being collected, laundered and embalmed by Pakeha savants to prepare it for use in posthumously providing New Zealand with a rich past, runes and ruins', but in the middle of this the 'mummy woke up'.¹²⁰ This highlighted the reality that such activities served Pakeha interests over Maori and were being conducted more for ethnological than for social or political reasons.

While this interest meant that the art collections of the museum developed greatly in respect to items depicting or relating to Maori, there were few acquisitions or donations made of non-Maori works of art. This stems from the fact that in 1905 the Academy secured from the Premier, Richard Seddon, an immediate subsidy of £500 pounds on a pound for pound basis to develop a permanent collection that would form the basis of a free public art gallery in Wellington.¹²¹ Subsequently the Academy, as the caretaker of the collection, may have seemed the more logical place for deposits of works of art rather than the museum. Further, the absence of published yearly reports during Hamilton's directorship makes tracking acquisitions problematic. He maintained registers of acquisitions, including specific departmental registers, but these were sporadically kept, and information relating to items was often documented retrospectively, rather than at the time of entry into the collections.¹²² Yet, as was the case of Hector, Hamilton was not uninterested in art, but had quite specific aims for the Museum collections. He did advocate on behalf of the future art gallery when opportunity arose, successfully negotiating the purchase of a book of old master

¹²⁰ James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Auckland: Penguin Press, 2001), 124.

¹²¹ Kay and Eden, *Portrait of a Century*, 49.

¹²² As well as a General Register, Hamilton initiated Fine Arts, Maori, History and Natural Science registers. Tracing acquisitions of works of art is made more difficult by the fact that they were often entered in the register to which Hamilton saw them as most relevant. The Robley sketches, for example, were entered in the Maori register, but transferred to the Fine Arts register in the 1960s.

engravings in 1910,¹²³ and he was instrumental in ensuring that works of art received conservation attention by organising, for example, the restoration in 1912 of Beetham's Featherston portrait as well as other oil paintings in the museum's collections.

Hamilton successfully strove to secure a representative Maori collection, but by the time of his death in 1913, the National Maori Museum he envisioned had not been realised. Further, in a letter to Donne in 1911, Hamilton complained that the display and development of collections continued to be hampered by inadequate storage and exhibiting facilities:

...we keep getting fresh things in and I could get plenty more if it were not that I discourage people as it is no use getting things that we cannot exhibit properly.¹²⁴

That the state of the collections was interdependent upon the potential for adequate display was highly apparent to Hamilton, who worked hard at innovative exhibiting strategies which are explored in subsequent chapters. This state of affairs, with the director bemoaning the lack of sufficient facilities for storage, exhibition, staff and research, was neither a new complaint, nor was it fast becoming an old one.

The quest for a Past

James Allan Thomson, Hamilton's successor, made clear his determination to develop a 'definite plan' for the Dominion Museum:¹²⁵

The general character of a museum should be clearly determined at its inception. The specialties or departments of any museum may be few or many, but it is important that its plan should be positively defined and limited, since lack of purpose museum-work leads in a most conspicuous way to a waste of effort and to partial or complete failure.¹²⁶

¹²³ See TPA: MU152 box 6, item 33 relating to the purchase of a book of engravings. See Mathew Norman's thesis for a consideration of this purchase as well as the trials and tribulations of the Monrad Collection in its travels between various state institutions. Mathew Norman, "The Print Collection of Bishop Monrad (1811-1887)" (MA in Art History, Victoria University of Wellington, 2006).

¹²⁴ Hamilton to Donne, 6 July 1911, TPA: MU152, folder 7, item 107.

¹²⁵ Hamilton had argued for a name change for the Museum in response to New Zealand's new status as a Dominion in 1907. Hamilton to Colonial Secretary, 27 September 1907, TPA: MU152, folder 2, item 1.

¹²⁶ James Allan Thomson, "Dominion Museum: Annual Report for the Year Ended 31st March 1915," *AJHR* H-33 (1915): 1.

Thomson's 'manifesto', published as part of the 1915 Annual Report, draws heavily on George Brown Goode's writing, particularly 'The Principles of Museum Administration' of 1895.¹²⁷ The structure of Thomson's report is based on Goode's and follows his rationale and argument closely, differing only to provide appropriate reflections on the local context. As with Hector and Hamilton, this first report provided Thomson with the opportunity to speak boldly of his ambitions for the Museum. If Hamilton's career was characterized by his commitment to securing a representative collection of Maori products, and Hector's of the natural resources, Thomson sought to address the museum collections as a whole and to initiate an overall strategy for enhancing the Museum so it might better reflect its national title.

Thomson was the inheritor of the new governmental organization of the Museum, whereby the Museum came under the control of a Board of Science and Art (Board), by Parliamentary Act of 1913.¹²⁸ However, by the time of Thomson's appointment in 1914, the Board, owing to the intervention of war, had not yet met. The Act decided that a Dominion Art Gallery and Dominion Scientific, Art and Historical Library were to be established in association with the Museum and that all would come under the control of the Board. Consequently, the scope of the collections overseen by the Museum broadened, and this was acknowledged by Thomson in his report, which, for the first time in such a publication, included a discussion of the fine arts as a separate category.

When outlining the possible avenues of acquisition, Thomson noted that collections 'may be obtained through gift, by collecting and exploration, by exchange, by purchase, by construction, and temporarily through deposit or loan'.¹²⁹ Thomson identified, as Hamilton had, that until the museum was housed in more secure or fireproof premises, there were several private collections that were being withheld.¹³⁰ He was also

¹²⁷ This paper was published as part of the Annual Report of the Museums Association in 1895 and was also reprinted as a separate publication in the same year. See George Brown Goode, *On the Principles of Museum Administration* (New York: Coultas & Volans, 1895). A well-thumbed copy is held in Te Aka Matua, Te Papa's research library.

¹²⁸ 'Science and Art Act', 1913, No. 22, *New Zealand Statutes*, Wellington: Government Printer, 117

¹²⁹ Thomson, 'Dominion Museum: Annual Report for the year ended 31st March 1915', *AJHR*, H – 33:7

¹³⁰ A break-in at the museum in 1903 resulting in the theft of valuable Maori 'curios' would have undermined public confidence in the safety of the museum as a site for their collections. See A. H. Gore to Under Secretary, Mines Department, 7 Sept 1903, TPA: MU465 vol. 9, p. 96. Others were aware of the flammable nature of the Museum building. For example, Lina Kettle, descendant of von Tempsky, wrote to Alexander Turnbull asking 'can you tell me if they have moved the Wellington Museum yet, as I do not

adamant that collections be accepted on the Museum's conditions and not those of the donor, especially when of a less important nature.¹³¹ Thomson concluded that most acquisitions could be acquired by gift, active exploration (particularly natural history specimens) and systems of exchange, and that the acquisition of specimens by purchase 'should be used chiefly for filling gaps in series obtained in other ways'.¹³² In 1919, for example, he advocated the purchase of an album of 70 photographic portraits of Maori collected by Dr Stewart in the 1860s. Although the Museum had almost half of them already, he argued:

...it would probably cost quite as much to collect them separately, and the duplicates could be used for exchange with private collectors in New Zealand. So far as I know this is the only museum making such a collection, and it is desirable that it should be as complete as possible.¹³³

This indicates Thomson's strategic approach, both towards enhancing the museum's exchange collateral and building on existing strengths in the museum's collections. The purchase of two collections similarly augmented the museum's natural history reference material: Sarah Featon's 134 original drawings that formed the basis of her book, *Art Album of New Zealand Flora*, for £150 in 1919¹³⁴ (fig 12); and F. E. Clarke's drawings of fishes for £60 from Mrs Clarke in 1921 (fig 13).¹³⁵ Thomson, like Hamilton, also drew on others to develop the collections, instigating a collection of photographs, models and paintings of boats, ships and yachts from 1915 with the assistance of P. M. Freyberg, who located and negotiated many of the donations and

want to send them my father's scabbard or the picture I promised unless they will be in safe keeping.' Lina Kettle to Alexander Turnbull, 17 June 1914, ATL: MS-Papers-0057-51

¹³¹ This had been addressed in the terms of acceptance of deposits laid down by the Institute, but problems had arisen during Hamilton's directorship when a collection of shells was donated to the Museum. The terms associated with the donation, demanding that it be kept in a separate case, and labelled accordingly, affronted Hamilton, who wrote that '... all museum authorities are agreed that donations with this condition should only be accepted in very special circumstances and there are a good many reasons for this decision'. See Hamilton to Internal Affairs, 7 August 1911, TPA: MU152, folder 8, item 10.

¹³² Thomson, 'Dominion Museum: Annual Report for the year ended 31st March 1915', *AJHR*, H – 33:13

¹³³ Thomson to Under-secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, 11 November 1919, TPA: MU1, box 5, item 12

¹³⁴ For correspondence relating to the purchase of 134 original plates/watercolour drawings illustrating 307 specimens see TPA: MU1, folder 5, item 15

¹³⁵ Clarke had made the drawings in the late nineteenth century, and they had remained in the Museum. They were officially purchased for £60 from Mrs Clarke in 1921. See TPA: MU14, box 5, item 2.

purchases.¹³⁶ Thomson acknowledged that in many cases purchase was ‘the only possible way of acquiring what is desired, particularly in the case of rare historical documents or works of art’. However, he qualified this by stating that no commitment for expenditure could be made until the scope of the Museum was clearly defined.

While Thomson desired to adopt a broad, well-considered approach to the evolution of the museums’ collections, he specifically sought to develop a collection relating to the history of New Zealand. In 1916 a committee was established under the Board to consider, among other things, ‘the question of expenditure of vote for the collection of historical and other matter relating to the Maori race and the establishment of a historical collection relating to the early history of New Zealand’.¹³⁷ A letter was sent to regional societies and specific individuals (descendents or relatives of early settlers) requesting items for collection, such as: busts, portraits or photographs; views of New Zealand, town or country, including photographs, oil and watercolour, sketches &c.; and early maps and plans.¹³⁸ In reply to this request an anonymous female wrote to the editor of a Wellington newspaper:

To the feminine understanding it is most obvious that only masculine intelligence dictated the list of “gifts specially desired” by the Board of Science and Art in connection with the National Historical Collection. If a woman had been on the board she would most assuredly have included specimens of fine needlework of all kinds...¹³⁹

Given this bias, it is unsurprising that the rhetoric employed to invite donations was markedly progressivist and heroic in tone:

¹³⁶ For correspondence relating to the formation of a collection of material illustrating the nautical and shipping history of New Zealand with the assistance of P. M. Freyberg, see MU1, folder 18, item 52. Newspaper coverage of this collection and its development can be found at ‘The old yachting days: proposed collection of pictures’, *Evening Post*, 18 March 1916, 9 and *Evening Post*, 21 March 1916, 6 and *New Zealand Times*, 21 March 1916, 5.

¹³⁷ Minutes of meeting, 28 January 1916, ‘BSA: New Zealand Historical Collection’, TPA: MU1, box 20, item 1.

¹³⁸ Gore notes that the focus was on collecting paper material, rather than objects, a tendency in early museum collections. See James Michael Gore, “Representations of History and Nation in Museums in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand - the National Museum of Australia and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa” (PhD in History, The University of Melbourne, 2002), 208. David Colquhoun more specifically addresses the relationship of this endeavour to New Zealand’s archives history in David Colquhoun, “‘The Pioneers Are Steadily Passing to the Great Beyond’: Early Collecting and the National Historical Collection,” *Archifacts* October (2005).

¹³⁹ 22 March 1917, unreferenced newspaper clipping in TPA: MU91, volume 1, p. 5.

By the aid of such material, in a national collection, historians will enable new generations to see the life of old times – the treks through the hostile forest; the conquests of mountains and rivers; the evolution of villages and towns from camps; the daily habits of the people, their work and the making of councils and Parliament; their recreation; great figures will live again for the inspiration of New Zealand's people.¹⁴⁰

Alexander Turnbull and Horace Fildes were both approached regarding the collection. Turnbull was invited to serve on the committee but declined as he felt his presence could '...embarrass both the Government and myself, seeing that the public are aware that I am forming a private collection of my own of New Zealand manuscripts, letters etc...' ¹⁴¹ The irony of this situation was that the National Historical Collection was deposited in the Turnbull in the 1920s for safe-keeping, and ultimately stayed there despite attempts by the Museum to have it returned in 1936. ¹⁴² Fildes, also a collector of historical material relating to New Zealand, was asked for his response to the proposed plans for the collection. He observed that the '...primary degree of importance [is] that accommodation for display of these treasures should be obtained and as the exhibition of the collection became known gifts would naturally be made in increasing rather than diminishing numbers'. ¹⁴³ He also drew attention to the fact that many valuable and rare New Zealand items were being bought up by 'private people who should not be'. ¹⁴⁴

The committee was subsequently underwhelmed with offers of items for the collection, there being little 'tangible result' from appeals for material. ¹⁴⁵ The history register records the presentation of varied paper material, such as diaries, letters, colonial newspapers, several illustrated publications and early records of notable events (such as programmes and catalogues), but little else. As a result, the most notable additions to this collection were made by purchase. The 'Gordon collection', consisting of 'portraits, maps, diagrams, &c., relating to the Maori wars of the "sixties", gathered during many years with loving care by Mr W. F. Gordon, of New Plymouth', received special mention

¹⁴⁰ Draft letter requesting material for national historical collection, 'BSA: New Zealand Historical Collection', TPA: MU1, box 20, folder 1.

¹⁴¹ Turnbull to BSA, 3 May 1916, 'BSA: New Zealand Historical Collection', TPA: MU1, box 20, item 1.

¹⁴² See Taylor to Heenan, Under-Secretary Internal Affairs, 17 July 1936, ATL: MS-Papers-0006-28 where Taylor asks for clarification of the function of the two institutions (Museum and Turnbull) and their collections, and Barrowman, *The Turnbull*, 87.

¹⁴³ Fildes, 13 May 1916, 'BSA: New Zealand Historical Collection', TPA: MU1, box 20, item 1.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid

¹⁴⁵ James Allan Thomson, "Report of the Director, Dominion Museum 1919," *AJHR* H-22 (1919): 2.

in Thomson's second Annual Report.¹⁴⁶ The way that objects could have multiple meanings depending on the context of classification is indicated by Thomson's comment:

This collection, which will retain the name of the Gordon collection, forms, together with the Robley collection of watercolours, a fitting nucleus for the national historical collection, the growth of which, it is hoped, will be the principal feature of the years activity.¹⁴⁷

While Hamilton had acquired the Robley drawings for their perceived value in documenting aspects of Maori culture, Thomson saw them as having interest from an historical perspective. That they would later in the century be transferred to the Art Gallery as part of the Museum Fine Arts collection reflects the fluid and changing status of objects both within these collections and between institutions.¹⁴⁸

The statement that the 'Gordon collection' would retain its name indicates the value that Thomson saw in the collection, which brought together photographic portraits of those involved in the New Zealand Wars. (fig 14) As Thomson reiterated several times in his attempts to purchase of the collection, it represented years of collecting, which would be extremely difficult to undertake in the present day and was therefore of great historical value to the museum. Negotiations towards its purchase dragged on, lasting from June 1914 through to early 1916, delayed by changes in Ministers, economising during the war and hampered by Gordon's somewhat cantankerous nature. Finally, payment of £100 for the collection of photographs was approved and Gordon sent them, along with a range of bonus items and 'gifts', to the museum. These 'gifts' included: an illuminated manuscript titled *Te Inoi a te Ariki (The Lord's Prayer in Maori)*, 1879 (ATL: manuscripts and archives collection, MSO-Papers-4853); several paintings by Henry Jury; a collection of drawings of Hauhau and other rebel flags; tracings and photographs of various sites and battlefields relating to the New Zealand Wars; and, a reliquary of a somewhat macabre nature, a photographic portrait of Reverend Volkner in a wooden frame made from the willow tree on which he was hanged.

¹⁴⁶ Thomson, "Report of the Director of the Dominion Museum 1915-16," *AJHR* H-33 (1916): 4.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ When the National Museum and Art Gallery were merged by Parliament Act in 1992, those items in the museum collection deemed to be 'Fine Art' were transferred to the management of the art gallery. This did not include the museum photography collection, which is managed by the same collection manager under two headings: 'Photography' (that collected as 'Fine Art' since the 1970s by the Art Gallery) and 'Historical Photography' (that from the museum collections).

The ‘fate’ of Gordon’s collection has been varied. The photographs remain labelled as such in reference drawers in Te Aka Matua, but the association of the many ‘bonus items’ with this purchase and thus to the ‘Gordon collection’ has largely been forgotten.¹⁴⁹ The illuminated manuscript, along with various manuscript materials, including his ‘Sketch of the Paimarire Religion’, are currently held in the Manuscripts and Archives section of the Turnbull. In the 1920 Annual Report, Thomson recommended that the Historical Collection be transferred to the Library, and the report from the following year confirms that this occurred.¹⁵⁰ The Paimarire manuscript is annotated in the history register of the Museum as having been transferred to the Library with this collection, and while it is not indicated that the other items were relocated, it is most likely this happened at the same time.¹⁵¹ Other works, notably the flag drawings and paintings by Henry Jury, are now in the Fine Arts collection at Te Papa, revealing the shifting classifications that have occurred over time. As this case suggests, the collection and organisation of historical material is the one that caused most problems as the once-fluid organizations of the late nineteenth century evolved into more tightly controlled and boundaried institutions in the twentieth century.

The transfer of historical material from the Museum to the Library was not the result of a typological or classificatory decision, but arose out of the limitations of the museum building. When Hamilton took over from Hector in 1903, he commented on the state of disrepair of the premises, a situation that was still not resolved during Thomson’s directorship. In his second report, Thomson wrote:

¹⁴⁹ The 1934 Carnegie Report on the Museums and Art Galleries of New Zealand noted that ‘The Dominion Museum (Wellington) contains the Gordon Collection of historical photographs’. See S. F. Markham and W. R. B Oliver, *A Report on the Museums and Art Galleries of New Zealand* (New York: The Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1934), 94.

¹⁵⁰ James McDonald, “Annual Report of the Acting Director, Dominion Museum, 30 June 1921,” *AJHR* H-22 (1921): 18.

¹⁵¹ A handwritten note in the front of the History Register of the Museum notes that all items marked with a red asterisk were transferred to the Library. Gordon’s Paimarire manuscript was purchased by the Museum in December 1916 for £5 even though it was considered to be of dubious historical interest. Elsdon Best’s handwritten notes on the title page declare it ‘a slovenly manuscript, confused, badly arranged’ that relied too heavily on untrustworthy newspaper data and misspelled many names. Despite this criticism, Thomson described it as an ‘interesting manuscript’. Thomson, “Report of the Director of the Dominion Museum 1918,” *AJHR* H-33 (1918): 2. William Gordon, ‘Sketch of the Paimarire religion’ 1917, Manuscript, ATL: reference qMS-0858.

The existing building is not only slowly decaying, but is unsuitable in design and lighting arrangements for the proper display of any collections, and is totally inadequate in floor space for the existing material. So long as it is in use the Museum must not only come far short of its full usefulness to the present generation, but is losing many opportunities of becoming the storehouse of material which will be unobtainable in the future. As a national institution, visited by most of the travellers to these shores, it must surely undo much of the reputation for enlightenment and efficiency which the Government has so successfully created. It may therefore be questioned whether the postponement of a new building is a true economy.¹⁵²

Consequently, the historical collections were not all that was removed from the unsuitable Museum premises in the 1910s and 1920s. In 1921 McDonald also advised that the inlaid writing desk, workbox and table, presumably the work of Anton Seuffert, 'be transferred to the Turnbull Library where they would be more safely kept than in the Maori store'. Johannes Andersen, the Chief Librarian, happily accepted the deposit stating '...I am glad to have them here as they harmonise well with the surroundings.'¹⁵³ It was also desired that the 'large painting of Dr Featherston' should '... in view of the risk from fire, be removed to safer premises' and '... as it is impossible for room to be found in the Parliamentary buildings at present and the Turnbull Library walls are not sufficiently high ... the Academy was ... asked whether they would be prepared to hand [sic] the painting in the Art Gallery for the meantime'.¹⁵⁴ While the painting may have been on show for a short time in the Art Gallery, its late-twentieth-century fate is prophesied by a handwritten annotation that notes: 'Painting sent to the Art Gallery and subsequently stored in basement of Parliamentary Buildings Internal Affairs storeroom'.¹⁵⁵

Maori artefacts were also redistributed in light of the fire risk, initially to the Museum store on Sydney St, and by 1922 McDonald was 'loath to unduly reduce the collections now in the cases' and joined in the litany of every director in arguing for a new building as safe storage facilities were pushed to the limit.¹⁵⁶ In 1924, the prioritising of a new building was side-stepped as room was taken on the seventh floor of

¹⁵² Thomson, "Report of the Director of the Dominion Museum 1915-16," 1.

¹⁵³ Andersen to McDonald, Acting Director, 15 September 1921, TPA: MU1, folder 2, item 17. A 1930s photograph of the entrance hall of the Library shows the Seuffert writing desk in situ. See fig 75.

¹⁵⁴ McDonald, Acting Director to Under-Secretary, Internal Affairs, 6 December 1921, TPA: MU1, folder 2, item 6.

¹⁵⁵ Unsigned annotation, probably McDonald, on McDonald, Acting Director to Under-Secretary, Internal Affairs, 6 December 1921, TPA: MU1, folder 2, item 6.

¹⁵⁶ McDonald, Acting Director to Under-Secretary, 19 October 1922, TPA: MU1, folder 2, item 17.

the Dominion Farmers' Institute Building on Featherston St, which '...had been fitted as a temporary museum'. Ironically this allowed for 'better classification of the exhibits', mostly Maori, and it was noted that '...public interest in the collection and exhibition is growing as it becomes better known'.¹⁵⁷ Further rooms were taken in 1925 'to safeguard from damp and fire' the insect and herbarium collections, as well as part of the library.

It seems that, by the 1920s, if an artefact remained on-site in the Museum proper, it was either unable to be displayed due to space limitations, or at risk of borer, damp *and* fire. The challenge that faced the Museum in the first part of the twentieth century was to create a home worthy of the national institutions (both Museum and Gallery), for the architecture and the possibilities of display were intimately linked.¹⁵⁸ W. R. B. Oliver had the privilege of seeing plans for a new Dominion Museum and National Art Gallery unfold under his directorship from 1928-1947. Rather than dealing with his time as director here, I will discuss Oliver's contributions alongside a consideration of the realisation of those long-awaited plans, which would finally provide a 'fitting national home for the art and museum treasures of the country'.¹⁵⁹

An antiquarian affair

*Private collectors, such as the late Dr Hocken of New Zealand and the late Mr Mitchell of New South Wales made considerable personal sacrifices to do the work that should have been done by the governments of their respective colonies, without hope or wish for reward...In New Zealand we have no National Library, no National Museum and no National Art Gallery...*¹⁶⁰

It seems that Alexander Turnbull counted himself amongst those who had been doing the work of the New Zealand Government, for in 1918 he bequeathed the contents of his library to His Majesty the King, desiring that it be kept together as 'the nucleus of a New Zealand National Collection'. Turnbull is predominantly known as a bibliophile,

¹⁵⁷ Thomson, "Report of the Director of the Dominion Museum 1925," *AJHR* H-22 (1925): 1.

¹⁵⁸ This thesis underlies much of Christopher Whitehead's discussion of the evolution of the National Gallery, London. See Christopher Whitehead, *The Public Art Museum in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2005).

¹⁵⁹ T. C. A. Hislop, cited in *National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum: Souvenir Catalogue of Pictures and Works of Art for Opening Exhibition, August, 1936*, 5.

¹⁶⁰ Alexander Turnbull to S. Percy Smith, 29 June 1911, ATL: MS-0057/Micro-0486-1.

while less attention has been paid to his collecting of ethnological artefacts or the rationale for his collecting of paintings and other works of art. The same breadth of interest can be observed of New Zealand's two other leading private collectors, Sir George Grey and Dr. T. M. Hocken, who were joined with Turnbull to form the trinity enshrined by E. H. McCormick in his discussion of the 'fascinating folly' that such collecting represented.¹⁶¹

Turnbull's collecting activities can be rationalised as antiquarian in nature.¹⁶² They represent the amateur habits of the leisured gentleman whose passion developed to become more focused on the local conditions of his own region. (fig 15) In 1893, Turnbull enthusiastically stated 'Anything whatever relating to this Colony, on its history, flora fauna, geology and inhabitants, will be fish for my net, from as early a date as possible until now'.¹⁶³ This concern for the local reflects the nineteenth-century shift in Britain from 'humanist' antiquarianism, concerned with the past of Greece and Rome, towards a kind of 'regional antiquarianism' characterised by an increased interest in British and local colonial histories. This shift no doubt provided a prototype for the collecting activities of nineteenth-century settlers in New Zealand and other colonies.¹⁶⁴

Turnbull's acquisition book from 1898-1902 reveals the breadth of his collecting, which included books on painting and artistic techniques, books and illustrated publications relating to New Zealand and other colonies, as well as historical engravings illustrative of Pacific exploration, particularly Cook's voyages.¹⁶⁵ Turnbull did not engage with his collection in a scholarly manner for research or other purposes, but in

¹⁶¹ E.H. McCormick, *The Fascinating Folly: Dr. Hocken and His Fellow Collectors* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1961).

¹⁶² Penelope Campbell's thesis rationalises Turnbull's collecting practice within this framework. See Penelope Campbell, "Collecting the Pacific: Joseph Banks, Alexander Turnbull, Rex Nan Kivell" (MA in Art History, Victoria University of Wellington, 2002), 47-81. The antiquarian practices of colonial collectors have also been investigated by Tom Griffiths who argues that the antiquarian imagination in Australia 'actually preceded and paralleled the rise of professional archaeology and history'. See Tom Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors: The Antiquarian Imagination in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3.

¹⁶³ Quoted in E.H. McCormick, *Alexander Turnbull: His Life, His Circle, His Collections* (Wellington: Alexander Turnbull Library, 1974), 122.

¹⁶⁴ Tom Griffiths, in particular, has argued for the importance of the amateur practices of collecting and interpretation in colonial Australia. See Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors*.

¹⁶⁵ This acquisition book is the only one held in the Turnbull. See ATL: MS-2169.

typical antiquarian fashion, he grouped information according to subject, preparing lists and catalogues of specific subject areas.¹⁶⁶

Traditionally historians have privileged text and high art, while antiquarians have collected both texts and objects to form historical tableaux. Turnbull's collection supports the hypothesis that as an antiquarian collector he invested equal value in both visual and textual evidence and that aesthetic value was not always the standard by which he judged artefacts. However, he was not afraid to assert his aesthetic opinion when the opportunity arose. In response to an offer made in 1917 by A. Berthel of a painting of Tomika Te Mutu by Lindauer, Turnbull wrote 'I do not care to purchase any of this artist's work. They are really coloured photographs and of little, if any, artistic value'.¹⁶⁷

Turnbull's collection of colonial New Zealand works of art began in 1889 when he was visiting England and made contact with New Zealand artists Georgina Hetley and Edward William Payton, arranging to purchase some of their original works. Following its publication in England, the plates for Hetley's *Native flowers of New Zealand* were purchased by a French publisher, and a French edition had just been released, coinciding with the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris. Hetley wrote to Turnbull that she had 'drawings of many beautiful flowers for sale, which I shall be very happy to show you if you have sufficient interest in New Zealand flowers to wish to see them?'.¹⁶⁸ She subsequently sold two small drawings to Turnbull for £3.¹⁶⁹ (fig 16) Turnbull also contacted Payton in 1889 enquiring after a set of etchings which he thought were associated with *Round about New Zealand: being notes from a journal of three years' wanderings round the Antipodes*.¹⁷⁰ Payton replied that the etchings were of New Zealand subject matter but were not connected with the publication. He had printed 50 sets, three of which remained by the time of Turnbull's inquiry. Due to Payton's

¹⁶⁶ Turnbull prepared, for example, compilations of place names given by European explorers in New Zealand, lists of Maori vocabulary, as well as a 'Catalogue of New Zealand Books', noting in the front that 'This catalogue now contains various books on New Zealand, works dealing with colonisation in general – English, French, German, Italian, Dutch, etc. – also works on the Antarctic.' See ATL: fMS-243-246.

¹⁶⁷ Turnbull to Mr. A. Berthel, London, 27 March 1918, ATL: 87-014-16. This is probably the painting by Lindauer of Tomika Te Mutu in the National Library of Australia, part of the Rex Nan Kivell Collection, nla.pic-an2282975.

¹⁶⁸ Hetley to Turnbull, London, 21 September 1889, ATL: MS-Papers-0057-36

¹⁶⁹ There are five possible drawings in the ATL prints and drawings database that these could have been. See ATL: B-073-016/021.

¹⁷⁰ Edward William Payton, *Round About New Zealand: Being Notes from a Journal of Three Years' Wanderings in the Antipodes* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1888).

imminent return to New Zealand these were ‘already packed in a zinc-lined case ready for the voyage back’.¹⁷¹ Payton advised that the cost of the set was £2-2-0, and the following year he notified Turnbull that he was holding a set for him in case he still wanted it. (fig 17)

Both purchases, from Hetley and Payton, directly followed their publications of illustrated texts, so the link between the textual and the visual may have provided the stimulus for Turnbull’s acquisition of original drawings and etchings by these artists. However, Turnbull appeared to have a particular interest in prints, which developed further in the twentieth century when he collected prints by Australian artists such as Julian Ashton, Lionel Lindsay, and Bruce Robertson.¹⁷² Later he made contact with local artists, such as Noel Barraud, whom he offered to show Payton’s etchings.¹⁷³ The correspondence he maintained with both printmakers and their agents focusses on the technical processes of printmaking, and the development of this aspect of his art collection may be as much a reflection of his dominant passion for books and other printed matter as it was for ‘art’.

Turnbull’s most significant purchase, and that which laid the ground for the future development of the collections of works of art in the Turnbull Library, was made in 1915, in response to an offer by Francis Edwards of a ‘very valuable and historical collection of drawings relating to the early history of New Zealand’.¹⁷⁴ Turnbull’s interest in this collection may have been motivated by a gift from E. Balcombe Brown of a painting by William Fox. Brown wrote to Turnbull in 1913:

I have a watercolour sketch or painting by Sir William Fox made in 1843 of his house which was built on the present or rather the old Parliament building site and showing Charlotte St with the palisade of a Maori pa on the Eastern side. As you are a collector of old records relating to Wellington I shall be glad to present you with the painting – but as we should like to see you we shall be glad if you can pay us a visit here and get the painting.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Payton to Turnbull, London, 12 September 1889, ATL: MS-Papers-0057-68

¹⁷² See Angus and Robertson to Turnbull, 7 March 1918, offering a complete set of Julian Ashton’s etchings, ATL: 87-014-16, William Dixon’s correspondence with Turnbull regarding Lionel Lindsay prints, ATL: MS-Papers-0057-020 and Bruce Robertson’s correspondence with Turnbull in 1913 regarding his prints and printmaking process, ATL: MS-Papers-0057-68.

¹⁷³ E. Noel Barraud to Turnbull, 18 May 1911, ATL: MS-Papers-0057-68

¹⁷⁴ Francis Edwards to Turnbull, 17 November 1915, ATL: 87-014-16

¹⁷⁵ E. Balcombe Brown, Upper Hutt, to Turnbull, 16 January 1913, ATL: MS-Papers-0057-005. This is the painting titled *Mr Fox’s first house – where Gen[eral] Assembly building now*, 1843 (ATL: A-195-004).

Turnbull must have succumbed to social bribery and acquired the work by Fox, and two years later bought the collection offered by Edwards for a total of £585. This collection consisted of 30 drawings by Charles Heaphy (£350), 16 by William Fox (£130), nine by William Mein Smith (£45) and four by Charles Kettle (£60). Edwards commented that ‘Each drawing is neatly hinged and enclosed in a sunk mount, and the whole are enclosed in 5 specially made boxes. Some of them bear the stamp of the New Zealand Land Company’, and he concluded that ‘... it is a most interesting collection of New Zealand drawings that I have ever seen’.¹⁷⁶ (figs 18 and 19)

In the wake of this purchase, Turnbull actively solicited works of a similar nature from specific individuals. He communicated with Heaphy’s niece by marriage, Amy Robertson, who stated that although she was not thinking of parting with any of Heaphy’s sketches, she would send down a portrait of *Abbie Cooper*, asking in return that he ‘give what you think it is worth’.¹⁷⁷ Turnbull’s collecting habits provided a challenge for friends and associates wishing to provide him with something unusual to enhance his collection. Captain Gilbert Mair was proud of his ability to provide Turnbull with a unique set of drawings, exclaiming:

At last! I have something in the literary line that I swear you haven’t a duplicate of ... Six sketches by a Maori artist depicting certain stirring incidents arising out of a taua or robbing party visiting a settlement in association with an adultery case.¹⁷⁸

Mair went on to conclude of the set of sketches, in a rather patronising tone:

Maori artists are rare. This one claimed to have produced faithful likenesses of every individual ... He must have been a second Meissonier. I hope the historic Maori whom Macauley prophesies as sketching the ruins of London, will have a better idea of perspective, and also use something more permanent than pencil.¹⁷⁹

The database, and Paul, incorrectly cite the year of donation as 1912 as printed in McCormick, *Alexander Turnbull: His Life, His Circle, His Collections*, 235-36. The description on the Turnbull database reveals no knowledge of Brown’s letter, describing the Maori palisade as a ‘rough paling fence’ and is uncertain of the location, confusing it with another depiction of Fox’s residence which is a view up Hill St (ATL: A-195-003) – this painting, as Brown states, looks up Charlotte St (now Molesworth St) to Fox’s residence.

¹⁷⁶ Francis Edwards to Turnbull, 17 November 1915, ATL: 87-014-16

¹⁷⁷ Amy T. Robertson to Turnbull, 24 December 1915, ATL: MS-Papers-0057-076. See *A. C. aged 15 [Sarah (Abbie) Cooper, aged 15, of Wellington, c. 1849, watercolour, ATL: A-144-002*. There is no provenance provided but it is likely this is the work referred to by Robertson.

¹⁷⁸ Gilbert Mair to Turnbull, 19 November 1913, ATL: MS-Papers-0057-064. For the drawings themselves see *Sketches of a Maori muru at Parawera, Waikato*, by an unknown Maori artist, c. 1860 to 1890, ATL, Prints and Drawings: A-081-001/006

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

While the artist may not have satisfied European aesthetic requirements of the day, the drawings are unique in the fact that they depict a customary Maori ritual of revenge from a Maori perspective. (fig 20) The acquisition of works such as these for Turnbull's collection meant that while it was, in part, strategically built, it also grew from fortuitous relationships that enriched it in unexpected ways.

The nucleus of a national collection

On Turnbull's death, the New Zealand Government inherited what was indeed a fitting nucleus of a New Zealand national collection, meaning that the New Zealand state, and consequently the public, benefited from the private efforts of one individual. In his discussion of nineteenth-century collecting in Britain, Arthur MacGregor observes that the worlds of private and public collecting increasingly intersected during this period.¹⁸⁰ In the colonies especially, the evolution of many state collections were characterised by a strong interdependence between those two worlds.¹⁸¹ The legacy that the Library inherited in terms of works of art, and one that is shared by other similar institutions, is a collecting policy that values works for their informative or historical rather than their aesthetic qualities.¹⁸² This divide, informative versus aesthetic, has historically policed the boundaries between the collections of library and gallery, but recently it has become blurred, and the inadequacies of that segregation have, in postmodern times, come under question. For example, an introduction to the Australian art in the Art Gallery of New South Wales notes that despite the origins of the gallery in the New South Wales

¹⁸⁰ Arthur MacGregor, "Collectors, Connoisseurs and Curators in the Victorian Age," in *A. W. Franks: Nineteenth Century Collecting and the British Museum*, ed. Marjorie Caygill and John Cherry (London: British Museum Press, 1997), 7.

¹⁸¹ The Mitchell Library in Sydney, Australia, is similarly an important national, historical library that was founded upon the gift of a private collection to the state. David Scott Mitchell bequeathed his collection, along with a sizeable endowment, to the state of New South Wales upon his death in 1907 and the library was opened in 1910. His collection, like Turnbull's, focussed on books, manuscripts, pictures, prints, maps and charts concerning the history of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Interestingly, the endowment did not allow for the purchase of pictures, which continued, nonetheless, to be acquired by gift and bought with funds from other sources. See Ida Leeson, *The Mitchell Library, Sydney: Historical and Descriptive Notes* (Sydney: Public Library of New South Wales, 1936). The picture collection was also boosted by the gift of Sir William Dixon's collection of historical Australian paintings for which a wing was added to the library in 1929.

¹⁸² The website for the State Gallery of New South Wales states that acquisitions for the pictures collection '... are considered on the grounds of a work's informational and historical value, rather than for artistic merit.' See <http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/collections/pictorial.cfm>, accessed 20 July 2006.

Academy of Art in 1871, there was always a tendency to collect the work of ‘contemporary’ artists, rather than those of the past, resulting in twentieth-century collections that were largely devoid of colonial art. The close proximity of the Mitchell Library with its representative collection of colonial art was cited as a key cause of this neglect. Regardless, in the late twentieth century the gallery still saw it as their province to address this lack, and set about building their own collection of colonial art.¹⁸³

Turnbull saw his library acting in the future as a reference and research collection for historians and scholars, and it is in this light that the collecting of pictures ‘as information’ can be understood. J. E. Traue comments that the notion of a *research* library for *local* scholarship, focusing on areas other than natural history and ethnography, was one that was ahead of its time in 1919.¹⁸⁴ A small number of scholars took root in the Library, including Elsdon Best, John Cawte Beaglehole and Thomas Lindsay Buick, a group that grew in the years leading up to the New Zealand Centennial celebrations in 1940. However, this research was primarily concerned with New Zealand and Pacific history; there was little research into New Zealand’s *art* history in the first part of the twentieth century. This was noted by Thomson in the 1920 Annual Report for the Dominion Museum, when he observed that the art books in the Dominion Library collection were well-used by artists and art students, but that:

...so far no history of the art of our own country has been printed. Much important work has been done by New Zealand artists, and there is need of a more complete and illuminating record of our art activities than the bald statement of exhibition catalogues.¹⁸⁵

Consequently, the pictures in the Library’s collection were largely rationalised as useful for what they recorded of historical places and events, and would primarily have been used as illustrative material for texts, not studied as works of art in their own right.

¹⁸³ It is ironic that one of the ‘treasures’ acquired during this period of collection was the painting by Eugene von Guerard, *Milford Sound, New Zealand, 1877-79*, purchased in 1970. Described as the ‘painting of strongest impact’ in the Gallery, this work has historically played a part in both New Zealand and Australia’s colonial art history, depending on the definition and context of exhibition and discourse. Anne Ryan, “Colonial Eyes,” in *Australian Art in the Art Gallery of New South Wales*, ed. Barry Pearce (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2000).

¹⁸⁴ J. E. Traue, “Alexander Turnbull’s Library: The Evolution of an Idea 1918-1978,” *Art New Zealand* 9 (1978).

¹⁸⁵ Thomson, “Dominion Library: Annual Report for the Year Ended 31st March 1920,” *AJHR* H-22 (1920): 17.

A commitment to the notion of ‘art as information’ in the Turnbull continues to serve as the key conceptual basis for the role of art in the collection. As Janet Paul stated in 1978, in the only major published evaluation of the pictorial collections to date:

Not all the items in the art collection are works of art: but they all tell our history. Whatever their aesthetic value, they show the artifacts and buildings, the customs and taste of New Zealanders in each decade.¹⁸⁶

What this conceptualization lacks is an appreciation of the flexibility of ‘taste’ in art, which is as interesting to chart as the taste in fashion or dress depicted in the art that is collected. Despite the emphasis on art as information, the works in the collection are referred to as ‘masterpieces’, suggesting there is an acknowledgement of their artistic as well as informative qualities.¹⁸⁷ The collaborative ventures of the Library with other galleries from the mid twentieth century provide further evidence of the increased importance attributed to many works in the collection for their aesthetic value.¹⁸⁸

In the first Annual Report for the Turnbull in 1919, Charles Wilson, Parliamentary Librarian who was temporarily appointed the Advisory Director of the Turnbull, commented on the proposed acquisition policy:

With regard to the future acquisition of books &c., much will depend on the amount the State is prepared to expend on such purposes. It is undesirable, in my opinion, that there should be any duplication either with the General Assembly Library or the Dominion Museum Library. The general principle to be observed should, I think, be that the Turnbull Library specialize in the collection of books and other publications dealing with the history, geology, ethnology, and folklore of New Zealand, Australia and the islands of the Pacific.¹⁸⁹

Thus the Library was to continue following Turnbull’s path, specialising in ‘books *and other publications*’, by which Wilson possibly intended prints as well as other visual material, concerned with New Zealand and the Pacific region. Following its establishment, the Library quickly became recognised as a suitable repository for works

¹⁸⁶ Janet Paul, “The Art Collection in the Alexander Turnbull Library,” *Art New Zealand* 9 (1978). See also Marian Minson, “The Pictorial Collections of the Alexander Turnbull Library,” *New Zealand Libraries* 45, no. 8 (1987) and Minson, “The Drawings and Prints Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library,” *AGMANZ*, no. 16 (1985) for further statements of the role of art as information in the Turnbull.

¹⁸⁷ Paul, “The Art Collection in the Alexander Turnbull Library,” 41.

¹⁸⁸ In the 1950s, the Turnbull collaborated with Auckland Art Gallery to launch a series of exhibitions that aimed to ‘discover’ New Zealand’s art history. See Barrowman, *The Turnbull*, 122-3.

¹⁸⁹ Charles Wilson, “Annual Report for the Alexander Turnbull Library,” *AJHR* H-22 (1919).

of art as well as books and manuscripts. While the Museum was struggling with unsuitable premises and limited exhibition space, donations and gifts were flooding into the Library. Johannes Andersen, the first librarian, also avidly pursued purchases of works of art to enhance that aspect of the collections. The first official purchases following Turnbull's death was of three Heaphy watercolours of Rangitoto for £50 from Amy Robertson, with whom Turnbull had communicated before his death, which makes a clear statement of continuity between Turnbull's collecting practice and that of the new public institution.¹⁹⁰ Further enhancing this body of work was a purchase made in 1927, of Heaphy's drawing of *Rangiaeata* [sic] 1840, 1840 (ATL: C-025-022) for £5.¹⁹¹

A significant purchase in the early years of the Library was a collection of flower paintings by Emily Cumming Harris, negotiated by Andersen in 1924. Turnbull had acquired copies of her hand-coloured books of *New Zealand Flowers, Berries and Ferns* in 1899 for £1.1.0.¹⁹² Andersen wished to obtain paintings done by Harris many years ago 'when she was a very good artist'.¹⁹³ He argued for their artistic and scientific quality and asked on behalf of Harris, who was over 80 years of age and only recently 'compelled to accept the old-age pension', that the Government might offer 11/6 for each painting (which were valued at 10/- each by Andersen and others).¹⁹⁴ Before approving any purchase, Wilson's concerns regarding the potential duplication of materials between institutions were reiterated by the Controller and Auditor General who wrote:

In order that there may be no overlapping in the purchase of pictures between the Library and the Dominion Museum, I shall be glad if you will advise me whether the Government has at any time previously purchased a set of flower paintings of the class Miss Harris has painted, and if so whether the purchase of those offered by Miss Harris to the Library would in any way be a duplication of such paintings.¹⁹⁵

While the focus in Wilson's 1919 statement related to the collecting of books, this request clearly refers to the collecting of pictures and it is interesting that the possibility

¹⁹⁰ See Andersen to Under-Secretary, Internal Affairs, 31 October 1927, ATL: MS-Papers-0006-07. The three watercolours have the reference numbers C-025-001, C-025-002 and C-025-003 in the Turnbull pictures database, Tapuhi.

¹⁹¹ See Andersen to Under-secretary, Internal Affairs, 31 October 1927, ATL: MS-Papers-0006-07. Considering Turnbull had paid £300 for 30 Heaphy drawings, £5 seems a bargain for this work.

¹⁹² Harris to Turnbull, 1 November 1899, ATL: MS-Papers-0057-32

¹⁹³ Andersen to Under-Secretary, Internal Affairs, 12 June 1924, ATL: MS-Papers-0006-19

¹⁹⁴ Ibid

¹⁹⁵ Under-Secretary, Internal Affairs to Andersen, 18 July 1924, ATL: MS-Papers-0006-19

of the Library duplicating pictures in the National Collection in the care of the Academy does not appear to be entertained, suggesting that the boundaries between Library and potential Gallery were felt to be natural and understood. Andersen replied that ‘the Museum did purchase a number of flower paintings by Mrs Hetley’¹⁹⁶ but countered that the inclusion of a number of drawings of flowers of the Sub-Antarctic Islands made Harris’ collection unique.¹⁹⁷ (fig 21) The purchase was approved on this recommendation at the price of 10/- for each picture.

Along with the Harris collection, important purchases in the 1920s included the collection of over 850 drawings, sketches and manuscripts by Samuel Moreton from his widow, Mrs Harvey for £100, and 40 original sketches by George French Angas, both in 1927.¹⁹⁸ In his comments, Andersen often reveals a connoisseur’s eye in his evaluation of works of art. Of Moreton, he wrote:

As a rule I did not care much for Moreton’s colour; he had a characteristic way of putting it on – a way that appealed to some, but which was not, and is not, adopted by artists generally.¹⁹⁹

Nonetheless, he advocated the purchase, observing that ‘There is a secondary, if mercenary side to the acquisition; that is many of them – hundreds – can be used for illustrating Government publicity publications’.²⁰⁰

The Library also received a steady influx of noteworthy donations during the 1920s, including: 106 mounted photographs of places in New Zealand of historical interest, photographed and donated by Russell Duncan in 1924; original drawings by John Buchanan of New Zealand plants donated by Harold Hamilton in 1925; 50

¹⁹⁶ This must be a mistaken identity as the Museum purchased a series of 134 flower paintings from Sarah Featon in 1919 for £150, but as noted, consistently refused offers to purchase Hetley’s drawings.

¹⁹⁷ Andersen to Under-Secretary, Internal Affairs, 23 June 1924, ATL: MS-Papers-0006-19

¹⁹⁸ Johannes Andersen, “Annual Report for the Alexander Turnbull Library,” *AJHR* H-22 (1927): 10. On Tapuhi, the collection of Angas drawings are said to have been ‘bound into volume by the Library on acquisition in 1934’, (reference number A-020) but the Annual Reports clearly locate the year of acquisition as 1927. It was noted in the 1935 Annual Report that ‘the cataloguing of approximately 600 prints and sketches kept in Solander cases has been completed’ which could have given rise to a date of acquisition of 1934 if the Angas drawings were bound at this time. See Andersen “Annual Report for the Alexander Turnbull Library,” *AJHR* H-22 (1935): 14.

¹⁹⁹ Andersen to Under-Secretary, Internal Affairs, 7 May 1926, ANZ: AAOJ 6015, series 1C, file 1934/94/2

²⁰⁰ Ibid. Paul refers to the Moreton collection as a donation in her account of the art collections of the Turnbull. While a gift of two oil paintings was made on Mrs Harvey’s death, correspondence clearly indicates that the collection referred to here was purchased by the Government. See Paul, “The Art Collection in the Alexander Turnbull Library,” 45.

watercolour and pencil sketches by William Mathew Hodgkins, donated by his son, Percy D'Esterre Hodgkins, in 1926 and 196 watercolour sketches by Charles Decimus Barraud, donated by William Francis Barraud in 1927. Particular note was made of the Barraud donation in the Annual Report:

Special attention should be drawn to the donation of the Barraud works which are of all parts of New Zealand, and are historically very valuable, as they include drawings of towns and country districts in the 60s, 70s and 80s. Barraud was one of the leading watercolour artists of New Zealand, and in 1877 published a large volume of views in New Zealand in colour; the original of some of the pictures included are in this number donated.²⁰¹

These and other donations and purchases, meant that the Library was quickly building a representative collection of drawings, photographs and other pictorial works that illustrated the history of the colony.

Andersen took advantage of any situation to promote the Library's art collections to Government officials. When asked for his opinion by John Hislop, Under-Secretary of the Department of Internal Affairs, about the proposed purchase and exhibition of paintings by John Gully by the state, Andersen offered his brief approval, and then proceeded to give a lengthy overview of the Turnbull's art collections to date.²⁰² He commented on the effort that was being made to mount the pictures in the collection, his objective being two-fold:

Firstly the preservation and easier storing of the pictures in Solander cases, as it is of course hopeless to think of displaying the pictures on the walls; secondly the exhibition from time to time, of pictures representative of certain artists or of certain kinds of work, or of historical subjects.²⁰³

With such close attention paid to the pictorial collections in the Library, a dramatic contrast is painted with the conditions that Museum had to endure, and it is unsurprising that the art collections of the Library flourished during this period as the Museum and Gallery were still awaiting the promise of secure premises in which their collections could be adequately housed.

²⁰¹ Andersen, "Annual Report for the Alexander Turnbull Library," (1927), 10.

²⁰² Andersen to Under-Secretary, Internal Affairs, 4 June 1926, TPA: MU2, part 2, folder 11, item 4.

²⁰³ Ibid.

Art for the nation

*We must not, however, be led into the error of thinking that a museum or art gallery is to be organised and stocked by outlay of money for works of art, and thrown open to the public as a finished and furnished establishment. Art is long; and its history, which the Dominion Art Gallery is intended to teach, is as long. It begins and ends with the history of the race.*²⁰⁴

These righteous sentiments rounded off the first official assessment of the works of art available for a future ‘Dominion Art Gallery’, by James McDonald in 1915.²⁰⁵ They followed Thomson’s ‘definite plan’ in the Annual Report of the same year and share with his ‘manifesto’ a concern to clearly outline the current resources of the state institutions and lay some groundwork for possible developments in the future. McDonald identified several collections which formed the ‘nucleus of the Dominion Art Gallery’ and that were currently contained in the Dominion Museum, the Parliament Buildings, and the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts. These included the:

Monrad collection of etchings and engravings; the Chevalier collection of sketches and watercolours; the Dominion collection of sculpture, oil-paintings, water-colours, etchings and engravings, and other objects of art; the Academy collection of oil-paintings, water-colours, drawings and etchings; the National Collection of sculpture, oil-paintings, water-colours, and etchings now held in trust by the Academy; and also the collection of marble statuary purchased by the Government after the close of the International Exhibition at Christchurch in 1906-7, and; works of art in private hands which will be forthcoming as soon as provision is made for their safety.²⁰⁶

This list emphasises the many sources from which works came to form a collection for the National Art Gallery and also suggests that many individuals and institutions were involved in their management prior to the establishment of the Gallery in 1936. The role that these institutions and other government employees played in the evolution and care

²⁰⁴ James McDonald, “Dominion Museum: Annual Report for the Year Ended 31st March 1915: Collections Available for the Dominion Art Gallery,” *AJHR* H-33 (1915): 19. McDonald was employed by the Museum first in 1905 as museum assistant and draughtsman; he was transferred to the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts in 1906, but returned to the Museum as photographer and art assistant in 1912. He applied for the position of director on Hamilton’s death which went to Thomson, but was called upon to fill the role of Acting Director on many occasions due to Thomson’s ill health. Dennis, Jonathan. ‘McDonald, James Ingram 1865 – 1935’. *DNZB*, <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>, accessed July 2007.

²⁰⁵ Although McDonald referred to the possible gallery as the ‘Dominion Art Gallery’, the title that was widely assumed in parliamentary discussions, Acts and debates, was the National Art Gallery, which is the title used in this chapter.

²⁰⁶ McDonald, “Collections Available for the Dominion Art Gallery.”: 15

of the National Collection has tended to be downplayed in histories of the Gallery, which rightly prioritise the Academy. However, the Academy is often attributed a martyr-like role in the development of the Gallery and, without wishing to dismiss their importance, I want to draw attention to those other parties in the following discussion. The history of the Academy has been well documented; here I focus on the evolution of the National Collection which, although in the care of the Academy from the early twentieth century, was the property of the state.²⁰⁷ By doing so, attention will be drawn to the disparate nature of the collection as it was shared amongst the Academy, the Museum and the Parliament Buildings. In contrast to the art collections of the Museum and Library, which evolved through their perceived relevance to science and history, the collections destined for the National Art Gallery were concerned with aesthetic value and the notion of ‘art for art’s sake’. In the twentieth century this has had implications for the commitment made to the acquisition of colonial art for this collection.

Cultivating culture

During the second half of the nineteenth century New Zealand began to demonstrate its cultural development with the establishment of art societies, schools and galleries: the first Art Society had formed in Auckland in 1869, the Auckland Society of Artists,²⁰⁸ followed a year later by the opening of an art school in Dunedin.²⁰⁹ The Otago Art Society was formed in 1875 while Canterbury established an Art Society in 1880 and opened an art school in 1882. It was not until 1888 that a permanent and independent art

²⁰⁷ See Kay and Eden, *Portrait of a Century*, which provides a solid history of the Academy and the negotiations that preceded the opening of the National Art Gallery, but is clearly written from the Academy’s point of view.

²⁰⁸ This was one of the first art societies established in Australasia; see R Tizard, *The Auckland Society of Arts 1870-1970, a Centennial History* (Auckland: Business Printing Works, 1970), 8. A short-lived art society was formed in Melbourne in 1856, with a more permanent one established in 1870. See Ann Galbally, *The Collections of the National Gallery of Victoria* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1987), 14 and Galbally, *The First Collections: The Public Library and the National Gallery of Victoria in the 1850s and 1860s* (Parkville: The Museum, 1992), 29.

²⁰⁹ See David Bell, “Art in Education: An Essay Celebrating One Hundred and Twenty-Five Years of Art Education at the Dunedin College of Education,” *Bulletin of New Zealand Art History, Special Series*, no. 5 (2000).

gallery was opened in Auckland, the first in the country.²¹⁰ Despite being the capital city, Wellington lagged behind on all fronts but, on 28 June 1882, a group dedicated to the promotion of the arts in New Zealand met in the Brandon Street rooms of the Pharmaceutical Society, and immediately laid claim to a national role in their title. The first meeting of the Fine Arts Association of New Zealand composed William Beetham, Charles Decimus Barraud, Noel Barraud, R. T. Holmes, T. Silk and J. D. Treanore, who boldly expressed their desire to:

... encourage the production of works of art by periodical exhibitions in Wellington, the institution of an Art Union, and other means for the cultivation and advancement of art.²¹¹

Despite these noble intentions, the Association was short-lived and held only intermittent exhibitions during its seven years. In 1889 the Association wound up, and its property and effects were transferred to the ambitiously named New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts. Charles Decimus Barraud, previously president of the Association, was elected as the first president of the Academy. (fig 22) Through their title, the Academy clearly intended to establish a link with the ancient and respected places of learning as well as their institutional model, the Royal Academy of Art in London.

As was suggested in the case of the Institute, the Academy provided another context through which the ‘diverse intellectual activities of New Zealand’s colonial elite’ could be drawn together.²¹² Roger Blackley has argued that the ‘role of social class in shaping the development of the fine arts’, is an ‘important, yet under-examined factor within colonial art history’, and that ‘involvement with art societies and exhibitions, alongside collectors and patrons, acts as confirmation of elite status.’²¹³ Like the Institute, the Academy drew on its geographically and politically central position, to assume a national role. Analysis of the membership of the Academy reveals the degree to which the Academy courted local elites and secured their support by the cultural capital

²¹⁰ Ron Brownson, ed. *Auckland City Art Gallery: A Centennial History* (Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery, 1988).

²¹¹ Minutes of meeting of the Fine Arts Association of New Zealand, 28 June 1881, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1

²¹² Reid, “Class and Professionalisation in the New Zealand Institute,” 21.

²¹³ Roger Blackley, “John Kinder and New Zealand Art,” in *John Kinder’s New Zealand*, ed. Ron Brownson (Auckland: Random House New Zealand and Auckland Art Gallery, 2004), 124.

that such membership bestowed. The catalogue for the Academy's Fourth Annual Exhibition in 1892 lists both subscribing and artist members. The subscribing members constituted a wide range of individuals who essentially acted as patrons of the Academy – only 11 of the 94 subscribing members are listed in Platts' *Nineteenth Century New Zealand Artists*.²¹⁴ The rest were a mix of politicians, such as Robert Pharazyn, the Chief Justice and Sir James Prendergast, a remarkable 17 Justices of the Peace, and a number of clergymen, including Archbishop Redwood.

Both Hector and Hamilton, as Directors of the Museum, were also members of the Academy. Hamilton became more involved than Hector as he served on the Council from 1907 until his death and took an active interest in the management of the National Collection, visiting the gallery regularly and assisting in the relocation of works.²¹⁵ His aesthetic acumen was called upon, and he regularly noted his contributions to the Academy in his diary. In 1909 he was on the selection committee for the annual Academy exhibition and commented, 'was out all the morning and afternoon at the Art Society selecting pictures. It was rather a long business as there were a great many to be thrown out'.²¹⁶ Following Hamilton's death, McDonald was similarly involved, serving as treasurer and secretary of the Academy over the years 1915 to 1918 when he was also actively involved with the Museum and its art collections. Although it may be debated whether Hamilton and McDonald participated in the management of the National Collection out of loyalty to the state or the Academy, there is no doubt that their contribution was important for the collection's legacy.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ 25 of the 74 artist members of the Academy are similarly unlisted in Platt's dictionary.

²¹⁵ Hamilton was on the Council of the Academy from 1907 until his death. See Kay and Eden, *Portrait of a Century*, 194.

²¹⁶ 16 September 1909, Ross O'Rourke, ed. *Two Diaries and a Field Notebook 26 July 1909-3 August 1910 of the Late Augustus Hamilton and Associated Documentation in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa* (Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2001). This was the year that a painting by Petrus van der Velden was rejected by the committee as it was considered 'in too unfinished a state to be hung in the Exhibition'. Minutes of meeting of NZAFA, 7 October 1909, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1

²¹⁷ It has already been noted that Hamilton was proactive about ensuring works of art in the Museum were adequately preserved, a commitment that was taken up by McDonald, who in 1917 advised Thomson that the paintings in the National Art Collection needed treatment for 'bloom' and proposed that this occur while they were removed from the walls for the annual Academy exhibition. The process he recommended consisted of removing accumulated dust, coating the surface of the canvas with wax and covering the back of the frame with '3-ply'. See McDonald to Thomson, 6 September 1917, TPA: MU14, folder 1, item 6.

This support from local elites and Government representatives was important, not just for their endorsement of the Academy, but it also augured well for the Academy's desire to establish a free public art gallery in Wellington, which was expressed early in the Academy's history.²¹⁸ As the capital city, Wellington was almost obliged to take steps towards establishing an art gallery, for as Duncan and others have theorised, art museums are a means by which a country can become 'recognisably a member of the civilised community of modern, liberal nations'.²¹⁹ However, nineteenth-century New Zealand was not yet a nation, and, as Ann Galbally argues, early colonial art galleries were more concerned with the civilising and moralising effect of art, than its capacity for nation-building.²²⁰ Concerns regarding nationhood arose later and the timing of the opening of the much-anticipated National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum in 1936 is noteworthy in this respect; the approaching centenary celebrations forced the nation to visibly demonstrate its cultural development. Thomson's words from 1919, while stated in argument for the development of a museum building, acknowledge the importance of symbols of civilisation to a nation's reputation:

The standard of civilisation of any nation is largely judged by the size and style of its public buildings. The foreigner must judge from the buildings provided for science, art and history that these are elements of civilisation for which the people of New Zealand have no care or pride.²²¹

But it is not just the buildings by which a nation is judged; it is what is housed within them. To this end, having no private or princely collection that could readily be turned over to the state, Wellington had to develop a collection worthy of a national title from scratch. This was what the Academy and other government officials became involved in building from the early twentieth century.

²¹⁸ In the 1880s discussions had begun with the Crown to obtain land for building an art school and gallery. See Kay and Eden, *Portrait of a Century*, 22-23.

²¹⁹ Carol Duncan, "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 89.

²²⁰ Galbally, *The Collections of the National Gallery of Victoria*, 14. Keith Sinclair argues that New Zealand 'nation-building' began at the turn of the twentieth century, and was spurred on by the South African War as well as other social and political factors. See Keith Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart: New Zealand's Search for National Identity* (Wellington: Allen and Unwin in association with Port Nicholson Press, 1986).

²²¹ Thomson, "Report of the Director, Dominion Museum 1919," 1.

Collecting culture

Just as the Museum and Turnbull collections of art evolved to serve both the interests of science and of history, the works that would form the basis of a National Collection for a future National Art Gallery were to be of a distinct and different character. These works were to be acquired and appreciated for their aesthetic qualities, as ‘art for art’s sake’. As McDonald identified, out of all the collections of art works that could form the basis of a National Gallery Collection, two were cared for by the Academy; their permanent collection and the National Collection which they held in trust. The first works that formed the basis of the Academy’s permanent collection were acquired in 1893, when it was noted in the minutes that Miss Holmes:

... on behalf of the Ladies of Wellington, has deposited with the Council, towards the formation of an Art Gallery, two watercolours by Walter H. Paton, R.S.A. It is to be hoped that the example thus set will be followed by our citizens; so that in time Wellington may be possessed of an Art Gallery worthy of the capital city of New Zealand.²²²

Other gifts from Academy members followed, including James Nairn’s presentation of a portrait, *Charles Decimus Barraud*, in 1897 (fig 23) and a rare gift that has since been lost of a watercolour by Poisson, presented by George Beetham in the same year.²²³ As was the case with the Museum, however, inadequate accommodation plagued the Academy and limited their ability to collect and house works in any kind of permanent display. They began seeking out possible affiliations with local institutions as early as 1890, approaching the City Council with a ‘view to having a suitable room or rooms for the Art Gallery (to be under the control of the New Zealand Academy) included in the building for the free public library’.²²⁴ Negotiations broke down and the Academy pursued plans to erect their own building on Whitmore Street on a plot of reclaimed land

²²² ‘NZAFA Sixth Annual Report, 1893-94’, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1

²²³ Kay and Eden, *Portrait of a Century*, 30.

²²⁴ Minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 12 September 1890, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1

granted by the Government.²²⁵ A single-story building was erected in 1892, which was used firstly for the Academy exhibitions, and hired out in the interim periods to raise money.²²⁶

In 1900 the Academy first promoted the idea of disposing of the Whitmore Street premises with the ‘view of devoting the proceeds in the purchase of works of art to be placed in a room to be provided in the New Town Hall – arrangements being made with the corporation for the control of the gallery by the institution’.²²⁷ Once again, negotiations were prolonged and ultimately fruitless, but the ideas put forward here – that the Academy would put the proceeds from selling their property towards funds for a new gallery and that they would give the works in their permanent collection to that institution – became their platform in future dealings with the Government towards the establishment of a National Art Gallery.

By 1902 the collection of works with which the Academy was bargaining consisted of only nine pictures and 20 plaster casts.²²⁸ This included a John Gully watercolour presented in 1901 by Charles Pharazyn and a picture by Charles Nathaniel Worsley gifted by Mrs C. Vaughan in the same year.²²⁹ The first purchase of a work of art by the Academy was Nairn’s *A Summer Idyll*, in 1903. (fig 24) Valued at £100, the Academy raised £60 by subscription, contributed £20 from Academy funds and asked Nairn to accept £80. Instead of accepting a lower price, Nairn himself contributed £20, suggesting he felt there was status to be maintained by having the full price realised.²³⁰ The Academy then, was supportive of local artists, particularly members of the Academy, in their acquisitions. However, despite the fact that photographers such Arthur Thomas Bothamley exhibited with the Academy, photographs were not acquired for the collection.

The collection may have continued to evolve in an ad hoc manner, had it not been for two major exhibitions in the early twentieth century that resulted in opportunities to purchase significant works of art. Both coincided with, or occurred as a result of generous

²²⁵ Kay and Eden, *Portrait of a Century*, 25.

²²⁶ The Hall was let out to the Wellington Art Club, founded by James McLauchlan Nairn, as well as other local groups, for dance lessons and dramatic performances among other things. See *Ibid.*, 28-29.

²²⁷ Minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 8 August 1900, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1

²²⁸ Minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 8 September 1902, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1

²²⁹ Minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 14 March 1901 and 1 November 1901, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1

²³⁰ Minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 15 October 1903 and 3 December 1903, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1

government grants made towards the purchase of pictures. In 1905 Seddon responded to the Academy's suggestion that they 'obtain[ing] an Art Gallery in the new museum'²³¹ by granting an 'immediate subsidy of £500 on a pound-for-pound basis to encourage subscriptions toward buying pictures for a permanent gallery collection'.²³² An intensive burst of fundraising followed and with the support of the public of Wellington – endorsed by the mayor T. W. Hislop – the Academy exceeded the goal, raising a total of £800 towards the picture fund. This timing allowed the Academy, as well as those from the other centres, to purchase works from the local and British art displays at the New Zealand International Exhibition, Christchurch 1906-7.²³³ Indeed, as James Cowan noted:

New Zealanders can proudly claim to be regarded as art lovers, for the sales – a matter of extreme importance to exhibiting artists – were the largest recorded at any recent international exhibition to which the British have sent pictures.²³⁴

Wellington is recorded to have spent £1168 on pictures from the exhibition, making them the second-largest New Zealand buyer of pictures to Christchurch, the host city.²³⁵ The Academy tended, although not exclusively, to foster the local market, buying work by Sydney Lough Thompson and Worsley among others from the Christchurch Exhibition. The most costly purchases were made by private individuals and presented to the permanent collection: Mr Wolf Harris presented an oil painting by David Murray, R.A. and Mrs Rhodes gifted a picture by W. B. Leader.²³⁶ The Government also participated

²³¹ Minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, October 1905, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1

²³² Kay and Eden, *Portrait of a Century*, 49.

²³³ As well as enhancing Wellington's art collection, the Christchurch Exhibition served as a model for 'using British art exhibits to create public interest in an art collection and gallery in Christchurch'. See Linda Tyler, "Art for Empire: Paintings in the British Art Exhibit," in *Farewell Colonialism: The New Zealand International Exhibition Christchurch, 1906-07*, ed. John Mansfield Thomson (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1998), 97.

²³⁴ James Cowan, *Official Record of the New Zealand International Exhibition of Arts and Industries, Held at Christchurch, 1906-7: A Descriptive and Historical Account* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1910), 267.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 284. This seems to exceed the intended amount, however, this may have included purchases made by other Wellington residents that were intended for the collection. The Academy's Annual Report ending 1906 states that £500 was to be spent on pictures on show at the New Zealand International Exhibition, while £800 was spent by buyers in London. See ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1.

²³⁶ See minutes of meetings of the NZAFA, 19 May 1905, 5 November 1906 and 18 February 1907, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1.

in this buying frenzy, spending, at the insistence of Sir Joseph Ward, £2200 on a collection of 13 sculptures by the Australian artist, Charles Summers Junior.²³⁷

By the end of 1906 the Academy could boast that:

The Academy and the Permanent Gallery committee combined now possess, as the nucleus of a Free Public Gallery 26 pictures of a total value of £1600, exclusive of the pictures being bought in England.²³⁸

At this point the works that constituted the collection were the property of the Academy, but as has been noted, a bargaining point in their desire to see a National Art Gallery established in Wellington was that their collection would join others to form the nucleus of a National Art Gallery Collection. A commitment to erecting a National Art Gallery in Wellington was finally made in 1910, when Premier Sir Joseph Ward announced that the government would support such a venture.²³⁹ Along with the commitment to a National Art Gallery the government also announced that a subsidy of £500 would be made to each of the main centres for the immediate purchase of pictures. This prompted the Academy to seek a strategic means to acquire works of art and the result was the highly successful 'Baillie Exhibition' of 1912.²⁴⁰ This exhibition consisted of a selection of British 'masterpieces', chosen and brought out to New Zealand by John Baillie, an expatriate New Zealander and previous member of the Academy who ran the Baillie Gallery in London. This exhibition can be seen as a successful successor to the Christchurch exhibition in that it allowed not only the Wellington Academy, but other regional galleries and societies, as well as Australian galleries, to purchase contemporary British works of art for their collections.

Paintings to the value of almost £6000 were acquired for the National Collection and were bought through a combination of public subscription and state support: the

²³⁷ Cowan, *Official Record of the New Zealand International Exhibition*, 106. Although McDonald reports that this collection was destined to form part of the National Collection and was only temporarily housed in the bath buildings at Rotorua, the current website for the Rotorua Museum intimates that the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts purchased the collection to 'add to the ambience of the bath house', which opened in 1908. See http://rotoruanz.com/rotorua_museum/summers_sculptures.htm, accessed 10 October 2006. See also Elizabeth Rankin, "From Rome to Rotorua: The Bathhouse Sculptures of Charles Francis Summers," *Journal of New Zealand Art History* 24 (2003) for a detailed history of the sculptures.

²³⁸ 'NZAFA, Annual Report end 1906', ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1

²³⁹ See 'National Art Gallery', 17 August 1910, *NZPD*, 150, 97.

²⁴⁰ For an overview of the Baillie Exhibition, see Zofia Milliszewska, "A Taste of Home: The Baillie Exhibition of 1912" (Honours dissertation in Art History, Victoria University of Wellington, 2004).

government contributed the £500 already mentioned; and the Wellington City Council also agreed to ‘grant the sum of £1000, subject to the amount of £5000 being raised by the public within two months’.²⁴¹ Presentations of pictures and monetary gifts were regularly listed in the newspapers, meaning that this exhibition provided a means for the public to demonstrate its philanthropy and thus enhance its cultural capital. But it was not just the social elite that supported this venture: staff of various government departments and school groups also made contributions, so this exhibition also provided the opportunity to emphasise the public commitment to the erection of a National Art Gallery.²⁴² While the nature of the exhibition meant that the works acquired were primarily by British artists, its profile also resulted in the presentation of works in private collections to the National Collection. For example, Kate Airini Sperrey gifted a work by her mother, Eleanor Mair (née Sperrey) *The Italian Goatherd*, 1884 (Wellington: Te Papa), which, it was noted, had ‘hung for several years in the Auckland Art Gallery’.²⁴³

A pattern emerges with these exhibitions; the importing of British art for exhibition and subsequent purchase, resulting in a National Collection that was strong in works by British artists. These exhibitionary contexts will be explored further in subsequent chapters, but James Belich’s theory of ‘recolonisation’ provides a likely rationale for this focus in collecting activity.²⁴⁴ Belich suggests that from the 1880s to the 1900s and reaching a high-point in the 1920s, New Zealand actively tightened its connection to Britain. This was manifest in trade and economic relations, through which New Zealand became a ‘town-supply district of London’, but it would seem that ties to the British art tradition, the tradition on which New Zealand’s art practice was founded, were similarly reinforced during this period, with London effectively becoming ‘the cultural capital of New Zealand’.²⁴⁵

Tyler doubted whether the Christchurch Exhibition improved the ‘production or reception of art in New Zealand’, but there is little doubt that the Baillie Exhibition five years later both secured public support for a National Art Gallery while expanding the

²⁴¹ ‘Pictures for all: City Council makes a move’, 3 April 1912, *Evening Post*, 8.

²⁴² For example the teachers and pupils of Wadestown School contributed £1-6-5, ‘National Gallery: the picture fund’, 15 May 1912, *Evening Post*, 7 and staff of the Dominion Analyst gifted £2-1-0, ‘National Gallery: fund over £3000’, 13 May 1912, *Evening Post*, 8.

²⁴³ ‘For national pictures’, 1 May 1912, *Evening Post*, 8.

²⁴⁴ Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 27-31.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

nucleus of a National Collection.²⁴⁶ However, with the promise of a Gallery building still in the wings, there was no appropriate venue that could accommodate these newly acquired works. Hamilton and other state officials became involved in co-ordinating the relocation of various artworks and attempts to find alternative venues of display as space became scarce. In 1912 Hamilton informed the Internal Affairs Under-Secretary that the Academy had ‘not yet formulated any scheme for the display of National Gallery pictures’, and he advocated that the painting of *Dreadnought*, recently purchased by the Government, ‘had better be placed on view at the Museum or some place in the Parliament Buildings if room can be found for it temporarily for the members to see it first’.²⁴⁷ Thus works in the National Collection could be found in the Museum, the Academy and the Parliament buildings.

An alleviation of this problem was promised by the Board of Science and Art Act of 1913, which provided for the ‘Constitution and Control of a Dominion Museum, Art Gallery, and Library, and for the Publication of certain Scientific Works’.²⁴⁸ Despite the excitement that this Act aroused in the art community it was biased towards the Museum and even in 1910, when discussions around a National Art Gallery were in their infancy, parliamentary debates reveal the true balance of perceived relations. Rather than committing to an independent institution, the Premier, Sir Joseph George Ward, proposed in 1910 ‘... in connection with the new museum building, to make *suitable provision* for accommodation for a National Art Gallery’[my italics].²⁴⁹ The Board was to consist of the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Director of the Dominion Museum, the President of the New Zealand Institute and five elected persons. However, in 1914, when nominations were invited for appointments to the Science and Art Board, the two made by the Academy, namely Charles Wilson, Parliamentary Librarian and H. Linley Richardson, R.B.A., Art Master at the Technical College, were not elected.²⁵⁰ The following rationale for excluding a representative from the arts sector was provided by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Francis Henry Dillon Bell:

²⁴⁶ Tyler, “Art for Empire: Paintings in the British Art Exhibit,” 102.

²⁴⁷ Hamilton to Under-secretary, Internal Affairs, 24 June 1912, TPA: MU152, folder 10, item 118.

²⁴⁸ Board of Science and Art Act, no. 22 (Wellington: Government Printer, 1913).

²⁴⁹ ‘National Art Gallery’, 17 August 1910, *NZPD*, 150, 97.

²⁵⁰ Secretary of Internal Affairs to Secretary of Academy, 16 March 1914, ATL: NZAFA correspondence, MS-Papers-1372/1/01.

As the Art Gallery does not yet exist, and as the principal work of the new Board must for the present relate to the Museum scientific publications and records, it was considered desirable to appoint four members having special qualities in those respects. Mr von Haast was named as a member who is qualified to deal with matters affecting art if they arise for present consideration. Your Society must bear in mind that the Government had only 5 appointments and had necessarily to provide for the due consideration of matters which will first engage the Board's attention. Later it may probably be necessary to appoint another member closely associated with art.²⁵¹

In Academy-focussed histories of developments after this point there is a tendency to highlight the commitment of the government to building a gallery over that of the museum and library. For example, Jenny Harper reverses the generative order in the introduction to *Bequest to the Nation*, an exhibition devoted to honouring the role of the Academy in the formation of the National Art Gallery. Harper states that in 1926 'it was proposed that the Government should increase the subsidy from £75000 to £100000, thereby *allowing the inclusion* of the Dominion Museum in the same building [my italics]'.²⁵² However, it is clear that the gallery received secondary consideration in government debates around the formation of national institutions.

By the mid 1910s the Academy council considered themselves a 'quasi-government department' because they were trustees of the National Collection, yet the relationship between the state and the Academy was often fraught, particularly in the years leading up to the opening of the Dominion Museum and National Art Gallery in Buckle Street in 1936.²⁵³ The Academy used its position as trustee of the National Collection to solicit financial assistance from the government, for it seemed that, having promised a gallery and supported the purchase of pictures, the government was paying little attention to the problem of housing them. Hamilton advised the Academy on their negotiations with the government suggesting to the Academy President, Henry Moreland Gore in 1912 that there 'was nothing now to be gained by waiting and that the Society should wait upon the Minister to explain the position with reference to the pictures that have been purchased and those that are to be offered and to arrange, if possible, for some

²⁵¹ H. D. Bell, Minister of Internal Affairs to Henry Moreland Gore, 26 May 1914, ATL: NZAFA correspondence, MS-Papers-1372/1/03.

²⁵² Jenny Harper, "Introduction," in *Bequest to the Nation* (Wellington: National Art Gallery, 1990), 5.

²⁵³ Kay and Eden, *Portrait of a Century*, 68.

assistance in taking care of them in their present quarters'.²⁵⁴ Gore wrote to the Minister accordingly, offering that the Academy would act as caretakers of the pictures in the National Collection if the government would contribute funds towards employing a custodian and arrange for a nightwatchman. He also reminded the Minister that along with the National Collection, there was a collection of pictures valued at £3500 that the council considered should eventually be housed in the National Gallery.²⁵⁵ The Academy was successful in these negotiations and again solicited the Government for money to fund additions to gallery space in 1916. But these acts also tied the Academy more firmly to the government, for the conditions associated with the 1916 Government grant were:

That the pictures the property of the government now hung in the gallery be hung in one room to be agreed upon between the Government and your Society, and that they not be removed from that room or taken down from the walls without the approval of the Government ... this arrangement to continue until the pictures are removed by the Government to a National Art Gallery.²⁵⁶

The extensions, which created a separate upper gallery for the watercolours, were completed in 1916 and allowed for the display of the National Collection, which was enhanced by the gift of several notable collections prior to the opening of the Gallery in 1936: the 'Chevalier Collection' gifted in two parts in 1907 and 1917;²⁵⁷ the 'Swainson Collection' in 1916; a collection of works by Petrus van der Velden in 1922 and the 'J. C. Richmond Collection' in 1935. Mrs W. Turton presented a series of sketches by William Swainson of the Hutt and Upper Hutt between 1840 and 1860 to the future National Art Gallery in 1916. She stated that:

I know these lovely examples of an art which grows rarer each year will be of great value both for their intrinsic merit and as accurate records of the wealth of luxuriant forest scenery which once rendered these valleys so lovely.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁴ Hamilton to Gore, 16 September 1912, ATL: NZAFA correspondence, MS-Papers 1372/1/01.

²⁵⁵ Gore to Under Secretary, Internal Affairs, 29 November 1912, ATL: NZAFA correspondence, MS-Papers 1372/1/01.

²⁵⁶ H. D. Bell to Gore, 27 May 1914, ATL: NZAFA correspondence, MS-Papers 1372/1/03. The extension had been provided for by the City Council's annual subsidy of £50 as well as a vote of £600 from the Government. The Academy initially took out a loan to cover the costs which were reimbursed by the government after the war. See Kay and Eden, *Portrait of a Century*, 67-68.

²⁵⁷ See chapter 5 for a discussion of this collection and its display.

²⁵⁸ Mrs W. Turton to G. W. Russell, Minister Internal Affairs, 2 June 1916, TPA: MU1, box 3, item 6.

George Warren Russell, the Minister, gratefully accepted the gift which was initially deposited in the Museum, writing ‘...the sketches are delightful and will add to the value and wealth of the historical records of this Dominion’.²⁵⁹ The conditions attached to the gift by Turton were: that the sketches should be suitably framed, but should maintain the original mounts and lettering as arranged by Swainson; that they should be deposited in the National Gallery once the building was ready; and that they should be shown together as the ‘Swainson Collection’ and not distributed about the gallery.²⁶⁰

The ‘Van der Velden Collection’ was presented as an anonymous donation in 1922, later revealed to be made by G. A. Troup²⁶¹ and the ‘J. C. Richmond Collection’ was gifted to the National Collection in 1935 by Esmond Atkinson on behalf of the artist’s daughter, Dorothy Kate Richmond, who had been an active member of the Academy.²⁶² Ann Calhoun and Gordon Brown imply that while prior to the 1906-7 Exhibition Academy purchases encouraged New Zealand artists, afterwards this support was directed more towards foreign works, particularly those from Britain.²⁶³ Exceptions were noted, such Dorothy Kate Richmond’s *Black Birch* and Frances Hodgkins’ *The Hill Top* that were bought in 1908 and 1913 respectively, but to this could also be added Thomson’s *La Ville Bretonne* and Raymond McIntyre’s *A Child’s Head* in 1908, as well as Charles Frederick Goldie’s *Te Hei* in 1909. Rather than a resistance to purchasing works by *New Zealand* artists full-stop, a clearer trend is that works by *colonial* artists became less desirable for the National Collection. The reason for this was multifaceted. The Academy maintained a commitment to supporting *contemporary* New Zealand artists, and a decrease in the acquisition of works by colonial artists merely reflects the fact that their work was no longer contemporary. But the status and classification of

²⁵⁹ Russell to Turton, 5 June 1916, Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Turton to Russell, 2 June 1916, Ibid. The gift also included several lithographs by Turton’s sister, the late Edith Halcombe, of the Fielding district, which were destined for the ‘early records or historical records branch of the National Museum’.

²⁶¹ Ann Calhoun, “The Acquisition of New Zealand Art for the National Collection: The Place of the Donor,” in *Aspects of New Zealand Art 1890-1940* (Wellington: National Art Gallery, 1984), 17.

²⁶² ‘Gifts for National Art Gallery’, 11 July 1935, National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum Board of Trustees meeting minutes 1929-1940, TPA: MU97, folder 1, item 1.

²⁶³ Calhoun, “The Acquisition of New Zealand Art for the National Collection,” 16.

colonial New Zealand art in the early twentieth century was also problematic, for while there was a shift to recognising its *historical* value, its *artistic* value was uncertain.

The collecting bias also arose from the fact that no clear acquisition policy was ever put into practice. The closest description of a strategic approach to collection development was made by McDonald in his 1915 report. In a section titled 'Some considerations for future guidance', McDonald addressed the issue of what could be acquired for the National Collection and how. He acknowledged that the practicality of securing 'ancient works' was financially impossible, but was adamant that where 'modern' art was concerned, the government should attempt to acquire works of 'real artistic merit' that would illustrate 'every school and phase of modern art' preferably by obtaining 'an early and a mature example of the work of every modern artist whose influence has been or is being felt in the artistic world'.²⁶⁴ McDonald made the interesting observation that 'with regard to modern art the world is becoming sufficiently cosmopolitan to obviate the necessity of dividing works into national schools', suggesting he did not feel that attention should only be focussed on work from Britain. He strongly advocated a national focus, advising that 'a representative example of the work of every New Zealand artist who has painted consistently up to a certain standard, and whose work has therefore had an influence upon the rising New Zealand artist' should be collected. McDonald does not 'name names', but given his interest in the art collections of the Museum and his regular copying of works in that collection, one imagines his interest in New Zealand art would extend beyond the trio of immigrant figures (Petrus van der Velden, Girolamo Nerli and James Nairn) who were fast adopted as having provided the initial impulse towards the development of a 'New Zealand' art tradition. Despite his insistence that works by New Zealand artists, particularly the 'best of the early as well as the mature works of the artists of each generation' could be presently collected with comparative ease and prove valuable to future generations, offers of works by colonial New Zealand artists were often rejected for the National Collection whereas those by van der Velden and Nairn were accepted with alacrity.

In 1906, for example, James Peele's daughter contacted the Academy to ask if a set of her father's pictures could be deposited in the Gallery. Peele was a prominent

²⁶⁴ McDonald, "Collections Available for the Dominion Art Gallery," 21.

nineteenth-century artist who had exhibited successfully in Australia and New Zealand in the 1880s and 90s. They responded that not more than one dozen of Peele's works would be accepted and that 'those works for which wall space can be found will be hung with the permanent collection and the remainder stored'.²⁶⁵ This arrangement was short lived, however, for when Miss Peele asked for the return of *A Phantom Ship* in 1909, the Council consented, but wrote rather dismissively that they 'would be obliged if she would remove the other pictures'.²⁶⁶

John Gully likewise enjoyed a wavering status during the early twentieth century. In 1912 Mr Jentsch wrote to Hamilton from New South Wales that he had 'noted by newspaper that it was decided to have a National Art Gallery in Wellington ... this being so might I refer you to mine of 12 March 1911 in regard to a work by the talented artist John Gully in 1875'.²⁶⁷ The Academy had declined Jentsch's earlier offer of *Sunset, West Coast*, stating that Gully was 'already well represented in the Gallery'.²⁶⁸ This was surely a white lie as only one Gully painting was then in the collection, the watercolour *Mt Cook 1872* (Te Papa) gifted by Charles Pharazyn in 1901.²⁶⁹ Jentsch was not easily put off and asked for Hamilton's advice as to whom to approach regarding a sale, justifying that this request was to be looked on 'not only in a business but a national light'. Hamilton again declined Jentsch's offer, replying '...we are not yet in a position to add to the collection'.²⁷⁰ Gifts were another matter, however, and in 1912 the Academy acknowledged the presentation by Gully's daughter, Mrs Robert Lee, of the 'last picture painted by John Gully', *Lake Te Anau 1888* (Te Papa).²⁷¹ (fig 25) The place that Gully should occupy in the national collections also seemed to be uncertain, for when the government was negotiating the purchase of three works by Gully in the 1920s, Hislop suggested at one point that they would be handed over to the Director of the Museum as 'part of the National Historical Collection'.²⁷²

²⁶⁵ See minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 10 December 1906, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1.

²⁶⁶ See minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 17 December 1909, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1.

²⁶⁷ Jentsch to Hamilton, 26 June 1912, TPA: MU152, folder 11, item 12.

²⁶⁸ See minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 12 May 1911, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1.

²⁶⁹ Te Papa reference: 1936-0035-1

²⁷⁰ Hamilton to Jentsch, 16 July 1912, TPA: MU152, folder 11, item 12.

²⁷¹ Te Papa reference: 1936-0012-57

²⁷² Hislop to Director of Museum, 19 July 1926, TPA: MU2, box 11, file 4, Part 2. The three works were offered for £450 by J. W. Pankhurst in London to the New Zealand High Commissioner in 1922. The works are possibly *Landscape [Waimea Plains, Nelson?]*, 1881, (Te Papa, reference 1936-0012-191),

Museum and Library staff were thus drawn into decisions regarding acquisitions for the National Collection. For example in 1918, the Under-Secretary of Internal Affairs approached the Director of the Museum, who deferred to McDonald, asking him, along with Gore and E. A. S. Killick (previously the Academy Secretary) to make a selection of pictures from the late Frank Grady's collection. Mrs Grady had offered the Government a first choice of the works as long as those chosen would be housed together in the National Art Gallery with the denomination 'Frank Grady Collection'.²⁷³ Gore, Killick and McDonald acted as the selection committee and came to the conclusion that 'the pictures are unsuitable for the Dominion National Collection'.²⁷⁴ The collection largely consisted of works from the later nineteenth century by colonial artists as well as a few works by European artists. A detailed assessment of the works was attached to the committee's decision and reveals them to have been acting as arbiters of taste. Of John Gibb's *Sunset Seascape* it was commented 'too red and too green, we hardly want two examples of his work, though we should possess one', and of William Francis Barraud's *Port Nicholson*, it was dismissively written 'this artist is hardly up to National Gallery standard'.²⁷⁵ However, the 'standard' by which one should judge a work, was, as Percy Sargood wrote to the Academy President, D. A. Ewen in 1936, highly subjective:

I quite understand that a personal or delegated inspection of any picture offered is most necessary...if otherwise, sentiment might dictate acceptance of works otherwise not up to the standard each gallery should set. A "standard", is, of course, a changing factor, but at least each council should, in its turn, and according to its ability, seek to increase the quality and appropriateness of its collection...²⁷⁶

Landscape Nelson, 1871 (Te Papa, reference 1936-0012-315) and *In the Southern Alps*, 1881, (Te Papa, reference: 1936-0012-189). McDonald, Andersen and the Academy were reluctant to accept the offer at this price, but when it was lowered to £150 they were purchased by the Government with the intention that they be shown at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924-5, then forwarded to New Zealand, where they were to be exhibited in the Academy Gallery then distributed to regional galleries. The Suter Gallery in Nelson was pleased to receive the two works of the Nelson region, and Wanganui happily accepted the third. Other centres, Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin, were less willing to accept works by Gully, even on loan, suggesting he no longer commanded the artistic status he'd held in the nineteenth century.

²⁷³ Under-Secretary, Internal Affairs to Director, Dominion Museum, 19 September 1918, TPA: MU1, box 3, folder 68.

²⁷⁴ James McDonald, Annotation dated 29 May 1919, Ibid.

²⁷⁵ 'Assessment of works', Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Sargood to Ewen, 29 January 1936, TPA: MU88, folder 4, 1936

So while the selection process might have become more discerning over the years, choices made regarding acquisitions were still subject to later criticism. In 1938, Mr Laugesen was recorded as observing:

...some of the pictures which had been purchased by the Academy in the past should not be hung on the walls of the National Gallery at all. Once a picture was purchased and hung it was difficult to set it aside. Some of the pictures which he had in mind had been purchased in quite recent times, In the case of some visiting artists the Government had bought pictures when a better standard of work by New Zealand artists had been passed over.²⁷⁷

The lack of a clearly defined collection policy undoubtedly led to such criticism. After McDonald's 1915 vision, occasional rationales for building the National Collection were put forward, but largely ignored. For example, at an Academy meeting in 1931, Mr Troup suggested that the Academy's aim in building its collection should be to 'make it representative in the first place of New Zealand art'.²⁷⁸ This suggestion was reiterated in official speeches at both the laying of the foundation stone in 1934 and the opening of the new National Art Gallery in 1936.

The financial circumstances of the Academy may have been partly responsible for this situation, whereby a purchase of a work by a visiting, apparently prestigious artist was often an easier case to argue for than a work by a New Zealand artist. Consequently, while outright offers might be accepted (for if deemed to be of an insufficient standard for the National Collection, it could easily be passed on to the Library) colonial art was rarely purchased. Offers to sell works by Barraud and J. C. Hoyte were declined, and works by Worsely were turned down as he was supposedly adequately represented in the collection. It also became apparent, as had been the case with Hamilton's attempt to purchase Dittmer's paintings, that there were no immediate funds available for purchasing pictures. In 1929 Mrs Harvey, Samuel Horatio Moreton's widow, offered the government a selection of large paintings by the artist.²⁷⁹ After inspection Andersen recommended that a number of the works be purchased for the National Collection. This resulted in the Internal Affairs Under-Secretary attempting to find out if there was 'any

²⁷⁷ Minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 1 September 1938, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-2.

²⁷⁸ G. A. Troup, Academy President, minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 28 August 1931, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-2.

²⁷⁹ Mrs Harvey to Sir Joseph Ward, 27 May 1929, IA: AAOJ 6015 1c/1934/94/2: Sketches and drawings, property of Mrs Harvey – suggested purchase of.

item to which the purchase of the pictures referred to ... could be charged'. The accountant replied that there was no such item and Internal Affairs regrettably wrote to Mrs Harvey that the government was 'not in a financial position to purchase the pictures'.²⁸⁰ McDonald had anticipated this problem in 1915, observing that:

Since the money that can be spent on Fine Art is limitless, it is also necessary, in order to preserve a due balance between the Art Gallery and the historical and scientific departments of the Museum, that the proportion of income to be devoted to each should be clearly defined.²⁸¹

This problem ultimately affected the ability to directly purchase works, but may also have biased potential donors. For while Moreton's paintings were not acquired as a result of her offer in 1929, two large paintings were bequeathed by Mrs Harvey to the Library, not the National Collection, on her death in 1932, presumably due to the fact that they had successfully purchased Moreton's notebooks and sketchbooks in 1927.²⁸²

The Academy and the State

After years of negotiations, the 1930 National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum Act finally ruled that in return for the proceeds from their building on Whitmore Street, accommodation for the Academy would be provided within the new building. This, however, only confirmed the suspicions held by regional art societies regarding the relationship of the Academy to the future National Art Gallery, which had been raised from the very first discussions about such an institution. In 1910, T. E. Taylor of Christchurch asked the Prime Minister 'whether the Government will refrain from making any definite promise to found a National Art Gallery in Wellington until the Art Societies in Christchurch and other centres have been fully consulted and the claims of existing art societies have been fully protected'.²⁸³ To this, Ward replied 'Any monetary assistance that may be given will be equally applied to the four centres'. In 1912 Hamilton was again mediating concerns expressed by the Canterbury Society of Arts that

²⁸⁰ Under-Secretary Internal Affairs to Mrs Harvey, 27 January 1931, Ibid.

²⁸¹ McDonald, "Collections Available for the Dominion Art Gallery," 16.

²⁸² Samuel Horatio Moreton's, [*Sunset*] c. 1910, watercolour (ATL: reference C-053-002) was one of the two gifted pictures.

²⁸³ 'National Art Gallery', 17 August 1910, *NZPD*, 150, 97.

it appeared the Academy was to have accommodation provided in the new Museum and Art Gallery. Hamilton reassured them at this stage that this was not to be the case and asserted this opinion in a letter to Ward:

The Wellington Academy of Fine Arts does not claim or desire any room in the Museum. The statement of these facts should allay any irritation that the other societies may feel.²⁸⁴

This boldly stated opinion contradicts the soliciting of support and reliance of the Academy on government patronage already cited. It also counteracts the suggestion made by Kay and Eden that the 1916 extensions had a political motivation of allaying fears of other societies; that ‘by adding to its own home the Academy would appear not to be planning to occupy or control a new national gallery’.²⁸⁵ Yet, if one considers the conditions associated with the government grant that funded these extensions, it is clear that they only increased the reliance of the Academy on state support.

In this respect the relationship between the Academy and the state shares a parallel with the evolutionary relationship of the Royal Academy of Arts and the National Gallery in London. As was the case with the Royal Academy, the Academy similarly laid the groundwork and brought the arguments for a national gallery to the public consciousness.²⁸⁶ The Royal Academy was housed in the same building as the National Gallery, as the Academy was destined to be in New Zealand’s National Art Gallery. Yet for both, such co-habitation was problematic. As Nick Prior states, in the case of the Royal Academy, which was seen to be a ‘bastion of exclusion and unaccountability’, a great disparity was felt to exist between one half of the building (the National Gallery) which ‘would encourage the admission of a broad public’, and the other, the Royal Academy, which would ‘be able to exclude such portion of the public as it does not choose to admit’.²⁸⁷ The Royal Academy eventually moved to Burlington House, their current location, in 1867.

²⁸⁴ Hamilton to Sir Joseph Ward, 1 April 1912, MU152, folder 10.

²⁸⁵ Kay and Eden, *Portrait of a Century*, 65.

²⁸⁶ See Holger Hock, “Old Masters and the English School: The Royal Academy of Arts and the Notion of a National Gallery at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of the history of collections* 16, no. 1 (2004) for a consideration of the role of the Royal Academy of Arts in the discussions towards a National Gallery in London.

²⁸⁷ Nick Prior, *Museums and Modernity: Art Galleries and the Making of Modern Culture* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2002), 84-5.

The Academy lasted slightly longer on the premises of New Zealand's national cultural institutions than its London namesake, and was arguably a very different kind of institution, but the relationship between the Academy and the National Art Gallery aroused similar concerns from regional art societies on several counts: the question of what privilege the Academy might hold over other regional societies as an independent body within a state institution; as well as the possibility that such proximity might allow a bias towards acquiring Academicians' work for the National Collection. The 'National' status assumed in the naming of the Academy in 1889, and followed by the establishment of a National Art Gallery needed defending in the face of potential resistance to this status by regional societies and galleries. Prior to the Gallery's opening in 1936, a report on its management was tabled at the meeting of the National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum Board of Trustees on 4 April 1935.²⁸⁸ The regional rivalry that existed between art societies was recognised as the report declared:

The National character of the Art Gallery should be maintained and emphasised even in the face of indifference or opposition from the other main centres. The National Collection will be there; the establishment of a National Portrait Gallery should be an aim, and if its national character is maintained ultimately gifts will be made from all over New Zealand.

So while the fears of regional societies may have ultimately been founded in reality, the report did caution that although 'Wellington has taken a leading part in establishing it [the National Art Gallery], it should not endeavour to get exclusive control...' Thus the Academy council's role in advocating for a National Art Gallery was acknowledged but they were cautioned against expecting to have a major role in its management. This led to last-minute debates within the Academy as to whether their permanent collection *would* be handed over to the new institution. Kay and Eden maintain that the Academy was unaware that it would relinquish *ownership* of its collection, although it was clearly acknowledged in various reports that together with the works owned by the Government

²⁸⁸ 'Report on scheme of management for National Art Gallery', National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum Board of Trustees meeting minutes 1929-1940, TPA: MU97, folder 1, item 1. It should also be noted that, in the absence of existing correspondence relating to gifts and offers of works made to the Academy prior to the opening of the Gallery in 1936, it is unclear whether donors were offering their works to the Academy or to the National Collection.

it would form the *nucleus* of a New Zealand National Art Collection. The 1935 report ignored such subtleties, declaring in an authoritarian manner:

The New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts is to hand over its present collection of pictures to form, with the Government's collection one National Collection. It is to be understood that any future gifts of pictures to the Academy or Government, or donations for purchase of pictures are to be regarded as for the National Collection.

This assumed sovereignty over the Academy's collection was made to seem common sense as it was stated 'there is not room in Wellington for two public collections. In the interests of display and educative value the whole Art Gallery should be run as one'. It was also a matter of necessity that the Government lay claim to the Academy collection in order that the National Collection might be worthy of its title. For due to its slow evolution, and despite its centrality, the collection was neither the 'best', nor the most extensive in the country. Auckland Art Gallery had long claimed to have the most distinguished collection, its advantage lying in the 'numerical and artistic wealth of British and European paintings contained in the Grey and Mackelvie collections'.²⁸⁹ Thus, regardless of the many other sources from which works came to constitute the National Collection, without the Academy's collection joining them to grace the Gallery walls, the opening exhibition was in danger of looking lacklustre.²⁹⁰

In the months and weeks preceding the opening of the Buckle Street premises the Academy's collection was not all that was argued over. The final section of this chapter considers the fragility of the boundaries between Museum, Library and Gallery collections and examines moments at which they were fiercely policed in the lead up to the opening in 1936.

²⁸⁹ Gordon Brown, *New Zealand Painting 1900-1920: Traditions and Departures* (Wellington: Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand, 1972), 15.

²⁹⁰ A negative consequence of the gifting of the Academy's collection to the National Collection is that much of the information relating to provenance has become dissociated from the works of art. All works from the Academy in Te Papa's collection have the credit line 'Gift of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, 1936', regardless of whether they were purchased by the Academy or gifted by an individual. This effectively obliterates the many generous acts that were carried out by citizens in the lead up to the opening of the National Art Gallery.

Policing the boundaries

With the imminent opening of the double-barrelled institution, the National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum in 1936, as well as the change in management of the Library, clear criteria for the division of material between the three state institutions – Library, Museum and Gallery – needed to be established. In most cases the call for boundaries was instigated by Clyde Taylor. After a period as understudy from 1933, Taylor had taken over from Andersen as Turnbull Librarian in 1936 and quickly formed a close allegiance with the Under-Secretary for Internal Affairs, Joseph William Allan Heenan. The Museum asked for the historical collection, transferred to the Library in 1921, to be returned for the opening of the new Museum building in 1936, a request that was promptly challenged by Taylor. Taylor sought Heenan's clarification of the situation asking him to give 'a ruling as to the definition of our respective fields'.²⁹¹ Taylor wrote that Andersen understood that the historical collection had been handed over permanently, having organised much of the collection to be sorted, bound and catalogued in the Library. While the writing desk and Maori artefacts had already been returned to the Museum, Taylor felt that all historical documentary material, manuscript or printed, should be housed in the Library. Further, he stated:

... although it is not exactly relevant, the Museum has benefited greatly in the past from Mr Turnbull's extensive gifts of Maori and historical relics, and to take them into consideration would be a fitting acknowledgement.²⁹²

Heenan agreed with Taylor and notified Oliver that '... obviously the proper place for documentary historical records is the Turnbull Library, and it is proposed to retain in the Library the historical material referred to in the memo'.²⁹³ This paper-versus-object divide seems a very straightforward, if somewhat literal division of the roles of the two institutions, but the typology of the pictorial collections was less easily determined.

The historical documentary collections in the Turnbull were not all that was enhanced by this decision, for the National Historical Collection had also consisted of pictorial material and this too stayed in the Turnbull, along with the manuscripts, letters

²⁹¹ Taylor to Heenan, 17 July 1936, ATL: MS-Papers-0006-28

²⁹² Ibid

²⁹³ Heenan to Director, Dominion Museum, 20 July 1936, ATL: MS-Papers-0006-28

and ephemera. Included were several collections of works that have assumed increased importance as works of art as well as for their historical interest in the later twentieth century. For example, a selection of works by John Williams and Cyprian Bridge, New Zealand's earliest military topographers, were acquired for the National Historical Collection in 1920. Thomson had approached Delmar Williamson in England in 1919 to enquire whether he wished to donate or offer watercolours from the 1840s known to be in his possession to the Collection.²⁹⁴ Williamson replied that the drawings were '...made by a Sergeant I think in my Uncle Col. Bridge's regiment in the Maori wars. They are very well done and I should think would be very interesting. There are also drawings of Auckland fort and the fields where the campaign took place'.²⁹⁵ Thomson asked James Cowan's opinion as to what action this description could be referring to, who replied that '... they are no doubt drawings by Sergeant J. Williams of the 58th Regiment. The subjects are most probably the fights of Puketutu (Okaihau), Ohaeawai and Ruapekapeka in the north of Auckland, in 1845'.²⁹⁶ The High Commissioner was then asked to inspect the pictures and report on their value, and concluded that '... a number of the watercolours were likely to be of interest to New Zealand from a purely historical point of view, although they had little or no artistic merit'.²⁹⁷ Nine pictures, including at least one by Lieutenant-Colonel Cyprian Bridge and an acknowledged copy of this work by Williams, were purchased for £10 and were promptly transferred to the Turnbull for inclusion in the National Historical Collection.²⁹⁸

As no works by Williams or Bridge exist as part of the Museum Fine Art collections, it can be assumed that they remained in the Library after 1936. At least one of these can be positively identified in the current Library collections, that titled 'Warship and burning bush' in the group of pictures purchased by the Government; identified in the Library collections as *H.M.S. North Star, destroying Pomare's pa Otiuhu, Bay of Islands, 1845*, watercolour, (ATL: A-079-032). (fig 26) The value that these works have, both from an historical and an aesthetic point of view, is indicated by the inclusion of this

²⁹⁴ Thomson to Delmar Williamson, Gloucesterhire, England, 27 June 1919, TPA: MU2, box 11, file 4, part 2.

²⁹⁵ Williamson to Thomson, 27 August 1919, TPA: MU2, Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Cowan to Thomson, 13 November 1919, TPA: MU2, Ibid.

²⁹⁷ High Commissioner to Department of Internal Affairs, 15 September 1920, TPA: MU14, box 3, file 19.

²⁹⁸ James McDonald to Librarian, ATL, 4 December 1920, TPA: MU2, box 11, file 4, part 2.

work in the exhibition, *Two centuries of New Zealand art* in 1990 at Auckland City Art Gallery, and the more recent appearance of Williams' *Storming of the Pa at Ruapekapeka, 11th January 1846* (Te Papa) in *Icons Nga Taonga*.²⁹⁹ This work was purchased in 2000 with New Zealand Lottery Grants Board Funds and reflects the integration of collections under The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act of 1992, which brought together material that had been divided according to an 'illustrative' versus 'fine' rationale, informed by both colonial priority and modernist ideology. This integration was accompanied by a shift in collecting policies to 'incorporate significant historical material', such as works by Williams and other noteworthy colonial artists.³⁰⁰

The proposed typological boundaries of the institutions were questioned earlier in 1936 by Taylor, when he caught wind of the fact that the National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum were planning to create a graphic art collection. In 1924 the Library had prepared mounts for Turnbull's collection of some 200 examples of etching by Australasian artists and in the same year the Monrad Collection was transferred into its care from the General Assembly Library. The graphic art collection was further enhanced by a donation of 46 original etchings by William Francis Barraud in 1925, which was hoped to form a 'nucleus for a collection of work by New Zealand artists'.³⁰¹ In defence of maintaining and developing the Library's graphic art collection, Taylor argued:

... graphic art primarily associates itself with books, though to some extent it has long been separate as regards such works as etchings, woodcuts etc... Now, because the book is so essentially the province of the Library, so graphic art and especially the art of printing come more within the scope of such an institution.

To carry the reasoning a stage further, it appears more worthwhile to develop a collection already existing, than to inaugurate a new one. ... The foundation of such a collection should be representative in both ancient and modern achievement and this has been fairly realised in the results of the late Mr Turnbull's untiring activity.³⁰²

The Monrad collection was subsequently returned to the Gallery along with other works in the Library. In the Board minutes dated 30 April 1936 Heenan also referred to the

²⁹⁹ Te Papa Curatorial Team, *Icons*, 72-73.

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<http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/TePapa/English/CollectionsAndResearch/CollectionCareAndAccess/HistoryOfCollections/Art+and+Visual+Culture.htm>) accessed 28 July 2006

³⁰¹ Johannes Andersen, "Annual Report for the Alexander Turnbull Library," *AJHR* H-22 (1925): 10.

³⁰² Taylor to Heenan, 30 April 1936, ANZ: AAOJ 6015, 1936/94/4

“Barraud Collection” of pictures at present in the Turnbull Library’ and proposed that ‘the Board of Trustees to make a selection from the collection for inclusion in the National Art Gallery’.³⁰³ While there is no evidence of Barraud’s works being transferred to the National Collection, the Monrad collection was exhibited at the National Art Gallery in 1937, one year after opening. Recent research by Mathew Norman has revealed, however, that the collection was not returned as a whole, with 56 works retained by the Library, 29 of which had previously been unrecognised as having a Monrad provenance.³⁰⁴ Of these 29, 27 are by Rembrandt, and while the details of the transfer remain unclear, Norman questions the rationale for the division of the collection between institutions, noting that the card catalogue entry stating they were kept ‘as examples of significant development in the history of printing’ does not explain the need to have all the Rembrandts retained in the Turnbull’.³⁰⁵

In 1933, four months into his job as understudy to the librarian, Taylor had taken a year-long Carnegie travelling fellowship to spend a semester studying Library Science at the University of Michigan and visit the ‘library treasures of the world’.³⁰⁶ Taylor aimed to focus on libraries with collections similar to Turnbull’s, while paying special attention to a study of modern graphic art. He had intended to form a New Zealand Graphic Art Society on his return, but this never eventuated.³⁰⁷ On the basis of the focus of this research trip and his correspondence, Taylor may have felt left out of Gallery and Museum discussions regarding a national graphic art collection, and this may have had a hand to play in the division of the Monrad collection. After all, if the Gallery and Museum were unaware of the incomplete nature of the collection they received, it would only reinforce Taylor’s belief that the Library was the preferred site for the really valuable works.

This and other examples draw attention to the difficulty experienced in establishing the boundaries of national collections, especially when their interests seemed to overlap. Taylor stated that in the countries he visited on his tour graphic arts were

³⁰³ ‘National Collections’, 30 April 1936, National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum Board of Trustees meeting minutes 1929-1940, TPA: MU97, folder 1, item 1.

³⁰⁴ Norman, “The Print Collection of Bishop Monrad”, 69-92.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 85. Te Papa’s website acknowledges this recent development. See ‘Theme: Bishop Monrad and his Collection’, <http://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/Theme.aspx?irn=533>, accessed 22 April 2009.

³⁰⁶ Barrowman, *The Turnbull*, 61.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

invariably considered part of library collections, citing the Public Library of Bristol, England; the California State Library and the Deutsche Bucherei of Leipzig, Germany as examples,³⁰⁸ while carefully omitting the example of the British Museum which housed both the national graphic art collection as well as the national library.³⁰⁹ The relationship between the British Museum and the National Gallery in London had been much debated in the nineteenth century, when it was uncertain whether the gallery would be an independent institution or incorporated under the museum's roof. Conceptual debates centred on the possibilities of all forms of Art – painting, sculpture, architecture, antiquities and engravings – being juxtaposed in displays so that they might throw light on one another.³¹⁰ Such a heterogeneous display tactic was compared to the Great Exhibition in its conception, which might be tolerated for a temporary exhibition, but not in a permanent museum, as such arrangements tended to foster amusement over instruction. Most participants in this debate supported the notion of placing paintings and graphic art in close proximity to enable frameworks of influence and historical comparisons to be established. But this proposed system of juxtaposition did not eventuate and in 1957 it was decided *not* to unite the collections. Consequently, the gallery collected 'fine art', primarily two-dimensional paintings, the museum collected prints, drawings and archaeological art, and also housed a library collection of manuscripts and maps along with other printed matter, while a third institution, the South Kensington Museum, advocated equality of artistic media, attributing equivalent *use-value* to a 'salt-cellar or an altar-piece'.³¹¹ Christopher Whitehead maintains that this separation of collections resulted in the consolidation of 'the conceptual and hierarchical distinctions between museum objects that we have inherited'.³¹²

In the debates over territory in the history of New Zealand's state institutions, arguments are less well aired than this British scenario, but Taylor's letters to Heenan suggest that he, at least, was greatly troubled by questions of proper typology of

³⁰⁸ Taylor to Heenan, 30 April 1936, ANZ: AAOJ 6015, 1936/94/4

³⁰⁹ The British Library is a relatively young National Library, whose collections consist primarily of those that were housed in the British Museum until the 1970s. See <http://www.bl.uk/about/history.html>, accessed 28 August 2006. The Prints and Drawings collections remain part of the Museum collections, while the library houses the Map and Manuscript holdings.

³¹⁰ Whitehead, *The Public Art Museum in Nineteenth Century Britain*, 70.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 82.

collections. There is also a feeling that, as much as expounding a particular philosophy of collecting or display, Taylor (and those in charge of other institutions), were keen to police their turf in the embryonic cultural terrain of New Zealand. Taylor was concerned to attribute historical ‘use-value’ to a graphic collection that would illustrate the development of form from:

... early calligraphy and illuminated manuscript ... through the great printers of England, France, Holland, Germany and Venice of the 15th and 16th centuries, through beautiful illustrated books, rich with the engraver’s art, down to the great presses of modern times of these latter ...³¹³

This represented a different focus from the primarily aesthetic value that a graphic art collection would hold in a Gallery, and reinforces Whitehead’s proposal that historical institutional boundaries have acted to reinforce distinctions between high and low, between informative or illustrative and aesthetic. This indeed, was the recommendation made by the Gallery’s graphic committee, which suggested that the best way to overcome Taylor’s concerns was for the ‘National Collection to confine its exhibits to the illustration side of graphic art and for the Turnbull Library to attend to the printing aspect of graphics’.³¹⁴

The Museum and the Library also overlapped in their collections of photographs, which were recognised as an important part of their collections early in their respective histories. As noted, photographs were especially suited to the early Museum collections both for their ability to represent progress and convey information as well as their use in display. For the Library photographs were valued as part of a ‘working historical collection’ for their ability to illuminate the ‘development of New Zealand’ rather than ‘... their status as indicators of the artistic and technical development of photography’.³¹⁵ According to Library acquisition guidelines, the cut-off point for collecting original works of art—watercolours, sketches and so on—was about 1880, when photography took over as the dominant medium for recording and capturing the topography and social

³¹³ Taylor to Heenan, 30 April 1936, ANZ: AAOJ 6015, 1936/94/4

³¹⁴ Minutes of the National Art Gallery Management Committee, 29 April 1936, TPA: MU226, folder 1

³¹⁵ John Sullivan, “The Photograph Collections,” *Art New Zealand* 9 (1978): 49.

history of New Zealand.³¹⁶ Considering that the ‘touchstone for acquisition is historical and topographical truth’ it is unsurprising that photography became the preferred medium for preserving visual knowledge of New Zealand and New Zealanders in the Library.³¹⁷

The photography collection was formally recognised as a separate facet of the Turnbull collections in 1944 when attempts at cataloguing the collection were begun.³¹⁸ Despite this, even in the 1980s the photographic archive was likened to a ‘national attic, where most of the material is waiting to be found, and exciting discoveries and new connections are made daily’.³¹⁹ The collection had been added to in a largely ad hoc manner by gift and purchase from 1919 and on at least one occasion efforts to secure works had resulted in the Library and Museum competing for the same items. For example in 1933, photographer Richard J. Thomson offered photographs of early Wellington for sale, resulting in both Andersen and Oliver seeking government approval to purchase works from this collection. It seems that Malcolm Fraser, the Under-Secretary for Internal Affairs at the time, chose to resolve the matter on a ‘first in, first served’ basis; Andersen’s request was dated 8 September 1933, and Oliver’s 26 September 1933.³²⁰ Fraser wrote to Oliver on 5 October 1933 to notify him that he had recently approved the purchase of ten photographs for the Library ‘several, apparently, being similar to those you now wish to obtain’. He continued:

It is not desirable that the Government should have a duplicate collection of photographs such as this, especially as consideration will have to be given later as to whether photographs and pictures would be retained there, or transferred to the Dominion Museum.³²¹

While no evidence of any future discussions relating to such a decision has been found, aside from the correspondence initiated by Taylor already referred to, it is interesting that the Government potentially envisioned the Library collection of pictures and photographs as having a future home in the Museum. Fraser’s comment also suggests that while

³¹⁶ See Minson, “The Drawings and Prints Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library,” 24 and Minson, “The Pictorial Collections of the Alexander Turnbull Library,” 163.

³¹⁷ Paul, “The Art Collection in the Alexander Turnbull Library,” 41.

³¹⁸ Taylor, “Annual report of the Alexander Turnbull Library”, 1944, *AJHR*: H – 22.

³¹⁹ Walter Cook and John Sullivan, “Alexander Turnbull Library: Photograph Section,” *AGMANZ* 19, no. 1 (1988): 18.

³²⁰ See Andersen to Under-Secretary, Internal Affairs, 8 September and Oliver to Under-Secretary, Internal Affairs, 26 September, ANZ: AAOJ 6015 1933/94/4

³²¹ Fraser to Oliver, 5 October 1933, ANZ: AAOJ 6015 1933/94/4

institutions may have felt a sense of 'ownership' over certain typological territories, the view of government officials was that all material, whether it was held in Museum, Library or Gallery, was the property of the state. Despite this paternalistic point of view, it is clear that until 1936, the boundaries between the collections of the Museum, Gallery and Library were reasonably fluid, but that they tightened and were more carefully policed following this date as each institution sought to develop and maintain its own typological identity.

Fig. c. above: New Zealand Fine Arts court at Melbourne Centennial Exhibition 1888-9, photograph, 1888-9, Te Papa: 0.009410; below: David Alexander De Maus, Gallery interiors hung with paintings at New Zealand pictures in Fine Arts courts at New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, Dunedin, 1889-90, albumen print, ATL: Reference Number: PA1-o-761-01

3: Producing ‘New Zealand’ art 1865-1890

Three of the walls are covered with oil paintings – the fourth, with that species of art in which the English excel all other nations, watercolour. A great proportion of the former are paintings by English and other artists in the old country, and are lent for the occasion by the proprietors. It says much for the taste of the New Zealand community that so many good pictures should have been brought to the colony. The watercolours are almost exclusively the work of New Zealand artists and amateurs. ... Many of them are quite equal to the works of some of the best artists at home and might be exhibited without fear of invidious comparison on the walls of old and new Water Color Societies of London.¹

The New Zealand Exhibition staged at Dunedin in 1865 was the first international exhibition to take place in New Zealand. This was an ambitious undertaking for a colony barely 25 years old, and faith in its success was no doubt boosted by the recent gold rush in Otago and its accompanying promise of a prosperous future. Further, the New Zealand colonial wars were apparently drawing to a close and questions concerning the governance of New Zealand were up for discussion, if not resolution. For this thesis 1865 is a pivotal year: the first New Zealand Exhibition opened in Dunedin; Government was moved from Auckland to Wellington; and as a consequence of both these events the Colonial Museum was established, also in Wellington, with James Hector at its head.

This chapter begins by retracing the period already covered but with a shift of focus – from acquisition to exhibition – to examine the state of exhibition from 1865 to 1889. Attention will be concentrated on the exhibition of art in Museum and Gallery displays, in annual art exhibitions and at international exhibitions, and will focus on particular works of art that were either from, or later acquired for, state collections.² The consideration of international exhibitions is necessary to fully evaluate the nineteenth-century exhibitionary context due to Hector’s employment as Commissioner for several major Australasian and American exhibitions. This was also the context for which the exhibition of art as well as strategies of display received the most direct energy and financial support from the state.

¹ ‘Rambler’, *Wellington Independent*, 16 March 1865: 3. Annotations in the Hocken Library copy of this paper identify ‘Rambler’ as William Fox. See R. D. J. Collins and Wendy-Anne Curtis, *The New Zealand Exhibition 1865: Documents on the Fine Arts* (Dunedin: University of Otago, 1988), 33.

² Acquisition and exhibition are clearly interlinked, with acquisition often closely followed by exhibition, or exhibition leading to acquisition. Attention will be drawn to these links in this, and following chapters.

Exhibitions are the medium through which art becomes seen, discussed and known.³ They are the medium that constructs significance by asserting what is worthy of being put on display and what is not, while also contributing to the cultural meanings of art. Exhibitions are sites of exchange between the works on display and an audience that understands the process of validation represented by the exhibition. They are also sites where the intersection between politics, audience, criticism and art is most pronounced. Typically, studies of national exhibition histories submit certain works to an ahistorical process, whereby they are crystallised as masterpieces by ‘hero’ artists and memorialised as icons of a moment or movement, rendering other works forgotten. By returning attention to the original contexts of display, broadening the scope of works, and considering the discourses that accompanied exhibitions, alternative paths open through the histories of New Zealand art.

The opening quote from ‘Rambler’s’ review of the fine arts court at the Dunedin Exhibition contains several points that will guide the content and discussion in this chapter. By praising the ‘taste’ of colonists, Rambler draws attention to the relationship between the exhibition of art and the demonstration of class in colonial society. Rambler’s identification of a colonial body of works of art that could compare favourably to those British works on display, serves as the first review that grouped together the work of colonial artists as a distinctive category worthy of its own evaluation. Rambler’s identification of the role of the ‘amateur’ is also revealing and highlights the conditions of artistic production in the colony. Taken together, questions are raised around the classification of ‘art’ in nineteenth-century New Zealand: firstly in terms of what might constitute ‘New Zealand’ art and secondly in terms of those classification systems that were articulated through catalogues, exhibitions and reviews. This chapter traces the shifting boundaries of classification, as well as the processes of canonisation that occurred as New Zealand began to develop a distinct field of art in the second half of the nineteenth century.

³ See Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne, eds., *Thinking About Exhibitions* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995). This erudite selection of essays investigates the medium of the exhibition from its historic to contemporary forms.

The New Zealand Exhibition opened on 12 January 1865 to ‘expressions of pleasure and surprise’. Reports commented that although the exhibition was ‘...confessedly very incomplete... the display was much better than could have been anticipated’ and congratulations were voiced ‘that so much should have been accomplished by a first effort in so young a colony’.⁴ Employing rhetoric typical of the nineteenth-century international exhibition movement, the commissioners at the first planning meeting in 1863 proposed that ‘by exemplifying the great natural wealth and the adaptability of the soil and climate of New Zealand for almost every species of production’, the exhibition ‘would increase the confidence of its inhabitants in their resources’. Further, by ‘stimulating old industries amongst them, it would give rise to new ones, would promote emulation amongst the various provinces, and draw the inhabitants of the Colony generally into closer union’.⁵ The Committee regularly had to reinforce that the exhibition was to be of a New Zealand, not a provincial nature, a fact that must have sat oddly against the strong movement towards separation that was in the air.⁶ Indeed, the same week the exhibition opened, a separation meeting was held in Dunedin just hours before the news that the Government had moved from Auckland to Wellington.⁷ The exhibition’s potential as a stimulus to industry might therefore have seemed more probable than its potential to foster internal relations. International exhibitors were welcomed – Tasmania apparently put on a very good show and Britain sent imperial as well as Indian exhibits – but in contrast to later exhibitions there was a greater emphasis on fostering the development of *local* industry and internal relations than *external* trade and relations.

Hector’s role in the Exhibition is credited with bringing him to the attention of central government which subsequently secured his services for the Geological Survey and Colonial Museum. In Alfred Eccles’ history of the exhibition, written on

⁴ *Otago Daily Times*, 13 January 1865, cited in Alfred Eccles, *The First New Zealand Exhibition and Dunedin in 1865*. (Dunedin: Crown Print, 1925), 6.

⁵ Minutes of meeting held 21 September 1863, Minute book of the Commissioners, Hocken Library: MS-0329, 10.

⁶ The initial proposal of separation was that the Middle (South) and North Islands should be separately governed. See ‘Great Separation Meeting. The Southern Separation League’, *North Otago Times*, 12 January 1865, 3. This scheme was modified to suggest a consolidation of the Middle Island Provinces which did not eventuate. See ‘Separation’, *New Zealand Spectator and Cook’s Strait Guardian*, 14 June 1865, 4 for a critical overview of the movements.

⁷ The coincidence of this timing and an anticipation of the negative implication of this decision for Otago was noted in the *Otago Witness*, 14 January 1865, 1.

the eve of the third international exhibition held in Dunedin in 1925, he extolled Hector's virtues, writing '... extensive and interesting were the contributions made to the Exhibition by this gentleman, whose name must ever be emblazoned high on the roll of the distinguished scientists of this Dominion'.⁸ In 1864 Hector toured New Zealand to promote the exhibition and gather information about possible exhibitors and exhibits from the various provinces. His report, which he hoped would '...enable the commissioners to judge how far the Exhibition may be expected to indicate the value of the internal resources of the Colony, and its present advancement of the Arts of civilised life' was tabled at the committee meeting on 27 July 1864.⁹ While Hector was primarily responsible for Otago's geological exhibits, these words suggest that evidence of civilisation was not only to be found in the development of industry, but also in the 'arts'. There is no discussion in the commissioners' minutes relating to the need for a fine arts display, suggesting that it was assumed that this would be a necessary part of any exhibition that claimed to be of colonial if not international consequence. Hector not only described the scientific exhibits that could be expected, but also commented upon potential art exhibits. Nelson, for example, would send a 'good show of works of art and especially of pictures illustrative of the romantic scenery of the Nelson Province by amateur and professional artists'.¹⁰

Eccles recollected that while the commissioners had exercised 'every care to ensure that the Exhibition should be as comprehensive as they could make it, as regards its industry and scientific aspects', they had also 'wisely endeavoured to stimulate a love for Art'.¹¹ This was, as Rambler noted, an act of faith for 'If there be a department in which failure might be predicted in a new colony, it would be that of the fine arts'.¹² Their faith was rewarded, however, and the display was reportedly most creditable to the 'artistic talent and taste of the colony'. The art exhibits, displayed in an annexe at the rear of the exhibition building alongside the refreshments area, consisted of both works lent by colonists and works of art lent by colonial artists.¹³ The loan works came primarily from the collections of Otago

⁸ Eccles, *The First New Zealand Exhibition*, 8.

⁹ Minutes of meeting held 27 July 1864, Minute book of the Commissioners, Hocken Library: MS-0329, 184

¹⁰ Hector to Eccles, 30 July 1864, Hocken Library: MS-0366.

¹¹ Eccles, *The First New Zealand Exhibition*, 10.

¹² 'Rambler', *Wellington Independent*, 16 March 1865, 3

¹³ This arrangement suggests a parallel between the ability of art to 'refresh' the senses and mind, and the refreshments which provide succour for the body. This restorative power of art rendered it an important aspect of international exhibitions where it provided a space for respite and contrast to the

‘gentlemen’ and were mostly by British artists. These were highly praised as providing evidence of colonial ‘taste’, and the prominence given to naming the lenders of works in the catalogue suggests that this public confirmation of cultural capital played a role in class definition in colonial New Zealand society.

On the whole it was the exhibition of colonial works that aroused the most impassioned reviews, tinged as they were with a sense of surprise and pride that such a fine group of works could be drawn together in such a young colony. But how were these works identified as such? The catalogue lists all the works exhibited by title, artist and exhibitor, with no subcategories and little indication of medium or date of execution, meaning that Charles Decimus Barraud’s *Kai Kora Bay* [sic] was listed alongside John Martin’s *Meeting of Adam and Eve in Paradise* and John Turnbull Thomson’s *View of Dunedin, 1856* next to a version of Raphael’s *Madonna del Gran Duca* by an Aliani artist, exhibited by F. Fulton.¹⁴ In contrast to the catalogue, the hang does appear to have been determined by medium.¹⁵ (fig 27) The report suggests that prints, engravings and chromolithographs were exhibited in the corridor, and Rambler explains that the watercolours, mostly by New Zealand artists, covered ‘the whole wall which faces the visitor as he enters’.¹⁶ Was it only the reviewers and organisers who could readily identify the work of local artists, or were they visibly identified by name, or were they obviously ‘New Zealand’ in subject or style? Certainly, by the given titles, most colonial watercolours were, unsurprisingly, of New Zealand scenes. But it was certainly not through *inferiority* of subject choice or style that ‘New Zealand’ artists could be identified, for as the report of the fine arts noted

predominance of industrial and mechanical displays. See, for example chapter 1 ‘Ideals and Mission’ in Andrew McClellan, *The Art Museum from Boullee to Bilbao* (California: University of California Press, 2008).

¹⁴ The collecting and display of reproductive prints in the nineteenth-century colonial context was commonplace and indicates such prints were held in high regard at that time. For an account of the collection and display of prints in Victoria, Australia, see Alison Inglis, “Art at Second Hand: Prints after European Pictures in Victoria before 1870,” *Australian Journal of Art* VII (1988) and Inglis, “‘A Mania for Copies’: Replicas, Reproductions and Copies in Colonial Victoria,” in *The First Collections: The Public Library and the National Gallery of Victoria in the 1850s and 1860s*, ed. Ann Galbally (Melbourne: The University of Melbourne Museum of Art, 1992).

¹⁵ This is important to note as catalogues often reveal disparate and illogical juxtapositions, which may not have been visible in the actual display.

¹⁶ ‘Rambler’, *Wellington Independent*, 16 March 1865, 3. The placement of prints, engravings and chromolithographs in the corridor suggests that the hang reflected the traditional hierarchies of medium, but it was also determined by practicality. For example, James Crowe Richmond’s *Lake Rotoroa* arrived late and Rambler observed that it was less well hung than it should have been due to this delay.

the display 'was very creditable to New Zealand, not only that it contained so many good pictures, but also so few bad ones'.¹⁷

The reviewer for the *Otago Daily Times* gamely began a work by work review of the fine art exhibition following the catalogue order, but petered out having described only 119 of the 412 works on display. In this too, there was no clear distinction made between colonial and European artists. Unfortunately, this unfinished assessment meant that most works by colonial artists went unconsidered, but of three named colonial female artists exhibiting, Sarah Greenwood's work received favourable comment:

It is seldom that a lady is so completely master of the art of painting as to be able to produce a picture so admirable in colouring as this. There is a clearness and brilliancy in the atmospheric effects not often attained, and long and careful study alone could have enabled her to produce them'.¹⁸

Captain Robertson emerged in these reviews as one whose marine paintings could be relied upon to provide 'faithful representations of the moving billows' and of the 'delineations of shipping'.¹⁹ Other than these comments, this reviewer was sparse with comments on Peter Power, Thomson, and William Binzer's work. But if he or she had continued past no. 119 of the catalogue, further works of colonial origins worthy of mention might have been identified allowing elaboration of the introductory boast that 'some watercolour paintings of the North are the gems of the Exhibition, and neither Italy nor Switzerland can boast of more romantic scenery than is brought under notice in these masterly productions'.²⁰ For further assessment of the works of colonial artists it is necessary to return to Rambler's assessment of the fine arts which was less methodical, but more broadly analytical and descriptive.

'Rambler' is identified as William Fox in the annotated copy of the *Wellington Independent* in the Hocken Collections.²¹ Fox himself was represented in the fine arts

¹⁷ *New Zealand Exhibition, 1865: Reports and Awards of the Jurors and Appendix*, (Dunedin: Mills, Dick and Co., 1866), 499.

¹⁸ 'New Zealand Exhibition, No. IX, The Fine Arts Collection, No. 3', *Otago Daily Times*, 7 March 1865, 5. Sarah Greenwood (1809?-1889) immigrated to New Zealand in 1843, settling in the Motueka region. A collection of works is held in the Turnbull Library. See Janet Paul, "Sarah Greenwood 1809?-1889," *DNZB*, <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>, accessed 6 July 2007.

¹⁹ 'New Zealand Exhibition, No. IX, The Fine Arts Collection, No. 3', *Otago Daily Times*, 7 March 1865, 5

²⁰ 'New Zealand Exhibition, No. VII, The Fine Arts Collection, No. 1', *Otago Daily Times*, 1 March 1865, 5. Captain Thomas Robertson (1819-1875), see Una Platts, *Nineteenth Century New Zealand Artists: A Guide and Handbook* (Christchurch: Avon Fine Prints, 1980), 207.

²¹ Collins and Curtis, *The New Zealand Exhibition 1865: Documents on the Fine Arts*, 33.

display by two works, *Wanganui* and *Oteriah Pah, Wellington*, both from the collection of the Supreme Court Judge, Henry Samuel Chapman. As Fox notes in his review, the watercolours of local production that he found compared favourably to those of British origin were ‘almost exclusively the work of New Zealand artists and *amateurs*’[my italics].²² Fox himself could be classed as an amateur, but this did not carry the negative connotations implied by the twentieth-century use of the term. The ‘gentleman’ or amateur painter is generalised as one whose practice is largely confined to the private sphere, yet in the colonial setting, these spheres were less well defined, and the amateur practitioner regularly crossed into the professional and public sphere by exhibiting in contexts such as this Exhibition. Most New Zealand artists were necessarily ‘amateurs’, for as the report of the fine arts observed:

Pioneer Colonists have rough, and generally stern, work before them. They may admire the beauties of nature with which they are surrounded; may, perhaps almost unconsciously, cultivate their taste for the picturesque and the grand as they explore the country they have come to, but their hands, even if skilled, are seldom at leisure to paint its beauties.²³

Thus, counter to Jill Trevelyan’s suggestion that Fox was attempting to perpetuate the tradition of a private practice intended for consumption by family and friends, this exhibition, when considered alongside other nineteenth-century viewings of Fox’s work, argues for an understanding of his production in the colonial context as one that regularly crossed into the realm of public consumption.²⁴ I would suggest, as Caroline Jordan has argued in the case of colonial female artists in Australia, that the practice of the early colonial artist in New Zealand, male or female, is likewise ‘captured in the space of “crossover” suggested in the apparent contradictions of the “public amateur” and the “private professional”’.²⁵

Watercolour was the dominant medium for exhibition and collection in the colonial period and was initially strongly associated with amateur practice due to its heterogeneous roots in eighteenth-century traditions of drawing room training of the

²² Roger Blackley addresses the role of the amateur within the developing culture of ‘fine art’ in nineteenth-century New Zealand. See Roger Blackley, “John Kinder and New Zealand Art,” in *John Kinder’s New Zealand*, ed. Ron Brownson (Auckland: Random House New Zealand and Auckland Art Gallery, 2004).

²³ *New Zealand Exhibition, 1865: Reports and Awards of the Jurors and Appendix*, 497.

²⁴ Jill Trevelyan, *Picturing Paradise: The Colonial Watercolours of William Fox* (Wellington National Library Gallery, 2000), np.

²⁵ Caroline Jordan, “The Public Amateur and the Private Professional: A Reevaluation of the Categories of Public and Private in Colonial Women Artist’s Work,” *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art* 1, no. 2 (2000): 42.

genteel classes as well various topographical and documentary functions. It was the favoured medium for travel and tourist painting due to the fact that it could be carried out quickly, *en plein air*, and could easily capture the features of the land as well as atmospheric effects. In combination with the economic advantages of watercolour production – the requirement of a smaller financial outlay and a wider potential range of patrons – this rendered it the most commonly practised art medium in the colonies.²⁶ The rising status of watercolour painting during the nineteenth century was supported by the foundation of the Society of Painters in Watercolours (SPWC), which Fox refers to in his review, and relied upon convincing those of a cultured habitus that what had previously been thought of as a preparatory media, used for sketches, could produce works that were ‘finished’ in their own right.²⁷ Hand in hand with an increase in the appreciation of landscape as subject, the SPWC increasingly challenged the monopoly of the Royal Academy in the British art field in the nineteenth century.²⁸

In New Zealand, there was no pre-existing academic system to grapple with, so watercolours were readily shown in exhibitions alongside oil painting, prints and architectural drawings. Regardless of their place in nineteenth-century ‘fine art’ exhibitions, many of the works by ‘amateur’ artists exhibited at Dunedin are now in the collections of the Turnbull and the Hocken Libraries, where they have traditionally been valued more for their informative rather than their aesthetic qualities. For example, names that dominated both the display and reviews were Gully, Richmond, Barraud, Robertson, Thomson, Fox, Binzer, Power, O’Brien and Coote. Of these, only Richmond and Gully’s works have found a significant place in the permanent collections of the National Art Gallery. Power, O’Brien, Thomson and Robertson are primarily represented in the Hocken and the Otago Settlers Museum and Barraud in the Library, with Fox’s work split between the Hocken and the Library.

²⁶ Greg Smith, “Watercolourists and Watercolours at the Royal Academy, 1780-1836,” in *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House 1780-1836*, ed. David H. Solkin (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 192.

²⁷ The Society of Painters in Watercolours was founded as an independent institution in 1804 in response to the antipathy expressed by the Royal Academy towards watercolourists. See Ibid and Gordon Fyfe, *Art, Power and Modernity: English Art Institutions, 1750-1950* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 77-100. By ‘old’ and ‘new’ Fox refers both to this Society and its later incarnation the New Society of Painters in Watercolours, founded in 1831 and first exhibited in 1832. See Fyfe, *Art, Power and Modernity*, 88.

²⁸ Fyfe, *Art, Power and Modernity*, 88.

New Zealand could boast its share of ‘professional’ and ‘amateur’ artists at Dunedin, but these categories were very loosely defined in the colonial context. In the case of Richmond, it was regretted by commentators that the realities of colonial life rendered art little more than a leisure activity, that his ‘artistic activities should be smothered by the details of an official life’.²⁹ Richmond was one of the few New Zealand artists to exhibit in oil and his painting *Lake Rotoroa* was the work singled out for highest praise by Fox.³⁰ Fox expressed strong personal opinion in his review based on analysis of technique as well as aesthetic judgement and dealt little with content or the ability of the pictures to convey information. Thus, despite the fact that Thomson was Chief Surveyor of the Otago Province and most likely produced works of primarily topographical interest, he was advised ‘to throw all his colours but three or four, into the street’ in the hope that ‘His eye may in time get relieved of the jaundice with which a residence in a gold producing country has infected it’.³¹

Gully and Barraud were identified as ‘professional’ by Fox, who felt their works in watercolour were at the ‘top of the ladder’. Obviously Gully was able to shift between the demands of topographical and ‘artistic’ practice, producing works of a different calibre for his surveying drawings as opposed to his exhibition pieces. Artists who were professionals in a working sense, such as Thomson, proved less able to refine their craft for exhibitionary purposes. Nonetheless, the feature of O’Brien’s work that was highly praised by Fox was its careful delineation; the quality most necessary for his work as a draughtsman. This was most clearly displayed in a watercolour drawing of the exhibition buildings, which Fox diagnosed as O’Brien’s work, despite the fact it was exhibited under the name of the architect’s firm for which it was executed (fig 28).³² Part of the appeal O’Brien’s work held for Fox may have lain in its meticulous realism that suggests a parallel with the Pre-Raphaelite pre-occupation with ‘truth to nature’.

Other artists, whose work was likewise executed in a truly professional capacity, but in the natural history and not the architectural field, were not singled out

²⁹ ‘Rambler’, *Wellington Independent*, 16 March 1865, 3. See also *New Zealand Exhibition, 1865: Reports and Awards of the Jurors and Appendix*, 498.

³⁰ A pencil sketch that may be related to this work is held as part of the Richmond collection at Te Papa, *Lake Rotoroa*, 1864 (Te Papa, reference 1935-0005-5). Oil painting was not Richmond’s typical medium. He tended to exhibit watercolours and while Te Papa holds a substantial collection of drawings in pencil and watercolour, an example of his exhibition-quality watercolour painting is *On Lake Wanaka, Mount Aspiring, Otago, New Zealand*, 1870, (Auckland Art Gallery)

³¹ ‘Rambler’, *Wellington Independent*, 16 March 1865, 3

³² Roger Blackley makes this observation in Blackley, “John Kinder and New Zealand Art.”

for comment in fine arts reviews. Architectural drawings were admitted in the fine arts display and classified as such in the catalogue, but natural history works, such as those by John Buchanan, were not. Buchanan's watercolour drawings were made from sketches executed by himself and Hector whilst exploring the West Coast and consisted of 17 'most interesting views, illustrative of the Geological features of Otago Scenery' as well as drawings of fossils and Alpine plants (fig 29).³³ They were exhibited in 'Class XXIX, Educational Works and Appliances', and formed part of the Museum of the Geological Survey Department of Otago, a collection of specimens that visually converted the West Coast from a *terra incognita* into a known quantity, transforming what was supposed an 'inhospitable, desolate, and unfruitful region' into one that was 'endowed with rich resources'. Buchanan received an honorary certificate for his drawings which were said to 'bring before us the botanical features and picturesque grandeur of this comparatively untrodden region', but it was clearly their integration into the display, alongside 'Rocks, Minerals, Fossils, Birds, Woods, and Plants' that rendered them meaningful.³⁴ In contrast, Heaphy exhibited drawings that were not listed in the catalogue, but were described in the fine arts appendix as 'Drawings illustrative of the geology of Auckland' (fig 30). These received a bronze medal, with the jurors commenting that 'independent of their scientific value, [they] were very beautiful sketches'.³⁵ Both Buchanan's and Heaphy's works were illustrative of regional geology; that one set of these works was exhibited in the fine arts gallery, and the other in the Educational Works and Appliances section, speaks more of the weakness of classificatory boundaries rather than of any clear aesthetic differences between the works. Both were praised for their artistic as well as their scientific value, whether classified as 'Art' or as scientific illustrations.

The commissioners initially decided not to make awards in the fine arts section, a decision that was protested by prospective exhibitors as well as organisers. In the industrial field, competition was seen as a means to progress skills in manufacturing, and the commissioners commented that '...inducements will consist of the opportunity of distinction offered by emulative rivalry'.³⁶ Protestors argued that the same applied to the fine arts; that exhibitors would be more inspired to

³³ *New Zealand Exhibition, 1865: Reports and Awards of the Jurors and Appendix*, 245.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 261.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 499. It is probable that those works exhibited by Heaphy were views of Rangitoto Island such as those purchased in 1922 for the Library.

³⁶ Minutes of meeting held 21 September 1863, Minute book of the Commissioners, Hocken Library: MS-0329, 20

contribute works if benefits of competition were associated with exhibition. The decision not to make awards in the fine arts section was based on the following opinion:

The chief grounds on which it was decided was the difficulty in making awards between works of art. This was the reason why prizes were not awarded at home, and the difficulty would be felt more here where competent judges would be less easily got.³⁷

Eventually, it was decided that medals would be given to exhibitors participating in classes which would not be judged, but the fact that either silver or bronze medals were awarded suggests there was a degree of discernment involved in the final decision and that the medal awarded reflected the perceived skill of the artist. This sat in contrast to the awards in other classes which consisted of a generic honorary certificate given to all ‘winners’. Questions of classification were also raised by the commissioners during these discussions. The qualification of the term ‘Colonial’ was debated, and it was concluded that it referred only to works produced in New Zealand. Further clarification of the definition of art for Section IV was also requested by Mr Webb, a commissioner, who was ‘of the opinion that works of fine art conception in architectural design should come under class 37’. Despite this opinion the minutes note that ‘works of photography, engraving and architectural designs are admissible under this section’, that is, the fine arts section.

Photography was, however, exhibited independent of the fine arts and was judged by William Mathew Hodgkins and A. Beverley. It reportedly occupied a prominent position in the New Zealand exhibits and was considered to be on par with similar works from the Mother Country.³⁸ The photographs by Alexander Fletcher of Nelson were judged to be the finest in the exhibition, meaning that Nelson topped the charts both in painting and photography.³⁹ While referred to as an ‘art’, the jurors commented on the value of photography to ‘every branch of science... the anatomist, the antiquarian, the historian, the virtuoso, in all their widely different researches; the botanist, the geologist, naturalist, architect, engineer, and every other profession, in

³⁷ Minutes of meeting held 6 April 1864, Minute book of the Commissioners, Hocken Library: MS-0329, 127

³⁸ *New Zealand Exhibition, 1865: Reports and Awards of the Jurors and Appendix*, 194.

³⁹ Fletcher went on to become a leading art dealer in Melbourne. See Jordan, Caroline. “‘Fletcher’s of Collins Street’: Melbourne’s Leading Nineteenth-Century Art Dealer, Alexander Fletcher.” *La Trobe Journal* no. 75 (2005).

their various pursuits'.⁴⁰ Missing from this roll-call of professions is that of the artist or painter, an interesting omission given the at times complex relationship between painting and photography in the late nineteenth century.

Validation of works of art occurred through recognition in reviews or successful competition, but exhibitions were also marketplaces where exhibitors were able to place their works for sale, as long as no physical transactions took place on the premises. A catalogue of works to be sold by auction following the exhibition shows that several paintings by Gully, Barraud, Pharazyn, Cousins and Redmayne were available for sale.⁴¹ However, one 'would be purchaser' was angered by the fact that their inquiry after the price of some Gully paintings revealed the works had been sold before the exhibition even opened.⁴² This was indeed the case, as Hocken underlined the titles of three Gully works in his copy of the judges' report for the fine arts, commenting 'These marked are in my possession'.⁴³ The 'would be purchaser' also made the observation that this was not only unfair to the public, but also to the artist, as they might have a greater price realised if their work was 'submitted to public competition'. As the arranger of the fine arts court, Eccles also had a head start on acquiring works for his collection. He wrote to Hector of the three pictures he bought from the exhibition, one of which was Barraud's watercolour of *Te Rangihaeata*, which Eccles investigated reproducing in chromolithography, the cost prohibiting him from doing so at this time (fig 31).⁴⁴ However, he exhibited the portrait at the London International Exhibition in 1872, and proudly reproduced a copy in his 1925 history of the 1865 New Zealand Exhibition, stating it was a 'hitherto unpublished portrait'.⁴⁵

As the report of the closing ceremony poetically noted, the exhibition was a short-lived event and a brave one for a young colony:

As a mere spectacle it will fade away, as a museum, it will be rapidly scattered. But the impress it leaves on Industrial Art in New Zealand will be permanent, and to it will have to be attributed by the faithful historian much of the future progress made by the commerce of the Colony'.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Ibid., 198.

⁴¹ Landress and Hepburn, *Catalogue of Exhibits in the New Zealand Exhibition 1865 to Be Sold by Auction* (Dunedin: Mills, Dick and Co, 1865), 11-13.

⁴² *Otago Daily Times*, 17 January 1865, 4. See Collins and Curtis, *The New Zealand Exhibition 1865: Documents on the Fine Arts*.

⁴³ *New Zealand Exhibition, 1865: Reports and Awards of the Jurors and Appendix*, 497.

⁴⁴ Eccles to Hector, 14 October 1865, TPA: MU242.

⁴⁵ Eccles, *The First New Zealand Exhibition*, 10. The painting was donated to the Turnbull Library in 1959 by Mrs E. Eccles. See ATL: Drawings and prints collection, reference number B-004-020

⁴⁶ Cited in Ibid., 11-12.

Despite such assurances that they would leave their historical mark, the ephemeral nature of exhibitions and their populist appeal has rendered them relatively invisible to scholarship until recent decades. Aside from their intended impact on commerce and trade, these events provide valuable resources for studying the classification and framing of art within the colonial context of exhibition and display. And while the museum aspect was, as Eccles noted, largely scattered, the Dunedin exhibition did stimulate the founding of the Colonial Museum.⁴⁷ Hector and his team relocated to Wellington, taking with them material brought together for the Dunedin Exhibition. The Colonial Museum also inherited a small collection amassed by the precursor to the New Zealand Institute, the short-lived New Zealand Society, established in 1851 with Sir George Grey as its president and fitfully surviving until 1861. These, along with specimens gathered during the geological survey of the province of Wellington, provided the basis of the Museum collections.⁴⁸ Within a year of Hector's transfer a building to house both the New Zealand Geological Survey and Colonial Museum was erected in Museum Street, behind Parliament, where it stayed with various unsatisfactory and ultimately insufficient alterations and additions until 1936. (fig 32)

Colonial Conversazioni

We see 'Bombastes Furioso' [The Governor, Sir George Bowen] with his classical quotations and his look of importance presiding, Bishops Selwyn and Abraham on either hand; Lady Bowen, gorgeously dressed as if for a levée, and here, three little daughters, escorted by Dr Hector; crowded audiences—400 or 500 of Wellington's elite, half of them ladies and Members of Parliament...⁴⁹

This hearty prose, recorded in a letter from Robert Holmes to Julius von Haast, vividly describes the inaugural meeting of the New Zealand Institute on 5 August 1868 which took place in Te Hau ki Turanga, the carved meeting house, or whare runanga, acquired by the Museum in 1867. A key acquisition, Te Hau ki Turanga enhanced both the Museum's status as well as its floorspace. James Crowe Richmond,

⁴⁷ This clearly follows the precedent set by the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations in 1851, as the collections amassed in London formed the basis of the South Kensington Museum, which opened in 1857 with Henry Cole as its first director. Jeffrey Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 199-200.

⁴⁸ R. K. Dell, "Museums: Beginnings," in *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, ed. A. H. McLintock (Wellington: R. E. Owen, Government Printer, 1966), 602.

⁴⁹ H. F. von Haast, *The Life and Times of Sir Julius Von Haast: Explorer, Geologist, Museum Builder* (Wellington: H. F. von Haast, 1948), 510.

then a Member of the House of Representatives and effectively Minister of Native Affairs, was instrumental in securing the meeting house, carved by Raharuhi Rukupo, for the state for £450.⁵⁰ Te Hau ki Turanga was joined to the Museum by a short corridor that lead between the offices. Hector commented in the Annual Report that:

This wonderful specimen of Native Art has been restored in such a manner, that, while it is carefully preserved from decay by an exterior covering of wood and iron, its interior presents as much as possible the original character which its designers intended. The only marked innovation has been the elevation of the carved walls on a plinth 2 ½ feet above the original level so that the eye of the visitor, when standing up, may be at the same elevation as if he were sitting on the floor of the house in its original state, according to usual Native custom...⁵¹

The scenario described by Holmes hardly sounds the dry, dusty affair one might expect of the first meeting of the Institute, held in a Museum, but conveys the real nature of these events, which provided opportunities for socialising as much as for erudition. Known as colonial *conversazioni*, they were modelled on the soirées and *conversazioni* of the Royal Society of London and were popular with the colonial elite who wished to demonstrate their sophistication and continuation of metropolitan practices.⁵² Hector, it transpired, was quite the catch in Wellington elite circles and when his engagement to Maria Georgiana Munro was announced at the close of the session, Holmes could not help wondering whether there would ‘...be such an attendance of young ladies at the Museum in the future’.⁵³

Those who gathered heard an address from Sir George Bowen replied to by William Fox, and lectures by James Hector, James Edward Fitzgerald, Walter Baldock Durand Mantell, William Thomas Locke Travers and Felix Wakefield. Bowen was reported as quipping that the presence of so many at the meeting ‘while an important debate was in progress in the House of Representatives’ was ‘proof that

⁵⁰ W. H. Oliver & Frances Porter. ‘Richmond, James Crowe 1822 – 1898’. *DNZB*, <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>, accessed 8 October 2007

⁵¹ Hector, “Third Annual Report on the Colonial Museum and Library”, 1867-8: 4. The modification of whare runanga to meet the needs of a Pakeha audience was common colonial practice. This was most grotesquely exemplified in the example of Mataatua, acquired by the Government for the Sydney Exhibition 1879-80, which was erected on the Exhibition grounds with the carved panels facing outwards. See James Hector, “Progress Report of the Executive Commissioner, 31 March 1880, Sydney International Exhibition, 1879 (Further Papers Relative to),” *AJHR* H-5 (1880): 2. For a history of the journeys of Mataatua, see Hirini Moko Mead, *Nga Karoretanga O Mataatua Whare, the Wanderings of the Carved House, Mataatua* (Whakatane Te Runanga o Ngati Awa, 1990).

⁵² C. A. Fleming, “Science, Settlers and Scholars: The Centennial History of the Royal Society of New Zealand,” *Royal Society of New Zealand Bulletin* 25 (1987): 18.

⁵³ Haast, *The Life and Times of Sir Julius Von Haast*, 510.

the attractions of intellect and science could at times triumph over politics'.⁵⁴ Following the speeches, the crowd proceeded to 'promenade the Museum, and to examine the multitude of objects of interest which lay on every hand'.⁵⁵ The newspaper reported that 'Quite a crowd collected to admire Mr Fox's sketches, while microscopes and geological specimens engaged the attention of those of a more scientific disposition'. In her study of lantern slides and colonial culture, Elizabeth Hartrick describes *conversazioni* as 'democratic and eclectic occasions [which] attracted large crowds, drawing together prominent local figures and the interested public, and presenting them with the latest developments and innovations in sciences and arts'.⁵⁶ This inaugural meeting of the Institute was no exception and instigated an inclusive approach to science and arts, hosting what was arguably the first public art exhibition in a state institution in Wellington. Watercolours lent by C. D. Barraud, Gully, Richmond and Fox hung in the Museum for this first meeting. These paintings were 'much admired by the large number of friends and guests of the Society', and the novelty of this display was referred to by the reporter who was moved to 'recommend all lovers of art not to miss this opportunity—not likely to occur again for some considerable time—of seeing those valuable productions of the hands of our best artists'.⁵⁷ Echoing the reviewers of the New Zealand Exhibition, it was commented of Fox and Richmond that they 'would have made as high a reputation for themselves in art as they have in politics, had they devoted their whole attention to the former subject'.⁵⁸ Once again, Richmond was awarded the highest praise:

Mr J. C. Richmond has a style peculiar to himself, which we much admire, and we feel inclined to give him the palm, as far as the totally distinct *genre* can allow of any comparisons being made.⁵⁹

Annual Reports record that sets of paintings by Gully and Barraud were deposited in the Museum at various times between 1867 and 1869. Sixteen watercolour paintings deposited by Barraud on 4 August 1868 are likely those that were exhibited at the first

⁵⁴ 'First Meeting of the New Zealand Institute: Sir George F. Bowen's Inaugural Address', *Wellington Independent*, 6 August 1868, 5.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*

⁵⁶ Elizabeth Hartrick, "Consuming Illusions: The Magic Lantern in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand 1850-1910" (PhD thesis, The Australian Centre, University of Melbourne, 2003), 160.

⁵⁷ *Evening Post*, 7 August 1868, 2.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*

⁵⁹ *Ibid*

meeting of the Institute.⁶⁰ The subject of these and the other paintings exhibited were not detailed, but in the case of Barraud, Gully and Richmond, it is likely they depicted New Zealand scenery. Fox's watercolours, on the other hand, were 'mainly of Egypt, Syria, and the Holy Land, taken by him on the spot during his late travels'.⁶¹

While this show of paintings was temporary, works from William Swainson's collection may have been on more permanent display in the Museum. Swainson's collection was deposited in the Museum by his widow on 16 May 1866, and consisted of '351 printed volumes, 126 volumes and folios of manuscripts, drawings & c., 24 parcels of plates & c., some loose drawings ... 20 framed pictures, 15 insect boxes, box of New Zealand shells, 1 sm. Cabinet ...'⁶² Anne Swainson wrote in an accompanying letter:

Of these things a proper catalogue should be made and a copy given to me. They are to be held in trust until my death unless I wish to have any portion or all of them returned to me at any time. If the Provincial Government shall at any time neglect the proper curatorship of the scientific property or the valuable pictures now sent, and those to be delivered by me – then I shall consider it my duty to my late husband's memory to insist on the care of such things...⁶³

Swainson's collection included specimens of fossils, bird skins, shells, insects and coral, as well as natural history drawings of foreign species of birds, shells, fishes and insects. A floor plan from the 1870 catalogue shows that the Museum was divided into two sections: the New Zealand collection and the Foreign Collection, and much of Swainson's collection could easily have found a home in the foreign section.⁶⁴ (fig 33). Within the New Zealand section the natural history and ethnological specimens were exhibited together in a partitioned space, effectively pairing indigenous nature with indigenous culture.⁶⁵ This pairing reflected contemporary scholarship which

⁶⁰ Hector, "Fourth Annual Report on the Colonial Museum and Library", 1868-9: item 73.

⁶¹ *Evening Post*, 7 August 1868, 2. Views from Fox's travels are in the Library collections. See for example WC-111 and WC-112, watercolours from Egypt by Fox in the Drawings and Prints collection.

⁶² Hector, "Second Annual Report on the Colonial Museum and Library", 1866-7. This collection is to be distinguished from the collection of drawings later gifted to the New Zealand government for the future National Art Gallery. See chapters 2 and 5 for further details of this bequest.

⁶³ Anne Swainson to W. B. D. Mantell, 2 February 1866, TPA: MU147, box 1, item 106

⁶⁴ James Hector, *Catalogue of the Colonial Museum, Wellington, New Zealand* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1870). On Anne Swainson's death, Mantell took over the management of the collection which was withdrawn from the Colonial Museum and ultimately deposited in the Library with the Mantell Collection in 1927. Phil Parkinson, "Introduction," in *William Swainson, F.R.S., F.L.S., 1789-1855: A Commemorative Exhibition* (Wellington: National Library of New Zealand, 1989), np.

⁶⁵ This arrangement was carried out by Gore according to Hector's desires. See Gore to Hector, 23 February 1867, TPA: MU147, box 1, folder 7.

was closely studying New Zealand's native environment and its indigenous inhabitants in order that they might be better understood and therefore better controlled. Maori were consequently positioned as part of "naïve" nature over which colonialism sought – and in large part achieved – hegemonic authority'.⁶⁶

In its early years, Hector was balancing the management of the Museum with a busy schedule of field trips, often leaving the day-to-day management to his subordinate, R. B. Gore, for months at a time. Gore necessarily took an active role in the organisation of the museum and its contents, but readily deferred to Hector's judgement. While the plan demonstrates the global organisational system of the Museum, allowing for comparison between 'foreign' and 'New Zealand' or 'native' exhibits, Gore became involved in the organisation of displays at a micro-level. He organised the manufacture of cases and assisted with the labelling and arrangement of exhibits, all of which was intimately detailed in regular letters to Hector. Though he was essentially an administrator and not an expert in exhibitions or any scientific field, Gore's correspondence shows him to have had a keen eye for detail. Regarding the new cases, he advised they be made 'like the last cases only narrower at the top and rather lower so as to have more glass and less shade thrown on the specimens'.⁶⁷ Gore also described his process of labelling exhibits to Hector: 'I write the name of the shell on the smallest size Museum label and gum it on a card a trifle larger and put them in card boxes with the specimens, they look very neat'. The type specimens of shells and fossils were thus carefully labelled and arranged by Gore and John Buchanan, and Walter Buller's birds were displayed on stands.

As described in chapter 2, Hector took advantage of Buchanan's skills to produce illustrated publications which conveyed specialised information about indigenous species, but photographs were the primary pictorial medium used to illustrate New Zealand's scenery in Museum displays. Any documentation of the hanging of works of art is scant, although Gore did inform Hector in 1868 that he was getting photographs of the 'hot springs & c.' mounted and 'bound round with paper and then a narrow strip of gold paper'.⁶⁸ (fig 34) These were likely the photographs of

⁶⁶ John Taylor, "Consuming Identity: Modernity and Tourism in New Zealand," *Research in Anthropology and Linguistics* 2 (1998): 16.

⁶⁷ Gore to Hector, 31 December 1866, TPA: MU147, box 1, folder 6.

⁶⁸ Gore to Hector, 17 April 1868, TPA: MU13, box 5, item 195.

New Zealand scenery donated to the Museum by William Thomas Locke Travers.⁶⁹ Travers forms an interesting exception to the otherwise professional photographers – Daniel Mundy, Burton Brothers, John Nichol Crombie and Josiah Martin – represented in the early Museum collections. Travers was firstly a lawyer, magistrate and politician, but had corresponding interests as an explorer, naturalist and photographer. He is primarily remembered for these latter interests; as a founding member of the New Zealand Institute and as an amateur photographer.⁷⁰ As a ‘gentleman amateur’ Travers’ photographic work participated in the class-defining activities of the elite, and was intended to disseminate both knowledge and ideas about ‘taste’ to the wider community. He published regularly in the *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* and one of these papers, read before the Wellington Philosophical Society in 1871 summarised the results of his experience of out-door photography.⁷¹ This pioneering paper provided specific advice for those practicing during the ‘heroic’ phase of New Zealand exploratory photography, and included practical details of what the pack-horse could be expected to carry as well as the best times of day for taking photographs.⁷² Travers’ final words are a reminder of the challenge that outdoor photography posed in the nineteenth century:

As a last suggestion I would add that perfect calmness and deliberation in all stages of the work are in the highest degree necessary, anxiety and hurry being fruitful sources of failure.⁷³

Travers’ photographs reflect a very considered and contemplative approach to photography. They were closely aligned to his exploratory work, picturing the Nelson region, but his concern with aesthetics consistently overrode that of purely providing

⁶⁹ Travers donated 12 mounted photographs in 1867 and 28 in 1868. See “Third Annual Report on the Colonial Museum and Laboratory”, 1867-68 and “Fourth Annual Report on the Colonial Museum”, 1868-9. These appear to have been shown at several international exhibitions over the following decade, for example, 12 photographs by Travers were exhibited at the Vienna International Exhibition 1873. See *Descriptive Catalogue of Exhibits Sent from New Zealand to the Vienna Exhibition, 1873*, (Wellington: Government Printer, 1873). Works by Travers were also shown at the Sydney International Exhibition 1879-80 and Melbourne International Exhibition 1880-81. A collection of photographic prints by Travers in the Turnbull are likely to be very similar in style and subject to those acquired by the Museum in the 1860s. See ATL: Photographic Archive: PAColl-1574. Twenty of these are of an oval format and are mounted on card with typed labels suggesting they were destined for a display context.

⁷⁰ Shepherd, R. Winsome. ‘Travers, William Thomas Locke 1819 – 1903’. *DNZB*, <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>, accessed 26 November 2007

⁷¹ W. T. L. Travers, “Notes on the Practice of out-Door Photography,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* 4 (1872).

⁷² See Roger Blackley, *Two Centuries of New Zealand Landscape Art* (Auckland: Auckland City Art Gallery, 1990), 36.

⁷³ Travers, “Notes on the Practice of out-Door Photography,” 164.

information in his images. His photographs were typically mounted in an oval format and conformed to picturesque principles of pictorial arrangement, using framing devices, such as a tree or rocky overhang and paths, roads or waterways, to lead the eye into the picture. Rather than focusing on the dramatic, Travers' photographs tended to represent the more charming aspects of the landscape and often included the presence of a single spectator figure. He also documented the colonial impact on the land and by doing so the idea of a pristine and natural beauty was fused with the presence of the colonisers, complicating any straightforward appreciation of beauty alone.⁷⁴ (fig 35) Travers often included photographic apparatus within the photographic frame, which recently prompted David Eggleton to characterise him as a pioneer conceptualist photographer, for these compositional devices demonstrate an awareness of the constructed nature of representation.⁷⁵

Photographs, not paintings, were the primary medium acquired by the Museum or donated to its permanent collections, but this does not infer that Hector was not interested in the fine arts. In the late 1860s, he was regularly consulted to help solicit works of art for exhibition or purchase, probably due to his involvement organising the 1865 Dunedin Exhibition. However, much of this was carried out in a personal as much as professional capacity, suggesting this consulting provided a means for Hector to maintain connections and enhance his cultural capital. Von Tempsky's flattery has already been cited, but many other requests were made of Hector in the realm of the arts. In 1867 Hector arranged for J. A. Douglas, a friend in London, to purchase three works by Gully for £50,⁷⁶ and Dr C. F. Fischer asked Hector for help organising the disposal of articles by Anton Seuffert by lottery.⁷⁷ The same year Hector co-ordinated the presentation of an inlaid writing desk,

⁷⁴ Travers' views around Lake Guyon, for example, include tree-stumps or logs with an axe firmly wedged into the timber. See for example *Mr Ellis and family on the shores of Lake Guyon*, 1870, albumen silver photograph, ATL, reference no. PA7-22-04. This documents both the tools of control of the environment as well as its destruction. Tim Bonyhady has emphasised the way that nineteenth-century photographers did not just seek out subjects that 'happened to conform to compositional conventions established by landscape painters', but that they actively 'cut and pasted their subjects to satisfy those conventions' literally using axes and felling trees to do so. See Tim Bonyhady, "Artists with Axes," in *The Colonial Earth* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002), 193.

⁷⁵ David Eggleton, *Into the Light: A History of New Zealand Photography* (Craig Potton Publishing, 2006), 34.

⁷⁶ J. A. Douglas to Hector, 1 August 1867, TPA: MU147, box 1, item 431.

⁷⁷ Dr. C. F. Fischer to Hector, 20 July 1867, TPA: MU147, box 1, item 421.

commissioned from Seuffert, to Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker.⁷⁸ (fig 36) The presentation was made possible by a number of ‘grateful colonists’, including Hector and Haast, and acknowledged Hooker’s work on the native flora of New Zealand, published in two books, the second in 1867 titled *New Zealand Flora*. Hooker was most appreciative of the presentation, writing:

I have an enormous deal to thank you for – in primus the superb writing table – which as far exceeds my expectations ... it is indeed a trophy to hand down to posterity...⁷⁹

However, he did find it necessary to make a few small adjustments:

I had Holland’s people out to repolish it, and at their advice removed the scrolls from the top (They rightly insisted they were quite out of keeping with the style of the cabinet which was otherwise perfect) replacing them with inlaid work on the flat of New Zealand woods from the museum – both Sir George and Knight greatly approved, all the more as it enabled me to stand some beautiful Wedgwood vases on the top; which heightens the whole.⁸⁰

In 1868 Eccles drew upon Hector as a contact to secure works for a fine arts Exhibition in Dunedin, writing ‘I cannot let another mail go without my thanks for getting us W. Fox’s sketches which will be a most interesting and valuable addition to our exhibition’.⁸¹ This exhibition planned to take advantage of the success of the 1865 Exhibition and to further prove Dunedin’s advance in civilisation. It also coincided with the Duke of Edinburgh’s visit to New Zealand. Hector forwarded a selection of works from the Monrad collection, in which he ‘endeavoured to represent the works of each of the old engravers’, only sending duplicates where there was any ‘marked peculiarity of style or design’.⁸² He sent a further consignment of drawings that were probably from his personal collection, or lent on behalf of artist acquaintances. These included:

⁷⁸ Hector wrote to Hooker on 7 January 1868 that he was sending a case containing the cabinet, and promised to send a list of all those who had contributed, suggesting Hooker would find ‘many appreciative names on the list’. See MU465, volume 1, page 499.

⁷⁹ Hooker to Hector, 1 May 1868, Hobbs, “‘My Dear Hector’”, 91-2.

⁸⁰ Hooker to Hector, 30 October 1868, Ibid. The removed scrolls were most probably by Anton Teutenberg who was often responsible for carvings on works by Anton Seuffert. The Hooker cabinet was purchased for the Museum collections in 1987 (Te Papa: PF000206)

⁸¹ Alfred Eccles to Hector, 1 December 1868, TPA: MU147, box 2, item 85. The ‘Fox Collection’ shown at the 1869 Dunedin exhibition consisted of 223 works, including a notable collection of photographs. See *Catalogue of the Otago Fine Arts Exhibition Held at Dunedin, New Zealand, 1869*. Dunedin: Henry Wise, 1869, 25-29.

⁸² Hector to William Hodgkins, 29 January 1869, TPA: MU465, volume 1, page 615.

1. Watercolour drawing of Dr Hector's camp on the Matakitaki looking North to Mount Aspiring, by C. D. Barraud, February 1863
2. Views of Black Peak and Mount Aspiring from the Wanaka Lake (framed) by J. C. Richmond
3. Thirty field sketches of New Zealand scenery by J. C. Richmond
4. Two sketches, watercolour, of the Wanganui River & c., by R. Pharazyn, Wellington⁸³

It is probable that the Barraud watercolour was drawn from one of Hector's sketches made during his expeditions into the Otago hinterland, and the Richmond works were likely sent on behalf of the artist. While the exhibition may have closed by the time the Duke reached Dunedin, Gore anxiously anticipated his arrival in Wellington and hoped that Hector, who was again on one of his interminable field trips, would be present. Gore promised to 'get the Museum brightened up a little', which he did with the help of an assistant, who helped him get 'some live ferns which we put in the small cut barrels' and 'placed them in the lobby and about the floor'.⁸⁴ The Prince was politely 'very pleased' with the Museum.

In 1870 the Museum once again sent a selection of items, including works from the Monrad collection, to the Art Exhibition staged in the new Canterbury Museum buildings before they were occupied by the public collections. Gore's deference to Hector's judgement is indicated in a postscript to the accompanying letter. He wrote 'Owing to the absence of Dr Hector ... many things are perhaps omitted that were to have been sent, but if there is time no doubt another parcel will be forwarded'.⁸⁵ This exhibition was remarkably comprehensive in its exhibits, including jewellery, photography, silverware, engravings, typography, archaeological specimens of coins and arms, an Indian and Chinese collection, statuettes, bronzes, ceramics, carvings and inlaid woods alongside the conventional categories of watercolour and oil painting. It also had an ante-room where Polynesian and Maori artefacts were displayed, as well as a case of pre-historic items, exhibited by the Canterbury Museum, and facilitated by Haast's presence on both the working and executive committee.⁸⁶ Haast was confident of the exhibition's success, stating 'The Monrad collection look well all framed'.⁸⁷

⁸³ Hector to Hodgkins, 12 February 1869, TPA: MU465, volume 1, page 620

⁸⁴ See Gore to Hector, 19 March 1869, TPA: MU147, box 2, folder 7 and Gore to Hector, 23 April 1869, TPA: MU147, box 2, folder 8.

⁸⁵ Gore to Alexander Lean, 22 January 1870, TPA: MU465, volume 1, page 747

⁸⁶ The Art Exhibition was held in the recently completed Canterbury Museum. Haast wrote 'it was thought desirable before it was occupied by the public collections that an Art Exhibition should be held

In addition to works from the Monrad collection, Gore forwarded two watercolours of Ngatapa on behalf of Richmond. (fig 37) These drawings represent a very scenic view of a troubled political spot; the scene of the assault by Government forces on the pa occupied by Te Kooti in 1868-9. By foregrounding the lush foliage in the composition, rendering the pa indistinct in the distance and omitting any sign of active assault, Richmond's watercolours aestheticise the land, cleansing it of its political associations and evidence of racial conflict.⁸⁸ The function of these drawings in a contemporary art exhibition is complex, especially in this context where a museological framing of the exhibits was offered. For it seems that Maori as ancient, pre-historic civilisation was acceptable, but Maori as living, rebellious presence required editing. This interpretation is further heightened by Richmond's position in Government where he had been acting as Minister of Native Affairs from 1866 to 1869. In 1867 peace had seemed imminent in Maori-Pakeha relations, so the renewed rebellions in 1868 lead by Titokowaru in Taranaki and Te Kooti on the East Coast must have jolted political expectations. Richmond marched with Colonel Whitmore against Te Kooti, but his exhibited drawings recorded no trace of active conflict, and offered instead a sanitised view. This representation mirrors the summary of Richmond's character provided by his biographers, who describe him to have found 'all occupations, apart from painting, eventually distasteful'.⁸⁹

The role that Hector played as a facilitator for these and later exhibitions undoubtedly resulted from his proven skill in soliciting exhibits for the 1865 Exhibition, but it also fulfils his expectation that the central institution he headed would act as a resource for the provinces. Consequently, it is not surprising that when New Zealand began to participate in the nineteenth-century international exhibition movement, Hector's skills were mobilised to effect the country's representation on the world stage.

in it. The first exhibition was opened on 8th February, and was a great success, proving full of attraction to the public'. See Julius von Haast, "On the Early History of the Canterbury Museum," *TPNZI* 14 (1881).

⁸⁷ Haast to Hector, 2 October 1870, TPA: MU147, box 3, folder 6. In a note attached to this letter Gore suggested that the museum should attempt to purchase the frames, as the organisers of the exhibition might 'be glad to dispose of them cheaply'.

⁸⁸ See entry 196 in *Art Exhibition, 1870, Canterbury, New Zealand*, (Christchurch: William Reeves, 1870). The original watercolour, *Ngatapa from the East* is in the Canterbury Museum collection, presumably acquired following this exhibition. This was subsequently lithographed and published in James Cowan's *New Zealand Wars* in 1923. A preparatory drawing of the same title is in the Gallery collection, gifted as part of the Richmond bequest in 1935, accession number 1935/5/3 and a copy of the lithograph is held in the Library, see ATL: drawings and prints collection: A-048-011.

⁸⁹ See Oliver & Porter. 'Richmond, James Crowe 1822 – 1898', op. cit.

International exhibitions were large-scale industrial and cultural events that set the world on a stage, acting as sites where nations could advertise their resources as well as promote their identities.⁹⁰ The fine arts were a crucial part of any international exhibition but the reasons for their inclusion varied. At the Great Exhibition of 1851, their token presence was part of an attempt to increase aesthetic taste amongst manufacturers and consumers. The French, however, realised that the fine arts provided the perfect counterbalance to industry, and at the 1855 Exposition Universelle the fine arts took central stage, including major retrospectives of the works of Ingres and Delacroix. Even in this setting, however, no-one was under any illusions that the display of fine arts attracted the crowds, for at the 1855 Paris Exposition Universelle, the fine art palace had only 100 000 visitors, compared with three million in the machinery hall.⁹¹ Consequently, exhibition historians such as Paul Greenhalgh have commented that the fine arts, ‘brought status, not pleasure, to the exhibition site’.⁹²

As Greenhalgh notes, there was no standard for the definition of fine arts at international exhibitions during this period.⁹³ Depending on the host country, the range of practices could be limited or extensive. For example, France restricted their definition to architecture, sculpture and painting, whereas the British had a wider-ranging definition which included lace, decorative designs, metal work and photography.⁹⁴ The constant in all displays was the prominence of painting, which maintained its status as the pre-eminent art practice.

The emphasis placed on the fine arts as indicators of status was important in the colonial context, particularly at nineteenth-century Australasian exhibitions, where they were to exert an educative and civilising effect on the visiting public. Fine art

⁹⁰ This next section builds on research carried out for my MA. See Rebecca Rice, “Picturing Progress in Paradise: New Zealand on Display at International Exhibitions 1873-1886” (MA thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2003). For literature on international exhibitions, see, for example Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display*, Robert Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century of Progress Expositions* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), Timothy Mitchell, “Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order [1989],” in *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Donald Preziosi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

⁹¹ Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 188.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 198.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

displays were also intended to demonstrate the cultural development and ‘civilisation’ of the colonies. But this role was subservient to the greater interest in picturing the potential of the colonies as *resources* for the imperial centre. This was why, at early international exhibitions, the colonies were largely exhibited as ‘goods, not culture’.⁹⁵ Fine art ‘palaces’ were largely reserved for the display of European art, at the expense of the colonies, who often chose to display their art in their own courts alongside raw materials, machinery and other products. This satisfied the commissioners who felt the primary role of the fine arts should be to illustrate the colony and that they could best serve this purpose in the courts themselves. In New Zealand’s case, art acted as a powerful marketing tool to support these dual goals, illustrating both the progress and civilisation of the colony while promoting an image of New Zealand as paradise.

Isaac Featherston, based in London from 1871 to 1875 as the Agent-General for New Zealand, was the first to suggest New Zealand should actively participate in these events. In 1872 he wrote to the Colonial Secretary:

I have the honour to bring under the notice of the Government the subject of the approaching International Exhibition at Vienna, which promises to be on a very magnificent scale ... The vital importance of our Colony being properly represented on this occasion was urged upon my attention at Hamburg, at Berlin, at Frankfurt and other commercial centres. The value to New Zealand of such an advertisement cannot, I think, be overrated.⁹⁶

Featherston clearly understood the potential of the exhibition to act as an *advertisement*, to assert New Zealand’s development as a civilised community while providing an opportunity to sell the country, or more properly its resources, on the international market. Trade was at the centre of Featherston’s plans for New Zealand’s representation at the Vienna Exhibition and this was reflected in his proposals for exhibits. He suggested that wools, grains and preserved meats would exemplify the pastoral and agricultural capabilities of the colony while indigenous fibres, such as *phormium tenax*, should show their adaptability for fibre, rope and

⁹⁵ Ibid., 54. Early displays consisted primarily of the mineral and agricultural products of New Zealand, focussing on flax, grains, coal, gold, for example. For an account of the representation of New Zealand and the Pacific at international exhibitions, see Ewan Johnston, “Representing the Pacific at International Exhibitions 1851-1940” (PhD in History, Auckland University, 1998). An overview of Australia’s participation in international exhibitions and other events is provided by Kate Darian-Smith et al., eds., *Seize the Day: Australians, Exhibitions and the World* (Melbourne: Monash University Press, 2008).

⁹⁶ Featherston to the Colonial Secretary, London, 27 June 1872, “The Vienna Exhibition, (Papers Relating to),” *AJHR* H-5 (1873): 1.

paper. The physical resources of the country, including minerals, rocks, coal and woods, would both illustrate the resources that awaited development, as well as give ‘fresh impetus to our trade and commerce’.⁹⁷

Hector and Haast were called upon to provide assistance and advice regarding the preparation of New Zealand exhibits in the colony, which were chosen by competition at a preliminary exhibition held in Christchurch from 1872-73, the Colonial and Vienna Exhibition. Although the catalogue lists several examples of oil painting, drawing and sculpture in the fine arts category, Hector and Haast chose to send only photographs to Vienna.⁹⁸ As the first exhibitions were devoted to celebrating technical innovation and progress, photography was welcomed in displays, but as a representational medium, it caused difficulties in classification. International Exhibitions attempted to impose meaning and order upon the realities of an age that had become pre-occupied with classifying and defining all aspects of the world: its matter, its inhabitants and their products.⁹⁹ Photography, a slippery practice that fell between the disciplines of science and art, was problematic in this context. Some exhibition organisers favoured treating photography as a science, focussing on technical apparatus and developments, while others argued for its artistic quality and advocated its inclusion in fine arts displays.

At Vienna photographs were classified within the liberal arts division in the published catalogue. This was significant, as classification was a key indicator of status at international exhibitions.¹⁰⁰ Vienna was the first exhibition to devote separate buildings to different aspects of human activity, erecting a separate fine arts hall, but despite their written classification as liberal arts, photographs were excluded from this area and were instead scattered throughout the national courts. (fig 38) Photographs were thus displayed alongside the other items in the New Zealand court: industrial manufactures and raw materials, Maori artefacts, moa skeletons, furniture and paintings. Reviewers of the exhibitions, taking their lead from the apparently highly ordered catalogues, generally distinguished between the different categories of

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ *Catalogue of Colonial and Vienna Exhibition Held at Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand, 1872-73*, (Christchurch: “Times” Office, 1872), 32-34.

⁹⁹ James Ryan, R., *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualisation of the British Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), 17.

¹⁰⁰ Julie K. Brown, *Making Culture Visible: The Public Display of Photography at Fairs, Expositions and Exhibitions in the United States, 1847-1900* (Harwood Academic Publishers, 2001), 61.

exhibits in their writing, but as artefacts they all functioned within the same dynamic display which was often less orderly than the catalogues suggest.

The photographs sent by Hector included series of scenic views by Daniel Louis Mundy and Travers, photographs of the Thames goldfields by G. W. Bishop, and a somewhat macabre set of views of the scene of the Wairau Massacre by William Collie.¹⁰¹ Hector, it seems, felt that photographs were sufficient to illustrate the scenery of New Zealand, but Featherston's opinion differed. His primary function during the period described as 'Vogelism' was to promote New Zealand as a site for immigration.¹⁰² To achieve this he felt that the exhibits should not only demonstrate the resources and capabilities of the colony, but should also be as 'striking and attractive as possible'.¹⁰³ To this end a circular was sent to residents in Britain requesting the loan of 'pictures, cabinet furniture, or any other objects illustrative of the natural resources or industrial progress of the Colony' to ensure New Zealand was properly displayed at the Vienna Exhibition.¹⁰⁴ The paintings eventually acquired for exhibition were contributed by colonists or ex-colonists resident in London, and were exclusively by two artists, C. D. Barraud and John Gully.

The contrast between Hector and Featherston's attitude towards the inclusion of paintings reflects the ambiguous place of the fine arts at international exhibitions, more specifically the ambiguity surrounding the role fine arts should play in New Zealand's courts. This arose from differing opinions as to whether the arts were included purely to provide illustration or whether they were markers of status, in which case a gilt-framed painting held greater prestige than a photograph. If the fine arts were included to provide illustration, then photography may have provided the facts a little too bluntly for a politician's causes, in which case its status as 'art' came under question. Hector's faith in the representational power of photography persisted, nonetheless, and as the commissioner for the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876 he again exhibited primarily photographs, despite Julius Vogel's assertion that 'photographs seem to me to give a very inadequate idea of the scenery of a country'.¹⁰⁵ Many of the exhibits for Philadelphia were drawn directly from

¹⁰¹ See *Descriptive Catalogue of Exhibits Sent from New Zealand to the Vienna Exhibition, 1873*.

¹⁰² Tony Simpson, *The Immigrants: The Great Migration from Britain to New Zealand 1830-1890* (Auckland: Godwit Publishing, 1997), 9.

¹⁰³ Featherston and Clifford, circular enclosed in Featherston to the Colonial Secretary, 21 March 1873, "The Vienna Exhibition, (Papers Relating to)," 9.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Julius Vogel, 1 October 1874, "The Philadelphia Exhibition of 1876," *AJHR*, H-5 (1875): 5.

Government sources, such as the set of photographs by Herbert Deveril, photographer and government lithographer, or those of the civil servant and avid photographer Arthur Thomas Bothamley who was sent to Philadelphia to assist with the displays. Hector sent the set of photographs by Mundy in the Museum's collections as well as photographs showing the domestic life of the Maori, and the Burton Brothers, Edward Sealey and John Nicholl Crombie were also represented.¹⁰⁶ The only non-photographic pictorial works sent were from the Museum collection and consisted solely of watercolour drawings by the surveyor artist, William Cooper, and a panoramic watercolour sketch of Thames Gold Fields by Henry Severn.¹⁰⁷

Hector boasted in his report that the total number of views exhibited was 549, an estimate supported by photographic views of the interior of the New Zealand court which shows pictures lining the walls and cases on all sides.¹⁰⁸ (fig 39) At Philadelphia, the organisers responded to previous criticisms of the dispersal of the photographic exhibits throughout the exhibition by planning to exhibit both the apparatus and the products of photography, 'everything belonging to photography', in a separate Photographic Hall.¹⁰⁹ By doing so, photography would become self-dependent, separate both from art and from science.¹¹⁰ Despite this initiative, many international exhibitors, including New Zealand, continued to exhibit photographs in their national courts, where they acted to convey the *character* of each country, rather than to demonstrate the *progress* of photographic art.¹¹¹

Hector was not just interested in the aesthetic appeal of photographs but saw them as having the capacity to enhance the educational aspect of the exhibits. Central to the display tactics of nineteenth-century international exhibitions was the belief in 'object lessons', whereby it was surmised that the audience could learn through visual experience alone. Thus 'descriptive writing [was] set aside for pictures and pictures in

¹⁰⁶ Works by Crombie were acquired for the Museum collection in 1872. The presence of Edward Sealey is accounted for by his association with Haast, whom he accompanied on expeditions into the Southern Alps, when he made striking views of the alpine scenery. Hector does not seem to have taken up Haast's offer to purchase works by Sealey for the Museum collections. See Haast to Hector, 11 March 1867, TPA: MU147, box 3, item 62.

¹⁰⁷ This work is currently in the Library collections (ATL, Drawings and Prints, F-013), but was probably in the Colonial Museum following the Philadelphia Exhibition as its accompanying label reads "Sketch panoamer [sic] of Thames Goldfields. General register 2501".

¹⁰⁸ James Hector, "Reports of the Special Commissioner, Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition," *AJHR* H-23 (1877): 28.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Brown, *Making Culture Visible*, 61.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 79.

their turn [were] replaced by actual objects'.¹¹² Hector's arrangements reflected this concern and he often juxtaposed objects in different media to both enhance the visual appeal of the exhibit and better convey an educational message. To this end, at Philadelphia, Bothamley's collection of photographs of Maori was 'hung over the Maori curiosities' and Sealy's views of the Southern Alps were 'grouped around Dr Von Haast's elaborate map of the glacier and mountain system of Canterbury'.¹¹³ So in the viewer's imagination static objects on display, such as a Maori cloak or a taiaha, were transformed into functional items in photographs showing Maori wearing or wielding such artefacts. Likewise the geological terrain depicted in a map could be related to its dramatic visual counterpart in views of the Southern Alps. Together with the objects, the photographs could effectively convey an absent but real landscape and its native inhabitants to those present at the exhibition.¹¹⁴

Hector continued in the role of Commissioner for the Sydney International Exhibition 1879-80 and the rival exhibition held by Melbourne in 1880-81. While the arrangements he co-ordinated sound eminently logical, the profusion of objects may have distracted from the intended educational effect, as ingenious techniques were sometimes adopted to deal with the number of items sent for display. A photograph taken of the New Zealand court at the Sydney Exhibition reveals that pictures were arranged on top of display cabinets so that they were visible from above, but not to visitors in the court itself. (fig 40) A reviewer checked himself from commenting on the 'photographic department' at Sydney, observing instead that the photographs were 'distributed "pell mell" around the New Zealand court'.¹¹⁵

Emily Harris was a particularly anxious exhibitor at the Sydney, Melbourne and Colonial and Indian exhibitions, who tried to exert influence over how her works were to be displayed in these contexts. For Sydney, Harris sent Hector 28 watercolour drawings of New Zealand wild flowers and berries along with a 'parcel containing the catalogue and a proposed design for hanging the pictures', for 'unless they have a better plan it will save the committee a great deal of trouble in placing them, as they

¹¹² Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century of Progress Expositions*, 40.

¹¹³ A. N. Bothamley to James Hector, 25 April 1976, "Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition," *AJHR*, H-23: 32.

¹¹⁴ See Rebecca Rice, "The Art of Photography at Nineteenth-Century International Exhibitions," *New Zealand Journal of Photography*, no. 63 (2007).

¹¹⁵ 'The International Exhibition at Sydney', 8 November 1879, *New Zealand Mail*, 22.

have been arranged according to colour'.¹¹⁶ (fig 41) One reviewer suggested that Harris's skills were invaluable to the colony, commenting:

She is deserving of more than commendation, and such talent as she possesses should not be lost to the colony; here is at least a painstaking and efficient artist, and it would not be unworthy of the botanical world if she were to be asked to contribute drawings for a work on New Zealand wild flowers, nor would a publisher find such a work unremunerative; there is a good opening for a production of this character, and no doubt a liberal government would assist.¹¹⁷

Harris did not receive any government assistance for a 'production of this character' and by the time she published her three books on New Zealand flowers, ferns and berries, the works of Sarah Featon and Georgina Hetley had eclipsed them.¹¹⁸

Works such as those by Harris, like photography, caused difficulty in classification at international exhibitions. Confusion arose over where to place botanical works in the classification system for the Sydney Exhibition, as Emily Harris, Emily Nutt and Mrs Tizard exhibited their respective drawings of native flowers, ferns and berries under Class 407, watercolours, in the fine arts section, but were awarded prizes in Class 700 – 724, ornamental trees, shrubs, flowers, conservatories &c.¹¹⁹ Buchanan's *Grasses of New Zealand* which was exhibited at Sydney and Melbourne was equally problematic.¹²⁰ (see fig 3) The significance of this work, the first publication devoted solely to New Zealand grasses, lay in the economic value of grasses both as cereal products and pastoral feed, information that was important for New Zealand's agricultural progress. But the classification of Buchanan's *Grasses* at various exhibitions illustrates how works could transcend the categories set in place by the organisers to be valued for their scientific as well as their aesthetic qualities. At Sydney, Buchanan's *Grasses* was exhibited in the

¹¹⁶ Emily Harris to Hector, 10 July 1879, MU188, no. 379.

¹¹⁷ 'The Sydney International Exhibition', 6 December 1879, *New Zealand Mail*, 22.

¹¹⁸ The relevant publications are Emily Cumming Harris, *Flowers, Ferns and Berries of New Zealand* (Nelson: H. D. Jackson, 1890), Mr and Mrs E. H. Featon, *The Art Album of New Zealand Flora* (Wellington: Bock and Cousins, 1887-8), Mrs Charles Hetley, *The Native Flowers of New Zealand: Illustrated in Colours in the Best Style of Modern Chromo-Litho Art, from Drawings Coloured to Nature* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1888).

¹¹⁹ 'Reports of judges and awards', in *Official Record of the Sydney International Exhibition, 1879*, (Sydney: Government Printer, 1881), 1008-9.

¹²⁰ List of Awards, "Sydney International Exhibition, 1879 (Further Papers Relative Thereto)," *AJHR*, H-5A (1880): 3.

education and science section, and awarded first degree of merit, while at Melbourne it was catalogued under engravings and lithographs in the fine art section.¹²¹

Up to this point the regional arts societies played a marginal role in international exhibitions, and art exhibits were either solicited directly through the commissioner's contacts or by artists responding to public invitations for exhibits. But in 1885 the Wellington-based Fine Arts Association of New Zealand became closely involved in preparations for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition to be held in London in London in 1886. The Association had held its first interim exhibition in the Museum in March 1883, in advance of its inaugural annual exhibition, which took place in July 1883 in rooms at Lyon Blair's store on Hunter Street.¹²² These exhibitions attracted a wide range of works from exhibitors around the country, but by 1884 the Association was struggling, having been without a president for a year. In 1885 it was announced that a New Zealand Industrial Exhibition was to be held in Wellington to draw together works for the upcoming London exhibition. The Association had been planning to hold their annual exhibition as well as help organise art exhibits for this event, but prospective participants became confused as to which exhibition they were submitting works for, so eventually the annual exhibition was forfeited and all exhibits formed part of the Industrial Exhibition.¹²³ This gave a boost to the efforts of the Association, but, as Kay and Eden suggest, also signalled their future strategies of seeking government support for various ventures.

The fine art section of the 1885 exhibition was displayed in the upper floor of St George's Hall and included paintings, architectural drawings, decorative arts and photographs, with a separate area screened off to form a photographic gallery. Gully's works were described in the official record as the 'most important' in the exhibition, and other usual suspects formed the core of this display, including John Gibb, Richmond and Barraud. However, newspaper reviews repeatedly drew attention to some less prominent figures in New Zealand's art history, such as the promising

¹²¹ *Melbourne International Exhibition, 1880, Opened 1st October 1880: The Official Catalogue of the Exhibits, with Introductory Notices of the Countries Exhibiting*, (Melbourne: Mason, Firth and McCutcheon, 1880), 291. Despite this classification it is unclear where the work was exhibited. Due to its format it was unlikely to have been hung and was probably displayed open to a particular page in a cabinet. The reviewer for the *New Zealand Herald* commented several times upon the difficulty experienced attempting to match the catalogued items with those on display in the New Zealand court at Sydney. Pictures were often unlabelled, or the labels were illegible to the visitor. See, for example, 'The Sydney Exhibition', 8 October 1879, *New Zealand Herald*, 6.

¹²² Robin Kay and Tony Eden, *Portrait of a Century: The History of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts 1882-1982* (Wellington: Millwood Press, 1983), 19.

¹²³ The Association was reimbursed £50 for forfeiting their exhibition. See *Ibid.*, 20.

Eleanor Kate Sperrey.¹²⁴ Sperrey was New Zealand's first academy-trained female artist, who had studied in Melbourne and Rome before returning to Wellington in 1884. Her prize work, *The Italian Goatherd*, c. 1884, oil on canvas (Te Papa), was first exhibited to the New Zealand public at this exhibition and consistently received high praise. (fig 42) Presumably painted while Sperrey was studying in Europe, the painting apparently had a striking presence. One reviewer lamented that there might not be such 'picturesque artists' models' in New Zealand. Nonetheless, he was excited by the promise displayed by her work and he predicted that she might become 'one of the leading painters of the colony'.¹²⁵

The New Zealand Industrial Exhibition provided a launching pad for many works to begin a world tour of international exhibitions, as they were forwarded from Wellington to London, to Melbourne for the Centennial Exhibition 1888-89, to the Paris Exposition 1889, and back to the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition in Dunedin 1889-90. While Hector was instrumental in the preliminary exhibition, Haast was ultimately appointed Commissioner of the London exhibition. The preliminary exhibition allowed for a more considered selection of exhibits, particularly in the fine arts, and all exhibits sent to London were of New Zealand subjects. New Zealand's fine arts, including photographs, engravings and drawings, were displayed in two separate venues at London: alongside other colonies in a fine art display in Albert Hall; and in the New Zealand Court itself. (fig 43) In the case of New Zealand, this exhibiting strategy aroused great consternation as the fine arts were felt to be 'divorced... from the rest of the colonial exhibits'.¹²⁶ There was art present in the New Zealand court, but following debate, more pictures were removed from Albert Hall to the court itself. This required careful consideration, as there was insufficient room in the New Zealand Court to accommodate all the pictures. Alfred Domett, one of the London-based commissioners, stated that the means of selection should be based on the relevance of the pictures to the New Zealand display, asserting:

It is not the *artistic* point of view that we have to consider. The great object is to show what the *useful* parts of New Zealand are like, such as the sheep runs and the agricultural plains. They are probably not the most picturesque places, like mountains and glaciers, but even if we only have photographs it would be well to show people that there is land to settle on. We should, of course, understand that the pictures

¹²⁴ *Official Record: New Zealand Industrial Exhibition, 1885, Wellington*, (Wellington: Government Printer, 1885), 147. See Jane Vial, "Sperrey, Eleanor Catherine, 1862-1893," *DNZB*.

¹²⁵ 'The Pictures', 21 August 1885, *New Zealand Mail*, 21-22

¹²⁶ 'The Colonial and Indian Exhibition', 20 August 1886, *New Zealand Mail*, 19.

would not be selected for their artistic merit, but for their *truthfulness* and *descriptive* excellence.[my italics]¹²⁷

In the original catalogue, the works exhibited in the New Zealand Court consisted primarily of depictions of Maori and ‘decorative’ works, such as painted screens, shells and silk. Gottfried Lindauer was dissatisfied with the fact that his pictures, on the basis of their subject matter, appeared in the Maori Court rather than in the Albert Hall.¹²⁸ There they were kept company by Alfred Burton’s recently produced series ‘The Maori at Home’, which showed a stark and contrasting view of Maori life. It is likely that those who contributed works of a more decorative nature, such as Emily Harris, who exhibited two painted screens and table tops and a fan in the fine arts category, would have been similarly unhappy with the relegation of their works to the New Zealand Court, where they were considered separately from the fine arts in reviews and descriptions.

However, the commissioners clearly saw that the exhibition was not a site where the interests of individual artists were to be promoted, but that New Zealand’s fine arts should serve a very specific function in this context. This function was less about art than advertisement, a focus that drew criticism from the art world, notably in J. A. Blaikie’s review of the New Zealand display of pictures, published in the leading periodical, *Magazine of Art*:

The show of colonial art... contains little that appeals to painters and students of painting. Its interest is of another and far more popular kind. As a pictorial commentary on the work of government surveyors, the observations of botanists, the records of photographers, these paintings and drawings possess a value that is quite independent of the artistic handling of materials.¹²⁹

New Zealand’s art might have provided merely a ‘pictorial commentary’ of colonial activities – but rather than this being the result of a rejection of ‘artistic’ value on the part of the artists, art was selected on the basis of its descriptive qualities. So Sperrey’s prize-winning *Goatherd*, which engaged with a modern international style, was not sent to the exhibition, but her portraits of Maori identities were.

¹²⁷ ‘Minutes of meeting of New Zealand Commissioners held at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition’, 19 July 1886, Haast Family Papers, ATL : MS-Papers-0037, folder 1, 8.

¹²⁸ Ibid. These were mostly paintings from Walter Buller’s collection and included the large painting *The Maori at Home* 1885 (Wanganui: Whanganui Regional Museum) as the centrepiece.

¹²⁹ J. A. Blaikie, “Art in New Zealand,” *Magazine of Art* London (1887): 34.

Aside from Maori, landscape was a favourite subject for pictorial representation, and by the time of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition two sites had emerged as the clear favourites in depictions of New Zealand: Milford Sound and the Pink and White Terraces of Rotomahana. Views of the Terraces abounded at London, particularly in photographs which, in spite of their perceived ability to ‘objectively’ document such geological curiosities, were appreciated for their aesthetic qualities and exhibited as part of the fine art display in Albert Hall. There, they entranced viewers with depictions of the unique ‘crystal and coral cups, bowls and basins set in stalactic filigree worked by Mother Nature in the vanished ages’.¹³⁰ (fig 44) The success of these advertisements of New Zealand’s natural wonderland was potentially undermined when Mount Tarawera erupted on 10 June 1886, destroying the Terraces and causing the deaths of approximately 105 people. The government, aware that the eruption could detract from the promotional goals of the exhibition, was quick to reassure both tourists and emigrants that the extent of the damage was localised and contained, that the eruption affected ‘the rest of the colony no more than England is affected by an eruption of Vesuvius’.¹³¹ While the eruption may have had negative implications for New Zealand’s international image, it provided immediate—if somewhat dubious—benefits to those exhibiting in London. Visitors were encouraged to rush to the exhibition to see those ‘pictures of scenes that will never again be beheld in reality’ and that were available for ‘modest’ prices.¹³² The *Illustrated London News* specifically recommended that visitors ‘should not omit to look at Miss Gordon Cumming’s fine watercolour drawings ... and at a series of small oil-paintings, by Mr. Charles Blomfield, of Auckland’.¹³³ (fig 45) Blomfield had 14 canvases of Rotomahana in the exhibition, which quickly sold out for a total of 180 guineas, probably as a direct result of the eruption.¹³⁴

Artists and photographers in New Zealand were also quick to capitalise on the opportunity to document the radically affected landscape of the Hot Springs region. Charles Spencer already had photographs of the terraces exhibited in the fine art display under the studio name, Spencer and Turner, but on 12 June 1886, he was officially recruited by Hector to make ‘a series of well-selected views of the site of the

¹³⁰ ‘The New Zealand Tourist’, 8 November 1879, *New Zealand Mail (NZM)*, 7

¹³¹ 18 June 1886, *NZM*, 22.

¹³² ‘Volcanic eruption in New Zealand’, 2 October 1886, *Illustrated London News (ILN)*, 347.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Roger Blackley, ‘Blomfield’s Terraces,’ *Turnbull Library Record* 20, no. 1 (1987).

eruption'.¹³⁵ Although artists also made 'on the spot' sketches that were forwarded to the *Illustrated London News* and other publications for reproduction, Hector's choice of a photographer to accompany him reflects the strong faith he held in photography as a documentary medium that could support a scientific discourse. This is also reinforced by reviews, which praised Spencer's photographs, along with Hector's and S. Percy Smith's reports, as 'the most precise and authentic information concerning those wonderful effects of volcanic forces'.¹³⁶ (fig 46)

Hector mounted and annotated Spencer's photographs and promptly forwarded them, along with his geological report, to the exhibition commissioners at London hoping that they would be added to the display.¹³⁷ The desolate landscapes recorded in Spencer's post-eruption photographs provided a stark contrast to the magical landscape that previously constituted the Pink and White Terraces. In the same context then, Spencer's photographs functioned within a fine art setting as well as becoming an adjunct to a scientific discourse, a role that was consolidated by their use in Hector's illustrated talks at the New Zealand Institute as well as their lithographic publication in Smith's *The Eruption of Tarawera* (1886).

Individual versus Institutional Identities

The consequence of the state's direction of New Zealand's pictorial representation abroad was that while New Zealand strove to emphasise its civilisation and progress, it increasingly found its point of 'difference' on the world stage in its natural scenery and native inhabitants. Indeed, it could be argued that the pictorial displays at these events contributed to the construction of a nascent colonial identity, based on these iconic motifs. International exhibitions *were* sites where 'national schools' of art could be showcased and celebrated, and this has led to close ties being made between the display of art at international exhibitions, national art histories and discourses of national identity. America, however, first celebrated the demonstration of a 'national school' at Chicago in 1893, and Christine Boyanowski has recently argued that as far as the colonies were concerned, it was not until the British Empire Exhibition in 1924 that Canada was hailed as having established a national school of

¹³⁵ Hector, "Preliminary report on the recent volcanic eruptions", *AJHR*, H – 25, p. 1.

¹³⁶ 'Volcanic eruption in New Zealand', 2 October 1886, *ILN*, 347.

¹³⁷ Hector to Francis Dillon Bell, 25 August 1886, Te Papa Archives, MU465, volume 5, p. 668.

art, while New Zealand and Australia lagged behind.¹³⁸ So it seems that other ways of theorising colonial displays of art at international exhibitions are required, rather than subsuming them within nationalist art histories, or as being complicit with supporting emergent national identities. A consideration of New Zealand's fine arts representation at international exhibitions reveals that many artists saw these events as sites where their individual practice might be promoted. I suggest then, that colonial artists participated in these events less from a desire to support embryonic national identities, than to have the opportunity to pitch their work in an *international* rather than merely local and colonial forum.

Pascale Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters* provides a model for shifting the usual frame of perspective to consider the display of art at these exhibitions from two different vantage-points – the exhibition as *competition* and the exhibition as a *marketplace*. This provides another way to think through the role of colonial New Zealand art in the context of the international exhibition, where conflict exists between art as an international universal language of form and art as an expression of national identity.¹³⁹ Casanova argues that while standard practice is to understand works of literature as products of a national tradition, as examples of French or American literature; on the contrary, the system has always been global. Casanova does not submit works to internal or external criticism, but attempts to situate writers and their works within 'world literary space', and to describe the processes of 'consecration' and legitimation that take place as texts attempt to enter the geographical and historical realm of the 'world republic of letters'. As she writes, literatures are 'not a pure emanation of national identity; they are constructed through literary rivalries, which are always denied, and struggles, which are always international'.¹⁴⁰

Hector's last stand as a Commissioner for New Zealand's presence at an international exhibition was for the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition 1888-89. Here, a clear attempt was made to separate the fine arts display in the arrangement of the

¹³⁸ See Diane P. Fischer, ed. *Paris 1900: The "American School" At the Universal Exposition* (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 1999) and Christine Boyanoski, "Selective Memory: The *British Empire Exhibition* and National Histories of Art," in *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa*, ed. Annie E. Coombes (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006).

¹³⁹ Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M.B. DeBevoise (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004).

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

court. While raw and manufactured products, geological and indigenous resources formed the central aspect of the display, the fine arts – oil and watercolour paintings and photographs – were exhibited in a series of octagonal rooms to one side of the court.¹⁴¹ (fig 47) The demarcation of the fine arts display reflected the interest that New Zealand artists had shown in being represented at this event: the commission noted that 6643 square feet had been applied for exhibiting works of art, compared with 5555 square feet for machinery and 3326 square feet for mining industries.¹⁴² This interest was likely motivated by the potential the exhibition offered New Zealand artists to participate in a more international game of art, firstly in terms of competition. The competitive aspect of the exhibition was heightened by the fact that even though the fine arts were distributed around the various colonial courts as well as in the fine art palace, the colonies were judged on a level playing field with the European exhibitors. So the expertise of colonial exhibitors was evaluated in direct competition with their international and European counterparts. The results were publicised, and often hotly contested, both in newspaper reports and in the Official Records of the exhibition.¹⁴³

These records show that New Zealand and Victoria were the key colonial rivals in the fine arts at the Melbourne Exhibition. New Zealand was the second-largest exhibiting colony next to Victoria, which, as the host colony, exhibited its works of art in the fine art palace. New Zealand sent 494 works of art, compared with Victoria's 766.¹⁴⁴ Despite Victoria's numerical dominance, the jury regretted that 'the requirements of an international competition have rendered it impossible to confer the highest honours upon any of the artists exhibiting'.¹⁴⁵ In contrast, one Australian artist, Ellis Rowan, and three New Zealand artists, John Gully, Kate Sperrey and Louis Steele, were awarded the highest honours of the colonial exhibitors. The jury:

... were greatly interested in the large and varied display of the New Zealand Court. The grand and picturesque scenery by which he is surrounded seems to incline the NZ

¹⁴¹ Reviews commented on these 'ingeniously arranged' chambers. See 2 August 1888, *Argus*, 9.

¹⁴² Minutes of meeting of commissioners, 20 April 1888, TPA: MU182

¹⁴³ For a consideration of the debates aroused by Australian exhibitors, see Caroline Jordan, "Tom Roberts, Ellis Rowan and the Struggle for Australian Art at the Great Exhibitions of 1880 and 1888," in *Seize the Day: Exhibitions, Australia and the World*, ed. Kate Darian-Smith, et al. (Melbourne: Monash University e-Press, 2008).

¹⁴⁴ 'The Fine Arts Galleries', in *Official Record of the Centennial International Exhibition Melbourne, 1888-9*, (Melbourne: Sands and McDougall 1890), 226.

¹⁴⁵ 'Reports and Awards of Judges', *Ibid.*, 675.

artist irresistibly towards landscape in painting – a department of art in which this country is unusually rich...¹⁴⁶

In light of these comments there is an irony in the fact that, as opposed to Gully's work, Sperrey and Steele were awarded first order of merit for works of art that were not representative of anything uniquely 'New Zealand'. (fig 48) Sperrey was again awarded a first order of merit for her painting, *Italian Goatherd*, and Louis Steele, best-known for his history paintings of Maori, won top honours at Melbourne for a work of quite a different ilk. *The Story of a Saddle*, 1888 (location unknown) illustrated a contemporary poem of the same title. A brief excerpt was printed in the catalogue:

Lay me by some gentle creek, plant a sapling by my head; fameless leave my life and history – might meet mates among the dead.
There, old boy cut short the parting; tis not right that men should cry. Have a drink?
No! – perhaps 'tis better! Bless you, Tom, old boy! Goodbye.¹⁴⁷

When *The Story of a Saddle* was exhibited at the Auckland Society of Arts before travelling to Melbourne, it was touted as the 'picture of the exhibition'.¹⁴⁸ To some it was even considered fit for the Royal Academy, with one reviewer predicting that the painting would 'probably be secured for the Melbourne art gallery by some of the wealthy Australian magnates'.¹⁴⁹

Steele's work, along with Sperrey's, went on to appear at the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition in Dunedin, 1889-90, suggesting neither was secured for a public or private collection at this time. (fig 49) Consequently, while the critical evaluations achieved through competition were important in providing validation of practice, they did not necessarily correlate to successful entry into the art market. The death of Gully during the early stages of the Melbourne exhibition no doubt stimulated market demand for his works, all of which were purchased – for more than he had originally priced them. A number of other significant purchases were made. For example, Sir William Clarke, Melbourne philanthropist and magnate, bought Joseph Gaut's impressive life-size portrait of *King Tawhiao*, 1888 (Te Papa) for £100, along with a New Zealand landscape by H. G. Lloyd. (fig 50) While a universal style

¹⁴⁶ Ibid

¹⁴⁷ Author unnamed, *New Zealand Court, Catalogue, Centennial International Exhibition, Melbourne, 1888.*, (Melbourne: Mason, Firth and McCutcheon, 1888), 6.

¹⁴⁸ 'Auckland Society of Arts Exhibition', 12 April 1888, *New Zealand Herald*, 5.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid

was advantageous in competition, success in the art market was stimulated by more unique signifiers of place. Notably, Sperrey's kitsch paintings of Maori subjects, executed in a slick, finished style, found buyers while her *Goatherd*, with its foreign subject and painterly style did not.

In the Dunedin exhibition, as participants from the host country, colonial New Zealand artists had the privilege of having their works displayed alongside European and British artists in the fine arts galleries. In contrast to Melbourne the English, foreign and colonial loan collections were not considered for competition, which was restricted to Australian and New Zealand artists. The New South Wales and Victorian works were said to be 'excellent in quality', but it was regretted that a 'more numerous and representative collection' was not sent.¹⁵⁰ Steele and Sperrey retained their first award status for the same works as in Melbourne, but they were joined by three other New Zealand landscape artists who were singled out for comment by the jurors: Edmund Gouldsmith, E. A. Gifford and J. C. Richmond. These artists apparently rose above producing tedious and repetitive views of the local landscape, which dominated the New Zealand fine arts display. They suggested that:

...if more attention were given to work in which the "figure" had place, it would vary the monotony of so much mere landscape work ... doubtless the magnificent scenery of our colony is largely responsible for what may be termed the landscape bias of our painters; but in the galleries are many fine examples by British artists of figure and landscape in combination, which show very conclusively the advantages to be had by uniting the two branches of study ...¹⁵¹

This feedback differed from the positive reception New Zealand landscape had received in Melbourne, but reflects the exhibitionary context. In Melbourne, the landscape acted as a point of difference for an international jury, whereas in Dunedin, a largely colonial jury used their feedback to encourage New Zealand artists to participate in a more international artistic dialogue. By making these comments they also emphasised the importance of these exhibitions in disseminating ideas about and approaches to art and art-making.

Regardless of their comparative successes at this exhibition – Sperrey's competitive success and Gaut's market success – both these works ended up in state

¹⁵⁰ John H. Scott, Chairman of Jurors, Class XVIII, in D. Harris Hastings, ed. *Official Record of the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition Held at Dunedin, 1889-90* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1891), 293.

¹⁵¹ John H. Scott, Chairman of Jurors, Class XVIII, *Ibid.*

collections and were destined to occupy a place in the same collection in the late twentieth century, but through markedly different trajectories. Sperrey's work was never sold but was gifted to the National Art Collection in 1912 by her daughter, Kate Airini Mair. Gaut's painting entered the Dominion Museum collections in 1911 when it was purchased for £60 from Storer, Meek and Co., Jervois St, Wellington, possibly through one of Clarke's family estates in New Zealand.¹⁵² While Sperrey's work continued to be valued for its artistic qualities, Gaut's was acquired during Hamilton's directorship for its ethnographic interest and as an adjunct to the Maori displays.

Analysis of the display of colonial New Zealand art at international exhibitions shows that tension existed between art as an international universal language of form and art as an expression of national identity. Artists most likely participated in these events more to have the opportunity to pitch their work in an *international* rather than local and colonial forum, than from a desire to support embryonic national identities. But there is a tendency to subsume their efforts within the stories of emergent national identities, which renders certain works prominent and others hidden within the canon of colonial New Zealand art. Sperrey's *Goatherd*, one of the most widely exhibited and highly praised works in the 1880s, has occupied a largely anonymous place in the National Art Gallery. This is most likely the consequence of its European subject and style, which identifies neither with the specificities of the New Zealand landscape, nor its indigenous inhabitants. Its inability then, to support any nationalist art historical narrative, has resulted in its relative obscurity, and has likewise impacted negatively on the posterity of Sperrey herself.¹⁵³

The tendency to seek histories that support progressive narratives of identity has rendered many works ineligible for inclusion in either the canons or discourses of colonial New Zealand art. This has been shown to have its precedent in the interest focused on New Zealand works of art on the world stage, which clearly favoured, at least in terms of the market and in terms of advertising the colony, images of the indigenous landscape and Maori. While I am not arguing that every unacknowledged or forgotten artist represented in the state collections needs to be rehabilitated, the

¹⁵² Dominion Museum Purchase Sheet, 7 April 1911, TPA: MU57. The painting may have come to New Zealand through Sir William Clarke's brother, Joseph Clarke, who took over the management of their fathers farming estates at Moa Flat and Teviot, New Zealand, from 1874 until his death in 1895. See Sylvia Morrissey, "Clarke, Sir William John (1831-1897)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1969).

¹⁵³ Sperrey is not considered in either the original or revised edition of Anne Kirker, *New Zealand Women Artists: A Survey of 150 Years*, revised ed. (Tortola: Craftsman House, 1993).

patterns underlying those processes of consecration reveal trends in collecting and exhibiting strategies that privilege certain works of art over others. A more inclusive analysis of the colonial art scene can enrich the understanding of the developing New Zealand art field as it approached the end of the nineteenth century. The following chapter takes up this thread and aims to provide a thick description of the Wellington-based art world from the 1890s to 1907.

Fig. d. Thomas Pringle, *Photograph of geyser erupting at Waimangu*, c. 1908, silver gelatin print, ATL: PA1-f-179-60-1

4. *A Red-letter Day for New Zealand Art*

*A red-letter day yearly marks the progress of every individual who treads life's path. With regret or satisfaction he then reviews the road already traversed, and with fresh hope and energy presses forward to the goal he would reach. At fixed times the careful trader tabulates his experience, and then draws the lines which in the future he can most safely follow. Nor are such wholesome and expedient customs confined to the individual. One of the prominent features of modern civilisation is that communities and nations have found it convenient to exhibit to the world at intervals the position they hold in the van of progress.*¹

New Zealand was to be no exception, and the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, Dunedin 1889-90, provided the vehicle by which the colony might 'recount the progress she has made during her short semi-centenary'.² This exhibition was *recognised* by Government as the public celebration of the jubilee of the colony, but it was not *organised* by the state as was the earlier Industrial Exhibition held in Wellington, 1885. Instead, it was a committee-driven venture that secured Government support for the buildings and for several of the exhibits, notably the Early History, Maori and South Seas Court, the Tourist Court and the Science Exhibits in the Industrial Court.³ The Government was also asked to request the loan of the British pictures currently on show at the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition.⁴ The 'red letter day' represented by the exhibition provided the opportunity to survey the past in order to map the future, to negotiate the evolving relationship between the old and the new. The Dunedin Exhibition provides a relevant starting point for this chapter's discussion, for I propose that it both reflects and embodies a new historical awareness of New Zealand as a country that was *creating* history, as quickly as it was *erasing* it. For example, the colonial works of art that had, up to this moment, been received as contemporary, were fast becoming historical. Further, the Early History, Maori and South Seas Court, which set out to visualise in text, picture and artefact, the history of the colony to date, as well as the pre-history of the colony, demonstrated an awareness of the need to preserve and record the past.

As noted, the self-congratulatory tone that had dominated New Zealand's art reviews at previous international exhibitions was less pronounced at the Dunedin

¹ 'The New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition', *Otago Witness*, 28 November 1889, 13.

² Ibid.

³ Hector was asked to help co-ordinate the arrangements of the exhibits in the Mining Court to render '...the Mining display at the forthcoming Exhibition worthy of the Colony'. John Roberts to Minister of Mines, 3 August 1889, Hocken Library: MS-339-Letter book July-November 1889.

⁴ 'The New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition', *Otago Witness*, 28 November 1889, 15.

Exhibition. In particular, the dependence on landscape as the dominant pictorial genre came under criticism. The fine arts reviewer, M. R.⁵, observed that New Zealand artists had a natural advantage with landscape painting ‘for our beautiful lake scenery, with towering snow-capped mountains, provides splendid material for pencil as well as pen’, and predicted that ‘before very long New Zealand is likely to have a distinct school of landscape painters, whose works are sure to be greatly sought after in the Australian colonies’.⁶ However, he too noted that ‘it will be found that it is in *genre* painting that we are most behindhand’.⁷

The introduction of the figure into painting required that some narrative element be integrated into New Zealand painting. The problem that faced New Zealand artists was where this narrative should be sought. In Australia, the Heidelberg school had initiated a mode of painting focusing on ‘nationalistic themes that celebrate the white settlement of Australia and its economic foundations in extracting wealth from the cultivation of the land’.⁸ Scenes of stockmen, shearers and bush rangers at work in a bleached dry landscape became synonymous with emergent Australian nationalism.⁹ Several New Zealand artists had been producing and exhibiting works that dealt with historical or genre subjects, but no definite school comparable to that emerging in Australia was noticeable by the time of the Dunedin Exhibition. A number of artists had sent work of rural or agricultural themes to the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in 1886, such as Peter Power’s painting *A New Zealand Homestead*, which represented a ‘typical bush home with a well painted flock of sheep in the foreground’.¹⁰ Benjamin A. Branfill exhibited two works *After a long day on the sheep run* and *Sheep-shearing on the Waimea plains* and James Peele sent a series of oil paintings based on a seasonal agricultural theme, with the descriptive titles: *Spring morning: a farmer taking his crossbred ewes with early spring lambs to market*, *Summer noon: a Merry Christmas on the Canterbury ocean beach – a*

⁵ The reviewer was presumably Malcolm Ross, journalist for the *Otago Daily Times* and exhibitor with the Otago Art Society in the 1890s. See Una Platts, *Nineteenth Century New Zealand Artists: A Guide and Handbook*, Christchurch: Avon Fine Prints, 1980, 209.

⁶ ‘The Art Gallery: No. X. New Zealand Pictures’, *Otago Witness*, 27 February 1890, 17

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Anne-Marie Willis, *Illusions of Identity: The Art of Nation*, Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1992, 73.

⁹ See also Richard White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980*, Sydney, London, Boston: George Allen and Unwin, 1981 for a discussion of the role of images in inventing Australian identity. The artists that sought distinct subjects for Australian art in the outback share a parallel with the American art which employed the West, particularly the ‘cowboy type’ as the source of historical and national identities. See William H. Truettner, ed., *The West as America* Washington: National Museum of American Art and Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990.

¹⁰ *New Zealand Herald*, 3 August 1886, 5.

farmer's family spending their summer holiday, Autumn afternoon, the wheat harvest with school children coming home, and Winter evening: Sou-wester coming up; ploughman knocking off work; girl returning with the cows.¹¹ Two years later George Fodor, who was most often represented by animal paintings, exhibited *Mustering Merino Sheep, South Canterbury District* at Melbourne. Rather than demonstrating a direct response to the local, however, these examples may better represent a transplantation of the 'rural idyll' genre, popular in British nineteenth-century landscapes, to the New Zealand context.¹²

As far as historical subjects were concerned, William Mathew Hodgkins exhibited watercolours at the 1888 Melbourne Centennial Exhibition which represented moments of initial contact by explorers, such as *Tasman's Encounter with the Natives of Massacre Bay, N. Z., on the 19th of December 1642*, 1886 (Hocken Library) as well as a scene from Cook's voyages. Notably, these works went without an award, whereas his sketches of the 'Sounds' painted for the Union S.S. Company received Third Order of Merit.¹³ Leonard Bell argues that history painting only emerged as a prevalent genre in New Zealand art in the 1890s, a delay that was undoubtedly linked to the state of art education and patronage in colonial New Zealand society.¹⁴ History painting, as the pinnacle of traditional academic painting, required a high level of study. It also depended upon patronage and there was little state support for such painting in New Zealand, for the colonial government tended to foster and promote works of art of a primarily illustrative nature.

¹¹ *Colonial and Indian Exhibition, London, 1886: Catalogue of New Zealand Exhibits*, London: William Clowes & Sons, 1886, 4.

¹² Landscape and rural subjects in nineteenth-century British painting were popularised by the work of John Constable and J.W.M. Turner, and this genre continued to grow in appeal for an urban market nostalgic for the changes wrought by industrialism. See, for example, Rosemary Treble, 'The Victorian Picture of the Country', in *The Rural Idyll*, ed. G. E. Mingay London: Routledge, 1989. The current location of those New Zealand works mentioned in this paragraph is unknown, so an evaluation of their content is only provisional and based on newspaper descriptions or the descriptive nature of the titles.

¹³ *New Zealand Court, Catalogue, Centennial International Exhibition, Melbourne, 1888.*, Melbourne: Mason, Firth and McCutcheon, 1888, 8. *Tasman's encounter* was exhibited at the Academy Annual Exhibition in 1891 and did not find a buyer at its advertised price, £15.15.0. The copy in Te Papa's library is annotated with sales, marked by a cross. See *New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, Third Annual Exhibition, September 1891, Catalogue*, Wellington: Lyon and Blair, 1891, 2. It must have been bought by Hocken some time after as both paintings are now in the Hocken Library collection.

¹⁴ See Leonard Bell, *Colonial Constructs: European Images of Maori 1840-1914*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1992, especially chapter 4, 'Late nineteenth/early twentieth-century history paintings', 147-194. He also observes that when history painting made its initial appearance, its production was largely centred in Auckland and it tended to focus on the depiction of historical or everyday events from pre-European New Zealand and Maori culture. Maori became a popular subject in painting in the 1890s, with works produced ranging from Louis Steele and C. F. Goldie's historical and overtly dramatic reconstruction of *The Arrival of the Maoris in New Zealand*, 1898 (AAG) to the more picturesque genre paintings by the brothers Frank and Walter Wright.

Historical or genre subjects in colonial art were scarce, and works dealing with such themes were largely absent from the Dunedin Exhibition, a fact lamented by judges and reviewers alike. Consequently, the historical representation of New Zealand was left to the Early History, Maori and South Seas Court. This section was co-ordinated by Thomas Morland Hocken, whose own collection would form the basis of the Hocken Library.¹⁵ Included in the display were documents relating to the early history of New Zealand's settlement, maps, plans, drawings, photographs, artefacts and paintings. Works that had been displayed in the Fine Art section of the 1865 Dunedin Exhibition, such as Charles Heaphy's watercolour sketches of Rangitoto Island, were now displayed for their historical interest. Gilbert Mair exhibited 'five portraits in oil, illustrative of the Maori race' in this court, all of which were by his wife, Eleanor Mair (née Sperrey). Some of these had recently been exhibited at Melbourne in the Fine Art display, such as *Merupa*, 1887 (private collection).¹⁶ Portraits by Gottfried Lindauer also found their place in this Court.

The framing of works of art could swing from aesthetic to historical and/or ethnographic, depending on the chronology and the context of display. In the Early History, Maori and South Seas Court the interest in these exhibits as historical or ethnographic records, rather than as works of art, was made apparent in newspaper reports, which discussed them primarily in terms of the information they conveyed. For example, Hocken's collections of pictures relating to the Northern War instigated by Hone Heke Pokai were used as a prompt to describe the historical event in detail. No information about the artist was provided, the reporter merely observed, 'A picture of the warrior, with Hariata, his wife, and Kawiti, his lieutenant in the war, is hung on the wall close to the exhibitor's entrance', before launching into the historical narrative.¹⁷ The discussion of photographs and paintings '...of those most intimately connected with the settlement of the colony, and with its progress in the early days of

¹⁵ Indeed, Hocken used his position to enhance his collection, often requesting if he could purchase or retain items after the close of the exhibition. The Hocken Library opened on 31 March 1910, six weeks before Hocken's death, and three weeks after the Mitchell Library had opened in Sydney. See Rachel Barrowman, *The Turnbull: A Library and Its World*, Auckland: Auckland University Press in association with the Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1995, 24-25 for a summary of these events. Turnbull's library would develop along parallel lines to Hocken's, though at the time of the Dunedin Exhibition he was three years away from making his commitment to focusing on local historical material. See Chapter 2.

¹⁶ *New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, 1889: Official Catalogue of the Exhibits*, Dunedin: Exhibition Commissioners, 1889, 235.

¹⁷ 'The Early History, Maori and South Seas Court, No. XI', *Otago Witness*, 9 March 1890, 17. This would have been Joseph Jenner Merrett's lithographic portrait *The warrior chieftains of New Zealand*, 1846. The original watercolour is in the ATL: Drawings and Prints Collection: C-012-019.

its history', were similarly discussed in terms of the personalities represented, but not their maker or origins.¹⁸ A novel display in this court was a section comprising photographs of the colonists who arrived on the first two ships from Scotland. This appears to have been a prototype for the gallery in the Otago Settlers Museum which displays portraits of the first settlers from Scotland, and, together with the other portraits on display, approximated a 'type of national portrait gallery'.¹⁹

The historical bias of this display becomes evident when one realises that while the *historical* personalities portrayed in paint or photograph were recalled and named, the *contemporary* artists who produced the works were not.²⁰ The exception was the discussion of a series of views of New Zealand, which allowed the viewer to observe the development and progress that had been made in various settlements. Here, the artists were named and details of their background were also provided. For example, of the view of Dunedin, the reviewer wrote:

The oldest view is one that was drawn in 1849 by Mr C. H. Kettle, the chief surveyor of the Otago block for the New Zealand Company. It is difficult to trace any resemblance between the Dunedin of that day and the Dunedin of 40 years later.²¹

However, it is apparent that the named authors of these views were considered as much part of New Zealand's history as the scenes they depicted.

In the Fine Arts gallery, a consideration of the work of the recently deceased John Gully provided a turning point for the appreciation of colonial art. Eleven works by Gully were exhibited by their owners alongside works by living artists, but were not eligible for awards. Most of these were from local collections, but notably two views by Gully, *Waimea Valley* and *Mount Cook*, were exhibited by Alexander Fletcher and Alfred Felton respectively as part of the Victorian Loan Collection, indicating his status as an Australasian artist.²² In addition, a number of Gully's drawings produced on a recent sketching trip with J. C. Richmond to Te Anau and Lake Manapouri in 1887 were lent by William Mathew Hodgkins and hung in the

¹⁸ 'The Early History, Maori and South Seas Court, No. XIII', *Otago Witness*, 27 March 1890, 17.

¹⁹ See Roger Blackley, *A Nation's Portraits*, ed. Christina Barton, *Art History Lecture Series 03*, Wellington: Art History, Victoria University of Wellington, 2005, 22.

²⁰ The paintings of 'Speakers of the House of Representatives in this court, for example, included one of Sir William Fitzherbert, who was painted by Eleanor Sperrey in the late 1880s (see Te Papa: 1992-0035-797). This could have been one of those portraits by Sperrey exhibited by Mair.

²¹ 'The Early History, Maori and South Seas Court, No. XI', *Otago Witness*, 9 March 1890, 18.

²² See no. 78 and 120 of the 'Victorian Loan Collection', in William Hodgkins, *Official Guide to the Picture Galleries and Catalogue of the Fine Arts Department*, Dunedin: Evening Star Job Printing Works, 1889, 58-66.

corridor leading to the Fine Arts galleries, opposite a selection of engravings from the Monrad collection.²³ These effectively constituted a retrospective of Gully's work, allowing for comparison between his early and later styles, and their instructive example was noted by Malcolm Ross, who thought they 'would provide of great advantage to students'.²⁴

This was not the first time Gully's work had been shown in a retrospective of sorts. In 1884 a modest event was held in Nelson, the novelty of which was noted in the *Nelson Evening Mail*, which proclaimed 'An exhibition in a colonial town of pictures by a resident is a very rare occurrence—an anomaly'.²⁵ The 'anomaly' was an exhibition of pictures by Gully that showcased his work from sketches to finished works ranging from the 1870s to the 1880s. A catalogue with dates and suitably poetic inscriptions was produced by Bishop Suter, who hosted the exhibition in his schoolroom.²⁶ The exhibition was used as a vehicle to promote the idea of building a local art collection with the goal of establishing a local art gallery.²⁷ Newspaper records of this event suggest there was a general feeling that colonial society should be progressing beyond a sustenance-based existence towards a more 'civilised' one. New Zealand was considered backwards in comparison with Australia and such an exhibition promised to be educative while also having the capacity to cultivate 'taste' among the community.

New Zealand may have lagged behind Australia, but by the 1890s, the colony was making definite inroads into establishing the trappings of a 'civilised' society with the establishment of art societies, schools and galleries in the four main centres. Wellington had finally established the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts in 1889; a School of Art at Wellington Technical College opened under Arthur Riley's instruction in 1886, and, while there was not a civic-funded gallery in sight, an Academy gallery was at least on the horizon. In spite of these outward signs of *institutional* progress, *artistic* progress was widely contested over the next few

²³ See 'The Exhibition Art Gallery', in *New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, 1889: Official Catalogue of the Exhibits*, 246-51.

²⁴ Ross, 'The Art Gallery, No. X: New Zealand Pictures', *Otago Witness*, 27 February 1890, 17.

²⁵ 'The exhibition of Mr John Gully's water-color pictures and the proposed Nelson art collection', *Nelson Evening Mail*, 25 September 1884, 2.

²⁶ Excerpts are quoted in the newspaper reviews. A copy of the catalogue has not been located.

²⁷ Works from Bishop Suter's collection, including 26 paintings by Gully, were bequeathed by Amelia Suter to form the basis of the gallery which opened in his name in 1899 in Nelson, The Bishop Suter Art Gallery. See 'History' at <http://www.thesuter.org.nz/history.asp> (accessed 22 March 2007) and Susan Butterworth, *The Suter: 100 Years in Nelson*, Nelson: Nikau Press, 1999.

decades, reflecting the greater transitional feeling theorised by James Belich in *Paradise Reforged*, which he describes as a shift from progressive colonisation to 'recolonisation'.²⁸

Belich's theory of recolonisation coincides roughly with the chronological framework of the next two chapters, which investigate the exhibition of colonial art in the state collections of art from 1890 to 1940. The new historical awareness signalled by the displays at the Dunedin Exhibition, particularly the Early History, Maori and South Seas Court, could perhaps be seen to coincide with the emergence of a new 'national' consciousness. Historians have proposed that New Zealand's 'nationalism' and 'independence' grew slowly and steadily from the 1900s. Keith Sinclair, for example, argues that by the 1890s in New Zealand 'people were beginning to think in national terms', as opposed to the regionalism that had dominated the colony's earlier history.²⁹ But as Richard Jebb wrote following his survey of the British colonies in the first years of the twentieth century, the development of a national consciousness was not easily achieved. Rather it was characterised by a 'process of internal friction, the old order slowly and painfully yielding to the new'.³⁰ Belich's concept of recolonisation allows for a less progressive and more critical evaluation of New Zealand's history. He describes how:

A sense of transition, of insecurity and uncertainty – indeed, something close to a collective identity crisis – can be detected in the New Zealand of the 1880s-1920s, partly masked by residues of the old ideology of progressive colonisation and, increasingly effectively, by the emergent new ideology of recolonisation.³¹

Gully's work in the context of the Dunedin Exhibition is therefore significant in relation to this period. For in contrast to my earlier discussion of artistic representation at international exhibitions, Gully's works were neither for sale, nor open to the competitive aspect of the exhibition. Their function was a new one for the colonial context. For the embryonic New Zealand art world they provided the artistic equivalent of an individual's 'red-letter' day. They represent the realisation that the *colonial* was on the verge of no longer being contemporary, but something of the past

²⁸ 'Recolonisation' is Belich's term for the the 'renewal and reshaping of links between colony and metropolis after an earlier period of colonisation'. James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland: Penguin Press, 2001, 29.

²⁹ Keith Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart: New Zealand's Search for National Identity*, Wellington: Allen and Unwin in association with Port Nicholson Press, 1986, 64.

³⁰ Richard Jebb, *Studies in Colonial Nationalism*, London: Edward Arnold, 1905, ix.

³¹ Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 76.

that was perhaps worth collecting. For artists, they stood as an example of what had been achieved to date, and their exhibition allowed this achievement to be evaluated and mapped against future expectations. The art world was aware of the need for art to continue to progress, but the path it should follow to do so, as with the road towards nationalism, was not an easy one.

In terms of art production the period covered by this and the following chapter has suffered critically in New Zealand's art history, as constituting the years that 'people preferred to forget'³² and which were affected by a widespread 'inverted nostalgia'.³³ However, I am less concerned with attempting to account for the *progress* (or perceived lack thereof) of art in terms of tracing an emergent expression of 'national identity', than I am in critically investigating the role that colonial art played in the 'collective-identity crisis', as described by Belich. Threads that have already been identified as underlying the organisation, classification and exhibition of art from the state collections will continue to provide a framework for investigation. These include: an attention to the place of class in relation to the colonial art world; the question of taste and its socially determining function; the shifting grounds of what constitutes 'Art' and in particular New Zealand 'Art'; and the often contradictory demands of the marketplace alongside the processes of validation signified by processes of exhibition and critical evaluation.

This chapter will also deal with initial attempts by the Academy and other participants in the artistic field to secure a national repository for art in the capital city as well as a permanent public gallery. So, on the one hand, my discussion will concern the development of a specific *place* for the experience of art. But a gallery is also a loaded and heavily symbolic *space*, thus, this chapter takes a more specific 'spatial turn' in its analysis. This draws upon scholarship which understands space not as a neutral backdrop to events but as something that is actively produced by as well as actively constitutive of social and political relations.³⁴ The paradox that faced New Zealand art in the late colonial period was a lack of alignment between the political

³² Gordon Brown, *New Zealand Painting 1900-1920: Traditions and Departures*, Wellington: Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand, 1972, 3.

³³ P. A. Tomory, 'The Visual Arts', in *Distance Looks Our Way: The Effects of Remoteness on New Zealand*, ed. Keith Sinclair Auckland: Paul's Book Arcade, 1961, 71.

³⁴ See for example: Andy Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, New York and London: Routledge, 2006; Simon Gunn and Robert J. Morris, eds., *Identities in Space: Contested Terrains in the Western City since 1850*, Historical Urban Studies Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2001; Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, London, New York: Verso, 1989.

and artistic fields in terms of their commitment to a public space for culture. The state's reluctance to support a cultural space in the capital city was justified by the fact that the Academy exhibitions could only lay temporary and partial claims to the gallery. The problem, however, was not just a physical one, concerning the funding of bricks and mortar to build a house for art. It was also a symbolic problem concerning the spaces of cultural production and consumption as well as the ability of art itself to lay claim to a space on its own terms.

This chapter traces the first part of the transitional phase of 'recolonisation' from 1890-1907 in light of these issues. The opening case study, the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition 1889-90, has highlighted the moment where the adjective 'colonial' shifts from referring to an art produced in the contemporary moment to a signifier of the past. The first section of this chapter traces the emerging spaces for the display of art in Wellington and examines how the shifting status of colonial art became manifest in exhibitions. The second section considers the contrasting modes of display established by the Museum under Hamilton's directorship, as contemporary works of art were produced to give visual form to the historical, to contribute to the construction of a 'Maoriland'. The closing case study, the New Zealand International Exhibition, held in Christchurch in 1906-7, represents the moment at which Hamilton's vision of Maoriland was most effectively realised. Paradoxically, any display of pakeha cultural history, which might have been achieved by an historical overview of colonial art, was absent. Significantly, the timing of this exhibition brings us to the point where the colonial is literally rendered permanently historical, when the country itself was renamed a Dominion in 1907.³⁵

³⁵ Dominion Day was celebrated on the 26 September 1907, when the Prime Minister Sir Joseph Ward read the proclamation of Dominion status on the steps of Parliament.

Constructive Criticism

*Within the hall a chocolate-coloured wooden dado, about 10ft high, serves as a background to the pictures...above the pictures at the end are casts of the Elgin Marbles, and numerous casts of classic busts and statuary occupy niches all round the gallery and on either side of the baize-covered platform...*³⁶

The newly built gallery of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts opened to the public on 25 February 1893 with a loan collection that, according to one paper, was ‘the finest yet exhibited in Wellington’ (fig 51).³⁷ Lord Glasgow congratulated the Academy on its new premises with its chocolate-coloured dado, in which ‘pictures and objects of art could be properly shown’. In particular, he felt that the concept of a loan collection was very valuable, bringing together as it did ‘works of art which had been produced by artists of celebrity in different parts and ages of the world’. Further, it demonstrated New Zealand’s urban sophistication, for he asserts that loan exhibitions were, in London, ‘very much in vogue’.³⁸ The exhibition showcased works from private collectors who were named in the catalogue and newspaper reports, and included original works by artists such as A. de Breanski and the British artist W. Oliver, copies of Old Masters such as Guido Reni’s *St Sebastian*, as well as works by prominent colonial New Zealand artists, Richmond, Edmund Gouldsmith, L. W. Wilson and Gully.³⁹ The Academy’s Annual Report proudly recorded the number and monetary value of the exhibits, 93 pictures valued at £4000, and commented on the educational value of the exhibition which had ‘...afforded young artists an opportunity so needed in Wellington’.⁴⁰

However, the worth of this exhibition was challenged by ‘Justitia’, a contributor to the *New Zealand Mail*, who suggesting the Academy had ‘...gone to anyone and begged for pictures on loan, with the result that they have bound

³⁶ ‘New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts’, *Evening Post*, 27 February 1893, 4.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ The absence of Gully’s work from the first Academy exhibition in 1889 was regretted. In following years, works were lent from local collectors in Wellington, and Gully’s son continued to send his father’s works to annual exhibitions well into the 1890s.

⁴⁰ ‘NZAFA Annual report 1892-3’, NZAFA minute books, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1, 4.

themselves to hang anything they got'.⁴¹ As far as education was concerned "Justitia" felt that '...with the exception of some half dozen pictures the whole collection is worthless from an art educational point of view' and concluded that:

If the fostering of art is based on such examples of painting as those of Barnes, Wilson and even Tennyson Cole, then the art-loving people of New Zealand have a very foggy outlook, not to mention the numbers of glaringly bad copies of much abused old masters ...

'Justitia' couched his/her criticism by stating:

I must say in concluding this article that I have written it specially for those who are cultivating a taste for art, so that having weighed my remarks, they may be better able to judge between good and bad. The exposing by fair criticism of what is acceptable or objectionable in pictures is what ought to be, and the sooner the uninitiated are made aware of the traps that are laid for them by 'potboilers' the better.⁴²

This criticism challenged the status of the Academy in the Wellington art scene, the result of a shift in the personalities and institutions in the colonial art world. While the 1890s might have seen the Colonial Museum descending into a cabinet of curiosities, this decade is regularly cited as holding great promise for a new era in New Zealand's art history, with the arrival of a trinity of foreign artists to New Zealand's shores: Girolamo Nerli to Dunedin; Petrus van der Velden to Christchurch; and James McLauchlan Nairn to Wellington. The constant grouping of these three individuals, who settled in different centres and had markedly different practices, has been questioned by Victoria Hearnshaw, who claims that Nairn's representation in the New Zealand art-historical context has been affected as a result.⁴³ Together, these artists undoubtedly had an impact on the teaching and development of art in New Zealand, but in the case of Nairn, the tendency to account for him within the mythology of the rebellious avant-garde artist has, as Hearnshaw notes, 'invariably not reflected the esteem in which he was formerly held by his contemporaries'.⁴⁴

⁴¹ 'Justitia', 'Academy of Fine Arts, loan exhibition of pictures, a look around the new gallery', newspaper clipping, *New Zealand Mail*, 3 March 1893, 12 in *Scrapbook: James N. Nairn and the Wellington Art Club*, Te Aka Matua: 759.993 NA. This scrapbook is thought to have been James Nairn's, and the nature of this criticism suggests it may have been written by Nairn himself or a member of the Wellington Art Club. Jane Vial has recently suggested that Nairn wrote under a number of pseudonyms in the *New Zealand Mail*. Jane Vial, 'Execrable in its nightmare of blues and greens', presentation in association with *Monet and the impressionists*, Te Papa, 16 April 2009.

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Victoria Hearnshaw, 'James McLauchlan Nairn: A Catalogue of Works', *Bulletin of New Zealand Art History, Special Series*, no. 3 (1997): 5.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

The following pages reconsider the critical discourse of this decade in order to both complicate and enrich an understanding of the social contexts of exhibition of colonial art in Wellington in the 1890s. The moment that has received most attention art historically and which is persistently recycled in exhibitions and texts is the moment of rupture identified in the critical response to the first Wellington Art Club Exhibition of 1893. This has been addressed by Francis Pound, who celebrates the vibrancy of the debates voiced in the newspapers, and examines them in relation to the reception of the ‘avant-garde’ in colonial New Zealand.⁴⁵ Likewise, Jane Vial addresses the ‘clash’ between the establishment critics and the avant-garde in Wellington at this time, which, she argues arose from ‘each side standing its own ground over what constituted an acceptable painting’.⁴⁶ Art historically, there is a tendency to over-emphasise the dissension between the two parties and to refer to the situation in Wellington in 1893 as a ‘Battle of the Schools’ is surely an overstatement.⁴⁷ Held up by Vial as a trans-Tasman counterpoint to the Melbourne *9x5 Impression Exhibition* of 1889, the isolation of the 1893 Wellington Art Club exhibition as a high point of the avant-garde movement and the retrospective judgement of the ‘Philistines’ on the basis of their responses to one exhibition, is perhaps as reactionary as the words of the critics themselves. As Pound concludes, while Nairn and his followers may have adopted some of the strategies of the avant-garde, they were by no means ‘truly avant-garde in any international sense’.⁴⁸

This moment of discontinuity, represented by the introduction of a new style and subject in painting via the ‘impressionist’ influence of Nairn, is no doubt worthy of consideration, and indeed, the question of what should constitute a ‘New Zealand art’ was raised in the criticism. But I suggest that the ‘hostility’ of the responses to the ‘new’ also reflected deeper issues concerning the institutions of art in colonial Wellington. These revolved around issues of artistic education and the expectations of exhibition and it is these that can be teased out through a consideration of the critical

⁴⁵ Francis Pound, ‘A Battle of the Critics: The Concept of the Avant-Garde Comes to New Zealand’, *Art New Zealand*, Winter, no. 28 (1983).

⁴⁶ Jane Vial, ‘Avant-Garde Painting in Australia and New Zealand 1884-1904 - a Comparison’ MA, Victoria University of Wellington, 1993.

⁴⁷ This phrase was a subtitle to one of C. F. Goldie’s outpourings against ‘modern’ art, published in Auckland newspapers. Here, he drew a comparison between the institutional shifts in the Auckland Art Gallery to those that had occurred in Paris in the late nineteenth century, particularly in response to Gustave Caillebotte’s donation of Impressionist works to the state on the grounds they be exhibited permanently in the Luxembourg Museum. See Roger Blackley, *Goldie*, Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery in association with David Bateman, 1997, 182-83.

⁴⁸ Pound, ‘A Battle of the Critics’: 27.

responses. Also, by extending the discussion beyond 1893 and considering how responses shifted over time, the painful process of the old conceding to the new can be traced.

Nairn arrived in Wellington in 1890 and founded the Wellington Art Club in 1892. The first exhibition of the Club was held in July 1893 in the Academy gallery, just months after the Academy loan exhibition, and met with divided responses from the newspaper reviewers. The opinions expressed mirrored the divide observed in the loan exhibition reviews, with the *Evening Post* representing the 'conservative' voice and the *New Zealand Mail* the more 'liberal'. As much as the *Post* critic had praised the Academy's loan exhibition, they found fault with the Club's first show.⁴⁹ This criticism has been much cited in isolation from later, more positive reviews of Nairn's work, perpetuating the myth of Nairn as a misunderstood genius, struggling in an unappreciative artistic community. For example, the *Post* reviewer wrote:

So it is that several of the exhibits in the Wellington section are bilious as to colour, inchoate in form — the creations of a disordered imagination, and a palette foul with the accumulation of many tubes and many years.⁵⁰

While this is damning criticism of the show in general, it reflects the difficulty contemporary audiences had viewing unfinished works or sketches in the context of a public exhibition. Nairn's response to this review was published in the *New Zealand Mail* and defended the efforts of the Club, suggesting that the *Post* reviewer's problem was that he did not know how to 'understand a sketch'.⁵¹ I would counter that it was not just a question of style, of the nature of the 'sketch', but also that the issue of context that was of concern to the *Post* reviewer. The notion of exhibiting sketches rather than completed works was an innovation for Wellington audiences. In the 1870s and 1880s in Paris, privately run exhibitions, unofficial alternatives to the

⁴⁹ Vial surmises that the *Post* reviewer was the literary editor, Gresley Lukin, an advocate of the working classes who was 'renowned for his forthright opinions'. See Vial, 'Avant-Garde Painting in Australia and New Zealand', 82. Lukin had been the editor of the socialist paper, *Boomerang*, in Queensland prior to coming to New Zealand. H. J. Gibbney, 'Lukin, Gresley (1840-1916)' *Australian Dictionary of Biography* Volume 5 1974 [accessed 9 August 2007]; available from <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A050129b.htm>

⁵⁰ 'Art Exhibition', *Evening Post*, 22 July 1893, 3.

⁵¹ 'Mr Nairn and the "Superior Person"', *New Zealand Mail*, 29 July 1893, 3. The 'Superior Person' refers to newspaper rivalry between the *Post* and the *Times*. The *Post* had criticised 'paltry mistakes' published in the *Times*, who retaliated 'This assumption of infallibility, of being a Superior Person, who cannot possibly err, is frequently made by our contemporary with a charming disregard of a certain saying as to the mote and the beam...'. See 'The Superior Person', *New Zealand Mail*, 10 March 1893, 10.

Salon, had allowed artists to exhibit their more personal works: ‘...work that escaped professional definitions of genre, medium, or finish but that the amateur, as the acquaintance of the artist, would understand and treasure for what it revealed of the private side of the individual’.⁵² The Academy gallery, however, was a setting which, with its chocolate dados and classical statues in niches, aimed to emulate the traditional salon-style art exhibition, rather than its recent, more intimate counterpart.

By 1894, the *Post* critic was able to comment more favourably on both the works of art in the Club exhibition as well the display innovations, observing that:

The gallery has been very tastefully arranged with palms and pot plants from Government House, and old gold draperies, which have been freely used over and around the frames, and are admirably harmonious and effective’.⁵³

Given that Nairn had possibly visited Paris sometime in 1880-1 and was aware of the Aesthetic Movement, perhaps the interior decoration of the Academy Gallery for the Club exhibition attempted to reproduce the aesthetic established by artists exhibiting at the Grosvenor Gallery in London or at privately organised exhibitions in Paris.⁵⁴ For those, the interiors had been arranged so the exhibition had the effect of being less like a gallery and more akin to the experience of viewing art in a collector’s home.⁵⁵ A second display innovation the reviewer noted in the Club show was the attempt to hang the works of a single exhibitor together. This not only allowed for comparison but also contributed to the overall aesthetic effect of the exhibition, for ‘...an artist will naturally not paint out of harmony with himself or herself’.⁵⁶ (fig 52)

⁵² See Martha Ward, ‘Impressionist Installations and Private Exhibitions’, *Art Bulletin*, 73, no. 4 (1991): 607-08 on the Impressionist exhibitions as well as the increasing number of ‘private exhibitions’ hosted by families such as the Mirlitons. Patricia Mainardi also addresses the changing rationale for exhibition installations of both state and private enterprises. See Patricia Mainardi, *The End of the Salon: Art and the State in the Early Third Republic*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 104-13.

⁵³ ‘Wellington Art Club, Second Annual Exhibition’, *Evening Post*, 16 July 1894, 4.

⁵⁴ The Grosvenor Gallery Intercolonial Exhibition in Melbourne, 1887, may also have had an influence on those New Zealand artists who exhibited with the Art Club in the 1890s. This event has recently been addressed by Alison Inglis, “Aestheticism and Empire: The Grosvenor Gallery Intercolonial Exhibition in Melbourne, 1887,” in *Seize the Day: Exhibitions, Australia and the World*, ed. Kate Darian-Smith, et al. (Melbourne: Monash University e-Press, 2008).

⁵⁵ See Christopher Newall, *The Grosvenor Gallery Exhibitions: Change and Continuity in the Victorian Art World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 12-12. Newspapers approved of a public gallery where art could be exhibited as in private houses surrounded by appropriate adornment. These new approaches to display, whereby the gallery was fitted out to resemble a studios or private home, had emerged in the 1870s in Paris as a strategy that aimed for greater market appeal. See Ward, ‘Impressionist Installations and Private Exhibitions’.

⁵⁶ ‘Wellington Art Club, Second Annual Exhibition’, *Evening Post*, 16 July 1894, 4.

However, while the *Times* congratulated the Club ‘on succeeding in holding the first exhibition of pictures in the Colony where the Mitre Peak is conspicuous by its absence’⁵⁷, the *Post* struggled with the subject matter of the Club’s exhibiting artists, stating:

...there is no interest or attractiveness in the brickfields, cut-off bows of vessels at the wharves, and brick buildings, which some of the exhibitors seek to pourtray[sic]. They are utterly lacking in the quality of picturesqueness. It would require genius to make them attractive, and their painters certainly have not this.⁵⁸

Not only did the Wellington Art Club advocate a new approach to art-making, challenging academic conventions of drawing and colour, they also introduced new subjects in art. Earlier criticism of Nairn’s *Tess and Cloud* shown at the Academy exhibition in 1893 also found fault with the lack of distinctness of the natural features represented:

What does it represent, and what nationality does it belong to? Assuredly it is not colonial. It may be British, but there is a question about that, for the nondescript tree ... is hard to class, in an arboreal sense – neither rimu, rata, oak, ash, elm, totara, or tawa, only a “generalised” idea of a tree...⁵⁹

The debates emerging in the criticism of the Academy and Club exhibitions in the 1890s reflect the local situation. The state did not take an active role in the promotion of arts and culture in colonial New Zealand, aside from a tendency to value works for their illustrative and advertising potential rather than their aesthetic capacity. Nonetheless, the necessity of art to a civilised society was widely understood. Because art was assigned the marker of cultural civilisation, institutions such as the Academy had to set themselves at the ‘higher’ end of art practice and followed well-trod paths of tradition to do so. The problem, then, was not just an individual but a cultural one. New Zealand’s institutions were in very embryonic states, and some kind of order, some kind of moral stance had to be taken so that subsequent innovations might thrive. In art this was sought in tradition, and the Academy was consciously named after the Royal Academy of London. The founding fathers of the Wellington-based Academy, William Beetham and C. D. Barraud both had first-hand experience of the London model. Beetham had been a regular exhibitor

⁵⁷ ‘Wellington Art Club, Second Annual Exhibition’, *New Zealand Times*, 16 July 1894, 2.

⁵⁸ ‘Wellington Art Club, Second Annual Exhibition’, *Evening Post*, 16 July 1894, 4.

⁵⁹ ‘New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts’, *Evening Post*, 19 September 1893, 4

at the Royal Academy between 1834 and 1853 before immigrating to New Zealand and Barraud came from a family that claimed so many artists of ‘more than average ability as to present a phenomenon unmatched in any other family’.⁶⁰ In particular, his brothers, Henry and William, were well-known painters of portraits and animals in nineteenth-century England.

In the colonial setting of Wellington, however, the concept of the Academy mutated. While it aligned itself with the elite end of the artistic spectrum, the scope of exhibits included in Academy exhibitions extended beyond that which would be seen on the walls of the London Academy. The definition of ‘Art’ was at its broadest in the early Academy exhibitions. Photographs by A. T. Bothamley, Frederick Halse and W. T. L. Travers, among others, were exhibited alongside paintings in the Academy exhibitions. The formation of the Wellington Camera Club in 1892 may account for the absence of photographs from 1894 onwards.⁶¹ Works from the local art schools, namely Morison’s School of Art and the Technical School of Art, were also exhibited alongside those of amateur and professional artists from throughout New Zealand, although this practice was discontinued after 1891.⁶² The decorative arts, consisting of painted opals and plaques, wood-carving and decorated panels, were also a feature of the Academy exhibitions. While these were mostly produced by females, it would be mistaken to assume that women were confined to this site of production. Instead, female exhibitors rated highly alongside their male counterparts. Although by no means achieving equivalence in numbers, female exhibitors were often among those receiving praise for their efforts in reviews. Names of local artists that featured repeatedly in the 1890s were M. E. R. Tripe (née Richardson), Mabel Hill, Katherine Holmes, Frances Hodgkins, Isabel Field, Dorothy Kate Richmond and May Lingard.

In its traditional and historic form, the Academy constituted more than a venue for annual exhibitions of its members’ work. It was also a place for intellectual as well as practical training for artists, but in Wellington this aspect was poorly catered for, a gap that Nairn’s Club consciously attempted to fill. At the opening of the second

⁶⁰ E. M. Barraud, cited in Paul Rayner, *The Barraud Collection: Highlighting Works from the William Francis Barraud Bequest*, Wanganui: Sarjeant Gallery, 1993, np.

⁶¹ The Camera Club held an annual exhibition. See *Wellington Provincial District*, 6 vols., vol. 1, *Cyclopedia of New Zealand: Industrial, Descriptive, Historical, Biographical Facts, Figures, Illustrations*, Wellington: Cyclopedia Company, 1897, 433.

⁶² In a letter to the editor, William Leslie Morison expressed his dissatisfaction with the Academy, which had apparently decided that ‘the Academy’s exhibition was not intended for the works of pupils’. ‘The Art Academy Exhibition’, *Evening Post*, 19 September 1891, 4.

annual exhibition of the Wellington Art Club, Nairn addressed the subject of supposed antipathy between the two local art groups, stating:

...the Club was not, in any sense, opposed to the New Zealand Academy, but was simply directed towards furthering the efforts of workers and students in a practical way thus filling a want that the Academy did not provide for at present.⁶³

The contemporary criticism surrounding what has become retrospectively recognised as an important modern influence can be accounted for by the fact that many thought artists should learn the technical aspects of their art before they attempted to contrive effect. This was, in fact, what concerned the *Post* reviewer most, who warned ‘...there is some danger of drawing becoming a lost art, and of pure colour being a thing unknown’.⁶⁴ This opinion did not just express antipathy towards an ‘avant-garde’, or modern development in the arts, but was tied up with the question of suitable artistic training. Whistler was directly referenced by this reviewer who felt that a ‘large proportion of them are emulating the Whistlerian “Impressionist” school, striving to produce the effects of that school while palpably ignorant of the technique which made those effects possible’.⁶⁵ This was not a lone voice from the conservative side, however, for Nairn likewise emphasised the need to acquire basic skills in draughtsmanship, advocating the ‘study of nature, from life or outside’.⁶⁶ The 1897 *Cyclopedia* noted that Nairn was ‘one of the first in New Zealand to start life nude classes, which have already resulted in several pupils proving themselves to have a good knowledge of the basis of art—“drawing”’.⁶⁷

The Academy depended on the support of the public for its survival, both through the admission fee charged for exhibitions, as well as the purchase of works of art. Nairn, on the other hand, once famously stated ‘I shall always make a point of trying to outrage the taste of the ordinary public as I do not want them to like my

⁶³ ‘Wellington Art Club, Second Annual Exhibition’, *New Zealand Times*, 16 July 1894, 2.

⁶⁴ ‘Art Exhibition’, *Evening Post*, 22 July 1893, 3. Even in French Impressionist circles, a loss of confidence was experienced in the early 1880s. Pierre-Auguste Renoir went to Italy to study Raphael and is quoted as saying, ‘I finally came to the conclusion that I knew neither how to paint nor draw’. See Mainardi, *The End of the Salon: Art and the State in the Early Third Republic*, 44. This concern was also voiced by Malcolm Ross in relation to New Zealand’s art at the 1889 Dunedin Exhibition. Then he wrote, ‘it cannot but be noted that too many of our young artists attempt to become painters before they have learnt to draw, and it seems fitting at such a season and in such an article as this to sound a note of warning’. ‘The Art Gallery: No. X. Some New Zealand pictures’, *Otago Witness*, 27 February 1890, 17.

⁶⁵ ‘Art Exhibition’, *Evening Post*, 22 July 1893, 3.

⁶⁶ James Nairn, “The Progress of Art in New Zealand,” *New Zealand Mail* 6 October 1892.

⁶⁷ *Wellington Provincial District: Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, 433.

work'.⁶⁸ While this seems to set him apart from any desire to find favour with the public, such statements must be taken in their original context, in this case, a personal letter to a friend. It does not necessarily correlate with Nairn's ready acceptance by the Academy and participation in its organisation, or the support he received from Wellington officials and patrons.⁶⁹ As Vial notes, Nairn both courted and was well-supported by the colonial elite, including manufacturers, lawyers, doctors and government officials.⁷⁰ For them, an ability to appreciate the more 'advanced' works of art produced by Nairn, which required an understanding of art's autonomy, freed from the realm of pure description, demonstrated their cultural capital. Nairn also received commissions to paint a number of official portraits, including three of High Court Judges: Mr Justice Richmond, Sir James Prendergast and Mr Justice Chapman. Richmond's portrait was exhibited at the Academy Exhibition 1897, suggesting that Nairn intended such works to fulfil artistic as well as official functions.⁷¹ Nairn was clearly well-supported by the local art community, serving the Academy, while teaching at the Wellington Technical College and running the Wellington Art Club.

In the developing artistic field of 1890s New Zealand, there is a danger in pitting the societies one against another, in an avant-garde versus conservative stand-off. Consideration of the catalogues and reviews shows that many of the same artists, including Richmond, Barraud, even Gully posthumously, exhibited at both Club and Academy exhibitions, meaning that the 'new' coexisted with the 'old'. Art historians have paid close attention to the moment of rupture, of discontinuity, represented by the 1893 exhibitions, but what of the long-term impact of that moment? How did public and painter, 'Philistine' and 'Avant-garde', negotiate each other in the yearly evaluations of the current state of art represented by the Academy exhibitions? Tracing the evolving response to new developments in the arts raises issues of taste and education that impacted on both the production and reception of works of art. The

⁶⁸ Nairn to Mabel McIndoe, née Hill, 19 August 1898, in Victoria Hearnshaw, 'James Mclauchlan Nairn: The New Zealand Years.' MA in Art History, Canterbury University, 1991, 148-9.

⁶⁹ Nairn served the Academy as Vice-President from 1898-1900 and 1902-1903 and sat on the Council from 1890-1893, 1895-1897 and 1901.

⁷⁰ The National Art Gallery was the beneficiary of many paintings by Nairn from the Newton family, local soap manufacturers. At least eleven paintings by Nairn were gifted to the National Collection by John Newton and his daughter Mary Newton in 1939. See Hearnshaw, 'James Mclauchlan Nairn: A Catalogue of Works'.

⁷¹ Tom Roberts and other participants in Australian Impressionism similarly moved between the genres of landscape and portraiture, primarily for financial reasons. See Angus Trumble, 'Colony and Capital in Australian Impressionist Portraiture', in *Australian Impressionism*, ed. Terence Lane Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2007.

reviews provide commentary on the evolution of art in Wellington; they chart its overall progress as well as that of individual artists. By 1895 it was claimed that:

Each successive exhibition, with its opportunities for mutual comparison and criticism, succeeds in educating both artists, students, and public, and work which was hung in Wellington exhibitions a few years back would now be mercilessly guyed.⁷²

The emphasis on the educative effect of art exhibitions acknowledges that both the production and the appreciation of art is a learned activity, not innately acquired, and exposure to art is necessary for the development of taste. The problematic of this situation in New Zealand was highlighted the following year, when we read:

Painter and public meet this year at the invitation of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts for the eighth time. Upon the maintenance of cordial relations between the two both depend – the one for the artistic education and enjoyment, and the satisfaction of what craving after art they may have; the other for the pounds, shillings, and pence which mean physical existence. They meet, therefore, on somewhat unequal terms – the inequality being in disfavour of the painter. Painting to satisfy the canons of his art (and so to please himself) the painter cannot fail to run risk of unsympathetic reception at the hands, or rather at the eyes, of a public whose acquaintance with those canons is sure to be slight, and whose ideal instincts may be in direct contradiction to their demands. It says much, therefore, for painter, public and society which forms the medium of their communication, if their relations remain cordial.⁷³

As noted, those who readily supported Nairn and his circle were primarily the learned elite of Wellington. In some ways then, rather than representing a conservative, right-wing voice, the *Post* commentary seems almost to have a socialist ambition. If Gresley Lukin was the writer, then an interest in the matters of the ‘working class’ would be in keeping with his background and political interest. This critical discourse brings us back to Bourdieu’s conclusion that a ‘love of art’ is a cultivated pleasure and in the *Post* writings there is an ongoing attempt to bridge the gap between public and painter by providing a critical evaluation of the new in light of the old.⁷⁴ Indeed, by 1901, the *Post* writer could sincerely observe:

To Mr Nairn, Wellington art owes a great deal. He came to us at a time when we much needed advice, and while other professional men have come and gone, he has

⁷² ‘The Academy of Art: Second Notice’, *Evening Post*, 1 August 1895, 4.

⁷³ ‘New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts: the Annual Exhibition’, *Evening Post*, 27 July 1896, 2.

⁷⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, Alain Darbel, and Dominique Schnapper, *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and Their Public*, trans. Caroline Beattie and Nick Merriman, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990, 109.

stuck to us, and helped to guide our infant feet. Much as we may disagree with some of his colour work – or rather, much as some of his colour work disagrees with us – we can always find something from his brush to admire.⁷⁵

Artistic anxiety

The critical debate of the 1890s in Wellington highlighted concerns regarding the *institutions* of art as much as the nature of the ‘avant-garde’ ambition. By the turn of the century, this anxiety was expressed throughout New Zealand. By this time Wellington had its Academy gallery, but there was none that stood as representative of the state, and, with the first generation of colonial artists being gradually replaced, both physically and ideologically, serious thought was given to the place of art in New Zealand. In 1900 a range of articles from Auckland to Christchurch addressed the current conditions. From Auckland, it was noted:

It is a regrettable fact, but one which few who have knowledge of the matter will controvert, that art in this colony is not advancing as those who love it best wish, or had hoped it might. ...that the exhibitions do not show any general step forward year by year, and that there undoubtedly seems to be a falling off in the number of exhibitors.⁷⁶

The reasons for this dangerous decline in terms of both quantity and quality were thought in part to result from a lack of patronage, for “‘Art for art’s sake’ was monstrous fine, but no good as a bread winner’.⁷⁷ Art Unions or raffles might have posed a solution to this problem, but tended to foster the production of ‘potboilers’. Even when works were sold, a bleak picture of those who had disposable funds for the purchase of art was painted by a contributor to the *New Zealand Illustrated Magazine*:

The shopkeeping spirit and Art do not assimilate, and unfortunately in this country the people of most financial influence are the successful huxters or schemers of the community, who generally lack nothing but the refinement of spirit necessary to recognise real artistic ability ... The element of artistic patronage here is at present chiefly confined to a shallow-pated coterie, who, with an air of brutal indifference, flippantly offer a shilling or eighteen pence at auction for a sketch, which has probably entailed a day’s labour, not counting the evolution of the idea, nor the cost of the material. Others there are, who, when they bid up to a pound for a real h’oil

⁷⁵ ‘Academy of Fine Arts’, *Evening Post*, 27 September 1901, 6.

⁷⁶ ‘Art and Art Unions in New Zealand’, *New Zealand Graphic*, 20 October 1900, 722.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

painting, swell with visible importance, and plume themselves with all the zest of a ten thousand guinea buyer at Christie's.⁷⁸

The decline in numbers of exhibitors was attributed by a Christchurch critic to the tendency for artists to leave the country as soon as any talent became obvious – the expatriate syndrome in the making.⁷⁹ When younger artists did continue to exhibit with local societies, it was proposed that they exhibited a 'lack of self-criticism and a tendency to self-satisfaction'.⁸⁰

Prominent strains in the discussion and suggested solutions revolved around the benefit that would be gained from the sharing of exhibits between regional art societies, as well as the necessity of municipal and/or government support for the arts. The anonymous letter in the *New Zealand Graphic* claimed that it was the 'duty of an enlightened municipality to provide her public with the best they can get in art, as well as the best they can get in books'. In particular, the 'encouragement of colonial art' should form part of this duty.⁸¹ Vaughan advocated for more centralised responsibility, suggesting that:

...the culture of Art be widely established by Government; let a sense of its importance be directly taught to the younger generation in the public schools; and as this country is professedly of a Communistic tendency, let the Government foster, not only the spirit of Art, but as in some parts of Europe, by a direct system of aid in models and materials, assist all those who have attained the aforesaid standard; and lastly, by the help of able judgement and through an incorruptible trustee-ship, purchase annually for the public galleries of their respective centres whatever suitable and deserving works local artists have to sell.⁸²

Only by investing in culture and art in this manner would the public become educated and a school of painters have the potential to develop. A government commitment to support art training in technical schools had been made in all centres by 1900, but its commitment to the galleries and exhibition of art was still lacking.⁸³ In 1900 in

⁷⁸ E. B. Vaughan, 'The conditions of art in New Zealand', *New Zealand Illustrated Magazine*, October 1900, 61. Vaughan was a cartoonist and illustrator for the *New Zealand Graphic*. See Platts, *Nineteenth Century New Zealand Artists*, 240.

⁷⁹ Leaflet, 'The Canterbury Society of Arts Exhibition', *New Zealand Illustrated Magazine*, July 1900, 789.

⁸⁰ 'Art and Art Unions in New Zealand', *New Zealand Graphic*, 20 October 1900, 722.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² E. B. Vaughan, 'The conditions of art in New Zealand', *New Zealand Illustrated Magazine*, October 1900, 61.

⁸³ See Brown, *New Zealand Painting 1900-1920: Traditions and Departures* for a summary of the art schools in New Zealand from 1900 on. A more focussed discussion of the history of Dunedin's art school can be found in Bell, 'Art in Education: An Essay Celebrating One Hundred and Twenty-Five Years of Art Education at the Dunedin College of Education'.

Wellington discussion also emerged regarding the question of a permanent art gallery for the city. As in discussions occurring nationwide, the issues identified related to: the need for positive examples to influence artistic production; the lack of patronage by the public; and the need to educate the public. It was felt that local artists consistently reached a certain standard, and then seemed to ‘stand still or fall away’.⁸⁴ The cause of this was surmised to be the ‘want of good pictures to train their taste and stimulate their efforts’.⁸⁵ It was also insinuated that the Wellington population was miserly with their contributions to culture and to civilising enterprises, leading the *Post* to conclude that ‘the people of Wellington are, in matters of art, worse off than the denizens of Whitechapel. This is undoubtedly a slur upon our civilisation, and a flaw, a very serious flaw, in our education’.⁸⁶ The situation in Wellington was perceived to be more dire than other centres for, despite the fact that it was the Capital, it had neither a local collection *nor* a public gallery.

I have asserted that the exhibitions provided a space where the social elite could enhance their cultural capital by demonstrating their appreciation of art, including purchasing ‘avant-garde’ works of art by artists such as Nairn. But what is telling in the newspaper commentary cited here, is that the grounds of cultural discrimination are not clearly defined in New Zealand, and criticism of class behaviour, particularly as expressed through spatial metaphors, are pushed back to the more stable cultural geography of London. Vaughan, for example, describes the peacock-puffing pride of colonial purchasers of works of art as they spend a pound for a ‘real *h’oil* painting’ as a purchase comparable in their eyes to a ‘ten thousand guinea buyer at Christie’s’. Likewise, the detrimental effect of the lack of a space for art suggests the people are worse off than those in Whitechapel, the implication being that artistically speaking, Wellington was a slum. The anxiety around the place of culture in New Zealand society is thus also related to an anxiety about the space of the nation. A gallery is a place that consists of both physical and symbolic space. It required that the state commit to a public space for culture, and its reluctance to do so reflected the lack of a clearly conceptualised national space.

Without a collection, the Academy gallery was only inhabited by art for short periods during each year, meaning its ability to lay claim to and occupy a cultural

⁸⁴ ‘A Permanent Art Gallery’, *Evening Post*, 17 September 1900, 4.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ ‘Art in Education’, *Evening Post*, 20 September 1900, 4.

space for the city was limited. The Whitmore Street gallery was shared with the Mission to Seamen until 1904 and was otherwise let to drama and dance students, ambulance lectures and other various organisations.⁸⁷ In fact, the interior of the gallery was adapted to better serve the interests of those groups in the 1890s with the addition of a stage, prioritising the commercial concerns of the Academy over artistic and cultural ones. The symbolic space occupied by art in Wellington was therefore transient and unstable. If exposure to art was felt to be necessary for the education of both artists and public, and for instilling a place for culture, what then were the conditions of exhibition in the 1890s and after? A photograph published in the *Cyclopedia* (fig 53) provides some indication of the viewing experience of the Academy exhibitions.⁸⁸ Plaster copies of ancient Greco-Roman statues take their place alongside the exhibits, which seem to include frames holding multiple views, possibly photographs. Most alarmingly, this shows that pictures were not so much skied, as floored in the gallery space, and the chocolate dado praised by the Governor is here completely obscured by a miscellany of apparently unlabelled exhibits.

The Academy gallery did not demonstrate either the architectural or the organisational elements required of a 'palace of art'.⁸⁹ The exterior of the building was unprepossessing, its displays were transient, and there was little arrangement of the art on display by medium, style or chronology, meaning it did not readily serve the symbolic role of enlightening the public. For public and for artists it was a site with limited potential, and other spaces emerged to stop the cultural gap. These are the focus of the next part of this chapter as I shift the analysis from criticism to exhibition to more closely investigate the spaces of cultural production that jostled for attention in Wellington from the 1890s.

Commercial versus consecrating spaces

In the previous chapter I addressed the relationship between amateur and professional artistic practice in colonial New Zealand, arguing that amateurs regularly displayed their work alongside professionals in the public realm of the exhibition. Indeed, the majority of artists in early colonial New Zealand were amateurs who held

⁸⁷ Brown, *New Zealand Painting 1900-1920: Traditions and Departures*, 13.

⁸⁸ *Wellington Provincial District: Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, 221.

⁸⁹ See, for example, Carol Duncan, *Civilising Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995) on the museum as ritual.

alternative professional roles. By the turn of the century there were a greater proportion of individuals who sought to achieve professional status as artists. While many necessarily sought work, often in a teaching role, to support their practice, achieving success through exhibition and making sales was obviously a highly desirable part of their endeavour. The Academy did not hold individual artist exhibitions, so artists had to pitch their work within the heterogeneous exhibitionary context of the Annual Exhibition in attempts to either find patronage or receive critical endorsement of their practice. These venues, with works of art hung frame to frame, skied and floored, were notoriously unflattering to an individual's work. Many artists consequently pursued other avenues to promote their work, hoping that by doing so, they might come to the attention of local patrons or collectors.

This echoes international changes in the latter half of the nineteenth century, where shifts in exhibition practice reflected the transformation of art distribution generally. Private dealers and private exhibition societies appealed directly to a new public who saw art as a 'luxury, as a commodity and investment'.⁹⁰ The seeking out of market opportunities had its historical precedents in New Zealand: von Tempsky's exhibitions in the 1860s in Wellington provide an example of an artist independently looking for exhibiting and marketing opportunities for his work.⁹¹ But the formal venues for doing so emerged only in the 1890s. In his history of New Zealand's art museums, Athol McCreadie dismisses the importance of early colonial dealer galleries, stating:

Some dealers, like John Leech and McGregor Wright galleries had begun decades before [the 1960s], but did not show *contemporary* art in the sense of work that engaged with the present. They were also of the type that made the greater part of their income from picture framing and selling reproductions. [my italics]⁹²

McGregor Wright's was in fact established almost a century before, by the brothers McGregor B. and George B. Wright in 1879. The multiple roles preformed by these dealer spaces, providing both exhibiting as well as practical services to artists and the public, was a feature of early colonial 'galleries' outside the formal constraints of the

⁹⁰ Mainardi, *The End of the Salon: Art and the State in the Early Third Republic*, 107.

⁹¹ See chapter 2

⁹² Athol McCreadie, 'Going Public: New Zealand Art Museums in the 1970s' MA Massey University, 1999, 53.

art societies, and was a necessary condition for economic sustainability.⁹³ McGregor Wright's foregrounded their role as dealers, particularly in their 1897 *Cyclopaedia* entry, which listed their services in the following order: 'Fine Art Dealers, Colourmen, Picture Framers, Carvers and Gilders'.⁹⁴ They described their premises as a 'general rendezvous for local artists and lovers of art', and highlighted their intermediary activities, stating:

The firm have unrivalled facilities for disposing of the productions of New Zealand artists in all cases where the pictures themselves are worthy of admiration; and, as Messrs. Wright and Co. lay themselves out specially to bring buyers and sellers together, all who favour the firm with their patronage may rely upon receiving every consideration and attention.⁹⁵

In 1897 the premises underwent alterations and additions to allow for the incorporation of an art gallery, making it 'one of the finest little picture galleries in the colonies'.⁹⁶ It was described as follows:

The lighting is entirely from the roof, and at night clusters of electric lights afford ample illumination. The walls, which are maroon coloured, are specially battened so as to allow of pictures being hung and removed with a minimum of trouble

McGregor Wright's regularly hosted individual artist exhibitions and sold works of art on commission. For example, when Thomas Edward Donne, Superintendent of the Tourist and Health Resorts Department, was unable to purchase Ellen von Meyern's pictures, which incorrectly rendered Maori moko, he:

... took it upon myself to put the whole of the pictures on view at Messrs McGregor Wright's Art Gallery, where they attracted a great deal of attention and Messrs Wright came to me and asked whether they might be allowed to sell them, as they had had a number of enquiries.⁹⁷

The public were obviously less discerning than government officials and four pictures were sold for a total of £7.5.0. Until the opening of the Academy as a free Public

⁹³ The role of dealer galleries in the colonial era remains an under-researched area. For an overview of the scene in Melbourne and an account of Alexander Fletcher, one of Melbourne's leading art dealers in the 1880s and 1890s see Caroline Jordan, "'Fletcher's of Collins Street': Melbourne's Leading Nineteenth-Century Art Dealer, Alexander Fletcher", *La Trobe Journal*, no. 75 (2005).

⁹⁴ *Wellington Provincial District: Cyclopaedia of New Zealand*, 620.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 621.

⁹⁶ *Evening Post*, 4 September 1897, 5. The plans are archived in the Turnbull Library. See James Hector McKay, 'Alterations and additions, premises, Lambton Quay, Wellington. For McGregor Wright & co. Scale ½ inch to 1 ft. 28 May 1897', ATL: ref: Plans-91-1424.

⁹⁷ Donne to von Meyern, 24 April 1903, ANZ: TO 1/14, 1901/117/14.

Gallery in 1907, galleries such as McGregor Wright were among the few venues in which the general public could view art on a regular basis, and free. This was emphasised in the advertisements placed by the gallery in the Academy annual exhibition catalogues, where the header read “Art gallery free to all”.⁹⁸ This pointed advertisement clearly responded to the fact that the Academy charged admission to their exhibitions, which had been criticised in the newspaper debate over a permanent art gallery in 1900. A letter to the editor from F. W. S suggested that ‘if the exhibitions were free more sales would be made, more pupils would come forward, and a greater incentive given to produce better work’. As it was, the ‘same little coterie’ came forward year after year, so this writer considered it unsurprising if the general public expressed little interest.⁹⁹ William Fell, then President of the Academy, defended their position and stated that an entrance fee was necessary to cover costs. He did note, however, that as the building was now paid off, any profit would be devoted towards acquiring works of art for a permanent art gallery.¹⁰⁰

The dealer gallery thus had a commercial advantage over the Academy and this commercial potential extended to exhibiting artists, who were likely to receive greater financial reward by having a solo show at McGregor Wright’s than they were by exhibiting in the Academy gallery. The potential validation of practice provided by successful exhibition in the Annual Academy exhibition may have held less symbolic value than the increase in economic capital to be gained by a successful solo exhibition. C. N. Worsley, for example, had a solo exhibition in August 1901 at McGregor Wright’s, only a month before the Academy’s Annual Exhibition, provoking the following comment from the *Post* reviewer:

We have only recently seen the best of Mr. Worsley’s work in a private exhibition, and the best was bought. It follows, as a natural corollary, that he is not seen to the greatest advantage in this exhibition.¹⁰¹

In this example, Worsley obviously chose to play the market, rather than hold back his best work for the Academy exhibition, prioritising commercial over artistic success. However, the validation provided by exhibiting with the Academy was limited. Awards were only made in classes for artists who were embarking on a

⁹⁸ See cover page of Academy catalogues from 1900-1902.

⁹⁹ F.W.S to the Editor, *Evening Post*, 20 September 1900, 7.

¹⁰⁰ William Fell to the Editor, *Evening Post*, 21 September 1900, 6.

¹⁰¹ ‘Academy of Fine Arts’, *Evening Post*, 27 September 1901, 6.

career; there were no major awards for mature or senior artists which confirmed or advanced their position in the artistic field. Instead, validation was provided first and foremost in the critical commentary of the newspapers, and, as has been shown, these evaluations could swing dramatically from one report to another, depending on the reviewer and their bias. A successful dealer show would also invite newspaper coverage, however, and perhaps attract greater kudos for the individual artist.

‘Cristabel’, for example, wrote of Worsley’s exhibition:

Mr Worsley is to be congratulated both on the excellence of his pictures on view just now, and on the appreciation they have met with. Evidently, all the money has not been spent on reception gowns and tall hats: some has been left for the more lasting delight of a good picture.¹⁰²

The placement of this endorsement in the ‘Social Gossip’ column – sandwiched between a description of a new coat fashion and the comings and goings of notables to and from Wellington – is revealing of the symbolic space art occupied in colonial society. In the *Freelance* particularly, brief assessments of the art were rapidly followed by descriptions of who was present and what they wore. Regardless of the ambitions of the galleries, dealer or otherwise, to attract the general public, the space constituted by culture in Wellington and reflected in such reviews was one that was predominantly a space of and for the social elite.

Some artists by-passed the Academy exhibitions altogether, choosing instead to pursue purely commercial routes to develop a market for their work. Wilhelm Dittmer was based in Wellington between 1902 and 1904, but his work was exhibited only once with the Academy.¹⁰³ As Bell notes, Dittmer is a curiously neglected figure in New Zealand’s art history, perhaps because the most significant collection of his work was in a Museum, not a gallery, for many years.¹⁰⁴ He came to public, and perhaps more notably, the state’s attention, through an exhibition at the McGregor

¹⁰² Cristabel, ‘Social Gossip’, *Freelance*, 20 July 1901, 9.

¹⁰³ In fact the one work by Dittmer that was exhibited at the Academy was entered by Lady Ranfurly and was a portrait of her husband, *The Earl of Ranfurly*. See no. 29, *NZAFS Fourteenth Annual Exhibition*, Wellington: New Zealand Times, 1902. Dittmer never exhibited any of his Maori subject paintings at Academy exhibitions.

¹⁰⁴ Two works were in the collection of the *Press*, Christchurch’s daily newspaper, *The Alarm*, c. 1904 (which was purchased by Christchurch Art Gallery in 1994), and *The Keeper of Pahikaure* (private collection), which was reproduced as a chromolithograph for the 1906 Christmas edition of the *Weekly Press*. The subject of this painting has been identified as Te Rerehau Kahotea, wife of te Heuheu V. See ATL, Tapuhi database: ref. C-067-002. The previous year, Dittmer’s painting titled *Mana*, a portrait of te Heuheu, had similarly been published. (see fig 10)

Wright gallery in July 1904.¹⁰⁵ The working relationship between various state departments becomes clear at this point, as C. R. C. Robieson wrote to the Minister of the Tourist and Health Resorts Department that 14 pictures had been selected as:

...being of use to this Department and the Museum, Mr Hamilton agreeing to take the 2 entitled "Revenged" and "Defiance". The schedule of prices of this lot amount to £170.10, but Mr Dittmer has agreed to accept £145. The two pictures for the Museum will cost £59.18.6, leaving a balance of £85.7.6 for those selected for this Department.¹⁰⁶

Seven of the works selected by Robieson were considered of little use to the department. In the typescript catalogue these were annotated, 'only of use for illustrations of book and too expensive for that. Photos better on the whole.' These were probably the black and white works referred to in the newspaper review of Dittmer's show, which commented that his illustrations of subjects of Maori mythology reminded 'some of the compositions of Blake'.¹⁰⁷ A selection of works was purchased nonetheless, making this a highly successful exhibition for Dittmer.¹⁰⁸ The following year, Dittmer held a second exhibition at McGregor Wright's and on this occasion the functioning of McGregor Wright's as a *dealer* gallery operating on behalf of their exhibiting artists, and not just as a passive site for opportunistic exhibition, is apparent. J. C. Butler wrote to Sir Joseph Ward suggesting he consider purchasing further works for the Tourist Department and offered a selection of works at a reduced price.¹⁰⁹ Despite the recommendations of 'Mr Hamilton of the Museum' and Butler's reference to Lady Ward, who was seen in the gallery and '...expressed herself very pleased with the work of the artist', Ward did not consider any of the unsold works suitable for the Government department.¹¹⁰ It was, however, following this exhibition that Augustus Hamilton negotiated the purchase of six Dittmer portraits with the Colonial Secretary.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ Bell refers to this exhibition, but not the second exhibition held by Dittmer in July 1905. See Bell, *Colonial Constructs: European Images of Maori 1840-1914*, 222.

¹⁰⁶ Robieson to Minister of Tourist and Health Resorts Department, 22 August 1904. Twenty-three works were listed in this catalogue of sorts, which ranged in price from £52.10.0 to £3.3.0. ANZ: TO1 box 14 1901/117/13.

¹⁰⁷ *Evening Post*, 26 July 1904, 4.

¹⁰⁸ The listed titles included *Koroniti*, *Pipiriki*, *Upper reaches*, *Girl in a canoe*, which were later published in Dittmer's *Reflections: Sketches on the Wanganui River*, Wanganui: A. D. Willis, 1905.

¹⁰⁹ J. C. Butler (of McGregor Wright) to Sir J. G. Ward, 31 July 1905, ANZ: TO1 box 14 1901/117/13. Butler was the father of George Butler, a promising young artist on the Wellington scene in the 1890s.

¹¹⁰ Robieson to Butler, 7 August 1905, ANZ: TO1 box 14 1901/117/13.

¹¹¹ See chapter 2. Hamilton must have made tentative arrangements to purchase works prior to or during the exhibition.

McGregor Wright's also readily hosted exhibitions that might have constituted the more 'avant-garde' end of contemporary practice. In August 1902 Frances Hodgkins had sent 37 watercolours to her sister, Isabel Field, which were exhibited in McGregor Wright's¹¹² and in February 1904, she and Dorothy Kate Richmond, who had both recently returned from their studies in Europe, also held an exhibition there. In the *Evening Post* both artists were introduced in relation to their fathers, but their work was highly praised for its own merit.¹¹³ In particular, the writer noted the positive influence of their travels, as they had 'benefited from the influence that surrounded them in the atmosphere of art into which they penetrated the Old World'.¹¹⁴ Hodgkins's work from Morocco was especially praised for its colour, as it seemed to be 'painted in sunshine'. One of these works, *The Onion-seller, Tangier*, one of the 'gems of the exhibition', would have been similar in style to the work J. W. Joynt gifted to the Academy, *The Orange Sellers* 1905 (Te Papa).¹¹⁵

Christina Barton considers that market scenes such as these provided Hodgkins with a specific 'artistic challenge' during this period.¹¹⁶ She characterises Hodgkins' modernism as a 'rear-guard action', one that found itself in the markets and cobbled streets of old Europe, with the effect that her '...modernism is haunted by the sense of a lost past rendered palpable in the nostalgic vision of one of its colonial daughters'.¹¹⁷ In this discussion, Barton is concerned to complicate the art historical narrative that has rendered '...Hodgkins' journey as a seamless progress towards modernity', by suggesting that it is instead, particularly between 1901 and 1913, 'caught in an oscillation between old and new, past and present, where those terms themselves need recoding'.¹¹⁸

While Barton's argument is constructed in relation to the dilemma of the 'expatriate' artist, the issues raised by it are equally applicable to the circumstances of

¹¹² No catalogue remains for the 1902 exhibition, but the *Evening Post* records the exhibition. See *Evening Post*, 27 August 1902, 4. For a full account of Hodgkins's exhibitions see Roger Collins and Iain Buchanan, 'Frances Hodgkins on Display: Galleries, Dealers and Exhibitions, 1890-1950', *Bulletin of New Zealand Art History, Special Series*, no. 5 (2000).

¹¹³ 'Exhibition of Paintings', 24 February 1904, *Evening Post*, 2.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Catalogue of the Seventeenth Annual Exhibition, New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, 1905.

¹¹⁶ Christina Barton, *The Expatriates: Frances Hodgkins and Barrie Bates*, Wellington: Adam Art Gallery, 2005, 16.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 17.

art production *in* the colony in the period under consideration. The recoding, or renegotiation of those terms, the ‘old’ and the ‘new’, the ‘past’ and the ‘present’, was of concern to those resident in New Zealand, necessitated by the fact that the adjective *colonial* in relation to New Zealand art was in the process of becoming a signifier of the *historical*, the old or that which had past, not the *contemporary*, the new or the present. This recoding was actively negotiated in two exhibitions at the Academy: the first, a ‘unique’ exhibition held in 1895; and the second the posthumous exhibition of Nairn’s work held in 1904. Both exhibitions draw attention to the place of nostalgia in instilling a sense of historical awareness as well as the circumstances which render works of art, and artists, worthy of remembrance.

There is no record of any planning for the ‘unique’ exhibition in the Academy minutes, but was noted in the newspaper that ‘it was a happy thought which led to the holding of the exhibition of sketches of three of the most representative of New Zealand artists just opened at the Academy of Art’.¹¹⁹ The three ‘most representative artists’ were Gully, Richmond and C. D. Barraud. The works on display came from the artists’ families and were found to be interesting ‘both from the artistic and the historic standpoints’. Richmond’s ‘graphic sketches of the sites or settlements of Gisborne, Westport, Greymouth, Auckland, Dunedin, &c. as they appeared in the sixties’ were therefore of interest, presumably in their ability to be contrasted with present development or memory of place. Likewise Barraud’s sketches of the pink and white terraces acted as reminders of the ‘various wonders gone, alas, for ever in the cataclysm of Tarawera’.¹²⁰ The review concluded:

It will be with mixed feelings that old settlers will visit this fine collection, and every young colonist should see it, to see how things once were in their native country, even though the interest may be intermixed with regret for beauties departed.¹²¹

This exhibition showcased *sketches* by these artists, works that they themselves would have considered studies for later exhibition pieces, a situation that may only have been possible in the wake of the Club exhibitions. Indeed, Richmond, New Zealand’s

¹¹⁹ ‘A Unique Exhibition’, 10 October 1895, *Evening Post*, 2. A second exhibition along similar lines was one of the first shows held for the Bishop Suter Art Gallery in 1899. Thirteen works were loaned by Dorothy Kate Richmond and were later removed to the National Art Gallery as part of the Richmond Collection. See Butterworth, *The Suter: 100 Years in Nelson*, 35.

¹²⁰ ‘A Unique Exhibition’, *Evening Post*, 10 October 1895, 2.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

head 'aquarellist' since the death of Gully,¹²² was criticised at the 1890 Academy exhibition for the fact that he 'sent a number of charming sketches, but they are simply sketches and no attempt has been made to finish them'.¹²³ The conditions necessary for exhibition had changed, as had the expectations of public and painter, perhaps in the understanding that these works were intended and exhibited as preliminary studies, not final works.

The nostalgic note that infiltrates the brief coverage of this exhibition is novel. Views that had been celebrated in earlier exhibitions were now sites of remembrance, reminders of how things were before the changes wrought by 'civilisation' and by the effects of nature herself. The historical here overrides the aesthetic and serves as the primary lens through which the art is appreciated. But what is also represented by this exhibition is an attempt to begin a historicising process of New Zealand's art and its history. By bringing together three artists who were felt to have been key participants in the colonial field of artistic production, this exhibition highlighted the fact that there were figures worthy of collection and exhibition that could in their own way pass on both artistic and historical lessons to the public.

This section began by considering the moment of rupture represented by the arrival of Nairn on the Wellington scene and the first Club exhibition. It seems fitting, then, to conclude this discussion by returning to Nairn, for his death in 1904, and the subsequent exhibition of his work provides a pertinent moment to examine the equivocal situation of art in New Zealand in the early twentieth century. In Europe, the precedent of holding commemorative posthumous exhibitions of a leading artist's work was well-established in the nineteenth century. Following Nairn's death, the first exhibition devoted to a single artist was held in the Academy Gallery, the significance of which did not pass unnoticed in newspaper accounts and reviews. The exhibition was described as '...a wonderfully complete presentment of the best work of the late artist [which] ... derives additional interest from being perhaps the first really adequate exhibition of the products of a colonial artist's brush'.¹²⁴ The exhibition was considered distinctive for several reasons, the first of which was that nearly all the wall space in the gallery was devoted to the 12 years of Nairn's production in New

¹²² 'New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, second annual exhibition, first notice', *Evening Post*, 20 October 1890, 4

¹²³ 'New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, second annual exhibition, second notice', *Evening Post*, 22 October 1890, 4

¹²⁴ 'The Nairn Exhibition: a Fine Collection', *Evening Post*, 9 April 1904, 5-6

Zealand. While some works of his followers were also exhibited, the exhibition comprised almost 100 loaned canvases, including twelve portraits which proved his claims as 'New Zealand's premier portrait painter'. In addition 98 works by Nairn were exhibited for the first time.¹²⁵ Of these, only one was of a subject foreign to New Zealand.¹²⁶

This exhibition recalls the inclusion of Gully's work in the 1889 Dunedin Exhibition following his death the previous year. On both occasions, death was the necessary condition for having one's oeuvre comprehensively displayed in a fine art setting, but the exhibitions also ambiguously provided the opportunity for previously unseen and recently produced works to be exhibited. In the case of Gully, works made on a sketching trip with Richmond; in the case of Nairn, 'memories of Nelson and Marlborough'.¹²⁷ The description of Nairn's works as 'memories', is not only a misnomer – Nairn was an advocate of the *plein air* technique, so they would have been more properly described as 'impressions' – but reflects the perceptions of the viewer and the role of the posthumous exhibition, not those of the artist. For it is in the sketches and *unfinished* works, not in the finished works from private collections, that the viewer encounters a sense of loss of potential and it is in this realisation that the nostalgia provoked by such a viewing experience is located. The unfinished works speak of unresolved promises and uncertain futures. They were, by the fact of death, cast into the past tense, and the retrospective glance of the contemporary viewer concretised the works as historical.

In the case of both Gully and Nairn, the posthumous exhibition was inextricably linked to the consolidation of their artistic reputation within the collective memory of the public.¹²⁸ While Gully's twentieth-century reputation did not escape modernist re-evaluation, the survival of his artistic reputation rested on his nineteenth-century reception and the very tangible and physical evidence that remains in collections and exhibition records of his practice. Likewise, Nairn's support by the Wellington elite, which was highlighted by the large number of works lent by their

¹²⁵ The new works were described as the 'last work of the deceased artist', and consisted mostly of watercolours. These were priced and available for sale. 'The Nairn Exhibition: a Fine Collection', *Evening Post*, 9 April 1904, 5.

¹²⁶ This was a 'bright little oil showing a scene at Glenfinlas, in Perthshire', which had been presented by Nairn to Mr G. B. Wright. *Ibid*, 6.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*.

¹²⁸ The relationship between survival of artistic reputation and the concept of collective memory is investigated in Gladys Engel Lang and Kurt Lang, 'Recognition and Renown: The Survival of Artistic Reputation', *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, no. 1 (1988).

owners for his posthumous exhibition, also stood him in good stead for future remembrance, especially when significant bodies of his work later entered the national collection.¹²⁹ In both cases the posthumous exhibition also acted as a retrospective, which allowed for the assessment of a single artist's practice and its development over time. Masterpieces could be noted for the record, and the significance of the artist's practice within the context of New Zealand art evaluated. Both the *Post* and the *Times* concurred in their opinion that *Tess*, 1893 (Te Papa) was one of Nairn's 'best' pictures.¹³⁰ While the *Post* critic concluded that 'a more complete exposition of the development of an artist during his best years could hardly be contrived', the *Times* added a cautionary and prophetic note to the generally celebratory tone by suggesting 'his work would remain a great memento', but that '...they would not see for a long time how much Mr Nairn had done for art in New Zealand'.¹³¹

The discussion surrounding the state of art in New Zealand was noted earlier, but the Nairn exhibition gave rise to further murmurings of discontent. An article published during the Nairn exhibition, titled 'Wanted, a Maecenas', gave expression to the ongoing concerns regarding art in Wellington.¹³² Criticism related to the fact that the 'national' Academy still had only one work of art in its permanent collection and had, after 20 years, only just paid in full for its building. This stood in poor contrast to the collections and galleries of Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin, all of which had benefited variously from bequests, the munificence of individuals or the side-effects of large-scale exhibitions. The fact that the Academy gallery was periodically used for wool sales did not inspire hope in the reporter, who noted that 'the periodical wool sales are still a cloud hanging over the artistic yearning of the city'.¹³³ Indeed, while I have suggested that the Gully and Nairn exhibitions acted as sites where those artist's reputations were consolidated within the colonial field of art, the market played an important role in the validation of artistic practice. For as the

¹²⁹ In addition to the works gifted by John Newton and Miss Mary Newton to the National Collection, individuals such as Mrs Agnes McGregor Wright, Miss S Leetham and A.N. Baird among others also presented works to the National Art Gallery after its opening in 1936.

¹³⁰ See 'The Nairn Exhibition', 11 April 1904, *New Zealand Times*, 5 and 'The Nairn Exhibition: a Fine Collection', 9 April 1904, *Evening Post*, 6.

¹³¹ *Ibid.* There is still no single comprehensive monograph of James McLaughlin Nairn and his work, but Victoria Hearnshaw's research provides an invaluable documentary catalogue. See Hearnshaw, 'James Melauchlan Nairn: A Catalogue of Works'.

¹³² 'Wanted, a Maecenas: How art languishes in Wellington. Its history and prospects. A doleful state of affairs', *Evening Post*, 16 April 1904, 5.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

examples of dealer gallery exhibitions have shown, art during this period was valued as much by its success as a commodity, a product, as it was by its artistic merit or critical acclaim. This fact was compounded by the lack of any accepted aesthetic standards for judging art, especially in an artistic climate that was gradually shifting towards something more 'modern'. Consequently there was no agreed canon of works yet established to which works might aspire or by which achievements might be measured. To investigate this 'lack' further, and some possible reasons for it, particularly in the relation between art and the state, the next section of this chapter explores the impact on 'culture' of the state's commitment to developing trade and tourism. In particular, I consider how the activities of the Museum and the Tourist and Health Resorts Department contributed to the perpetuation of an artistic tradition based in popular representational forms.

Transforming a 'cabinet of curiosities'

In the 1900s the Museum and Tourist and Health Resorts Department called for a re-emphasis on the natural landscape as a consumable product of New Zealand and on Maori as consumable culture. The state's investment in tourism made use of culture to produce a symbolic representation of the nation abroad that was not yet fully reflected in the practical realities of existence in New Zealand. Consequently, the co-option of the cultural forms of painting and photography to realise this symbolic nation impacted upon the artistic production of New Zealand artists as well as on the development of public cultural spaces. In contrast to the emerging recognition in the art world of a colonial art that was becoming historical, and therefore of a *pakeha* cultural history, the Museum (and the developing national publicity organisations) fostered the production of contemporary art that reconstructed *pre-colonial* history and contributed to the creation of a modern-day 'Maoriland'.

In 1903 Augustus Hamilton inherited a Museum whose contents had been denounced as a 'cabinet of curiosities' by an international expert. James Hector had received increasing criticism in his last years as Museum director, and not just for his Museum displays. His arrangement of the New Zealand Court at the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition of 1888-89 was also attacked, particularly in relation to the mining exhibits, for its great 'inefficiency of display,' and it was reported in national newspapers that the *Lyttleton Times* maintains the representation that the exhibits

partake of a museum rather than a commercial character'.¹³⁴ When approached by E. Engster in 1892 regarding New Zealand's representation at Chicago in 1893, Hector asked Engster's opinion about his organisation of New Zealand's courts at previous exhibitions.¹³⁵ He asked this '...as a favour as at the time I was subject to very unfair criticism at the instigation of two instrumental persons'.¹³⁶ However, criticism of Hector's involvement in international exhibitions was not just made by his contemporaries; one of his successors, James Allan Thomson, was retrospectively sceptical of his contributions. Thomson's critique concerned the time Hector's exhibition organisation had taken out of his duties to science and to the Museum. In response to a proposal to call on the Dominion Museum for both manpower and specimens for the British Empire Exhibition in 1924, Thomson made the 'strongest protest against any possible abuse of the Museum's position'. He argued that:

The late Sir James Hector spent a large part of his own and his officers' time in preparing large exhibits for the Melbourne, Sydney, and Indian and Colonial Exhibitions in the 80s and the 90s, and it is quite clear that not only did the collections suffer badly, but that from that time Sir James himself ceased to do the valuable original research that his earlier work showed him capable of. The loss to New Zealand science is irreparable.¹³⁷

A photograph of the interior of the Museum in the 1890s does reveal it to be the heterogeneous collection of curiosities that Bather had criticised, writing of the arrangement 'Practically none. At some distant period there seems to have been an attempt to keep the geological specimens in one room, the zoological in another, the ethnological in a third; but now specimens are simply placed where room can be best made for them'.¹³⁸ (see fig 34) While a degree of differentiation and separation of exhibits may have existed on a micro-level, this photograph shows whale skeletons suspended from the ceiling swimming above a replica statue of Dionysus, a Grecian urn and bust of Sir Isaac Featherston, cases of fossils, rocks and other natural history

¹³⁴ *New Zealand Herald*, 9 August 1888, 5.

¹³⁵ New Zealand was not represented at the Chicago Exhibition, which was one of the major assertions of American progress in the nineteenth century. Engster, who remains an enigmatic pro-international exhibition character, also submitted a letter to the editor of the *Post* in 1899 regarding the lack of effort being made to represent New Zealand at the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle. See 'New Zealand and the Paris Exhibition', *Evening Post*, 18 August 1899, 2.

¹³⁶ See E. Engster to Hector, 12 December 1892, TPA: MU95, box 8, item 65 and Hector to Engster, 21 December 1892, TPA: MU465, volume 7, page 185-6.

¹³⁷ Thomson to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 15 February 1923, TPA: MU14, box 5, item 13.

¹³⁸ F. A. Bather, 'Some Colonial Museums', in *Museums Association: Report of Proceedings with the Papers Read at the 5th Annual General Meeting, Held in Dublin, June 26-29, 1894*, ed. E. Howarth and H. M. Platnauer Sheffield and York: Museums Association, 1895, 13.

specimens next to Maori carvings, and pictures, largely photographs, hung skied on the railings interspersed with stags' heads.¹³⁹ This display exhibits none of the emergent principles of museological strategies, such as the 'new museum idea' espoused by Sir William Flower in 1889. Instead of clearly separating off a research from a display collection arranged to promote a methodical and instructive experience for the museum visitor, the interior of the Colonial Museum would seem to have encouraged a series of random encounters with a miscellany of fantastic objects.

On his appointment in 1903, Augustus Hamilton devoted himself to planning organisational improvements and making changes in the Museum arrangements. These were carefully documented in his diary, kept sporadically between 1903 and 1910. On 22 December 1903, he wrote:

...The laboratory building is only fit for firewood and must be removed as soon as possible. The Maori House is in the same line with it and will I think have to be shifted so that a row of workshops &c. can go along the back of the section ... there is no catalogue and I think I shall have to introduce the card system for Deposits and for Acquisitions.¹⁴⁰

He began a catalogue in February 1904, a card system for acquisitions and deposits in March 1904 and a letter register from 1905. The catalogue had not been updated since 1870 and meanwhile the collections had grown vastly. In his first Bulletin, published in 1906, Hamilton quoted Hector reporting that some 500 boxes of geological specimens were stored under the Museum awaiting manpower and space for proper cataloguing or exhibition.¹⁴¹

In his first years as Director, Hamilton secured many notable collections of Maori material and promptly set about rearranging the Museum to better reflect its new focus on Maori ethnology. By 1906 he could boast:

The Director has altered the general arrangement of the present Museum so as to leave the main hall entirely for specimens of Maori art, the north wing being devoted

¹³⁹ The photographs on the railings were carbon print enlargements of New Zealand views made by Daniel Louis Mundy in London in 1875, which were sent back to the New Zealand Government. See Lissa Mitchell, "Promotional Landscapes: D.L. Mundy's 'Photographic Experiences in New Zealand'," *Tuhinga* 20 (2009).

¹⁴⁰ Augustus Hamilton, Tuesday 22 December 1903, Ross O'Rourke, ed., *A Diary of the Late Augustus Hamilton: 19 December 1903 - 3 March 1904* Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2001.

¹⁴¹ James Hector, quoted in Augustus Hamilton, 'Colonial Museum', in *Bulletin* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1906), 8.

to New Zealand natural history, and the south wing and the table-cases in the gallery being still occupied by the collection of the Geological Survey.¹⁴²

The initial move to organise the exhibits so that clear areas of specialisation were identified was essential, but in his descriptions and in photographs of Hamilton's rearrangements of the Museum, an understanding of the need for displays to do more than just present a comprehensive collection of well-labelled specimens is demonstrated. Hamilton's display strategies attempted to enliven the exhibits and bring the museum into the twentieth century in terms of museum arrangements and techniques of presentation.

Studies on the relationship between art and science refer to the belief in a cognitive hierarchy that progresses from 'sensual knowledge to "pure" thought', with visual perception plotted at the 'bottom' and language at the 'top'.¹⁴³ Historically, this was accompanied by a strong suspicion of the power of images that led to a hard distinction being drawn between reason and truth (language) and appearance and falsity (art).¹⁴⁴ Illustrations, or the use of artistic strategies to convey abstract ideas, were seen as superfluous, and valued less than the written word. Similarly, 'serious' museums resisted incorporating artistic elements into displays. In direct contrast to the curiosity cabinet, early museums aimed to be methodical in their organisation and exhibition, with the result that they were often unappealing to the eye. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, curators began to realise that museum displays were not just disseminators of information but also held the potential to evoke powerful emotions in the viewer. This could be achieved by incorporating a degree of imagination and artistic innovation into displays. Rather than arranging labelled specimens in a cabinet, curators aimed to visualise relationships, to create habitat groups, or dioramas.

Hamilton clearly realised that the relationship between art and science could go beyond facilitating the production of objective drawings of specimens. In addition to increasing the number of Maori artefacts on display, he also made an attempt to

¹⁴² Ibid., 20. The Geological Survey came under control of the Mines Department from 1895, but it did not have an independent laboratory until 1905.

¹⁴³ David Topper, 'Towards an Epistemology of Scientific Illustration', in *Picturing Knowledge: Historical and Philosophical Problems Concerning the Use of Art in Science*, ed. Brian S. Baigrie (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 218. This book investigates the relationship between art and science, particularly in relation to the scientific illustration.

¹⁴⁴ Stephen T. Asma, *Stuffed Animals and Pickled Heads: The Culture and Evolution of Natural History Museums*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

contextualise those objects. One of the first completed projects under Hamilton's directorship was the construction of a large model pa, twelve by six feet, which represented in three dimensions a 'Maori village in time of peace'.¹⁴⁵ James McDonald was responsible for this preparation and during his employment as draughtsman at the Museum he also modelled a 'life-sized figure representing a well-tattooed Maori chief'.¹⁴⁶ The use of mannequins to display clothing and to form social groupings or tableaux had been implemented in American Museums from the 1870s and was employed by Julius von Haast for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, both to display clothing and illustrate the performance of typical tasks.¹⁴⁷ Hamilton hoped to have groups of such figures made to model items of clothing, such as Maori cloaks and mats, from the Museum collections; however, the lone figure modelled by McDonald is all that remains. (fig 54)

Hamilton had re-assessed the Museum's priorities by replacing the taxidermist's workspace with a photographic studio, which inhibited the development of lively natural history dioramas, but external help was sought to maintain the natural history collections. Mr E. Jennings, from Otago Museum, was engaged for three months to help mount the shell collection and place the 'mounted collection of New Zealand birds on uniform stands'.¹⁴⁸ Interior photographs show that while Hamilton's spatial reorganisation was in progress, the natural history specimens, including the reconstructed moa and the cases of stuffed birds remained in close proximity to the model pa. Thus the juxtaposition of nature and culture persisted, although this was probably as much due to space limitations as it was ideological imperatives. (fig 55)

Hamilton also incorporated pictures into his Museum displays. Some of these were shown less as 'works of art', than with the intention of conveying information that would enhance the visitor's understanding and appreciation of artefacts. Just as pictures provided an adjunct to the objects on display at international exhibitions, so

¹⁴⁵ Hamilton to Dr Anderson, 29 December 1909, TPA: MU206, box , item 16.

¹⁴⁶ Hamilton, 'Colonial Museum', 21. In the copy of the Bulletin in Te Aka Matua, the italicised portioned of the following published sentence is crossed out: '*The Director, assisted by Mr. McDonald, constructed a large model of a Maori village and fortified pa...*'

¹⁴⁷ See 'A Ramble through the New Zealand Court', *Illustrated London News*, 2 October 1886, 364 and Frank Cundall, ed., *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition* London: William Clowes and Sons, 1886, 68 for comments on the effectiveness of these models. Canterbury Museum acquired copies of these models but the Colonial Museum did not adopt displays of this kind until Hamilton's era. See Canterbury Museum, *Guide to the Collections* (Christchurch: Canterbury Museum, 1906).

¹⁴⁸ See Hamilton, 'Colonial Museum', 22.

this was largely the role played by Maori portraits in the Colonial Museum. Hamilton noted in Bulletin No. 1 that ‘...a set of the principal plates in Angas’s well-known work has been framed and printed labels affixed describing the plates. These portraits of celebrated personages in Maori history attract much attention’.¹⁴⁹ The plates were acquired from Francis Edwards in England¹⁵⁰ and were listed by Hamilton in the catalogue of the Maori collection, which, by 1906, contained over 2500 specimens.¹⁵¹ The descriptions, adapted from Angas’s text, survive in manuscript form in Te Papa’s archives. They provided biographical and historical details as well as descriptions of clothing and surroundings. For example, the label for plate IX (fig 56) reads:

The sitting figure is Te Wai the young wife of Tuarau, son of Nga Homa or ‘Tom Street’ who was the elder brother of Te Rauparaha. She lived at Taupo pa near Plimmerton and close to the strongly fortified stockade erected by Rangihaeata as a refuge in case of being attacked for his share in the Wairau massacre. The red handkerchief round the head is a sign of mourning. Katoki, the standing figure was a daughter of Te Wehirangi of Rotorua and cousin of Te Wai.¹⁵²

Hamilton’s interest in securing images of Maori for the Museum has already been discussed, and his appointment to the Museum resulted in an increase of artistic activity and state support of such representations in Wellington. But this activity was not just confined to the museological context. Hamilton’s appointment came just two years after the formation of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts in 1901, a department which also set about building collections of imagery representative of New Zealand scenery and culture. In the first annual report for this department, the Superintendent, T. E. Donne, raised the issue that had brought Hamilton to the attention of Government. That was the rate at which ‘Maori carvings, weapons, implements, and ornaments are being constantly taken out of the colony by visitors, and genuine articles, illustrative of Maori life in former times are daily becoming more rare’. Donne urged that the government give ‘early and serious consideration ...

¹⁴⁹ Hamilton, ‘Colonial Museum’, 21.

¹⁵⁰ No. 760 in Hamilton’s holograph inventory is for ‘Twenty two illustrations from Angas. Purchased from Edwards, Framed’. A later purchase, also from Edwards, is itemised as a series of 26 ‘Portraits of Maori chiefs from Angas’ from 898 to 923. List of specimens in the Maori Collection, 1904-1913, pages from Hamilton’s Holograph Inventory (Wellington: Te Papa). Twenty-two of these can be matched to contemporary holdings in Te Papa’s collections (from 1992-0035-697 to 1992-0035-721).

¹⁵¹ Hamilton, ‘Colonial Museum’, 21.

¹⁵² Miscellaneous MSS relating to pictures by Angas, TPA: MU152, box 6, item 46. Compare this description with that provided in the ATL database, reference number PUBL-0014-09.

to the question of establishing an ethnological Museum for the colony'.¹⁵³

Hamilton's appointment went some way towards addressing this concern, but aside from their interest in preserving the cultural artefacts, Hamilton and Donne also supported the production of representations of Maori and their culture.

The suitability of Maori as a subject for painting in New Zealand that could be supported by the state depended on two apparently conflicting ideologies. That which has been most vividly recalled in postcolonial analyses of art is the 'dying race' theory, whereby Maori were believed to be a culture on the verge of extinction. In this case, representations took part in the genre of the 'picturesque' and acted to preserve what would otherwise be lost. As Linda Nochlin observes in her study of Orientalist painting, 'The picturesque is pursued throughout the nineteenth century like a form of peculiarly elusive wildlife'.¹⁵⁴ In reference to the French artists who were as interested in the 'primitive' culture of Brittany as much as of the Near East, she comments that, 'The same society that was engaged in wiping out local customs and traditional practices was also avid to preserve them in the form of records – verbal...musical...or visual...' Nochlin concludes that the 'very notion of the picturesque in its nineteenth-century manifestations is premised on the fact of destruction', for only then are the '...customs, costumes, and religious rituals of the dominated finally *seen* as picturesque'.¹⁵⁵ While the 'dying race' theory was discounted as fact – replaced by the inevitability of miscegenation – the popularity of this discourse, alongside a preservationist impulse, accounts in part for the increasing representation of Maori life and culture in art from the turn of the century.

Nochlin justifies the interest in the picturesque on the part of the coloniser as one that necessarily captured its subject as 'irredeemably different from, more backward than, and culturally inferior'.¹⁵⁶ But arguably a second ideology, prevalent in the 1890s, provides a different rationale for the increasing popularity of Maori as subject in New Zealand. This was popularised by Edward Tregear's book, *The Aryan*

¹⁵³ T. E. Donne, "Department of Tourist and Health Resorts: First Annual Report," *AJHR* H-2 (1902), 22. This coincided with the tabling of 'The Maori Antiquities Act, 1901', in parliament by Carroll, in which S. Percy Smith and Hamilton outlined their vision for a National Maori Museum. The proposal to form a collection of Maori curios in Wellington was critiqued by the *New Zealand Herald*, who suggested that rather than setting up a rival department, the government should support the Auckland Institute which already had a substantial collection. Reported *Evening Post*, 7 October 1901, 5.

¹⁵⁴ Linda Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient [1982]', in *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* London: Thames and Hudson, 1991, 50.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 51.

Maori (1885), which claimed descent for Maori from European ancestors, citing evidence based on pictorial motifs as well as linguistic elements.¹⁵⁷ Tregear's thesis, which clearly ennobled Maori, was disseminated through the Polynesian Society, a group of Pakeha scholars formed in 1892. According to Belich, the argument for Aryanism persisted well into the twentieth century, primarily due to its 'cultural utility'. Cultural forms and symbols borrowed from Maori culture provided a necessary 'distinctiveness' for Pakeha New Zealanders undergoing an 'identity crisis'. As Belich notes:

The beauty of it was that such distinctiveness, the distinguishing 'golden tinge' in New Zealand culture, did not threaten the recolonial imperative of racial homogeneity and Britishness, because Maori were Aryan – virtually Brown Britons.¹⁵⁸

Goldie, Lindauer and Steele's paintings of Maori subjects melded these two theoretical stances most successfully. All practised what can be described as an 'Orientalism' adapted to colonial circumstance, through their careful reconstruction of scenes, complete with ethnographic details that combine to create what Nochlin refers to as the 'reality effect'.¹⁵⁹ While neither Hamilton nor Donne were successful in acquiring works by any of these artists for their respective collections, central to both their institutional enterprises was the securing and exhibition of images of Maori, for which they demanded a high degree of representational accuracy.¹⁶⁰ In their response to the Maori Antiquities Act, Hamilton and S. Percy Smith had included a first-floor gallery in their requirements for a Maori Museum:

...to be used for portraits and memorials of noted persons of the Maori race, who would be represented by paintings, and, I hope, eventually by statuary. The full scheme provides for a specially lighted picture-gallery to be added at some future time for portraits and pictures of events in Maori history.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Edward Tregear, *The Aryan Maori*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1885.

¹⁵⁸ Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 209. See Belich, 'Myth, Race, and Identity in New Zealand', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 31, no. 1.

¹⁵⁹ Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient [1982]', 38.

¹⁶⁰ Donne, for example, found himself unable to purchase a selection of works by Ellen von Meyern, as he was informed by 'some Maori authorities... that the tattooing on the lips of the female was not correct'. See Donne to von Meyern, 24 April 1903, ANZ: TO 1/14, 1901/117/14. Hamilton purchased two paintings by von Meyern in 1909. These are both dated 1908 and appear to use the same model as their subject (Te Papa: 1995-0035-1140 and 1995-0035-1161). In one, the Maori woman is smoking a pipe and wears a green headscarf, in the other she carries a child in a blanket on her back (in a manner reminiscent of Lindauer's *Ana Rupene and Child*). They are very sketchily executed, and may fit within what von Meyern herself described as 'potboilers'. See Von Meyern to Donne, 7 February 1903, ANZ: TO 1/14, 1901/117/14.

¹⁶¹ See S. Percy Smith and Augustus Hamilton. "The Maori Antiquities Act, 1901 (Suggestions, Correspondence, Etc. In Connection with)." *AJHR* G-8, (1902): 1.

In terms of gathering together works that might constitute a picture gallery of Maori, Hamilton's most significant acquisitions were those pictures by Wilhelm Dittmer. The portrait of te Heuheu Tukino V, Tūreiti, titled *Mana*, had been on display in Dittmer's studio in November 1904; from there it was to be exhibited at McGregor Wright's and then sent to Christchurch.¹⁶² (see fig 10) In November 1909 Hamilton noted in his diary that he had 'taken down *Te Heuheu* portrait to photograph', complaining 'It ought to be put in a place where it can be seen if they are not going to take at the Art Gallery'.¹⁶³ Minutes from an Academy meeting in December record that 'Te Heuheu's offer of a picture on loan was accepted (portrait by W. Dittmer)'.¹⁶⁴ However, it seems that the following year it was back in the Museum building. For after seeing te Heuheu downtown, who promised to visit the Museum, Hamilton 'shifted the old man's portrait from the watchman's room into the hall so that he might see it'.¹⁶⁵

The 'hidden' location of this portrait suggests that Hamilton and Smith's grand vision of a Maori picture-gallery was not realised. Instead, the most effective formation of the kind of gallery of Maori painting that they had imagined was brought together by Donne for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, 1904. For this, Donne secured works from H. E. Partridge's collection of Lindauer paintings, as well as the recently completed work by Goldie and Steele, *The Arrival of the Maoris in New Zealand*, 1898, which was lent by Auckland Art Gallery.¹⁶⁶ Aside from representations of Maori, Donne also displayed a wide range of scenic views of New Zealand to support the assertion in the catalogue that New Zealand was the "Wonderland of the World" and the "Paradise of the Pacific".¹⁶⁷ Many of these were photographic enlargements, but C. N. Howorth, G. E. Butler, J. D. Perrett, John Gibb,

¹⁶² It is possible that while the painting was in Christchurch, Phil R Presants began a lithograph copy which was published in the Christmas edition of the Christchurch *Weekly Press*. Dittmer also reported that he intended to send the painting to Berlin for the Royal Academy Exhibition, but this does not appear to have occurred.

¹⁶³ 6 November 1909, Ross O'Rourke, 'Two Diaries and a Field Notebook 26 July 1909 – 3 August 1910 of the Late Augustus Hamilton and Associated Documentation in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa', (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2001).

¹⁶⁴ Minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 17 December 1909, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1

¹⁶⁵ 29 April 1910, O'Rourke, 'Two Diaries and a Field Notebook'.

¹⁶⁶ See T. E. Donne, "Third Annual Report of the Superintendent of Tourist and Health Resorts," *AJHR* H-2 (1904): 5-6 and Donne, *New Zealand Government Catalogue of Exhibits at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, 1904, St. Louis, Missouri*, St Louis: Little & Becker Printing, 1904. In her recent history of tourism in New Zealand, McClure mistakenly claims that the Lindauer paintings were from the Department's own collection. See Margaret McClure, *The Wonder Country: Making New Zealand Tourism*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2004, 58.

¹⁶⁷ Donne, *New Zealand Government Catalogue of Exhibits at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition*, 6.

H. W. Kirkwood, Walter Wright, James Peele, L. W. Wilson and George Baker were among those represented by landscape paintings. These were also subject to censorship on the basis of their re-presentation of reality. Donne had written to von Meyern that landscape pictures for use by the department ‘...must embrace a fair scope of the country; “local bits” are seldom of use as a means of advertising’.¹⁶⁸ Of J. D. Perrett’s painting of the Waimangu geyser Donne lamented:

...I regret to say that as it does not come up to my expectations as a faithful representation of the geyser and adjacent country I cannot purchase it. I am very much disappointed as I wanted a good picture of Waimangu for exhibition at the St Louis Exposition.¹⁶⁹

Within weeks Donne was working to rectify the situation and commissioned George Butler to paint a picture of the geyser. Butler was working in Dunedin at the time but quickly made his way to Rotorua to fulfil Donne’s vision.¹⁷⁰

In the New Zealand display at St Louis landscape paintings, as well as those of Maori subjects, were exhibited in the Palace of Fish, Forestry and Game.¹⁷¹ A photograph reproduced in *New Zealand Graphic* shows that the pictures were interspersed on the walls with stag’s heads and cabinets of various unidentifiable specimens.¹⁷² (fig 57) While landscape views make sense in this setting, the incorporation of Maori into a display advertising New Zealand forestry and game attractions again presents the persistent conflation of Maori culture with nature. However, the grouping together of scenic views, sporting paraphernalia and Maori culture did exemplify Donne’s aims for the exhibit. In the catalogue he stated:

The exhibit made by the New Zealand Government at the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition is primarily intended to make known to the world the attractions New Zealand offers to tourists. Incidentally a few of the leading products of the colony have been brought to the World’s Fair, and to a slight extent they serve to indicate the country’s productiveness.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸ Donne to von Meyern, 4 February 1903, ANZ: TO 1/14, 1901/117/14.

¹⁶⁹ Donne to Perrett, 25 February 1904, ANZ: TO 1/14, 1901/117/10. The ‘Great Waimangu Geyser’ was represented by at least five photographic enlargements and Butler’s oil painting. See numbers 126, 163, 555, 556, 565 and 596 in the New Zealand catalogue. Donne, *New Zealand Government Catalogue of Exhibits at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition*, 14. The dramatic appearance of the geyser in 1901 had provided the Rotorua region with a new spectacular attraction that Donne was quick to maximise in his advertisements of the area.

¹⁷⁰ See ‘Commission to a Colonial Artist’, *Hawera and Normanby Star*, 5 March 1904, 3 and *Evening Post*, 7 March 1904, 5, both of which comment on Butler’s commission.

¹⁷¹ New Zealand exhibits were also displayed in the Palace of Agriculture. C. R. C. Robieson, “Third Annual Report of the Superintendent of Tourist and Health Resorts,” *AJHR* H-2 (1904), 5.

¹⁷² C. L. Harris, ‘Impressions of the World’s Fair’, in *New Zealand Graphic*, 8 October 1904, 27.

¹⁷³ Donne, *New Zealand Government Catalogue of Exhibits at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition*, 2.

The point here is that art in this context was not intended to function as ‘art’, but was used as part of a display strategy, in which the emphasis is clearly on advertising. Donne’s focus differed from his nineteenth-century counterparts for his focus was on publicising New Zealand as a short-term destination for tourism, not a site for emigration. The image projected was one of a colony that was a space of spectacle, in terms of both the scenery and the culture.

While the Maori paintings shown at St Louis were largely drawn from private collections or, in the case of the Goldie and Steele painting, from regional galleries, many of the landscape views were acquired by the department for illustrative and advertising purposes, such as Butler’s painting of Waimangu Geyser. The photographic enlargements shown at St Louis were also drawn from the newly developed collections of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts. Hamilton and Donne both realised the potential of photography as a medium that could serve their respective government departments. In the early 1900s Hamilton set up a photographic studio in the ‘portion of the building formerly used by the Taxidermist’ and set about making photographic records of Museum specimens.¹⁷⁴ Donne, from his first annual report, indicated a commitment to photography as a medium that could best represent New Zealand on the world stage. He wrote:

One of the best means of advertising the colony’s scenery, wonders, and agricultural, pastoral and industrial life is generally admitted to be by the aid of photography; but unfortunately the Department has found serious drawbacks in this direction owing to the high price for copies, the heavy charges asked for the right of reproduction, and especially the difficulty of getting the class of pictures required from professional photographers.

Recognising the advantage of being in a position to supply illustrated newspapers, magazines, &c., with photographs at small cost to the Department, and without any drawback as to reproduction, also for the illustration of guidebooks and the making of lantern-slides, the Department arranged for a series of views to be taken in the North, Middle and Stewart Islands.¹⁷⁵

Thomas Pringle was the photographer employed for this task, and by 1903 Donne could boast that the Department’s collection of photographic negatives was the best in

¹⁷⁴ Hamilton, ‘Colonial Museum’, 21. The change in function of this space signals a shift from an emphasis upon natural history, requiring the preparation of specimens for display, to actively attempting to document the ethnographic history of the Maori race. By 1906, some 400 photographs had been taken. As well as documenting the collection, Hamilton and McDonald staged photographs of Maori in traditional dress. This continued Hamilton’s practice prior to his employment at the Colonial Museum when he had made photographs of traditional activities ‘in the field’, several of which were published in texts about Maori by both Tregear and Elsdon Best.

¹⁷⁵ Donne, “Department of Tourist and Health Resorts: First Annual Report,” *AJHR* H-2 (1902), 3.

the country. James McDonald, who was later employed by the Museum, also toured the country, sometimes in the company of historian, James Cowan, to photograph sites of scenic and cultural interest for the Department.¹⁷⁶ The photographs, as well as the paintings Donne acquired from artists, were not only shown in exhibitions, but were also used to decorate the Tourist and Health Department offices throughout the country. Indeed, when works from the department's collection were sent to St Louis, Donne bought others to replace them. This suggests that while the Museum had trouble finding financial support for the purchase of pictures, funds were readily available for the more modern forum of exhibition that the Tourist and Health Resorts Department promised. It was, after all, the first governmental department dedicated to promoting national tourism in the world.¹⁷⁷

Photography had begun to assert its independence as a representational medium in the 1890s. Photographs had been exhibited alongside other works of art in the Academy exhibitions but following the establishment of the Wellington Camera Club in 1894, yearly exhibitions were held by the club. Photography clubs were also formed in Nelson, Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin and all were in close communication. An indicator of the vibrant community of photographers emerging in the colonies was the phenomenon of intercolonial photography exhibitions initiated from across the Tasman in 1894. Hector received a letter from Chas Haines in Geelong asking for his co-operation as a patron of 'The Intercolonial Exhibition and Congress of Photography' to be held during Easter 1895.¹⁷⁸ All Australasian photographic societies were invited and it was proposed that the event would consist of both a competitive exhibition (with separate professional and amateur classes) and a congress (constituting papers and practical demonstrations). No evidence of Hector's support or local participation has been located, but the initiative seems to

¹⁷⁶ For a brief summary of McDonald's movements between government departments, see Jonathan Dennis, 'McDonald, James Ingram 1865-1935' *DNZB* [accessed 14 September 2006]; available from <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz>.

¹⁷⁷ For a recent publication surveying the history of tourism in New Zealand see McClure, *The Wonder Country: Making New Zealand Tourism*. Donne was also involved with the Department of Industries and Commerce. There was a tangible cross-over in the ambitions of the two departments, as they both sought to develop trade and tourism on the international market. The formation of these departments represents a governmental shift from a focus on immigration to overseas tourism. The purchase of pictures, both photographs and paintings, would have an immediate role to play in the advertisement of the colony with the supposed benefit of revenue from increased trade and tourism. Although, as Belich points out, the actual numbers did not really justify this state support of overseas tourism; there were only 5000 overseas tourists in 1904, a number that grew to only 20 000 by the 1920s. As he suggests, perhaps the notion of *publicity* was one more suited to Donne's endeavours than *tourism*. See Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, 81-2.

¹⁷⁸ Chas Haines, Geelong to James Hector, 5 Sept 1894, TPA: MU95, folder 9, item 111.

have taken off, as the Wellington Camera Club hosted at least three such intercolonial exhibitions in the late 1890s.¹⁷⁹ The incorporation of pictures from across the Tasman was a strategy that also had been adopted by the Academy, which from 1895 had included works by artists from New South Wales in their exhibitions. This was, on the one hand, a means of fostering intercolonial communality, but also allowed for the comparative evaluation of progress in the arts.¹⁸⁰ In 1901 the affiliation of the local society to the 'Royal Photographic Association in the Old Country' was noted.¹⁸¹ This, it was hoped, 'would have the benefit of the interchange of pictures of some of the best artists in the world'.¹⁸²

The photographic exhibitions were initially held in the Academy gallery and the 1899 exhibition was heralded as 'the best army of photographic work made in the colony up to that time' although the most extensive newspaper coverage relates to the 1901 exhibition.¹⁸³ Commercial photographers such as George Moodie tended to submit works for exhibition, not competition, but among the prize-winning competitors was Thomas Pringle, who, as noted, was the first photographer for the Tourist and Health Resorts Department. These exhibitions were accompanied by evening programmes of music, but included other entertainments, such as lantern slide shows. In 1901 Pringle showed a series of prize-winning lantern slides taken on a trip to Japan in 1900 and Malcolm Ross gave a lecture illustrated by lantern slides from photographs taken on a tour in the South Sea Islands.¹⁸⁴ These exhibitions clearly catered more for the education and entertainment of visitors than did the Academy exhibitions, which favoured purely musical entertainments in the evenings.

The separation of photography from 'fine art' exhibitions, such as those of the Academy, may have impacted negatively on photography's status as 'Art' in the twentieth century. But the formation of clubs and groups that took the medium seriously and sought to develop it, both technically and artistically, meant that

¹⁷⁹ The second and third Intercolonial Exhibitions were held in 1899 and 1901 respectively.

¹⁸⁰ It should be borne in mind that in the 1890s there was every possibility that New Zealand might become federated with Australia, a fact that fostered trans-Tasman relations. Elizabeth Hartrick closely considers the role of magic lantern slides in fostering intercolonial cohesion in her thesis. See Elizabeth Hartrick, 'Consuming Illusions: The Magic Lantern in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand 1850-1910' PhD thesis, The Australian Centre, University of Melbourne, 2003.

¹⁸¹ 'Photographic Exhibition: Opening Ceremony', *Evening Post*, 3 September 1901, 5.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ An album of Pringle's views of Hong Kong, Japan and Manila is in the Turnbull See ATL: Photography collection: PA1-f-146. Several negatives from Ross' trip to the South Sea Islands are also held in the Turnbull. See, for example, [Cook Islanders on the wharf, Aitutaki, to welcome Lord Ranfurly and party, 11 October 1900], dry plate glass negative, ATL: PAColl-5192, 1/2-021258-G.

photography pursued a separate trajectory from the turn of the century. In contrast to the art of painting, which struggled to find an independent voice in the colony, photography was a new medium that had already proved itself suitable to the project of visualising the colony. In this respect, the usefulness of photography to the state was readily absorbed in the early twentieth century, particularly through the efforts of Hamilton and Donne.

The New Zealand International Exhibition, Christchurch, 1906-7

This chapter began with a consideration of the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, 1889-90, when a conscious attempt was made to assert the progress that had been made in the colony in the preceding fifty years. As well as looking forward, the displays looked back, aware that the colonial was fast becoming historical and that there was a need to both preserve and record the past. It might be expected that the New Zealand International Exhibition, Christchurch, 1906-7, would build on these initiatives. Instead, the colony took a paradoxical stance. It displayed marked deference to the Imperial centre, and looked to pre-colonial rather than colonial history as a site for investigating cultural representation. George S. Munro, General Manager and Chairman of Exhibition Commissioners, revealed the intended position of the colony at the exhibition, as he cautioned that

...our own industrial progress [should be] referred to as little as possible, as other parts of the Empire and Foreign Nations are not interested in the industrial progress of the Colony: they are interested in the Colony as a field in which they can find a market for manufactured goods, and obtain supplies of produce and raw materials'.¹⁸⁵

Consequently, the colony was to play a peripheral role in terms of global relations and was to be represented as a site of potential rather than an independent and progressive country.

In contrast to the Dunedin Exhibition, the recent history of the colony was largely absent at Christchurch. Instead, the historical focus of the exhibition was on the pre-colonial period and it was here, in relation to the ethnological displays, that the concerns of the Museum and Tourist and Health Department were brought into

¹⁸⁵ Munro to Acting Minister for Industries and Commerce, 19 April 1905, cited in Jane Vial, 'New Zealand and Australian Art', in *Farewell Colonialism: The New Zealand International Exhibition Christchurch, 1906-07*, ed. John Mansfield Thomson Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1998, 112.

close alignment. Inside the exhibition buildings, Maori were present as visitor, but also as object of display. James McDonald was commissioned to produce a piece of ceremonial statuary, depicting a group of Maori on top of a large pedestal.¹⁸⁶ (fig 58) In keeping with the ethnological bent of Hamilton and Donne's interests, some of the figures were modelled on living Maori, but the aim was to represent an ethnological 'type'.¹⁸⁷ The sculptor, Nelson Illingworth considered the figures to be 'artistic and symbolic',¹⁸⁸ and Cowan described them further as a 'heroic emblematic Maori group'.¹⁸⁹ While this frozen tableau gazed down upon the promenading public in the main corridor, outside the exhibition buildings the encounter was of a different kind. (fig 59) The grounds of the exhibition were home to the fairground, aptly named 'Wonderland', and the 'living' ethnological section, which became known as 'Maoriland'. This area was set aside from the 'serious' courts and exhibits and had an emphasis on amusement and entertainment. The attraction of 'Wonderland' was reluctantly admitted by James Cowan, who described it as 'garish and prosaic by daylight but softened by night and glorified by the glow of electricity and coloured lights'.¹⁹⁰ Wonderland and Maoriland proposed a different space for encounter between the exhibition visitor and the object of display to that within the exhibition buildings, as was noted in *Freelance*:

The Christchurch Exhibition is a place where a dignified person may retain his dignity with ease. It is just a matter of strolling slowly from court to court with a condescending smile not unmixed with a certain hauteur, as if exhibitions existed in every town ... It is when one leaves the building and ventures into the side-shows that dignity must be thrown to the winds.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ The statuary was to be displayed in the entrance hall of the exhibition, but the late completion of the work by McDonald and the arrival of a grand fountain in the meantime, meant the statuary was placed in the Main Corridor. See Elizabeth Rankin, 'From Rome to Rotorua: The Bathhouse Sculptures of Charles Francis Summers', *Journal of New Zealand Art History*, 24 (2003): 30-31.

¹⁸⁷ The figure of the girl was apparently modelled on a young Canterbury half-caste girl.

¹⁸⁸ 'The Maori Statuary', *The Star*, 24 November 1906, p. 5. Illingworth had come to New Zealand in 1906 seeking a government commission for a bust of the recently deceased Sir Richard Seddon. The plaster was displayed in the Christchurch exhibition and the completed bronze is now in the General Assembly Library. See Michael Dunn, *New Zealand Sculpture: A History*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2002, 37-38. Illingworth was later commissioned to produce a series of busts of Maori for the Dominion Museum. Roger Blackley considers Illingworth's aim, in collaboration with Hamilton, to produce not portraits of living Maori, but to distil from them an ancestral 'type' in *Te Mata: The Ethnological Portrait* (Wellington: Adam Art Gallery and Victoria University Press, 2010).

¹⁸⁹ James Cowan, *Official Record of the New Zealand International Exhibition of Arts and Industries, Held at Christchurch, 1906-7: A Descriptive and Historical Account*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1910, 107.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁹¹ 'All sorts of people', *Freelance*, 24 November 1906, 1.

The structuring of the ethnological exhibits brought coloniser and colonised into close and often unprecedented proximity for they consisted of a model Maori pa and other South Sea Island villages which functioned as living displays for the duration of the exhibition. (fig 60) ‘Maoriland’ was the ‘brainchild’ of Donne, Hamilton and Gregor McGregor and was supported by James Carroll, the Native Minister, who bestowed the name ‘Arai-te-uru’ upon the Maori pa.¹⁹² This display was unique for New Zealand, but had its precedents in exhibiting strategies established at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1889,¹⁹³ at the Midway in Chicago in 1893,¹⁹⁴ and those more recently observed by Donne at St Louis in 1904.¹⁹⁵

The model pa demonstrated a complex relationship between the past and the present, between history and a nascent modernity. The reconstructive motive I have observed as underpinning much of Hamilton and Donne’s work in relation to the representation of Maori, similarly informed the construction of the model pa. As McCarthy notes, ‘heritage is, ironically, a sign of modernity not only because it recognises the past as past but recycles it as a regenerative resource’.¹⁹⁶ This paradoxical relationship between the past and the present is captured in Cowan’s comment that ‘In some respects there was a certain unavoidable suggestion of modernity, but, taken all in all, the pa was a faithful attempt at the revival of villages of other days’.¹⁹⁷ Hamilton’s book *Maori Art* was drawn upon for design and decorative inspiration,¹⁹⁸ and representations by colonial artists informed the contemporary construction of many key structures in the Maori pa. So a reconstruction of an ‘authentic’ cultural past was enabled through culturally translated sources. For example, due to the configuration of the ground at Hagley Park, the pa

¹⁹² Cowan, *Official Record of the New Zealand International Exhibition of Arts and Industries, Held at Christchurch, 1906-7: A Descriptive and Historical Account*, 311.

¹⁹³ On the construction of ‘La rue du Caire’, an imitation Egyptian street built by the French for the exposition to represent a street in medieval Cairo, see Timothy Mitchell, ‘Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order [1989]’, in *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Donald Preziosi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

¹⁹⁴ Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling, and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America: World’s Fairs in the United States*, Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000.

¹⁹⁵ ‘Ethnological’ exhibits had, by this stage, progressed from collections of inanimate artefacts and pictorial representations to ‘living’ ethnological displays. At St Louis there were ‘American Indians, the Ainu from Japan, Pygmies from South Africa, Patagonian Giants from Argentina, and the Canadian Indians’. Elana V. Fox, *Inside the World’s Fair of 1904: Exploring the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition*, vol. Two, Elana V. Fox, 2003, 135.

¹⁹⁶ Conal McCarthy, *Exhibiting Maori: A History of Colonial Cultures of Display*, Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2007, 58.

¹⁹⁷ Cowan, *Official Record of the New Zealand International Exhibition*, 315.

¹⁹⁸ Hamilton’s text was the most authoritative text on Maori art and design. See Augustus Hamilton, *Maori Art*, Wellington: New Zealand Institute, 1901.

was ‘modelled on the lines of a waterside pa, such as—to instance a celebrated prototype—the great pa Waitahanui, once occupied by Te Heuheu and his tribe, on the shores of Lake Taupo, which was sketched by Angas in 1844’.¹⁹⁹ (fig 61) The watchtower was ‘on the lines of a *puhara* sketched by the late Charles Heaphy when at the Chatham Islands over sixty years ago, constructed by the Ngatimutunga tribe,’²⁰⁰ and the *waharoa* or gateway was carved in Wellington by Neke Kapua and his sons, ‘taking as their *tauirā* or pattern to a large extent a great *waharoa*, or fort-gate, which formed one of the entrances to the Maketu Pa, Bay of Plenty, forty years ago, and which is the subject of a water-colour sketch by Major-General Robley now in the Colonial Museum’.²⁰¹ (fig 71)

This meant there was greater energy expended on using colonial representations as the basis for constructing simulacral spaces of the colony’s prehistory, rather than using those representations to illustrate or recount recent colonial history. These images functioned problematically; they served as a lens through which Maori might reconstruct their past, but the reconstructions they facilitated ultimately served Pakeha interests as well. Consequently, ‘Maoriland’ played into both Pakeha and Maori conceptions of identity formation and/or confirmation. For Pakeha, ‘Maoriland’ was a romanticisation and idealisation of the pre-European history of New Zealand, through which they could lay claim to a sense of history that was uniquely theirs and one that was lent authenticity by the science of ethnology which informed the construction of the display.²⁰² As much as supporting a Pakeha identity, ‘Maoriland’ could, however, also be seen to support the processes of recolonisation. For while the romanticising of Maori, who were widely perceived as a ‘dying race’ despite statistics revealing a different story²⁰³, the point of difference provided by the ‘logoising’²⁰⁴ of Maori culture presented the British with another

¹⁹⁹ Cowan, *Official Record of the New Zealand International Exhibition*, 312.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 316. Angas’s drawing was based on Joseph Jenner Merrett’s watercolour *Lake Taupo near the hot springs*, 1840s, in the Rex Nan Kivell collection in the National Library of Australia (reference: nla.pic-an5527433). See ATL: drawings and prints collection, reference: PUBL-0014-18.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 322. This *waharoa* is now in Te Papa, where it stands as the museum’s symbolic ‘gateway’ to New Zealand’s cultural and national heritage. See McCarthy, *Exhibiting Maori*, 1.

²⁰² For a consideration of the historical construction of ‘Maoriland’ in New Zealand literature, see Mark Williams and Jane Stafford, *Maoriland: New Zealand Literature 1872-1914* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2006).

²⁰³ The census of 1906 showed an increase in the Maori population of 4630. See Te Rangi Hiroa, “The Passing of the Maori,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* 57 (1924), 365.

²⁰⁴ Ben Dibley deals with the conflicting demands of colonial society in its desire to participate in two different temporal narratives of progress. One which sought to assert New Zealand’s modernity, requiring that the locally specific be eliminated, and the other which aimed to articulate New Zealand’s

exotic facet to place in the crown jewels. However, as Bernard Kernot notes, participation in 'Maoriland' was serious business for Maori, as 'idealising the past was a way of promoting a better future', meaning 'Maoriland for them was a real world of bitter struggle at the centre of which was the possession of Maori land'.²⁰⁵

In light of this focus it is perhaps unsurprising that the exhibition, albeit on the eve of Dominionism, made little attempt to build on recording New Zealand's immediate colonial history. Instead, increased investment and attachment to the Motherland was signalled, especially in the fine art displays. The main attraction in the Art Galleries was the British Art Exhibit, which was considered:

... of a higher standard than was generally anticipated ... on account of its comprehensive and thoroughly representative character. Every possible branch is reproduced and nearly all styles. There will be found among the pictures the impressionistic style, the ordinary style, the rather broad style and the pre-Raphaelite style... probably the best display of pictures sent out of the United Kingdom.²⁰⁶

In contrast to this reportedly comprehensive and wide-ranging exhibit,²⁰⁷ the New Zealand collection of pictures was a deferential selection. (fig 62) Wellington sent approximately twenty pictures selected by a committee from the Academy. These included works by Butler, J. F. Scott, E. W. Christmas, D. K. Richmond, L. C. Baird, Ella Adams, E. Patterson and John Wright. New Zealand artists working overseas were at a distinct disadvantage. Frances Hodgkins and other expatriate artists enquired after sending works for exhibition, prompting the following cablegram:

Firstly the exhibition executives have reserved additional room art gallery for British pictures total reservation now 8 small rooms and one large room, secondly cannot accept any pictures from New Zealand artists at present in England because balance of Art Gallery allotted to Australian art society.²⁰⁸

individuality, which was achieved by 'logoising' indigenous icons and motifs. See Ben Dibley, 'Telling Times: Narrating Nation at the New Zealand International Exhibition 1906-7', *Sites: a journal for South Pacific Cultural Studies*, no. 34 (1997).

²⁰⁵ Bernard Kernot, 'Maoriland Metaphors and the Model Pa', in *Farewell Colonialism: The New Zealand International Exhibition, Christchurch, 1906-7*, ed. John Mansfield Thomson Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1998, 77. For a thorough account of indigenous agency at play in 'Maoriland', see Conal McCarthy, "'Our Works of Ancient Times': History, Colonisation and Agency at the 1906-7 New Zealand International Exhibition," *Museum History Journal* 2, no. 2 (2009).

²⁰⁶ 'New Zealand International Exhibition: opens 1st November 1906', *Lyttleton Times Pamphlet*, ATL: New Zealand Pacific Collection: Pq606 NZ.INT 1906

²⁰⁷ Despite this statement, Linda Tyler characterises the British Art exhibit as 'backward looking'. See Linda Tyler, 'Art for Empire: Paintings in the British Art Exhibit', in *Farewell Colonialism*, 1998, 100.

²⁰⁸ Munro and Allan, Christchurch to James McGowan, 30 May 1906, ANZ: IA 25, box 16. Hodgkins sent six pictures to Wellington in the hope they would be included in the exhibits sent to Christchurch, but these were not listed in the catalogue. See Linda Gill, ed., *Letters of Frances Hodgkins* Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1993, 193.

Nine of the twelve available rooms in the Art Gallery were taken up with British exhibits and the colonies were grouped together in the remaining three rooms. In the planning stages of the exhibition Munro justified the 'subordinate feature' that the Australian and New Zealand pictures would form in the Art Gallery, stating 'we want to bring people here...to show them what they have never seen before'.²⁰⁹ As Jane Vial notes, the colonial exhibits in the Art Gallery did not attempt an historical overview of artistic development or even a survey of the recent years.²¹⁰ Prominent living artists such as Petrus van der Velden and Charles Frederick Goldie were absent, and so too were more historical figures such as Gully and Nairn.²¹¹ The oldest painting exhibited in the Art Gallery was possibly that by Mabel Hill, who showed her *Portrait of late J. M. Nairn*, 1894 (Te Papa), which was for sale for £30.²¹² (fig 63)

Most of the works exhibited were contemporary, shown in the hope they would find a buyer. However, Australasian art societies and galleries were more inclined to acquire works by foreign and British artists from the exhibition, not those by local and colonial exhibitors.²¹³ In this respect, Worsley again showed himself to be a canny operator. He set himself up outside the 'official' fine art displays in order to exploit the more commercial side of artistic practice.²¹⁴ While he had eight paintings of New Zealand and Alpine scenery on display in the Art Gallery, directly opposite, at Fred H. East's bookstall, the public could purchase a portfolio of eight

²⁰⁹ 'The exhibition attractions: Pictures, sideshows and music', *Evening Post*, 20 December 1905, 8. This comment presumes a largely colonial audience, and would seem to run counter to Munro's desire for the exhibition to function as an advertisement for New Zealand's raw materials.

²¹⁰ Vial, 'New Zealand and Australian Art', 110-11. Notably, no reviews of the colonial art display have been found in newspapers, though there was extensive coverage of the British Art section as well as the photography displays.

²¹¹ Cowan lamented the absence of Goldie's Maori studies. See Cowan, *Official Record of the New Zealand International Exhibition*, 268.

²¹² See catalogue number 355, *New Zealand International Exhibition, Fine Art Section, Official Catalogue*, Christchurch: Christchurch Press Company, 1906, 12. This painting was acquired by the Academy in 1920 and gifted to the National Art Gallery as part of the Academy collection in 1936. See *Aspects of New Zealand Art 1890-1940: From the Collection of the National Art Gallery*, Wellington: National Art Gallery, 1984, 53.

²¹³ An interesting inclusion in the art display was a set of original watercolour studies of New Zealand birds for Walter Buller's book *The History of the Birds of New Zealand*. While the artist, Johannes G. Keulemans, was not acknowledged in the catalogue, this was nonetheless a unique context for viewing his work, which was highly valued for its scientific accuracy but not, until the later twentieth century, for its artistic qualities. *Three Huia*, 1900 (Te Papa) may have been included in this selection. This was painted for Buller's 1905 *Supplement to the Birds of New Zealand*, but was never published. It was purchased for Te Papa in 1993 with NZ Lottery Grants Board funds.

²¹⁴ Rather than this being an 'avant-garde' gesture comparable to Edouard Manet or Gustave Courbet's independent exhibitions staged alongside the Paris Expositions of 1855 and 1867, Worsley's intention was purely commercial.

‘exquisitely-coloured reproductions of New Zealand’s most beautiful lakes, rivers, mountain and gorge scenery’.²¹⁵

The irony of the Christchurch exhibition was that the most significant showings of New Zealand art were not found in the Art Galleries, but in the Tourist Department and the West Coast Courts. Scenic views dominated these displays, causing Cowan to describe the West Coast court as ‘a fairy region of forest and fern, of blue-hazed mountain and calm wood-belted lake, of Himalayan ice-falls and snowfields’.²¹⁶ (fig 64) Both photographs and paintings had been commissioned for the displays: E. W. Christmas had been enticed to linger longer in New Zealand to ‘complete some important works for the Tourist Department’, which depicted the ‘advancement of New Zealand farm and stations life from the virgin bush to the stage of the “well-to-do”’.²¹⁷ Other works were loaned and included some of a more historical nature that might have constituted an interesting overview of New Zealand’s art history to date, were they exhibited together. Three views of the Buller goldfields were shown in the West Coast section, two by Gully and one by Richmond, along with two watercolours by William Fox of the west coast glaciers.²¹⁸

While the whole exhibition was intended to act as advertisement of New Zealand, it also aimed to attract population, both fixed and transient. This was the primary role of the Tourist Department, whose court was strategically placed at the centre of the Exhibition buildings. Here, welcome relief was provided for the weary visitor, and it was widely described as a place for repose and relaxation (fig 65):

Thither goes the tired sightseer to rest his limbs in the deep chairs and his eyes among the green furnishings. Weary or indolent though he is, the magnificent array of deer heads, the giant trout, pleasantly, but not too closely engages his attention, and his eye wanders round to the landscape photographs, the specimen of timber, each with its painting of the growing tree, and the Rotorua bath.²¹⁹

In light of these ambitions and the soothing atmosphere created within the court, a historical group of paintings was included that would have reminded visitors of a more problematic colonial history than was otherwise acknowledged. Donne secured

²¹⁵ The portfolio was sold for 7s 6d, or individual prints for one shilling each. ‘Fred H. East’s Art Exhibit’, *The Press*, 8 November 1906, 10.

²¹⁶ Cowan, *Official Record of the New Zealand International Exhibition*, 211.

²¹⁷ ‘Exhibition of pictures’, *Otago Witness*, 27 March 1907, 38.

²¹⁸ These two paintings, *Francis Joseph glacier, Waiho River, Westland*, 1872 (ATL: B-113-019) and *Fox Glacier, Weheka or Cook’s River, Westland*, 1872 (ATL: B-113-018) were lent by Gerhard Mueller and presented through the estate of Miss M. V. Mueller to the Library in October 1969.

²¹⁹ ‘Wanted: Population, methods of advertising’, *The Press*, 31 December 1906, 8.

a chromolithograph of Kennett Watkins' painting *Death of Major Von Tempsky at Te-
Ngutu-o-te-Manu, New Zealand, 7th September 1868*, 1893 (fig 66)²²⁰ for exhibition
and borrowed 'Von Tempsky's own picture of the Forest Rangers marching in
Taranaki', from the Museum's collections (fig 7), as well as a black and white sketch
by von Tempsky from the Hocken.²²¹ These provided a troubling representation of
the actuality of recent colonial history, rather than reverting to the mythical, pre-
colonial past of the 'Maoriland' displays. In his description of the works, Cowan
enlists a frontier metaphor, stating that they 'took the memory back to the old
fighting-days when Maori and Pakeha met each other in fierce border warfare'.²²²
Thus Cowan attempts to elevate traumatic historical events to the realm of heroic
myth, invoking the terms of imported narratives of colonial encounter, such as those
of the American frontier. This might have served as a point of curiosity for the foreign
or Pakeha visitor, but for Maori, it denied and overwrote the very real and serious
consequences of that conflict, which resulted in widespread loss of land and culture.

The Christchurch Exhibition provides a telling finish for this chapter, both in
terms of its representation of history, as well the conceptualisation of public and
cultural space. The high profile given to New Zealand works of art in the government
courts, as opposed to the Art Gallery, indicates that the state's use of art continued to
be tied up with advertising and commercial intent. 'Culture' was continually displaced
to the symbolic realm of defining the nation through the representation of an 'ideal'
place, while any commitment to a physical and public space for culture in the
permanent or material realm was evaded. In fact, the identity of Wellington itself as a
provincial centre was subservient to that of its role as the seat of government, which
was noted by at least one commentator of the Exhibition, who wrote, 'The middle
province, whose capital city is honoured with an imperial adjective, is absent'.²²³ The
Christchurch exhibition provided the state with the opportunity for self-representation,
but this was achieved through the construction of a largely symbolic and simulacral
space that was ultimately ephemeral. It would not be until the state realised the need
for permanent public spaces of culture in the capital city that the Gallery or Museum
would be able to fulfil their role as institutions representative of the nation.

²²⁰ The original painting is in the Turnbull collections. See ATL: Pictures collection: D-016-013

²²¹ Donne to Hamilton, 27 September 1906, TPA: MU152, box 6, item 63. See Cowan, *Official Record of the New Zealand International Exhibition*, 142.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ 'Provincial Courts', *Evening Post*, 1 November 1906, 6.

JUDGED ON APPEARANCES.

Stranger : Excuse me, sir, but is this where they are holding the inquest ?

Art Lover : No , but they do a lot of hanging here, though.

Stranger : Oh ! I thought it was the Morgue.

Art Lover : Well, hardly that ; you see it's our Art Gallery.

Fig. e. William Blomfield, 'Judged on Appearances', *Freelance*, 7 March 1908, 16

5. *Constructing a history of New Zealand art*

*There was a great deal of honest artistic work throughout the rooms, and some exceedingly beautiful work, but inevitably the lustre of the New Zealand artists was dimmed by the glory of form and colour that filled the adjoining British gallery.*¹

James Cowan, who was so effusive in his praise of New Zealand's efforts for the New Zealand International Exhibition, Christchurch, 1906-7, nevertheless found the display of New Zealand art to be underwhelming. While he acknowledged the existence of certain 'gems', his description of much of the work as 'honest' employs an opaque adjective to suggest, without stating directly, that much of the New Zealand work was simply not very good. Cowan's disappointment could, to some extent, be assuaged by the fact that the exhibition of British works was apparently 'one of the best, largest, and most comprehensive shows ever sent from the motherland's shores'.² But this counter-defence only emphasises the inferiority of the colonial art exhibits against those of the imperial centre, a stance that seems odd given the fact that within the year New Zealand would seek official recognition of its increasingly independent status. In 1907, following the close of the Exhibition and after the Imperial conference staged in London, the New Zealand House of Representatives requested that the King support a change in status from 'Colony' to 'Dominion'. Support was granted, and on 26 September, the Prime Minister, Sir Joseph Ward, read the proclamation of Dominion status from the steps of Parliament. This change in name is generally considered more a symbolic than practical shift and its impact is much debated.³ Some hoped it would engender a shift in perceptions of nationhood but, as James Belich has argued, it served only to provide a furthering of the cult of "Better Britonism" under the guise of Dominionism.⁴ So while the naming of New Zealand as Dominion is indicative of progress towards independence, it is not surprising that little investment or attention was paid to those commonly understood symbolic cultural markers of nationhood in the wake of this change in status: the national Museum, Gallery and Library. For New Zealand remained a dependent

¹ James Cowan, *Official Record of the New Zealand International Exhibition of Arts and Industries, Held at Christchurch, 1906-7: A Descriptive and Historical Account* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1910), 268.

² *Ibid.*, 267.

³ Keith Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart: New Zealand's Search for National Identity* (Wellington: Allen and Unwin in association with Port Nicholson Press, 1986), 178-81.

⁴ See James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Auckland: Penguin Press, 2001), 116.

country, and the nation to which it deferred, at least in a cultural sense as was borne out by Cowan's comments, was Britain. Consequently, one must be cautious of rationalising New Zealand's cultural development during the period covered by this chapter as evidence of an emergent national identity.

This chapter deals with the evolutionary period from 1907 to 1940: from the renaming of the colony as Dominion to the celebration of the centenary of the founding of New Zealand; from the opening of the Academy Gallery as a public gallery, to the belated establishment of the Dominion Museum and National Art Gallery on Buckle street in 1936. In 1907 Hamilton drew attention to the need to change the title of the Museum in accordance with the New Zealand's new status as a Dominion. He suggested as it was purely a Government Museum that it should be called the National or New Zealand Museum, but the title Dominion Museum was decided upon.⁵ At this time, neither a state-supported national library nor gallery existed: the Museum was the only institution with the status of a statutory body which received government funding. The Academy succeeded in opening their Gallery as a Free Public Art Gallery in June 1907, but a lack of significant practical or symbolic support meant the Gallery could not achieve the status required of a 'National' gallery.⁶ While its location in the capital city suggested this should be a long-term ambition of the Gallery, it had neither a collection to support such nomenclature, nor a building that established the conditions for the ritualised experience that art museums were expected to provide. (see fig e.) A free municipal library opened in Wellington in 1893, but a library of national significance was only realised with the opening of the Turnbull to the public in 1918. The realisation of state-supported spaces in which to display the arts of the nation is therefore one story told here. But the close proximity of the opening of these national institutions to the centennial year of the colony, and their associated celebrations, means that an analysis of the role accorded colonial New Zealand art within these contexts becomes a focus of this chapter, for it is in

⁵ See Hamilton to Colonial Secretary, 27 September 1907, TPA: MU152, box 2.

⁶ As a comparison, the idea of a gallery in Melbourne was mooted in 1859 with a government vote of £2000 for the purchase of works of art. In 1864 the Gallery opened to the public as the National Gallery of Victoria. The impetus for the National Art Gallery of New South Wales came from the Academy, who received government support in the 1870s with several grants towards the purchase of pictures. The government funded a new gallery in 1885 after the Sydney Exhibition buildings which had housed the national collection burnt down. See Lianne Gibson, *The Uses of Art: Constructing Australian Identities* (Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2001), 38-44. The National Art Gallery of Canada was likewise established under the control of the Academy in 1880, but similarly received government assistance with funds and accommodation. See chapter 1, Jean Sutherland Boggs, *The National Gallery of Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1971).

association with these events that a sense of cultural nationalism began to emerge. The point of debate that is scrutinised in this chapter concerns the status of art and its relationship to history: whether art is to be received as *history* or as *art*.

During this period two different attitudes towards the historical relevance of New Zealand art begin to emerge: its ability to serve as historical document; or to support a narrative of development in terms of writing New Zealand's art history. Alongside the historical overview that was necessarily part of the Centennial celebrations, the lead up to the centenary also aroused a desire to identify a 'modern' element within New Zealand art, or 'an art truly national'. How was colonial New Zealand art, characterised in A. H. McLintock's introduction to the National Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art as 'unimaginative and literal', exhibited and discussed in the midst of this new climate in the arts?⁷ How was it implicated in a national history or construction of a nascent national identity? This chapter considers these questions in light of the exhibitions and display practices in the Museum, Library and Gallery and closes with an evaluation of the 1940 Centennial Exhibitions and associated publications, which provided the first attempts at a *critical* evaluation of New Zealand art. In the case of the two state-endorsed ventures, McLintock's exhibition and E. H. McCormick's text, the employment of works from library and museum collections was important for its 'recovery' of more 'historical' or 'topographical' works for the writing of New Zealand's art history.

Artistic Apathy

*To the visitor, art in Wellington appears to be in its infancy; but it is a puny, sickly child, ill-nourished, suffering from marasmus [sic], the victim, yet not so much of congenital weakness as of unskilful nursing and niggardliness in the matter of diet.*⁸

If, in 1907, just four months after the opening of the Free Public Art Gallery, art in Wellington was diagnosed as a sickly child, it took less than a year for its death to be announced. *New Zealand Freelance* signalled its opinion of the Gallery, by referring to the 'Whitmore street picture cemetery' in 22 June 1907, and again in the illustration heading this chapter from 1908, where the Gallery is mistaken by visitors

⁷ A. H. McLintock, *National Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art* (Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1940), 16.

⁸ 'Art in Wellington, need for a new public gallery. Wanted – patronage', *Evening Post*, 1 October 1907, 7.

to Wellington for a morgue. This characterisation of the Gallery means that the situation for art in Wellington, rather than being improved by the opening of the Gallery, was perceived as even worse than the ‘slum’ it had earlier been compared to; instead, it was now pronounced dead and required a Lazarus-like resurrection. But this was potentially a two-pronged attack. On one hand, it may have been a critique of the lack of progress in the arts demonstrated by the works of art on show in the Gallery. The cartoon may also have been an oblique response to debates over the quality of the works purchased for the Academy collection from the Christchurch Exhibition. On the other, it may have been less a direct criticism of the efforts of the Academy, than an attack on those who continued to withhold their support for a cultural space in the capital city. Wellington continued to be criticised as a city ‘with no aspiration higher than the making of money’ while exhibiting a reluctance to spend any of that money on advancing the cultural institutions of that city.⁹

The model of philanthropy that prevailed in other colonies, such as America, and even other centres in New Zealand, resulting in the establishment of many key art institutions, was not taken up in Wellington.¹⁰ Neither had the government offered any ongoing or specific support to the establishment of a Gallery in the capital city.¹¹ While the Premier, Seddon, had offered £500 on a pound-for-pound basis to purchase pictures from the Christchurch Exhibition, he felt uneasy about privileging Wellington in this arrangement, and decided any vote must also include the other centres, Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin.¹² Consequently, the ambitions of the Gallery committee continued to be divided in their efforts and the question of whether the Gallery should aspire to municipal or national significance was hotly debated in the early years of the twentieth century. It was proposed that a future Free Public Art Gallery could either be accommodated within a Museum building, and be associated

⁹ ‘Wanted—more good pictures’, *Evening Post*, 10 April 1907, 4

¹⁰ Carol Duncan argues that wealthy business backed new museums in America following the Civil War, as spaces that made visible the ideals of the republican state. See Duncan, *Civilising Rituals*, 48–51. Auckland benefited from this model with Sir George Grey as the founding donor of the Public Library and Art Gallery. James Tannock Mackelvie donated a collection of works of art to the Auckland Gallery, and on his death in 1885 established a trust to provide for a building in which his collection could be displayed. See <http://www.aucklandartgallery.govt.nz/aboutus/history/collections.asp?show=Grey#1>, accessed 17 December 2007.

¹¹ It should be noted that National Gallery of Australia in Canberra did not officially open until 1982, though it had been envisioned as early as 1911, and a board was established in 1912 to give advice on the purchase of works. Those works that were acquired were housed in the Government buildings, diplomatic offices and State Galleries.

¹² In 1905 a deputation from the Academy met with the Premier to appeal for the encouragement of art in Wellington. The meeting was reported in the *Evening Post*, 13 October 1905, 5.

with Government, or in the Town Hall, which would bring it under the control of the local Municipality. The implications of this decision would be both physical and symbolic, and the slowness of the evolution of the gallery speaks of apathy on both a local and a national level to support a space for art in Wellington.

The source of the local apathy had two origins. The reluctance of Wellington's wealthy to contribute funds towards an art gallery was regularly cited, but less often described was the state of Wellington city itself. Wellington was founded by a private company and, although it was made capital in 1865, it was slow to develop a centralised focus. David Hamer suggests this was due to its geographical situation as a harbour city hemmed in by hills, with no hinterland to support its existence.¹³ Without this the city was a capital in symbolic terms only; it needed to become a capital in terms of practical and commercial interests as well, for only then would it establish the resources necessary to create a sense of permanence and potential prosperity for its population. This was resolved in part with reclamation projects and the construction of railway lines to the North and West by the later nineteenth century, but the sense of transience that the city fostered was noted as late as 1906, when Dr Fell commented:

[Wellington] was a city that had cut its wisdom teeth rather late. Its inhabitants had gone on for very many years thinking it would never really be a comfortable city to live in and that they were here because they had to be, and would get away as soon as they could.¹⁴

Fell concluded that efforts to support cultural activities would be made only once the city was felt to be a comfortable place to live, and with a municipal Library and Town Hall established, the next logical steps would be the development of a Museum and Gallery.¹⁵

When the Gallery opened to the public on 12 June 1907 it boasted forty pictures in its collection and was open from 1-4pm on Wednesday, Saturday and the

¹³ David Hamer, "Wellington on the Urban Frontier," in *The Making of Wellington 1800-1914*, ed. David Hamer and Roberta Nicholls (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1990).

¹⁴ 'Free Art Gallery Public Meeting: a hopeful outlook', *Evening Post*, 24 February 1906, 2. Terence Hodgson refers to the fact that many colonials regarded Wellington's institutions as 'makeshift and feeble when compared with other cities' and, like Hamer, cites the lack of funding or financial security from government or agricultural and other natural resources. See Terence Hodgson, *Colonial Capital: Wellington 1865-1910* (Auckland: Random Century, 1990), 29.

¹⁵ Wellington Town Hall was opened by the Mayor with a gold and greenstone key in 1904. See <http://www.wellingtonconventioncentre.com/about-us/town-hall-history.html>, accessed 28 October 2008

first Sunday in every month, with extended hours, from 1-5pm, during the summer months.¹⁶ This was made possible primarily through the efforts of the Academy, but support had come from both the Government (for the picture purchase fund) and the City Council (who contributed £50 towards the wages of a custodian). Little comment was made in the papers of the colonial works included in the opening exhibition, as most writing focussed on those works recently acquired from the Christchurch Exhibition.¹⁷ Despite the limited opening hours and the unsavoury location of the Gallery, 'among the smoke and the shipping, and sandwiched between the Seamen's Mission Hall and a warehouse',¹⁸ the Annual Report of the Academy for 1907 reported that the Gallery had already been visited by 4000 people.¹⁹

The recognition of a need for a national institution that could adequately house works of art in the long term was possibly precipitated by Caroline Chevalier's presentation of the Chevalier Collection to the New Zealand Government in 1907. The collection, numbering approximately 60 watercolours and 200 pencil sketches, was delivered to the High Commissioner's office in London in November 1907, and was placed on view in the New Zealand Government offices on Victoria Street.²⁰ It was noted that the pictures would 'form a notable addition to New Zealand's art treasures', but no arrangement for its accommodation was made by the time of its arrival in the Dominion in 1908.²¹ The Academy minutes from 9 April 1908 record a request from the Minister of Internal Affairs that they 'accept charge and hang on certain conditions the Chevalier collection of drawings'.²² While no evidence of the Academy's decision or the early exhibition of this collection has been found, given the Academy's limited resources it is unlikely they took full responsibility for the collection at this time. Instead, in 1912 Charles Wilson, of the General Assembly

¹⁶ 'Fine Art Gallery: pictures for the public', *Evening Post*, 8 June 1907, 6

¹⁷ These reviews were largely positive. See, for example, 'Wellington's Pictures: the Art Gallery, yesterday's ceremony', *Evening Post*, 13 June 1907, 2. However the choice of pictures from the Christchurch Exhibition had their fair share of critics. William Fell penned a letter to the editor, writing that the 'idea seems to be, buy something quickly; good if you can; if not, buy bad, rather than nothing'. 'Wellington's Free Art Gallery', *Evening Post*, 26 April 1907, 7. Frances Hodgkins commented in a letter to her mother on 12 January 1907, 'I don't feel very uplifted over the purchases... Why buy pictures for a young colony by derelict artists of bygone time and taste?' Linda Gill, ed. *Letters of Frances Hodgkins* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1993), 198.

¹⁸ 'Art in Wellington, need for a new public gallery: wanted – patronage', *Evening Post*, 1 October 1907, 7.

¹⁹ NZAFA Annual Report end 1907, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1.

²⁰ 'Art Treasures for New Zealand: generous gifts', *Evening Post*, 18 December 1907, 2. A further body of works by Chevalier were bequeathed by Caroline after her death in 1917.

²¹ *Evening Post*, 22 January 1908, 3.

²² NZAFA minutes, 9 April 1908, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1.

Library, reported that ‘several specimen watercolour drawings and monochrome drawings from what is known as the Chevalier Collection have been hung temporarily in the downstairs lobby’.²³ The General Assembly Library had a steady flow of pictures through its doors and regularly housed works of art for which no permanent home could be found, such as the Chevalier Collection, or the large painting *HMS New Zealand*, commonly referred to as the ‘Dreadnought’, by William Lionel Wyllie, 1911 (National Archives). Wilson adorned the walls, stairways and foyer of the library with panoramic photographs of New Zealand towns and scenery, portraits and busts of members of the house, along with decorative devices in order to ‘greatly diminish the previously existing monotony of bare white walls’.²⁴ This was clearly an aspect of the job that appealed to Wilson and details of the library interior and its rearrangements were documented in his yearly reports.

In 1914, the Library Committee resolved that the Chevalier collection be hung in the Joint Library Committee room until ‘such time as the National Art Gallery is erected’ and that Wilson be charged with the cataloguing of the pictures and drawings.²⁵ Wilson also had many of the pictures framed with labels identifying the subject, and promised that a catalogue with detailed descriptions of the pictures was being printed.²⁶ This arrangement was short-lived as in 1915 James McDonald noted in the Museum report that images ‘of little or no interest’ had been removed from the walls to make room for the addition of 40 sketches from the Chevalier collection ‘for which space could not be found in the Parliamentary Buildings’.²⁷ Two years later those same pictures were removed to the Gallery for the 1917 Annual Exhibition and in 1929 they were sent to the Sarjeant Gallery for restoration, where they stayed until the opening of the National Art Gallery in 1936.²⁸

The practical concerns of space, then, remained the main factor thwarting the development of Wellington’s cultural institutions and resulted in works of art

²³ Charles Wilson, ‘Report of the General Assembly Library, 1911-1912’, *AJHR*: H-32, 3.

²⁴ Charles Wilson, ‘General Assembly Library: report of the library for the year 1902-3’, 1903, *AJHR*, H-32, p. 3.

²⁵ ‘Parliamentary portraits’, *Evening Post*, 13 August 1914, 2.

²⁶ No such catalogue has been located. Charles Wilson, ‘General Assembly Library: report of the library for the year 1914-15’, 1915, *AJHR*, H-32, 2.

²⁷ James McDonald, ‘Some considerations for future guidance’, in ‘Dominion Museum: Annual Report for the year ended 31st March 1915’, *AJHR* H – 33, 21.

²⁸ *Early New Zealand Watercolours and Drawings from the Chevalier, J. C. Richmond and Swainson Collections at the National Art Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand*, (Wellington: R. E. Owen, Government Printer, 1960s), np. A note in the Museum files from 1927 records that 147 watercolours from the Chevalier collection were then on loan to the Sarjeant Gallery in Wanganui. See TPA: MU2, box 11, folder 4, part 2.

becoming transient objects passing from one place to another. It is well acknowledged that the context of display contributes to the potential meaning(s) of objects. As Philip Fisher states ‘each object becomes what it is only as part of a community of objects in which it exists’.²⁹ In both the library and museum context works such as Chevalier’s, made on an expedition in the South Island in the 1860s and consisting largely of preliminary sketches, tended to be understood as bearers of information. In a gallery, by contrast, particularly a venue such as the Sarjeant Gallery, which opened in 1919 and conformed to the temple-like model of art museum, positioned on top of a hill in the centre of town, such works would be read as art first, information second. Further, not only does the interpretation of a collection shift according to its placement in museum, gallery or library, but there is a risk that knowledge of the objects, both practical and interpretive, might be lost in transition. This is evidenced by the fact that, although it was described as ‘perhaps the most valuable of any art collection in New Zealand’,³⁰ by 1937 when the collection was to be hung in the National Art Gallery for the first time, E. D. Gore wrote to Joseph Heenan, Internal Affairs Under-Secretary, seeking information for public relations:

It will be desirable to make reference to these works in the press when they are hung. Could you kindly let me have, from your records, any available information regarding the history and acquisition of these pictures, so that I shall be able to supply the newspapers with authentic notes?³¹

Apparently, this information was never fully recovered for in Te Papa’s *Icons*, the date of acquisition of the Chevalier collection is referred to as 1912, not 1907, the year it was gifted to the Government and entered the collection of the state.³²

Such problems existed across the board for those institutions in Wellington that were destined to fulfil a national purpose but had yet to receive the necessary support to do so. In this respect the Museum fared slightly better than the Gallery, and

²⁹ Philip Fisher, *Making and Effacing Art: Modern American Art in a Culture of Museums* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 4.

³⁰ ‘Famous pictures: transfer from Wanganui to National Art Gallery – Chevalier Collection’, *Dominion*, 4 July 1936, 12.

³¹ Gore to Heenan, 18 January 1937, ‘Miscellaneous – NZAFA – National collection – list of pictures’, ANZ: IA, series 1, record 158/198. Heenan referred Gore to the Director of the Museum, for ‘any information supplied to this office from time to time with regard to the National Collection was transmitted on to the Director of the Museum’.

³² Te Papa Curatorial Team, *Icons Nga Taonga: From the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2004), 70. An additional donation was made in 1918 when the remainder of the collection passed to the government under the terms of Caroline Chevalier’s will. Melvin Day, *Nicholas Chevalier, Artist: His Life and Work* (Wellington: Millwood Press, 1981), 103.

photographs of the main hall of the Museum from between 1907 and 1910 show that Hamilton had succeeded in transforming the interior into a close approximation of his ambitions for a National Maori Museum. While the whale skeletons and stuffed albatross remained suspended inanimately from the rafters, below them, carvings ‘were everywhere’: hung off the gallery rail in between the enlarged photographs; on columns; or free-standing on the floor.³³ (see fig 54) McDonald’s Maori figure had been placed on a plinth so he surveyed the collections displayed in glass cases as well as the large war canoe, *Te Heke Rangatira*, which ran the length of the interior. Behind the figure, the façade of a meeting house had been erected. However, as Conal McCarthy concludes in his assessment of this arrangement, in the end Hamilton’s ambitions, like Hector’s before him, ‘may have been defeated by the volume of the collection’.³⁴

Just as the affiliation of the Gallery to either state or municipality was debated, there was a local museum that competed for resources in Wellington in the early twentieth century. The ambition for a capital city to have two institutions, one of local and one of national relevance was not unreasonable. In 1896 George Brown Goode wrote that ‘every great nation now has a museum’, and insisted that while the primary aim of a national museum was to advance knowledge, a local, provincial or municipal museum should record information relating to all that was characteristic of the region or city in which they were located.³⁵ E. W. Petherick donated his collection of stuffed animals and curiosities to the City Council in 1906, and his displays were opened to the public on 27 June 1907 above the Newtown Library. However, in 1909, rather than consolidate the efforts of the Dominion and the Petherick Museums, the Council provided funds to extend the Newtown premises, a decision that drew criticism from the press. By this time Mount Cook had been established as the future site of the Dominion Museum and the council’s decision to support a ‘curiosity shop’ rather than an institution that had the potential to stand as a significant national symbol was considered short-sighted.³⁶ In 1915 the Petherick

³³ Conal McCarthy, *Exhibiting Maori: A History of Colonial Cultures of Display* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2007), 50.

³⁴ Ibid. Neither managed to distinguish between a research and display collection, though admittedly, neither had the privilege of space to do so.

³⁵ George Brown Goode, “On the Classification of Museums,” *Science* 3, no. 57 (1896): 158-59.

³⁶ See, for example, ‘The Two Museums: in competition for support. Petherick and National – and Petherick wins’, *Evening Post*, 30 March 1909, 8 and ‘The Two Museums’, *Evening Post*, 12 April 1909, 6.

Museum was labelled “superfluous”, having cost thousands of pounds with little to show for the money, and the *Post* lobbied that the ‘energy Wellington people can spare for Museum purposes should be applied to the national project’.³⁷

The situation in Wellington seems to reflect a confusing and partial inheritance of two models of Museum and Gallery financing, from either the government or the municipality. Generally, it can be stated that Western European Museums were ‘typically a government enterprise with some nongovernmental participation in finance and direction’, whereas American Museums normally derived their foundational impetus from ‘one or more private citizens who then become trustees’, acting as representative citizens of the municipality.³⁸ In Wellington, the Museum and the Gallery attempted to gain the support of both municipality and state, meaning that their scope and ambition was constantly adapting to meet the needs of their benefactors. In the case of the Museum, the scarcity of resources made it seem more beneficial for the citizens of Wellington, and ultimately New Zealand, to have one institution with adequate funding that could properly catalogue and arrange its exhibits, rather than two that did so haphazardly and, ultimately, unprofessionally. In the case of the Gallery, Government affiliation carried with it the burden of caring for the National Collection, but lack of sufficient financial support meant this was a task that the Academy had neither the space, nor the personnel to achieve effectively.

Forging and exhibiting ‘authentic’ histories

*Today, we are on the lookout for the differences in a copy. We regard the perfect copy (and the perfect fake) as the scandal of the intellect.*³⁹

*... just as we live in a “forgery culture”, so it is true that our culture is forged.*⁴⁰

Despite the financial and spatial difficulties experienced by the Museum and Gallery in the first decades of the twentieth centuries, both continued to extend their collections and initiate new exhibition strategies. While Hamilton had aimed to

³⁷ ‘A Superfluous Museum’, *Evening Post*, 8 June 1915, 6.

³⁸ Eugene Smolensky, “Municipal Financing of the U.S. Fine Arts Museum: A Historical Rationale,” *Journal of Economic History* 46, no. 3 (1986): 757.

³⁹ Sandor Radnoti, *The Fake: Forgery and Its Place in Art*, trans. Ervin Dunai (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 96.

⁴⁰ Judith Ryan and Alfred Thomas, eds., *Cultures of Forgery: Making Nations, Making Selves* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), ix.

advance the knowledge of Maori and their culture in his museological enterprise, Thomson sought to ensure that the Museum was accruing records of the colony's history. Consequently, while Hamilton had attempted to purchase works of art depicting Maori and their way of life, Thomson expanded the collections of historical works of art. The idea of organising a national collection that would bring together New Zealand's historical records was formally initiated under the Board of Science and Art in 1913.⁴¹ This collection was to be housed in a 'Historical Library', which would be built along with the Dominion Museum and Art Gallery.⁴² I have outlined Thomson's intended scope and ambitions for the collection in chapter 2. In this next section I analyse the problems involved with attempting to build up and exhibit such a collection, especially when works of art are acquired as historically laden artefacts. The national historical collection aimed to create 'heroes' of the colonial pioneers for contemporary New Zealanders, so in this, there was clearly an attempt to lay the foundations for forging a national identity. These efforts were also echoed in the Academy's exhibition schedule, which from the late 1910s began to host one-person shows of colonial artists. In these activities, a shared interest in identifying key moments or individuals from the past who could act as models in the present can be identified – the beginnings of colonial canon-making of sorts.

A number of works acquired by the Museum in 1914 threw into question the grounds for collecting works of art as historical artefacts. Museum staff had long been aware of the possibility of purchasing 'fake' taonga,⁴³ but when a collection of watercolour drawings by W. S. Hatton were secured for the National Collection, the question of historical authenticity in relation to works of art was raised. While these constitute a rather minor episode in the voluminous history of fakes and forgeries, their example highlights the problems of a colonial institution attempting to acquire works that might be used in exhibition to support the forging of a national identity. As a volume of essays edited by Judith Ryan and Alfred Thomas investigates, often the 'double meaning[s] of the word "forge" – to create or form, on the one hand, and to make falsely, on the other – are intertwined in the shaping of a nation, an individual,

⁴¹ See 'Science and Art Bill', 5 November 1913, *NZPD*, Wellington: Government Printer, 534-540.

⁴² 'Science and Art Act', No. 22, *The Statutes of the Dominion of New Zealand*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1913, 117-119. This role was temporarily filled by the Turnbull and General Assembly Libraries, a national library proper only being officially opened in August, 1987.

⁴³ In 1909 Donne wrote to Hamilton that many fake Maori curios were being circulated for sale. See Donne to Hamilton, 24 September 1909, TPA: MU152, box 3, item 91.

or an artifact'.⁴⁴ Ryan and Thomas acknowledge that 'forging national identity inevitably involves an element of fabrication', but in this process the boundary between what can be accepted as 'authentic' material and what must be dismissed as a 'fake' is subjectively negotiated. Writings on fakes and forgeries of works of art suggest that a work's authenticity does not only depend on its 'aesthetic' value, but also on its 'historical', or 'survival' value.⁴⁵ As Denis Dutton writes, 'part of the importance and value of a work derives from the place it has in the stream of aesthetic history'.⁴⁶ In the case of New Zealand, the case is further troubled by the fact that there was deep uncertainty and anxiety concerning New Zealand's status as a collective polity.

In 1914 the Internal Affairs Under-Secretary, James Hislop, inquired whether the Museum was interested in views of Wellington, Auckland, Nelson, Christchurch and New Plymouth, offered at the price of £4 each through the dealer Albert Berthel in Richmond, Surrey. James McDonald replied that 'apart from any artistic method the drawings may possess they may be of some historical interest and worth securing for the National Collection'.⁴⁷ The works were forwarded to Thomas Mackenzie, the High Commissioner, for inspection. As McDonald had expected, Mackenzie's secretary found that the drawings were of 'little if any artistic merit' and pointed out to Berthel that the price attached, £25, was in excess of the original offer. In reply, Berthel wrote:

I cannot justify the price of the drawings from the artistic or historical point of view: the first is a question of individual taste and the second a question of local interest which I am entirely unable to appreciate. My point of view is purely commercial, and I should say experimental.⁴⁸

Eventually the Museum acquired the works for £20. The watercolours were forwarded to Thomson in March 1916 and by May they had been framed and hung in the Museum.

Within months the 'authenticity' of the drawings was queried by Thomson who suspected they were 'not original sketches but copies made from old woodcuts or

⁴⁴ Ryan and Thomas, eds., *Cultures of Forgery: Making Nations, Making Selves*, x.

⁴⁵ Jack W. Meiland, "Originals, Copies and Aesthetic Value," in *The Forger's Art: Forgery and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Denis Dutton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 116.

⁴⁶ Denis Dutton, ed. *The Forger's Art: Forgery and the Philosophy of Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), viii.

⁴⁷ McDonald to James Hislop, Under-Secretary, Internal Affairs, 9 April 1914, TPA: MU2, part 2.

⁴⁸ Berthel to Thomas Mackenzie, High Commissioner, London, 2 July 1914, TPA: MU2, part 2

photographs'.⁴⁹ In reply Berthel feigned innocence, claiming that due to the high turnover of works by his business and the low price of the works under question, an inquiry into their origins would not be worthwhile.⁵⁰ He claimed that most of the time 'we know absolutely nothing as to the past history' and that they attached 'little importance to the stories – true or doubtful – told by the sellers'.⁵¹ When McDonald was approached regarding the origins and authenticity of the drawings in 1935 he replied:

Yes, those coloured drawings signed Hatton were fakes, sure enough. They were put over on Sir Thomas Mackenzie when he was High Commissioner. I recognised one as being somewhat similar to an old woodcut in the Church Missionary Journal, I think it was, and the last one that came out was a picture of the Octagon, Dunedin, done from photos taken in 1862 by Coxhead, I think... They should have been destroyed, but were put aside to wait explanations from London, and lost sight of...⁵²

McDonald's diagnosis of the Hattons as fakes and his recommendation that they be destroyed raises questions around the nature of fakes and of authenticity of works of art and their place in national collections, where they are expected to contribute to the construction of an authentic history for the nation. It is now generally accepted and documented by most institutions holding works by Hatton that his views were made from illustrations in the *Illustrated London News* or other visual sources such as photographs.⁵³ There is no evidence that Hatton ever set foot in New Zealand, or any of the other countries represented in his drawings. While the entry in Joan Kerr's *Dictionary of Australian Artists* suggests his works were used as the basis for the reproductions in the *Illustrated London News*, it is more likely that the inverse relationship is true: that Hatton was copying from those published reproductions.⁵⁴ For example, his watercolour of *Panmure Bridge Auckland 1859*, (ATL)⁵⁵ is clearly related to the illustration in the *Illustrated London News* in 1867, moreover his date of execution predates the existence of the bridge, which was not built until 1865.⁵⁶ The watercolour panorama *View of Dunedin, Otago, N.Z.*, 1867, in Te Papa's collection is

⁴⁹ Thomson to Mackenzie, 9 June 1916, TPA: MU2, part 2

⁵⁰ Berthel to High Commissioner, 9 August 1916, TPA: MU2, part 2

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² McDonald, Tokaanu, to Thomas Lindsay Buick, 22 February 1935, TPA: MU2, part 3.

⁵³ See, for example, the individual entries for works by Hatton on the Turnbull database, Tapuhi, where the sources for his works are identified.

⁵⁴ See Una Platts, *Nineteenth Century New Zealand Artists: A Guide and Handbook* (Christchurch: Avon Fine Prints, 1980), 119-20 and Joan Kerr, ed. *Dictionary of Australian Artists : Painters, Photographers and Engravers to 1870* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992), 352.

⁵⁵ ATL: Drawings and Prints collection: B-078-018

⁵⁶ *Illustrated London News*, 12 October 1867, 405

also based on a reproduction in the *Illustrated London News* from 1867, which acknowledges the source as a photograph by William Meluish.⁵⁷ (see fig 67 and 68) Whether his watercolours were made in preparation for the reproduction, or after the fact, in both possible scenarios they are copies, whether once, or twice, removed from the ‘original’ work. Not only that, but an article in the *Otago Witness* criticised the *Illustrated London News* illustration for being out of date, and providing a wrong impression of the state of advancement of Dunedin as a city.⁵⁸ Consequently, that Hatton unwittingly based his drawing on this reproduction meant that he too was perpetuating an anachronistic view of Dunedin.⁵⁹

The scale of the Dunedin panorama suggests it was a work intended for display, and the presence of multiple copies of the same scene with minor adjustments of details suggests these works were produced to cater for a potential market.⁶⁰ Indeed, it is the sudden entry and proliferation of Hatton’s work in the art market in the early twentieth century that caused them to become fakes, as they were sold, wittingly or not, with the intention to deceive. It appears that Berthel, and maybe Hatton too, if his dates of production can be questioned, may have been capitalising on the resurgence in the market for material relating to the settler history of the colonies at this time.⁶¹ Not only were museums proliferating and extending their

⁵⁷ Te Papa, ref 1992-0035-1218. The description in the *Illustrated London News*, 6 April 1867, 332, is as follows ‘It is copied from a fine photograph, or series of photographs, by Mr. Meluish, formerly of Bath, who emigrated some time ago from this country to Dunedin, where he practices the business of a photographic artist’. McDonald mistakenly attributed the source for this panorama to Frank Coxhead, who acquired Meluish’s negatives on his departure from New Zealand.

⁵⁸ The *Otago Witness*, 29 June 1867, 12, reported: ‘The *Illustrated News* has given to its subscribers a picturesque view of Dunedin; but, we repeat, it is to be regretted that the proprietors of that paper should have been led, or misled, into publishing what is essentially not Dunedin as it was at the end of 1866’.

⁵⁹ Indeed, while I have assumed a masculine pronoun for Hatton, there is no evidence that Hatton was male or female, or whether he or she was even a real person or an invented pseudonym.

⁶⁰ Two other versions of the Dunedin panorama are in the Hocken, ref. FH 366, and the Turnbull, ref. E-151-q. (fig 69) Hatton also produced at least five copies of Patrick Joseph Hogan’s *No. 4, Auckland, New Zealand (From the new wharf)*, 1852, lithograph by Standidge and Co, Old Jewry (ATL: reference C-010-020). That in Te Papa’s collection (reference 1992-0035-1653) features Maori figures in cloaks and with feathers in their hair, as does the version in the Turnbull from Captain A. W. F. Fuller’s collection (reference B-078-017). The three other copies in the Turnbull feature only Pakeha figures (B-078-010, B-078-011, and B-078-012)

⁶¹ Hatton’s works were widely distributed and acquired by institutions in the early twentieth century. There are works by Hatton in the National Library of Australia (two from the Rex Nan Kivell collection), the Mitchell Library, the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the Canadian Heritage Gallery and the Archives of British Columbia. Tietze wrote of the ‘intimate connection between collecting and forgery’, in that a sudden craze for a previously neglected branch of collecting will simultaneously open up a new field to forgers. See Hans Tietze, *Genuine and False: Imitations, Copies, Forgeries* (London: Max Parrish, 1948), 17.

collections in this area, but private collectors were also keen to acquire such works.⁶² Berthel referred to this competitive market when he first approached the New Zealand Government, requesting a prompt decision regarding their purchase, for apparently Alexander Turnbull had already ordered the entire set, including some views of Australia.⁶³ However, Berthel suggested that he would rather sell to the Government, 'being greatly honoured of so high a patronage'.⁶⁴ This comment, and Berthel's earlier one that his approach was 'commercial' and to a degree 'experimental', suggests that he was testing the grounds for such a market in the colonies and that dealings with the Government would lend credibility to his enterprise.

In particular, it was the entry of these works into the grandly named National Historical Collection that rendered them troublesome for the Dominion Museum. These works were potentially unique as they provided a record of the developing colonial cityscapes in colour, as opposed to the usual monochrome photographs. McDonald's words on agreeing to acquire the works, that they might be of *historical*, but not *aesthetic* interest, are telling here. For in order for Hatton's works to be of value to the National Historical Collection, they had to exhibit historical value, which for McDonald and Thompson depended on Hatton actually being a witness to the scenes he depicted. Deprived of an actual moment of encounter on which the representations were based, these works became, in the minds of Thomson and McDonald, forgeries. Their role in the National Collection was to provide description of the early settlement and developing towns, and while a nation must necessarily invoke myths and stories to *forge* a national identity, to do so based on *forgeries* is problematic. It seems, however, that a solution was found in order that these works, rather than being destroyed as McDonald recommended, were able to be placed on view. The solution, which can be noted from the surviving mounts and labels of some of Hatton's works in Te Papa's collection, was to acknowledge the original sources

⁶² A 1914 report, for example, notes that in the previous six months in Europe 21 museums had opened, 12 reopened after extensions etc, and 16 new museums were projected. See *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, vol. 9, no. 8, 1914, p. 171. The Hocken Library, Turnbull and the Museum all acquired works by Hatton in 1914. A gift to Auckland Art Gallery of two works by Hatton in 1915 from Mrs Sturtevant was also likely from the same source.

⁶³ There are 24 watercolours by Hatton in the Turnbull Library. While some of these may have been acquired by Turnbull himself, four were purchased at Sothebys in London by the Library in 1973, from the collection of Captain A. W. F. Fuller (1882-1961). (See for example, Hatton, *Auckland Harbour* [1862], watercolour on grey paper, ATL: B-078-019). Annotations on verso of the works from Fuller's collection suggest he acquired them on 3 November 1930. Fuller, like Turnbull, was an avid antiquarian, whose comprehensive collection of ethnographic and anthropological artefacts, built up over 60 years, was sold to the Chicago Field Museum.

⁶⁴ Berthel to Mackenzie, 2 July 1914, TPA: MU2, part 2.

for his drawings where they were able to be identified.⁶⁵ For example, the caption to *Auckland, 1852* reads ‘Watercolour by W. S. Hatton, from a drawing by P. Hogan’. This may have occurred under Oliver’s directorship, for he appears to have been less of a connoisseur than McDonald.⁶⁶

There is something akin to the tourist ethnographic fake at work in the problem proposed by Hatton’s work.⁶⁷ For while his works may reproduce a scene that is historically ‘correct’ and comparable to the ‘original’ view (either sketched or photographed by an individual), they do not hold any value as an historical or contextually authentic object, and nor do they exhibit any aesthetic value, meaning they have no value as works of art. However, in the context of illustration, as they seem to have been employed by Oliver, Hatton’s works could operate in the same way as other reproductions, as explicative devices in a museum display.

It is also worth returning to McDonald’s dismissal of Hatton’s work as ‘fakes’. McDonald was a talented photographer and artist, yet the majority of his painted output consists of copies of works by other artists. In 1903 he produced a series of copies of bust portraits of individuals ranging from Gustavus von Tempsky to Captain William Hobson.⁶⁸ Copying has long formed an important part of artistic education, while also playing an important role in the preservation and circulation of images.⁶⁹ This latter function was that most often performed by McDonald, who produced copies to fulfil semi-official functions when the original was unavailable. For example in 1913 he made an oil painting of Captain Hobson to hang in the General Assembly Library.⁷⁰ (fig 70) This continued an accepted practice of reproducing portraits of important officials for public spaces, and was acknowledged by McDonald through identification of its source in an inscription on verso, which also asserted that his was

⁶⁵ Te Papa: ref 1992-0035-1653

⁶⁶ For example, in the case of the James Barry’s painting *The Reverend Thomas Kendall and the Maori chiefs Hongi and Waikato*, Oliver settled for a reproduction for display in the Museum rather than persist in attempts to have the painting transferred to the Museum’s collection. See chapter 2.

⁶⁷ Larry Shiner discusses the problem of the ideology of authenticity in relation to ethnographic ‘tourist’ art in Larry Shiner, “‘Primitive Fakes’, ‘Tourist Art’, and the Ideology of Authenticity,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 52, no. 2 (1994).

⁶⁸ Seven of these watercolour drawings are in the Turnbull Collections.

⁶⁹ See Radnoti, *The Fake: Forgery and Its Place in Art* especially chapter 3, ‘The Copy’, 65-102. Leo Steinberg describes the endless appropriation at play in the world of art in “The Glorious Company,” in *Art About Art*, ed. Jean Lipman and Richard Marshall (New York: E. P. Dutton in association with the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1978).

⁷⁰ See ‘General Assembly Library – Report of the Chief Librarian for the year 1913-1914’, *AJHR*, H-32, 3.

a ‘faithful’ copy.⁷¹ While his work could claim the paradox of being an ‘authentic’ copy, on many levels it was no more authentic than Hatton’s works. However, the painting was supplied to ‘fill a gap’ as the government sought to secure a representative series of portraits – either photographs or paintings – of the succession of governors of New Zealand.⁷² Its function, then, was primarily to produce a visual referent for a specific, historically significant individual, so the question of aesthetic or historical authenticity was less important than the production of a representational likeness that could play a role in constructing a national identity.⁷³

Hatton’s oeuvre also stands as an interesting comparison to the collection of works by Horatio Gordon Robley that was exhibited in 1914, the same year the Museum was approached about Hatton’s works. Robley, as Elsdon Best warned in 1920, was in the habit of reproducing the same subject in his drawings, often with slight alterations. At least six versions of *Arawa soldier warning off* have been identified by Tim Walker, three of which are in Te Papa’s collections.⁷⁴ (fig 71) Robley varied his reproductions—in one drawing, the warrior holds a mere, while in others he wields a rifle, or a tewhatewha (long-handled fighting staff)—but regardless of their actual year of production, he dated them all 1865. In contrast to Hatton, Robley had at least been in New Zealand during the New Zealand wars from 1864–65, and his copies were based on drawings made from that historical moment of encounter. Hatton, on the other hand, was most likely never here, so to use his works as evidence of colonial history means accepting a *third*-hand view (the initial illustration, a drawing or photograph, translated into engraving for multiple reproduction, reproduced as authored, hand-made object) as a historically authentic artefact. Further, although Robley reproduced the same subject in his drawings, he strove to achieve a true representation of those individuals he depicted. In his drawings and portraits of Maori, he did not attempt to identify, or reduce, his subjects

⁷¹ For an account of the role of copies in colonial culture see Alison Inglis, “‘A Mania for Copies’: Replicas, Reproductions and Copies in Colonial Victoria,” in *The First Collections: The Public Library and the National Gallery of Victoria in the 1850s and 1860s*, ed. Ann Galbally (Melbourne: The University of Melbourne Museum of Art, 1992). The inscription on verso of this painting reads: ‘Copy by J. McDonald, Dominion Museum, 1913, copied from the small painting presented to Auckland by the Hon. W. Mitchelson, M.L.C. Small portrait for Government House copied from this’. See Timeframes entry for James Ingram McDonald, *Captain William Hobson*, 1913, oil, (ATL: G-826-1)

⁷² See correspondence between E. Mitchelson and F. D. Bell, TPA: MU2, box 11, folder 4, part 2.

⁷³ That McDonald’s copied portrait continues to be widely reproduced alongside biographical information about Hobson’s life and career attests to its relevance.

⁷⁴ See Tim Walker, “Robley: Te Ropere 1840–1930” (Masters in Art History, Auckland University, 1985). The image reproduced here is from the Turnbull collections and is differently titled, *Tattooed Gate, Maketu*, but also dated 1865.

to a specific ethnological 'type', but tried to delineate moko accurately, capturing the individuality and irregularities of those personal signatures.⁷⁵

In 1914 McDonald arranged an exhibition of Robley's work in the lecture hall and library of the Dominion Museum, which he described as the 'first exhibition of the kind held here, and, therefore, an event of no little importance in the history of the Museum'.⁷⁶ McDonald was anxious to mount the exhibition at this time, as June-July 1914 marked the jubilee of the events depicted in Robley's drawings. Each of the newspaper reviews commented on the 'historical' or 'ethnological' value of his work.⁷⁷ As Leonard Bell asserts, Robley's sketches, with their attention to ordinary, rather than exotic detail, and their appearance of having been rapidly executed, conform to conventions of 'documentary' or 'authentic' reportage of contemporary events.⁷⁸ As Bell notes, Robley's work was never originally intended for public exhibition or publication, and their translation into this sphere depended both on the altered appreciation of the code of the sketch, as well as their increasing historical relevance as part of the Dominion Museum collections. But in 1914 these same works were also appreciated for their artistic value, with one writer describing Robley's work as belonging to a 'high artistic order...full of life and movement and character'.⁷⁹ Consequently, Robley's work, initially acquired by Hamilton for its *ethnological* content, was valued by Thomson for its *historical* nature, while its display in an exhibition context also led to an appreciation of its *aesthetic* qualities.

Just as the timing of the Robley exhibition was commemorative in terms of historical events, it also coincided with England's declaration of war on Germany on 4 August 1914, as did the acquisition of another war-related collection: the Gordon collection in 1916. This acquisition coincided with the resurfacing of concerns regarding the Maori prophet Rua Kenana, which must have seemed an unwelcome legacy of the prophet movements fuelled by the New Zealand wars some 50 years earlier. This comparison was made more explicit by the fact that Kenana's arrest⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Although Best had been wary of Robley's copying, he valued his drawings of Maori tattooed faces for their 'considerable ethnological interest' as he was a 'very accurate observer'. Oliver to George Newton, Internal Affairs Under-Secretary, 22 December 1930, TPA: MU14, box 1, item 7.

⁷⁶ McDonald, Acting Director to Minister of Internal Affairs, 15 June 1914, TPA: MU14, box 1, item 7.

⁷⁷ See, for example, 'At the Museum', *Evening Post*, 8 June 1914, 8 and *Evening Post*, 25 July 1914, 7.

⁷⁸ Leonard Bell, *Colonial Constructs: European Images of Maori 1840-1914* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1992), 112-3.

⁷⁹ *Evening Post*, 18 July 1914, 5.

⁸⁰ On 2 April 1916, Kenana was arrested on the grounds of sedition, based on his insistence that his followers boycott military service.

occurred at the same time as an exhibition of Gordon's collection in the Dominion Museum.⁸¹ This featured a 'large collection of portraits and historical material relating to the Maori wars' including mounted and labelled photographic portraits of officers and medal winners in the Maori wars, as well as those of the principal 'rebel' Hauhau chiefs.⁸² The exhibition was opened to the public on 7 April 1916 and attracted veterans of the New Zealand wars.⁸³ By 1917, the resonance of collections such as Robley's and Gordon's with contemporary events became even more apparent, particularly as the Dominion Museum began to accumulate material that would form a National War Portrait Collection.⁸⁴ A newspaper appeal for exhibits stated:

Standing out strongly in the objects of the promoters is a desire to, as it were, link up the heroes of the past – pioneer and Maori War fighters – with their descendents, direct and indirect, who have been and are playing such a prominent part in the world war of today.⁸⁵

Following the special exhibition of the Gordon Collection,⁸⁶ Thomson wrote to Gordon that he would 'contrive to find room to show the portraits and pictures in the general galleries, but with our old unsuitable building it will be a difficult task to put them in any prominent place'.⁸⁷ He also acknowledged the need to separate reference collections from exhibition material, writing that some material in the collection was of 'great interest to historians, but not to the general public'. This research material was catalogued with the other historical papers and it was largely this body of work that was transferred to the Turnbull in 1921. While there is no

⁸¹ An account of Rua Kenana's arrest is given on the same page as the review of the opening of the Gordon exhibition. See *Evening Post*, 8 April 1916, 9. See also 'Early New Zealand records at the Museum; presentation of a polar medal', *New Zealand Times*, 8 April 1916, 10.

⁸² Examples of the photographs collected by Gordon are published in Te Papa Curatorial Team, *Icons*. See the mounted, captioned photographs on pp. 202-3 titled 'Jane Foley, who gave water to the wounded at Gate Pa', and 'Lt. Col. Booth, 43 Reg., killed Gate Pa April 1864'.

⁸³ Colonel Porter, for example, after visiting the exhibition wrote and offered Thomson an older photograph to replace the more modern one that Gordon had secured for the collection. Porter to Thomson, 10 April 1916, TPA: MU1, box 6, folder 1.

⁸⁴ Discussions regarding the possibility of establishing a National War Museum surfaced in 1917. The collections that were accumulated were held by the Dominion Museum and were later transferred to Archives New Zealand. See Archives New Zealand, <http://warart.archives.govt.nz/whatiswarart>, accessed 17 January 2008.

⁸⁵ *Evening Post*, 10 March 1917, TPA: MU 91, item 1.

⁸⁶ The temporary exhibitions of Robley and Gordon's works were largely the initiative of McDonald. If he had continued his employment at the Museum the long term exhibitions of the museum would no doubt have evolved quite differently. These exhibitions also counter McCarthy's suggestion that the word 'exhibition' was only used in relation to temporary installations at the Dominion Museum from the 1960s. See McCarthy, *Exhibiting Maori: A History of Colonial Cultures of Display*, 113.

⁸⁷ 10 April 1916, Thomson to Gordon, TPA: MU1, box 6, folder 1.

mention of the display of the ‘Collection of Hauhau and other rebel flags’ gifted as part of the collection, Gordon’s letters reveal that the flag drawings were originally mounted on one sheet, making them quite a different exhibit to that which they constituted, separately framed and exhibited in ‘Made in New Zealand’ at Te Papa from 11 November 2003 to 13 April 2008.⁸⁸ The flags, as indicated by their placement in this exhibition, in a subsection titled ‘Settling/Unsettling’, were slippery objects that had a hybrid status. They stood as trophies of European success in battle, but were also markers of Maori resistance, representing the forging by Maori of new hybrid identities in the face of colonial presence. Consequently, their presence in the Dominion Museum in 1916 may have been a problematic one.⁸⁹ (see figs 14 and 72)

Gordon’s role was primarily as a collector of historical artefacts, which, as I have argued elsewhere, reflects his attempt to forge a new subjectivity relevant to his circumstances in New Zealand.⁹⁰ Thus the historical authenticity of his collection depended on faith in his ability to access genuine material. While it was reported that Gordon was a veteran of the New Zealand Wars, there is no biographical evidence to support this, and as he arrived in Wellington only in 1868 and his employment history from then until his move to Wanganui in 1875 is well documented, it seems unlikely that this was the case.⁹¹ So Gordon lacked Robley’s aura of authenticity as having been part of the action, but established his authority through intensive research, including visits to the major sites of the New Zealand wars as well as making contact with survivors. Materials arising from this contact, such as the letters exchanged between Gordon and Jane Foley, lent legitimacy to Gordon’s enterprise and also became valuable records acquired by the Museum as part of the Gordon collection.⁹² Gordon also claimed that many of the photographs he secured for his collection were

⁸⁸ For an overview of the scope and content of ‘Made in New Zealand’, see: <http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/TePapa/English/WhatsOn/LongTermExhibitions/MadeinNewZealand.htm>, accessed 30 April 2009.

⁸⁹ Similarly, the unique illustrated manuscript *Te Inoi a te Ariki (The Lord’s Prayer in Maori)* received no press at the time, foretelling its background presence in the present collections of the Turnbull.

⁹⁰ See Rebecca Rice, “Hauhau and Other Rebel Flags: Histories of Exchange, Acculturation and Appropriation in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand,” *Journal of New Zealand Art History* 23 (2002).

⁹¹ Gordon was a shipping reporter and copy reader for the *Wellington Independent*, and then joined the Telegraph Department in 1873. In 1875 he was transferred to Wanganui. For accounts of Gordon’s movements, see Roger Blackley, *Stray Leaves: Colonial Trompe L’oeil Drawings* (Wellington: Adam Art Gallery and Victoria University Press, 2001) and Maurice Norton, “William Gordon: Artist Extraordinaire,” *New Zealand Memories* April/May, no. 65 (2007).

⁹² Foley was a famous wahine toa who fought alongside Ngāti Koheriki at Gate Pa and also made the flag ‘Aotearoa’ which was drawn by Gordon in 1913. See James Belich, ‘Heni Pore, the woman warrior’, *Dominion*, 3 February 1987, 8, and Rebecca Rice, artist entry for William Gordon, *Art at Te Papa*, Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2009, 80.

‘autograph photos given to me by the officers’.⁹³ Whether by this he meant they were signed or unique is unclear as he later entered a debate with the Museum over his reproducing photographs from negatives for other institutions that Thomson thought had been singularly acquired for the Dominion Museum collection.⁹⁴

One last example shifts the ground slightly to explore the relationship between the authenticity and aesthetic or historic value attributed to works of art, and their consequent place in the National Collections. When Mrs W. Turton gifted a collection of drawings by William Swainson to the National Collection in 1916, she insisted that the works would be valued both for their ‘intrinsic merit and as accurate records’.⁹⁵ Much as these are delicate, well-executed drawings, it is Swainson’s status as an artist that imbues his work with its intrinsic merit, and the perceived historical ‘accuracy’ of his works, their value as a record of place, depends on his reputation as naturalist, an individual who could produce a faithful imitation of nature. Works from the collection were initially placed on exhibition in the Museum Library, but in October the Minister of Internal Affairs, G. W. Russell instructed that the Swainson and Chevalier collections were to be exhibited at the 1916 Annual Academy exhibition, to be held later that month in their newly extended premises.⁹⁶ The alterations were well-received for apparently ‘having the watercolours in a room to themselves seemed to allow the best points in these pictures to be better seen’.⁹⁷ The Swainson collection, installed on screens in the centre of the main gallery, consisted of pencil and ink sketches made in the Hutt Valley between 1841 and 1850 and was, as predicted, praised for being of ‘historic as well as of artistic interest’.⁹⁸ (fig 73)

A small collection of lithographs by Swainson’s daughter, Edith, or Mrs Arthur Halcombe, illustrating the development of the Manchester Block in Fielding, was also donated by Turton in 1916. (fig 74) Halcombe was a skilled artist, whose style was highly comparable to that of her father, yet the medium of the work, its subject and the fact it was by a relatively unknown female artist meant it was credited with historical, not aesthetic value.⁹⁹ Thus the lithographs took their place in the

⁹³ Gordon to Thomson, 10 June 1914, TPA: MU1, box 6, folder 1.

⁹⁴ See Gordon to Thomson, 28 September 1917, TPA: MU1, box 6, folder 1.

⁹⁵ Mrs W. Turton to G. W. Russell, Minister Internal Affairs, 2 June 1916, TPA: MU1, box 3, item 6.

⁹⁶ ‘Academy of Arts Annual Exhibition, opened by Hon G. W. Russell’, *New Zealand Times*, 10 October 1916, 8.

⁹⁷ ‘N.Z. Academy’, *New Zealand Times*, 10 October 1916, 9

⁹⁸ ‘Academy of Arts Annual Exhibition’, *New Zealand Times*, 10 October 1916, 8.

⁹⁹ Kirker provides a brief account of Halcombe’s work in Anne Kirker, *New Zealand Women Artists: A Survey of 150 Years*, revised ed. (Tortola: Craftsman House, 1993), 18-21.

National Historical Collection and their gifting was used as an example to encourage further philanthropic gestures from the public who might ‘possess articles of historic or artistic interest in connection with the early history of New Zealand’.¹⁰⁰ In contrast, Swainson’s collection was always destined for the National Art Gallery, based on his status as an artist as much as the calibre of the works. A commemorative exhibition of Swainson’s work in 1989 claimed that his ‘reputation in posterity stands primarily as that of an artist, (not as a scientist, as he himself would undoubtedly have preferred)’.¹⁰¹ This bias undoubtedly resulted from the fact his collection was gifted to the future National Art Gallery, as it is for his ‘pencil drawings of New Zealand scenery’ now in Te Papa’s collections that Swainson has become best known.¹⁰² Further, while there are vast holdings of his natural history output in the Turnbull collection, its focus on foreign material means that its prominence in those collections has been sidelined due to the predominantly nationalist impulse that has driven their establishment and exhibition strategies.

While the ‘authenticity’ of Swainson’s or Halcombe’s works of art was never questioned, a practice of copying was also present in their family. Halcombe and her brother, William, would copy works by their father, and occasionally he would initial drawings made by them, meaning that the actual authorship of works is sometimes questionable. The boundaries then, between authentic and inauthentic, between copy and fake, between the historical and aesthetic value ascribed to works of art, are highly subjective. The instability of those boundaries does, however, resonate more highly when the use of those artefacts to forge national identities is at stake. The past is always to some extent reinvented by the present, but for individuals, such as Thomson and McDonald, that reinvention had, at least, to be based on what could in their moment be considered a historically or aesthetically authentic object.

With the acquisition of the Chevalier and Swainson collections, the National Collection was beginning to accrue significant holdings of colonial New Zealand art, which the government, by ordering the exhibition of the works within the gallery, was

¹⁰⁰ ‘Academy of Arts Annual Exhibition opened by Hon G. W. Russell’, *New Zealand Times*, 10 October 1916, 8. Despite their early twentieth-century placement in the ‘historical’ collections, the online description of Te Papa’s collections describes Halcombe’s prints as one of the ‘highlights’ of the New Zealand print collection. See <http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/TePapa/English/CollectionsAndResearch/Collections/ArtAndVisualCulture/Paper/Prints/>, accessed 16 January 2008.

¹⁰¹ Phil Parkinson, “Introduction,” in *William Swainson, F.R.S., F.L.S., 1789-1855: A Commemorative Exhibition* (Wellington: National Library of New Zealand, 1989).

¹⁰² Ibid.

apparently keen to display.¹⁰³ The opening of the additional space in the Gallery in 1916 clearly made more focused ‘special’ exhibitions possible, and from the late 1910s the Academy became more creative in their exhibition schedule, rather than limiting their activities to Annual and Sketch exhibitions alone. From 1920 they initiated a series of loan exhibitions, which brought together works by one artist from the Academy’s and other collections.¹⁰⁴ These may have been inspired by the one-person shows held at the Museum and such exhibitions indicate that the Academy was interested in extending its scope and ambition as an institution. On 5 July 1920, it was resolved that the ‘first loan exhibition be an exhibition of works by the late J. M. Nairn’.¹⁰⁵ The exhibition would take place after the close of the annual exhibition and was to be open to the public free of charge. Notably, it was accompanied by ‘short discourses on the life and work of the late Mr Nairn...by Colonel Purdy, Mr Alex Newton, Mr Chas Wilson, and Mr J. A. Tripe’.¹⁰⁶ The provision of an interpretive dimension for an Academy exhibition was also a new initiative and signals their interest in acting as educators as well as arbiters of taste. Newspaper reports found that such an exhibition was worthwhile, for while Nairn ‘left a name behind him in New Zealand that will be slow work for Time to obliterate, the younger generation of artists and art-lovers may not have the acquaintance with his superb craftsmanship as did those with whom he walked and worked’.¹⁰⁷ A similarly educational and commemorative exhibition of works by van der Velden followed the anonymous donation of a valuable collection of his paintings and drawings in 1921. Conditions of acceptance were that the collection would be hung together and named the Van der Velden collection. While this necessitated rearranging the Academy’s permanent collection, moving the Swainson collection to a side room, the following

¹⁰³ At the opening of the 1916 Annual Exhibition, the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Hon G. W. Russell expressed his pride in the fact that the additions would enable the Academy to ‘house safely pictures which were to lay the foundations of a national collection’. ‘Fine Arts: Annual Exhibition Opened, Founding a National Collection’, *Evening Post*, 10 October 1916, 9.

¹⁰⁴ Canterbury Society of Arts also began to hold one-person exhibitions in the 1920s, but these tended to be of contemporary artists’ work, such as Margaret Stoddart and Sydney Thompson. See Rodney T. L. Wilson, ed. *The Canterbury Society of Arts 1880-1980* (Christchurch: Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 1980), 15. The Academy also organised one-person shows of living, contemporary artists. The first was held in 1918, but they did not become a regular feature of the Academy programme until 1921, when an exhibition of Nugent Welch’s work was mounted. The Academy noted in their Annual report that such exhibitions were valuable for illustrations of the ‘development of the artist in all its stages are of considerable educational value’. ‘NZAFA: Annual Report for the year ended June 1922’, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1.

¹⁰⁵ Minutes of meeting of the NZAFA 1882-1924, 5 July 1920, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1.

¹⁰⁶ ‘NZAFA: Annual Report for the year ended June 1921’, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Sylvius’, ‘James M. Nairn: Exhibition of his work’, *Dominion*, 22 October 1920, 9.

year the Academy drew together a retrospective exhibition, for which they even secured *The Dutch Funeral*, 1872 (Christchurch Public Art Gallery) from a private collection in Christchurch.¹⁰⁸

In 1923 it was proposed that works by M. E. R. Tripe, Margaret Stoddart and Dorothy Kate Richmond be exhibited together. However, Tripe preferred not to take part in such an exhibition and instead it was resolved that an exhibition of works by D. K. Richmond and her late father J. C. Richmond be held.¹⁰⁹ It appears from newspaper reviews that the collection was arranged both by media, the smaller pencil sketches being displayed on screens, and chronology, so that J. C. Richmond's artistic development might be noted by the keen observer.¹¹⁰ One newspaper review titled 'A national art? A unique display: the Richmond family's collection' used this exhibition as an opportunity to suggest that the elder Richmond 'did much as a member of a pioneer band of dauntless spirits to fully appreciate the manifold beauties showered so generously on this little country of ours' and went on to advocate that 'something might be done to conveniently house the collection so that it might be available for student and visitor alike'.¹¹¹

In each of these cases, the exhibitions were closely linked to recent or future acquisitions. While the impetus for the van der Velden exhibition clearly lay in the gift of works in 1922, the support shown by the Academy for Nairn and Richmond most likely laid the path for the future gifts of their works by benefactors and family. These academy exhibitions, as well as the one-person exhibitions at the Museum, represent the first steps taken by these institutions to select and bring to the public's attention specific artists and their works. Such exhibitions, especially when associated with collecting activities, and accompanied by lectures, acted to authenticate and validate an artist's place and role in the nascent history of New Zealand colonial art. Notably, these exhibitions were less marked by the sense of nostalgia that infused the 1897 exhibition of Richmond, Barraud and Gully's works, or the 1904 Nairn retrospective discussed in chapter 4. Instead, these artists could now be seen as having unquestionably contributed to the development of New Zealand art and their artistic development and influence could be appreciated without regression to memorial

¹⁰⁸ 'True Art: exhibition of Van der Velden's works', *Dominion*, 22 July 1922, 6

¹⁰⁹ Minutes of meeting of the NZAFA 1882-1924, 18 April 1923, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-1.

¹¹⁰ 'An Appreciation: the art of the late Hon. J. C. Richmond', *Dominion*, 21 June 1923, 6.

¹¹¹ 'A national art? A unique display: the Richmond family's collection, New Zealand artists', *New Zealand Times*, 19 June 1923, 6.

reminiscence. Consequently, these exhibitions can be understood as the beginnings of presenting a range of artists whose works might be considered exemplary within the state institutions. It could be argued that these exhibitions began to establish a body of canonical works of colonial New Zealand art, albeit one based on the strengths of the National collections.

A new kid on the block

Many of the works that were to become part of New Zealand's colonial canon were, however, housed not in the Museum or Gallery, but in the Turnbull Library, arguably the greatest repository of colonial New Zealand art in the country. The Turnbull Library opened on Monday, 28 June, 1920, two years to the day since Turnbull's death.¹¹² The opening was, as Rachel Barrowman notes, a 'gathering of the city's intellectual and political worlds' and it was to this audience that the Library primarily catered in Johannes Andersen's years.¹¹³ This positioning of the Library within the intellectual and political sphere was emphasised by its administration, which was entrusted to the Board of Science and Art, established in 1913 to 'provide for the constitution and control of a Dominion Museum, Art Gallery, and Library, and for the publication of certain scientific works'.¹¹⁴ Further, the physical location of the Library in Alexander Turnbull's house on Bowen St was within a block of the Museum, Parliament and the Gallery.¹¹⁵ Turnbull's biographer Eric McCormick described the threshold established by the entry to the Turnbull Library:

...one learns something of Turnbull from the building that was once his home: vaguely Jacobean in design, it stands exotic and aloof, a distinguished alien among its flimsy or utilitarian neighbours; and having crossed the classical portico, one encounters an atmosphere of domestic ease and opulence...¹¹⁶

This atmosphere of exclusivity described by McCormick reflected the nature of the library for, as a newspaper noted in anticipation of its opening, the 'rules governing the use of the library are intended to exclude the merely casual reader. The Turnbull

¹¹² Rachel Barrowman, *The Turnbull: A Library and Its World* (Auckland: Auckland University Press in association with the Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1995), 26.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ 'Science and Art Act', 1913, No. 22, *New Zealand Statutes*, Wellington: Government Printer, 117

¹¹⁵ Turnbull's house was not included in his bequest, but was bought by the Government for just over £9000. Barrowman, *The Turnbull*, 24.

¹¹⁶ E.H. McCormick, *The Fascinating Folly: Dr. Hocken and His Fellow Collectors* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1961), 19.

Library is intended for reference, not for entertainment'.¹¹⁷ Consequently admission as a reader required a process of application, and visitors had to ring a bell to gain access to the library. Despite this, it was generally understood that the Library's collections were more accessible than those of some other institutions. For example, in 1923 the Monrad collection of engravings was transferred from the General Assembly Library to the Library so that it might be made more readily available to the public until the opening of the National Art Gallery.¹¹⁸ Such decisions suited Andersen, who imagined the Library acting as a de facto National Art Gallery and suggested several initiatives that might enhance and better use the art collection.¹¹⁹

While Andersen became infamous for his personal tours of the Library, which could take several hours and included looking at works held in the Art Room, the primary uses for art was as historical document and as decorative device. Just as Wilson employed pictures in the General Assembly Library to create a pleasing and less monotonous environment, so too did the foyer displays of the Library set the tone for the experience of a gentleman's library. In the arrangement of the foyer that McCormick describes, Robert S. Clouston's portrait of Turnbull took central place, presenting a highly dignified frontal view of the benefactor of the library.¹²⁰ These foyer displays were generally neither thematic nor historical, but tended to highlight the range of fine and decorative arts in the Library's collections (or on loan from other institutions). For example, in a view of the foyer from the 1930s the Seuffert desk on loan from the Museum collections can be seen, as Andersen predicted, to 'harmonise well with the surroundings'.¹²¹ (fig 75) This arrangement primarily consisted of historical New Zealand works, including two watercolour sketches by John Gully, oil

¹¹⁷ This distinction, of reference versus entertainment, reflects the role art was to play in the Turnbull, as being of historic, not aesthetic, interest. 'The Turnbull Library: Official opening today', *Dominion*, 28 June 1920, 6. The 'Rules and Regulations' of the library were printed in the paper prior to the opening. See *New Zealand Times*, 25 June 1920, 9. Barrowman reports that a mere 50-60 reader's tickets were issued each year and mostly to students of New Zealand history. Visitors, however, numbered in the hundreds and were often treated to a personal tour by Andersen. See Barrowman, *The Turnbull*, 39.

¹¹⁸ J. Hislop, Undersecretary Internal Affairs to McDonald, Acting Director Dominion Museum, 31 August 1923, MU2, box 3, folder 1, item 13.

¹¹⁹ For example, he proposed that selections from the collection might be loaned to art galleries for exhibition, a suggestion that was not taken up by any art institutions save Auckland. See Barrowman, *The Turnbull*, 49.

¹²⁰ ATL: Pictorial collections, ref: G-600

¹²¹ Andersen to McDonald, Acting Director, 15 September 1921, TPA: MU1, folder 2, item 17. See ATL F185961/2. This cabinet is known as the 'Watt' Cabinet and was a bequest to the Dominion Museum of Mrs E. H. Blair, in 1918 in memory of her late husband Archibald Anderson Watt., Te Papa: PF000079.

paintings by William Strutt and Charles Blomfield, a panoramic view of Nelson and two less congruous items, bronze silhouette portraits by Thomas Woolner of Governor Latrobe, first Governor of Victoria, Australia, and Mary Howitt, female author.¹²² There is no evidence in the photographs of any labels identifying those works on display, reinforcing their role in creating an environment, rather than educating a curious visitor. One does imagine, however, that Andersen would have provided a suitable and enlightening commentary as part of his personal tours.

A later foyer arrangement shows that the display extended to include more decorative items, particularly after the Sir Joseph Kinsey bequest of 1937.¹²³ (fig 76) Andersen had had grand plans for Kinsey's collection, imagining that it might be preserved in two period rooms: a gentleman's library with books, chairs, statuettes and so forth, and a lady's sitting room, decorated with the vases and other pieces of china.¹²⁴ Unfortunately, many of Andersen's plans were not realised. While taking ownership of Turnbull's home had provided a quick solution to house his collection, the addition of gifts and acquisitions as well as major items from other state departments, such as the National Historical Collection in 1922, meant that a gentleman's home was quickly outgrown by the weight of its holdings.¹²⁵ So rather than taking the Mitchell Library as its model as Turnbull requested, and providing adequate purpose-built accommodation for the future of the institution, the government continued its pattern of taking shortcuts in housing the state collections.¹²⁶ Regardless of accommodation problems, Clyde Taylor, who assumed the role of Turnbull librarian from 1936, is credited with transforming the Library

¹²² The Strutt painting [*On the beach, Onehunga*], c. 1856 was possibly in Alexander Turnbull's collection (ref ATL: G-637). The John Gully watercolours are two views of the Remarkables, c. 1870 (ATL: ref A-178-005 and A-178-004). The panorama is that attributed to Dudridge Gibbs, [*Nelson, looking across the town, Haven and Boulder Bank toward Tasman Bay*], c. 1863, (ATL: ref C-030-001) possibly that donated by Sir Joseph Kinsey in 1928. See 'Annual Report: Alexander Turnbull Library for year ending 1928', *AJHR*, H – 22, p. 5. The Blomfield painting, *Pink Terraces* c. 1886, entered the Museum collections in 1943 (Te Papa: ref 1943-0009-1) but had probably been acquired by the government in the early 1920s through the High Commissioner. See TPA: MU2, box 3, folder 11, item 4, part two.

¹²³ This bequest had been negotiated by Andersen and constituted a library that ranked alongside Turnbull's, as well as a range of decorative arts and furniture. See Barrowman, *The Turnbull*, 57.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Despite much petitioning the government funded strengthening and modernising of the Library in 1957, rather than provide a new building, effectively reducing the library's storage capacity.

¹²⁶ The Mitchell Library was designed and purpose-built after close study of principal libraries in Europe and America. Following the gift of a major collection of pictures by William Dixon, the government extended the building to provide accommodation for these which opened in 1929. For a description of the history of the Mitchell Library see Ida Leeson, *The Mitchell Library, Sydney: Historical and Descriptive Notes* (Sydney: Public Library of New South Wales, 1936).

from a semi-private gentleman's library into a public institution, while Andersen defended his actions claiming that 'he would have made many of these changes himself had he the money and the staff.'¹²⁷ The changes made under Taylor took place in parallel with the opening of the National Museum and Art Gallery in Buckle St in 1936. The presentation of colonial New Zealand art from the three state collections within in this context, as well as that of the Centennial Exhibitions of 1940, form the subject of the last section of this chapter.

Art for the Nation

*New Zealand is unquestionably ripe for a great advance in the general cultural progress of her people, and I can conceive of no more practical or fruitful method of signalling and stimulating such maturity than the establishment of an up-to-date National Museum and Picture Gallery ...*¹²⁸

These words were spoken by the Governor General, Lord Bledisloe, on 14 April 1934 as he performed the ceremonial laying of the foundation stone of the National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum on the summit of Mt Cook. This day signalled the realisation of years of petitions and deputations on the part of Museum and Gallery personnel, who had long argued for suitable buildings to accommodate and exhibit their respective collections. On the anticipated function of these institutions, Bledisloe continued:

A museum ... if properly equipped, organised, and fully utilised, both inside and outside its walls, should not be a mausoleum of dead specimens ... but a vitalising power-house radiating currents of intellectual energy and calling forth latent genius in all classes of the community. Similarly, a National Art Gallery should not be only a receptacle for 'Old Masters' (valuable and sadly scarce though they are in this Dominion) still less of modern pictures of varying merit and transient popularity, but rather a source of unsullied inspiration to 'young students' and indeed to all thoughtful citizens – a pure fountain of sound artistic taste and perchance a shrine of distinctive national artistic vision influenced by local environment and ideals.¹²⁹

The national role of these institutions was duly emphasised and high hopes set for their cultural and intellectual relevance at both a local and a national level. Yet it did seem that some confusion remained regarding the identity of those institutions. In

¹²⁷ Barrowman, *The Turnbull*, 62-3.

¹²⁸ 'Art Gallery and Museum: Laying of foundation stone performed by Governor General – large gathering of public', *Evening Post*, 14 April 1934, 14.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

1936, Joseph Heenan, Under-Secretary of Internal Affairs for the first Labour Government elected in 1935, pointed out that the:

... institutions were three-fold in character – ‘National’ in that the Government had contributed towards the building and was contributing towards the maintenance, and ‘National’ as regards exhibits because the Government had handed over the National Collection; ‘Provincial’ in the very real sense that the people of the province had contributed nobly towards the cost of the foundation of the institutions, and “Wellington City” in that very special sense that they were the successors of the Art Gallery controlled by the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts and the Dominion Museum maintained by the Government for some 60 years.¹³⁰

Resistance to these capital developments still existed in other centres, particularly concerning the nature of a ‘National’ Art Gallery and its possible benefits to all New Zealand citizens. For example, following the gift of a selection of J. C. Richmond watercolours to the National Collection in 1935,¹³¹ the Christchurch *Star-Sun* stated in an editorial:

It is impossible...in a cultural centre like Christchurch, not to feel a shade of regret at the news that a selection of watercolours by the late J. C. Richmond, of great historical interest, has been given to the National Art Gallery at Wellington, for under the present rules governing art in New Zealand, they will be immured in the least art-loving centre of the country, and in a city that is mainly a terminus for travellers.¹³²

This criticism was a blow to those in Wellington who had spent time, energy and money to bring the idea of a National Art Gallery to fruition. In Wellington’s defence, J. M. Ellis, acting president of the Academy, challenged the somewhat parochial notion of ‘centres’ to which the *Star-Sun* editor had referred, suggesting that the possibility of a collection of pictures from British institutions coming to New Zealand might allow ‘we who are so far removed from the *centre* of artistic activity...to enjoy the opportunities that will arise out of this’.¹³³ Nonetheless, Ellis’ reminder, that while New Zealand might have its centres of activity, it was still very much on the margins of the international art scene, did not diminish the hope that New Zealand

¹³⁰ Joseph Heenan, TPA: MU8, folder 4, 1936.

¹³¹ ‘Pictures of early New Zealand. Gift to National Gallery: Notable J. C. Richmond Collection’, *Dominion*, 18 July 1935, 10.

¹³² ‘Least art-loving centre: estimate of Wellington’, *Dominion*, 29 July 1935, 14.

¹³³ ‘Strongly resented: criticism of Wellington’s love of art. “Ill-advised comment”’, *Dominion*, 30 July 1935, 10. [my italics]

might ‘firmly establish our own school of art, however comparatively humble it might be’.¹³⁴

The provincial antagonism aroused by the Richmond gift did reinforce the observation made in a 1934 *Report on the Museums and Art Galleries in New Zealand* that New Zealand centres were self-absorbed and seemed to see themselves as almost the ‘Greek idea of the self-contained city state’.¹³⁵ It concluded that ‘greater intercourse between the various museums’ along with a wider cultural outlook would only advance progress of the museum and art gallery scene in New Zealand. The fact that criticism of the ‘National’ potential of the National Art Gallery emanated from Christchurch was unsurprising. While their own gallery, the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, was lagging behind in developing its collections,¹³⁶ Canterbury was beginning to produce the strongest art of the 1930s.¹³⁷ As early as 1926, Professor James Shelley was able to write ‘So sure and workmanlike is much of the painting from quite a considerable group of artists in the Christchurch district, and so definitely having a character of its own, that one might almost dare to speak now of a New Zealand School of Painting with its inner circle in Christchurch and its inspirational nucleus at the west end of Hereford Street’.¹³⁸ However, while the advance of the Canterbury regionalist school was recognised *locally*, the repeated call for a New Zealand art over the following decades suggests that it had not yet achieved *national* recognition. Crucial too, for the establishment of a national school was the identification, or construction of, a lineage for such an art, and it was to this that the events associated with the opening of the National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum, and the later Centennial celebrations, would contribute.

In the two years between the laying of the foundation stone and the opening of the new institutions, activities related to the Museum and Gallery were kept in the public eye through regular newspaper articles which reported key acquisitions,

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ S. F. Markham and W. R. B. Oliver, *A Report on the Museums and Art Galleries of New Zealand* (New York: The Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1934), 105.

¹³⁶ In 1936 Sydney Lough Thomson complained that most of the paintings in the collection had been acquired some 30 years earlier and represented an academic style. See Gordon Brown, *New Zealand Painting 1920-1940: Adaptation and Nationalism* (Wellington: Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand, 1975), 54.

¹³⁷ This work, described as ‘regionalist’, was characterised by an apparent ‘truth’ to place, stripped of foreign influence, and was achieved by a focus on the particularities of the local environment that rendered it both recognisable and identifiable. Michael Dunn, for example, titles a chapter of his survey of New Zealand painting, ‘Regionalism and Realism’, which focuses on art produced in Canterbury in the 1930s. See Dunn, *A Concise History of New Zealand Painting* (Auckland: David Bateman, 1991).

¹³⁸ Brown, *New Zealand Painting 1920-1940: Adaptation and Nationalism*, 62.

reminded the public of old treasures that would be able to be on display for the first time in decades, and recorded the progress of the building site. By tracing connections between these interim reports and accounts of the opening exhibits, issues lying at the heart of these new institutions can be uncovered and examined. One thread that runs through this analysis, and that also becomes apparent in early attempts to construct or fabricate New Zealand's art history, is that of the relationship between art for art's sake and art as information. This becomes most apparent in considering the display of portraiture, Maori art and 'historical' pictures.

Putting a face to history

One feature which is worthy of congratulation and commendation is the formation of a national portrait gallery, where are displayed portraits of those who, in the past, have rendered distinguished service to New Zealand. While it is a fact that the number of portraits now on the walls is but small, the idea is an excellent one, and will be more and more appreciated as the years go by.¹³⁹

The 'excellent' idea of a 'National Portrait Gallery', realised as a permanent room in the opening exhibitions of the National Art Gallery in 1936, had been proposed in relation to the National Historical Collection initiated by Thomson in 1916. Portraits would have formed an essential part of Thomson's collection that sought to recover records and memories of a pioneering past, for they are compelling historical documents which can be put to use to create an 'imagined community' in efforts to construct a national identity.¹⁴⁰ As early as 1919, however, James McDonald wrote on a list of potential subjects of photographic portraits for a preliminary National Portrait Collection, 'Action suspended on account of cost and difficulty of deciding who should be included'.¹⁴¹ Portraits then, posed problems in terms of *who* should be represented, but they were also problematic in terms of artistic *quality*: should a

¹³⁹ Lord Galway's address, in "Inspiration to great things" National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum officially opened. Ceremony by the Governor-General: displaying something of the human race', *Dominion*, 3 August 1936, 10.

¹⁴⁰ The notion of 'imagined communities' was coined by Benedict Anderson and refers to the theory that a nation is 'imagined as a community as conceived as deep comradeship'. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983). For a discussion of the role of London's National Portrait Gallery in contributing to the construction of such an imagined community and thence of a nation state, see chapter 2: 'Picturing the ancestors and imag(in)ing the nation' in Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 23-48.

¹⁴¹ Annotation by James McDonald on memo, 'Photographs for National Portrait Gallery', T.C.A Hislop, Under-Secretary Internal Affairs to Director of Dominion Museum, 2 June 1919, TPA: MU1, folder 17, item 3

portrait be accepted into the National Collection based on the national or historical relevance of the individual depicted, or on the aesthetic value of the work?

In the 1930s, gifts or commissions for the National Collection reported in the newspapers included a large number of portraits, which were discussed in anticipation of a 'National Portrait Gallery' forming a permanent part of the National Art Gallery's collection and display strategies.¹⁴² Portraits of Sir Truby King by M. E. R. Tripe and Sir Francis Bell by Archibald Nicholl were gratefully and ceremonially accepted into this collection, but less public records reveal tensions relating to decisions about the value of the subject versus the quality of the painting.¹⁴³ In 1937, the National Gallery Management Committee determined that Eleanor Sperrey's portrait of *John Carpenter*, c. 1885 (current location unknown) was unsuitable for the National Collection, and recommended that it be considered for the National Portrait Collection from which it was rejected,¹⁴⁴ while Harry Linley Richardson's portrait of the late *Sir James Carroll*, c. 1912, (ATL) though not considered 'representative of the artist's best work', was accepted on historical grounds into the National Portrait Collection in 1939.¹⁴⁵ Thus, a portrait might be rejected on the grounds of artistic execution but, if the subject's status warranted, lapses in artistic proficiency might be overlooked. This rationale, based on the protocols of the National Portrait Gallery, London, was formally established by the Board of Trustees in 1939. They determined that the

¹⁴² Many works were commissioned and gifted to the National Collection in the 1930s. For example, in June 1935 a full-length portrait of King George was gifted to the Gallery by Mr T. F. B. Davis, a South African millionaire (Te Papa, ref 1935-0009-1). See 'Gift to Dominion: Portrait of King George', *Dominion*, 27 June 1935, 9. A portrait of Sir Robert Stout by Archibald Nicoll (Te Papa: ref 1935-0007-1; deposited on long-term loan to the Turnbull in 1978, ref G-823-3) was presented to the Board of Trustees for 'inclusion in the national portrait section of the gallery' by Duncan Stout on behalf of his family in December 1935. See 'Valuable addition to Art Gallery: gift by Mr G. Shirtcliffe. National Collection to be enriched', *Dominion*, 4 December 1935, 10. In 1936 the women of New Zealand combined forces to gather funds to commission a portrait of Queen Mary, from Simon Elwes, which was presented to the National Art Gallery in 1939. (Te Papa, ref 1939-0002-1). See 'Meeting of Women: proposal of gift for National Gallery', *Dominion*, 9 June 1936, 4.

¹⁴³ The King portrait, c. 1935, was gifted by the Karitane Products Society (Te Papa: 1936-0024-1) and the Bell portrait by the family of Sir Francis Bell (Te Papa: 1936-0009-1). Both were ceremonially presented on 28 May 1936. See 'Two great New Zealanders – portraits for gallery: Sir Francis Bell and Sir Truby King, Presentation Ceremony', *Dominion*, 29 May 1936, 13.

¹⁴⁴ Minutes of Committee of Management of the NAG, 4 August 1937. ANZ: IA 1, Series 1, record 114/2/3 part 1. Robert Holt Carpenter was a local Wellington identity, characterised as a bookbinder, local politician, bookseller and character in his biography. See Coleridge, Kathleen A. 'Carpenter, Robert Holt 1819/1820? - 1891'. *DNZB*, <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>, accessed 9 February 2009. The painting is not listed as part of Te Papa or the Turnbull's collections, though there is a photograph of the painting in the Turnbull, see ATL: ref PA3-0342.

¹⁴⁵ Minutes of the NAG and DM Board of Trustees, 6 October 1939, TPA: MU88, folder 7. The portrait of Carroll, along with many other works that constituted the "National Portrait Gallery", was transferred to the Turnbull Library in 1977. See ATL: ref G-822-1.

celebrity of the person represented should override the merit of the artist and that 'faults and errors' would not be sufficient grounds for 'excluding any portrait which may be valuable as illustrating the history of the country'.¹⁴⁶

The emphasis on portraits as a genre that might serve as illustration of a national history ultimately led to the 'National Portrait Collection's' problematic status within an institution committed to upholding aesthetic standards for art. The opening exhibitions in 1936 accorded portraits a prominent place in the Gallery: the portrait of King George was hung 'in such a position as to be the first picture to strike the eye when entering the main gallery doors'¹⁴⁷ (fig 77) and a room, Gallery M, was devoted to portraiture (fig 78). But by the latter half of the twentieth century, such an emphasis was well out of step with a modernist outlook in art. As Roger Blackley writes, the de-accessioning in the 1970s of many portraits from the Gallery to an institution regarded as better suited to collecting objects of historical relevance, the Library, reflects the 'tense relation between the historical and representative function of portraiture, on the one hand, and the conflicting values of an art museum on the other'.¹⁴⁸ So while the early hang of Gallery M was praised as forming the 'basis of an interesting gallery of portraits', reviews following the opening were more tempered in their evaluation of the 'National Portrait Collection'.¹⁴⁹ A. R. T, in the *Dominion*, warned that 'however distinguished the subjects finally admitted may be, care must be taken that the canons of art are not abused and that more truth and less garish paint is

¹⁴⁶ Minutes of the NAG and DM Board of Trustees, 6 October 1939, TPA: MU88, folder 7. These were reprinted in *Art in New Zealand*, September 1940, vol. XIII, no. 1, 51. It was recommended that in order to fulfil this illustrative function, the historical portraits should be shown in chronological order. In this, the Board was following in the footsteps of the National Portrait Gallery, London, which was founded in 1856 with the ambition of representing the history of the nation through its portraits. See the National Portrait Gallery website www.npg.org.uk, accessed 12 February 2009, and Lara Perry, *History's Beauties: Women and the National Portrait Gallery, 1856-1900* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), for a critical evaluation of the evolution of the gallery.

¹⁴⁷ 'Portrait of King George V at New Art Gallery', *Dominion*, 1 May 1936, 9. It is noteworthy that this portrait was hung and publicity photographs published at least four months prior to the official opening of the Museum and Gallery.

¹⁴⁸ Roger Blackley, *A Nation's Portraits*, ed. Christina Barton, Art History Lecture Series 03 (Wellington: Art History, Victoria University of Wellington, 2005), 29-30. Confusingly, many of those portraits that were deaccessioned to the Library are still listed on Te Papa's database with no reference to the fact that those portraits are now located in the Library.

¹⁴⁹ 'Early hang of portraits: portrait gallery. Nucleus of a National Collection', *Dominion*, 23 June 1936, p. 6. This hang prominently consisted of white, aging male subjects, with two works by female artists (M. E. R. Tripe and E. K. Sperrey). The two small paintings of Maori subjects by H. L. Richardson which were reportedly in this early hang are not present in the catalogue listing for Gallery M. See *National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum: Souvenir Catalogue of Pictures and Works of Art for Opening Exhibition, August, 1936*, (Wellington: Blundell Bros, 1936), 62-64.

admitted', ¹⁵⁰ and the *Evening Post* reminded potential viewers that 'it must be borne in mind that the portraits are not necessarily hung there as outstanding works of art. Frankly, some are not' and hoped that in time one might 'see the other sex represented on the walls'. ¹⁵¹

While a gallery committed to portraits of the nation did not survive, in 1936 at least, the possibility of a 'National Portrait Gallery' received the support of both the public and officials. ¹⁵² Such a gallery relied on the notion that the paintings exhibited held the status of 'national' based on the sitter's identity, rather than in terms of any 'national' style or spirit in art. ¹⁵³ Consequently, the 1936 hang of the portrait collection foregrounded distinguished members of New Zealand society and excluded Maori, women, and historical 'characters', such as John Carpenter. This effectively presented elite values as national ones. It is ironic, then, that the portrait most favoured by the *Evening Post* reviewer in 1936 was one of the more modest, loaned for the occasion by the Turnbull Library. This 'most interesting' portrait of the missionary Samuel Marsden was 'obviously in its right place in a national collection', as the 'old time simplicity and charm of this, the smallest and oldest of all the portraits there' was found to contrast 'very forcibly with the somewhat flamboyant ostentatiousness of the largest'. ¹⁵⁴ It seems, then, that confusion presided over the nature of portraits that would best serve 'national' interests and that, despite the warnings of newspaper critics, pompous painting was mistaken for a positive legitimisation of character.

¹⁵⁰ 'The National Art Gallery: No. 2. Murray Fuller Collection a lavish display of present-day British art. National Permanent Collection', *Dominion*, 4 August 1936, 8.

¹⁵¹ 'The National Art Gallery. Important collections: works of renowned artists. First display in Empire Tour', *Evening Post*, 30 July 1936, 5. They pointed, for example, to the portrait of Dorothy Kate Richmond by Harry Linley Richardson, hanging in an adjacent gallery, as a painting worthy in both subject and style of taking its place in Gallery 'M'. A letter to the editor was concerned about the standards being set by this collection, expressing surprise that portraits of living persons were being accepted and that artistic merit was not being adequately considered in acquisitions decisions. See Courtney, 'Portraits for Art Gallery', *Dominion*, 4 August 1936, 11.

¹⁵² It should be noted that since 1988 efforts to establish a national portrait gallery have been inaugurated and this body currently exists as the New Zealand Portrait Gallery based at Shed 11 in Wellington. See www.portraitgallery.nzl.org, accessed 12 February 2009.

¹⁵³ Such a paradox lies at the heart of most galleries with the status of National Portrait Galleries. See, for example, Brandon Taylor, *Art for the Nation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999). on the National Portrait Gallery, London.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. See Joseph Backler, *Revd Samuel Marsden*, c. 1832-1838, oil on canvas, ATL: ref. G-620.

The tension between art as ‘art’ and art as ‘information’ was also borne out in comparisons between upstairs and downstairs, and the respective uses of art as exhibit in the National Art Gallery as opposed to the Dominion Museum. In the case of the Museum, most publicity prior to the opening related to the Maori exhibits, emphasising the role that they were to play in the national institution as one of the more distinctive and distinguishing features of the nation. On 7 December 1935 a full-page spread in the *Dominion* by L. B. Inch, titled ‘Some forgotten treasures and unrecorded history’, reminded readers of the wide range of materials owned by the Museum and the fact that they would shortly be on exhibit.¹⁵⁵ This report connected the voyages of Maori and other early explorers to the expeditions of Columbus and Cook, creating a kind of historical continuity between Polynesian and European pasts through the metaphor of journey and discovery. Artefacts that referenced historical moments of encounter between European and “Other” were privileged in the article, such as the mysterious Tamil Bell, Cook’s Hawaiian trophies and, most importantly, *Te Hau ki Turanga*. This discourse served to provide a point of connection between Maori and Pakeha cultures: a fitting, but problematic effort for a national institution, especially when the conceptualisation of the Maori displays relied on the imminent obsolescence of Maori culture. The following description was typical of the importance ascribed to Maori artefacts:

Precious now, they will become more precious with every passing year. For his lore is something inseparable from the story of early New Zealand and was woven into the very fabric of the colony’s pioneer communities.¹⁵⁶

Thus, underlying the display strategies of the new Dominion Museum was a desire to fabricate a national narrative that brought together Maori and Pakeha (hi)stories – not necessarily that they might be fully integrated, but that there might be a co-option of one to the other. The value of the indigenous thus lay in its ability to attest to the concrete reality of an earlier stage of New Zealand’s history that might be shared by

¹⁵⁵ The byline read: ‘Scores of real trophies of conquest, bargaining, festivals and exploration in war and peace are owned by Wellingtonians, and a new building is nearing completion on Mount Cook to house them. The collection, including much that has been forgotten, together with much that is new, will be set forth in the new building next year’. See Lawrence Bates Inch, ‘Some forgotten treasures and unrecorded history’, *Dominion*, 7 December 1935, 15.

¹⁵⁶ ‘New Zealand’s Treasure House: National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum official opening today’, *Dominion*, 1 August 1936, 17.

Pakeha and Maori, constructing a “common past” that could confirm New Zealand’s “triumphant present”.¹⁵⁷

The Maori Hall in the Museum was to form the ‘very central shrine of the whole’, which was felt to be appropriate given the ‘unique’ and ‘advanced’ nature of the Maori race.¹⁵⁸ Newspapers regularly reported on the progress of the displays, publishing articles and photographs of newly erected pataka and waka,¹⁵⁹ but, as was the case with displays at nineteenth-century exhibitions, these were not posited as an assertion of the contemporaneity of Maori as a people. Instead, as one newspaper took care to state, any idea that the Maori Hall might have been ‘fashioned on the lines of Maori traditional architecture’ was mistaken; rather, it was the ‘juxtaposition of native arts, crafts, patterns and colouring on this modern interior that makes an effective contrast’.¹⁶⁰ (fig 79) Thus the Maori displays were conceived as evidence of an historical past, and were presented as ethnographic artefacts that might illustrate a pre-colonial way of life and stand in contrast to the modernity of the new institution.

There were, nonetheless, the stirrings of a discourse that foresaw the potential of Maori art not just as something relegated to the past. In the first instance, many items were only able to be exhibited due to the skills of living Maori. In the years leading up to the opening of the new Museum, a team had been working under Museum employee, Thomas Heberley, to repair, restore and reconstruct objects that would be central to the Maori Hall displays.¹⁶¹ (fig 80) A group from the Rotorua Maori Arts and Crafts School, accompanied by Sir Apirana Ngata, joined Heberley in 1936 to work on Te Hau ki Turanga, which had become the model for the revitalisation of meeting houses in the twentieth century.¹⁶² (fig 81) So while in one

¹⁵⁷I have here paraphrased James Clifford’s description of the use of the exotic object to “a common past confirming Europe’s triumphant present”. See James Clifford, “On Collecting Art and Culture,” in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1988), 228.

¹⁵⁸ ‘New Zealand’s Treasure House: National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum official opening today’, *Dominion*, 1 August 1936, 17.

¹⁵⁹ See the published photographs of the pataka and fishing traps in *Dominion*, 13 June 1936, 9. “Te Haukituranga” [sic] Famous Maori house for new museum not ready till next year’, *Dominion*, 5 May 1936, 8.

¹⁶⁰ ‘Nearly ready for the opening: National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum’, *Dominion*, 24 July 1936, 10.

¹⁶¹ See McCarthy, *Exhibiting Maori: A History of Colonial Cultures of Display*, 73-75.

¹⁶² On the revitalisation of ‘traditional’ Maori arts and crafts in the twentieth century, see Deidre Brown, “Architecture of the School of Maori Arts and Crafts,” *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 108, no. 3 (1999). and Damian Skinner, *The Carver and the Artist: Maori Art in the Twentieth Century* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2008). As both Brown and Skinner point out, however, these activities did have a potentially negative effect of perpetuating Maori art as something static, rather

sense Maori art was resigned to the past, activities associated with such restoration or rebuilding projects established Maori art as a living tradition. The hope that this would be ongoing was expressed by the Prime Minister, Sir Joseph Savage, in his speech at the opening of the Museum on 1 August 1936. He mused:

I wonder sometimes why there is not more Maori arts and crafts in the surroundings of the citizens of New Zealand, for they are wonderful. During a comparatively short time Maori art has reached a very high pinnacle and can go still higher, and I am not going to lose any opportunity to help our brethren in their arts and crafts...¹⁶³

The potential of Maori artefacts as ‘Art’ did not go unnoticed, either. In 1929 *Art in New Zealand* had published a feature issue on Maori art, the same year that Christopher Perkins borrowed a selection of Maori artefacts from the Dominion Museum to use in teaching at the Wellington Technical College.¹⁶⁴ This was consistent with international trends. Although modern artists’ encounters with ethnographic artefacts are historically tracked to Paul Gauguin’s visits to the Trocadero in 1889 or Pablo Picasso’s visits to the Musée d’Ethnographie in the early twentieth century,¹⁶⁵ it was not until 1935 that the first exhibition of ‘ethnic’ art in a modern art institution was mounted: *African Negro Art*, curated by James Johnson Sweeney at New York’s Museum of Modern Art.¹⁶⁶ Thus it was not surprising that Roland Hipkins began his *Art in New Zealand* review of the opening *upstairs* exhibitions in the National Art Gallery by drawing attention to displays *downstairs* in the Maori Hall, writing that the Maori arts:

...are justly given pride of place in the Dominion Museum, and are so excellently displayed that we can appreciate anew the greatness of the Maori as an artist. His instinctive sense of beauty and consummate skill of execution, in creative ornamental carving and in the various forms of domestic arts, are an inspiration for all time.¹⁶⁷

than an innovative art that could adapt and respond to the new circumstances of twentieth-century Maori.

¹⁶³ ‘Art Gallery and Museum: official opening ceremony performed by Governor-General’, *Evening Post*, 1 August 1936, 10.

¹⁶⁴ Memo dated 31 October 1929, TPA: MU1, folder 4, item 13. The use of Maori artefacts in teaching or developing artistic practice had been initiated in the 1880s, see Roger Blackley, “The Exhibitions of Maori Art in Auckland, 1884-1885: Documents of the New Zealand Art Students Association,” *Antic* 3 (1987): 116-22. This practice tended to consist of the absorption of Maori motifs into Pakeha art. While evidence of the interpretation of Maori art through a modernist lens is evident in Perkins’ *Maori Meeting*, 1932-34 (Auckland Art Gallery), more extensive experimentation with the formal elements of Maori art did not begin until the 1940s in the work of artists such as Theo Schoon and Gordon Walters.

¹⁶⁵ Resulting in the iconic *Les Femmes d’Alger*, 1907 (New York: Museum of Modern Art).

¹⁶⁶ Christa Clarke, “From Theory to Practice: Exhibiting African Art in the Twenty-First Century,” in *Art and Its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millennium*, ed. Andrew McClellan (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), 167.

¹⁶⁷ Hipkins, “The National Art Gallery Exhibitions,” *Art in New Zealand* IX, no. 1 (1936): 11.

But while aesthetic valorisation of indigenous art was being carried out on one level, there was, as Conal McCarthy notes, an implicit division between what might be discussed as ‘Maori Art’ in the downstairs displays of the Dominion Museum, and the ‘Fine Art’ displayed upstairs, which he describes as a space marked off as an ‘exclusively Pakeha domain’.¹⁶⁸ Maori could enter the upstairs domain as subject, for example in the paintings of Maori by Harry Linley Richardson and Charles Frederick Goldie, but not as artist. So while Maori artefacts might be appreciated as art on one level, as Donald Preziosi suggests, the Enlightenment project of commensurability ensured that they would be plotted in their proper position on an evolutionary ladder of artistic developments that ranged from the ‘primitive’ fetish to the ‘aesthetic’ displays of the National Art Gallery.¹⁶⁹ The physicality of the upstairs/downstairs arrangement in Wellington only served to heighten the implied hierarchical separation of the two institutions as one ascended to a higher level both physically and spiritually to reach the Fine Arts displays.

Despite events such as MoMA’s 1935 exhibition of African art, in the 1930s debate surrounded the appropriateness of appreciating the ethnographic object as art, particularly in Paris where the transformation of the Musée d’Ethnographie into the Musée de l’Homme was taking place under Paul Rivet and his assistant Georges-Henri Rivière.¹⁷⁰ Rivet and Rivière ultimately proposed an ethnographic model that attempted to incorporate the aesthetic into the ethnologic, resulting in an appreciation of the object as ‘plastic form, but also the society that produced it as social form’.¹⁷¹ This allowed for the integration of an aesthetic appreciation alongside the contextualisation of the object according to its cultural origins and was arguably a

¹⁶⁸ McCarthy, *Exhibiting Maori: A History of Colonial Cultures of Display*, 93.

¹⁶⁹ Donald Preziosi, “The Art of Art History,” in *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Donald Preziosi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 513.

¹⁷⁰ For a consideration of the debate over scientific versus aesthetic appreciation of ethnographic artefacts, see James Herbert, D., *Paris 1937: Worlds on Exhibition* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 71-79. See Sally Price, *Paris Primitive: Jacques Chirac’s Museum on the Quai Branly* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007), especially pages 81-97 on the debate over the presentation of artefacts in the Musée de l’Homme. A similar debate was aroused in the transition of the Musée de l’Homme to the Musée du Quai Branly in 2006, when it was feared by the scientific community that a purely aesthetic approach would be taken to exhibits. For brief, critical evaluations of the changes implied by this recent move see Lisa Bernasek, “‘The End of a Glorious Era’: From the Museum of Man to the Quai Branly Museum,” http://cmes.hmdc.harvard.edu/cmcs/field/end_of_a_glorious_era and Michael Kimmelman, “Art: A Heart of Darkness in a City of Light,” *New York Times*, 2 July 2006. For a more comprehensive consideration of the evolution of the Musée du Quai Branly, as well as an assessment of the display strategies, see Price, *Paris Primitive*.

¹⁷¹ Herbert, *Paris 1937: Worlds on Exhibition*, 74.

model that W. R. B. Oliver, who succeeded Thomson as Director of the Dominion Museum in 1928, was concerned to follow. Oliver was firmly committed to the educational potential of the new Museum and was determined not just to present a succession of accurately labelled objects, but to connect them with information as well as pictures in order that the displays might be more effectively ‘instructive as well as interesting’.¹⁷² Oliver employed more up-to-date, ‘modern’ museum display techniques which were commented on in publicity prior to the opening. In June 1936 it was noted that Maori artefacts, such as fishing traps, had labels of the ‘latest in Museum technique’ attached and that ‘wherever possible specimens are to be accompanied by pictures showing the use of the particular article’.¹⁷³

The role of the Museum as a story-telling machine was thus made explicit under Oliver and it is telling that Inch concluded his 1935 article by paraphrasing Oliver in his hope that ‘there will be more use made of the Museum and its stores of real evidence of the racy stories of New Zealand colonisation and early history than ever before when the new building is occupied’.¹⁷⁴ To this end, historical pictures had a role to play in the arrangements of the Museum, but here too the relationship between the artistic and the informative was problematic. New freestanding display cases had made wall space available for the exhibition of pictures, whose function as illustrative features that complemented the objects on display was clearly understood by reporters, who commented:

One of the features of the eastern wing is a series of reproductions of paintings and sketches of men and incidents in the early history of the colony and early views of practically every city and town in New Zealand presented by the Wellington Harbour Board. Historic Maori pas and redoubts and not a few heavily-tattooed chiefs prominent in those days hang in illustration on the walls.¹⁷⁵

It was estimated that some 400-500 pictures were on display, some 80 of which were presented by the Wellington Harbour Board, who supported the Museum employee

¹⁷² ‘The new Dominion Museum: Modern institution, ample room for display, Maori arts as main feature’, *Evening Post*, 31 July 1936, 6.

¹⁷³ ‘Work at Dominion Museum. Preparing for opening: exhibits in Maori Hall and Gallery’, *Dominion*, 12 June 1936, 10.

¹⁷⁴ L. B. Inch, ‘Some forgotten treasures and unrecorded history’, *Dominion*, 7 December 1935, 15.

¹⁷⁵ ‘New Zealand’s Treasure House: National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum official opening today’, *Dominion*, 1 August 1936, 17.

J. M. Johnston, in making a series of copies of paintings.¹⁷⁶ Many of these came from the collections of the Turnbull Library, where Johnston reportedly had the ‘full cooperation and assistance of the librarian, Mr Johannes Andersen’.¹⁷⁷ The collection consisted of both copies and photographic reproductions, and included the following: a gallery of figures from New Zealand’s history; Augustus Earle’s *Meeting of the artist and Hongi at the Bay of Islands, November 1827*, c.1835 (ATL); pioneering ships, scenes from the New Zealand Wars; and pictures of early buildings from practically every city and town in New Zealand.

Whereas Thomson and McDonald were affronted by the possibility that they had acquired ‘copies’ for their historical collections, Oliver was happy to use copies, or reproductions, for the primarily illustrative purpose these pictures were to serve. It should be noted, though, that Oliver did share with Thomson and McDonald a desire to be honest about the nature and origins of works of art. He was disparaging of art galleries that misled the public in this respect, writing ‘cheap prints and reproductions have their virtues, but to label them as if they were the genuine old masters is, to say the least, hard on the dead’.¹⁷⁸ It is probably at this time that the works by W. S. Hatton, with their clearly labelled mounts, took their place on the Museum walls along with other pictures from the Dominion Museum collection, making it imperative that Oliver distinguish between such copies or reproductions and original works in the Museum displays.

This collection of pictures was cursorily passed over in reviews published in the *Dominion*, but the *Evening Post* granted an article to this collection with descriptive evaluations of works identified as of key historical interest. Little mention was made of the artistic quality of any of the copied works – it was clearly understood that their function was to depict ‘scenes famous in the history of New Zealand’ and to portray ‘men, Maori and pakeha, who played a prominent part in the development of the country’.¹⁷⁹ Curiously, no connection was made between these historical figures and those present in the National Portrait Collection upstairs hanging on the walls of the National Art Gallery. Neither was there any link made between these early colonial pictures, copies or otherwise, and the Loan Collection of Retrospective Art in

¹⁷⁶ This was considered a ‘unique’ feature of the Museum. ‘The new Dominion Museum: modern institution, ample room for display. Maori arts as main feature’, *Evening Post*, 31 July 1936, 6.

¹⁷⁷ ‘Old New Zealand in Pictures: Dominion Museum Collection. Gift of Wellington Harbour Board’, *Dominion*, 28 July 1936, 8.

¹⁷⁸ Markham and Oliver, *A Report on the Museums and Art Galleries of New Zealand*, 88.

¹⁷⁹ ‘Early New Zealand: valuable sketches, Museum collection’, *Evening Post*, 6 August 1936, 11.

New Zealand held in Galleries ‘P’, ‘Q’ and ‘S’.¹⁸⁰ Although the new Dominion Museum and National Art Gallery were opened in unison, suggesting some kind of communion or relationship existed between them, clearly they functioned, and were perceived to function, as entirely independent institutions. So while art was understood as conveyor of information in the Museum, upstairs it occupied a purely aesthetic realm. Thus it was not only Maori art, but colonial art too that was excluded from the National Art Gallery. This reinforced the fact that colonial art was not to be received on the same terms as fine art, for in the National Art Gallery the beginning point for New Zealand art was taken as the work of watercolourists such as John Gully and J. C. Richmond.

That many of the pictures that featured on the Museum walls were copied from works held in the Turnbull is worth noting, and it may have been the rise in interest in historical pictures that stimulated the periodic exhibitions held in the Library from 1936 on. Clyde Taylor’s concerns regarding the collecting activities of the Library in relation to the Museum and Gallery have been discussed in chapter 2. Here, it is timely to consider his policies regarding the accessibility of the library and its collections. Firstly, he began opening the Library door, both ‘literally and figuratively’, extending the opening hours and publicising the notion that the library was the only public state library in New Zealand.¹⁸¹ Rachel Barrowman suggests that these changes were not just the result of Taylor’s personal vision, but reflected the ideals of the democratic culture he had encountered in America on his Carnegie library tour.¹⁸² No doubt it was also a response to the opening of the Museum and Gallery, the first state cultural institutions to have been supported by the New Zealand government. The holding of temporary exhibitions from 1936 replaced Andersen’s personal tours of the Library and also enabled increased and easier public access to collection items.¹⁸³ By 1938, the Library had held exhibitions on themes such as ‘Old New Zealand’, ‘First Explorations in New Zealand’, ‘Early New Zealand Pictures’ and ‘The Maori in Early Art’. They found that this ‘method of using rarities is

¹⁸⁰ This exhibition will be considered in the last part of this chapter, alongside the major survey of New Zealand art carried out under A. H. McLintock for the Centennial celebrations of 1940.

¹⁸¹ Barrowman, *The Turnbull*, 62-3.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁸³ Andersen had proposed such a scheme in 1926, but there is no evidence any short term exhibitions were held until the 1930s. He wrote of his desire to hold exhibitions ‘from time to time, of pictures representative of certain artists, or of certain kinds of work, or of historical subjects’. Andersen to Hislop, 4 June 1926, TPA: MU2, folder 11, item 4, part two.

apparently effective' and also secured the 'ready co-operation of the press'.¹⁸⁴ These articles, submitted by the Library, actively publicised the Library's collections as well as its intentions towards the public. In December 1937, a report drew attention to these exhibitions, stating:

The Turnbull Library, Wellington, has many historic documentary pictures, and the present policy is to show as many as possible to the public, by means of monthly exhibitions in addition to the exhibitions of rare books.¹⁸⁵

In their coverage, newspaper reports also emphasised the unique nature of the Turnbull's collections. One concluded:

Many of the items in this exhibition can be seen no-where else. They provide a picture of an era which has now passed away; and the original material gives an insight into the lives of many names famous in New Zealand history.¹⁸⁶

So while *copies* of works might be viewed in the Museum, the Library was unique in that there one might view the originals. The framework of interpretation for those works, did, however, remain one of historical appreciation, whereby the pictures were understood in terms of the information they conveyed, not their aesthetic quality. Consequently, just as the Museum saw its primary role as one of educating and informing the public, the Library, while admitting the 'attractive' nature of the exhibitions, found they were especially appealing to 'educational groups'.¹⁸⁷ That is not to say that they did not have collection items or showcase works that did have aesthetic potential. In 1939, for example, an exhibition of Charles Decimus Barraud's sketches was held at the Turnbull Library; long before solo shows of colonial artists were held in any major art gallery.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Clyde Taylor, "Turnbull Library Annual Report," *AJHR* H-22 (1938): 23.

¹⁸⁵ 'Early settlement of New Zealand: history in pictures. Exhibition at Alexander Turnbull Library', *Dominion*, 22 December 1937, 13.

¹⁸⁶ 'Old New Zealand. Turnbull Library Exhibition. Rare pictures, logs and manuscripts', July 1937, ANZ: series 93, no 14.

¹⁸⁷ Taylor, "Turnbull Library Annual Report," (1938): 23.

¹⁸⁸ Clyde Taylor, "Turnbull Library Annual Report," *AJHR* H-22 (1939): 25. There is no evidence of exhibitions of historical or colonial New Zealand art held in New Zealand's art galleries prior to the tour of the Centennial Exhibition of 1940-41.

The Library, then, was the first of the three institutions to embrace the notion of the periodic exhibition at this time, an activity it was suggested would help to ‘popularise’ museums and galleries. But while the public could readily relate to views and scenes that illustrate people, historic places or events, aesthetic appreciation was intended as an activity independent of the need to convey information and/or history. Works of art were to be timeless and universal in terms of the values they conveyed, not limited by the description of a specific time or place. It was ultimately for this reason that art which was conceived as ‘documentary’ was excluded from the realm of ‘high’ art. However, in order that the public might feel comfortable in a gallery context, the 1934 *Report on the Museums and Art Galleries of New Zealand* suggested that ‘much more might be done by art galleries to educate the public in art appreciation’.¹⁸⁹ Roland Hipkins also advocated the importance of artistic education in his review of the 1936 opening exhibitions, writing ‘The Dominion-wide interest aroused by the establishment of a National Art Gallery demands a national policy for the education of the whole people for art appreciation...’¹⁹⁰

The opening Gallery exhibitions were wide-ranging in their scope and presented several exhibitions exclusively brought together for the occasion. Along with the National Portrait Gallery, the rest of the National Permanent Collection and the ‘Loan Collection of Retrospective Art in New Zealand’, there was the ‘British Empire Loan Collection’, the ‘Murray-Fuller Collection of Contemporary British Art’, an exhibition of ‘New Zealand Architecture’, and the ‘Annual Exhibition of the Academy of Fine Arts’.¹⁹¹ The new Gallery and its exhibitions were highly praised,

¹⁸⁹ Markham and Oliver, *A Report on the Museums and Art Galleries of New Zealand*, 103.

¹⁹⁰ Hipkins, “The National Art Gallery Exhibitions,” 18.

¹⁹¹ See *National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum: Souvenir Catalogue of Pictures and Works of Art for Opening Exhibition, August, 1936*. Two dedicated reviews of the Gallery exhibitions were published in the *Evening Post*: ‘British art: its history told, loan collection, famous originals’, 4 August 1936, 9 and “‘Retrospect’”, art in NZ, display in Art Gallery, pioneers’ influence’, 7 August 1936, 11. The *Dominion* published a series of four articles by A.R.T as follows: ‘National Art Gallery: No. 1, Three centuries of British painting in the Empire Loan Collection’, 1 August 1936, 8; ‘National Art Gallery No. 2: Murray Fuller Collection a lavish display of present day British Art’, 4 August 1936, 8; ‘National Art Gallery No. 3: NZ artists – their contributions of today and yesterday. Loan and Academy Exhibitions’, 8 August 1936, 10; and ‘National Art Gallery No. 4: Here and there among New Zealand’s present-day painters: notable landscapes exhibited’, 11 August 1936, 8.

but it was feared that the public might not know how to deal with its modernity.¹⁹²

(fig 82) The *Dominion* commented:

Many who may never have been out of New Zealand were rather dumbfounded to see for the first time a modern art gallery. There is something finely austere and dignified about those great burlap-lined galleries which melt one into the other round the mighty area of the new structure; nor were the majority less impressed by the rare display of artistic treasures which made those neutral-tinted walls come to life.¹⁹³

Though 'excellent' attendances were recorded, and some 900 catalogues sold within the first few days of opening, that both the *Dominion* and *Evening Post* published articles concerning the nature of art appreciation suggests there was a need for public reassurance or education in the manner of looking at pictures. On 4 August, the *Dominion* published 'Art and the artist. A visit to the National Gallery: differing opinions' and on 12 August, the *Evening Post* contributed 'The artist's vision must be adopted: how to look at pictures. "Doing" the gallery'.¹⁹⁴ An article by 'S. G.' in the *Dominion* pitted the opinions of 'Topsy', a lady attending the gallery in the hope that she might be seen, as much as see, against those of an artist, who might not have been recognised as such had he not 'been wearing spats', for 'his appearance was otherwise normal'. From the outset, the stereotypes of the society lady and the bohemian artist were firmly set in place and their artistic opinions were equally prescribed. While Topsy exclaimed:

"You arty people always seem more concerned with how the paint is laid on, and how the space is divided up, than with the subject or the aspect of the picture as a whole, which is the thing the ordinary person is concerned with."

The artist countered:

"The ignorance of the ordinary person is abysmal...It is only by perfect technique that the craftsman can do justice to his subject"

The problem exaggerated by these characters concerned a difference in the way 'representation' is valued by the two viewers. For Topsy, artistic quality was measured by a painting's 'readability', that is, how successfully it represented its

¹⁹² A. S. Paterson's comic strip commented on the ability of the public to 'stand up to art'. *Dominion*, 8 August 1936, 13. See (fig 82)

¹⁹³ 'A great occasion. Opening of the National Art Gallery and Museum. Milestone in cultural history', *Dominion*, 3 August 1936, 8.

¹⁹⁴ S. G., 'Art and the artist. A visit to the National Gallery: differing opinions', *Dominion*, 4 August 1936, 11. 'The artist's vision must be adopted: how to look at pictures. "Doing" the gallery', *Evening Post*, 12 August 1936, 4.

chosen subject, whereas for the artist, value lay in the act of representation itself. The artist's opinion demonstrates what Pierre Bourdieu describes as a 'properly aesthetic mode of perception', one which was dependent on the autonomy of art and the privileging of the artist's personality and their vision.¹⁹⁵ Topsy, in the end defended her opinion by telling the artist, '...it's a question of whether one likes or dislikes a picture. All your talk can't alter that', articulating a flippant perspective that the *Evening Post* set out to counter by arguing that the viewer must become educated in the 'art of looking at paintings'.¹⁹⁶ This article suggested that if one spent time learning *how* to look, then:

Instead of seeing merely land, houses, and trees, one receives something of the effect of cloud shadows upon the land, the play of light upon the houses, and the colour and movement in the trees. That is what the artist sees and paints. Therefore to go to an art exhibition with a closed mind and restricted vision is to miss the beauties of Nature which the specialised vision of the artist offers for our pleasure.

The problem implied by this advice is that at some point there is a need for the public to have the opportunity to acquire, through education, an open mind in order that they might properly appreciate the art on display. But when one considers that the Gallery had no official Director, was staffed by two positions and had a yearly budget of £381.15, compared with the Museum budget of £2617 and staff of ten, it is clear that the resources required to run an educational programme were not readily at hand. However, the public's lack of informed artistic appreciation did not stop them from entering the Gallery in these early days, for the rooms were reportedly peopled 'not only by artists, but politicians, flappers, untidy garrulous newspaper men, solemn Maoris, respectable city men and urban housewives and rowdy children' who 'marched, loitered, flirted, bustled or romped through the galleries, according to their several dispositions'.¹⁹⁷

Still, the place of colonial New Zealand art within this new 'national' context and the extent to which this was posited as any kind of narrative that might inform the populace of their cultural heritage requires further investigation. The last part of this

¹⁹⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, "Manet and the Institutionalization of Anomie," in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 239.

¹⁹⁶ Such a perspective reinforces Bourdieu's theory that appreciation of art is a cultivated activity and one that becomes representative of a cultured habitus. See, for example, Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Sociology of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984).

¹⁹⁷ S. G., 'Art and the artist. A visit to the National Gallery: differing opinions', *Dominion*, 4 August 1936, 11.

chapter will evaluate the presentation of the retrospective survey of New Zealand art brought together for the opening celebrations, alongside two events which similarly attempted an overview of New Zealand art within the context of a national framework: the exhibition of New Zealand art and the publication of *Letters and Art in New Zealand* which took place in association with the Centennial celebrations of 1940.

The centennial exhibition/ retrospective as genre

*One of the things one comes to appreciate in studying museum history, for example, is how what we imagine to be the characteristic signature or style of the artefacts of a time, place or people is the product as much of an excavation of evidence for consistency as the culling or erasure or destruction (the “de-collection”) of objects deemed as confusingly disparate...the result is a certain homogeneity or purity of a patrimony or legacy, which can be “demonstrated” as developing progressively over time along a particular stylistic trajectory.*¹⁹⁸

The paramount genre for establishing a trajectory such as Donald Preziosi articulates here must surely be that of the retrospective exhibition. Whether surveying an individual artist's oeuvre, or a nation's art, the retrospective is a genre that allows for the evaluation and assessment of 'progress' in art. By the 1930s the genre of the national retrospective exhibition was firmly established and both on the opening of the National Art Gallery and in association with the centennial celebrations of the founding of the colony of New Zealand in 1940, retrospective exhibitions of New Zealand art were mounted as an adjunct to the greater celebrations. While the convention of holding major international exhibitions to commemorate notable events in a country's history was established with the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, which marked the centennial anniversary of the Declaration of Independence,¹⁹⁹ the connection of a comprehensive survey of a nation's art to such an occasion was inaugurated by the artistic capital, Paris, with their Exposition Universelle of 1889,

¹⁹⁸ Donald Preziosi, "Narrativity and the Museological Myths of Nationality," *Museum History Journal* 2, no. 1 (2009): 48.

¹⁹⁹ This Exposition was intended to both celebrate one hundred years of American industrial and cultural progress while asserting America's status as new world power. See, for example Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling, and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America: World's Fairs in the United States* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 19. Many similarly commemorative exhibitions quickly followed, such as the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition of 1888-89. Here, there was no attempt to present an overview of Victoria's art to date or assert its place on the international stage; rather, there was a degree of competitiveness *between* the colonies. See chapter 3.

held on the centenary of the French Revolution. On this occasion two distinct art exhibitions were mounted: a retrospective exhibition, l'Exposition centennale de l'art français (French art of the previous century) and a contemporary exhibition, the Décennale (Art of the preceding decade).²⁰⁰

There was, however, a paradox embodied by the association of retrospective exhibitions with major international exhibitions. For the international exhibition celebrated modernity and progress and was located in the present moment, an investment that potentially ran counter to the sweep of a retrospective art exhibition. This issue was addressed in different ways. At the 1933 Century of Progress Exhibition, held to commemorate the founding of Chicago, the Fine Arts exhibition was not solely concerned to demonstrate the cultural produce of America; instead it demonstrated the cultural and economic capital of many American citizens by emphasising their role as collectors, thereby asserting America's place on the economic and cultural world stage.²⁰¹ Further, rather than provide an historical overview of art in America, a conscious decision was made to prioritise the aesthetic value of works of art, rather than include works of historical interest, resulting in a selection that could parallel, even rival, that of the French component.²⁰² Four years later, in 1937, in association with the Exposition Universelle des Arts et Techniques, Paris mounted a retrospective art exhibition that surveyed two millennia of French Art. Here, the temporal disparity between the eternality of art and the modernity of the fair was turned to art's advantage; for it was established that through art French 'cultural constancy' could be celebrated.²⁰³

Art, then, could be put to work in different ways, but ultimately in these contexts retrospective exhibitions became essential to the process of connecting art to both newly emerging and established nation states. Through the retrospective, a nation's art was put on display, allowing its progress and development to be observed, while also enabling the work of individual artists to be brought to attention. In anticipation of a Retrospective Exhibition in Berlin in 1906, 'H. W. S' hoped the exhibition would 'bring to general notice a number of artists who have been unduly

²⁰⁰ Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 204-5.

²⁰¹ "The Century of Progress Exhibition of the Fine Arts," *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago* 27, no. 4 (1933): 60, Rydell, Findling, and Pelle, *Fair America: World's Fairs in the United States*, 77.

²⁰² "The Century of Progress Exhibition of the Fine Arts," 60, Rydell, Findling, and Pelle, *Fair America: World's Fairs in the United States*, 77.

²⁰³ Herbert, *Paris 1937: Worlds on Exhibition*, 87-90.

neglected' and that it would 'enable us in many cases to pass the final judgement upon an artist, and to assign him his exact position with reference to his contemporaries'.²⁰⁴ The retrospective, then, was a means through which an individual artist's work could be assessed not only in relation to his peers but also to the nation's art history, which could possibly, as 'H. W. S' concluded, 'entail the necessity of re-writing the history of modern German art'.²⁰⁵

Consequently, the presentation of objects within an exhibitionary context was necessary to the process of constructing a teleological narrative for the modern nation-state. The expected role that objects would play in constructing New Zealand's history was articulated by Wellington Mayor, T. C. A. Hislop, in his 1936 opening speech, when he stated:

...the artistic and technical merit should not be the sole test. Of equal importance is the national value of a work, its influence upon the community, and its place and effect in the history and development of our country in the past, and its influence in the years to come...²⁰⁶

These sentiments echoed those of Lord Bledisloe who, on laying the foundation stone two years earlier, had stated that 'a nation was only as great as its art, and that its art was interwoven with the fabric of its history'.²⁰⁷ Objects in New Zealand's new national institutions were to be embedded in a story or narrative that would provide an evolutionary history of the nation. It was essential that such a narrative be constructed so that the political and cultural identities of New Zealand might be brought together and imag(in)ed as one collective national identity. As Preziosi indicates, this process is by no means a passive one:

Museums do not simply or passively reveal or 'refer' to the past; rather they perform the basic historical gesture of *separating out of the present* a certain specific 'past' so as to collect and recompose (to *re-member*) its displaced and dismembered relics as elements in a *genealogy* of and for the present.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ H. W. S., "A Retrospective Exhibition in Berlin, 1906," *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 8, no. 31 (1905): 60.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. Although H.W.S's subsequent review of this exhibition did not mention him, this event is credited with bringing Caspar David Friedrich and the German Romantics into the canon of German art (see H. W. S., "The Centenary Exhibition of German Art at Berlin," *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 9, no. 37 (1906). See, for example Charlotte Klonk, "Patterns of Attention: From Shop Windows to Gallery Rooms in Early Twentieth-Century Berlin," *Art History* 28, no. 4 (2005): 482.

²⁰⁶ 'Art Gallery and Museum: official opening ceremony performed by Governor-General', *Evening Post*, 1 August 1936, 10.

²⁰⁷ 'Art Galleries – great public trust: appealing to public. Lord Bledisloe's speech', *Evening Post*

²⁰⁸ Preziosi, "The Art of Art History," 511.

But there were two ways that objects could function in relation to the past. As Preziosi states, the ‘significance of any object can be made to appear a uniquely powerful *witness* to part of present events, and to the character, mentality, or *spirit* of a person, people, place, or time’.²⁰⁹ Thus an object can act as a ‘witness’, providing evidence of an absent past, or it could function in a more spiritual manner, such as in the 1937 Paris exhibition, to demonstrate something of the essence of a nation and its people. Preziosi suggests that museums ‘manufacture a twofold belief’ in these distinct, but complementary roles; that if an object is found to signify in terms of a national narrative, then it can be seen as representative of a common style or mentality, and that this in turn speaks of their being the ‘product and effect of that spirit or mentality’. So in a sense, the informative and the aesthetic are potentially not as didactically opposed as has been suggested. The trap to be avoided in this discussion, however, is the assumption that a ‘national narrative’ already existed that simply awaited discovery. Rather, as Preziosi is careful to emphasise, the exhibition and the museum are actively involved in the fabrication of such a narrative.

In the case of the 1936 opening and 1940 centennial celebrations, it was generally agreed that a high point had not yet been reached in contemporary New Zealand art. The Annual Report of the Museum and Gallery concluded of the 1936 exhibition that the ‘result was a collection of pictures and sculpture which demonstrated that, although we cannot yet claim to have developed a New Zealand School of Painting, the Dominion has produced some artists of outstanding ability’.²¹⁰ This summation was echoed in A. H. McLintock’s ‘Introduction’ to the *National Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art*, where he wrote ‘Although it is quite apparent that at the present time New Zealand is far from possessing an art truly national, the future is not without promise’.²¹¹ E. H. McCormick, in *Letters and Art in New Zealand*, also concluded that a ‘national voice’ in literature and art was slowly emerging, but more so in literature, which was exhibiting ‘signs, few but positive, of adult nationhood’.²¹² The question is: exactly what kind of historical narrative was

²⁰⁹ Preziosi, “Narrativity and the Museological Myths of Nationality,” 38. On the lack of neutrality or transparency in art museums, see also Carol Duncan, “Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship,” in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).

²¹⁰ “National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum: Report of the Board of Trustees for the Year Ended 31 March 1937,” *AJHR* H-21 (1937): 3.

²¹¹ McLintock, *National Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art*, 16.

²¹² E. H. McCormick, *Letters and Art in New Zealand* (Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1940), 170.

developed to provide a foundation for the future of New Zealand art? What artist figures were identified as those that might be emulated or serve as a historical point of reference for contemporary artists? What objects were brought together in initial attempts to fabricate a history of art in New Zealand through exhibitions and publications supported by the state? To deal with these questions, it is necessary to consider the organisation and ideological approaches that informed the opening exhibition of the Gallery in 1936, the centennial exhibition of 1940 and the publication of *Letters and Art in New Zealand*.

Putting the ‘nation’ into the National Art Gallery

In November 1935 news reached the Academy that Mrs Murray Fuller was in London making arrangements for two of the five opening exhibitions – the British Empire Loan Collection of Retrospective British Art and the Murray Fuller Collection of Contemporary British Art.²¹³ While the retrospective exhibition was to consist of loaned works, the Murray Fuller exhibition included works for sale, a fact that alarmed Academy members, not so much from an ethical point of view regarding selling art in the Gallery, but because if British works were for sale it might ‘spoil the sale of New Zealand works’.²¹⁴ It was not until this news that the Academy realised they needed to make some definite plans for New Zealand Art at the opening exhibitions for the ‘opening of the gallery was a most opportune time to show how far New Zealand art had advanced and it would be a pity if New Zealand artists did not have the first exhibition in the New Zealand National Art Gallery’. By February 1936 it was decided that the New Zealand exhibits should consist of two parts: a retrospective historical collection and a collection of works for sale by living artists.²¹⁵ However, it was soon realised that no financial allowance had been made

²¹³ While the Murray Fullers began their career with a gallery devoted to New Zealand artists in 1920, they made their mark on the Wellington art scene by bringing out several collections of contemporary British art, notably in 1928, 1930 and 1932. On Edwin Murray Fuller’s death in 1933 Mary Murray Fuller continued to mount these exhibitions. On the Murray Fullers and their entrepreneurial activities see Ann Calhoun, “Two Wellington Entrepreneurs of the ‘Thirties, the Murray Fullers: Edwin Murray Fuller,” *Art New Zealand* 23, Autumn (1982) and Calhoun, “Two Wellington Entrepreneurs of the ‘Thirties, the Murray Fullers: Mary Murray Fuller,” *Art New Zealand* 24, Winter (1982).

²¹⁴ Minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 6 December 1935, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-2. One suggestion put forward to resolve this situation was that Murray Fuller should not be allowed to bring out British works for under £100, thus creating a financial separation between the British and New Zealand works for sale. Minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 12 December 1935, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-2.

²¹⁵ Minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 27 February 1936, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-2.

for the costs involved with either moving works from the Whitmore St Gallery to the new premises or for organising the opening exhibitions. Consequently, the National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum Board of Trustees 'resolved that the sum of £50 to be made available to the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts for the purpose of arranging a retrospective exhibition of New Zealand art at the opening of the new gallery'.²¹⁶

Nelson Isaacs, Nugent Welch and A. D. Carbery were appointed as a sub-committee to organise the retrospective exhibition. While a list of artists who should be represented was apparently drawn up, there was no clear agenda for this exhibition, other than that it should be 'representative of New Zealand art from the foundation of the Dominion to the present day'.²¹⁷ In order to achieve this, the resources of other centres needed to be drawn upon and Isaacs, Carbery and Welch made contact with galleries and private collectors who might be able to lend works for the exhibition.²¹⁸ Artists too were approached and asked to offer works for exhibition. Harry Linley Richardson wrote to D. A. Ewen, the Academy President, in response to this request:

The secretary of the New Zealand Academy has written to me about my being represented in the loan exhibition of New Zealand Art at the new National Art Gallery. The oil painting of the Old Maori Chieftainess – Tauhuri, of the Waikato tribe in your possession is representative of one phase of my artistic activities. If you would be so kind, and could spare the painting, I should like this to be exhibited in the Retrospective section.²¹⁹

So although it was retrospective in scope, the exhibition included the work of living artists, such as Richardson, many of whom were also represented in the concurrent Academy exhibition of contemporary New Zealand art. A further point of cross-over existed in the display of the National Permanent Collection which included works by New Zealand artists that could equally have been part of the retrospective survey.²²⁰

²¹⁶ Minutes of meeting of NAG and DM Board of Trustees, 27 March 1936, TPA: MU88, folder 4, 1936.

²¹⁷ 'Loan of pictures: New Zealand works for Dominion Gallery', *Dominion*, 20 April 1936, 11

²¹⁸ Minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 14 February 1936, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-2.

²¹⁹ H. Linley Richardson to D. A. Ewen, Academy President, 9 June 1936, TPA: MU88, folder 4, 1936. This painting was reproduced as part of a full page collage of pictures in the National Art Gallery. See *Dominion*, 1 August 1936, 7.

²²⁰ Included, for example, were works by Margaret Stoddart, Petrus Van der Velden, Sydney Lough Thomson and D. K. Richmond, who were also key artists featured in the retrospective collection. See *National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum: Souvenir Catalogue of Pictures and Works of Art for Opening Exhibition, August, 1936*, 64-5.

The retrospective exhibition finally consisted of 164 works that were arranged in three rooms, Galleries “P”, “Q” and “S”.²²¹ It was well-received by critics, who recognised it represented the first attempt to present a comprehensive collection of historical New Zealand art in a gallery space. The *Evening Post* noted that the ‘national character of the new gallery is emphasised by the pictures on loan from other centres in the Dominion, which collectively make a most important exhibition of art in New Zealand from 1839 to 1936’.²²² A later article reinforced the importance of art to identifying a developing sense of nation, stating that a ‘study of the progress of art is, perhaps, a surer indication of the evolution of a distinctly national genius than any other easily accessible evidence’.²²³ The belief, then, in the existence of a national spirit that might find its expression in the arts, underlay the presentation and interpretation of the art on display in the National Art Gallery.

The *Evening Post* concluded their overview of the retrospective exhibition by writing ‘there is a great deal revealed about the history of art in New Zealand by this section of the exhibition which will make strong appeal to all visitors to the galleries’.²²⁴ But how was this history articulated? Were the exhibits arranged in a manner that facilitated a chronological understanding of art in New Zealand, or in order that aesthetic appreciation might be fostered? The catalogue suggests there was a vague chronological organisation, with Gallery “S” being dedicated to the ‘watercolour pioneers’,²²⁵ or the ‘old-timers’ as A.R.T. referred to them in the *Dominion*:²²⁶ the ‘late’ C. D. Barraud, Charles Blomfield, William Mathew Hodgkins, J. C. Richmond and John Gully. Gallery “Q” by contrast seems to have held works by living artists, as well as those who might be classified as belonging to the ‘impressionist’ school, including James Nairn, D. K. Richmond, M. O. Stoddart and Alfred Walsh.²²⁷ Gallery “P” included a number of Maori portraits, such as those by

²²¹ See the catalogue for lists of works hung in each room. Ibid.

²²² ‘The National Art Gallery. Important collections. Works of renowned artists: first display in Empire tour’, *Evening Post*, 30 July 1936, 5.

²²³ “‘Retrospect’. Art in New Zealand. Display in art gallery: pioneers’ influence’, *Evening Post*, 7 August 1936, 11

²²⁴ ‘The National Art Gallery’, *Evening Post*, 30 July 1936, 5.

²²⁵ “‘Retrospect’. Art in New Zealand. Display in art gallery: pioneers’ influence’, *Evening Post*, 7 August 1936, 11

²²⁶ A. R. T., ‘The National Art Gallery: No. 3. New Zealand artists: their contributions of to-day and yesterday. Loan and Academy Exhibitions’, *Dominion*, 8 August 1936, 10.

²²⁷ One article suggested that the ‘main idea underlying its arrangement is to show how various men and women have left their influence on painting as practised in New Zealand’. See ‘The National Art Gallery’, *Evening Post*, 30 July 1936, 5. However, this intention only appears to have been partially borne out in the arrangements as they are suggested in the catalogue.

C. F. Goldie loaned by Auckland Art Gallery, and the star of the exhibition, Petrus van der Velden's *A Waterfall in the Otira Gorge*, 1891, from Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Gallery "P" also included the 'black and white' section of the exhibition, resulting in the anachronistic juxtaposition of, for example, Richmond's 1869 pencil drawing *Detribalised Natives, Taranaki*, alongside etchings by Mina Arndt and others, and caricatures by David Low.²²⁸ Within this vague ordering, there was little in the catalogue that conveyed a sense of the historical development of art in New Zealand: no dates were provided that indicated the lifespan of the artist or the dates of their works—the only indicator of chronology was the appendage of the word 'late' to the names of deceased artists—and there was no introduction to the scope or approach of the retrospective.²²⁹

Photographs of the opening hang suggest there was little additional material provided in the exhibition context that might have enhanced the public's understanding of the works on display. (fig 83) Labelling was sparse, prioritising the creation of an environment of minimal distraction to foster maximum aesthetic appreciation. The works, rather than being arranged in a salon-style hang, cheek-to-jowl, as had been in vogue in the Academy gallery, were displayed according to the latest in Museum techniques, in a single layer on plain 'burlap' walls.²³⁰ The overwhelming drive behind the hang was aesthetic, and aimed to make a dramatic impression on gallery visitors. For example, van der Velden's work was hung so it could be seen down the full length of one of the corridors, meaning, as one newspaper commented, that this 'majestic canvas can be viewed from afar or at close quarters'.²³¹ (fig 84)

The hang was effective in highlighting the status of this work and therefore that of the artist, van der Velden. He, along with Nairn, was regularly cited as a key

²²⁸ *National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum: Souvenir Catalogue of Pictures and Works of Art for Opening Exhibition, August, 1936*, 93-4.

²²⁹ James D. Herbert makes similar observations of the exhibition of two millennia of French art at the 1937 Paris Exposition. He suggests that this approach reinforced the notion that the works required no 'explanation or interpretation', that the 'works of art were permitted to convey their meaning without curatorial interference'. See Herbert, *Paris 1937: Worlds on Exhibition*, 86. The works were, however, organised into period rooms that progressed through historical time. In the case of the New Zealand exhibition, it seems the lack of labelling would only have compounded the lack of a clearly organised space.

²³⁰ The colours decided upon for the gallery spaces were grey-green for the black and white gallery and neutral scrim for the end walls of the large galleries. See Minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 9 August 1935, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-2.

²³¹ 'The National Art Gallery: Important collections, works of renowned artists. First display in Empire Tour', *Evening Post*, 30 July 1936, 5

influential figure in New Zealand artistic practice, establishing both as major figures in New Zealand's art history.²³² The *Evening Post* article devoted to discussing this exhibition was based on a conversation with Mary Murray Fuller, in which she singled out the works of van der Velden and Nairn,²³³ an approach that was shared by A.R.T., who wrote of van der Velden's *A Waterfall in the Otira Gorge* that this picture dominated this collection, 'if not the whole of the contents of the galleries, because it is a masterpiece which would suitably take its place in any world-famous gallery'.²³⁴ Local achievements were ultimately judged by their international potential, and in this respect van der Velden's work clearly triumphed.

While the collection was generally found to be impressive and A.R.T in the *Dominion* was moved to extend thanks to the various 'art galleries and to citizens in so many parts of the Dominion who have ungrudgingly loaned their treasures',²³⁵ Roland Hipkins was critical of the very fact that the exhibition was, in essence, a *loan* exhibition. He commented:

One is struck by the fact that some of the best paintings of both past and present artists are privately owned... A National Art Gallery which cannot permanently show a collection truly representative of the art of this Dominion is without the status that its name implies... This retrospective exhibition is a revelation of the high standard of Dominion art, but what have we left when these works are returned to their respective owners?²³⁶

Hipkins' observation is borne out by a quick tally, which shows that the exhibition featured approximately 36 works from the National Collection compared with 70 or so loaned from private collectors, nearly 30 from artists themselves, with the remaining works coming from other galleries. However, rather than a negative feature of the exhibition, one could suggest that this demonstrated a spirit of co-operation between the centres, the lack of which had been criticised two years earlier in the 1934 report on New Zealand's Art Galleries and Museums.²³⁷ The exhibition also

²³² See Minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 27 October 1936, and 16 November 1936, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-2.

²³³ Although Mrs Murray Fuller was not elected to the Academy Council until October 1936 or onto the National Art Gallery Committee of Management until November 1936, she appears to have taken on the role of spokesperson for the exhibitions in the National Art Gallery following the opening. See "Retrospect". Art in New Zealand. Display in art gallery: pioneers' influence', *Evening Post*, 7 August 1936, 11

²³⁴ A. R. T., 'The National Art Gallery: No. 3', *Dominion*, 8 August 1936, 10.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Hipkins, "The National Art Gallery Exhibitions," 17.

²³⁷ Markham and Oliver, *A Report on the Museums and Art Galleries of New Zealand*, 105. See discussion at the beginning of this chapter.

acknowledged the fact that it drew heavily on other sources by its title ‘The *Loan* Collection of Retrospective Art in New Zealand’, but did include works from the National Collection. Most of these were works by the ‘old timers’ who featured in the ‘pioneer’ gallery, as well as key works by Nairn and van der Velden. What is interesting in this tally is that only one work was loaned from the Turnbull Library, Charles Blomfield’s *Pink Terraces*.²³⁸ Rather than explore the richness of colonial art, the sub-committee made a very ‘safe’ selection that consisted primarily of works already held in their collection. A broader and more thorough investigation of colonial art would, instead, be presented as part of the retrospective exhibition held in association with the Centennial celebrations four years later.

Birthday celebrations

There is no doubt that the timing of the opening of the Gallery and Museum as well as the Centennial celebrations was fraught: the first Labour Government was elected in 1935, just as New Zealand was emerging from the Great Depression; and in 1939 world war once again broke out. But rather than putting a damper on New Zealand’s centennial celebrations, these events heightened the need to reinvigorate New Zealand society by bringing the pioneering spirit that such events would both commemorate and foster back into the public eye.²³⁹ In his study of worlds’ fairs Robert Rydell argues that such events ‘injected hope and optimism into a nation suffering from economic collapse’ and helped to focus attention on past achievements and possible future developments.²⁴⁰ This belief underpinned the government’s decision to persevere with the celebrations in the face of a second world war. The opening of the Gallery and the Centennial celebrations also coincided with new discussions regarding the very nature of national culture, largely centred in the literary realm. And perhaps most importantly, the centennial celebrations provided an

²³⁸ There are three Blomfield paintings of the Pink terraces currently in the Library’s collections, all of which were gifted in the later twentieth century. This work was probably that which was on display in the Turnbull foyer (see fig 75) and which, ironically, entered the Museum’s collections in 1943.

²³⁹ Renwick notes that while plans were reviewed, the government decided to proceed with the programme of national events. Visitor numbers to the Exhibition were, however, not as high as had been expected and several international contributors chose not to participate. See William Renwick, ed. *Creating a National Spirit: Celebrating New Zealand’s Centennial* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004), 19.

²⁴⁰ Rydell, Findling, and Pelle, *Fair America: World’s Fairs in the United States*, 99.

opportunity for New Zealand to look at itself and ‘take its place in the world’.²⁴¹ For just as the individual ego is formed in part through relations with others, so too are nations, which, although they are spatially bounded entities, are defined as much by their abstract as their physical differences.

A key figure behind the centennial celebrations was Joseph Heenan, who returned to government under Labour as Under-Secretary for Internal Affairs. Heenan was, as Rachel Barrowman writes, the imaginative and administrative power behind the ‘flurry of institution building’ which ‘set the state at the core of the infrastructure of post-war cultural development’.²⁴² While a key event in the Centennial year was the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition in Rongotai, Wellington, from 8 November 1939 to 4 May 1940, Heenan’s ideal for the centennial celebrations was that 1940 should not be conceived as ‘so much a centenary year as a year of centenaries’.²⁴³ Consequently, commemorative events took place throughout the country and ranged from the erection of public monuments to the re-enactments of pioneering moments. There was, however, a strong focus on the cultural dimension of nationalism associated with the centennial celebrations. This was manifest in the support of a variety of projects that fostered recognition of New Zealand’s achievements over the last century in learning, science and the arts, such as the historical surveys, the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, and the pictorial studies titled *New Zealand in the Making*.²⁴⁴

As far as art was concerned, as Roger Blackley notes, there was no ‘single, triumphant showing of art’ associated with the centennial celebrations.²⁴⁵ Instead there were at least five different exhibitions held in different locations that could cater to the desires of an art-seeking audience.²⁴⁶ The New Zealand Artists Society²⁴⁷ and

²⁴¹ Stuart Murray, *Never a Soul at Home: New Zealand Literary Nationalism and the 1930s* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1998), 9.

²⁴² Rachel Barrowman, “‘Culture-Organising’: Joe Heenan and the Beginnings of State Patronage of the Arts,” *New Zealand Studies* July (1996): 3.

²⁴³ Heenan, cited in Michael Bassett, *The Mother of All Departments: The History of the Department of Internal Affairs* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1997), 110.

²⁴⁴ For an indication of the range of events and associated publications, see Renwick, ed. *Creating a National Spirit: Celebrating New Zealand’s Centennial*.

²⁴⁵ Roger Blackley, “Centennial Exhibitions of Art,” in *Creating a National Spirit: Celebrating New Zealand’s Centennial*, ed. William Renwick (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004), 222.

²⁴⁶ These included the ‘Centennial International Exhibition of International Art’ and the ‘Annual Exhibition of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts’ at the Gallery, the ‘New Zealand Artists Society (Inc)’ and the ‘Australian Pavilion’ at the Centennial Exhibition, Rongotai and the ‘National Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art’ which toured the country. “Our Centennial,” *Art in New Zealand* XII, no. 2 (1939): 69.

the Academy exhibition focussed on contemporary New Zealand artists and their works, while the main drawcard at the Gallery was a collection of international art organised by Mary Murray Fuller consisting of 562 works by British, French and Belgian artists for sale.²⁴⁸ (fig 85)

The idea of a comprehensive, *touring* exhibition of New Zealand art, the ‘National Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art’, was appealing to Heenan, who favoured events that would have national, not just central, relevance. Although he was not officially appointed in charge of the exhibition until April 1939, Alexander Hare McLintock, a historian temporarily employed by the Centennial Branch, had come up with the idea, and was probably involved in drafting the following memorandum which outlined the proposed scope of the exhibition. This is worth quoting at length:

The Centennial year affords an excellent opportunity for a complete visual survey of New Zealand Art – a national stock-taking, as it were – and we should like to suggest that this is the proper time for organising such an Exhibition, ranging in scope from the work of the earliest artists and surveyors who visited New Zealand before white settlement up to the present day. The exhibition would begin with the work of Parkinson, who accompanied Captain Cook, and aim at including representative drawings by the early pioneers who were really the first New Zealand artists... The exhibition should be thoroughly representative at all stages so as to show the development of art through the century, and on to the present day. If this line is followed a complete survey of New Zealand art in all its aspects would be achieved. It is not suggested that the exhibition should be confined to one centre, but that it should be displayed in all centres throughout New Zealand in order to extend its range of influence and interest.²⁴⁹

The scope outlined here is at once more comprehensive and more wide-ranging than the Gallery’s opening retrospective exhibition of 1936. As well as extending the historical scope to include pre-colonial material, it was also imagined from the outset that the exhibition ‘would consist not only of paintings, but also of drawings, etchings, lithographs, caricatures, cartoons, book illustrations and sculpture’.²⁵⁰ This effectively erased the perceived boundaries between ‘high’ and ‘low’ art and, in a way, brought together the works of art that were artificially separated between the

²⁴⁷ This Society had come into existence for the sole purpose of ensuring the work of New Zealand artists was ‘on view at the Exhibition’, that is, on site at the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition, the focus of official celebrations. Ibid: 81.

²⁴⁸ This exhibition took place from November 1939 to April 1940. The works exhibited were mostly for sale and the fact that they were unable to be returned to their origins due to the outbreak of war, meant that a disproportionate number were ultimately acquired for the National Collection.

²⁴⁹ Memorandum for Under-Secretary of Internal Affairs, 16 March 1939, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 1.

²⁵⁰ Memorandum for newspapers, 12 September 1939, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 1.

upper and lower levels of the Museum and Gallery. Some material was, however, left out of the picture: photographic art was not included in the exhibition, but the committee ‘urged’ that ‘photographic societies...stage local exhibitions of their work’. Likewise, although sculpture was to be included, the practicalities of transportation meant that ultimately it was only represented through the insufficient medium of photography. The initial hope that specimens of Maori art might be included was never realised.²⁵¹

The appointed committee consisted of representatives from throughout New Zealand, meaning the project was geographically national in conception. One of the first issues the committee faced was how to define a “New Zealand artist”. As item three on the agenda of the first meeting, this was clearly a matter requiring clarification. However, the fact that the following ‘definition’ was recorded in pencil on the typed minutes suggests there was difficulty reaching a consensus:

Any artist who at any time has been domiciled in New Zealand and whose work, in the opinion of the Committee, has had sufficient influence on New Zealand art to warrant his inclusion.²⁵²

This definition was broad enough to allow works by artists as diverse as Sydney Parkinson, artist on Cook’s first voyage, and David Low, expatriate caricaturist, to be included in the exhibition.

It was intended that material should primarily be drawn from public collections, followed by appeals to collectors and artists. The selection process was democratically conceived: regions were asked to draw up lists of deceased artists who should be included and living artists were asked to submit two works to a selection committee in the four centres, Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. McLintock made the final selections and clearly had a strong idea as to what he wanted on show and what would be most relevant to constructing a historical picture of the development of art in New Zealand. For example, McLintock wanted to exhibit Mabel McIndoe’s (née Hill) portrait of James Nairn, but she resisted, writing ‘I have a feeling that as I am still alive, I should like to be represented by a painting done at the

²⁵¹ Minutes of National Centennial Exhibition Committee, 29 June 1939, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 1.

²⁵² Ibid. Minutes of National Centennial Exhibition Committee, 29 June 1939, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 1.

present time, as well as one painted over forty years ago'.²⁵³ (see fig 63) McLintock replied that it was unlikely another painting would fit, and that the 'Nairn would be most interesting to the general public as it would be a portrait of an outstanding artist'.²⁵⁴ In contrast McLintock requested a *second* painting, preferably a portrait, from Sydney Lough Thomson, who had asked to be represented by *Horses on the Quay*. In this way, the number of works by which an artist was represented offered some indication of their perceived importance to the national narrative. McIndoe eventually came around to McLintock's preference, writing:

I have been "smithering" over your letter...and have come to the conclusion that you are right and I am wrong – that Jimmy Nairn's portrait has more historical interest in an Exhibition such as we are going to have, than all the silly little rose pieces I can paint at the present, good, bad, or indifferent...please reverse my "preference for my more recent work" to that of "my ancient of days" and probably better effort.²⁵⁵

Through such carefully managed negotiations, and polite refusals of inappropriate works, McLintock achieved an exhibition that comprised the most comprehensive and inclusive survey of New Zealand art to date. Loans were negotiated from a wide range of institutions and individuals, with over half of the 355 works on display drawn from public collections. In contrast with the 1936 exhibition, where only one work was loaned from the Turnbull Library, the Library was a key contributor, lending some 50 works for exhibition. This reflected the centrality of the Library as a well-utilised resource for the Centennial celebrations, a point that was emphasised in Turnbull-generated publicity after the event:

Taken together, the reproductions and originals in the Pacific collection ...have proved to be an immense asset in the recent extensive historical research done for the Centennial of this country, in particular for the numerous publications, much of the material and illustrations of which were garnered in the Turnbull Library.²⁵⁶

The heavy borrowing from the Turnbull meant that pre-colonial works were well-represented in the exhibition, such as works by the artists on board Cook's voyages, as well as early French expeditions to the Pacific: the 'first visiting artists to New Zealand when it was almost a terra incognita'.²⁵⁷ Early surveyor artists such as

²⁵³ Mabel McIndoe to McLintock, 30 December 1939, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 3.

²⁵⁴ McLintock to McIndoe, 4 January 1940, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 3.

²⁵⁵ McIndoe to McLintock, 12 January 1940, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 4.

²⁵⁶ Alice Woodhouse and A. St. C. Murray-Oliver, "Art Treasures of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington," *Art in New Zealand* XIII, no. 3 (1941): 118.

²⁵⁷ McLintock, June 1939, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 1.

Charles Heaphy and William Fox, settler artists William Strutt and John Alexander Gilfillan and soldier artists such as Horatio Gordon Robley and Gustave Von Tempsky, were also included. Remarkably, ‘historical’ works by the latter two artists were present in the Museum collections at Buckle St but were not drawn upon for the Exhibition. This more historical body of early work proved the most interesting to many reviewers. In Auckland, a writer for the *Star* asked:

How many New Zealanders realise that the name of Major Von Tempsky, which stands out so romantically from the pages of early Dominion history, would be found in an art exhibition? There are two examples of his work, one from the Turnbull Library and one from the Hocken Library. Both of them reveal him as having been quite an accomplished watercolourist’.²⁵⁸

Despite this historical strength, approximately 123 of the 223 artists on show were classified as contemporary and only 100 as retrospective, women were outnumbered by men and painting remained the dominant medium, despite initial attempts to be more inclusive in terms of media.²⁵⁹

The exhibition was scheduled to tour 15 venues throughout the North and South Islands and generally received positive reception in the press, particularly regarding its rich chronological sweep. (fig 86) It aimed to enlighten New Zealanders as to their own cultural heritage, for, as McLintock proudly wrote ‘I venture to state that this work is barely known to anyone outside a limited circle which is acquainted with art collections in the Turnbull and Hocken Libraries’.²⁶⁰ But although it was democratically conceived and made widely accessible, the exhibition was not wholly taken to the hearts of New Zealanders. From Invercargill, McLintock wrote ‘the local committee are fairly good, but in a place where art has been as dead as a Dodo, it’s not easy to get things moving’.²⁶¹ Mary Murray Fuller later wrote to Mulligan from Hamilton, ‘the response here is very bad’.²⁶² McLintock summed up the problem, complaining:

Everyone moans about the war but I’m afraid the term “N. Z. Art” damns it. If we called it Hottentot, Chinese, or even German, we’d get a better run. What we do need

²⁵⁸ ‘Was too big! Gallery picture: window was enlarged. Salisbury’s coronation’, *Auckland Star*, 12 June 1940.

²⁵⁹ The exhibition included pastels, pen and ink drawings, and a wide variety of printing techniques, caricatures and cartoons. See McLintock, *National Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art*.

²⁶⁰ McLintock, June 1939, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 1.

²⁶¹ McLintock to Mulligan, 27 March 1940, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 5.

²⁶² Murray Fuller to Mulligan, 14 August 1940, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 5.

is the “Coronation picture” to provide a boost. That drew the crowds in Wellington’.²⁶³

McLintock was clearly run down by the demands of organising and running the exhibition and when offered a position as Lecturer in History at Otago University to begin mid-April 1940, he dropped the exhibition. The Director of Centennial Pageantry, W. S. Wauchop, took over until mid-June when the indomitable Mary Murray Fuller was appointed director of the exhibition.

Ultimately, as McIntock predicted, it was the ‘Coronation picture’ by Frank Salisbury that drew the crowds. Wauchop wrote from Auckland that ‘it is a case of “hundreds being turned away” as the coronation picture is not here and they “will come later”’.²⁶⁴ (fig 87) This echoed the situation at Philadelphia’s International Exposition of 1876, where the crowd in front of William Frith’s *Marriage of H.R.H and the Prince of Wales* ‘was impassable from the opening to the closing of the doors, and it was necessary to have a guardian continually stationed there to protect the picture, and keep the crowd moving’.²⁶⁵ The irony at both Philadelphia and New Zealand was that while the governments were attempting to nourish a locally inscribed *national* culture, it seemed the masses would only emerge for reminders of the *imperial* centre. In New Zealand, this response also reflected the complicated coexistence of national independence and colonial deference that underpinned the conceptualisation of the centennial celebrations. For, as Stuart Murray writes, these championed the ‘achievements of New Zealand as an independent nation while stressing the place of the nation within the extended family of Empire’.²⁶⁶ The fact that Salisbury’s painting was commissioned by the Dominions for presentation to the King and Queen reinforced this paradoxical position, for the painting could be seen to embody a sense of pride in colonial achievement and their collective ability to present something of such a grand scale to the imperial centre. In practical terms, too, the scale of the work, 17’6” by 10’4”, meant it undoubtedly fulfilled a public desire for

²⁶³ McIntock to Mulligan, 27 March 1940, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 5.

²⁶⁴ Wauchop to Arthur, 14 June 1940, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 5.

²⁶⁵ ‘Memorial Hall’, Centennial Exhibition Digital Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia, <http://libwww.library.phila.gov/CenCol/tours-memorialhall.htm>, accessed 23 February 2009.

²⁶⁶ Murray, *Never a Soul at Home*, 22.

spectacle, and provided a touch of royal glamour that had perhaps been missing from the humdrum of existence in 1930s New Zealand.²⁶⁷

One final publication needs to be introduced before the writing of New Zealand's art history can be more closely examined: Eric McCormick's *Letters and Art in New Zealand*.²⁶⁸ This was one of eleven Centennial historical surveys produced under the guidance of the National Historical Committee. These publications were intended to be 'scholarly, popular and affordable', and ranged in subject from *New Zealanders in Science* to *New Zealanders in the World*.²⁶⁹ *Letters and Art in New Zealand* was a distillation of McCormick's Cambridge thesis and provided a dual account of the progress of literature and art in New Zealand from first contact to the present day. It was praised as 'easily the best of the surveys and the first important critical work by a New Zealander' by Canterbury academic Leicester Webb.²⁷⁰ It was, however, heavily biased towards the literary, rather than the artistic, devoting only one quarter of the text to art, a fact that invited criticism from the press. One reviewer suggested McCormick 'should have been allowed another volume to deal with the manner of native self-expression through the medium of line and colour',²⁷¹ while the *Times Literary Supplement* felt that 'it tells us less about the less familiar art than about the comparatively accessible letters'.²⁷² This bias is also reflected in more recent critical evaluations of McCormick's text, which primarily deal with the literary side of *Letters and Art in New Zealand*, but seldom address the art historical.²⁷³ Nonetheless, McLintock's catalogue essay and McCormick's survey

²⁶⁷ Van der Velden's *A Waterfall in the Otira Gorge*, which had provided such a dramatic centrepiece for the opening retrospective exhibition was not part of the touring exhibition due to its size and weight and the difficulties involved with its transportation.

²⁶⁸ McCormick, *Letters and Art in New Zealand*.

²⁶⁹ Thirteen had originally been commissioned. See Rachel Barrowman, "History and Romance: The Making of the Centennial Historical Surveys," in *Creating a National Spirit: Celebrating New Zealand's Centennial*, ed. William Renwick (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004), and chapter 6 'Centennial Splendours' in Christopher Hilliard, "Island Stories" (Master of Arts in History, University of Auckland, 1997).

²⁷⁰ Quoted in Heenan to 'Mac', 25 February 1941, ATL: MS-Papers-0166-14.

²⁷¹ J. M., 'With Brush and Pen: creative pioneers in New Zealand', *Otago Daily Times*, ATL: MS-Papers-0166-14.

²⁷² 'Art grows in New Zealand: export of talent', *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 April 1941, ATL: MS-Papers-0166-14.

²⁷³ See for example the following articles and chapter, all of which consider McCormick's text in terms of its literary implications: Hilliard, "Island Stories", Murray, *Never a Soul at Home*, James Smithies, "Modernism or Exile: E. H. McCormick and *Letters and Art in New Zealand*," *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 39 (2004). A recent exception is Francis Pound's publication, *The Invention of New Zealand: Art and National Identity 1930-1970* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2009).

text are commonly considered the founding documents of New Zealand's art history, so it is worthwhile comparing their approaches. (see figs 88 and 89)

As noted, the touring exhibition differed from the 1936 exhibition through its more inclusive approach and the attempt to articulate an overview of the development of New Zealand art to 1940. As the *Press* in Christchurch noted, the exhibition was 'far more than a collection of paintings, for it represents the development of New Zealand and the gradual appearance of new ideas in art'.²⁷⁴ But as in the case of the 1936 exhibition, a lack of documentation makes it difficult to evaluate the *visual* presentation of the wide variety of material at its various venues. One clue is provided by Harry Tombs' critique of the exhibition, which suggests the works were arranged by media, meaning that the 'beholder who desires to know what work was done, say, in the first twenty-five years of our history, has to hunt through the water-colours which begin one end, then the oils which begin at the other, and finally the drawings'.²⁷⁵ Presumably taking a dig at the aesthetically and commercially-minded Murray Fuller, Tombs suggested that the 'ordinary rules regarding hanging such as those generally adopted when pictures are for sale should be over-ruled by considerations of the purpose for which the exhibition was got together, ie., an historical survey of our art for the century'.²⁷⁶ Tombs proposed a five-part periodisation: the period prior to colonisation; from colonisation to the formation of art societies; the art society period to van der Velden and Nairn; from van der Velden to the end of the Great War; and from last Great War to present time. C.R.S, possibly Cedric Savage, writing for the Christchurch *Press*, condensed the first two of Tombs' categories to suggest four categories: the 'topographical work of the pioneer surveyors and explorers'; the 'work of early emigrant artists and visitors'; that of the 'schools which arose from the influence of Van der Velden and Nairn; and of the 'modern school done in the last 20 years'.²⁷⁷ Dividing the exhibition into chronological sections, particularly in newspaper reviews, would have helped make sense of the works on display for a lay viewer, and act as a preparatory guide to interpreting the exhibition.

²⁷⁴ 'New Zealand Art: work since earliest times. Centennial display at Gallery', *The Press*, 17 April 1940, 15.

²⁷⁵ Harry H. Tombs, "New Zealand and American Art," *Art in New Zealand* XIII, no. 3 (1941): 154.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*: 155.

²⁷⁷ C.R.S., 'New Zealand Art. Two important influences: the period before the war', *The Press*, 22 April 1940, 7

The apparent lack of narrative developed in the exhibition itself was, in part, Tombs admitted, made up for by the accompanying ‘well-produced catalogue, complete with biographical notes and illustrations’.²⁷⁸ The catalogue was conceived as an essential part of McIntock’s project and was closely modelled on that produced for *A Century of Canadian Art* staged at the Tate in 1938.²⁷⁹ (fig 90) It provided details of artists’ lives and brief biographies where they could be recovered, and it was felt that the publication would ‘form the basis of a history of New Zealand art’.²⁸⁰ However, according to Murray Fuller the catalogue was:

...full of inaccuracies and omissions. Several important figures in the history of New Zealand art had been left out. The director had apparently referred to obsolete directories instead of approaching the artists themselves or people who could have given him accurate information. The Chairman and other members expressed the opinion that the catalogue was inaccurate and the introduction badly compiled. It was a great pity that the catalogue should have to go through the country as an official history of New Zealand art.²⁸¹

The archival material relating to the exhibition preparation records the difficulties that McIntock encountered in bringing together this information for the catalogue. Not only was it the first time such an effort had been made, but the project was convened within six months, an extraordinary feat by any estimation. Further, artists had been approached, but had proven lax in providing information, causing McIntock to ask of John Barr ‘Finally, could you tell me if these people are to be classed among the “quick” or the “dead”?’²⁸² One wonders, too, who Murray Fuller would have included, and it is worth noting that this harsh criticism was made prior to her taking on responsibility for the exhibition in June 1940.

Central to these retrospective exercises was a ‘search for origins’ that would enable diachronic comparisons to take place so that connections between the past and present as well as patterns of development over time might be observed. Although both McIntock and McCormick noted the presence of a cultural tradition in New

²⁷⁸ Memorandum for Under-Secretary of Internal Affairs, 16 March 1939, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 1.

²⁷⁹ *A Century of Canadian Art*, (London: Tate Gallery, 1938). This decision was noted in the Minutes of National Centennial Exhibition Committee, 29 June 1939, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 2.

²⁸⁰ *Evening Paper New Plymouth*, 3 October 1939, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 2.

²⁸¹ Minutes of meeting of the NZAFA, 26 February 1940, ATL: Micro-MS-0570-2.

²⁸² McIntock to John Barr, 14 December 1939, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 3. Further inquiries were made to the Deputy Registrar to attempt to find out dates and places of birth and/or death of artists such as J Peele, E. Gouldsmith, Alfred Sharpe, and T. S. Cousins. See Mulligan to G. G. Hodgkins, Deputy Registrar, 12 January 1940, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 3.

Zealand prior to the arrival of Europeans, that of the Maori, no further consideration of this tradition was provided in either of their accounts.²⁸³ Instead, as Hilliard observes, this acted as a narrative device, a Maori prologue of sorts that was set aside in order to allow the ‘real’ story to begin.²⁸⁴ In the planning stages McIntock had anticipated that the display of early cartoons, drawings and caricatures would ‘reveal the beginning of a virile native art which has produced a David Low’.²⁸⁵ Likewise, it was considered that contemporary art would ‘form the logical conclusion to the whole display and will provide the public with an opportunity of comparing the past with the present’.²⁸⁶ Despite this intention, McIntock’s introductory text largely shied away from drawing such comparisons, and from Tombs’ critique, it seems that little in the exhibition layout fostered an interpretation based on this approach. Neither, as has been discussed, did the 1936 opening exhibition at the Gallery encourage a critical or historical reading of New Zealand art in context. Even with its literary bias, it was McCormick that most thoroughly carried through out a comparative evaluation of the progress of art in New Zealand.

The artists Charles Heaphy and John Buchanan were central to the development of McCormick’s thesis. Throughout *Letters and Art*, Heaphy, in particular, stands as a point of reference, a standard against which other artists’ achievements are compared and measured.²⁸⁷ In both literature and art, McCormick sought to identify an ‘authentic’ authorial voice, one that had thrown off the shackles of inherited British and European modes of representation and developed a confidence in engaging with the local on its own terms. Thus he wrote:

Throughout the range of Heaphy’s work you are aware of a man wrestling with the strange contours and colours of a new environment and, moreover, attempting to define the peculiar quality of each part of New Zealand, as he visited it in turn.²⁸⁸

²⁸³ Such an approach was typical of other colonies’ art histories. One of the first histories of Canadian art began by considering Indian art, only to dismiss it as purely utilitarian, while an early history of Australian art considered much early rock art to be attributed to cultures other than Australian Aborigines. See Newton MacTavish, *The Fine Arts in Canada* (Toronto: Coles Publishing, 1973 [1925]), 1 and William Moore, *The Story of Australian Art: From the Earliest Known Art of the Continent to the Art of Today* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1980 [1934]), 1-3.

²⁸⁴ See Hilliard, “Island Stories”, 117.

²⁸⁵ McIntock, June 1939, ANZ: IA1, series 1, record 62/106, part 1.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Pound discusses McCormick’s identification of Heaphy and Buchanan as antecedents for a national tradition. See chapter IX. Inventing Antecedents and the Canon, in *The Invention of New Zealand*.

²⁸⁸ McCormick, *Letters and Art in New Zealand*, 34.

This quality was also valued by McLintock, who most keenly appreciated the efforts of young New Zealanders who interpreted the ‘characteristics of their country without undue reliance upon European styles and methods’.²⁸⁹ That this turn of phrase is closely modelled on Vincent Massey’s ‘Foreword’ in the 1938 catalogue of *A Century of Canadian Art* is unsurprising, for the identification of this quality in art became central to the identification of an independent ‘national’ art in the various art histories of the British Dominions.²⁹⁰ To this end, McCormick drew textual comparisons between artists working at different times and within different modes throughout his text, while McLintock provided less an evaluative account and more a brief overview of New Zealand art to date. Thus, where McLintock discussed John Gully and John Buchanan separately, as representative of different approaches to art-making – Buchanan a ‘surveyor-explorer’ whose attitude was ‘topographical rather than interpretative’ and Gully one of a group of individuals ‘eager to devote their talents to the furtherance of national art’ – McCormick acknowledged their divergent backgrounds, yet compared their output according to his criteria.²⁹¹ As was the case with Heaphy, McCormick saw that Buchanan’s strength lay in the very fact that his work was that of a draughtsman, not an artist, for this meant he was ‘free from the nineteenth-century Romantic conventions which so hampered his contemporaries, both the artists and poets’ and was therefore able to ‘escape the tyranny of an imported tradition to achieve a degree of emancipation found only rarely among later writers and artists’.²⁹² In their respective images of Milford Sound, McCormick found grandeur in Buchanan’s stripped back emphasis on line and form, while Gully’s attempt to convey grandeur by depicting a ‘microscopically exact foreground and its tiny ship to emphasise the immensity of the mountains’ used a well-worn trope that was merely ‘insipid and obvious’.²⁹³ McCormick also compared works from different media, for example Gully and poet Alfred Domett, seeing in both their work a romantic approach to their subject which relied upon extensive description rather than the distillation apparent in Heaphy and Buchanan.²⁹⁴

²⁸⁹ McLintock, *National Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art*, 16.

²⁹⁰ Vincent Massey wrote ‘In the early years of the present century a determination appeared among the younger Canadian artists to attempt an interpretation of their country without undue reference to European styles and methods’. See *A Century of Canadian Art*, np.

²⁹¹ McLintock, *National Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art*, 11.

²⁹² McCormick, *Letters and Art in New Zealand*, 103.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 102. The two works are Buchanan, *Milford Sound*, 1863, watercolour, (Dunedin: Hocken Library), and Gully, *Milford Sound*, 1877, watercolour, (Dunedin: Dunedin Public Art Gallery).

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 98-99.

Buchanan and Heaphy recur as positive ancestral figures for New Zealand art throughout McCormick's text and are drawn upon to reinforce his opinions regarding the social conditions for art-making. For example, in the chapter 'Between two hemispheres', where McCormick deals with expatriatism and its effect on New Zealand artists, Alfred Walsh emerges as an example of an artist who, like Buchanan was by training a draughtsman, and who, alone among his generation had no experience abroad. For McCormick, this raises the question as to 'whether the stimulus of Paris or a training at the Slade were indispensable prerequisites to a career in New Zealand art'.²⁹⁵

Lastly, while the plates at the back of McLintock's catalogue are in no logical order, either by chronology or alphabet, McCormick reinforced his textual observations with pertinent visual comparisons, juxtaposing, for example, Heaphy's and Christopher Perkins' representations of Mt Taranaki to iconic effect.²⁹⁶ (fig 91) While Heaphy's view remained the superior, Perkins was seen to exert an invigorating influence on young New Zealand artists that might help them recover the 'freshness of vision' that Heaphy had brought to the landscape.²⁹⁷ McCormick's comparisons were carefully considered to illustrate what he considered the 'better' of two different approaches. To this end, Gully's Milford Sound was played off to detrimental effect next to Buchanan's version of the same subject, and Goldie's 'archaeological' Maori portrait next to Frances Hodgkins' 'resurgent' depiction of a *Maori Woman and Child*.²⁹⁸ (figs 92 and 93) In each example, the play off was between a 'hackneyed' and 'derivative' representation, with one that was apparently 'true' to its subject.

If we return to the discussion in the first half of this chapter concerning Hatton's 'fakes' and the prerequisite that works collected for the historical collection would exhibit historical authenticity, it is clear that some kind of 'authenticity' was likewise relevant to McCormick and McLintock's assessment of New Zealand art. Thomson and McDonald demanded *historical* authenticity: that is, evidence of direct experience of a depicted scene. Only then could they be certain that the picture might convey historical truths. McCormick and McLintock, on the other hand, were

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 160-1.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., facing p. 34. See Perkins, *Taranaki*, oil on canvas, Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery, accession no. 1968/35 and Heaphy, *Mt Egmont from the Southward*, watercolour, c. 1840, (ATL: reference number: C-025-008).

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 192.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., facing 158. Charles Frederick Goldie, *The Widow*, 1913 and Frances Hodgkins, *Maori Woman and Child*, 1900, (Wellington: Te Papa, reference 1936-0012-62).

concerned with authenticity of artistic *expression*. This did not relate to a truthful *description* of place, but a truthful *response* to place that was conveyed honestly, without reliance on inherited pictorial models. This requirement was central to the modern attitude in art, which demanded an individual, expressive response to subject. For this reason, the identification of ancestral figures who exhibited such characteristics was crucial to present and future developments in New Zealand art.

The irony is that in the works of Heaphy and Buchanan the qualities of truth to place and truth to self were seen to coexist, and consequently their achievements might be positively emulated by contemporary artists. For as surveyor artists, their depictions were relied upon to convey a reasonably accurate sense of place – they were *witness* to an historical moment – yet they also conveyed an engagement with the *essence* of place and could therefore stand as representative of the *spirit* of a nation and its people. It is here, then, that the separation of the historical from the aesthetic, as represented by the separate pictorial collections of the Museum and Gallery, and of the Library from those two institutions, becomes problematic, and, arguably, redundant.

In spite of this, the Gallery continued to exemplify an aesthetic and conservative approach to the collection and display of art, one that clearly demarcated its collections from those of its fellow government institution, the Library. This approach is evident in the entry on New Zealand art in the 1966 Encyclopaedia written by Stewart McLennan, the first appointed director of the National Art Gallery from 1948 to 1968:

We have to decide, however, whether we are to accept as our starting point the works of charming but minor British artists like Heaphy, Angas, and Brees, just because they happened to come to New Zealand, or to forge the links back to Cotman, De Wint, Constable, and Turner. Believing this to be the proper course, the National Art Gallery has acquired through the Sir Harold Beauchamp Fund, a small but choice collection of eighteenth century English watercolours.²⁹⁹

This approach impacted greatly on the strategies of the Gallery throughout most of the twentieth century, and while it is not part of the scope of this thesis to outline that history here, it suffices to say that the ground-breaking efforts of McLintock and McCormick were not taken up by McLennan, but were built upon by the efforts of Auckland Art Gallery exhibitions and publications during the 1950s and 1960s under

²⁹⁹ Stewart McLennan, 'Art in New Zealand: Surveys, trends and influences, 1938 to present'

the influence of Gallery Directors Eric Westbrook and Peter Tomory, and curators and art historians, Gordon H. Brown and Hamish Keith.³⁰⁰

The exhibitions and publications produced in association with the opening of the Gallery and the centennial celebrations had an enduring influence on the writing of New Zealand's art history, recuperating some colonial artists for posterity. These acts were beset by the tensions underlying the role of colonial art as history or as art, as well as by New Zealand's troubled status as a nation that had not yet fully conceptualised itself as such.

³⁰⁰ Brown and Keith published the first comprehensive history of painting in New Zealand in 1969. See Gordon Brown and Hamish Keith, *New Zealand Painting: An Introduction* (Auckland: William Collins, 1969). On the influence of Tomory on New Zealand art history, see Courtney Johnston, "Peter Tomory: The New Zealand Years 1956-1968" (MA in Art History, Victoria University of Wellington, 2004). On the use of Turnbull pictures by Auckland Art Gallery, see Barrowman, *The Turnbull*, 121-24 and Pound, *The Invention of New Zealand*, 340-345.

Fig. f. Cover, William McAloon (editor), *Art at Te Papa*,
Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2009

6. Colonial Art Today

*The founding legislation of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa intended that it would provide a forum in which the nation may present, explore, and preserve both the heritage of its cultures and knowledge of the natural environment in order to better understand and treasure the past; enrich the present; and meet the challenges of the future. As this book demonstrates, the national art collection is indeed a treasure of the past, one that enriches our present and remains a challenge for the future.*¹

These congratulatory, yet considered, words conclude William McAloon's introduction to Te Papa's most recent publication on their collections. In the germinal stages of this thesis, the publication *Icons Nga Taonga* was hot off the press; now, as I enter the concluding phase, the first book devoted to Te Papa's collection of art, *Art at Te Papa*, has been released. These two publications function as bookends for my thesis and provide an opportunity to reflect on its key themes in relation to the role of colonial art in the state collections. *Art at Te Papa* does not suffer from the typological slippages imposed by the departmentalised structure of *Icons*, the subject of interrogation in my opening chapter, and provides a long-overdue institutional overview of art in Te Papa's collections. Indeed, in contrast to *Icons*, colonial art is well represented in McAloon's text and its status as 'art', rather than as illustrative device for historical or scientific sections, thereby affirmed. Yet arguably, there remains a schism between the inclusiveness embodied by the text, and the physical experience of art at Te Papa, where exhibitionary practice continues to reinforce the upstairs/downstairs logic in an attempt to distinguish the 'fine art' displays from those of a more 'museological' bent. Further, while Te Papa is the result of an amalgamation of the National Museum and Art Gallery, this text provided little opportunity to reflect upon the intertwined nature of their histories with the Turnbull.

By way of presenting some concluding thoughts, I would like to return to two examples introduced earlier in this text to explore the issues raised in this thesis, and to reflect on the place of colonial art in the state's institutions today: William Beetham's portrait of *Dr Isaac Featherston and the Te Atiawa Chiefs (Hon Wi Tako Ngatata MLC and Honiana Te Puni)*, 1857-58 (fig 8) and William Francis Gordon's *Te Inoi a te Ariki (The Lord's Prayer in Maori)*, 1879 (fig 94).

¹ William McAloon, ed. *Art at Te Papa* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2009), 21.

The entry of Beetham's portrait of *Dr Isaac Featherston and the Te Atiawa Chiefs* into the Colonial Museum was considered in chapter two, as was its subsequent movements between state institutions. In 1921 it was recorded that the painting had been 'sent to the Art Gallery and subsequently stored in basement of Parliamentary Buildings Internal Affairs storeroom'.² In 1927 it was asked if the painting could be stored in the Maori House at the Museum but its packing case, some eight feet wide, would not fit through the door.³ Even when the new Museum building opened in 1936, Oliver wrote that the Featherston painting had been 'transferred to the new building where it is stored in a space on the ground floor opposite the lift'.⁴ I have not found any record of the painting exhibited in the Dominion Museum and, despite a designated portrait gallery in the new National Gallery, the unique group portrait was excluded from the entirely Pakeha occupants of Gallery M. Two inquiries, both written in 1939, confirm that the painting was not exhibited and had faded from public consciousness. The first asked after a painting in the museum 'of a group that includes Te Puni, the Petone chief and Sir George Grey',⁵ while the second, from Clyde Taylor at the Turnbull, asked:

I have been told of a picture that was thought to have hung in the entrance of the old building, and should like to know if you still have it. I understand Barraud is the artist, and that it depicts a group which includes Colonel Wakefield, Te Puni, and one or two other notabilities of Wellington's early days.⁶

Taylor was wrong on all counts bar one, the presence of Te Puni, mistaking Beetham for Barraud and Featherston for his rival Wakefield. Oliver corrected him, but wrote in reply 'I do not know the name of the artist'.⁷ In an unpublished conference paper, Jane Vial describes how this portrait was 'found' in the 1980s on a dirt basement floor at Buckle St alongside some 'fearsome African spears'.⁸ It was resurrected for the sesquicentennial celebrations of 1990, and initially its return to the stage was a welcome one. For the exhibition 'Treasures and Landmarks from the National

² Unsigned annotation, probably McDonald, on McDonald, Acting Director to Under-Secretary, Internal Affairs, 6 December 1921, TPA: MU1, folder 2, item 6.

³ Under-Secretary Internal Affairs to Thomson, 18 July 1927, TPA: MU2, folder 11, item 4. Thomson replied that the painting could be stored in the Museum shed on Sydney St.

⁴ Oliver, 23 April 1936, Ibid.

⁵ A. Mulgan, National Broadcasting Service to Oliver, 5 October 1939, Ibid.

⁶ Taylor to Oliver, 12 October 1939, Ibid.

⁷ Oliver to Taylor, 19 October 1939, Ibid.

⁸ Jane Vial, "The Burden of Collections - Caring for Art" (paper presented at the South Island Curator's Seminar, Akaroa, August 2004).

Collection', the first collaborative exhibition between the Museum and Gallery, it was hung alongside Colin McCahon's *Northland Panels*, 1958, oil-based house paint on canvas (Te Papa), and Paratene Matchitt's *Te Wepu*, 1986, mixed media (Te Papa), in the gallery foyer. An accompanying pamphlet described how this portrait was:

... on public display for the first time in over a hundred years. This portrait is perhaps the most important 19th century oil painting in the National Collection and has been specially restored and reframed for this exhibition.⁹

This installation had the potential to raise the portrait to iconic status. However, it was not long before Dr Featherston was given a 'good rap across the knuckles', in the spirit of postcolonial reconciliation. As one of a series of debates on art and politics, Brian Easton raised a number of points that were to serve as the basis for the interpretation of the work in subsequent exhibitions at Te Papa. The wall panel for 'Made in New Zealand: Ko au te whenua, te whenua ko au Stories of art and identity' was titled 'Portrait with height advantage'. While it acknowledged that the grouping of Maori and Pakeha leaders was rare, it attributed the phrase 'smoothing the pillow of a dying race' to Featherston and concluded:

Featherston was a short man, nicknamed 'the Little Doctor'. The height advantage William Beetham gave him over these Maori rangatira is extremely suspect!¹⁰

While there may well be a height discrepancy, the fact remains that this portrait is remarkable for its inclusion of two Maori rangatira alongside a pakeha leader, but it is arguably this that has made it problematic as a national icon. However, for this, and other reasons, such as the fact that public subscriptions were sought for its execution, and that it was by a Royal Academician, the portrait remains deserving of a more balanced interpretation. This is provided in the account of the work in *Art at Te Papa*, yet currently, Beetham's portrait is not on view.¹¹ In fact, since the closing of 'Made in New Zealand' in 2008, historical, or colonial New Zealand art, is markedly absent from Te Papa's displays.

⁹ National Art Gallery, *Treasures and Landmarks from the National Collections: Nga Taonga Me Nga Tohuwhenua Tawhito a nga Tupuna*, (Wellington: National Art Gallery and Museum of New Zealand, 1990).

¹⁰ Wall text, 'Made in New Zealand: Ko au te whenua, te whenua ko au Stories of art and identity', Wellington: Te Papa, 17 October 2001 - 13 April 2008.

¹¹ McAloon, ed. *Art at Te Papa*, 76.

While I have stated that *Art at Te Papa* is a much more inclusive publication than *Icons* and acknowledge that any such text is subject to processes of selection, certain figures are notable through their absence. William Swainson, for example, whose body of work was often seen alongside that of J. C. Richmond and Nicholas Chevalier, does not rate a mention, and nor does his daughter Edith Halcombe. Further, as noted, while it brings together ‘upstairs’ and ‘downstairs’, gallery displays still embody that division, for now that ‘Made in New Zealand’ is no longer on display, there is no place for ‘historical’ New Zealand art within the art of the nation. For several years, ‘Made in New Zealand’ provided a forum for the interpretation of the nation’s history through works of art, ranging from F. E. Clarke’s 1860s drawings of fish, to C. F. Goldie’s turn-of-the-century Maori portraits. Arguably, such an exhibition strategy recalls the efforts of Hector, Hamilton and Oliver, who sought to illuminate natural history, ethnology and cultural heritage respectively, by displaying works of art alongside museological specimens.

‘Made in New Zealand’ was also where William Francis Gordon’s flag drawings were on long-term display. However, it is another work by Gordon, *Te Inoi a te Ariki (The Lord’s Prayer in Maori)*, 1879, that provides an opportunity to reflect upon the historical intersection of the Museum and Gallery with the Alexander Turnbull Library. *Te Inoi a te Ariki* is a highly detailed illuminated manuscript: the text is surrounded by an intricate border derived from ancient Maori carvings, which are described in an accompanying text by Gilbert Mair. This is arguably a genuinely bicultural product that is accessible from both a Pakeha and Maori perspective. It posits the Maori version of the Lord’s Prayer next to a *literal* English translation, thus addressing those Pakeha who wish to *read* the Maori as it is written. It also highlights the ambiguity of meaning: *rangatiratanga*, for example, is translated as both kingdom and chieftainship. *Te Inoi a te Ariki* is unique – its ambitions are extraordinary given its time and place of production. The *Grove Dictionary of Art* suggests that ‘since the middle of the sixteenth century it has only been in isolated and eccentric cases that the hand-produced illustration of texts has been a focus of artistic attention’.¹² Gordon’s writings and oeuvre definitely speak of an eccentric at work. A brief survey of holdings of the major colonial libraries and galleries shows that illuminated

¹² Sutton, Kay, “Illuminated manuscripts,” In *The Oxford Companion to Western Art*, edited by Hugh Brigstocke. *Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t118/e1265>, accessed 23 November 2009

manuscripts *were* produced in the colonies, but that they largely took the form of the illustrated address, commemorating a period of service of a notable individual on the point of retirement or departure. Further, I have found no reference or illustration of any that makes such an attempt as Gordon does to integrate the colonial and the indigenous, to produce what is, on so many levels, a thoroughly hybrid work.

Gordon was obviously proud of this work. It was copyrighted and photographed, and at least one newspaper recommended that ‘lovers of the beautiful and curious should not fail to procure a copy’.¹³ He exhibited *Te Inoi a te Ariki* at the Sydney International Exhibition in 1879, where it was catalogued under ‘Engravings, Lithography and Photography’ and given an honourable mention, the report stating ‘this exhibit is a curious one’. In Melbourne, 1880, the work was prominently placed in the New Zealand Court. It was catalogued under ‘Printing and Books’ yet was awarded a prize under ‘Fine Arts’. In 1881 it was exhibited in the Fine Arts Gallery at the Dunedin Industrial Exhibition, and finally, also in Dunedin at the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, 1889-90, *Te Inoi a te Ariki* was displayed in the ‘Early History, Maori and South Seas Court. Clearly, this work challenged those attempting to classify and order culture and nature, a Sisyphean task that may have achieved stability in texts, but was revealed as a more fragile process in the chaotic environment of the international exhibition.

Te Inoi a te Ariki was acquired by the Dominion Museum in 1916 as part of the ‘Gordon collection’, the fate of which has been varied.¹⁴ Rather than staying together as Gordon intended, it has been dispersed throughout and between institutions. The flags were, until recently, on display in Te Papa in ‘Made in New Zealand’, where they featured in a section titled ‘Settling/Unsettling’ and one flag drawing, *Aotearoa*, features in *Art at Te Papa*.¹⁵ (fig 72) *Te Inoi a te Ariki* has had a different fate. Its twentieth-century movements suggest that it continued to elude definitive classification and has yet to have some kind of value restored. In 1920 Gordon wrote to Horace Fildes that *Te Inoi a te Ariki* was held in the Dominion Museum as part of his collection. How then did it come to be housed in the Alexander Turnbull Library where for much of the century it was stored in the uncatalogued Ephemera Collection (with published reproductive material) until its August 1993

¹³ ‘Educational’, *Otago Witness*, 12 July 1879, 7

¹⁴ See chapter 2.

¹⁵ McAloon, ed. *Art at Te Papa*, 80.

transfer to the Manuscripts and Archives collection, a move that seems to privilege the text over any artistic merit the work may possess. *Te Inoi a te Ariki*, according to James Clifford's art-culture system, should be classified as 'art' due to its singular qualities and the fact that its author is known. Yet its current classification undermines this status. While the collecting of illuminated manuscripts in libraries, rather than galleries, is not unusual, it is noteworthy that other examples in the Turnbull are housed within the drawings and prints collection. The potential of this object to participate within a national or art historical discourse has been repressed by its location changes and inaccurate classification. One can imagine, for example, that in twenty-first-century Te Papa, a work such as this would prove stimulating for curators and audiences alike.

These objects and their fates clearly reveal the closely interconnected histories of the state collections: collections that are unstable, and that have continued to shift and evolve throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Further, the collection, interpretation and evaluation of these works of art has reflected the interests (and prejudices) of specific individuals, which has ultimately impacted on their location. This, in turn, has affected the role they have played (or not) in New Zealand's history of art and the shape of that history in the national institutions. These case studies show the ongoing processes of recovery that both inflect and reflect art history as a discipline. *Te Inoi a te Ariki*, which may have served Te Papa's interests well had it remained in the Museum, still resides in relative obscurity in the Library's Archives and Manuscript collection; the Featherston portrait fared unfavourably through its resurrection in the light of a postcolonial interpretation, and has now been re-consigned to the basement.

I have demonstrated in this thesis that the recuperation of colonial art is plagued by its problematic, and often unstable, status both as historical evidence, and as art. Indeed, the aesthetic rehabilitation and establishment of those early colonial artists espoused by McLintock and McCormick as fit for a canon of New Zealand art has been subject to criticism by writers and curators other than the conservative Gallery director, Stewart MacLennan, in the twentieth century. In the 1980s, Leonard Bell, commenting on the evaluative claims made for many a colonial New Zealand artist, observed:

There has been a tendency among some writers on New Zealand art to exaggerate the aesthetic quality of paintings by other amateurs of the early Colonial period – William Fox, Charles Heaphy, John Buchanan, for example. It seems as if Histories and Art Histories of new lands need artist [sic] of high merit – a means of validating European presence, perhaps. If they do not exist they can be invented...Heaphy, Fox: functionaries of the colonialist takeover of New Zealand, making their marks, staking their claims.¹⁶

These re-evaluations consequently served the purposes of cultural colonisation, assisting in the invention or creation of a national identity through the identification of canonical works while avoiding consideration of the broader context or structures that drive such judgements.¹⁷

The aim of this thesis has not, however, been to reinforce these evaluations, or to make evaluative claims for those artists who have not been canonised, but to analyse the processes by which works of art entered the state collections and the uses to which they were put. This thesis has demonstrated that a study of New Zealand's cultural institutions cannot be approached in terms of standard museological theory. They simply do not fit the models of institutional development that have formed the basis of many texts, and which often assume a direct relationship between the forging of a national identity and the foundation of national cultural institutions. Thus, my approach has been to problematise the writing of a progressive national art history which heroically tracks the emergence of a national style in art.

At the outset of this thesis I posed the research question 'how has a canon of colonial New Zealand art been formed through exhibition, commentary and criticism?', in terms of works of art in the state collection. It has become clear, however, that the state's 'use' of colonial New Zealand art largely relied upon the descriptive aspects of art, using it as a means to provide *literal* advertisement of the country and its indigenous inhabitants, rather than seeking to recognise the evolution of, or support the development of, a specific style of New Zealand art. Art was not only to provide a picture of New Zealand, but also participated in providing evidence of civilisation, but here, the supporting works were not colonial, but primarily British, reinforcing the fact that the cultural centre of New Zealand was not to be found in the capital city, but at 'Home'.

¹⁶ Leonard Bell, "Colonial Fortunes: The New Zealand Paintings of Commander R. A. Oliver," *Art New Zealand* 30, no. Autumn (1984): 48.

¹⁷ See Peter Gibbons, "Cultural Colonization and National Identity," *New Zealand Journal of History* 36, no. 1 (2002) on cultural colonisation and its complicity in the construction of national identity.

As I have demonstrated, the canonisation of colonial works of art, specifically the ‘invention/discovery of precursors’ or antecedents for a national tradition, as Francis Pound puts it, was initiated by McCormick’s and McLintock’s efforts in association with the centennial celebrations of 1940.¹⁸ The retrospective exhibition held in conjunction with the opening of the National Art Gallery failed to contextualise the works on show in any way that might support such a project. Consequently, while the book, *Letters and Art in New Zealand*, and the exhibition were supported by the state, neither McLintock nor McCormick was directly connected to any of the state’s cultural institutions, the Museum, Gallery or Library. They actively mobilised colonial works of art from the state collections, primarily the Library, to support their germinal histories, but the furthering of this nationalist art historical project was not taken up in Wellington, but at the Auckland Art Gallery from the 1950s.

My approach, then, has been one that has employed a variety of analytical strategies to account for the collecting and exhibition of the first hundred years of New Zealand art by the state institutions. It has attempted to provide a more fully contextualised account of this period, thereby avoiding a historical narrative that recounts the emergence of canonical works. To do so I have paid attention to: the place of class in relation to the colonial art world, especially the question of taste and its socially determining function; the aesthetics of ‘space’ and the practicalities of exhibition in the colonial period; the shifting ground of what constitutes ‘Art’ and in particular New Zealand ‘Art’ in the period under study; and the fluctuating status of much colonial art as both ‘information’ and as ‘art’. I have closely analysed the organisation, classification and display of art from the state collections. In this I have foregrounded the act of collecting, in particular the role of the collector in shaping the state collections according to their individual ambitions. I have brought to bear an analysis of the exhibition and display of works of art within the state collections both locally and abroad, to consider how such displays served various ideological purposes. Within this analysis I have also been concerned to pay attention to the intentions of the artists themselves within these exhibitionary contexts, highlighting the often contradictory demands of the marketplace alongside the processes of validation signified by the processes of exhibition and critical evaluation.

¹⁸ Francis Pound, *The Invention of New Zealand: Art and National Identity, 1930-1970* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2009).

Most significantly, this thesis has been unique in not just considering the evolution of *one* state institution, but in recognising that the histories of New Zealand's cultural institutions—Museum, Gallery and Library—required an approach that considered their development in relation to one another. This untold history of the interconnectedness of those institutions as resources of the *state* complicates their twentieth-century modernist identities. Indeed their nineteenth and early-twentieth-century origins ironically reflect the reassessment of colonial art in the last few decades, particularly in terms of the challenges posed by colonial art to the postmodern descendent of the Museum and Gallery, the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. For, as Paul DiMaggio stated in 1987:

Much of the Western world has entered a period of cultural declassification – the unravelling and weakening of ritual classifications. Artistic classification systems are becoming more differentiated and less hierarchical, classifications weaker and less universal.¹⁹

Thus, while initially colonial art was readily assigned to fulfilling 'topographical' or 'historical' functions, meaning that within the confines of the Gallery, at least, such art was ineligible for canonical status, the passage of time has eroded these hierarchical distinctions, especially in relation to the eccentric, which more often than not emerges as the most interesting. By drawing attention to the breadth of colonial art collected by the state, not just the typical or iconic works, this thesis has elucidated the ideologies and motives that have driven the collection and exhibition of colonial New Zealand art. By studying the collections of Museum, Library and Gallery through this lens, a more rounded, yet complex picture of early New Zealand art and the state institutions within which it is held has emerged. Perhaps it is by holding a mirror to the past, by further recovering the histories of the national collections, that the challenges of the future alluded to by McAloon at the outset of this chapter might be productively embraced.

¹⁹ Paul DiMaggio, "Classification in Art," *American Sociological Review* 52, no. 4 (1987): 452.

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 - B. Published New Zealand-related Material 1840-1940: Exhibition Catalogues, Articles and Reports
 - C. Newspapers and Periodicals
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1. John McGregor, *Portrait of Dr Hector*, c. 1863, photograph,
ATL: PA1-q-264-17-4.

2. Johannes Gerrard Keulemans, *Prosthemadera Novae Zealandiae* [Tui], adult and young, from Walter Lawry Buller, *A History of the Birds of New Zealand*, London: John van Hoorst, 1873, facing page 87.

3. John Buchanan, 'Sporobolus africanus', plate 18 in *Manual of the Indigenous Grasses of New Zealand*, Wellington: James Huges, 1880.

4. Daniel Louis Mundy, *The Te Kiwi Geyser, Rotomahana*, c. 1869, albumen print, ATL: PA1-f-042-27.

5. William Cooper, *View from Limestone Beach*, 1873, watercolour, sent to Hector by Cooper in 1873, Te Papa: 1992-0035-1669.

6. Herbert Deveril, *Railway bridge over the Tokomairiro River*, 1880s, albumen print, ATL: PA7-46-43.

7. Gustavus von Tempsky, *On General Chute's March*, 1860s, watercolour, gifted to Colonial Museum by Sir William Fox in 1872, Te Papa: 1992-0035-1186.

8. William Beetham, *Dr Isaac Featherston and the Te Atiawa Chiefs, Hon Wi Tako Ngatata MLC and Honiana Te Puni*, oil on canvas, 1857-58, deposited in Colonial Museum, 1881, Te Papa: 1.006857.

9. James McDonald, *Augustus Hamilton and a Maori youth from Ohinemutu*, Christchurch Exhibition 1906-7, 1906, reproduction from a black and white gelatin glass negative, Te Papa: MA_C.001754.

10. Wilhelm Dittmer, *Mana, Portrait of te Heuheu Tukino*, 1904, oil on canvas, purchased for Colonial Museum, 1905, Te Papa: 1992-0035-1252.
Iwi clearance for reproduction of this portrait was granted by Tuwharetoa; thanks particularly to Te Ariki, Sir Tumu te Heuheu, Timi te Heuheu and Rangiiiria Hedley.

11. James Barry, *The Reverend Thomas Kendall and the Maori Chiefs Hongi and Waikato*, 1820, oil on canvas, gift of Church Missionary Society to New Zealand Government, 1905, ATL: G-618.

12. Mr and Mrs E. H. Featon, Pohutukawa. *Metrosideros tomentosa*, in *The Art Album of New Zealand Flora*, volume one, Wellington: Bock and Cousins, 1889.

13. F. E. Clarke, plates 6 and 7 in *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 58.

14. Items from the Gordon Collection, *Maori Rebel Flag*, *Hau Hau Flag*, c. 1900, watercolour and ink on paper; *Plan of Gate Pa*, c. 1900, ink on paper; *Portrait of Jane Foley*, c. 1895, black and white photograph. In *Icons Nga Taonga: from the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa*, Wellington: Te Papa Press, 202.

15. Photographer unknown, *View of the Billiard room at Elibank, Seated left to right, Robert Thorburn Turnbull, E F Hadfield and Alexander Horsburgh Turnbull, 1890s, photograph, ATL: 1/2-002608-F.*

16. Georgina Hetley, *Leptospermum scoparium*. *Manuka*, 1880s, watercolour, possibly on of two drawings purchased by Alexander Turnbull in 1889, ATL: B-073-015.

17. Edward William Payton, *A Bush Camp at Nihotapu* 1887, etching, purchased by Alexander Turnbull, 1889, ATL: A-045-002.

18. William Fox, *Bird's eye view of Watoi*, 1848, watercolour, purchased by Alexander Turnbull in 1915, ATL: C-013-001.

19. Charles Heaphy, *Mt Egmont from the Southward*, 1840, watercolour, purchased by Alexander Turnbull in 1915, ATL: C-025-008.

20. Artist unknown: [Sketches of a Maori muru at Parawera; the co-respondents. Confronted by the injured husband and wife, while the giddy dance proceeds in front of the marae, c. 1860-1890, pencil on paper, gifted by Gilbert Mair to Alexander Turnbull in 1913, ATL: A-081-004.

21. Emily Cumming Harris, *Celmisia chapmanii* and *Celmisia vernicosa* Campbell Island, c. 1890s, watercolour, purchased 1924, ATL: C-023-018.

22. Louisa Marian Herrmann, *Council members of the Fine Arts Association of New Zealand and the first council of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts*, c. 1897, silver gelatin print, ATL: PAColl-3861-35-01.

From left to right, standing: A T Bate, Edward Noel Barraud, (painting of the late Charles Decimus Barraud, president of the Academy by James Nairn, see fig 23) Arthur Dewhurst Riley, Frederick de Jersey Clere. Seated: Thomas Kennedy Macdonald, Augustus Carl Ferdinand Koch, and F Grady.

23. James Nairn, *Portrait of C. D. Barraud*, 1897, oil on canvas, Gift of the NZAFA, 1936, (presented by James Nairn in 1897), Te Papa: 1936-0012-1.

24. James Nairn, *A Summer Idyll*, 1903, oil on canvas, Gift of the NZAFA, 1936 (purchased by NZAFA 1903), Te Papa: 1936-0012-7.

25. John Gully, *Lake Te Anau*, 1888, watercolour, Gift of the NZAFA 1936 (gifted to the NZAFA by Mrs Robert Lee, Gully's daughter, in 1912) Te Papa: 1936-0012-57.

26. John Williams, *H.M.S. North Star, destroying Pomare's pa, Otuihu, Bay of Islands*, 1845, watercolour, purchased for National Historical Collection 1920 and transferred from Museum to Library the same year, ATL: A-079-032.

27. Fine Art Gallery, New Zealand Exhibition, Dunedin 1865, photograph,
ATL: 48820-1/2.

28. George O'Brien, *Exhibition Buildings*, 1865, watercolour
Dunedin: Otago Early Settlers Museum.

29. John Buchanan, *Milford Sound, looking north-west from Freshwater Basin*, 1863, watercolour, Dunedin: Hocken Library.

30. Charles Heaphy, *The crater of Rangitoto Island, 960 ft. high, no. 1*, c. 1850s, ATL: C-025-001.

31. Charles Decimus Barraud, *Rangiheta [sic] New Zealand Maori Chief who killed Capt'n Wakefield at the Wairau massacre, Jun 1843*, 1863, donated by Mrs E. Eccles in 1959, ATL: B-004-020.

32. Creator unknown, *Colonial Museum and James Hector's house, Wellington*,
c. 1880, photograph, ATL: 1/2-005154-G.

33. Colonial Museum floorplan, in James Hector, *Catalogue of the Colonial Museum, Wellington, New Zealand*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1870.

34. Creator unknown, *Colonial Museum interior*, c. 1895, photograph,
ATL: PAColl-3114-2.

35. William Thomas Locke Travers, *Mr William Newcombe and family on the shores of Lake Guyon*, c. 1870s, photograph, ATL: PA7-22-04.

36. Anton Seuffert, *Hooker cabinet*, 1867, marquetry secretaire, purchased 1987,
Te Papa: PF000206.

37. James Crowe Richmond, *Ngatapa from the East*, 1869, lithograph,
ATL: A-048-011.

LONDON: Printed and Published at the Office, 138, Strand, in the Parish of St. Clement Danes, in the County of Middlesex, by GEORGE C. LEIGHTON, 138, Strand, above. SATURDAY, AUGUST 16, 1873.

38. Vienna exhibition plan, *Illustrated London News*, 16 August 1873, 160. Although there was a Fine Arts Gallery, New Zealand's paintings and photographs were displayed in the New Zealand court itself.

39. Centennial Photographic Co, *Main Building: New Zealand*, Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, 1876, photograph, Free Library of Philadelphia.

40. Bird's-eye view of New Zealand Court, Sydney International Exhibition, 1879-80, photograph, Te Papa: 0.020720.

41. Installation diagram, Emily Harris to Hector, 10 July 1879, Te Papa Archives, MU188, Sydney International Exhibition: registered correspondence, box 1, no. 379.

42. Eleanor Sperrey, *Italian Goatherd*, c. 1884, oil on canvas, Gift of Mrs K. A. Mair 1912, Te Papa: 1912-0029-1.

43. Floorplan, Colonial and Indian Exhibition, *Report of the Royal Commission for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886*, London: William Clowes & Sons, 1887. New Zealand's paintings and photographs were split between the Fine Arts display in the Royal Albert Hall (at the top of the plan) and the New Zealand Court (H on the left side of the plan)

44. Charles Spencer, *Cold Water Cups, White Terrace*, 1880-85, gelatin silver print,
Te Papa: O.000766/1.

45. Charles Blomfield, *Pink Terraces*, 1889, oil on canvas,
ATL: G-366.

46. Charles Spencer, *Wairoa Settlement, Looking East*, 14 June 1886, black and white photograph, albumen silver print, Te Papa: O.002098.

47. Plan showing the arrangement of the New Zealand Court at the Centennial International Exhibition, Melbourne, 1888, TPA: MU183, folder 1, item 1. The Fine Arts were displayed in the hexagonal rooms running along the top of the plan.

48. Picture Gallery, Melbourne Centennial Exhibition, 1888, photograph,
Te Papa: 0.009409.
Eleanor Sperrey's *Italian Goatherd* is on the far right.

49. David Alexander de Maus, Picture Gallery, New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, Dunedin 1889-90, albumen print, Hocken: Album 507, page 11. Eleanor Sperrey's *Italian Goatherd* is hung in the middle row of the extreme left of the photograph.

IMAGE UNAVAILABLE FOR REPRODUCTION

50. Joseph Gaut, *King Tawhiao*, 1888, oil on canvas, purchased for Dominion Museum 1911, Te Papa: 1000-0000-52.

(Please refer to *Icons Ngā Taonga: from the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa*, p.10 to view this image)

51. Creator unknown, *Two interior views of New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts Gallery, Whitmore Street, Wellington, 1893*, albumen print, ATL: PAColl-0232-1 and PAColl-0232-2.

52. Creator unknown, *Wellington Art Club Exhibition*, 1894, gelatin silver print, Te Papa, O.031087.

View of a wall showing nine paintings by Mabel Hill hung on exhibition.

First column left to right: *Autumn Flowers*, *Purity*, *St. Clair - Dunedin*.

Second column: *Portrait of Mr Nairn* (see fig. 63), *Fruit Study*, *An Old House - Dunedin*.

Third column: *Summer*, *The Avon - Christchurch*.

Fourth column: *Little Chrysanthemum*, and an unknown painting not by Mabel Hill.

53. McGee and Gamble, 'New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts Picture Gallery',
*Wellington Provincial District: Cyclopedia of New Zealand: Industrial, Descriptive,
Historical, Biographical Facts, Figures, Illustrations,*
Wellington: Cyclopedia Company, 1897, 221.

54. Augustus Hamilton, *Old Dominion Museum – interior view of the Main Hall*, 1903-1913, reproduction from a black and white gelatin glass negative, Te Papa: MA_C.001050.

55. Augustus Hamilton, *Old Dominion Museum – interior view of the Main Hall*, 1903-1913, reproduction from a black and white gelatin glass negative, Te Papa: MA_C.001049.

56. George French Angas, *E Wai and Kahoki, nieces of Rauparaha*, plate IX, in *The New Zealanders Illustrated*, London, Thomas McLean, 1847.

The New Zealand Exhibit in the Fish and Forestry Building at the World's Fair, St. Louis.

57. 'The New Zealand Exhibit in the Forestry, Fish, and Game Building at the World's Fair', C. L. Harris, 'Impressions of the World's Fair', in *New Zealand Graphic*, 8 October 1904, p. 27.

58. Creator unknown, *James Ingram McDonald working on a clay sculpture*, c. 1905, photograph, ATL: PAColl-6348-27.

59. Creator unknown, *Main Hall of the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition of 1906-1907 in Christchurch, 1906-7*, photograph, ATL: PAColl-5932-28.

60. Leslie Hinge, *Hongi at the inner pa at the New Zealand Exhibition, Christchurch, 1906-7*, photograph, ATL: PAColl-3050.

61. George French Angas, *Te Heuheu's old pa of Waitahamui at Taupo Lake*, plate XVIII, in *The New Zealanders Illustrated*, London, Thomas McLean, 1847.

NEW ZEALAND PICTURES, ART GALLERY.

62. *New Zealand Pictures, Art Gallery*, in James Cowan, *Official Record of the New Zealand International Exhibition of Arts and Industries, Held at Christchurch, 1906-7: A Descriptive and Historical Account*. Wellington: Government Printer, 1910, p. 269.

63. Mabel Hill, *Portrait of J. M. Nairn*, 1894, watercolour, gift of the NZAFA 1936, Te Papa, 1936-0012-76.

64. *The pictures, West Coast Court, in Cowan, Official Record of the New Zealand International Exhibition, p. 212.*

THE GOVERNMENT TOURIST DEPARTMENT'S ROOM.

65. *The Government Tourist's Department Room*, in Cowan, *Official Record of the New Zealand International Exhibition*, p. 141.

66. After Kennett Watkins, *Death of Major Von Tempskey [sic] at Te-Ngutu-o-te-Manu, New Zealand, 7th September, 1868*, 1893, colour lithograph, ATL: C-033-006.

67. W. S. Hatton, *View of Dunedin, Otago, N.Z.*, 1867, watercolour, purchased for Dominion Museum, 1916, Te Papa: 1992-0035-1218.

68. Wood engraving after William Meluish, 'Panorama of Dunedin', *Illustrated London News*, 6 April 1867, p. 332.

69. W. S. Hatton, *View of Dunedin, New Zealand*, 1859, watercolour, purchased by Alexander Turnbull 1914, ATL: E-151-q.

70. James Ingram McDonald, *Captain William Hobson*, 1913, oil, ATL: G-826-1.

71. Horatio Gordon Robley, *Tattooed Gate, Maketu*, 1865, watercolour, ATL: B-139-016.

72. William Francis Gordon, *Aotearoa flag*, 1916, watercolour and ink, purchased by Dominion Museum 1916, Te Papa: 1992-0035-1631-10.

73. William Swainson, *Silver Leaved Fern, Hutt Forest*, 1847-8, pencil and graphite, gift of Mrs Turton, 1916, Te Papa: 1916-0001-24.

74. Edith Stanway Halcombe, cover of *The Feilding Settlement, Manchester Block, Manawatu, New Zealand* by A W F Halcombe, lithograph, 1878, ATL: A-226-014.

75. Photographer unknown, *Entrance Hall of the Turnbull Library*, c. 1930s, photograph, ATL: G-3846-1/1.

76. Photographer unknown, *Entrance foyer of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Bowen Street, Wellington*, c. 1940, photograph, ATL: F-18596-1/2.

77. J. T. Salmon, *National Art Gallery, Looking through sculpture hall to portrait of King George V*, 5 November 1936, reproduction from a black and white negative, Te Papa: MA_B.005617.

78. M. Mathews, *A corner of the National Portrait Gallery*, drawing, in *The National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum*, 1936.

79. *Maori Hall at the Dominion Museum, Buckle Street, Wellington, c. 1936, photograph, ATL: 1/1-003855-G.*

80. *Thomas Heberley and his staff reconstructing the Te Awhi pataka in the Maori Hall at the Dominion Museum, Wellington, 1936, photograph, ATL: PAColl-8557-65.*

81. *Maori women from Otaki making tukutuku panels, 1936, photograph, ATL: PAColl-5927-60.*

82. A. S. Paterson, cartoon, *Dominion*, 8 August 1936, p. 13.

83. *Art works in the National Art Gallery, Wellington, 16 June 1936, 1936,*
photograph The Dominion Post Collection,
ATL: EP-Municipal-National Art Gallery-01.

84. J. T. Salmon, *National Art Gallery, View through Western Galleries to van der Velden's 'A Waterfall in the Otira Gorge'*, 3 October 1936, reproduction from a black and white negative, Te Papa: MA_B.005611.

85. *National Art Gallery, Buckle Street, Wellington, 1939, photograph.*
Original *Evening Post* caption attached to back of print reads: "Hanging pictures at the [words torn off] Gallery, where preparation is going on for the Centennial Art Exhibition of paintings [words torn off] which opens on Nov 10. Many of the works are on loan from the [words torn off] Gallery in London and other notable art centres."
ATL: PAColl-6301-46.

PREPARING THE EXHIBITION OF NEW ZEALAND ART

The pictures comprising the Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art being hung in the Pioneer Hall yesterday. On the right, supervising the hanging, are Dr A. H. McLintock (director of the exhibition), Mr Gordon Tovey (vice-chairman of the Dunedin committee) and Mrs John McIndoe (Mabel Hill), a member of the committee.

86. Hanging paintings for the opening of the Centennial Exhibition in Dunedin,
Otago Daily Times, 15 February 1940, p. 13.

87a. The 'Coronation' picture arrives at the Auckland Art Gallery.

87b. The 'Coronation' picture on display in Auckland Art Gallery, clippings from *Auckland Star*, Auckland Art Gallery scrapbook, E. H. McCormick Research Library.

88. A. H. McLintock, *National Centennial Exhibition of New Zealand Art: Catalogue*,
Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1940.
Cover featuring *A Valley in the Seaward Kaikouras* by Alfred W. Walsh.

89. E.H. McCormick, *Letters and Art in New Zealand*, Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1940, cover.

NATIONAL GALLERY ADELAIDE

BRITISH

SPRING ICE

TOM THOMSON

NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA, OTTAWA

A CENTURY OF CANADIAN ART

1938

THE TATE GALLERY, LONDON, S.W.1

90. *A Century of Canadian Art*, London: Tate Gallery, 1938.

indeed—do more than this; they portray experiences of an elusive kind, rarely to be expressed in words—words in fact being the wrong medium, unless they are used by a sensitive poet, and poets, as distinct from versifiers, were few in early New Zealand. Throughout the range of Heaphy's work you are aware of a man wrestling with the strange contours and colours of a new environment and, moreover, attempting to define the peculiar quality of each part of New Zealand, as he visited it in turn. The magnificent sweep of Cloudy Bay, where sea, hills, and bush unite in one curving harmony; then, in the sub-tropical north, the oily calm of a tidal river overshadowed by dense kauris; and, again in the south, the warm, open Waiamea plain, contrasting with the gloom of the upper Buller region which no sunshine can quite dispel—all this was within Heaphy's compass. Sometimes the work fails, more often than not because his vision is blurred by the softer greens and blues of the English landscape or because he cannot forget the subdued palette of his student days. When he does get away from the conventions of his time, ignoring the requirements of directors and treating a New Zealand subject freely in his own way, the result is a small masterpiece. Such is the beautifully decorative 'Kakariki, from Ship Cove and Teawaiti' (1839) and such 'Mt. Egmont from the southward', which remains one of the few satisfying

CHARLES HEAPHY: MOUNT EGMONT (c. 1840)

CHRISTOPHER PERKINS: TARANAKI (1931)

91. McCormick, *Letters and Art in New Zealand* facing page 34 showing Charles Heaphy's and Christopher Perkins' views of Mount Taranaki.

gold prospector) in 1862 he found employment with James Hector as draughtsman-botanist, and during exploratory trips painted the handful of water-colours which now form part of the Hocken collection. Building up his pictures in a series of planes and using a simple range of colours—browns, grey-greens, and pale blues—he dispensed with the prevailing naturalism and placed the chief stress on forms and contours. The result is that his work has an impressiveness and a strength of composition almost unique at the time. ('Charming' and 'carefully arranged' are the epithets appropriate to the best work of his contemporaries.) In his finest water-colour, 'Milford Sound looking N.W. from Freshwater Basin', he suggests as no one else has done the stark, incredible grandeur of that natural prodigy. Except for the gaunt trunk of a dead tree, a gushing torrent, and a few other formal features, detail is absent, and the emphasis of the picture is placed on the superb lines and masses of the mountains, as they rise and fall. By comparison, the Dunedin Gallery 'Milford Sound' (1877) by John Gully, with its microscopically exact foreground and its tiny ship to emphasise the immensity of the mountains, is insipid and obvious. The fact is that Buchanan was free from the nineteenth-century Romantic conventions which so hampered his contemporaries, both the artists and the poets. This freedom was probably not of his own seeking and may have been due to the circumstances of his calling

JOHN BUCHANAN: MILFORD SOUND (c. 1863)

JOHN GULLY: MILFORD SOUND (1877)

92. McCormick, *Letters and Art in New Zealand* facing page 102, showing John Buchanan's and John Gully's views of Milford Sound.

of two Christchurch artists, A. Elizabeth Kelly and Archibald F. Nicoll. The more mature portraits which have brought Mrs Kelly recognition beyond New Zealand are not in public collections, where she is represented as the portrayer of youth. The National Gallery's 'May' and 'Youth' in the McDougall Gallery are incarnations, in another less complex medium, of the eager young womanhood so often found in Katherine Mansfield. On the other hand, 'Lady Stout' and 'G. Harper, Esq.', in Wellington and Christchurch respectively, suggest that Nicoll is at his best in treating old age. These two contrasting studies, handled with penetration and great technical skill, go beyond the mere individuals to suggest, as good portraits often do, the circumstances and the people who have helped to shape those individuals.

Standing outside the category of commissioned work are a few paintings by A. H. O'Keeffe, most of C. F. Goldie's extensive *oeuvre*, and H. Linley Richardson's studies of the Maori as he was. The finest of O'Keeffe's paintings in public galleries is 'The Defence Minister's Telegram' (1921) in Dunedin, an impressive piece of work, poignantly recording one aspect of the war as it touched New Zealand. Goldie's portraits, highly accomplished, almost photographically exact, now have a slightly archaeological flavour to a generation which has seen the Maoris turn from sad retrospection to a vigorous reconstruction of their present. Some conception of the new

C. F. GOLDIE: THE WIDOW (1912)

FRANCES HODGKINS

MAORI WOMAN AND CHILD (1901)

94. William Francis Gordon, *Te Inoi a te Ariki (The Lord's Prayer in Maori)*, 1879, ink and watercolour, purchased as part of the 'Gordon Collection' by Dominion Museum in 1916, possibly transferred to Library as part of the National Historical Collection in early 1920s, ATL: MSO-Papers-4853