



GORDON H. BROWN GIFT NOW ON SHOW IN THE LIBRARY

Last week Adam Art Gallery staff hung a new suite of works in the Central Library by the circulation desk on Level 2. These are nine of the 11 works gifted to the Victoria University of Wellington Art Collection by prominent art writer and historian Gordon H. Brown (b. 1931).

Gordon H. Brown has a special relationship with Victoria. In 2002 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Literature by the University and in the same year he gave the first of what has become an annual lecture in Art History, now known as the Gordon H. Brown Lecture. Brown has also made important donations of research materials to the Art History Library and Archive and regularly keeps in touch with staff of that programme.

Brown is a key figure in New Zealand's art history. He graduated with a Diploma in Fine Arts from Canterbury School of Art in 1956, and from 1960 to 1977 he worked in libraries and art galleries throughout New Zealand. It is for his work as a freelance writer on the visual arts from 1977 to the present that he is most recognised. Together with Hamish Keith, Brown authored the foundational text on New Zealand art: *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting 1839-1967* (Collins, 1969). The life and work of Colin McCahon, whom he met while studying in Canterbury, has provided a constant focus in his writing career. In 2010 Brown published *Towards the Promised Land: On the Life and Art of Colin McCahon* (Auckland University Press, 2010), a culmination of years spent thinking, talking and writing on McCahon's work.

The intimately-scaled paintings and works on paper that constitute the Gordon H. Brown gift are indicative of Brown's artistic taste and a product of his close relations with many of New Zealand's leading artists. It is fitting that this gift is being showcased in the University's Central Library, which, from 1968-1982 hosted art exhibitions organised by the University Extension Exhibition Programme. These exhibitions, featuring a range of artists from Colin McCahon and Ralph Hotere, to Gretchen Albrecht and Vivian Lynn, aimed to actively engage University staff, students and the public with the maturing contemporary art scene of the 1970s and '80s. They were also often an avenue through which works entered the University's art collection. The library remains a key site for the display of works of art from the VUW Art Collection.

If you wish to know more about these or other works in the VUW Art Collection contact the Adam Art Gallery adamartgallery@vuw.ac.nz or visit the Adam Art Gallery website www.adamartgallery.org.nz/collection