

ON DIT

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FRIDAY, MAY 23, 1947.

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STUDENT ART EXHIBITION



FIRST PRIZE WATER COLOURS,
Pam Cleland.

SUCCESS OF INITIAL VENTURE

Prof. Cornell Commends Organisers

THE Adelaide University saw its first Student Art Exhibition during the past week. Held under the auspices of the National Union of Australian University Students, its immediate aims were two-fold. The best 20 entries are to be sent to Sydney and entered in an exhibition of work representative of all the Universities in Australia.

During the second term, this exhibition will tour the Commonwealth. It is expected in Adelaide in July. In addition it is hoped that the exhibition will give impetus to the demand that Adelaide follow the example of Melbourne in the appointment of a Professor of Fine Arts. When the original request was received from Sydney that the exhibi-

should be open to all students. They expected to find a few promising ex-service artists among these students, but were not prepared for the 200 exhibits entered. The organisers had expected, at the most, 30 or 40 pictures—"enough to fill a bathroom," according to one of the organisers. In fact, the entries—oils, watercolors, photo-



"FACE AND HANDS,"
Keith Neighbour.

GALLERY DIRECTOR IMPRESSED

SPECIAL 'VARSITY ART STUDIO SUGGESTED

Mr. Louis McCubbin, Director of the S.A. National Gallery, was extremely impressed at the lively and courageous, if still slightly and naturally immature exhibition. Ten years ago such a thing would not have been possible within a University, yet we had now entered a stage where no artistic attempt was too ambitious for undergraduates to attack. There appeared to be a new and revolutionary atmosphere of enthusiasm for the visual arts among the academic students of the day, and the work exhibited illustrated all the trends in the fine arts to-day.

Excellent advice was given by Mr. McCubbin when he suggested that future building additions to the Union block should include an art exhibition studio. This could be used for student exhibitions, exhibitions on loan from the National Gallery and would also provide a home for the Carnegie Collection, now hidden away in the recesses of the Barr Smith Library. Such a studio could also be used for student meetings.

Referring to the suggested foundation of a Chair of Fine Arts, Mr. McCubbin felt that it was impractical at the moment. Approximately £30,000 would be needed to set up the Chair, and only a small percentage of students would be able to support it. However, if we could obtain such a Chair it would be an extremely good thing for Adelaide,

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FIRST PRIZE OILS John Dowie.

tion be held, the organisers (Miss Pamela Cleland and Mr. Max Birrell) knew that work was being done here by students, who are art students as well as University students. However, they felt that an exhibition limited to the works of such students would be hardly fair to the undergraduate body as a whole, therefore, decided that the competition

graphs, drawings and posters filled the entire Lady Symon Hall.

CHAIR OF FINE ARTS ADVOCATED

The Lady Symon Hall was packed to hear Prof. Cornell open the exhibition. Declaring that many
(Continued Next Page)

PRIZE WINNERS

John Dowie, an architectural student, who received the prize for the best oil painting—an excellent study of the betting ring at a metropolitan race-course — is already a well-established artist. One of his works has been hung in the National Gallery and he recently had success at the S.A. Society of Arts Autumn Exhibition.

The second award for oil painting was received by Brian Seidel, a student of the Teachers' College whose "Country Cottage" shows an interesting development in color technique.

Pam Cleland, Arts and Social Science, who won a prize for the best watercolor, was one of the organisers of the exhibition. Pam has successfully sold four of her entries for a total sum of nineteen guineas.

Walter Wotzke, whose "Cottage" was judged to be the most promising entry, has studied painting under Gwen Barringer, and is, at the moment, a student of music at the University Conservatorium.

One of the most interesting of entrants is Keith Neighbour. His entries included an oil, a watercolor, one pencil drawing, and three photographs. It was for his startling photograph "Faces and Hands" that he received the photographic award. Keith, an engineering student, received a similar photographic award in last year's International Photographic Salon and has also had his work exhibited in Britain and the U.S.A. His pencil entry was executed while he was a prisoner-of-war, and was one of the few works which the Japanese permitted him to retain on his release. A bright red Japanese censorship mark remains one of its distinctive features.

On Dit

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GALLERY DIRECTOR

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and would merit the support of the Gallery.

It is to be hoped that the local N.U.A.U.S. organiser will accept the advice of the prize-winners and Mr. McCubbin, who suggested that if the standard of the touring exhibition reached that of Adelaide's best entries the National Union Ex-

teresting, both the modernists and the more conservative being represented.

Professor Cornell considered that the success of this first exhibition warrants the holding of similar annual exhibitions leading to a tremendously increased interest in the visual arts among students, and finally to the establishment of a Chair of Fine Arts.

J.R. and J.B.

EDITOR'S NOTE

As this is an art issue, the Editor feels that an editorial would be out of place and would only serve to display his ignorance.

hibition should be housed in one of Adelaide's exhibiting galleries. That an exhibition in the bay of the National Gallery would do much to break the bad impression of University students held by a large and wrongfully prejudiced section of the public is undoubted.

Noel Adams, writing in "The Advertiser," called attention to the fact that while the art is that of University students, it is not University art. This arose from the fact that a pencil sketch of Sir Kerr Grant and an oil depicting the lawns at the front of the Varsity were the only two entries apparently connected with University subjects. This, however, overlooks the fact that most of the entries in the modernist section of the exhibition—ranging from Don Thompson's satirical "University Council" to Brian Claridge's "Socialist Bloc," are intimately connected with contemporary Varsity thought. The popularity of this section was evidenced by the quick sale of works by Don Thompson and Brian Claridge (including the portrait of Edgar Castle).

Many students and visitors saw the exhibition, and this interest may be taken as an indication of the support the N.U.A.U.S. Touring Exhibition should receive.

JOHN RODER and JUSTIN BARKER.

STUDENT ART EXHIBITION

(Continued from Previous Page)

other members of the University staff could have been more appropriately chosen to open such an exhibition, he suggested that he had been chosen because "the fellow fancies he can talk about anything under the sun." He assured all those who had entered that the judging had been done by experts—he had followed them attempting to keep out their way as much as possible.

Prof. Cornell was pleasantly and remarkably surprised at the high standard of work submitted not by artists who were University students, but by University students who looked to painting, drawing and photography for a hobby. The diversity of entries was extremely in-

ANDREW H. YOUNG

It was with very deep regret that the University learned, last Saturday, of the death of Andrew Young. He had not been in the best of health for many years, but the suddenness of his passing was a shock to all those who knew him.

He was an officer of the University Athletics Club, and probably was one of the three best athletes ever to represent the club. At one stage, he won 32 successive championships, including the Inter-varsity 440 yards, 3 times. He also won the 440 yards for Australia against a combined New Zealand Universities' team on the Sydney Cricket Ground. He was captain of the athletics team for three years, and of the rifle team in 1933.

An injured shoulder kept him out of active athletics after that, but his interest never waned. His help in little matters was noticed by few, but it was offered without reservation, without expectation of any reward except the satisfaction he got through helping his old club.

The club, and the University, will be poorer for their loss.

DR. CALLAGHAN ADDRESSES AG. SCIENCE STUDENTS

On the night of Monday, May 12, several enthusiastic Ag. Science students visited the George Murray Hall to listen to Dr. Callaghan, principal of Roseworthy College, and chairman of the Land and Development Executive for settling ex-servicemen on the land, speak about "Soldier Settlement in the South East."

It was interesting to hear from Dr. Callaghan, as he dispelled many ugly rumors that have been circulating regarding soldier settlement.

Regeneration of Reaction?

To the Editor,

Sir,—Universities, like armies, have their "spinifex wireless." I have heard at many points along the line that the more enlightened conservatives (if that is not a contradiction in terms) are considering the formation of a political club to give overt expression to their political philosophy. As the gestation period for any specie is definite and limited, I have begun to wonder when the new-born will see the light of day.

Assuming that the "spinifex wireless" is accurate in its foreknowledge (and I found it so in all "Top Secret" matters in H.M. Forces), I can only assume that there must be some reason for the tardiness of the expected birth. It would be over-optimistic of me to attribute the delay to any lack of enthusiasm, initiative, or understanding on the part of those of the Right. Consequently, I am driven to the conclusion that the tie-up is dictated by the want of an appropriate name for the proposed organisation.

Do not let us under-emphasise the importance of a suitable name—especially for parties of the Right. We must not forget that in our domestic political arena the party of the Right has changed its name four times in little more than a generation. For the time being it has attempted to cash in on the ethos attached to the word "Liberal" quite overlooking the fact that the historical significance of that word is completely foreign to the aspirations of the remnants of the U.A.P. However, there are already indications that a fine word has become tainted and that all is not happy in the ranks of the party that has appropriated it.

Germans, of course, are more thorough-going than Anglo-Saxons. The name assumed by the arch-Rightest party of modern history (a party, by the way, eulogised by "Liberal" leader, Mr. R. G. Menzies—Hansard 1939) was "Nationalist Socialist Workers' Labor Party." You see there is more there that the people will support. Comment on the political philosophy and in-

tegrity of the organisation is, happy, superfluous.

If the difficulty, then, is one of nomenclature, I can sympathise with those faced by that inevitable dilemma. In any case, and by whatever name it may emerge, I welcome the conception of a second political club (assuming, of course, that the Aquinas Society is not one). The Socialist Club believes that civilisation is doomed unless man develops, and develops quickly, a social consciousness commensurate with his advances in science and technology. It exists to stimulate interest in political and social matters, and is prepared to submit its ideas to students for critical examination. It is confident that any honest examination of the society in which we live cannot harm the causes of Socialism. Quite the contrary!

If, however, I am misjudging this embryo organisation, I apologise. If the purpose of its proposed formation is not that of sincere and intelligent enquiry into the body politic, then its appearance will be welcomed for different reasons—as a study in pathology. In this latter event, there could be no scrupulous hesitancy over a mere name. Perhaps valuable time is being wasted collecting ammunition. In this case, I may be able to make useful suggestions. First, take over the political cliches of this year's "On Dits." I realise there have been only a few issues yet. But plenty more can be gleaned from the daily press. Even better stuff can be got from certain non-secular papers and pamphlets. Finally, write to Messrs. Harrison, Abbott, and Cameron, c/o Canberra. Although certain of these gentlemen are not acquainted with the difference between a bacteriologist and a physicist, they are all experts in political obscurantism.

This, Mr. Editor, is addressed to those of your readers who may be interested in the formation of the aforementioned club, and who may be able to supply us with further information. "Spinifex wireless" has been silent on the matter these last few weeks.

Yours, etc.,
RON HIESER.

WHEN IS A GIRAFFE NOT A GIRAFFE?

Modern art has thrown off the shackles of form, but has yet to realise that with them went its claim to be called art. The artist may wish to express his emotions in drawing a giraffe, but if the result of his labor is a drawing of an animal with a neck like his own or that of his beloved, he has failed to draw a giraffe, and until he agrees to be limited by the fact that a giraffe's neck is as long as his legs his art is abortive.

The only limit recognised by the modern school is the frame, with the result that a conglomeration of beautifully drawn and subtly shaded shapes is presented to the beholder. The point is that it is presented to the beholder, and if it is not coherent to him then the artist might as well have kept it in his head. Coherence is essential to art, both in the subject and its interpretation, and the ablest draughtsmanship is wasted on an subjective mess. If the mind of the artist is a mess of impressions and conceptions small enough to be impressed on a form, he would do well to broaden it and order its parts before presenting them.

In music, the centuries of development that went to mould Beethoven and his successors have been jettisoned, and the moderns have gladly stepped back into a, not inferior, but definitely less developed and slower culture, which is now where our ancestors may have been aeons ago. This "voluntary" retro-

gression is difficult to understand, but it may yet prove prophetic of a general decline in our standards, aided by its influence. The devotees of negroid rhythm who have gladly abandoned the culture of their forebears would be ill at ease if this retrogression was universal, if the law of the jungle pervaded society as it pervades their idea of music.

In literature, the ramblings of a disordered mind as portrayed in what is claimed to be modern verse may be admirable examples for the psychologist, or replicas of extracts from a psycho-analyst's note book, but they are not art, except insofar as they may have been designed to illustrate a Freudian's theories. If they are designed to join the canon of English literature they are so much waste paper. The subject for great art must not only be coherent, but also worthy of presentation. Even the latter minimum stipulation is too much for some of our moderns, but a "reductio ad absurdum" would convince even them, or would it?

There are many interpretations of "form," from the philosopher's supplement to matter to the undergraduate's streamlined conception of his favorite film star, but for the artist it might well be defined as his first essential.

"WONDERER AT THE WASTE-LANDS."

FISHLIGHT F-OILED!

Pseudo-artist Fishlight [I got a clue] Fraser slouched through the office doorway. "I'm a long hair, boss," he said; just then his flowing six feet mane got under his feet and he described a one and an eighth double jackknife through the air, landing face first on the gold-plated cuspidor. "Wouldn't it make you spit," said Fishlight; "I wish I hadn't stuck that wig on with cement."

Carefully he got up and eased himself into a chair.

"I haven't got a clue, boss."

The strength of this statement hit me like a flour-bomb. — Fishlight stumped at last. I could see the truth of his statement stamped on his face, which presented a study in water colors—yes, wot 'er color! No one could imagine the turmoil which raged beneath that rugged exterior—not even the editor of "On Dit." Carefully concealed beneath that half-witted, almost imbecile, visage was one of the worst faults of our capitalistic education system—a dumb Alec.

"You haven't a clue?"

"No, boss. I don't see how those birds, who painted those surrealist drawings escaped."

"Sehh! Quiet! Half of those were by the 'On Dit' staff. I'll never get into print if you say things like that."

"Oh, is that how they do it. Someone ought to tell the 'News.'"

"Do what?"

"Well, if they've got enough imagination to paint those things, they could easily think up half a dozen sensations a week per fortnight. [See 'News,' 13/5/47]. Anyway, half those mugs ought to be hung—not in the Art Gallery either, but on the Socialist bloc for preference."

"Tell me, brainstorm, what did you like the best out of everything you saw at the Exhibition?"

"I picked my supreme choice on the opening day, boss. The coloring was gorgeous, the framing delightful, and the body of this wonderful picture stood out well, and not only that, it was well supported."

I leaned forward closer to him—it must have been a prize-winning exhibit to affect him so deeply. He continued: "I didn't think the 'Varsity contained such a work of art—and on investigation I found it was an outsider—but, boy, oh boy, what an R.A."

"But you must be wrong, Fishlight. All paintings were by University students, none by members of the Royal Academy."

"Paintings! Royal Academy! I'm talking about that gorgeous sophisticated blonde with the Royal Anatomy, who was getting all the wolf-calls from the engineers!"

Fishlight burst into a wolf-call, thrashing his arms through the air and stamping on the floor, evidently getting into practice for the Engineers' Ball.

"Get out of here, Fishlight," I belted through the din, "and don't come back—till you get her name, address and telephone number."

WATCH FOR FISHLIGHT! HE WILL BE BACK!

"BASIL THE RAZZLE."

NOTE FOR MORONS [THIS MEANS YOU]: I don't intend to publish her name in this column. So there, tricked you!

WHEN A BLACK MAN'S BLUE

MOST critics of music, when expressing their views on the folk music of the world, entirely ignore what is one of the greatest of them all. In all probability the main reason why this is so is that the negro is considered as being inferior to the white man, who will not admit that anything created by negroes can have any cultural significance or beauty.

NEGRO FOLK MUSIC CHILD OF SLAVERY AND OPPRESSION

SLAVE CONDITIONS

In order to understand the depth of feeling contained in the spiritual it is necessary to understand something of the conditions under which the negro lived, and is still living. These people have always been repressed, and it is out of the indescribable misery of their lives that the feeling and harmony of a new music was born. We must remember that family life as such did not exist in the days of slavery, and that after Emancipation Day the negroes were free up to a point, but could only obtain jobs that the white man would not do. And out of this life of poverty and hardship there arose a feeling of understanding of each other's troubles, and this found expression in what was to become one of the greatest forms of music. These spirituals, work shouts, and children's songs are not an extinct art form, they are a living language, the negro's expression of his joys and sorrows, his hopes and his fears. They do not belong to the eighteenth, nineteenth, or twentieth centuries, but are a form of art which is pure in itself and does not bow to fashion or Neville Cardus' opinion.

BIRTH OF SPIRITUALS

The story of the development of the spirituals begins in the sixteenth or early seventeenth century. It begins with the transportation of the negroes into slavery, to a strange country, in which they had to work under disgusting conditions, learn a new language, and try to make something of life in an environment totally different from anything they had been used to. They had no power to prevent the breaking up of their families, and consoled themselves with their music. These people were ignorant, and led simple but indescribably hard lives, and these things are reflected in the themes and harmonies they created. In the beginning the folk songs were sung in unison, and the advent of harmonies in the music was a somewhat later idea. As is the case with all folk music, the spirituals do not boast of composers, but were merely handed down from one generation to the next, each generation adding something in the way of ideas and later harmonies. The folk songs themselves are pure in their form, and do not need to be polished up for our enlightened minds to appreciate them. The different themes employed by the negroes all expressed some part of their lives. The spiritual is well known and its form hardly needs description, but the meaning or idea expressed might not be so obvious.

INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

America introduced Christianity to the negro, and his simple mind grasped one idea from his new re-

ligion. He believed in a better world to follow, but also believed that a "bad nigger" would not get there. He adopted a romantic view of religion, or in other words he tried to express his beliefs in a form that he himself could understand, and thus the spiritual was born. The work song was a means adopted to keep a large number working in unison, in the cane-fields, or on the barges. It employs a slow, steady monotonous rhythm throughout, and has no start or finish, but just goes on and on until the day's work is done. Then there is the light side of their existence, their gatherings at night, usually around a fire, when songs of a happier nature are

by
Bob Wright

sung, and the people dance and enjoy themselves, for the negro cannot remain sad when he has a chance to be happy for a short while. The negroes of old sang to relieve the monotony of a drab existence, and thus a new art was born, an art perfect in form, a timeless expression of the spirit of its creators.

FORM, OLD AND NEW

Naturally the negro adopted the European diatonic scale to suit his own ideas, and many early recordings show several significant facts. It is noticed that the negro avoids singing the mediant in tune. Sometimes he flattens it, and sometimes he sharpens it, but the result is musically attractive, and is an example of the way in which he has modified the diatonic scale to suit his own ends. As the diatonic scale is an artificial one we have no grounds for calling his music crude or artificial, as in many cases the harmony employed is nearer to natural harmony than that of the various European schools. In the main the negro uses the perfect intervals only, the octave, the fourth, and the fifth. The use of the seventh and the ninth are later additions, and are mainly due to the sophisticated arrangements of choral societies and the like. These later additions are often confused with the original ideas, and much of the criticism levelled at the spirituals should have been aimed at the white choral societies and concert orchestras that tried to cash in on a new craze.

"BIRTH OF THE BLUES"

After the so-called emancipation of the negroes, they found that they could obtain the instruments of the white musicians, and from their origi-

nal simple music a new form developed. This was probably one of the most significant developments, although it cannot compete with the utter simplicity and yet depth of feeling of the parent style. This development became known as the blues, and, when first developed, was a branch of negro folk music, and was not regarded as jazz (which, incidentally, did not exist in those days). At present, anything in the musical line that has not got a name is loosely referred to as a blues, but this again is a white man's adulteration of a music with which he could not compete (in the same field). When first developed, the blues consisted of a loosely set chord system, which was usually of twelve bars duration, but could be lengthened to 16 or 24 if the singer so desired. Expression was all important, and the words did not matter to anywhere near the same extent; they were simple in form, but could be varied at will to suit any particular theme, and naturally formed a great part of negro life.

This music, born of oppression and misery, has become an integral part of musical art. We, who have never lived in the conditions experienced by its creators, cannot hope to understand and derive as much from it as the negro has. It expresses his emotions and comforts him in his troubles. An art that has done so much for a race that is ignored by the more fortunate people on the earth deserves our tolerance, that one day we may understand and alleviate the conditions under which they live.

MYSTERIA

Enraptured; in tune;
Dismal;
Such weird reality bewitching,
All the blood leaps
With fear. Alas, I know
Nothing; see, hear, understand not.
Still!—the infinite strikes
The chillness of haemorrhaged ice
In my pocket,
Flash of lightning, and the color
fades,
To flame anew in wilful rhapsody.
Tower, gibbet, embittered sky—
Death comes silently.

Only the soul,
Freed from simplicity,
Sounds the depths of the bottomless
sea.

(Dedicated, with sympathy, to the uninitiated).

"SURREALIST."

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ENOUGH has been written on the art of today and its appreciation to make this speck in the ocean superfluous. But it is obvious that people generally, in their ignorant, one-eyed approach to the subject make little attempt, if any, to acquaint themselves with the wealth of information on the trend of art to-day that awaits them in any library or bookshop. It is not all written by cranks and freaks, and a discerning soul can easily assess the worth of the many works available. Some, of course, become unintelligible to the ordinary man and woman—being full of stylish phraseology and nomenclature, and written for those more advanced in knowledge. But, at the same time, there are many books written for the ordinary man and woman, which present the whole development of Modern Art in readily understandable terms and with completely unbiased outlook.

First of all, I dislike the term "Modern Art." It at once conjures up wrong ideas in the minds of most people; "modern" implies "new," and it is a strange thing that while a fundamental instinct of man is to seek out and conquer new things, at the same time an equally fundamental instinct—fear—causes the general masses to shun the new discoveries. A few brave souls are left to make the advances, and to break the barriers between man and new knowledge; but then these few pioneers are dubbed cranks by the general mob, who, not willing to own to their fear of new knowledge, push that fear behind a smug complacency and cries of condemnation. They adopt a pitying air—almost scornful and derisive—towards the few who have the courage to launch out in new fields, which, when considered in the

sent day art it would be necessary to go back to the "cave-men" paintings of Europe and Africa; the art of the Cro-Magnon, or something. For present day art is not a revolution—it is not a sudden crazed outburst, nor is it a pure disregard of history. It is a logical evolution, and, as such, has its beginnings planted in the pre-historic caves of France, where the mammoth is depicted with extraordinary rhythm and vitality.

The thing that makes the art of to-day appear revolutionary is the long period of almost photographic and unimaginative realism that preceded it. From the beginning of the Renaissance to the end of the 19th century, the movement of art was along the paths that led it to the perfection of realism. The cry of Aristotle was, presumably, "Art is

wards realism went on until, near the close of the 19th century, it had realised its pinnacle with the "impressionists"; where realism was almost overtaken by the paintings of Constable and Turner—the latter ultimately producing misty, vague pictures that seem to lack definite structure.

Here realism had gone as far as it could; and it was here that evolution demanded a new form consistent with the hints of new ideas that appeared now and again throughout the now overgrown realistic era.

And so, in a perfectly logical manner, the "modern" emerged. They were, literally, radicals. Not nuts and freaks, but evolutionists.

BRIAN CLARIDGE SAYS—

"HE WHO HAS EYES TO SEE . . ."



"EDGAR CASTLE," by Brian Claridge.
"A press agent pounding his typewriter."

imitation," and the artists of this era adopted that dictum as their slogan. It was, save for a few notable exceptions, the time of the technicians, who put everything they had into reproducing their subjects with camera-like precision. Techniques were developed to an amazing degree of astuteness, but the creative spirit—the inventive research spirit—lagged far behind. A few artists stand out who are now seen to have been feeling for the modern ideas—where imagination did not succumb entirely to the general surge towards realism. Tintoretto and El Greco are two names amongst a few more that are known now in that regard.

But, generally, this striving to-



"LOVE," by Don Thompson.
"Many a girl who loves a man from the bottom of her heart finds room for another at the top."

REALIST OUTLOOK

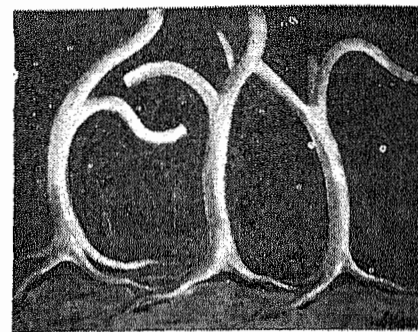
It is the products of those centuries of realism that make up the environment in which the ordinary man and woman has come to "know" art. It is these photographic paintings that have instilled in the average mind the feeling that art is imitation, and that is a bad thing. (Purists may say that there is no such thing as the "average man.") I imply the meaning tagged to that questionable phrase by common usage).

But when it is realised that our galleries—the places where men and women of ordinary intelligence go, in their natural innocence, to see "art"—are packed full of the works of the realists and their imitations; when it is realised, too, that magazines and even school-teaching methods use art in an illustrative manner—who can blame the "average" person for his one-eyed ideas? Added to that is the fact that the few great names he probably knows in the history of art are those of the masters of the era of realism.

There it is. The realists are readily "understood" by ordinary people. Anyone can see that, when Rembrandt paints "A Portrait of a Man," the result is, virtually, a man; and anyone can see even when Constable paints "Landscape with Windmill" that the result bears a readily discernable resemblance to such a scene.

But when Picasso paints, for instance, "Still Life with Musical Instruments," the beholder is left absolutely bewildered, because, first of all he looks at the name of the picture, and looks then for relevant objects in the picture, just as he looks for the windmill in the Constable landscape. The only difference is that he sees the windmill in the Constable, but he, presumably, does not see the musical instruments in the Picasso, and at once scorns the picture.

It is this "looking for something" that leads the realist-minded and realist-trained observers of modern art up a blind alley. Quite often, of course, the subjects are discernable, but then they may be distorted and disjointed, or near-obscured by other forms and colors; and the ordinary man says, "Oh, yes, I suppose I



"TREES," by Ann Creed.
"Poetry of movement."

can see a musical instrument there—but I've never seen one that looks like that. Why can't they paint a musical instrument? . . . etc."

People have come to judge the worth of a painting in terms of how far it represents what it claims to represent. So long as a painting leaves nothing to the imagination—so long as the subject is obvious or readily understandable, then most people say it is "a good picture," that "they like it"; "Ooo-er, isn't it lovely?" And this attitude shows that the majority of people get no more pleasure from art than that associated with their self-congratulations on being able to see something in the painting that accounts for its title. The pleasure is purely

superficial and, in a lot of instances, artificial, in that some are ready to gush over a painting merely to impress, or because they feel they should—"otherwise," they think, "it wouldn't be there."

The more a picture approaches nature, the better it is!

To approach a "modern" with this instilled idea of a picture's worth is futile. It would be better to stay at home with a volume of Durer's portraits, where each hair may be counted, each wrinkle and crease is portrayed.

SELF EXPRESSION

First it must be realised that the moderns are anti-realists.

Then the fact that they are not illustrators must be appreciated.

Art is no longer the medium whereby nature is meticulously reproduced. The camera can do that; and even that is superfluous, I feel, when we have nature itself all around us merely for the looking.

Art to-day is a medium of self-expression, as it was in the days of the Cro-Magnons. They didn't have to paint mammoths and bison on their cave walls as reminders of what those animals looked like. They only had to go outside their caves, and they would have probably been flattened by one of the brutes.

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"UNIVERSITY COUNCIL". . . Satirico-abstract!n

Black courtesy "The News"

They did it because they felt the desire for some form of self-expression other than hushing each other over the head with clubs. And so it is to-day. Imagination and creativeness are driving forces—not to produce something startling or sensational, not to try "to attract by novelty." It is a personal and natural satisfaction of an urge, the

These qualities have come to be completely overlooked by the ordinary picture-gallery-goer, who, because of his innate laziness, seeks out those pictures which he can "understand." Because he sees a windmill or what-have-you, his enquiry stops there. He has become accustomed to looking no further into the picture.

An Approach to the Art of Today

force of which only the artists themselves can know.

But this personal nature of modern art does not necessarily distract from its possible popular appreciation. Although the idea of the artist which originally prompted the painting may be unknown; even though the subject of the painting may be obscured and unintelligible to the uninitiated, the painting itself should not be devoid of appeal to anyone who has any aesthetic sense at all.

After all, subject matter is immaterial. If one is consistent, one should derive as much pleasure from a (realist) portrayal of an onion as that of a human face. There is more than just subject matter to look for in any painting, realist or surrealist.

The mere composition of a picture is a big factor in assessing its value as a work of art. The repetition or otherwise, or balancing of mass, light and shade; the continuity. The way in which the eye is focused on one main spot, or, perhaps, led by form or color repetition from one shape to another, and its final resting point.

Color plays a big part, too. The appeal of many pictures lies in coloring—harmony and contrast are things to look for here, and appropriateness.

Shape and form have a great influence on the degree of satisfaction a painting will produce. Rhythmic motion, grace and lightness may be conveyed by subtle use of form, or static immobility and solidarity may likewise be made evident.

In oil painting more obviously, but in any medium, however, texture is important in producing the atmosphere or feeling. Whether the point is laid on heavily with the knife, or subtly applied with a fine brush, will make all the difference to the feeling—a painting will radiate

The basis of the artist's technique lies in these factors, and they are, virtually, the tools with which he represents his ideas, emotions, dreams or pure compositions.

Too often one hears: "Blime! I could do as good as that," or: "Why, my little girl is only four, and she can draw as well as that!" In answer, I say, "If you think so, then try it." I suspect you may be disillusioned. You may produce something that looks like a modernist painting, and it may have admirable ideas behind it, either in its symbolism, or in its attempt to be a copy of some master's style, but the painting will lack appeal entirely because you have no technique—no control over the tools you are using. In short, you are NOT an artist. Should the painting you produce, by any chance, be acclaimed by those competent to judge, then you have not hoaxed them, but rather yourself. You are an artist, and didn't know it! But I imagine still that you will find out, despite your ideas, that you have no technique, and that you are no artist.

The contributions (save one) to the "Modern, Miscellaneous, Etc." section of the Students' Art Exhibition held here, support this. With one exception, they were the work of those who thought (perhaps not seriously) that they "could do as good as that." Symbolism and surrealism abounded—even cubism was attempted. But it was so obvious that the authors were not artists, that, where the symbolism was too deep to be readily obvious, there was nothing left to hold the spectator's interest. Curiosity was all that led the eyes over the exhibits. This emphasises the point made before: Even if the subject matter is beyond you, in the work of a modern master there is sufficient purely aesthetic value to hold your interest if you are prepared to look for it in

composition, color and form, and to permit the emotions those qualities can move to surge within you.

Don't be unnecessarily repulsed by the deliberate, often grotesque, distortion that is often encountered. It does not necessarily represent the morbid or warped character of the artist. The reasons for it are many and varied. Sometimes it is merely to aid the composition, or to give importance to one figure over others. Sometimes it gives the idea of movement by the use of an exaggerated perspective. Other times it is the artist's attempt to produce a feeling that the subject is being seen from more than one viewpoint. The trick of combining full face and profile features is often employed to give this impression. It will be seen that there is, then, often a desire to instill a feeling of the passage of time behind distortion.

SURREALISM AND CUBISM

An appreciation of modernism requires, initially, mental effort, until you become used to realising purely aesthetic values rather than material ones. Alongside of this should develop an understanding for the artists; from books and prints, or, if possible (as is vastly preferable), by personal contact with their original work. Of course, it is impossible to understand the inner workings of an artist's mind, just as it is to discern the inmost thoughts of a bus-driver, but a serious study of an artist's pictures will help in an appreciation of his thoughts and ideas and beliefs.

A very brief mention now of the different groups modernism has so far developed, may help in a rational approach to the art of to-day.

Cezanne is a name known to many as one of the earliest radicals, and he is the foremost of a group which delighted in the use of the elements of rhythm and order, of plastic vitality to produce the effects that were felt necessary. Their chief tool was form which they employed with subtlety and force. This group also includes the abstractionists,

position. Which, you will say, is all very well—for the artists.

Surrealism is, actually, the latest development of the modern trend, and the medium by which the artist, with the use of symbols of his own invention, flits fancifully in the fields of fantasy—a dream world where his ideas and beliefs, fears and prophecies are represented by symbolic features. It is "the new dream reality."

But the main point to remember with all these different developments of modernism is that the effect is gained by the use of materials, and that subject matter is, as often as not, supplementary to this.

CAUTION!

Whatever your reactions may be towards the moderns, don't become one of those who, in their ignorance and pseudo-superiority, condemn modernism outright. Those who are loudest in their damning are, usually, the most ill-informed of their subject. They are those who neither wish nor attempt to learn what they can. They are loud-mouthed ignorants, scathing and scornful,



"SELF PORTRAIT," by Roland Forss.

"Many a train of thought is just a string of empties."

condemning that of which they obviously have no knowledge, and of which they wish to have none.

It is a simple matter to pick such people. Their arguments are shallow and hollow, with no historic backing. They are reduced to attacking superficialities, sometimes with personalities dragged in. The outburst against the National Gallery's acquisition of "Moa" was typical of their moronic rantings.

Be careful—don't become one of them!

BOOKS TO READ

- By Sheldon Cheney: "A World History of Art." (Public Library.)
- "The Story of Modern Art." (Public Library.)
- "Expressionism in Art." (Barr Smith Library.)
- By Herbert Read: "Art Now." (Barr Smith Library.)

Also any of the publications of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

WATCH YOUR INTERESTS!
UNION A.G.M. TO-DAY
● DISCUSS BALANCE SHEET

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"WOMAN DRINKING," by Brian Claridge.

"Men often make passes at girls who drain glasses."

WHAT THE CRITICS SAY

IVOR FRANCIS

Judging by this exhibition, student talent ranges from Bruce Cheek's copy of Heysen's "Red Gold" to "University Council," a satirico-abstracto-omen of possibly considerable depth of thought by D. Thompson.

Even more impressive is the giddy range of styles and the all-embracing catholicity of taste evidenced. The commendable gum and barn studies of W. Wotzke, rub shoulders, not unkindly, with John Dowie's London Groupish annotations on contemporary life.

All the watercolors of Pam Cleland are beautifully expressed, especially her winsome study of trees and bridge (No. 17), and Max Birrell, also, shows that he is well advanced, particularly in his pleasing and unusual monochromes.

There is good work by A. Creed, Brian Seidel, and a number of others, as well as a fine collection of photographs in which K. Neighbour, a returned soldier student, and P. M. Simpson have especially interesting examples.

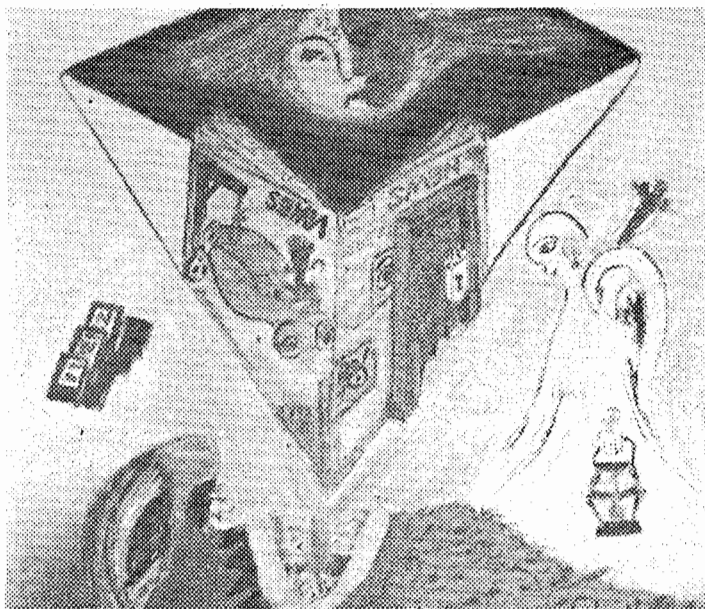
H. E. FULLER

The exhibition convened to initiate the plan for a Chair of Art at the University, outlined recently by Mr. E. W. Hayward, is not only novel, but also a most extraordinary success, as regards quality and number of exhibits.

John Dowie has a capital oil painting of the betting ring at the races; the figures are well drawn and coloring is good.

A section devoted to photographs is varied and comprehensive. Keith Neighbour has some fine work in this group, and a small head should be noted for its excellent arrangement of light and shadow. Some pencil drawings are very attractive, especially a sketch of St. Augustine's Church by Frank Weston, and some figure work by P. Bulbeck.

Some so-called modern or contemporary sketches, cleverly handled as to drawing and color, form an amusing section of the exhibition.



"MISREPRESENTATION," D. Thompson.

Block courtesy "The News"

Interpretation of Misinterpretation

IVOR FRANCIS

"An example of multiple symbolism showing 'The News' with its door locked to the Angel of Truth and Light. Possibly the artist meant that truth will be vindicated before the God of Righteousness, which he seems to have some reason to doubt, as the god is two-faced."—('News', 17/5/47.)

Mr. Francis' interpretation is quite a good one, considering the psychopathic mind that conceived the effort (?)

Actually, he is a little hard on "The News," as no specific newspaper was intended.

THE ARTIST (???)

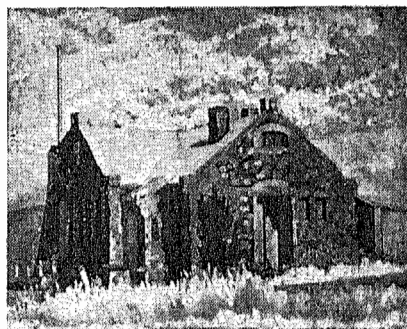
"A hideous, green, purple-eyed, blue-lipped yellow-fanged monstrosity is shown belching forth a yellow, moulding newspaper, imprisoned in whose interior darkness is the two-faced Spirit of Deceit, shut off from the Angel of Truth and Light. The inverted and transposed letters of the heading show the distorted newspaper policy. The mutilated torso and gallows emerging from a skull shows the sordid nature of the news, as also does the dagger, whose handle is a clenched fist and hilt a small hammer and sickle. The folded placard on the left emphasises the warped outlook of the newspaper."

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!

A.G.M. OF UNION

AGENDA for the Eighteenth Annual General Meeting of the Adelaide University Union, to be held in the Lady Symon Hall at 1.20 p.m. TO-DAY.

1. Minutes of the Seventeenth Annual General Meeting.
2. Eighteenth Annual Report.
3. Annual Financial Statement and Balance Sheet.
4. Any other business in accordance with the Constitution.



OILS 2ND PRIZE, Brian Seidel.

SCIENCE FOR ART'S SAKE

We are alarmed at the widespread belief that science is mere materialism, and it is time that such misconceptions of the nature of science should be dispelled.

Just as artists can rightly claim a difference between the works of the great masters and those of the commercial artist, so also must a distinction be made between science and technology. We hasten to add that we are not condemning technologists, but would like to point out that whereas emphasis here is laid upon the utility of their work, the true scientist is occupied with the pursuit of truth. In this connection, it may be well to restate the fact that the recent war added relatively little to scientific knowledge. The atomic bomb was the result of perverted application

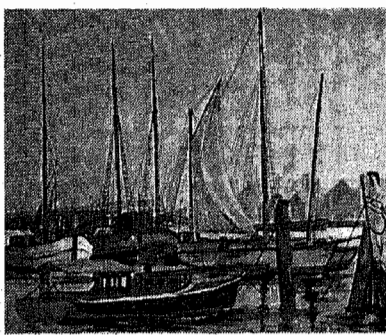
been amply justified by results. The following extract from a book by Sarton is particularly apt.

"Popular resistance has especially been strong against religious reformers and men of science. That saints and scientists should be placed in a single category by the opposition of others is far more than a casual occurrence. . . . As the Pythagoreans had already understood it more than 24 centuries ago, there is sanctity in pure knowledge as there is in pure beauty, and the disinterested quest for truth is perhaps the greatest purification."

Science has been, and is, a potent cultural force. The scientific attitude has been instrumental to advance in the realms of morals and politics as well as in the understanding and control of the physical world. Sir Richard Gregory observed that "the prime claim of science on the curriculum is for its intellectual value and its application to life." The two aspects are again emphasised by Professor J. D. Bernal when he writes "the task which scientists have undertaken—the understanding and control of nature, and of man himself—is merely the conscious expression of the task of human society." From this statement the importance of the social sciences is at once apparent, and the applications of new knowledge here may well prove more beneficial and far-reaching than those of the physical sciences.

In conclusion, the following quotation is recommended to those embarking on science as a career, "The man of science who wishes to make his expert knowledge contributory to an absolute wisdom, must first complete it by making it a full knowledge of nature, not in all her detail, but in all her aspects."

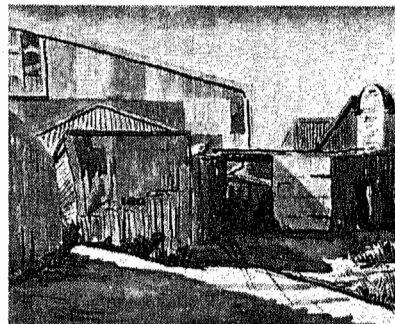
C. S. HOCKING,
President, Adelaide University
Science Association.



WATER COLOUR, by Max Birrell, co-organiser of the Art Exhibition.

of the science of atomic physics by militarism. Knowledge in itself is not harmful.

Although the justification of science may appear to lie chiefly in its material applications, the essence of science is pursuit of truth, and science has been the constant defender of free thought through the ages. The faith in reason permeating the scientific approach, has



WATER COLOUR, by George Phillips.

WOMEN'S UNION PLAYS

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FRIDAY, JULY 4
SATURDAY, JULY 5

in the

Lady Symon

At 8 p.m.

Tickets, 2/-, available Union Office and Women's Union Committee.

MEANJIN PLEASES

Casting a copy of 'Meanjin, first quarter, 1947' at me, the Editor told me to get busy. I have.

The first thing that struck me (as with earlier copies I have read) was that each one improves upon its predecessor, which, I think you will agree, is a good thing.

In this copy there is an extract from a travel book being prepared by Alan Marshall, who is probably more familiar as a writer of brittle and witty sketches in "The Mail" magazine section. If this extract is a fair sample of the book, it's going to be one of those books that are worth reading, but not worth buying—if you understand what I mean.

Then there are several articles and essays written by people who obviously know what they are writing about, and sundry criticisms of critics' criticisms—that sounds peculiar, and it does appear that it is the sort of thing that could be carried on ad infinitum (and ad nauseam). Also a section where reviewers have their say—and they push out both brickbats and bouquets with a strong arm.

When they criticise, it's apparently a case of all or nothing at all.

This issue contains only five poems (rather less than usual, if my memory serves me right), but they all appear to be of a reasonably high standard, though Lois West does write some deep dark stuff that is beyond my comprehension. However, Judith Wright's "The Flood," stands out as easily the best. She is a most prolific poet (or is it poetess?), and seems to be carving herself a place in Australian literature.

If Meanjin mirrors Australian literary development, it has a long way to go before it becomes adult. But it is on the up grade.

If you're interested in trends in current Australian literature, read Meanjin.

WATCH YOUR INTERESTS!

UNION A.G.M. TO-DAY

● DISCUSS BALANCE SHEET

On Saturday, June 28, the Biggest, Brightest, and Best Ball ever to be held in the Refectory will be held by the Engineers, and, believe me, it will take some holding. But there will be two bands to hold it, and two floors to hold it on. In addition, there will be supper and stunning surprise floor shows. So come along, bring your friends, and have the time of your life at the Engineers' Ball.

FROM ART TO ARTLESS

"The difference between a conviction and a prejudice is that you can explain a conviction without getting angry."

SWAN LAKE OR WHIRLPOOL?

To the Editor,

Sir,—In reply to Miss C. Moore's letter "The Melody Still Lingers" in your last issue, I would like to ask, "Does the melody linger?" or has it died away leaving not a trace upon the desert air?

First, I would like to say how much I agree with Miss Moore in questioning Mr. B. Claridge's attack upon Dr. Swan. How can Mr. Claridge so wholeheartedly decry Dr. Swan's statements when he (Claridge) has first hand evidence from the research graduates themselves in this University bearing out Dr. Swan's criticism.

It is amazing that the front office can so dictatorially deny Dr. Swan's criticism on the false grounds that he has no authority for such criticism and nothing more is said. Relatively few students or, for that matter, other members of the University have bothered to express an opinion, publicly at any rate. Is this an example of student apathy or of fear to criticise?

The front office's answer to Dr. Swan was insufficient when the magnitude of his assertions is realised.

Research work is by far the more important function of a University if it is to be a University, and not merely a glorified technical school. Studying for the right to a degree is not an end in itself but a means towards an end, and that is to enable the individual with this degree to attain to greater knowledge through research. Therefore, as Dr. Swan says, thousands of pounds are being spent to build impressive buildings, but what of the research workers and the work these buildings and their equipment are to serve. Surely they deserve something more than the cleaner or groundsman on the University Oval?

Is the front office then, in fairness to itself, Dr. Swan, and most important the research workers, giving no more adequate reply than that already given?

I am, Sir, etc.,
J. R. MARSHALL.

The article referred to was based on what information could be gleaned from the front office, research workers themselves and a professor. The majority of views expressed were theirs. The author claims no personal experience with research work, and had to rely on the information of the others entirely for the writing of "Swan Song." Every attempt was made to present both sides of the controversy, and the only place where the author's personal views were expressed were in one or two general summaries.—Editor.

PARTY MACHINE

To the Editor,

Sir,—I feel the Socialist Club has not been receiving enough publicity lately. Did you know, for instance, that the party machine has been giving trouble lately? That's the trouble with these two-strokes.

You're my bloke,
"HIC HAEC HOC."

DUNKIN' DRUNKEN DUNCAN

To the Editor,

Sir,—In the "On Dit" of May 12, "Drunken Duncan" asserts in the article headed "Student Morality" —"The majority of students are being wrongly accused of doing something which by their standards is not wrong."

As in Engineering, the slip gauge, blue print, etc., constitute the standard, in navigation, the compass or beam—so in the spiritual and ethical realms the standard of God's choice is Christ, as revealed in His inerrant word. Or in the words of Prime Minister Gladstone, reiterated by Winston Churchill during the

Letter of the Week

CLARION OF CULTURE

To the Editor,
Sir,—Is the insidious influence of the Communist making itself felt in yet another way?

I refer to the growing practice of scribbling rude verses on the walls of toilets in what should be Adelaide's cultural centre—the University.

This is a custom which in the past (so I believed) was left behind when one began to wash behind the ears. Apparently the moral level of the undergraduate has deteriorated to a level even lower than that Clarion of Culture—"The News" could imagine. Or is the tone of the community as a whole so degenerate that "The News" looks upon such manifestations of intellectual immaturity as normal?

Worse than the verses though are the drawings, which are not even justified by their originality—in fact they're not even well drawn.

HO HUM.

~~~~~  
war "We stand four-square on the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture."

Thus for men (including students) to govern their living by mere personal conviction is to invite results comparable in another realm with the Wanganella disaster.

Bearing upon "Drunken Duncan's" claim, "In an age when to have a good time means to have a morally bad time," we are forced to the conclusion that this belies a sad lack of satisfaction from life. If perchance, this statement were justified, it might be said we are approaching a national crisis comparable with that of England prior to the Reformation.

No man can claim full enjoyment of life until he has attained the standard God demands. Though humanly unattainable, this standard may be fully and freely met by the exercise of a personal faith, "For to as many as received Him (Christ) to them gave He the authority to become the children of God, even to them who believe on His name." Such a gift awaits personal acceptance of "Drunken Duncan."

Sincerely,  
JOHN HAWKE,  
HARROLD STEWARD.

## RIGORS OF SEX

To the Editor,

Sir,—Perhaps the enclosed may entice to New Zealand a few of our University shining lights. Otago's free publicity on the "Sex Question" seems to have had an adverse effect on its lecturers. Or perhaps I am mistaken in my interpretation of this little extract?

Yours, etc.,

"A STICKLER FOR MORALS."

THE NEWS, MONDAY, MAY 12, 1947.

SITUATIONS VACANT  
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- Lectureships, £600-£700.

Assistant Lecturers, £400-£500. Full particulars and application forms may be obtained from the Registrar of any Australian University or from the undersigned.

H. CHAPMAN,  
Registrar.

## KILLING OF BRUNO

To the Editor,

Sir,—Your correspondent who defended the killing of Bruno last week is surely off the point. The question is not why Bruno was burned, but whether he was rightly put to death—not whether his beliefs were dangerous to the social order of his day, but whether they were true. If they were true, does your correspondent suggest that society is justified in putting to death a man who seeks the truth, simply because that truth may damage the social structure?

I find rather odd the implication that a social order which has to exclude any truth must be maintained at all costs. It was, I believe, for such arguments based on expediency that the great Catholic historian, Acton, rebuked Creighton.

I am, etc.,

MARGARET HUBBARD.

## CONTRIBUTORS PLEASE NOTE!

Several letters have been received with only nom-de-plumes attached.

The Editor will not publish letters which do not contain the true name of the contributor as a sign of good faith. Pen names may be used for publication purposes.

Letters must not exceed 300 words.

WATCH YOUR INTERESTS!

UNION A.G.M. TO-DAY

● DISCUSS BALANCE SHEET

## Pars and Jars

There was a mild sensation the other day in the History department so I believe. Although his students often find it somewhat difficult to follow his lecture, even the people in the front row were unable to comprehend one word that the professor was saying. Then suddenly he strolled boldly from the lecture room returning in a few minutes with his teeth in his mouth—at last!

"More people would come to music if musicians dropped high-sounding technical terms and used simple everyday language. We don't talk about a staphylococcal abscess surrounded by a zone of inflammatory reaction, when we mean a boil on the neck. So why say allegro vivace brillante when we mean a quick tune."

DR. BOYD NEEL, English orchestral conductor.

To sue or not to sue? Don Thompson hasn't quite made up his mind whether Ivor Francis in his critique of the Art Exhibition published in "The News" was being complimentary or not. According to Francis, Don's "University Council" was "a satirico-abstraction omen of possibly considerable depth of thought."

When "The News" decided to attack "On Dit" and "its boasted policy of 'a sensation every week' in the interests of circulation" we had to object to this distortion of fact. Everyone knows "On Dit" only appears every fortnight!

Writing in Sydney's "Honi Soit" columnist Neville Wran is reassuring:—"Did you know that the police authorities cannot be called in to assist in the solution of intra-Varsity crimes and misdemeanors unless summoned through the Vice-Chancellor's office? Murder and rape are the two exceptional instances—thank God!"

The organisers of the Art Exhibition evidently wished to fan the flames of the present ideological war when they placed the surrealistic entries by members of the "On Dit" staff on the extreme left!

Professor Portus tells! Michael Bakuin, a leading 19th century anarchist tried to revolutionise Marx 1st Communist International. He proposed to completely overthrow Marx's conception of the proletarian State and form a community in which government was unknown. Bakuin was righteously expelled by Marx for his terrifying revolutionary ardor.

With the Varsity oxuding an oxygenated oxomoronomic air over the forthcoming oxomic bomb experiments it is rumored that a new society will soon be formed to seek affiliation with Sydney's Oxometrical Society and to grant degrees in Oxometry within this University. According to latest reports the D.Sc. (Oxom.) has only been conferred eight times—among the recipients being Dr. Neville Cardus. The Ph. D. (Oxom.) which was founded to commemorate Pharaoh's daughter, the founder in ancient times of oxogamy is however only presented to women. Gaudeamus igitur!

The University's magazine has risen from its ashes and the first edition of "Phoenix" for 7 years should be with us in the first week of second term. We hope that the standard has changed since 1938; otherwise it might be kinder to call in the Socialist Club.

## RED HEN CAFE

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