

The Quarterly Bulletin
of the
National Gallery of Victoria

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1953



CONSTANCE STOKES, THE BAPTISM, *Oil on board, 30 in. x 24 in.*

Purchased.

AUSTRALIAN PAINTINGS.

In this number of the Bulletin we illustrate a selection from recently acquired contemporary paintings, drawn from a variety of countries.

The Australian acquisitions include paintings by Constance Stokes and Jean Bellette. Both artists are represented in the collection by earlier work acquired on previous occasions. Their recent work shown here is the result of years of steady development.

Both artists have often stated the pursuit of the classical ideal as their aim. They show marked variance in their interpretation of this ideal, yet coincide in one point: both work in a lyrical and static rather than in an heroic and dramatic mood.

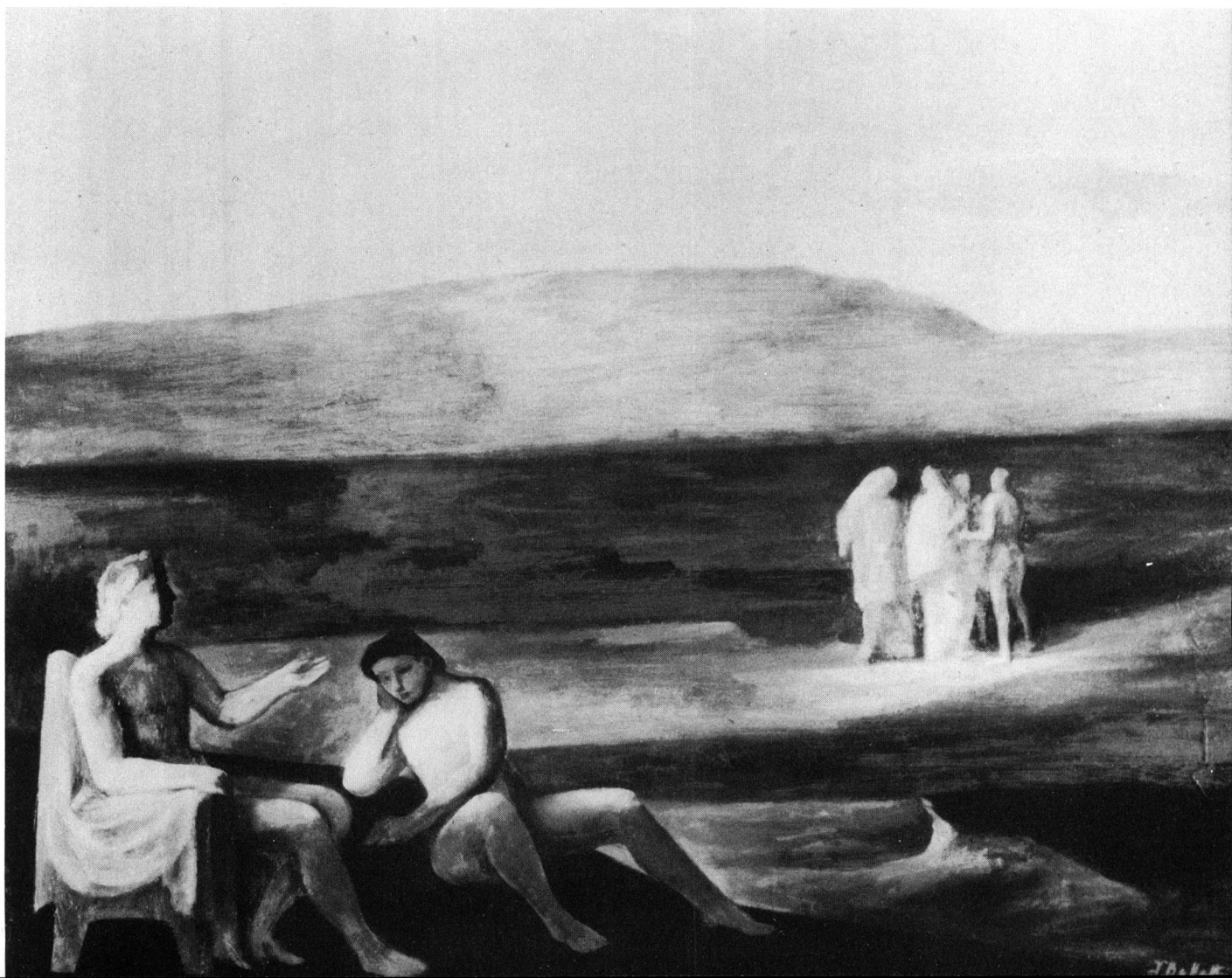
Constance Stokes avoids the classical pose, the dignity of bearing. She subdues the animation of her figures but her composition achieves the solidity associated with the classical ideal. She stresses volume and creates a compact triangular order in limited space. She seems to "carve" with her brush and hollows her figures from out of the framing rocks. A rich and unearthly colour scheme accentuates the solemn mood of the scene.

Jean Bellette is much more obviously and directly beholden to the ideals of classical art. The harmonious stance, the ideal of physical perfection are visible — figures and subject in *Minos of the Shades* stem directly from classical mythology. Recession and flat-plane composition are skilfully welded together. The artist uses the full scale of deep space and by accentuating foreground, middle distance and distance gives poignant expression to a mood of separation.

URSULA HOFF.

JEAN BELLETTE, MINOS OF THE SHADES, *Oil on board, 23 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. x 29 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.*

Purchased.

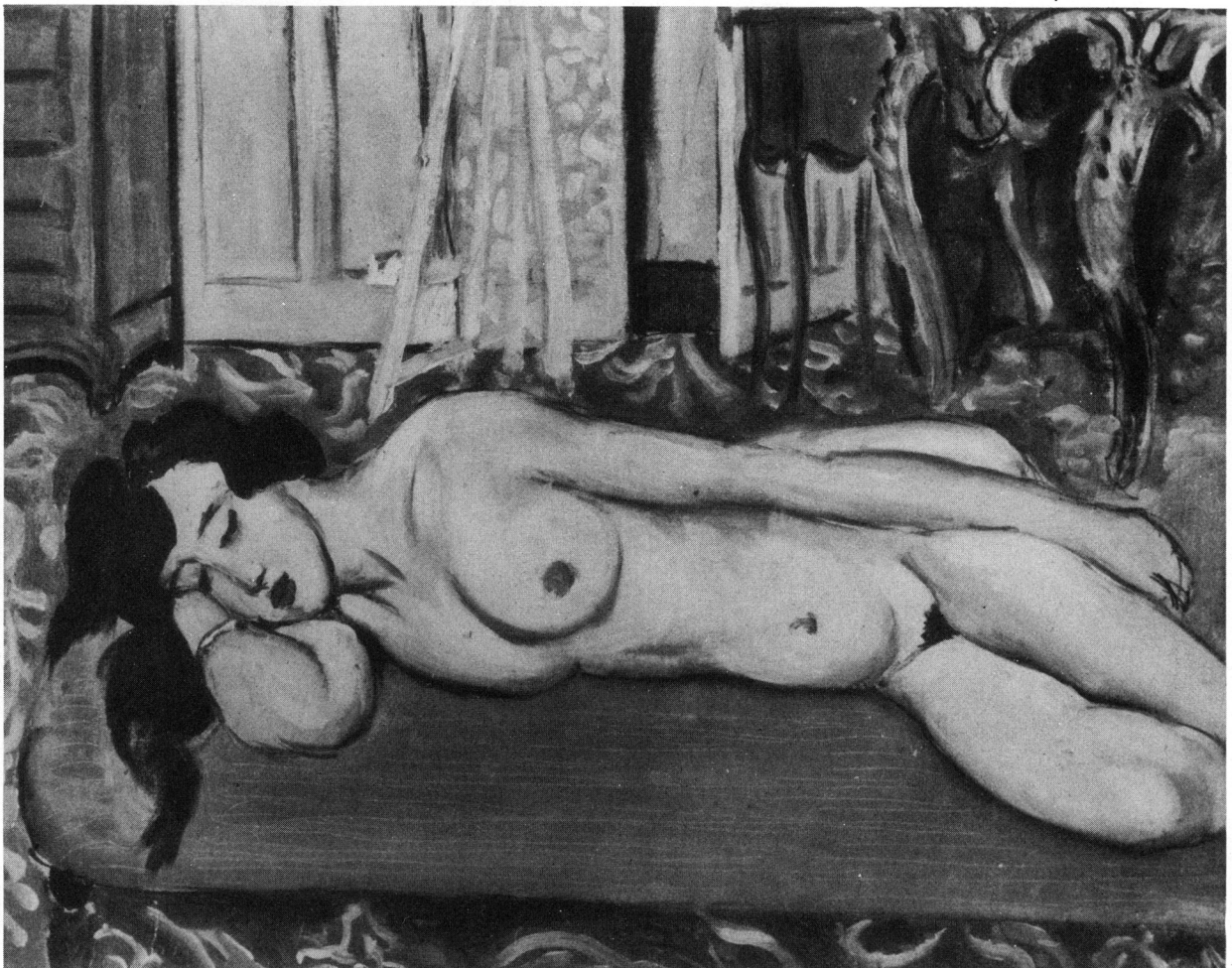


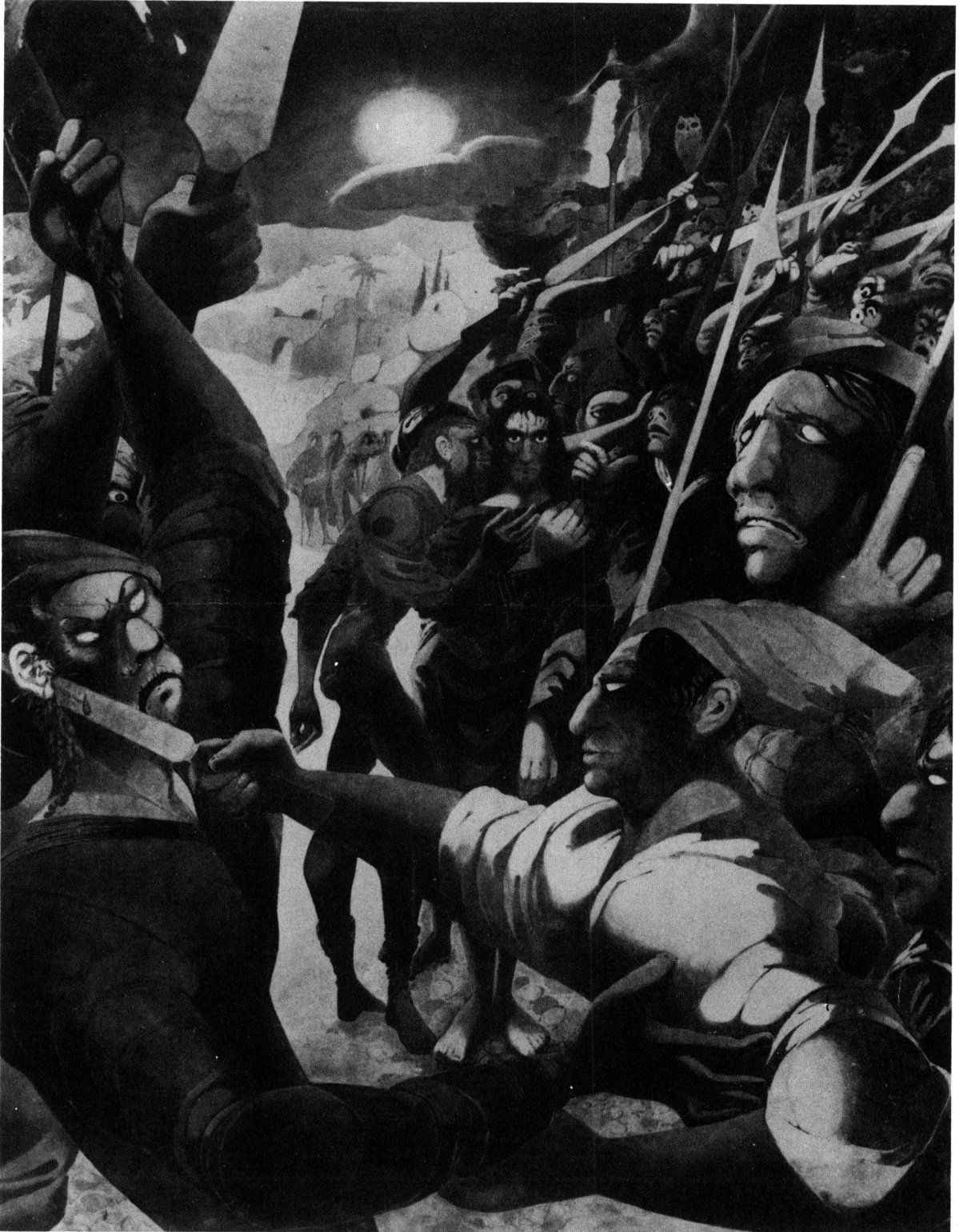
Matisse's revolutionary break-away from realistic representation by the use of distortion and violent colour schemes earned him and his followers the nick-name of Les Fauves, the Wild Beasts, at an exhibition held in Paris in 1906. In the nineteen twenties when the picture of a Nude Resting was painted Matisse was in his fifties and had a decade earlier begun to create the decorative figure pieces and still lifes which had made him internationally famous. At no stage does Matisse's work reflect directly the stress and conflict of his time. Unlike Picasso he never chooses "topical" subject matter. He creates the sophisticated twentieth century version of the "Odalisque", a characteristically French genre, cultivated by such artists as Liotard, Ingres, Delacroix and Renoir. Matisse brings to this subject an austerity peculiar to our times and abandons persuasive beauty of texture and play of light for a conscious stress on rhythmical scaffolding of line. In his *Nude Resting* he combines suggestions of depth with strong flat pattern effect. He contrasts the horizontals of figure and couch with the verticals of wall and furniture. The non-realistic treatment of the carpet is used to strengthen the pattern effect of the whole. Rhythmic correspondences of line and colour echo through the composition and give it that decorative unity which is the outstanding characteristic of the art of Matisse.

URSULA HOFF.

HENRI MATISSE, NUDE RESTING, *Oil on canvas, 13 in. x 16¼ in.*

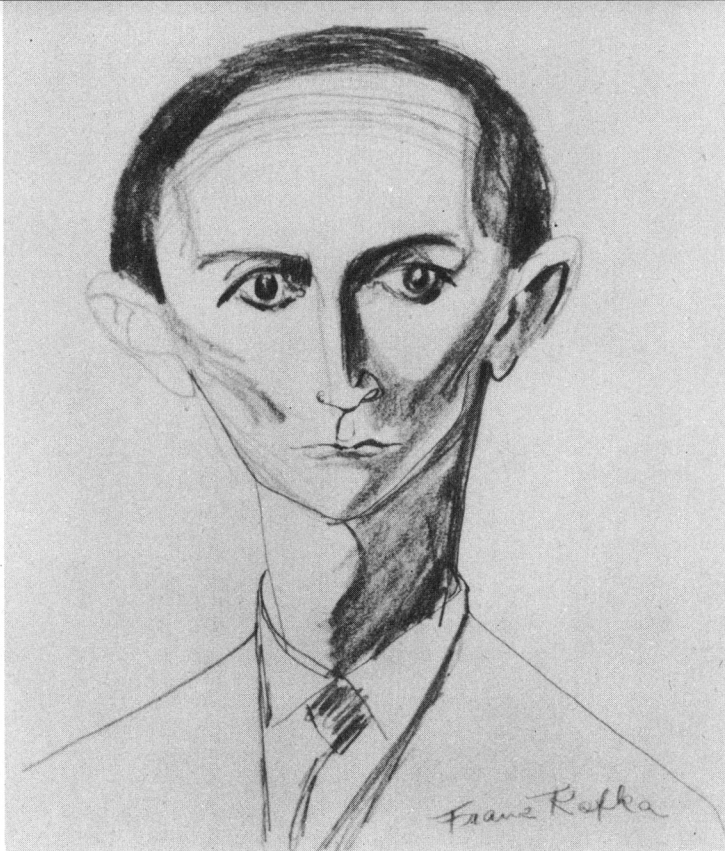
Felton Bequest.





EDWARD BURRA, PETER AND THE HIGH PRIEST'S SERVANT, *Watercolour on paper, 52½ in. x 40½ in.*

Purchased.



Above:
JANKEL ADLER, PORTRAIT
OF FRANZ KAFKA, Pencil
drawing, 12½ in. x 9¼ in.
Purchased.

Below:
DANIEL O'NEIL, THE GAME
KEEPER, Oil on board,
17¼ in. x 19 in. Purchased.



The recent consignment of modern British and European paintings includes some works by important artists hitherto not represented in our Collection, and provides some interesting indications of post-war trends.

One of the most striking pictures is Edward Burra's "St. Peter and the High Priest's Servant". The subject is a minor incident of the Scripture story: its protagonists loom large in the foreground, their limbs locked in triangles. The artist takes advantage of the strongest contrasts: brilliant and sombre colour, the clash of line, crowded and vacant spaces; and the pitch of the work is somewhat shrill. There is deliberate over-emphasis, for example, in the Venetian elegance of one of the middle-ground figures, but the over all seriousness of the work is evident at every point.

In Adler's drawing of the novelist Kafka a blunt and expressive technique defines an acutely sensitive head with focussed intentness of expression.

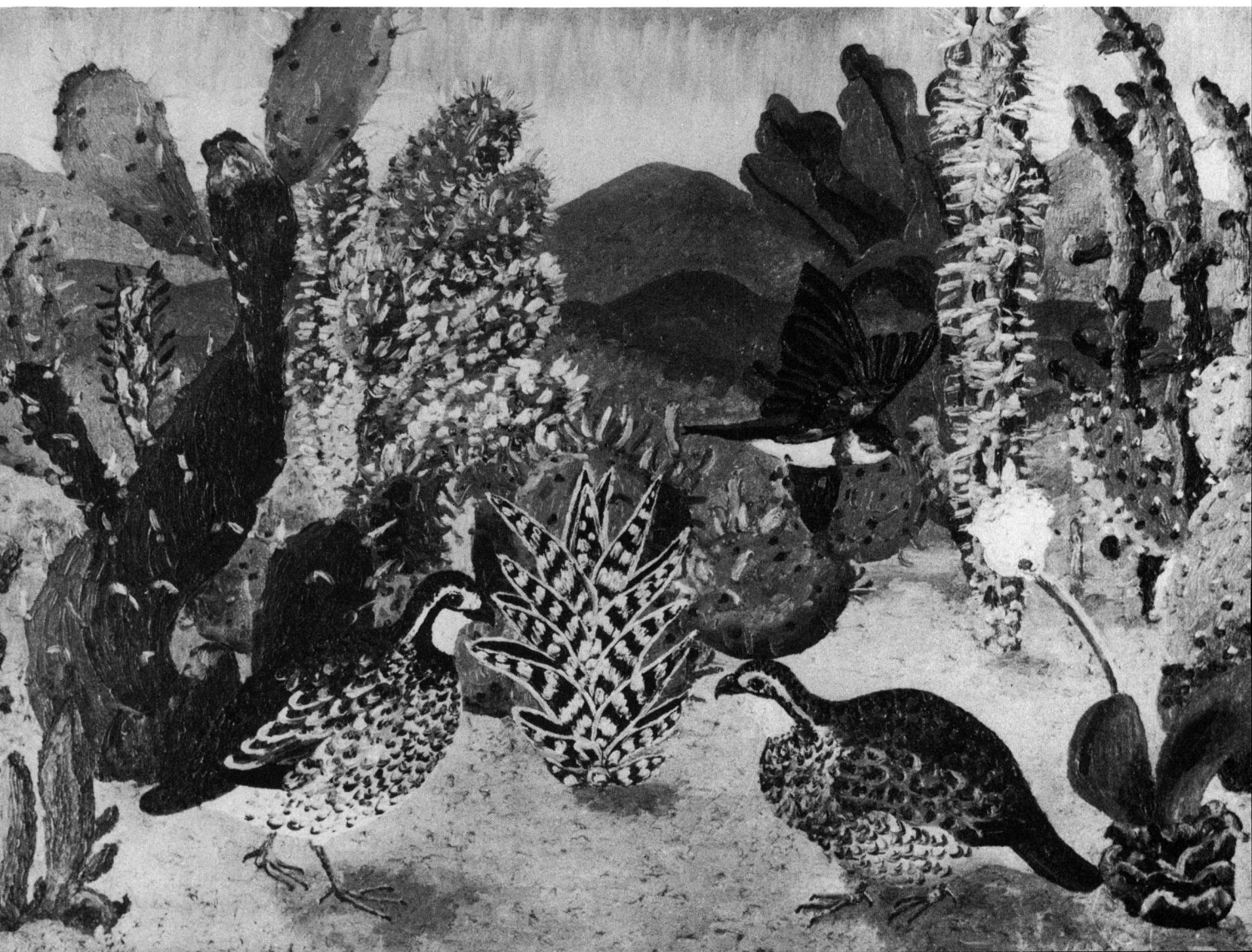
"The Gamekeeper" is by a young Irish artist who uses great decorative skill and a sense of the fantastic in his picture.

Sir Cedric Morris' "Virginian Partridges" provides those momentary confusions of shape and pattern which enliven design. The picture is low in key, decorative, and its colour is related to nature in a way which distinguishes much English art from French, which in general has an intellectual basis.

G. THOMSON.

CEDRIC MORRIS, VIRGINIAN PARTRIDGES, 1929, Oil on canvas, 23¼ in. x 31½ in.

Purchased.



RECENT ACQUISITIONS TO THE ART GALLERY INCLUDE:

OIL PAINTINGS

Still Life . . . Punch and Judy, Feb. 28, 1949	Ben Nicholson	Purchased
Nude Figure	Francis Bacon	Purchased
Virginian Partridges, 1929	Cedric Morris	Purchased
The Jail	Merlyn Evans	Purchased
Andalusian Farm, 1949	Tristram Hillier	Purchased
The Applewoman and Her Husband	Mark Gertler	Purchased
The Game Keeper	Daniel O'Neil	Purchased

WATERCOLOURS

Beach Scene and Ships	Marcel Gromaire	Purchased
Thistle Picture	Paul Klee	Purchased
Peter and the High Priest's Servant	Edward Burra	Purchased

GENEROUS DONATIONS TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY AND ART MUSEUM INCLUDE:

The Vines, Hazel Janicki Presented by Mr. and Mrs. Alexander de Bretteville, San Francisco
 Portrait of Jeff Amherst, Guiliam de Ryck Presented by Charles Henschell, New York
 Portrait of Mrs. Bright, Sir John Longstaff Presented by Miss Rachel Bright, Henley-on-Thames

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National Gallery Society Hillary Hunter

The following publications and reproductions are on sale at the Swanston Street entrance:

Catalogue of the Gallery (5/-). Gallery Guide (1/-). Catalogue of Selected Masterpieces with 30 illustrations (1/6). Ten large colour reproductions (25/- each). A selection of small reproductions including Christmas cards.

"THEATRETTE"

DOCUMENTARY FILMS: Every TUESDAY at 1.15 p.m.
LECTURES: NATIONAL GALLERY LECTURE — First Thursday.
PUBLIC LIBRARY LECTURE — Third Thursday.
MUSICAL RECORDINGS — Second and Fourth Thursdays.

The cover design in this issue is The Hobby Horse, by Alan Nichol, pastel on paper, 13½ in. x 14½ in. Purchased.