Locating Paul Olds Within New Zealand Modernism

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Abstract
The place in New Zealand art history of Paul Olds (1922–1976) remains relatively obscure. Olds' oeuvre defies easy categorisation and does not readily align with established notions of New Zealand modernism. He made a considerable impact as a painter and teacher in Wellington, where he settled in 1957 after six years in Europe. However, his reputation dwindled after his premature death. Olds' paintings juxtapose figurative and non-figurative elements, organic and inorganic forms and employ nuanced texturing and complex colour layering. Observing his oeuvre chronologically reveals his distinctive approach and his subtle and nuanced contribution to New Zealand's post-war modernist narrative.[1]

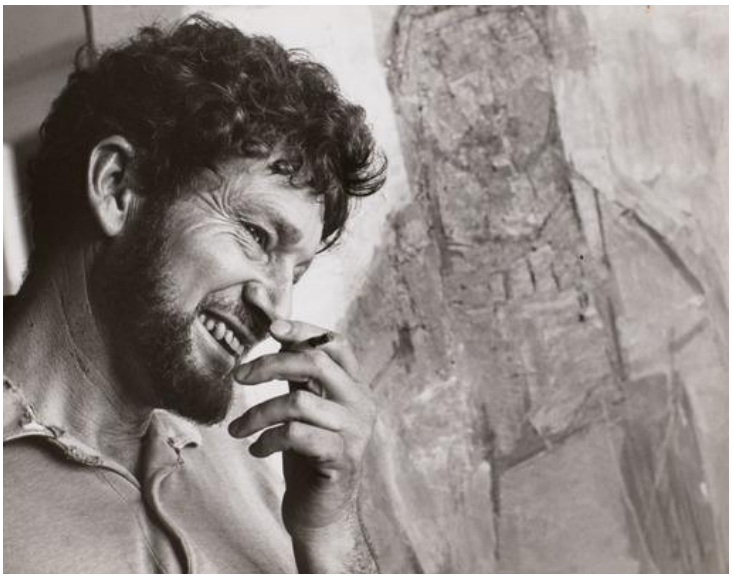

Figure 1. Marti Friedlander, *Paul Olds, Wellington*, c. 1967. Black and white photographic print, 203 x 254 mm. E.H. McCormick Research Library, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, on loan from the Gerrard and Marti Friedlander Charitable Trust, 2002. Courtesy of the Gerrard and Marti Friedlander Charitable Trust.

Paul Olds' career as a teacher and painter spanned merely three decades before an asthma attack led to his death at the age of 53 in 1976. While he was included in the early standard histories of New Zealand art published during his lifetime in the 1960s and 1970s, from the 1980s his work has barely been discussed in publications or exhibited.[2] His style appears to have fallen out of fashion and is no longer considered part of New Zealand modernism, which has long favoured hard-edged "realism," expressionism and, toward the end of the twentieth century, abstraction. Yet as can be demonstrated, while Olds remained committed to representational painting, his "School of Paris" inflections showed his interest in cubism, although his approach did not evolve as radically or thoroughgoingly as that of Colin McCahon or perhaps even Toss Woollaston. One reason for the lack of in-depth analysis of his oeuvre is that his later works are scattered mostly in private collections, with eight in New Zealand public collections and universities.[3] Study of surviving works is complicated by his ceasing to date them after 1951. This was when he left New Zealand, and also when a significant stylistic shift occurred. However, despite these difficulties, we can recognise key modernist characteristics common to

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all his works: he found his subject matter in what surrounded him (people and places) and his post-1951 paintings are often without a central focus. This encourages the eye to scan over the surface of the painting, thereby drawing the viewer's attention to the picture plane and the artifice of the painting's construction.

There are innumerable examples of omissions of artists and their work in major exhibitions and art historical texts, but those in Francis Pound's influential book, *The Invention of New Zealand: Art & National Identity, 1930–1970* (2009), exemplify why several groups of artists have repeatedly been excluded. Art historian Mark Stocker has drawn attention to Pound's "hubristically Auckland-centered approach."[4] Stocker adds that Pound "blithely ignor[es] a swathe of urban or suburban art of the mid-twentieth century." He points out the absence of "figurative landscape themes,"[5] and among the overlooked artists he singles out Paul Olds. One could argue that these major histories are selective and cannot offer broader patterns and tendencies in the story of New Zealand art. However, a vast chunk of this country's art history is inevitably lost by not addressing the above-mentioned anomalies. So, although it is a valuable contribution to art history, Pound's publication highlights gaps, some of which have been tackled by art historians, academics and curators in the last decade.

Modernism, as defined by the Museum of Modern Art's first director, Alfred Barr, in the famous diagram on the jacket of his catalogue for *Cubism and Abstract Art* (1936), forms a linear trajectory from neo-impressionism, absorbing influences from Japanese prints and "Negro" sculpture to produce fauvism and cubism before splitting into expressionism, futurism, orphism, suprematism and constructivism to dada and de stijl, finally arriving at non-geometrical abstract art and geometrical abstract art. But this is now outdated, and its programmatic limitations are all too evident. Sociologist and art historian Janet Wolff points out that any artists or groups of artists that did not fall into what she calls Barr's "narrow and linear account of Western art" were overlooked and ignored. In hindsight, modernism "appears as a chaotic, undifferentiated mass."[6] This makes it difficult for the critic, academic and historian, as subtle modernist ambiguities and nuances can be easily overlooked or misinterpreted—particularly if there is not a substantial body of work available to be researched. How, then, can "modernism" in art be defined? For the purpose of this article (and acknowledging that it can mean much more), modernism is understood as a desire to improve society and understand the modern world through new modes of expression in tune with rapid scientific and technological developments; as such, modernism is a philosophy. To apply the word "modernism," there must be a common denominator or similarities between artworks, even though there are multitudes of modernisms. Modernist artworks move away from the traditional or classical in their art practice, yet are tethered to what had come before and, importantly, include an element of thoughtful experimentation and individuality, as well as references to the modern world. As a philosophy, then, there is no finite end to modernism. Modernist art within these parameters of definition still exists and is being produced today (Roy Good is one prominent example).

In New Zealand, modernism as a "foreign" influence (European and American) proved difficult to reconcile with preoccupations of cultural and national identity from the mid-1930s to well into the 1960s. Pound defines this as "the regionalist or the Nationalist period."[7] Art historian Tony Green, in his 1992 essay "Modernism and Modernisation," highlights a particular condition of New Zealand: its geographical remoteness from other countries. This helps explain why "if there is a reckoning in New Zealand with modernism, it comes late, fitfully and partially." He concludes by framing a difficulty in New Zealand's modernism relative to the typically linear modernist trajectory: "To speak, therefore, of a developing modernism in New

Zealand is confusing because different timing, social motivation and a different set of institutions is at work." Green also states that "when an international (late) modernism finally became available, it was overtaken by a new critical opposition," namely post-modernism.[8] By declaring this, however, he does not appear to see modernism so much as a philosophy but as a period in art with a beginning and an end. Green does not address how the issue of geographical distance diminished when modernism came to New Zealand, no longer so dependent on publications and the odd returning artist, due to the arrival of refugees and displaced persons. These included Jews fleeing Nazi persecution who began arriving in Australasia in the late 1930s, bringing with them new ways of thinking which were not limited to defining the local. As both producers and consumers of European modernism, engaged in diverse media, including photography, architecture and painting, as well as design and the crafts, they had an enormous influence on Australasia. Art historian Leonard Bell affirms that these emigrés were "a catalyst for change and innovation in New Zealand culture."[9] Although brought up Methodist, through his mother Olds had Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jewish heritage, and many of his friends and acquaintances were prominent Wellingtonian Jewish emigrés. They included co-founder of Downstage Theatre, restaurateur and supporter of the arts, Harry Seresin, and philosopher and historian Peter Munz. Olds aligned to the cultural values of this European immigrant group and their modernist outlook.

There is as yet no single book on New Zealand's modernism and art; perhaps the closest in terms of the title is Elva Bett's *New Zealand Art: A Modern Perspective* (1986), in which Olds' work was not included, but where he could have found a place in the chapter titled "The bridging artists."[10] There even seems to have been a reluctance, in New Zealand, to use the word "modernism" and let it stand on its own, at least until recently.[11] Over the past forty years, narratives of modernist art in New Zealand have customarily focused on a few well-represented artists from Olds' generation, such as Gordon Walters, Milan Mrkusich, Woollaston and McCahon.[12] A recent trend has been the publication of monographs on modernist artists who have previously not had a great deal of exposure; for instance, Michael Nicholson's *Visual Language Games* (2006),[13] John Drawbridge et al.'s *John Drawbridge* (2008)[14] and Julia Waite's exhibition and book, *Louise Henderson From Life* (2019).[15] The last decade has also seen the publication of several art and architecture histories, identifying regional sub-variants of modernism occurring in cities that have had inadequate attention due to the long-term bias towards Auckland as the centre for artistic development in New Zealand. For example, *Vertical Living: The Architectural Centre and the Remaking of Wellington* (2014), edited by Julia Gatley,[16] focuses on modernism in the capital city after 1946, and *Bloomsbury South: The Arts in Christchurch 1933–1953* (2016), by Peter Simpson, highlights Christchurch modernism in art, music and literature in its formative years.[17] This recent publishing activity is evidence of the heterogeneous aspect of modernism and of the re-discovery of various "modernisms" in New Zealand art, as well as artists who embraced the movement to varying degrees.

Exhibitions have also brought together artworks made during this same period that overlap with the aforementioned publications, such as Auckland Art Gallery's touring exhibition *Freedom and Structure: Cubism in New Zealand Art 1930–1960* (2017), curated by Waite.[18] This included artists such as Wilfred Stanley Wallis, Melvin Day, John Weeks, Louise Henderson and Charles Tole, but not (despite his subtle assimilation of aspects of cubism) Olds. Another key exhibition, curated by Roger Blackley for New Zealand's sesquicentennial in 1990, *Two Centuries of New Zealand Landscape Art* at the Auckland City Art Gallery, was more comprehensive, but still only drew from the gallery's own collection and consequently omitted many 1960s and 1970s artists who produced New Zealand landscapes.[19] These included several notable Auckland women artists and artists from Wellington, such as John

Drawbridge, Suzanne Goldberg, Juliet Peter, Helen Stewart, Alison Pickmere, Vivian Lynn and Olds. In fact, out of the 108 paintings, only 14 artworks date from the thirty-year period between 1960 and 1990. Olds himself has only rarely been included in exhibitions since the Massey University Jubilee Art Exhibition in 1977,[20] a year after his death, which included 39 of his works. Since then, except for a solo exhibition organised by his ex-partner Elisabeth Olds Wilson in 1997, *Portraits and Drawings by Paul Olds: From the Elisabeth Olds Wilson Collection*, at Page 90 Artspace in Porirua,[21] his work has been very little seen.

In 2006, in an exhibition organised by Aratoi Wairarapa Museum of Art and History, entitled *Luncheon Under the Ash Tree: The Ian and Elespie Prior Collection*, two Olds paintings were included: *Wharfside Wellington* and *Otira* (fig. 16). Damian Skinner's catalogue essay highlights an important aspect of this collection:

> . . . it promotes a more historically accurate view of the local modernism, which is not just a hit parade but a complex network of practices and directions, some of which may have been relevant or powerful in the 1950s and 1960s but no longer appear so to us in the present. This is a revelation of modernism as it was experienced on the ground at the time rather than one fabricated by art history in hindsight.[22]

Skinner emphasises the importance of the taste of the collectors, Ian and Elespie Prior, and the time and place in which these works were collected, Wellington in the postwar decades. If these works were "relevant" at that time, should they not be understood as part of the richly complex history of modernism from the mid-twentieth century in New Zealand and celebrated as such? For the interested viewer, as well as for the posthumous reputation and status of an artist, having works curated in an exhibition is as important as being included in publications, and Olds has largely been denied both.

Olds attended the Canterbury College School of Art from 1938 under tutors and artists William (Bill) Sutton, Rata Lovell-Smith, Archibald Nicoll and Russell Clark. He passed the practical tests for still life painting in 1941 and for landscape and life painting in 1942, before completing all the requirements for a Diploma of Fine Arts in December 1943. By 1945, he was one of three students from the previous 17 years recalled by the Director of the School of Fine Arts, Richard Wallwork, as having potential talent in his retirement speech. In 1944, aged 22, he married Joyce Keay and began teaching art at Christchurch Boys' High School, continuing to exhibit and sell his paintings in Christchurch, Invercargill and Wellington. By 1948, he had begun presenting radio talks on sketching and painting and was considering overseas study to continue his professional development.[23]

Olds' early landscapes produced in Christchurch before 1952 belong to the stylistic category of Canterbury Regional Realism, related to the work of Nicoll, Rita Angus, Henderson, Doris Lusk, Sutton and other painters who identified with the Canterbury College School of Art. Their works typically show the expansion of Pākehā settlement: roads, railways, gas works and fencing. Of his tutors, Olds' early work appears predominantly informed by Nicholl,[24] not only in the use of colour, loose brushwork and pastoral subject matter but, conspicuously, in the use of telegraph/electricity poles as compositional aids. This is evident, for instance, in Olds' *Bend in the Road* (fig. 2), comparable with Nicoll's *Grey Day, Caroline Bay* (undated).[25] Here, Olds' wooden power poles achieve the illusion of recession into the distance, which became a leitmotif in subsequent paintings, including his later more modernist ones. Also included here are introduced eucalyptus trees and two figures standing by the postbox. From the same period, Olds' painting *Timaru Stockyards* was described as "attracting attention" in the *Otago Daily*

Times review of the Otago Society of Arts exhibition in 1949.[26] The Christchurch *Press* described him as well-known for his "bold paintings of harbour scenes" in 1950.[27] Works sent to the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts were always amongst those reported as being sold by the Wellington newspapers. By 1951, Olds had also begun part-time teaching at the elite Anglican boys' school Christ's College and his own old school, St Andrew's College.

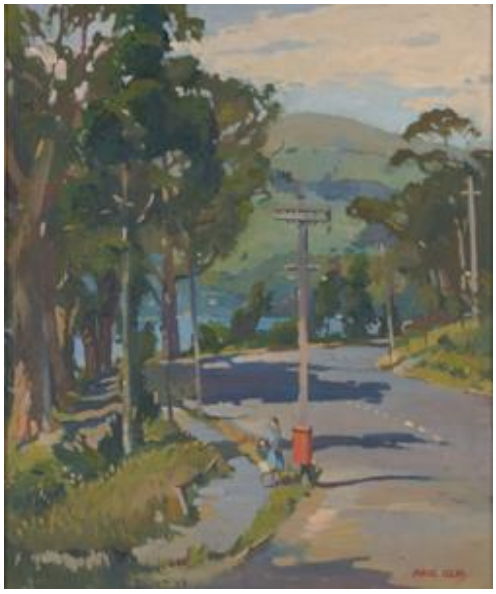

Figure 2. Paul Olds, *Bend in the Road*, undated. Oil on board, 598 x 500 mm. University of Canterbury Art Collection, Christchurch.

In March 1951, Olds entered the first National Art Gallery Travelling Art Scholarship competition, winning the award for three years of overseas study, then worth £1500. Olds and his wife were farewelled by the Canterbury Society of Arts in July 1951 at an afternoon reception, where the president noted how one of the paintings that Olds submitted for the scholarship had been purchased by Sir Bernard Heinze, an Australian conductor who had been briefly the musical director of the New Zealand National Orchestra, and who took Olds' drawings and oil studies back to Australia with him for an exhibition.[28] Olds' farewell solo exhibition of 70 works opened at Fisher's Gallery in Christchurch in September 1951. This occurred at the same time as he began his study at the Royal College of Art (RCA) in London, where he later became president of the junior common room.[29] There, he began painting English subjects such as *London Street Scene* (c. 1954), *Winter Landscape, Chiswick* (c. 1954)[30] and *The Road Under the Bridge* (c. 1954, fig. 3). This last painting was reproduced in *The Artist* in 1955, for which he wrote a three-part article in consecutive issues, titled "An Approach to Painting." Here, Olds shares what is important to him:

> . . . nothing I can tell you could be nearly so useful to you as looking at the work of the great. We may learn much by looking at the work of those who have proved themselves artists, for if looked at intelligently, we may in part follow their discoveries and by so doing help us to decide what we wish for ourselves. This may assist much in telling us what drawing and painting is all about, but to be of any use at all, one must discover what is to be said in one's own way.[31]

Olds' first-hand encounter with famous historical paintings in galleries and museums in London appears to have affected him greatly. As well as featuring in his writing, this is also evidenced by the stylistic change from works executed in New Zealand compared with those

he made during his European training and travel. Evidently his own experience with the "work of the great" acted as a catalyst in developing and discovering his own unique style or, in his own words, "discover[ing] what is to be said in one's own way."

Did the different light in England have an effect on the artist's palette? Olds' friend, the Hamilton-based short-story writer Alec Pickard,[32] visited him in London in 1953 and recalled forty years later in a letter to Elisabeth Olds Wilson: "He had then abandoned his bright colours, saying 'you have to learn to paint mud before you can paint colours.'"[33] Olds' arrival in London coincided with continued postwar rationing, which could perhaps account for limitations in the range of artists' oil colours available. However, Pickard's comment, referring to a period when Olds was in his second year at the RCA, suggests that this was also part of his training. Sombre, muddy colours are certainly evident in *Road Under the Bridge* (fig. 3). The RCA tutors are also depicted in sombre tones by Professor of Painting Rodrigo Moynihan, who captures the all-male teaching staff in *Portrait Group* (1951, Tate Collection). These were predominantly well-known landscape and portrait painters of the time: Ruskin Spear, Robert Buhler, Rodney Burn, Colin Hayes, Kenneth Rowntree, Carel Weight and prolific neo-romantic illustrator and artist John Minton.

Figure 3. Paul Olds, *The Road Under the Bridge*, c. 1954. Oil, 609 x 726 mm. Reproduced in *The Artist* 49, no. 6, issue 294 (August 1955). Present location unknown.

Olds gained his Diploma of Associateship of the Royal College of Art (A.R.C.A.) in 1954, but it would be another three years before he returned to New Zealand with his wife and infant son Michael on the *Ruahine* on 5 August 1957. He had been away for exactly six years. Olds is described by Kelliher curator Christopher Johnstone as "the most internationally experienced painter of his generation" (perhaps reflecting the fact that the better-known Drawbridge, Hotere and Hanly were all significantly younger than him).[34]

After graduating, Olds spent six months at the British School at Rome in 1955. Here his paintings became more provisional and subjective, and he employed a colourful sketchy style where the viewer must interpret and complete the image visually. One example is *Piazza del Popolo* (c. 1955, fig. 4), which was sold by expatriate New Zealander Rex Nan Kivell's prestigious Redfern Gallery while on exhibition in its Cork Street London premises in 1958.[35] This work depicts a couple strolling in the famous Roman piazza in 1950s attire. They could be interracial; she is of a darker complexion, and he is pale. This is just one element that demonstrates the painting is made up of opposites, such as the contrast of rounded and angular forms. With her eyes demurely downcast, she appears feminine and elegant, and he, looking up, is bulkier and more assertive looking. The composition is carefully planned, leading the eye into the lighter and uncluttered area of the piazza. Here, much of the oil paint is applied diluted, sparingly and lightly, giving the painting the appearance of a pastel drawing. Colour also becomes form, manifesting in various shapes and sizes within the buildings and the darker stone sculptures on either side of the couple, but also less distinctly in the area around the objects and subjects. This work conveys the sensation of moving in and out of focus, with certain recognisable forms surfacing and others remaining indistinct. A tension is evident between Olds' modernist desire to emphasise the flatness of the canvas and his use of one-point perspective to achieve a sense of depth. Shadows become planes of flat colour, seen in the small statue in the centre of the painting, where the shadow appears in blue as an elongated triangle with edges running parallel to the base of the buildings above. His interest in design is evident with the repetition of rectangular windows in the buildings and the stone balustrade in the foreground, echoing the shape upwards into the light-coloured piazza. Olds' modernist approach now emphasises the formal elements of design, technique, colour, composition, balance, and form. The subject is treated as a tool to produce an interesting composition, rather than being considered significant in itself.

Figure 4. Paul Olds, *Piazza del Popolo,* c. 1955. Oil on canvas, 745 x 900 mm. Private Collection, Auckland.

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In 1956, Olds lived in Paris for a year and worked in the studio of metal sculptor Albert Féraud. He met other artists, such as bronze sculptor Georges Charpentier and César Baldaccini, who later became a New Realist and was known for his radical compressions of metal into cubic form. Situated in this milieu, mixing with these French artists, Olds' stylistic evolution continued. Baldaccini and Féraud used scrap metal to create sculptures, abandoning more precious traditional materials such as marble and bronze. Their modernism led Olds to stress the two-dimensionality of the canvas whilst still capturing fleeting impressions of everyday motifs.

Visiting museums in London, Rome and Paris, he engaged with historical paintings that influenced his development. His enthusiasm ranged over Romanticism, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Cubism and Futurism. His interest in movement, for example, could be attributed to paintings by the great French Romantic, Eugène Delacroix (fig. 5). In this way, he brings together both traditional and new concepts in his painting. Olds' interest in Pierre Bonnard's use of colour could have also prompted him to investigate the potential of the intimate interior and focus on decorative details, such as the patterning of curtains and bannisters (fig. 6). But equally, his interest in "background" detail and composition of his interiors, certainly owes something to Bonnard's contemporary and kindred spirit, Édouard Vuillard. In the period 1955–1956, Olds painted his first interiors, usually but not always including a figure.

Figure 5. Paul Olds, *Title unknown*, c. 1956. Oil on paper, approx. 210 x 140 mm. Private Collection, Auckland.

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Figure 6. Paul Olds, *Title unknown*, 1956. Pen and ink and watercolour, approx. 420 x 417 mm. Private Collection, Auckland.

Most significantly, while in Paris in 1956, Olds began experimenting in his cityscapes with cubist techniques of fracturing space. This influence can be seen in how he interlinks planes of forms by varying their hues, placing them opposite or echoing them in another part of the painting, occasionally deploying a black outline. No longer pastel-like, now a greater degree of texture of the paint is evident in contrast to his paintings of Rome. This is seen in a painting of a Parisian subject (title unknown, c. 1956, fig. 7), where he builds up the thickness of the oil paint with firm brushstrokes. This creates built-up ridges of paint that create shadows depending on the direction and intensity of light meeting the painted surface. In effect, not only does he deliberately manipulate the light through colour but also through the increased density of the oil paint.

Figure 7. Paul Olds, title unknown, c. 1956. Oil on canvas, 360 x 310 mm.
Private Collection, Auckland.

Despite being recognised primarily as a landscape painter, it is not common knowledge that Olds excelled at figure and portraiture during his training,[36] and many of his surviving works are portraits. In a portrait of his wife, Joyce (fig. 8), painted in Paris around 1956, he shows further cubist influence. He renders her face as patches of colour applied to sharply edged planes of light. The space around her is also patterned, similar to Henri Matisse's bright patches of fauvist colour and Jean Metzinger's cubist fracturing. The portrait demonstrates Olds' earlier, more representational style and seems tentative, even a little staid, compared with his only known commissioned portrait, of prominent Wellingtonian Jewish émigré *Gisi Hirschfeld* (c. 1966, fig. 9), which was completed a decade later and is executed more fluidly and expressively, in a manner akin to Woollaston.

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Figure 8. Paul Olds, *Joyce,* c. 1956. Pencil and watercolour on paper, approx. 420 x 297 mm. Private Collection, Auckland.

Figure 9. Paul Olds, *Gisi Hirschfeld*, c. 1965. Oil on canvas, 395 x 290 mm. Private Collection, Auckland.

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In 1957, Olds returned to New Zealand, to take up a position in Wellington as a lecturer in art at the Teachers' Training College. He exhibited at the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, and also sent work back to Christchurch, exhibiting three paintings in The Group Show in 1958: *Curtains and View Beyond*, (Waikato Museum Te Whare Taonga o Waikato), *Coal Express* (possibly *Otira*; MTG Hawke's Bay Tai Ahuriri) (fig. 12) and *Wooden Church Willis St* (possibly *Wellington*; Kelliher Art Trust) (fig. 10). Olds also showed his work in Wellington at the newer dealer galleries and cafés. He found that while he had not been forgotten, other artists had superseded him in prominence while he had been away. "It isn't easy to suddenly tackle the fresh New Zealand scene,"[37] he said during a newspaper interview marking his return. His paintings were now characterised by colour splintered into many hues, creating planes, shapes, repetitive designs and forms; they had become, in effect, kaleidoscopic. Buildings and urban scenes were frequent subjects, while artists such as Walters, McCahon and Mrkusich were in varying degrees becoming increasingly abstract. While these artists would have scorned the Kelliher Art Award, which began in 1956 and was hosted at the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts in Wellington, Olds showed no compunction about entering in 1958 and 1959, both years winning an award. His *View Across the Harbour* (1958, fig. 11) won a £25 Merit prize the same year as its production, and *Wellington* (1959, fig. 10) came third in the competition, winning Olds £100. Both awards brought considerable attention to the artist's work.[38] *Wellington* has been Olds' most frequently exhibited painting in recent years, and can be considered the most modernist painting ever to have won a Kelliher prize. Australian artist William Dargie was the Kelliher judge that year. In his catalogue essay accompanying the exhibition *Representation and Reaction* (2002), Peter Shaw described the painting as "a Wellington cityscape that exhibited a loose quasi-expressionist technique quite unlike any previous or succeeding entry."[39] Shaw found the painting—and its award—remarkable, and it represented a fascinating anomaly in his curation of *Representation and Reaction*, which largely pitted the traditionalist Kelliher collection against the modernist Fletcher collection. Woollaston, who featured in the latter and was generally scathing of the Kelliher painters, wrote in a letter to his wife, Edith, of encountering Olds during the 1958 Kelliher prizegiving: "Met this Paul Olds who is trying along the right lines, but typically 'one of us revolutionaries.'"[40]

Olds' involvement in the Kelliher competition may have counted against him in what could sometimes be a vindictive New Zealand art world. However, *Wellington* and *View Across the Harbour* cannot be termed "traditionalist," and appear to be Kelliher competition-winner anomalies insofar as they express modernist tendencies. Olds managed with his Kelliher entries to straddle both the representational and modernist aspects, something no other New Zealand landscape painter appeared to be able to achieve as boldly or bravely.

Figure 10. Paul Olds, *Wellington*, 1959. Oil on canvas, 820 x 715 mm.
Collection of the Kelliher Art Trust, Auckland.

The capital city was where Olds resided, and it occupied him as his subject matter, but most of the country's critics and commentators were in Auckland. Importantly, there was a shift in interest from European influences (to which he was so responsive) to American ones in the late 1950s. This attitudinal change is indicated by Peter Tomory, the English director of the Auckland City Art Gallery from 1956 to 1965. He was instrumental in shaping attitudes around painting during that time through his activity as a curator, writer and commentator. Surely with McCahon uppermost in his mind, Tomory summarised how he found painting in New Zealand in 1961: "It . . . comes out as a revolt against the sophisticated arrangement of brushstrokes. You can almost use the word 'brutal.' There is a 'brutal' application of paint. New Zealand painting, in this way, is closer to the American than to any European kind."[41]

Tomory, then, was a major contributor to an increasingly widespread belief in New Zealand that American art was the future.[42] McCahon, his junior colleague at the gallery, was sent to America, not Europe, for his study visit in 1958. Tomory's (rather simplistic, but influential) generalisation about a brutal style of painting seemed to exclude the sensitive and nuanced treatment of people and places by an artist such as Olds.[43] Yet it is known that Olds knew and liked Tomory.[44] Under Tomory's curatorship, in 1962, Olds exhibited two paintings at the Auckland City Art Gallery's *Contemporary New Zealand Painting and Sculpture* exhibition, titled *Landscape in Westland* (1962) and *Forms in a Valley* (undated). Unfortunately, there are no images in the catalogue, but the subject matter, style and size of one painting that remained in Olds' estate makes it in all probability *Forms in a Valley* (fig. 14).

New Zealand-born Adelaide-based artist Ian North remained an influential supporter of Olds. North was taught by Olds in Wellington and wrote an essay for the 1997 *Portraits and Drawings of Paul Olds* exhibition catalogue: "Olds' painting reflected his authority as a draftsperson and possessed, as I recall it, a sophisticated, Bonnardian sense of the medium's physicality as coloured substance. At its best, his work radiated a highly-wrought sense of ecstasy."[45] This "Bonnardian" sense of the medium can be discerned in the aforementioned *View Across the Harbour* (fig. 10). The artist's viewpoint is across Oriental Bay from behind Victoria University of Wellington's Hunter Building. Olds uses the reddish brickwork in the foreground to chime in with the masonry of St Gerard's church and monastery on Mt Victoria opposite, situated almost in the centre of the painting. These iconic Wellington landmarks are used as geometric compositional aids. Olds remains interested in design: the repetition of windows and lines of weatherboards on houses; hints of vegetation; the spiderlike drooping of leaves that could be an endemic New Zealand cabbage tree (tī kōuka) by the power pole; and, on the left, the cobweb look-alike of a punga tree-fern frond. Vegetation on the distant hills is suggestive and takes on repetitive patterns, forming chevrons, dabs, squiggles, dots and zigzags. Contrasting with these organic shapes of nature are human-built structures: above the fern frond are the decorative yellow eaves of a Victorian two-story villa. Curves trace Wellington's geography, indicating valleys and continuing skywards and down through the strings of tiny white houses grouped together and clinging to Wellington's streets. Olds' pale blue harbour is surrounded as if in a jewel-like setting or shards of glass set in a leadlight.

Figure 11. Paul Olds, *View Across the Harbour,* 1958. Oil on canvas, 665 x 865 mm. Private Collection, Wellington.

In an essay on cubism by Albert Gleizes and Metzinger, in one of his books, Olds underlined the following passage: "A painting carries within itself its *raison d'être* . . . It does not harmonise with this or that ensemble; it harmonises with the totality of things, with the universe: it is an organism."[46] *View across the Harbour* certainly appears as an organism—a

highly complex scene with an all-over patterning that keeps the eye on the surface of the work, emphasising its objecthood. A feeling of place is evoked through the title for those who recognise Wellington landmarks, yet the painting retains a universal language with which those unfamiliar with Wellington and New Zealand can also engage. Here there are remnants of elements which sustained the regional focus of the pre-war generation of painters, when landscape painting was co-opted into the quest for national identity and "signatures of place."[47] Olds uses the Wellington regional subject as a springboard to assimilate a modernist approach. His series of works based in the small railway town of Ōtira, on the West Coast side of the Main Divide between Christchurch and Greymouth, shows his increased use of abstraction from 1958 onwards.

Ōtira is a dramatic place, consisting of a notoriously steep gorge, native birds, dense native vegetation clinging to the snow-capped mountains, large, violent rock slides, a wide rock-strewn riverbed, waterfalls and rivers, a one-lane road and rail bridges, small holiday baches, an ancient hotel, a celebrated train tunnel, a train station—and its geography is renowned for its climate, catching mists, rain or snow-laden clouds that are continuously shifting. Ōtira's popularity in art resulted in a Christchurch Art Gallery exhibition in 2011 that compared the works of over twenty artists with those of Petrus van der Velden's famous Ōtira series. What separates artists who visited Ōtira are those who came once or twice and those who repeatedly returned. Olds, Van der Velden, Grace Butler and Woollaston were in the latter category. Woollaston lived in Greymouth, Ōtira's closest town, while Butler owned a bach in nearby Arthur's Pass. But Olds was the only artist at that time to own a bach in Ōtira itself, named Konini after the local Kōtukutuku (tree fuschia) berries. This became a refuge from city life, a place where he could regain his equilibrium and make preliminary sketches and watercolours for his Ōtira oil landscapes.

Figure 12. Paul Olds, *Otira*, 1958. Oil on canvas, 590 x 696 mm.
Collection of MTG Hawke's Bay Tai Ahuriri.

Journal of New Zealand Studies NS38 (2024), 153-175 https://doi.org/10.26686/jnzs.iNS38.9586

Olds captures the steam train in operation until 1966 in *Otira*, 1958 (fig. 12). Through vibrant colours, Olds demonstrates power, not only mechanical but also that of Ōtira's environment and atmospheric conditions. The fractured spectacle of power and mechanical movement has an element of homage to machinery reminiscent of the Futurist painter Gino Severini. Also from 1958, Olds' *West Coast Landscape* (fig. 13) depicts the rugged hills and mountain tops, the yellow summer grass at the base of the valley, the continuously shifting shadows, mists and clouds, and built structures which he uses as compositional aids. In 1960 this painting was acquired for Victoria University of Wellington's art collection through the initiative of composer and music tutor Douglas Lilburn. It was one of the first three such paintings and has distinguished siblings: McCahon's *Otago Landscape* (1950) and Woollaston's *Landscape with Fire* (1960)[48]—evidence that, at the time, Olds was one of New Zealand's most highly regarded modern artists.[49] It is an arresting painting, particularly its multitude of textures and colours, which are rich and luminous. In 1997, gallerist, art historian and friend of Olds, Elva Bett, went further: "There is a painting in the library at Victoria University that I pass often, and each time I'm stopped anew by its beauty. *West Coast Landscape* ca (1962) [*sic*] is breathtaking in its subtlety of colouring and in its command of lyric abstraction."[50]

Figure 13. Paul Olds, *West Coast Landscape,* 1958. Oil on canvas, 595 x 698 mm. Art collection of Ngā Puhipuhi o Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington, purchased 1960.

Olds' work of the 1960s and beyond changes stylistically, as seen in the work that is possibly *Forms in the Valley* c. 1962 (fig. 14), *Riverbed, Otira* c. 1961 (fig. 15) and *Otira,* 1960s (fig. 16). Gone is the feeling of movement and loose brushwork. The horizon has disappeared, with only glimpses of colour that might indicate the sky. Now, from a bird's eye view not a linear perspective, "form" and "composition" are achieved using larger, more deceptively solid-looking blocks of colour that on closer inspection are actually made up of a multitude of colours. In the possible *Forms in a Valley*, colours are applied in layers, juxtaposed tonal variations and varying paint consistencies, applied thickly with evident directional brushstrokes, sometimes using sgraffito, or applied so thinly it dribbles down the canvas,

occasionally with the canvas's weft clearly visible, balancing the effects of complete control and accident. For the viewer, this painting is not easily deciphered. Olds' nuanced use of colour, various methods of paint application, and paint consistencies have resulted in a commandingly complex painting.

Figure 14. Paul Olds, *Title unknown,* possibly *Forms in a Valley*, c. 1962. Oil on canvas, 650 x 795 mm. Private Collection, Auckland.

Just as Paul Cézanne repeatedly painted Mont Sainte-Victoire in Provence, Olds repeatedly painted the valley and mountains of Ōtira and its surroundings. At least fifteen such paintings exist, dating from the late 1940s to the 1960s. His familiarity with Ōtira sets his work apart from other painters who visited just once or twice, evident in his inventively transforming what he saw, felt, and experienced there onto canvas. In his *Landscape and Western Art* (1999), English art historian Malcolm Andrews describes this as "saturating oneself in this landscape." Andrews explains the motivation for this: "An environment is the current field of significance for a living being."[51] For Olds, Ōtira certainly was "the current field of significance," and it is one of his paintings located there that gained him sustained recognition. *Riverbed, Otira* c. 1961 (fig. 15) was acquired by the National Art Gallery in Wellington as a donation from the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts in 1962 and is now in the collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. It is one of his best-known paintings, having been reproduced by Gil Docking in *200 Years of New Zealand Painting* (1971) and retained in four subsequent editions.[52] There is evidence too of the painting's popularity. The National Art Gallery had an arrangement with Parliament to allow artworks to be loaned to its offices from the 1960s to the 1980s, and in the *Riverbed Otira* file in Te Papa archives, we read that it "goes in and out of Parliament like a revolving door!"[53] Ian North remembers when this painting was on display in the National Art Gallery:

> I used to stand from time to time in front of Olds' Otira picture in the National Gallery, in silent, secret and almost awed communication. I felt puzzled by some of the formal moves in the work, but this only increased its attractive mystery. For me this painting possessed the potency of significant art.[54]

Journal of New Zealand Studies NS38 (2024), 153-175 https://doi.org/10.26686/jnzs.iNS38.9586

North's statement illuminates an important aspect of Olds' later works, one that today has become near impossible: that of being able to revisit and communicate with the work, attempt to unravel its forms, textures and colour and, through this process, feeling something. These works cannot be easily interpreted without time and patience.

Figure 15. Paul Olds, *Riverbed, Otira*, c. 1961. Oil on canvas, 660 x 800 mm. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, gift of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, 1962.

Olds' mature style is evident in this work, which North cogently explains as representing a significantly different approach to his New Zealand contemporaries: "If Olds did not overtly essay the big questions in the manner of McCahon . . . he re-proposes the important problem, as articulated by Cézanne, of how to recognise formal values and the subjectivity of vision while rendering objective motifs."[55]

Unlike McCahon, who explored spiritual and religious questions, Olds' approach is to translate what he discerns visually through shapes, line, composition and colour in the language of aesthetic theories of European modernists. He does this within the traditional medium, oils on canvas, and traditional genre—landscape painting and portraiture. Olds' work cannot be restricted or compartmentalised as belonging to just one modernism, yet his work resonates with it, incorporating cubist elements, utilising the flatness of the canvas, post-impressionistic colour and subject matter. His focus always lies in his current surroundings, people and places, and his desire to continuously evolve and experiment is evident in his stylistic changes over time. Olds' paintings are not formulaic, they are complex; his ability to assimilate influences is profound; his subjects are local but with global resonance; his style tends to abstraction with representational elements, and his motifs combine natural and altered landscapes. His mature work indeed "harmonise[s] with the totality of things," where all the objects represented are equally important across the canvas, and where cubist fracturing forms complex patterns, shapes and colours—and overall pictorial interest.

Figure 16. Paul Olds, *Otira*, 1960s. Oil on canvas, 805 x 910 mm.
Private Collection, Auckland.

Olds' last exhibition during his lifetime was of three paintings at the Bett Duncan Gallery at 147 Cuba Street, Wellington, in 1969—at the gallery's opening, with fellow artists Tanya Ashken and John Drawbridge.[56] From 1963, he tutored for three years at the Wellington Polytechnic, where he instituted the General Design Course. In 1966, he began his employment at Victoria University of Wellington as a lecturer in Visual Arts at the Department of University Extension. There, he developed the program for art courses, and organised summer and weekend schools. He curated exhibitions in the university library[57] and oversaw invitations to visiting art tutors. His Summer Art Couse in 1967, for instance, included tutors from Christchurch, Don Peebles from the University of Canterbury'; from Auckland Pat Hanly and Director of New Vision Gallery Kees Hos; and locally, the philosopher and historian Peter Munz.[58] Olds' life became increasingly occupied with university work and actively promoting art within Wellington and his connections with artists nationwide. This left little time for painting.

In a newspaper tribute to Olds at the time of his death in 1976, Elva Bett wrote that "He was one of the most respected artists and teachers in New Zealand and sacrificed his own art to teach and encourage." Since his death, he has been recognised predominantly as a teacher rather than an artist. Had he lived longer, he would surely have produced a greater body of work and further developed his personal style which, judging by the unfinished works that remained in his estate, would likely have been to a greater degree abstracted. He was planning to return to Ōtira to paint; shortly before his death he had removed the floor of one of the bedrooms in his bach to accommodate his easel. Sadly, this was not to be.

Journal of New Zealand Studies NS38 (2024), 153-175 https://doi.org/10.26686/jnzs.iNS38.9586

Conclusion

At the opening of the 1997 exhibition, *Portraits and Drawings by Paul Olds*, John Drawbridge spoke of his friend's achievement and reputation. He "felt [that] there is a great need for Paul's work to be thoroughly recognised in a major retrospective—the number of works in private and public—should be seen as a whole."[59] This is the last time such a thing has happened and, far from being "thoroughly recognised", the very opposite has applied. Paul Olds was a leading figure in Wellington's art scene in his lifetime, but over the many years since his death, he has been omitted from art historical publications and exhibitions alike. Short term, he paid the price for following European rather than American models; longer term, he has become largely forgotten. How, then, does one characterise Olds' unique modernist style since it does not resonate with pure abstract or expressionistic modernisms? One word repeatedly applied to him is "lyrical," which was first used by the eminent English art historian and champion of modernism, Sir Herbert Read. In 1963, Read wrote: "I was once more impressed by the work of Paul Olds, of which I had seen several examples in Auckland and Wellington. He has a very individual sense of colour and composition, at once lyrical and constructive."[60] Elva Bett used the term "lyric abstraction"[61] of him in 1997, while Grant Banbury, in his 2021 article on Olds in *Art New Zealand,* uses the term "A filtered modernism" as the sub-title."[62] The oversight of Olds' contribution to New Zealand's postwar art history reflects the narrowness of this country's modernism. However, several recent scholarly and curatorial endeavours have emphasised the necessity for embracing pluralism in modernist narratives. By acknowledging Olds' unique figurative abstraction, we enrich the tapestry of modernisms woven into New Zealand's artistic heritage.[63]

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[1] The author (Miriam Olds Spence) was born in Wellington in 1963 to Elisabeth and Paul Olds. When I was three years old, my parents separated and my mother and I moved to Germany, where I grew up. My mother was engaged in postgraduate research at the University of Tübingen, and later became a lecturer there. After we moved, I only saw my father twice, briefly. I did not return to Wellington until 1979, three years after my father died. My research stems from a desire to better understand my father's place in New Zealand's postwar art history.

[2] The exception is *Portraits and Drawings by Paul Olds—from the Elisabeth Olds Wilson Collection*, held at Page 90 Artspace, Porirua, in 1997. Only two paintings have had more recent exposure. *West Coast Landscape* (fig. 13) is on permanent display in the Hunter Building at Victoria University of Wellington Te Herenga Waka; *Wellington* (fig. 10), in the Kelliher Art Trust collection, has been exhibited in the touring exhibition curated by Peter Shaw, *Representation and Reaction: Modernism and the New Zealand Landscape Tradition*, 2002–5, and in the touring exhibition curated by Christopher Johnstone, *Infinitely Varied: Prizewinning New Zealand Landscape Paintings from the Kelliher Art Competition 1956–1977*, 2018–19. A recent publication of note is Grant Banbury, "A Filtered Modernism: Paul Olds, Painter & Teacher," *Art New Zealand*, no. 179 (Spring 2021). Olds is also mentioned in Leonard Bell, *Marti Friedlander: Portraits of the Artists* (Auckland: Auckland University Press), 39, 114–17, and in his article "Fallen Star: Reflecting on Suzanne Goldberg," *Art New Zealand*, no. 183 (Spring 2022): 108–13.

[3] The eight are: Waikato Museum Te Whare Taonga o Waikato, M.T.G. Hawke's Bay Tai Ahuriri, Victoria University of Wellington, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, New Zealand Portrait Gallery, University of Canterbury, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū and He Waka Tuia Invercargill, with a ninth being the Kelliher Trust.

[4] Mark Stocker, review of *The Invention of New Zealand: Art & National Identity, 1930–1970*, by Francis Pound, *New Zealand Journal of History* 44, no. 2 (2010), 195–97.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Janet Wolff, *AngloModern Painting and Modernity in Britain and the United States* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003), 2, 3.

[7] Francis Pound, "The Words and the Art," in Mary Barr, ed., *Headlands: Thinking Through New Zealand Art,* (Sydney: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1992), 187.
[8] Tony Green, "Modernism and Modernization," in Barr, ed., *Headlands,* 147.
[9] Leonard Bell, *Strangers Arrive: Émigrés and the Arts in New Zealand, 1930–1980* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2017), 3.
[10] Elva Bett, *New Zealand Art: A Modern Perspective* (Auckland: Reed Methuen, 1986), 34–43.
[11] A rare exception of an author confidently using the word "modernism" is James Ross. See his edited *New Zealand Modernism—In Context: Paintings from The Gibbs Collection* (Auckland: J. & A. Gibbs, 1995); *New Zealand Modernism—Expressionism and Figuration: Paintings from The Gibbs Collection* (Auckland: J. & A. Gibbs, 1996); and *New Zealand Modernism—The Content of Form: Paintings from The Gibbs Collection* (Auckland: The Gibbs Collection, 1997).
[12] See, for example, Michael Dunn, *A Concise History of New Zealand Painting* (Auckland: David Bateman, 1991), in the chapter titled "Towards Modernism," 101–21.
[13] Michael Nicholson, *Visual Language Games* (Wellington: Steele Roberts, 2016).
[14] Damian Skinner et al., *John Drawbridge* (Auckland: Ron Sang, 2008).
[15] Julia Waite et al., *Louise Henderson: From Life* (Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki; Christchurch: Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, 2019).
[16] Julia Gatley, *Vertical Living: The Architectural Centre and the Remaking of Wellington* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2014).
[17] Peter Simpson, *Bloomsbury South: The Arts in Christchurch 1933–1953* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2016).
[18] Julia Waite, *Freedom and Structure: Cubism in New Zealand Art 1930–1960* (Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, 2017).
[19] Roger Blackley, *Two Centuries of New Zealand Landscape Art* (Auckland: Auckland City Art Gallery, 1990). To date, the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki has no works by Olds in its collection. However, it very recently acquired black and white photographs of him in his studio by Marti Friedlander (see fig. 1).
[20] The exhibition showed a wide range of works by Olds, together with pottery by Jack Laird, and was held for just one week (3 to 8 May 1977).
[21] Now Pataka Art + Museum.
[22] Skinner et al., *Luncheon Under the Ash Tree: The Ian and Ellespie Prior Collection* (Masterton: Aratoi—Wairarapa Museum of Art and History and The Willi Fels Memorial Trust, 2005), 17.
[23] "Christchurch 3YA Winter Course Talk, use of Leisure, 'Painting' by Paul Olds," *The Press*, 16 August 1948.
[24] Archibald Nicoll is the only tutor from Canterbury College School of Art that Olds included in his address book (dated May 1951), in the author's collection. This strongly suggests Olds' admiration of Nicoll and his influence.
[25] This painting was offered for auction at Dunbar Sloane, Wellington, 15 February 2024, lot 0252.
[26] "Mature Art," *Otago Daily Times*, 10 October 1949.
[27] "Canterbury Artists," *The Press*, 5 September 1950.
[28] "Society of Arts," *The Press*, 8 July 1951. To date, there is no evidence they were actually exhibited.
[29] "Royal College of Art," *The Press*, 7 July 1954.
[30] These two oil paintings are reproduced in Olds' article "An Approach to Painting," *The Artist* 49, no. 4, issue 292 (June 1955), 74, 76. Olds lived at 28 The Avenue, Bedford Park, Chiswick, from March 1951 to July 1954.
[31] Paul Olds, "An Approach to Painting," *The Artist* 49, no. 5, issue 293 (July 1955), 114.
[32] Pickard wrote under the pen name A.P. Gaskell.
[33] Alec Pickard to Elisabeth Olds Wilson, 22 June 1997, author's collection.
[34] Christopher Johnstone, in an introduction for a talk on 12 February 2020, accompanying the exhibition *Landscapes from the Kelliher Trust*, Northart Gallery, Auckland. https://www.eventfinda.co.nz/2020/curators–talk/auckland/northcote.

[35] This was not a one-man show, as has been repeatedly stated. It was a three-person show that included Olds, who exhibited 25 oil paintings and six drawings, as well as the Australian–born landscape artist Derwent Lees (1884–1931) and the eminent British abstractionist Patrick Heron (1920–1999). It was held in 1958, after Olds had returned to New Zealand. A catalogue is in the author's collection. Olds' *Piazza de Popolo* was singled out in a review of the exhibition (G.S.S., "New Patterns of Colour," *The Scotsman*, 10 March 1958).
[36] Olds won numerous prizes during his time at the Canterbury College School of Art, including the Staff Prize for Life Work and Figure Composition (1942) and the Rosa Sawtell Prize for Figure Painting (1943), as well as earning numerous first-class examination grades for "Drawing Figure from Life," and "Drawing Head from Life." See MB 2114—University of Canterbury, School of Fine Arts records 71917 (1928–1966).
[37] "Return of N.Z. Artist: Six Years' Study Overseas," *The Press*, 6 August 1957.
[38] For the Kelliher Art Award and the national attention it attracted, see Richard King, *The Kelliher: 67 Award Winning Paintings of the New Zealand Landscape and its People* (Auckland: Orakau House, 1979).
[39] Peter Shaw, *Representation and Reaction: Modernism and the New Zealand Landscape Tradition 1956–1977* (Whanganui: Sarjeant Gallery, 2002), 8.
[40] Jill Trevelyan, *Toss Woollaston: A Life in Letters* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2004), 208.
[41] Peter Tomory, "The Visual Arts," in Keith Sinclair, ed., *Distance Looks Our Way: The Effects of Remoteness on New Zealand* (Hamilton: Paul's Book Arcade for the University of Auckland, 1961), 76.
[42] This is a two–pronged issue, also evident in English painting, as when David Peters and Lara Perry refer to "a long series of dismissals which deny the importance of English art to any history of modernism." See their *English Art 1860–1914: Modern Artists and Identity,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 1.
[43] Pound also noted: "A concept not entirely new to Tomory's 'brutal' can be seen much earlier, when Charles Brasch (1909–1973), in 1950, uses the words 'rawness' and 'harshness' to explain McCahon's work '. . . qualities [that] reflect with painful accuracy a rawness and harshness in New Zealand.' Paintings executed stylistically in high contrast and hard-edged, associated with New Zealand's supposed 'harsh light.'" "The Words and The Art," in Barr, ed., *Headlands*, 188.
[44] Elisabeth Olds Wilson, conversation with the author, September 2022.
[45] Ian North, "Olds Remembered: In the 1960s," in *Portraits and Drawings by Paul Olds—From the Elisabeth Olds Wilson Collection*, exhibition catalogue, Page 90 Artspace, Porirua, 1997, unpaginated.
[46] Quoted in Robert L. Herbert, ed., *Modern Artists On Art* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1964), 5.
[47] See Pound, *Signatures of Place: Paintings & Place-names*, exhibition catalogue (New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 1991).
[48] Willian McAloon et al., *Victoria's Art: A University Collection* (Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington, 2005), 14.
[49] It is important to note that this painting was acquired six years before Olds' employment with Victoria University of Wellington.
[50] Elva Bett, "Paul Olds 1922–1976," in *Portraits and Drawings by Paul Olds*, exhibition catalogue (Porirua: Page 90 Artspace, 1997), unpaginated.
[51] Malcolm Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 193.
[52] Gil Docking, *Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting* (Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1971).
[53] Paul Olds, artist's file, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. This quotation, the source of which is not recorded, is included in a memorandum of 2 May 1992 from Lesley Cobb, Conservator, Paintings, to Jill Trevelyan, then MoNZ Trainee Art, on "Works for Parliament Offices." The painting's display history at Parliament buildings is revealed: "This is fine—it's already had the full conservation and framing attention."
[54] Ian North, in *Portraits and Drawings by Paul Olds*, unpaginated.
[55] Ibid.

[56] Elva Bett and Catherine Duncan formed Bett Duncan Gallery, Wellington, which operated from 1969 to 1975, when Duncan retired. Bett renamed the gallery Elva Bett Gallery, which she sold in 1980. It promoted many Wellington women artists and students of Olds.
[57] For instance, Rita Angus's last solo exhibition held in her lifetime (1968).
[58] "Summer Art Course with McLuhan Text," *The Press*, 7 December 1962.
[59] Drawbridge's speech is in a video recording of the event, in the author's collection.
[60] Herbert Read, "Painting in N.Z. as Good as in Europe," *The Press*, 8 May 1963. Read was referring to an untitled exhibition of New Zealand painting, with works selected by Tomory, held in the students' common room at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch.
[61] Elva Bett, in *Portraits and Drawings by Paul Olds*, unpaginated.
[62] Banbury, "A Filtered Modernism," 106.
[63] For Olds and Ōtira, see Miriam Olds Spence, "Ōtira into Landscape Painting 1860s to 1960s: A Selection of Artists with a Primary Focus on Paul Olds" (BA (Hons) dissertation, University of Auckland, 2021).