

# The Architect and the Artists

## Hackshaw, McCahon, Dibble

BRIDGET HACKSHAW



\$65

CATEGORY: Art, Architecture

ISBN: 978-0-9951431-1-1

ESBN: TBC

THEMA: AFP, AGR, AMB, AMG AMN,  
1MBN

BIC: AGB, AMB, AMN

BISAC: ARC006000, ART016000,  
ART035000

PUBLISHER: Massey University Press

IMPRINT: Massey University Press

PUBLISHED: October 2021

PAGE EXTENT: 240 pages

FORMAT: Hardback

SIZE: 260 x 200mm

RIGHTS: World

AUTHOR'S RESIDENCE: Auckland,  
New Zealand

### HOW CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS ART AND MODERNIST ARCHITECTURE WERE FUSED

A beautiful and important book about the remarkable collaboration between the modernist architect James Hackshaw (a member of the famous Group Architects), the painter Colin McCahon and the then young sculptor Paul Dibble on 12 New Zealand buildings — from churches to houses.

Drawing on interviews with James Hackshaw before his death and on the McCahon archive, this book brings into the light a body of work and a collaboration that has been little known or examined, even by old McCahon hands.

Richly illustrated with Hackshaw's plans, McCahon's drawings, letters and journal entries, and contemporary images of the surviving buildings and artworks, expert essays by Peter Simpson, Julia Gatley, Peter Shaw and Alexa Johnston complete the package.

*'A rewarding investigation into one of the great artistic collaborations of twentieth century New Zealand' — John Daly-Peoples, New Zealand Arts Review*

*'This is a meticulously crafted chronicle describing a symbiotic relationship between art and architecture ...' — Maggie Hubert, HOME*

### SALES POINTS

- A striking contribution to the history of both New Zealand art and architecture
- A new insight into a relatively unknown aspect of Colin McCahon's practice
- Of great interest to fans of modernist architecture
- Expert contributing authors
- Stunning design package

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Bridget Hackshaw** is the daughter of James Hackshaw. Before her father's death in 1999, she talked with him about this body of work and has researched and photographed the buildings and artworks resulting from his collaboration with Colin McCahon and Paul Dibble. Bridget previously worked as an English teacher then as an advisor and lecturer in teacher education, following which she established and managed a travel business. In 2019 she completed a course in architectural photography at the London College of Communication. She is the producer of a film directed by Christopher Dudman about the Hackshaw, McCahon and Dibble collaboration.

### PRINTABLE A3 POSTER AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Mā whero, mā pango ka oti ai te mahi.

This book explores the creative collaboration between an architect, a painter and a sculptor. The work they did together spanned the years 1965 to 1979, a critical period in New Zealand's modern cultural history, and resulted in a dozen buildings. Most of the buildings were designed to serve diverse local communities, and, in three instances, families. However, much of the work from the collaboration has been virtually invisible and, in some cases, badly neglected. This might not be surprising nor warrant much attention were it not for the fact that the painter was Colin McCahon and the sculptor was Paul Dibble.

By his own account, the series of windows McConah designed for more than a half-dozen—eight churches and chapels, three private houses and one school building—were not only important in their own right but also critical to the development of his painting. Yet until now, McConah's windows have been barely mentioned in the great mass of commentary about his art and about the life and work of his accompanying documentary film, *Bring McConah's Unknown Glass Works Into the Light*.

My part in telling this story began in 1990, the year my father, the architect James McConah, died. We began our conversation when he was already quite ill, and we talked over several days. I took notes, but I don't have as much detail: the work he undertook with McConah and Dibble across their 34 years

After my father died, I shelved the handwritten notes for a long time—I had young children and for me it wasn't the right moment. However, I must have known I would come back to this subject one day. I was interested in my father's legacy, but more than that, I was intrigued that this collaborative work had remained largely unrecorded.

At the time of his death in 1967, McCahon was recognised as one of New Zealand's most influential modern artists and had a growing international reputation. Dibble's career had gained momentum since his collaborations with my father and McCahon, and by the 1960s his work was well represented in private and public collections. His *Southern Stand* New Zealand war memorial, unveiled in 2006 at Hyde Park Corner in London, cemented his

I was puzzled that their work together remained hidden in plain sight in buildings dotted around suburban Auckland and appeared to arouse next to no curiosity. My father gave a talk entitled 'McCahon and Church Architects at the Auckland City Art Gallery in 1989 in association with the Gates and Journeys

McCaughy's extraordinary windows in the convent chapel were removed in 1988. The architectural community of removers at such had sold the

A photograph of a wooden shelf against a brick wall. On the shelf are two ornate metal candle holders with lit yellow candles, a small bell, and a power cord.

In 1982, James Hackshaw reflected

And these people [Frank Sargison, Maurice Dugan, Bob Lowry and others] were living off the smell of an oil rag, trying to develop a New Zealand culture in their own field. And that is exactly what Bill [Wilson] inspired me to do. Now, the question is, how has it affected us now? Well, I have sort of carried that through, since leaving the Group, in other work, which is basically being designed on the principles of the Group, bred mainly for economy, you save materials and so forth. I've also used people like McCaughan, Dibble, artists who have made our buildings far more meaningful within our social context. And I insist that the reason Bill gave me the Group was that he knew that who we worked, was this terrific urgency to give New Zealand an identity in the architectural field — its own unique identity.

The Group member among the most important and influential New Zealand architects of the mid twentieth century. Hockaday's time with them in the 1940s and 1950s was formative, influencing his thinking long term and providing the context for his later collaborations with artists. It was also as a member of the Group that Hockaday earned the New Zealand Institute of Architects' highest honour – the Gold Medal –

The member "the Group" encompasses four formations: the Architectural Group, the Group Construction Company, Group Architects and Wilson & Jones. The Architectural Group were a collective of second-year Australian architecture students, who, in 1964, wrote a constitution and published a manifesto and the first issue of a magazine, *Planning*. Hackshaw

