

CHRONOLOGY, PART 3: 1979 TO 2002

1979–80

Two biblical texts dominate the final period of McCahon's painting – the New Testament's A Letter to Hebrews and the Old Testament Book of Ecclesiastes. Copying from the New English Bible, McCahon transcribed those passages he planned to use onto the loose sheets of a sketchpad. In retrospect it is clear that the texts, as employed, do not always follow the sequence of the Bible. Instead, McCahon adjusted them to best suit his needs, accentuating the emphasis on certain aspects and possible meanings.

Apart from the use of a small number of passages in several of the 1969 *Scrolls*, consideration of A Letter to Hebrews, with its meditations on the nature of faith, had first seriously occupied McCahon in 1970. At that time a Wellington collector had asked McCahon to consider the text and the possibilities it might hold for a painting. However, it was 1979 before McCahon felt sufficiently confident in his understanding of the Letter to be able to explore its possibilities on a significant scale. What particularly held his attention were the passages in which Paul, the Letter's reputed author, considered the nature of faith. In the first of a pair of images from October 1979, each titled *The Testimony of Scripture*, the question posed: 'and what is Faith?', is answered thus: 'Faith gives substance to our hopes and makes us certain of Realities we do not see.' (TCMDAIL No. 000881.) This is expanded in the second image: 'By faith we perceive that the universe was fashioned by the word of God. So that the visible came forth from the invisible.' (TCMDAIL No. 001318.)

McCahon expanded on these ideas in a large work on canvas, *A Letter to Hebrews* 1979 (TCMDAIL No. 001038). In this painting McCahon considers the acts of faith among the Jews of the Old Testament, including Abel, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, observing that: 'All these persons died in faith. They were not yet [in] possession of the things promised, but had seen them far away and had hailed them and

confessed themselves no more than strangers or passing travellers....It is for faith that the men of old stand on record.'

Although the first panel of *Paul to Hebrews* 1980 (pages 146–147) reveals the displeasure of a judgemental God, the remaining panels seek His indulgence and the protection of God in an essentially positive way. Meanwhile, in another painting from the same time, *The Flight From Egypt* 1980 (TCMDAIL No. 000247), a new theme emerges. In this six-panel work, each image is composed of a positive/negative reversal of the earlier *Necessary Protection* motif. Now the former 'fall of light' becomes the dark pillar of cloud that, according to Exodus, had guided the Holy Family on their escape from Egypt. The six 'stages' of the journey depicted were to be McCahon's final variation on the theme of a 'painting to walk past'.

Within months, the mood of the artist's work had changed, a reflection of McCahon's increasingly dispirited state. In *Storm Warning* (page 149) an apocalyptic text, taken from Paul's Letter to Timothy, presages the direction McCahon was now headed:

'YOU MUST FACE THE FACT the final age of this world is to be a time of troubles. Men will love nothing but money and self. [T]hey will be arrogant, boastful and abusive; with no respect for parents no gratitude, no piety, no natural affections they will be implacable in their hatreds.'

Such an admonishment through his art was reflected in McCahon's personal state. Rages fuelled by heavy drinking and bitterness at years of public misunderstanding and denigration, an increasing paranoia and suspicion of even long-time friends and supporters, and his desperate attempts to hold out against a disease he knew was eating at his mind, created a negative psychology that few could have overcome.



Colin McCahon in his studio, 1982. The image beside him is *Elias cannot save Him now* 1959 (TCMDAIL No. 000168).
 Courtesy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Wellington, New Zealand.

Whether, in these final days, McCahon lost totally any belief in a spiritual Being, remains a matter of conjecture. What is clear from the last four paintings, each of which draws upon texts from Ecclesiastes, is the collapse of his faith in faith itself, and in any possibility of fulfilment in a temporal life. His darker and ever more negative sentiments are written in episodic progression across these canvases. Painted in his distinctive, cursive white script, on black, almost featureless, backgrounds, the deliberate character of the handwriting appears to be that of an individual still sufficiently in physical control to be able to bend his hand to his will. But the bleakness of the texts McCahon chose to use gives a window to the battles raging inside his mind as he struggled with the frightening idea that all he had previously held to be true might now appear misguided and false.

In *The emptiness of all endeavour* (page 151) and *Is there anything of which one can say, Look, this is New?* (page 153) McCahon contemplates the futility of human endeavour, concluding that it is mankind's destiny to repeat its mistakes. There is no real advantage to a righteous and wise life over that lived by a fool, he decides. Perhaps most tellingly: 'The Men of old are not remembered, and those who follow will not be remembered by those who follow them.' A far cry from the assertion that 'It is for faith that the men of old stand on record' of barely a few months earlier.

Yet bleaker still is *I applied my mind* (page 155), for in this text McCahon personalises the negativity. After identifying his uncertainty as to God's true nature – 'I applied my mind to all this and I understood that the Righteous and the wise and all their doings are under GOD'S control, but is it love or hatred? no man knows' – McCahon clearly states his position: 'Good man and sinner fare alike, the man who can take an oath, and the man who dares not. This is what is wrong in all that is done here under the Sun: that one and the same fate befalls every man.' The only consolation he can suggest is that at least: 'for a man who is counted among the living there is still hope: Remember, a live dog is better than a dead lion. true the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing. there are no more rewards for them; they are utterly forgotten. for them love, hate, ambition, are all now over. never again.'

Where now McCahon's optimism of a 'Victory over Death' of ten years earlier?

For many artists, a state of mind disturbed by these thoughts would have spelled the end to creativity. But psychologically and spiritually McCahon had still further to go into the void: *I considered all the acts of oppression* 1980–82 (page 157). In this final work, all hope is lost. There is no cause for faith. Even the consolation of being alive – however bleak

and futile the existence – is now dismissed. Instead, writes McCahon: ‘I Counted the dead happy because they were dead, happier than the living who were still in life’ and the brutalist conclusion of all: ‘More fortunate than either I reckoned man yet unborn, who had not witnessed the wicked deeds done here under the SUN.’

With its unfinished text, ‘endless yet never’, and the dark black void on the right hand side of the painting, the issue of whether this work is completed must remain a subject of conjecture. What is clear is that McCahon had taken it as far as he was able. The ravages of alcohol, illness, paranoia and – most critically – a loss of faith, combined to ensure that he would never paint again.

Although *Is there anything of which one can say, Look, this is New?* and *I applied my mind* are dated March and May 1982 respectively, contemporary accounts confirm that each was substantially completed in 1980. Both were exhibited at the Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington in April–May 1983. This was to be McCahon’s last solo exhibition with any of his dealer galleries. I considered all the acts of oppression would not see the light of day until McCahon’s funeral in 1987.

1981–87

The years between 1981 and 1987 were a period of steady and, after early 1984, serious and irreversible psychological and physical decline. Of course there were, in the first two years of the decade, still times of comparative contentment and optimism. For example, in response to an invitation to provide a biographical entry for the catalogue of a 1981 exhibition at Victoria University of Wellington, McCahon was still able to muster a positive note:

“‘A biography?’ A painter’s biography is not in any way exciting. It’s just hard work and trying to be honest, and that is difficult indeed – try it for a week or so. I see my painting life as something with no beginning or end – it all just happens – sometimes I feel terribly sad, it hurts and it’s hard to work at all. So I get out into the garden and work with plants and trees – walk along Muriwai Beach – and listen to the sea – see the curve of the horizon. I think I am a Christian – perhaps I am. I think I am a good guy – but I’m not...

‘With this exhibition I try to tell you something more useful than born ‘1919’ and if you want to know – in Timaru – I was there for a few weeks and then shifted to Dunedin and some months later began my painting career – well with crayon drawings anyway...’²⁰²

In July–August 1982 the Auckland City Art Gallery exhibited its recently enlarged McCahon collection, which included a number of works gifted by the artist himself. Other institutions, including the Hocken Library and Victoria University of Wellington, received similar gifts of paintings – the result of a quite deliberate policy by McCahon to place major works still in his possession in public institutions where he felt their presence would be most relevant. As Gregory O’Brien has pointed out:

‘There [was] a purpose and a pattern to this gifting.

‘Just as McCahon grafted landscape and meaning onto the New Zealand landscape and night sky of his paintings, this time he was placing the paintings in the actual landscape. These markers or beacons were perhaps his last great statement as a painter, a final coming to terms with “the terrifying present we live in” and a strategic placement of messages in places where they might be heeded.’²⁰³ The sad betrayal of McCahon’s intentions by Victoria University of Wellington was several years in the future (see 1999).

Meanwhile, in August 1982, there was further public humiliation, this time in Christchurch and prompted by the Robert McDougall Art Gallery’s purchase of *As there is a constant flow of light* 1965. Although John Coley, director of the McDougall, defended the purchase, commenting ‘Art is not just for entertainment but for challenge, stimulation and a stretching of the mind’,²⁰⁴ the NZ\$10,000 price tag



Colin McCahon with granddaughter Elizabeth Douglas, Crummer Rd, Grey Lynn, Auckland, New Zealand, 1985. Photograph by the Reverend Ron O’Grady. Courtesy of McCahon Family Archive.

induced apoplexy among many newspaper correspondents while a local radio station invited listeners to paint McCahon look-alikes, planning an exhibition of them in the station's foyer.

Throughout the period up until February 1983 McCahon continued to cooperate with his old friend – and now biographer – Gordon Brown, on the drafts of Brown's book, *Colin McCahon: Artist*. Gordon Brown recalls:

'Up to then, McCahon still occasionally spoke of getting back to his painting; unfinished canvases of promise waited in his studio. But any glimmer of hope was abandoned when he turned to a world as watched on television. Year after year he had resisted the attraction of its screen; he had been emphatic that no television set was to be in the house. As a visual being, he feared its tunnel-vision imagery and its power to absorb the seeing eyes' independent visual receptiveness. He had been Saint Anthony Abbott resisting temptation, fighting to preserve the visual purity of his own artistic vision. And now he accepted defeat without realising he had been defeated. It was clear, McCahon's career as a painter was over.'²⁰⁵

1984

On 12 April 1984 the exhibition, *I will need words: Colin McCahon's Word and Number Paintings*, opened at the Power Gallery of Contemporary Art, University of Sydney, as a satellite exhibition of the Fifth Biennale of Sydney. Curated by Wystan Curnow, the theme – and title – of the exhibition had been suggested by McCahon's letter to John Caselberg at the time of planning *The Second Gate Series* (see earlier, 1961). The exhibition was keenly anticipated among those interested in the artist as it was to be the first occasion on which a survey of McCahon's work would be presented to an audience beyond New Zealand.

Within the international setting of the Biennale, McCahon's exhibition is regarded by many as one of its successes. However, the reception of the exhibition was overshadowed by the dramatic turn of events that took place on Wednesday 11 April 1984. Gordon Brown takes up the story:

'Anne and Colin McCahon travelled to Sydney. The exhibition...was to be officially opened at 6.30 pm, Thursday 12 April....Earlier, on the Tuesday, McCahon found the opening ceremony for the Biennale an unsettling experience. The next morning, to remedy the bewilderment felt from the previous evening, Colin and Anne McCahon left the Manhattan Hotel with Alexa Johnston, to spend part of the day in the Royal Botanic Gardens. Later that morning McCahon wanted to use the men's convenience, but with his companions out of sight, he wandered off alone. Once the two waiting women became aware of what had happened, they made a frantic search, then reported him missing to the police.

'The following morning he was gathered up in the routine police-sweep of Centennial Park, 5 km from the Gardens, and taken to St Vincent's Hospital. Unable to tell the staff who he was, he was examined and the symptoms diagnosed were consistent with cerebral atrophy. It was only after the hospital staff saw an item about the missing artist that evening on the television news that McCahon's whereabouts could be reported to the police.

'As feared, though not openly acknowledged till later, McCahon had become a victim of dementia. What was said and written in his praise during the time when *I will need words* was on view in Sydney, then, during August–September, at the 1984 Edinburgh Festival, no longer registered in his mind. Darkness had set in, blotting out his world.'²⁰⁶

Writing of *I will need words*, the Australian artist and critic Elwyn Lynn compared McCahon with the American painter Barnett Newman:

'Like Newman (and comparisons with Robert Motherwell and Adolph Gottlieb could be illuminating), McCahon is emphatic and inescapable in intensity; he has lots of words, and Newman lots of minor painterly touches, but neither is loquacious or discursive. Both qualify and adjust but never deviate. Both use religion to face problems. Curnow says that McCahon is agnostic, but whether one is uncertain about the existence of a God seems irrelevant to the problem of encountering or coping with the notion of eternal death. All art, thought André Malraux, was a defence against mortality.'²⁰⁷

In August–September 1984 *I will need words* was shown at the Talbot Rice Art Centre, Edinburgh, Scotland, as part of the Edinburgh International Festival. Later in the year, the exhibition returned to New Zealand to be displayed at the National Art Gallery, Wellington.

Late in 1984 the first serious monograph on McCahon was published, Gordon H. Brown's, *Colin McCahon: Artist*. It remains the only comprehensive biography and is an indispensable book on McCahon.

1985–86

In 1985 the National Art Gallery in Wellington purchased *Practical religion: The resurrection of Lazarus showing Mount Martha* 1970 (pages 108–109). The gallery paid a then record NZ\$150,000 for the painting.

In December 1986 the director of the Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt, organised the exhibition *Colin McCahon – A Celebration*.

1987

On 27 May 1987 Colin McCahon died in the Auckland Public Hospital of bronchopneumonia complicated by dementia.



Gates and Journeys, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, 1988.
Installation view showing *Angels and Bed no. 4: Hi-Fi* 1976–77 and a selection of paintings from the Gate series.
Photography courtesy of Auckland Art Gallery Toi O Tamaki.

His funeral was held at St Joseph's Catholic Church, Grey Lynn, on 29 May 1987. Hanging on one wall of the church was *I considered all the acts of oppression* 1980–82 (page 157). William McCahon recalled:

'On the day of Colin's death, my sister and I felt compelled to clean his studio; one of many studios in which we used to enjoy talking to him while he painted.

'As he became ill and ceased painting we were actively discouraged from entering the studio by Colin. It remained locked and disused for some years. I did however go in once during this period to help bring out works stored there for viewing and possible inclusion in the *Gates and Journeys* exhibition. This action greatly agitated Colin and it was clear he did not want his studio disturbed.

'As we cleaned the studio we found the painting *I considered all the acts of oppression*, symbolically face down on the floor. It was such a personal and conscious statement from Colin to his audience that we hung it on the wall of St Joseph's Church in Grey Lynn during his funeral.'²⁰⁸

A Tribute to McCahon, 1919–87, was organised jointly by the Dunedin Public Art Gallery and the Hocken Library,

Dunedin, during the months of August to October 1987.

1988–89

On 6 June 1988, McCahon's ashes were released over the headland at Muriwai.

Later, on 11 November that year, a retrospective exhibition, *Colin McCahon: Gates and Journeys*, opened at the Auckland City Art Gallery. Afterwards, a significantly reduced version of the exhibition was shown in Wellington, Dunedin and Christchurch. Although the catalogue also lists a Sydney venue, organisational and financial problems prevented this from happening. In her catalogue introduction, co-curator Alexa Johnston wrote:

'We wished to acknowledge McCahon's investigation of and response to the landscapes and histories of New Zealand; his reactions to the artistic currents of his time and of the past; his interest in words and numbers both as symbols and as the content of paintings; his exploration of the idea of a walk past a series of paintings as a metaphor for other journeys; his concept of the Gate as a 'way through' both the surface of the picture and the destructive inclinations of humanity;

and his dedication to the task of confronting and discussing issues of religious doubt and religious faith.²⁰⁹

1990

Three exhibitions of McCahon's paintings were seen outside New Zealand in 1990. The first, *Colin McCahon: The Language of Practical Religion*, was shown at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, United Kingdom, 12 April–27 May 1990. In June, a joint exhibition with the Australian artist Rosalie Gascoigne opened at the Ivan Dougherty Gallery, in Sydney. Entitled *Rosalie Gascoigne, Colin McCahon: Sense of Place*, the exhibition examined each artist's response to the landscape in which they lived. *Sense of Place* subsequently travelled to the Ian Potter Gallery at the University of Melbourne. Finally, in August, *Colin McCahon: The Promised Land*, a survey of the artist's work, opened at Canberra's Australian National Gallery.

Reaction to the Australian exhibitions was positive, particularly to *Sense of Place*. However, unfortunately both *The Promised Land* and *The Language of Practical Religion* were hindered by organisational problems and lack of any published catalogue. The ICA show, in particular, received little positive notice. Amongst those who did comment was the critic Tim Hilton who, writing in *The Guardian*, essentially dismissed McCahon as a naive provincial, contrasting his use of subject matter with what Hilton felt to be the much more successful use a sophisticated, 'international' artist such as the English painter John Walker had done with the same material. That the calligraphic script and quasi-religious texts, which characterised the body of work for which Walker had become best known, had been directly informed by Walker's experience of the McCahon paintings he had seen during visits to New Zealand – made during his time spent holding a teaching position in Melbourne, Australia – seemed to have eluded Hilton.²¹⁰

In Australia, a project to compile a McCahon *catalogue raisonné* project was initiated in this year. After several false starts, this led eventually to the formation in New Zealand of the Colin McCahon Research and Publication Trust.²¹¹ The Trust's researcher, Gerald Barnett, spent the succeeding decade compiling the information that is now the basis for the Colin McCahon Database and Image Library.

1992

Headlands: Thinking Through New Zealand Art, the first major survey of New Zealand art to be shown outside of New Zealand for some years, opened in the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, in March 1992. It was shown at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, later the same year. Much controversy surrounded aspects of the exhibition and, in particular, an essay by Maori art historian Rangihira Panoho in the accompanying catalogue. In his essay Panoho accused the artist Gordon Walters (1919–95) of 'cultural appropriation' in his use of the Maori koru motif. One of New Zealand's leading abstract painters, Walters' synthesizing of the koru

in an abstract manner in the late 1950s and early 1960s had previously been regarded as one of the most avant-garde developments in the New Zealand art world. Although McCahon had also used Maori motifs, the broad thrust of the 'cultural theft' argument was directed at Walters.

1993

In October 1993, the McCahon Family Trust offered for sale *I considered all the acts of oppression 1980–82*, the so-called 'Last Painting', at Webb's auctioneers in Auckland. The resulting price of NZ\$511,750 created a new record for a work by McCahon, a figure due largely to the presence of Australian bidders and reflecting the internationalisation of the audience and market for the artist.



Under Capricorn. The World Over, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 1996. Installation view shows *Victory over Death 2* 1970 (pages 110–111), *The Shining Cuckoo* 1974 (page 127) and *A grain of wheat* 1970 (TCMDAIL No. 001022).

On 30 December 1993, Anne McCahon died in Auckland.

1995

This year saw the opening of the NEW Gallery, a division of the Auckland Art Gallery dedicated to showing modern and contemporary art. Reacting to earlier criticism that it was often not possible to see works by McCahon, as New Zealand's most acclaimed artist, on display, the gallery dedicated a permanent space – 'The Colin McCahon Room' – to a changing display of the artist's works. An active programme of thematic exhibitions was held between 1995 and early 2000, since which time the space appears to have been dedicated to other activities.

In March 1995, the sale by auction of the painting *Let be*, 1959, set a new record price for McCahon of NZ\$712,000.

1996

In this year a selection of paintings by McCahon was a feature of the exhibition *Under Capricorn. The World Over* held at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, and organised by the Stedelijk Museum and the City Gallery, Wellington. The coinciding conference in Wellington, organised as part of the Wellington International Festival of the Arts, discussed the theme 'Is art an European Idea?'

1997-98

On 5 June 1997 a night-time raid on the Aniwanuiwa Visitors Centre at Lake Waikaremoana resulted in the disappearance of the *Urewera Mural* (page 223). Although several suspects gave themselves up, claiming that the theft was to draw attention to Maori land grievances in the Urewera area, intensive police investigations failed to find the artwork, leading to fears that it had been destroyed, either intentionally or accidentally. Eventually, some fifteen months later, the painting's safe return from the group of Maori activists holding it was negotiated by leading New Zealand art collector and patron, Jenny Gibbs. Gibbs was taken in her car, blindfolded, to a secret location where the painting was placed in the luggage compartment before she was driven back to suburban Auckland and allowed to go free. After conservation treatment, the painting was eventually returned to the Aniwanuiwa Visitors Centre, where it was re-installed under the custodianship of the local iwi (tribal groups).

In July 1997 the painting *Let be, let be* 1959 was sold for NZ\$1.14 million dollars to an Australian collector by Sydney dealer Martin Browne. The first McCahon painting to sell for in excess of NZ\$1 million, the sale also set a new record price for any post-War artwork by an Australian or New Zealand artist.

1999

In January 1999, *Toi Toi Toi, Three Generations of Artists from New Zealand*, curated by René Block, opened at the Museum Fridericianum, in Kassel, Germany. A representative selection of paintings by McCahon was central to the exhibition.

'*Toi Toi Toi* is in part a proposition and in part a declaration. It seizes a moment in contemporary New Zealand art and weaves it through some key strands of its modern condition. That moment both confirms and resists the long shadow cast by Colin McCahon, as it opens up to the little known photographs of Len Lye and extends through the contemporary work of Ralph Hotere, Bill Culbert, Boyd Webb, Billy Apple, Jacqueline Fraser, L. Budd et al. and Rosalie Gascoigne.'²¹²

In April 1999 controversy again surrounded a McCahon artwork and a public institution but, in marked contrast with earlier times, on this occasion the dispute was over plans to sell – rather than buy – the painting. The subject of the uproar was *Storm Warning* 1980–81 (page 149), a painting

McCahon had gifted to Victoria University of Wellington in 1981. After closed deliberations by the University Council, the Head of the University's Art History Department, Jenny Harper (herself formerly Director of the National Art Gallery), announced the 'intended' sale of the painting to raise money to cover the cost of a shortfall in budgeting for a new university gallery, as well as setting up a fund for the purchase of new artworks. The outrage that greeted this announcement, both within the University community and amongst the wider public, was to no avail. In fact, despite Harper implying that the sale was still 'intended', she was disguising the fact that it was already to all intents and purposes a fait accompli. Anger reached new heights after the discovery, a week later, of a letter from McCahon that prompted debate about Harper's earlier assertions that the artist's original gift had been unencumbered with any implied obligations, and that the sale of the painting was in the spirit of McCahon's intentions when making the gift. Although informal, the letter clearly stated McCahon's belief that *Storm Warning* was a 'public work' that he didn't want to disappear into a private collection.²¹³ But by then it was too late. As poet and commentator Gregory O'Brien wrote in an essay on the affair:

'It was more than a gift in the material sense alone....The University Council's right to sell *Storm Warning* will always be contested, if not necessarily on legal grounds then certainly on moral and ethical ones.'²¹⁴

On a more positive note, April 1999 also saw the opening, at the new Hocken Library Gallery in Dunedin, of an exhibition examining the collaborations of McCahon with the poet John Caselberg. Curated by Peter Simpson, *Answering Hark. McCahon/Caselberg: Painter/Poet*, later toured public galleries throughout New Zealand.

'This exhibition records the friendship and artistic collaboration between the writer John Caselberg (b. 1927) and the visual artist Colin McCahon (1919–87). Over several decades Caselberg and McCahon collaborated on a succession of remarkable works which brought together words and images in a unique fusion....Caselberg supplied words for McCahon's paintings, drawings and lithographs; McCahon provided images for Caselberg's poems, plays and books – each became for the other a crucial vehicle of communication and response....A prophetic view of art – ethically driven, biblically attuned, given to warning and lamentation – characterized much of their subsequent collaboration.'²¹⁵

In May 1999 the Waitakere City Council announced plans to buy and preserve McCahon's Titirangi home, to be used as the site for an artists-in-residence programme. William McCahon, the artist's son, opposed the idea, describing the house as a 'rotten old bach' and pointing out that the place had not always been a happy one for the artist and his family. More importantly, McCahon pointed out that the true memorial of his father's time in the Titirangi area was in the paintings and drawings made in the surrounding locale. The Waitakere City Council have pushed forward with the idea regardless.

2002

This year McCahon's life and work were among the inspirations for Australian playwright Andrew Upton's play *Hanging Man*, premiered at the Sydney Theatre Company, 28 August 2002: '*Hanging Man* examines the anxiety of identity. Our identity as individuals, the identity of a family and above all, the anxiety of identity at the heart of this country.'²¹⁶

On 30 August 2002, *Colin McCahon: A Question of Faith*, curated by Marja Bloem, opened in the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. The exhibition represents the first time a non-New Zealander had developed an exhibition on McCahon, and focuses on the spiritual, existential side of McCahon, his exploration of faith, belief and knowledge.