

OBITUARY

Painter for peace leaves rich legacy

Sunday Times 26.9.04

PAT HANLY

Artist. Born Palmerston North, August 2, 1932. Died Auckland, September 19. Patrick Hanly, who died in Auckland last Sunday, seemed always in the grip of a remarkable energy and restlessness. Watching him paint was like watching some session of creative calisthenics. Beneath that was the rigorous discipline of an artist, who knew thoroughly how to paint and draw. He was a fine and effortless draughtsman; line seemed to flow from brush, pencil crayon or pen as if drawing were an instinct rather than some hard-won skill.

Born in Palmerston North in 1932, from his youth Pat was driven to be an artist. He attended the Canterbury School of Art from the early '50s – not in pursuit of some qualification or a job as a school teacher, but to learn the craft. At Canterbury he met Gillian Taverner, also an art student and a painter of considerable talent,

whom he later married in London. She is now better known as a gifted photographer.

In 1957 the couple travelled to England where Pat worked a variety of jobs including a stint in a Soho club as stage manager. From that came his first mature series *Showgirls* – works showing the influence of the British painter Francis Bacon, but very much in a style of the artist's own. Then followed the *Fire* paintings, oddly lyrical protests against nuclear weapons.

Pat and Gil were strong supporters of CND and took part in the Aldermaston marches. Later, in New Zealand, Pat was a founding member of the peace squadron, sailing his somewhat eccentric boat adorned with colourful banners out into the Waitemata to protest against visits such as that of the US submarine *Pintado*. He had returned to New Zealand in 1962 where his passionate professionalism became a role model for many

younger artists and even for some of his own generation.

His painting flowered on his return. While the influence of many of the great 20th century artists was still there, it was now translated into something very much a part of this place. *Pacific Icons* and *Figures in Light* were two of the earlier series that in many ways marked a watershed for local painting in the '60s.

These were followed by the remarkable *Molecular Landscapes* and *Inside the Garden* paintings, which buzzed with energy and the painter's idiosyncratic take on the natural world. There were numerous print editions in a variety of media, some of which were of Pat's own devising. Beyond art was the creative pursuit of kite-building and kite-flying, and Hanly filled the skies over Auckland Domain with colourful and ingenious creations.

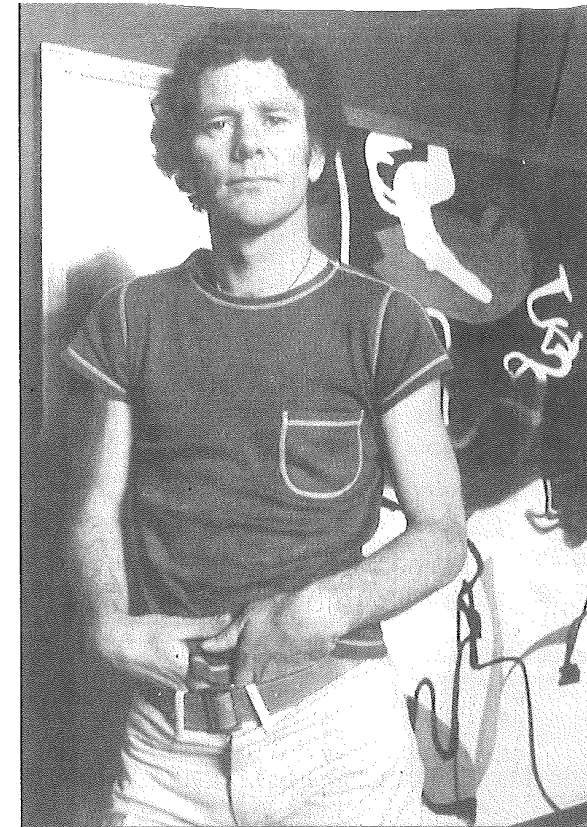
Hanly's influence on the Auckland

art scene was enormous. He taught generations of architects how to draw and, by example, a couple of generations of artists how to be professional in their chosen vocation. He carried out several public mural commissions on a large scale and it is to the city's shame that none of his three major Auckland works are still intact or accessible. His only remaining mural is in Christchurch Town Hall.

In the mid-'90s, with the onset of Huntington's disease, Hanly gave up his career. That was a considerable loss to New Zealand art, but he always demanded the best from himself. Even before then, it was a risk for Hanly to return to a painting for what he called a "bit of touching up" – it was likely to be repainted.

Pat Hanly is survived by his wife and three children and by a large body of art which will continue to enrich us all.

– Hamish Keith



Pat Hanly taught generations of architects how to draw.