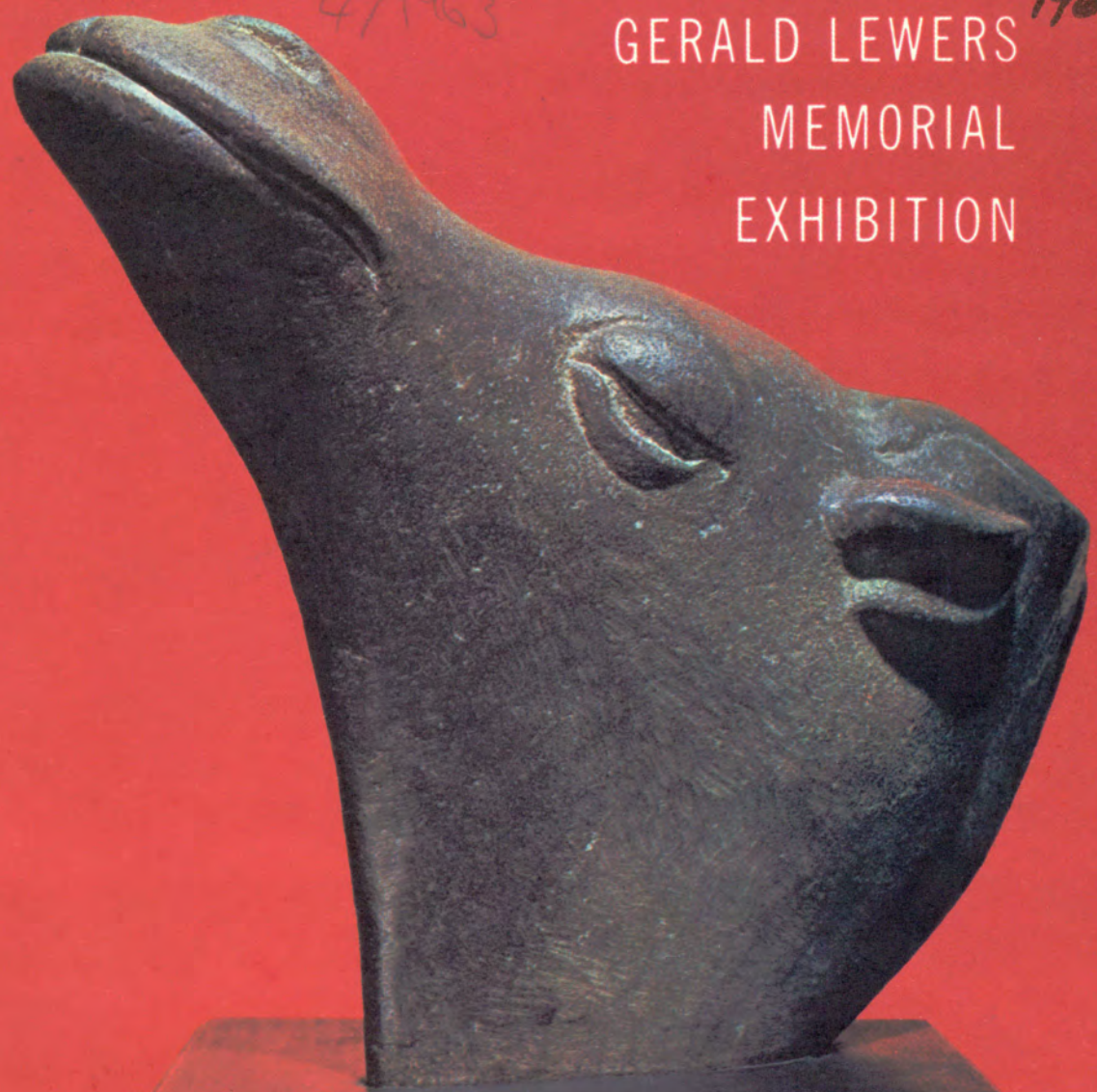


4/1963

1963

GERALD LEWERS  
MEMORIAL  
EXHIBITION



*Gerald Lewers Memorial Exhibition catalogue—ERRATA*

First page of catalogue, add:

**9 Camel's Head** bought from the artist June 1946, trachyte, 10½ high  
*Lent by the Art Gallery of New South Wales*

for catalogue no. 36 (vi) Fountain read catalogue no. 36 (vii) Fountain  
Catalogue no. 13 Gong, for April 1950 read April 1960

Catalogue no. 32 Model for Wall Sculpture, for one section full scale  
32 x 62 read one section quarter scale 32 x 62

A selected exhibition of the works of the late Gerald Lewers  
arranged for showing in  
the Art Gallery of New South Wales  
June 5 to June 23  
the Queensland Art Gallery  
July 11 to August 11 and  
the National Gallery of South Australia  
August 29 to September 29 1963

Grateful acknowledgement is made to owners who have generously  
lent works to the exhibition



## FOREWORD

The two people best qualified to talk about Gerald Lewers and his work are Lyndon Dadswell and Margel Hinder, both eminent and expert sculptors and both closely associated with him.

Margel Hinder says:

*To me the true quality of Gerry's work was the expression of his unique personality.*

*His love and understanding for the wood and stone of his own land, coupled with his sensitivity for the inner life of wild animals and birds, carried out with his assured craftsmanship, led to some of his finest and most distinguished works—works that will always set him apart from any other Australian sculptor.*

*It was not so much his use of shape, although it was always distinctive, whether figurative or abstract, but his perfect sense of movement plus his inventive handling of materials that was, I think, his most compelling sculptural quality, containing a rare sensuous beauty.*

Dadswell says:

*Others have written of the many facets that made Gerry Lewers the man that all men admired, but the quality that I remember him for is that he believed all men are honest and, if one looks for it, this honesty will be found in their sculpture, painting, writing etc.*

*Gerry knew how to look for, and each of us would be the better if we too tried to find, the best in others a little more often. However, looking for the best in every act and work isn't at all easy, because often it is necessary to be frank. I mean frank, not just the smoothing-over of weaknesses with a few soft words.*

*It wasn't in Gerry to say that he liked a sculpture if he didn't, especially if he was talking to a friend—especially if it was a friend.*

*My personal experience of him was that he could be painfully critical, but his criticism was never negative. He always saw the basic weaknesses, and he always gave me the impression that he genuinely wanted to say something that would enable me to do something really fine. The point is that he was vitally interested in sculpture—period. Who made the sculpture was a secondary consideration. So if he thought he could help, he did, otherwise he remained silent.*

*How often when we are visiting an exhibition do we look for the glaring weaknesses in the work of others? Not so with Gerry. When he looked at someone's work, he didn't try to tell everyone within earshot just how much he knew. No, he tried to find some quality in the work. How many of us do this?*

*On the few occasions when he has taught, he has worried himself sick trying to help others help themselves. Gerry was an educator. As to his sculpture, well, many will remember him for his fine wood and stone carvings, but I believe that his solving the problem of wedding his fountain to the I.C.I. building in Melbourne to be so successful that, if ever a man made a memorial to himself, it was in this splendid integration of sculpture and architecture. I hope that those who had the good sense to commission him are aware of the honour he did that city.*

*Finally Gerry was a foundation member of the Society of Sculptors and Associates, and without a doubt he kept it together.*

*Sculpture isn't very old in Australia, but Gerry played a vital civic role in its beginning. We miss him.*

Sculpture was petrified in Australia. It was Lewers, Dadswell, Hinder and Tom Bass who, in Sydney, revived it and began the forward, exploratory movements which have since opened the road to younger artists experimenting in new materials, forms and techniques.

Lewers himself was a carver, not a modeller. His early works were exquisitely carved stone or wooden subjects typified by the *Camel's Head* in the Sydney Gallery. When he first faced his own inner need to grapple with the spiritual and emotional stresses of the present day and to use modern materials to do it, he seemed temporarily flummoxed, and some of the transitional works combining stone or wood and metals discreetly tucked away in his old studio testify to the struggle.

Somewhere about the early 1950's he discovered that copper, besides stone and wood, was especially suited to his temperament and ideas because he could fashion it as a carver—that is, he found he could use his hammer like a chisel and mallet. Long before he died he had begun to twist his materials to his ideas, to force them and to respect them, to recreate them, until, in his best fountains and other important commissions, idea and material were wedded in unique, powerful and beautiful forms, strong and sensitive like himself.

*Laurie Thomas*  
Brisbane, May 1963





catalogue no. 11  
*Pelican Bird Bath*

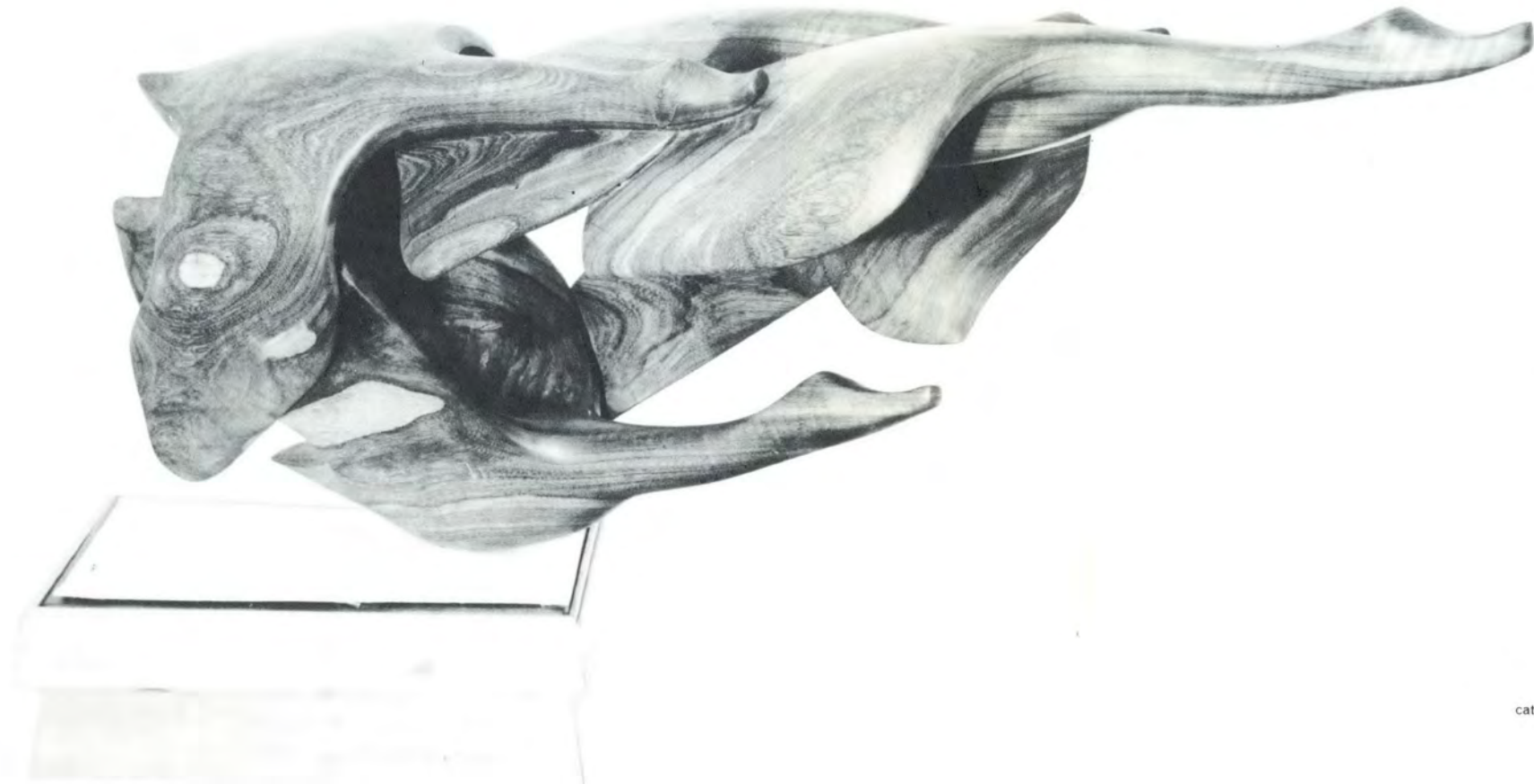
## GERALD FRANCIS LEWERS

- 1905** Born 1st July at Hobart, Tasmania. Seventh of eight children of a Sydney bank manager and his Tasmanian wife whose family, the Propstings, were Quakers. As a child was always carving. Attended the Friends School, Hobart, for one year, then Chatswood Public School, Sydney, and completed schooling at Barker College, Sydney, which he left in 1923.
- 1924** Aged eighteen, sailed in a lugger to the Great Barrier Reef with A. F. Bassett Hull's zoological expedition to collect chitons (a mollusc with jointed shell). This interest in shells and similar natural forms continued a childhood love of nature.
- 1924-26** Studied art part-time at East Sydney Technical College.
- 1926-29** Night classes with Dattilo Rubbo, Sydney, where he studied drawing and lettering. Joined Farley and Lewers, a construction company founded by his brother-in-law and elder brother. It built roads and, in 1937, the Port Augusta-Port Pirie railway. This work entailed a great deal of travelling, and constant experience of bushland and rocks.
- 1931** Visited Europe briefly. Studied drawing and painting under Koenig at Kunstgewerbeschule, Vienna.
- 1933** Married Margo Plate, a sister of the painter Carl Plate; two daughters, Darani 1936, Tanya 1941.
- 1934** Visited England briefly with his wife; studied sculpture for a few months in London at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, under John Skeaping. Exhibited sculpture for the first time with a group of Six Colonial Artists at the Cooling Galleries, Bond Street, London in July 1934. His exhibits were wood or stone carvings of animals and machines and the catalogue foreword by John Skeaping expressed particular interest in Gerald Lewers.



catalogue no. 36 (viii)  
*Fountain*

- 1939 Participated in *Exhibition 1* in Sydney in August. This was the first group manifestation in Australia of cubist and constructivist tendencies. The painters were Frank Hinder, Fizelle, Crowley, Balson, the other sculptors Eleanore Lange, and Margel Hinder.
- 1940 Participated in the Contemporary Art Society's first Sydney exhibition. Continued to exhibit with the Society in 1945-49, 1951, 1954-1955.
- 1945 Participated in the Sydney Group's inaugural exhibition, though did not show with it again. Also exhibited for the first time with the Society of Artists, of which he was elected a member in 1952, and with which he exhibited again in 1954.
- 1948 In October participated in a large group exhibition of abstract art at David Jones Gallery with much the same artists as *Exhibition 1*
- 1949 In November showed five works in a sculpture exhibition at David Jones Gallery.
- 1950 Moved from Sydney to Emu Plains, on the Nepean River, at the foot of the Blue Mountains. Retired from active membership of Farley and Lewers and devoted himself extensively to sculpture. Most fountains and large commissions belong to the 50's and 60's. December: included in exhibition of sculptures carved from Australian and New Guinea woods, held by Australian Board of Trade at Rockefeller Centre, New York. Other sculptors: M. Hinder, L. Shillam, Beadle, Madigan, Broughton.
- 1951 In May showed in a group exhibition *Abstract Compositions* at Macquarie Gallery, with Klippel, Vonwiller, F. Hinder, Balson, Crowley, M. Lewers, etc. In November participated in the Society of Sculpture and Associates inaugural exhibition held in the open air in the Botanic Gardens. G. F. Lewers showed in all the Society's subsequent exhibitions, and served as its President, and as its Treasurer, on occasions.
- 1952 Two-man show, with paintings by his wife Margo Lewers, at David Jones, Sydney, in March, and at Peter Bray, Melbourne, in June.
- 1956 Visited China in May with an Australian Cultural Delegation, whose other artist members were Elaine Haxton, Douglas Annand and Charles Bush. In September, two-man show with paintings by his wife at David Jones Gallery; except for *Whales* only wooden bowls and spoons. In October included in Arts Festival of the Olympic Games, Melbourne.
- 1959 March-July, visited Far East and Europe. Entered City Fountains Competition, David Jones, August. Awarded a second prize.
- 1960 One-man show, April, at Terry Clune Gallery, Sydney.
- 1961 Entered Blake Prize Competition for religious sculpture, Sydney, May.
- 1962 Entered Reserve Bank Competition, Sydney, May with designs for a wall enrichment and for a formal garden. Awarded second prize in the garden section.
- Died 9th August 1962 after a riding accident while on holiday in North Queensland.





## CATALOGUE

works are recorded as far as possible in chronological order

sizes are in inches

- 1 Bunyip** 1934, green connemara marble,  $5\frac{7}{8}$  high,  $14\frac{1}{4}$  long  
*Lent by Mrs. M. Farley*
- 2 Plough** 1934, basalt,  $4\frac{5}{8}$  high,  $23\frac{1}{2}$  long, wooden base  
*Lent by Mrs. Margo Lewers*
- 3 Mouse** c. 1939-40, green soapstone,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  long  
*Lent by Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Hinder*
- 4 Abstract** (sometimes called *Skeleton of Black Duck*) c. 1943-44, bogwood  
 $7\frac{1}{4}$  long  
*Lent by Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Hinder*
- 5 Fat Lady** date uncertain (c. 1945?), seastone from Benelong, south coast of New South Wales, 11 high, wooden base  
*Lent by Mrs. Margo Lewers*
- 6 Hippo** exh. Contemporary Art Society April 1945, granite,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  high,  $16\frac{1}{2}$  long  
*Lent by Miss Dorothea Mackellar*
- 7 Porpoise** exh. Contemporary Art Society April 1945, marble,  $34\frac{3}{4}$  long  
*Lent by Miss Dorothea Mackellar*
- 8 Tortoise** exh. Sydney Group July 1945, limestone,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  high, 14 long,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  wide  
*Lent by the Art Gallery of New South Wales*
- 10 Black Shag** exh. Contemporary Art Society November 1947, blackboy wood,  $12\frac{1}{8}$  high,  $14\frac{1}{2}$  long  
*Lent by Mrs. H. Barnett*



- 11 Pelican Birdbath** 1947, sandstone, 56 long, 52 wide including base  
*Lent by Mrs. H. Barnett*
- 12 Dance Movement** c. 1948, black bean (?), 16½ high, wooden base  
*Lent by Mrs. Margo Lewers*
- 13 Gong** exh. Clune Galleries April 1950, copper and wood, 11 high, 16½ long, on stone base 4¼ high  
*Lent by Mrs. Margo Lewers*
- 14 Fish** exh. one-man show David Jones March 1952, grasstree, 12⅞ high, 32 long  
*Lent by Mrs. Winifred West*
- 15 Gossip** exh. one-man show David Jones 1952, yellow boxwood, 12 high 10½ wide, 8½ deep, on brushbox base  
*Lent by Chris Vandyke*
- 16 Flight of Birds** exh. one-man show David Jones 1952, black bean, 16 high, 44 long  
*Lent by the Forestry Commission of New South Wales through the Art Gallery of New South Wales where it is on long loan*
- 17 Projection** exh. one-man show David Jones March 1952, grasstree, 11 high, 27 long, wooden base  
*Lent by Mrs. Margo Lewers*
- 18 Black Girl** c. 1952, black bogwood with aluminium inlay, 36 high  
*Lent by Mr. Oscar Bayne*
- 19 Flight of Birds** exh. Society of Sculptors June 1953, Queensland black bean, 16½ high, 56 long  
*Lent by Western Australian Art Gallery*
- 20 Sleeping Bird** exh. Society of Artists, August 1954, mangrove root, 15 high, 34 long, 9 wide  
*Lent by the National Gallery of Victoria*
- 21 Whales** exh. Society of Sculptors, February 1955, bogwood, 13 high, 52 long, 10 wide  
*Lent by Messrs. Bates, Smart and McCutcheon*
- 22 Introspection** exh. Society of Sculptors, February 1956, volcanic breccia and soapstone, 16½ high  
*Lent by the Art Gallery of New South Wales*
- 23 Salad Bowl with handle** c. 1956, teak, 5½ high, 15 long  
*Lent by Mrs. Margo Lewers*
- 24 Platypus** c. 1956-57 (?), shale, 4½ high, 7½ long  
*Lent by Mrs. R. S. Steed*
- 25 Head** 1957, sandstone, 24½ high  
*Lent by the Art Gallery of New South Wales*
- 26 Owl** exh. Society of Sculptors April 1958 (and Clune Galleries April 1960), black bean, 11 high, 41 long  
*Lent by Brigadier R. S. Steed*
- 27 Composition** c. 1960, plaster relief using seabird bones, 44 high, 60 wide  
*Lent by Mrs. Margo Lewers*
- 28 Composition** exh. Clune Galleries April 1960, cassia wood, 41¾ high  
*Lent by Mrs. Margo Lewers*
- 29 Crab** exh. Clune Galleries April 1960, copper over riverstone, 7¾ high, 13¾ long  
*Lent by Mrs. Margo Lewers*
- 30 Ascent of the Cross** exh. Blake Prize, February 1961, bronze set in natural stone, 38 high on wooden plinth  
*Lent by Mr. Dennis Ambler, Kuala Lumpur*
- 31 Model for Fountain** (to be entitled Windjammer?), 1961, executed to full scale (84 high, 42 wide, 66 base within bowl 192 x 144) in copper and bronze for the A.M.P. Sydney. Now possibly to be erected Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney.  
*Lent by the Australian Mutual Provident Society*
- 32 Model for Wall Sculpture** (one section full scale 32 x 62) entered in Reserve Bank competition May 1962, copper. Now to be executed full scale, 480 x 216, by Margo Lewers and Helge and Darani Larsen for the Reserve Bank, Canberra.  
*Lent by the Reserve Bank, Sydney*  
Note: Catalogue Nos. 31 and 32 may be withdrawn from exhibition since erection of the full-scale works is due to begin
- 33 Fruit Bowl** 1962, silky oak, 4¾ high, 26½ long  
*Lent by Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Hinder*
- 34 Work in Progress**, 1962 red cedar, 28 high, 45 long, 36 wide, uncompleted at the time of the artist's death  
*Lent by Mrs. Margo Lewers*
- 35 Small Sculptures** various small works not catalogued in detail and lent by various owners:  
*Fish*, 1938, grasstree on seastone (Mrs. M. Farley); *Tortoise*, 1938, soapstone (Mr. Ross Lewers); *Snail*, 1939, wood (Mr John Barnett); *Penguin*, 1948, bogwood (Miss Sonia Farley); *Possum Doorknocker*, 1948, wood (Mr. Carl Plate); *Ant*, 1949?, mulberry wood, (Mr. John Barnett); *Cat*,

1953, beanwood (Miss Mary Smith); *Ladle*, 1962, bogwood and copper, and *Salad Servers*, 1962, bogwood (Mrs. Margo Lewers); two *Wooden Mallets* carved in one piece, and one *Chisel*, carved handle (Mrs. Margo Lewers)

**36 Photographs of some Commissioned Works:**

(i) **Sandstone Sculpture** c. 1940-41, for "Nudibranch" Commonwealth Experimental Research Station, Ryde, 19 high, 52 long, 41 wide  
*Photograph, Max Dupain*

(ii) **Chris Brennan's Memorial Headstone** Northern Suburbs Cemetery, Sydney, c. 1945, for Fellowship of Australian Writers, sandstone, 9 high, 41 long, 15 wide  
*Photograph, Max Dupain*

(iii) **Pelican Birdbath** 1947, for Mrs. H. Barnett, Penshurst, sandstone 56 long, 52 wide—see catalogue no. 11  
*Photograph, Max Dupain*

(iv) **Garden with Seven Large Abstract Forms** official opening August 1957, for M.L.C. Offices, North Sydney, forms in sandstone (largest 43 high, 100 long, 32 wide)  
*Photograph, Max Dupain*

(v) **Fountain** 1958, for I.C.I. Building, Melbourne, copper, total height 90, elliptical bowl 156 x 96 and 54 high  
*Photograph, Wolfgang Sievers*

(vi) **Fountain** installed August 1960, Memorial to John Christie Wright, Macquarie Place, Sydney, copper, 18 high, 36 long, 28 wide  
*Photograph, Max Dupain*

(vii) **Fountain** c. 1960-61, for Coca-Cola Factory, Kingsgrove, Sydney, copper, 42 high, 54 long, 30 wide, within bowl 96 x 72  
*Photograph, David Moore*

(viii) **Fountain** c. 1961, for Oxford University Press, Melbourne, sandstone  
*Photograph, Wolfgang Sievers*

(ix) **Fountain** 1961—see catalogue No. 31  
*Photograph, Max Dupain*

(x) **Fountain** 1962, for Birrong Swimming Pool, Sydney, copper, 6 high, 60 long, 36 wide, resting on stones 60 high  
*Photograph, Max Dupain*

**37 Gerald Lewers at Work**, photostats of seven drawings by Frank Hinder



## MAJOR COMMISSIONS

**Fountains:** I.C.I. House, Melbourne. Rex Hotel, Canberra. John Christie Wright Memorial, Macquarie Place, Sydney. Lady Hancock Memorial, Australian National University, Canberra. Patrick White, Castle Hill. Oxford University Press, Melbourne. Coca-Cola, Kingsgrove, Sydney. Birrong Swimming Pool, Sydney. A.M.P. Head Office, Sydney (1961 project). Gosford (in progress 1962-63).

**Gardens:** I.C.I. Office, Sydney. M.L.C. Offices, North Sydney (including large abstract forms in sandstone). Wrigley's Chewing Gum, Hornsby. Entrance to "Kingsdene" Estate, Carlingford.

**Other Commissions:** Reclining Figure, University House, Australian National University, Canberra. "Nudibranch" and "Firebird" Commonwealth Experimental Building Station, North Ryde, Sydney. The Coming Together of the States, York Street facade of Commonwealth Bank, Market Street, Sydney. Headstone (eventually used as footstone) Christopher Brennan's grave, Northern Suburbs Cemetery, Sydney. Bird bath, New England Girls' School, Armidale. Bird bath, Frensham School, Mittagong. Cumberland County Council, England. Baby Health Centre, Parramatta. R.S.L. Club, Merrylands, Sydney. K13 Submarine Memorial Park, North Parramatta. "Capricorn," Commonwealth Bank, Rockhampton. South British Insurance Office, Melbourne. Snowy Mountains Authority, Cooma (project).



catalogue no. 6 Hippo

**SELECTED  
REFERENCES**

- Guy Innes, "Australians' New Art Work," *Herald*, Melbourne, 23-8-1934  
"Drawings and Small Sculpture, Society of Artists Special Exhibition,"  
*Australian National Journal*, Sydney, May 1945  
*Southerly* No. 4, 1949, p.216  
H. Badham, *A Study of Australian Art*, 1949  
A. C. Zander, "Gerald Lewers," *The Studio*, London, August 1953  
H. Badham, *A Gallery of Australian Art*, 1954  
G. F. Lewers, "A Visit to Ta-Tung and the adjacent sandstone caves,"  
*Report on China, Australian Cultural Delegation*, 1956  
Kym Bonython (ed.) *Modern Australian Painting and Sculpture 1950-1960*  
Mildura Art Gallery, *Sculpture Mildura 1961*  
Lenton Parr, *The Arts in Australia. Sculpture*, 1961  
Patrick White, "Gerry Lewers Has Left Us," *Sydney Morning Herald*,  
18-8-1962

