

# From the collection

Cutting his teeth as a graphic artist when working as an effects animator for British Animated Cartoons in London, Ted Dutch developed his signature figure-drawing style.

His was a pictorial shorthand which would come to set him apart from the landscape painters in New Zealand when he arrived in Auckland as a 23-year-old in 1951. Over the next five decades, he honed his quirky stick figures to create geometric hybrids of men and machines. These served not only as the basis for a large series of prints and paintings but also for a range of porcelain stoneware. Ted Dutch often showed his work alongside that of his wife and fellow ceramist Doris Dutch, in an exhibiting career which has just ended with his death in January at 80 years of age.

When he was a teenager during the Blitz, Dutch's drawings and paintings were dominated by bombed buildings and crashed aircraft. Introduced to the colourful work of European artists such as Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso and Karel Appel at South West Essex Technical College and School of Art in Walthamstow, he evolved his own take on modernism. Soon he was combining wiry figures with clashing shapes and abstract forms, typically resolved into compositions where neatly denoted humans and animals capered in front of technological landscapes.

Continuing his study at St Martin's School of Art,



*Ted Dutch (1928-2008), Technician 1/20, 1970, screenprint, 735 x 505mm.*

Dutch was introduced to the new technique of silk screen printing for creating multiple renditions of an image. Using a rubber squeegee, colours

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pushed through a tightly stretched organdie screen past stencils stuck to the underside were used to create patterns on paper. Called serigraphy by the post-war generation of American artists who produced limited edition fine art prints by the method, the technology used in silk screening had been pioneered in office duplicating.

Once he had immigrated here, Dutch found employment as a commercial screen-printer but continued to promote the potential of fine art serigraphy, becoming one of the founders of the New Zealand Print Council in 1967. He began exhibiting with New Vision Gallery that same year, his solo show of 30 different prints in editions of 20 depicting astronauts, lone horsemen, flying machines and jazz musicians, all combining humour and pathos in equal measure. *Technician*, from the Staff Common Room collection, is typical: at the bottom stand an elongated dog and tiny human figure, drawn with just a few lines, yet contrasting poignantly with the impending chaos of technological innovation which looms behind.

This print will go on display at the Gus Fisher Gallery in July in an exhibition about the role of New Vision Gallery in the development of the visual arts in New Zealand, curated by Art History postgraduate Joanna Trezise.

Linda Tyler