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By RICHARD
CHEALES
LIDCHT ART GALLERY,
â\200\224in 1970, was something of a
surprise packet. There was
a reaching out, in the selec-
tion of exhibitions. for a
more acceptable and varied
choice of shows, from the

publie point of view.

Indeed, this gallery seems
the first to have suspected a
wind of change in the art
world. If all the shows were
not as technically first-rate as
in the past, at least Lidchi Art
Gallery is attempting to bridge
the ever widening gap between
too modern art and a disinter-
ested public.

Louis Maqhubela's enchant-
ing exhibition ended a year
that was always interesting,
with occasional delightful sur-
prises. Five of these surprises
were exhibitions by women
artists. Margaret McKeen held
a first one-woman show that,
though faintly raw from a
colour contrasting point of
view, showed both power and
imagination.

Olivia Watson had _ neat,
modern panels that did not
appear half as deeply rumina-
ave and sincere, at a superfi-
cial glance, as they really were.

Stella Shawzin had some
metal sculpture that was, at
times, exquisite in its intricate
filigree. Elvira Buder, un-
known in Johannesburg, had
some paintings on Perspex that
were delicate, imaginative and
delightfully decorative.

An outstanding exhibition
was held by Erica Berry. Her
first one-woman show for several
years, it would have been the
finest in 1970 had she not tried
too many abstract ideas.

Chris van den Berg, with
intricate compositions of
figures and shapes, like vast
African tapestries; Cyril Fra-

dan, with checky cartoons, in ,
Ben Ma- Â\$

oils, of Old Masters;

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LIDCHI GALLERY
WAS A SURPRISE

cala showi
ihg ability to depict his people
with haunting beauty; and Ben
Arnold with some grippingly
effective sculpture were other
artists who exhibited in this
gallery in 1970.

Again, one must applaud the
crisp, clear thinking of Harold
Jeppe, the power behind Lid-
chi Art Gallery, for feeling a
way towards more vitally var-
ied exhibitions in 1970, than
has been the pattern in galler-
jes in the past.

* * *

It was rather an uneventful
year in Pieter Wenning Gal-
lery. There was, as always, a
stressing of only the best in,
mainly, realistic work.

In a sense, the â\200\234inbetween â\200\235
exhibitions of stock paintings

were often as vital as the
occasional official exhibitions.

Barbara Jeppe's show of alor
paintings which coincided
with the publication of 'South
African Aloes' was disciplined
and competent.

The same can be said of
Kenneth Newman's bird stu-
dies, where amazing attention

to detail caused one to marvel
without being particularly

an ever expand-
moved.

Paintings and drawings by
Sir William Russel Flint gave
an opportunity once again to {
realize what an_ exquisite
draughtsman this master of. i
watercolour was. 4

But this show parheds pre-
vented deeper appreciation -of '«
Francis Russel Flint's watercol- .!
ours, exhibited at the end of ,
1970. The superlative talent of '
the father seemed a little '
muted and hesitant in the son. |

Even so, such skilful, large '
and disciplined watercolours {
are unique in a world where
discipline is impatiently
brushed aside.

In his way, Clement Serneels (|
dominated Pieter Wenning Gal- |
lery in 1970, There was always.
something by this outstanding
Belgian artist (who lives in the
Cape) to be seen in the gallery.

His small group of work,
done in Madagascar, illustrated ~
his ease and briefness in
drawing landscapes in flow-
ing -oils. But his exquisite
flower studies showed more
dramatically the artist's mas-
tery technique aligned with a.
more: sensitive awareness . of
exquisite colour nuances and
contrasts.

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