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**RALPH HOTERE**

1931 - 2013

*Untitled Diptych*

Oil on two glass panes 90 x 102

Signed & dated 1973 on underside of sash frame

**ESTIMATE**

\$75,000 - 100,000

**PROVENANCE**

Private Collection, Auckland

Purchased by current owners from Temple Gallery, Dunedin

**REFERENCE**

Many believe *Untitled Diptych* is Ralph Hotere's Ode to Colin McCahon.

Ralph Hotere moved to Dunedin in 1969 to take up the Frances Hodgkins Fellowship at the University of Otago.

In 1973 he was a tenant at 121 Forth Street, a small 1870s cottage on the corner of Forth and St. David Streets, at the time on the fringe of the university campus. The site is very steep and there is another floor below street level at the back of the building. It housed a laundry and Hotere built an extension and a studio there too, divided from the laundry by an internal partition. The present work was set in the partition, mounted in its own stripped wood frame by the artist. Nearby was another 1973 work, a Memoriam to Hotere's mother, Ana Maria Hotere, who died in 1972. In a partition at the top of the stairs leading to the studio below Hotere had set a multi-paned stained glass window apparently salvaged from a church, with the letters *IHS* as a central motif, in a gold ground with red glass in the spandrels.

Gregory O'Brien has pointed to an affinity Hotere feels with continental European culture, people and places arising from his family's Catholic background and reinforced by the time the artist spent in Europe from the early 1960s. O'Brien specifically mentioned Hotere's living near, and frequently visiting, Henri Matisse's Chapelle du Rosaire in Vence in the south of France, drawing parallels between some of the works there and Hotere's own productions. Matisse's round-topped stained glass windows in the chapel seem echoed in Hotere's diptych, although the geometry and the palette have changed. The closeness in time of his mother's death to the making of the diptych, and its spatial and temporal proximity to the Memoriam to his mother also seem relevant. Round topped forms appear too in Hotere's 1973 set designs for John Whiting's play *The Devils* where they represent niches, as in a church wall, for statues of religious figures. The same form also appears in Hotere's design for the cover of *Landfall 100*, December 1971.

The diptych's panes have been reframed in separate sashes, although they still constitute a single work. They are best exhibited with a back light so as to be seen as illuminated windows.

Excerpt from full provenance supplied to vendor by Temple Gallery, Dunedin - available on request.

