The Week in Art
by Daniel Thomas

RANK HODGKINSON won the first Helena Rubinstein Travelling Scholarship, the largest art award given in Australia.

Now, five years later, he is the first returned Rubinstein Scholar to hold an exhibition (Hungry Horse Gallery).

In a few weeks he leaves once more for Spain, where he spent most of his time abroad. It does not matter in the least that he will be lost to us again, for the Rubinstein money, and the additional grant given him then by the Australian-American Association, should not be regarded as investment in Australian culture, but in an individual artist.

If his paintings enrich the general Australian scene well and good, but the best and most effective art patronage is particular, not general, and the artistic welfare of the individual must be the first consideration.

Nevertheless the exhibition does make an important addition to our knowledge of the new post-war Spanish school. This movement has been gathering impetus here for some years with Elwyn Lynn and later with Gwion. A fortnight ago two texture painters, W. Pescod and Sheila McDonald, shared the Maitland art prize, and at the same time we saw the exhibitions sent from abroad by Peter Kaiser, and the real Spaniard, Jose Chirino.

Hodgkinson has two very Spanish paintings, one a mysterious, rough circle deeply traced in hot desert sand, "Nothing means nothing," the other a symmetrical square-winged totem, "In between time."

Deliberately Australian

Some of the pictures, however, are deliberately Australian. The 26 titles, which read in sequence almost as a poem, do not specify Australia, though they mostly refer to summer. But there is a clear visual reference to the close-up view of scribbly gum bark in certain neighbouring lines, and to Joanna Lumley, holding in

The Blonde Dark of Summer by Frank Hodgkinson.

more than poetic reflection. Occasionally a larger form is attempted, say, a Rothko, and filled with random purples and reds, but the picture stylised faces, but the picture remains. It is other all over seem happier. A great improvement on last year.

ADRIAN LINDEN: Adrian Linden at Barry Stevens is a very young painter of Dutch background, now working in Brisbane. He paints genre-scenes, figures, still-lifes — in an essentially parallel and decorative line. One thing I think of the Dutch art is the absence of Toorop, with its student techniques. It is all rather flat, but there are some ideas, and some humour.

ARCHIBALD REJECTS: Anthony Hordern's show some of the pictures rejected from the Archibald Prize. Wynne and Sulman competitions are probably the worst of the rejects and prize material. However, one cannot say that it is not easy to imagine a professional artist who was rejected agreeing to exhibit here.

The better are obviously young, student-like. T. L. Parker or L. Broad. Shirley's Sulman rejects the one significant piece is happily unacceptable as a genre painting.

Susan White's "Reclining Wilderness" is a good as a curious Victorian way, the general technical competence is allied with generally vulgar minds: some one of two pure were to be found.

There are a great many at only 10 or 12 nationals.

For so large a collection the standard is amazingly high. Such careful selection gives hope that the presumably inevitable debasement of this unique art will not proceed so rapidly or indeed that it might even be halted.

Two of the finest pictures in the exhibition employ the same kind of form (without the mutinous substance) but compress it into a withdrawn, proud image of self-sufficiency. For what it is worth their titles are "Doveing Pigeon" and "The Barren Passion of Summer."

When Hodgkinson won the Rubenstein in 1958 he was still struggling to remove the traces of sickness that survived from his years as a very successful commercial artist. The process is now complete.

He has been helped considerably by the deliberately reserved Spanish School of painting. But he has not, in his own words, been himself in

Concern for...