

Youthful zest

The Star
THE EXHIBITION: John McLaren
(Gallery 101, Holland Street).

ALTHOUGH he was an official war artist in the last two wars, and has held numerous one-man shows, it is the youthful zest that shines from the artist's gouaches that is so arresting.

There is disarming naivete in these boat scenes and landscapes, presented in the simplest of terms. The artist occasionally uses figures — also "seen" with a mildly child-like vision — to add an atmosphere of

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movement and bustle.

Because McLaren applies his thick watercolour in bold, uniform washes, stressing vivid colour contrasts, the compositions have the strength of oils.

The wholesome approach comes off most satisfyingly in the dock scenes and still-lives, where strong outlining emphasises the rich colours.

McLaren's last exhibition only hinted at such fearless use of his medium. In this show, this fearlessness is a characteristic of all the work.

—RICHARD CHEALES.