



65 Robert MacBryde
Man with a Melon, 1952
 Oil on canvas, 102 × 155 cm
 Leicestershire County Council

66 Robert MacBryde, *Woman at Fireplace No.1*, c.1948
 Oil on canvas, 89.8 × 57.1 cm
 City Art Centre, Edinburgh Museums and Galleries

67 Robert Colquhoun, *Seated Figure*, 1949
 Oil on canvas, 102 × 90 cm
 Leicestershire County Council



asked for it to be changed, but Colquhoun refused.³⁰

In 1953 they were among one hundred artists invited to paint large pictures on the theme 'Figures in their Setting' for an exhibition initiated by the Contemporary Art Society and held at the Tate Gallery. The exhibition was conceived as a celebration of Coronation Year. Colquhoun submitted *Figures in a Farmyard* [68], a depiction of a farmer and his wife together with a big fat pig. Colquhoun made numerous preparatory studies to produce one of his largest and most formidable paintings. It was a rare foray into landscape, although the scene, with its tipped-up perspective and flattened characters, looks as if it has been lifted from the stage rather than from the outdoor world. MacBryde also approached the task with resolve, producing *Two Women Sewing* [69], a painting which seems to have been inspired by the work of the Italian artist Renato Guttuso, although it also bears close comparison with an etching by Adler.³¹ The paintings were finished just in time. Sensing the importance of the occasion, MacBryde wrote to a friend: 'We must try to go to the preview at Tate Gallery on Nov 4th there is a big party from 8.30 until 11 o'clock. We must mind our Ps and Qs that night.'³² The Contemporary Art Society bought a number of works from the exhibition, but nothing by either of the Roberts. With their popularity waning, their funds dwindling and their drinking increasing (they would probably have been classed as alcoholics by this point), they were caught in a downward spiral. Neither artist painted much in the mid-1950s. When he did

