

ART

Two Exhibitions

The Macquarie Galleries are being shared by Peter Kaiser and Charles Blackman for an exhibition of paintings.

A joint exhibition is a rather precarious adventure for two artists. Their work is rarely in sympathy with one another so that one artist is usually made to look better by the other's presence whilst the reverse applies and the other is made to appear even worse.

At this exhibition Peter Kaiser is the one who seesaws down and suffers accordingly. Alas this position is not unmerited and I found myself glossing over his work and being drawn back to Charles Blackman's fascinating canvases.

Peter Kaiser has plunged headlong into abstract art; a feat, which, like the Purple Heart decoration, now sounds invariably a lot braver than it appears. However, we are not here to admire this man's particular artistic courage but to concern ourselves solely with his art.

The artist's love of shape for shape alone is so tenu-

ous that it fails to hold one's interest and to communicate to the viewer. Indeed these works on show are as boring as a series of Hans Heyson's drawings.

Charles Blackman is a different kettle of fish. His work cannot be ignored and his canvases almost reach out of their frames, tap one on the shoulder and cry "love me, hate me, but don't ignore me."

Even when, as in "Prone Girl," his range of colours are two shades of pale grey, a little black and a lot of white, there is no evidence of insipidness because the draughtmanship is so powerful.

Blackman deliberately prefers to misuse and to subjugate correct technicalities when his artistic taste demands it. For example, the background clarity of the wrought iron in the "Woman in a Garden Chair" and "The Corner," all wrong, yet somehow the works gain by these additions and omissions.

Another interesting work on show is "Girl Dreaming." in a review of a book on Paul Klee's work by Carola Giedion-Weiker, a critic says: "One recurrent sign

says: One recurrent sign of Klee's introversion is the symbolic phallic arrow which appears in colour-plate 5 with such furtive insistence as to astonish; for in any faintly realistic art-medium, this picture would be unprintable."

With Freud, as it were, sitting on Charles Blackman's shoulder this preceding statement could not be truer for the abovementioned picture.

On show until July 26th.
—Barry Stern