

CHOICE

TIM HILTON

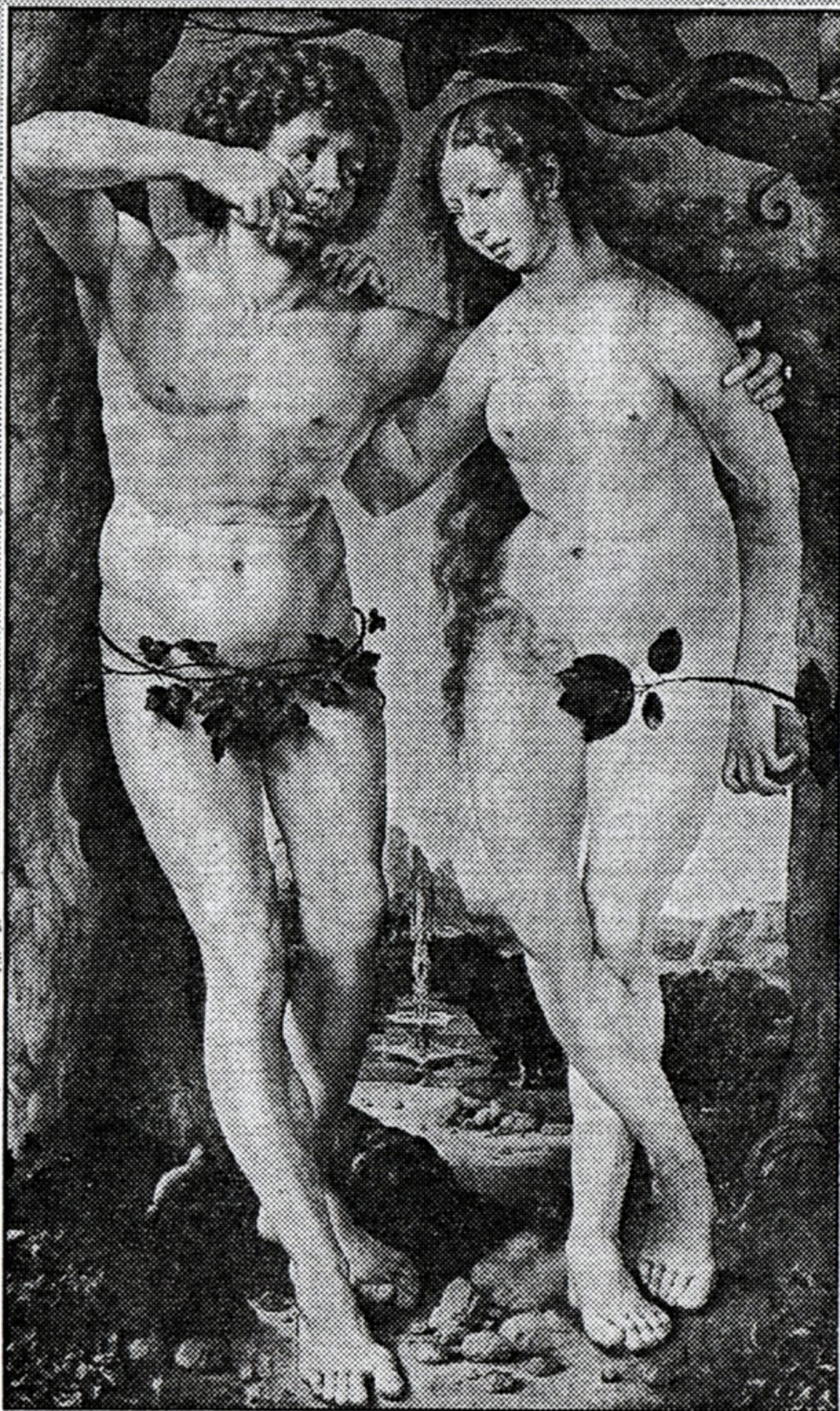
THE QUEEN'S PICTURES: ROYAL COLLECTIONS THROUGH THE CENTURIES

(National Gallery, opens Oct 2).

Splendid show to inaugurate the temporary exhibitions gallery in the basement of the NG's Sainsbury Wing. These paintings belong to the Queen but she did not buy them.

Royal collections were built up from the time of Henry VIII, but nothing of importance seems to have been added since Victoria's reign, when all sorts of contemporary realism was purchased for Windsor, Sandringham, Balmoral. Such works give an unusual coda to the grand, predictable procession from Breughel and Holbein through Rembrandt, Vermeer, Claude, Gainsborough, and Reynolds. It is essential to see these paintings; most of them have not left their palaces for 50 years. But surely this is a collection that ought to be viewed free.

Right, Gossaert's Mbause..



RICHARD DIEBENKORN

(Whitechapel Gallery, opens Oct 4).

The long-awaited first European retrospective by the independent, meditative Californian painter, admired since he began to show in the 1940s but never a part of the New York promotional scene. This could be the year's most distinguished painting exhibition.

MARILYN HALLAM: RECENT PAINTINGS (The Smith Jariwala Gallery).

Hallam questions life too closely to be a traditional artist. At first you think her paintings are domestic interiors; the more you look at them they seem like universal allegories. Highly recommended.

ERNST BARLACH (Goethe Institute).

Graphic works by the German expressionist in this excellent but too-little-visited gallery. Barlach died in Gustrow in the former GDR in 1937 and the true, rather than legal, ownership of his works is now a German national issue, to be discussed by a panel of experts at the Institute on Oct 17 at 7.30pm.

TURNER'S RIVERS OF EUROPE (Tate Gallery).

The Tate's Turner exhibitions seem endlessly repetitive but this must be the best of them so far: beautiful visions brought home from his travels on the Rhine, the Meuse and the Moselle.

MORAG BALLARD (England and Co).

Can 1920s St Ives art still go on? Yes, if from Ballard's brush. Nice work from an artist far too young to have ever known the Cornwall group that inspires her paintings and constructions.