

TO: The Council

FROM: Team Leader Governance

MEETING DATE: 16 June 2008

SUBJECT: **CIVIC PORTRAITS**

SUMMARY

1. The Social Advisory Committee requested that a portrait artist be identified to paint the current Mayor's portrait. Advice as to local artists with appropriate experience was sought and in consultation with the Mayor, an artist has been identified. Confirmation of the Council's Mayoral Portrait policy is now sought so that the artist may be engaged.
2. A request from the Auckland School of Art has been made for the loan of Captain Cargill's portrait.

IMPLICATIONS FOR:

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| (i) Policy: | No |
| (ii) Approved Annual Budget: | No |
| (iii) LTCCP/ Funding Policy: | No |
| (iv) Activity Management Plans: | No |
| (v) Community Boards: | No |

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Council re-confirms its policy of engaging an artist to paint a portrait of each Mayor.
2. The Council considers whether it wishes to loan the Captain Cargill portrait to the Auckland School of Art on the terms set out in the report.

DISCUSSION

Mayoral Portrait Policy

On 7 September 1992 the Dunedin City Council noted that the tradition of painting sitting Mayors commenced after the Second World War with the first portrait being of Sir Donald Cameron. At that time the Council also determined that Mayors Calvert and Sidey's portraits should be done "so that they are portrayed during their respective times as Mayor and further, that the paintings be in the same style as similar portraits which are on display in the Council Chambers".

The tradition was continued with portraits of Mayors Skeggs, Walls and Mayor Turner. In Mayor Turner's case the portrait, not being to her taste, was purchased by the Mayor; and a large photographic portrait, otherwise of similar style and size to the painted portraits, was hung in its place.

In February 2005, the Chief Executive requested that the matter of the commission of an appropriate portrait of Mayor Chin, be referred to the Civic Social Advisory Group (CSAG) for consideration.

CSAG was of the view that the mayoral portrait tradition should be continued. The Subcommittee also recommended that the Community and Recreations Services department be asked to provide advice on local artists with experience in portrait painting. It was further suggested that the Mayor be asked to select a portrait artist from among those recommended.

Advice was subsequently provided by the Community Advisor – Arts, and the Mayor has since had discussions with Simon Richardson. Details of Mr Richardson's credentials are attached as Appendix A. Mr Richardson has been tentatively engaged, subject to confirmation by the Council of the continuation of its portrait policy.

It is, therefore, recommended that the Council re-confirm the Council's historic policy of engaging an artist to paint a portrait of each Mayor, for the purpose of continuing the existing tradition.

If the Council resolves to confirm the policy, it is intended that Mr Richardson will be engaged on the basis that:

"The final portrait must both reflect the original style of the artist and also be of a style that is not unsympathetic to previous mayoral portraits (which are traditional in nature) so that it can be placed alongside the other portraits in what is effectively the Portrait Gallery of former Mayors."

Captain Cargill Portrait – Request for Loan

The Council recently received the attached enquiry from Erin Griffey, Auckland University as follows:

"I wondered to whom I should write about possibly borrowing the Cargill portrait for the exhibition, 'The Power of Portraiture: Portraying Leaders in New Zealand, 1840 to the Present', which I am curating. The exhibition, of around 50 portraits coming from major public and private collections all over the country, will be held at the Gus Fisher Gallery, Auckland, 28 November through 8 February 2009, and Shed 11/New Zealand Portrait Gallery, Wellington, 25 February through 3 April 2009.

The loan would be fully insured, and freighting/packing would be fully covered and handled by Mark Roach, widely considered to be the best art handler in the country.

Will you let me know if this might be possible, and to whom I might address the formal request, if necessary?

The Council is asked to consider whether it wishes to grant the request.

Prepared by:

Approved for submission by:

Nina Darling
TEAM LEADER GOVERNANCE

Athol Stephens
**GENERAL MANAGER
FINANCE AND CORPORATE SUPPORT**

Date report prepared: 28 May 2008

Attachments

Appendix A: Simon Richardson

Appendix B: Formal request letter from the University of Auckland

Simon RICHARDSON

New Zealand b. 1974

Simon Richardson was born in Gore in 1974. He studied at the Otago School of Art and graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1996. Since then he has been a full time artist.

In 1998 Richardson received the Elizabeth Greenshield Award. This is a prestigious ten thousand dollar grant from the Canadian institution to aid young artists at the beginning of their careers, which enabled Richardson to spend time studying in Europe. On his return to New Zealand he took up a job teaching drawing to international students at the University of Otago. In 2000 Richardson held his first solo exhibition in Dunedin. Following the success of this, he travelled overseas to study European painting.

Whilst still at art school Richardson was often criticized for his lack of contemporary approach with his painting. His highly detailed brushwork, even then, could have been likened to the Spanish realist paintings of the early 20th century. While fellow students were courting a more radical approach towards their art Richardson was keen to explore and develop his own signature style of realist painting, consequently he ignored the call of art school fashions.

Leading Otago landscape artist Grahame Sydney has been an important influence to Richardson. Sydney mentored Richardson, encouraging him to paint in a traditional way when realism was viewed as outdated.

Richardson's fascination with textural and intricate detail and the mundane everyday object are the fundamental characteristics of his work. When looking at the stylistic genre Richardson employs, one is likely to put him within the same category as artists like the Spanish realist painter, Antonio Lopez-Garcia, and his friend and mentor Grahame Sydney.

Richardson's passion for depicting the natural and the figurative can be seen in works such as Hone Tuwhare, the portrait of New Zealand's literary great. The poet's response to Richardson's finished portrait was: "You beauty. It's honest. You didn't try to glamorise me. Good on ya mate."

Richardson has achieved many awards throughout his career. These include two Elizabeth Greenshield Foundation awards, finalist in the Wallace Awards, finalist in the Adam Portraiture Award, winner of the Mainland award and a scholarship from The New York Academy of Art. His works are held in many important collections including the Eastern Southland Museum in Gore who purchased his portrait of Hone Tuwhare.

Exhibition introduction by Grahame Sydney.

"Those who see this small exhibition will recognise a mature, individual manner, and a solid confidence within the separate world of its modest frames. I have enjoyed the privilege of watching those qualities develop from the unlikely, hesitant teenager who first had the courage to step outside his Art School classroom and knock on my own studio door - surely a risk for any politically aware art student in Dunedin. What I didn't know then, but learned soon enough, was that Simon Richardson possessed a fine intelligence and sensitivity, a love of the magic and traditions of paint, and a stubborn, unshakeable determination to make a real painter of himself, whatever it took, and however long that path might be. He strode from the trenches of Art School straight into the no-man's land of full-time commitment, and has never conceded to those uncertainties. Simon remains a student of traditions, but is bringing his own fascinating complexities to them: he listens to the whisperings of his own instinct, taking his lead only from that secret voice, and the evidence of his remarkable abilities is before you.

Courage, confidence, individuality, intelligence, stubborn dedication, love, and a recognition that in art maturity builds slowly and without artifice. More work than talk. That's where art like this comes from, and its quiet depths will be a pleasure to ponder for all the years to come".

Grahame Sydney
Central Otago
November 2006

(Source: Jonathan Grant Galleries Ltd Website)

