



Media release

8 July 2011

Strong showing by artists in first Dunedin show

The first IHC art exhibition held in Dunedin attracted a strong showing by Dunedin artists – six of them reaching the finals in the national IHC Art Awards 2011.

The Dunedin show was the first of three regional judging heats to choose finalists for the Awards. Dunedin artists competed against 115 entries from throughout the South Island for a prize pot of \$9000.

But it wasn't all smooth sailing. The exhibition and judging was shifted to Dunedin from Christchurch because of the earthquakes – and the judging of the art by children's author Margaret Mahy and Dunedin printmaker Olav Nielsen had to be done in two stages when Mahy couldn't fly into Dunedin because of ash cloud.

Olav Nielsen selected his top works on Friday 17 June, then 10 days later, Margaret Mahy chose hers. They needed to name 10 finalists and found that they had independently selected eight of the same works. The other two finalists came about by negotiation.

Margaret Mahy liked what she saw: "Generally I think it's quite impressive because it shows that art does not flow out of intellectual capacity but out of an emotional response that people have to the world."

Olav Nielsen said the works didn't have the same shyness that you would see in a mainstream art show. "[With] a lot of mainstream work people hide behind technical skill, but these were not self-conscious."

Auckland sculptor Brett Graham, who judged heats in Hamilton and Wellington, agreed. "The works were uninhibited and showed a greater sense of freedom." He was also impressed by the use of colour.

This year 362 artists entered the national competition and work included a wide range of media from sculpture and fibre art, to painting and drawing.

The IHC Art Awards are open to all New Zealanders with an intellectual disability, whether or not they use IHC services. The top 30 entries from the regional

competitions – 10 finalists from each region – will be exhibited at the St James Theatre Gallery, Wellington, from 2–16 August.

The winners are announced on Awards night, Tuesday 16 August. First prize is \$5000, second prize \$2000, and two third-equal prizes are awarded of \$1000 each.

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The finalists' work can be viewed on <http://www.ihcartawards.co.nz/gallery/>

The list of finalists chosen by the judges from the three regional exhibitions:

SOUTHERN REGION

Robert Jones, Dunedin
Allan Hegan, Dunedin
Selwyn Irving, Dunedin
Ricky White, Dunedin
Josh Cooke, Dunedin
Daryl Breen, Dunedin
Chris Tilley, Nelson
Dianne Hockridge, Kaikoura
Sally Owen, Motueka
Christopher John Wright, North Otago

CENTRAL REGION

Anthony McIlroy, Lower Hutt
Vicki Dooley, Lower Hutt
Stacy Hughes, Lower Hutt
Sharleen Monaghan, Wellington
Tracey Tse, Wellington
Victor Wilson, Wellington
Denise Dennehy, Wellington
Dion Jones, Taranaki
Martha Nuku, Opunake
Judy Hintz, Tararua

NORTHERN REGION

Katie McMillan, Auckland
Mark Warner, Auckland
Jimmy Shum, Auckland
Shannon Clarke, Te Awamutu
Willhelm Bardoul, Te Awamutu
Jean Schneider, Tauranga
Jamie McCullough, Katikati
Cherie Mellsopp, Hamilton
Paul Sedgwick, Hamilton
Isabel Thomas, Turangi