

New Zealand Museum Awards 2011

Small Museum Award Winner

media release

15 April 2011

Upper Hutt's Expressions Arts and Entertainment Centre has won the 2011 Excellence in Exhibition Award (small museum), with **Bohemians of the Brush: Pumpkin Cottage Impressionists**. The award was presented at the Museums Aotearoa national conference in Nelson last night (14/ April).

Through paintings, historic objects and a DVD, the exhibition tells the story of 19th Century Wellington painter James Nairn and his colleagues who developed an indigenous, Impressionist style of painting in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Developed by guest curator and art historian, Jane Vial, **Bohemians** relates how the group of artists evolved their unique approach and a Bohemian lifestyle - with Pumpkin Cottage (Silverstream) as their rural haven.

The Pumpkin Cottage paintings were donated to the Expressions Trust for the people of Upper Hutt in 2009 by collectors Ernest and Shirley Cosgrove, who collected them over a period of 30 years. **Bohemians** has been touring nationwide since May 2010 and will return to Upper Hutt in April 2012.

"We established the NZ Museum Awards to acknowledge and showcase the outstanding achievements of our museums and art galleries. We are grateful for the support of major sponsors Story! Inc, in helping us recognise the sector's achievements," says Executive Director of Museums Aotearoa.

Phillipa Tocker.

Judges* citation for the Small Museum Award

This is a transformation project. Expressions has built an endearing story around a gifted collection, which enabled it to transcend beyond the local. For a very small gallery, it showed an extremely professional and well thought-out approach.

Bohemians of the Brush came to be about more than the works of art – it gave credence to the artists and the nurturing culture around the creation of the works and the community at the time. In the process, Expressions has used this opportunity to nurture its own growth and take on an expanded role in its community.

prize: Expert Knowledge Exchange, to be arranged with National Services Te Paerangi

* The judging panel comprised: architect, Ian Athfield, Priscilla Pitts, Heritage Destinations Manager, New Zealand Historic Places Trust and Greg McManus, Director of Rotorua Museum

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