

Sister City Relationship Gains Momentum.....

Christchurch's sister City relationship with Kurashiki, Japan takes another step forward this year with an artistic collaborative venture between sculptors Graham Bennett and Professor Wataru Hamasaka. These two artists, both highly regarded in their respective countries, will exhibit together in an exhibition entitled '**Ishi**' at the Arthouse, Christchurch from 22 August to 10 September 2006.

An invitation to Bennett to extend part of his 1999 Tokyo exhibition to the historic Hashimaya Gallery in Kurashiki became a catalyst for a number of subsequent initiatives.

In November 2003 a Sister City anniversary sculpture, 'Lines Extending', was gifted to Kurashiki, from Christchurch. Bennett's 3 metre stainless steel structure completed during a 6 week residency at Kurashiki University of Science and Art, incorporated river stones from the Waimakariri and Rakaia Rivers, and Takahashi River, Kurashiki.

Professor Hamaska, the Arts' Centre Artist in Residence in March 2004, sculpted the 'Canoe in the Canoe', a 2.2 metre long Timaru basalt carving featuring a smaller canoe inside it made from granite found in the Tsurajima area of Kurashiki. This sculpture was gifted to the city of Christchurch by Kurashiki City to complete the marking of the 30th anniversary of the sister-city relationship.

Further cementing this relationship, Hamasaka and Bennett organised an exchange for senior sculpture students. In 2004 Yumiko Nakagawa attended Canterbury University School of Fine Arts, and in 2005 Kate McIntyre attended Kurashiki University of Arts and Sciences Sculpture School.

Hamasaka and Bennett are currently collaborating in two joint exhibitions – the first in Christchurch 2006, followed by one in Gallery Shiwori, Kurashiki, in 2007.

"Ishi" will be open daily from 12.00 to 6.00pm Monday to Friday and 12.00 to 5.00pm Saturday and Sunday at the Arthouse, 292 Montreal Street, Christchurch.

For further details please phone Barbara August, International Relations Co-ordinator, 941 8251