

CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND
SISTER CITY COMMITTEE
CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL

AIR NEW ZEALAND
SISTER CITIES 2006 AWARDS

CULTURE, SPORT OR RECREATION PROJECT

"CHRISTCHURCH TO CHRISTCHURCH
AND BACK AGAIN"

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- To celebrate thirty years of the sister city relationship between Christchurch, New Zealand and Christchurch, Dorset, UK, an exhibition of New Zealand art was curated in Christchurch, New Zealand and freighted to the UK. An exhibition of this art was held in the 1000 year old Priory in Christchurch, Dorset alongside art created by artists from the Christchurch, Dorset area.

- To mark this unique exchange of art, a 2006 calendar was produced which includes examples of work from the six New Zealand artists and a range of work from the UK artists. The calendar has been distributed to arts communities both here in Christchurch, New Zealand and in the UK.

Objectives

- To celebrate the thirty year sister city relationship with an exchange of art.
- To use art as the vehicle to link the two sister cities.
- To establish a link between the respective Community Arts Councils in each country.
- To give Christchurch, New Zealand artists an opportunity to exhibit their work in an international setting and for them to establish links with UK artists.

What Took Place

The Christchurch, New Zealand Sister City Committee commissioned a curator to put together an exhibition of work from local artists which would be displayed in Christchurch, Dorset, UK. New Zealand artists were approached and six artists submitted work representing a broad range of styles, cultures and medium. The works included landscape photography, Maori design, print making and rug weaving. The work was freighted to the UK along with a catalogue and the exhibition was held in the 1000 year old Priory in Christchurch, Dorset, UK from 2nd to 15th April 2005 in conjunction with local art from artists and students living in that area.

A reciprocal exhibition had always been planned for Christchurch, New Zealand which would show our works and also the work of the UK artists. This exhibition took place at 'Our City' in Christchurch and ran from 17th October to 28th November 2005. Unfortunately due to freight costs, it was not possible to have the actual UK artwork exhibited here in Christchurch, New Zealand. However with modern technology, an electronic version of the works was created and shown throughout the Christchurch, New Zealand exhibition.

Following the outstanding success of these two exhibitions on opposite sides of the world, it was considered important to have a tangible record of the art work and something to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the sister city relationship. A calendar was produced using work from six New Zealand artists and six UK artists and a number of copies of the calendar have been sent to the UK for distribution.

The dream to have this exchange of art began over eighteen months ago and was realised by the hard work and commitment on both sides of the world from members of the Arts Councils, the Christchurch, New Zealand Sister City Committee and the Christchurch, UK Twinning Association. The opportunity for a representation of New Zealand art to be accessible in the UK is a rare event in the arts world. The New Zealand artists were delighted to be able to display their work internationally and the UK artists were given the same opportunity here in New Zealand. The exhibition unearthed connections New Zealand links in the UK and it has resulted in a solid foundation for further exchanges of art, craft and photography.

Resources

The Christchurch, New Zealand Sister City Committee supported the project with funding (\$3,000) to curate the exhibition and to freight it to the UK. An experienced curator managed the project in liaison with the Christchurch City Council's Arts Advisor and the Christchurch Community Arts Council (CCAC). Further funding was contributed by the Christchurch City Council Arts Team for the New Zealand exhibition (\$1,000)

Curation and freight \$3,000

Costs of exhibition in UK contributed by Christchurch and District Arts Council, UK.

Calendar printing and design \$4,000. This amount was covered by a grant to the Christchurch Community Arts Council (CCAC) from Creative New Zealand's Creative Communities Scheme. The CCAC also managed this part of the project.

Community Participation

Through our contacts with the Twinning Association in Christchurch, Dorset, the Christchurch and District Arts Council (CADArts) was engaged to manage the exhibition in the Priory and also to liaise with their local artists for work to be included in the exhibition. This established a link between the two Arts Councils who, although in different hemispheres, both have a passion for community arts and fully understand their importance in the fabric of a city. The fact that the Priory is an iconic tourist attraction in Dorset meant that there were large numbers of visitors to the exhibition who were not only exposed to the cultural differences of the two countries, but to the value of the sister city relationship which the exhibition was recognising.

The Calendar which was produced in Christchurch, New Zealand was freighted to the UK and has been extremely well received as recognition of the thirty years of the sister city relationship.

Awareness

During the exhibitions, both in the Priory in the UK and here in Christchurch New Zealand, the public were not only exposed to art from different hemispheres, but also to the work, history and advantages of sister city links. Many visitors to the Priory exhibition expressed an interest in the link with New Zealand. Fortunately at the time of the exhibition there were 23 Linwood College students and three staff staying in Christchurch as part of the well established student exchange between Linwood College, Christchurch, New Zealand and Twynham Comprehensive School, Christchurch, UK. This allowed the New Zealand students to be part of the exhibition and associated events and gave them the opportunity to see art being used as a platform for establishing and enhancing international relationships. The students also discovered that the sister city links have a long and interesting history and that projects such as this add huge benefit to both New Zealand and the UK. Here in Christchurch, New Zealand, visitors to the exhibition learnt (some for the first time) about our links with Christchurch, Dorset and many showed a keen interest in the history of the social and economic benefits of such links.

Benefits

The benefits of this project range across far and wide across the two communities and also within the Christchurch City Council and the two Arts Councils involved. The profile of sister cities and their social and economic benefits was lifted through this exchange of art and the strong links between the two cities enhanced and strengthened. Apart from the artists involved and the organising teams, people from a wide range of ages and cultures visited the two exhibitions, gaining an insight not only into the differences in styles of art, but into the invaluable international links that the sister city relationship has provided.

An added bonus this project has been the publication of the 2006 calendar "Christchurch to Christchurch and Back Again" a copy of which is attached to this application.