

For immediate release

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TWO SIGNIFICANT PAINTINGS BOOST HERITAGE COLLECTION

Two paintings of local significance were purchased by the Rotorua Trust for The Heritage Collection recently.

Trust chairman, Grahame Hall said the opportunity to purchase the paintings, one by Charles Goldie and another by Walter Wright, was too good to miss. "Trustees felt it was important to secure these important pieces of work for the community. Our financial position has improved this year and we had an opportunity to buy them at a very good price."

Keen to preserve the region's history, the Trust began collecting artworks inspired by the Rotorua district and its people 10 years ago. "We believe the acquisition of such important artwork is a very sound investment on behalf of our local community. It's important to bring the works 'home' where they will remain and be enjoyed by many generations to come."

Mr Hall said the two paintings are of special significance to our people. A major historical work, the portrait of "Mihipeka Wairama" by Charles F Goldie, is the sixth painting the Trust has purchased by the well-known New Zealand artist. One of the Tuhourangi people, Mihipeka Wairama, was among the survivors forced to leave their ancestral home of Te Wairoa following the Tarawera eruption in 1886. "Mihipeka, along with many of the survivors, was taken in at Whakarewarewa Village and it was there she first met Goldie and became one of his favourite models." The other paintings by Goldie in the Collection are Mita Taupopoki, Guide Sophia, Hinemoa, Maramena Uiari, and Te Arani or Pipi Haerehuka.

The Trust also recently purchased a painting by Walter Wright. Entitled "Maori Canoe Race, Lake Rotorua", it is a rare and important historical document. Mr Hall said the painting is of waka peke (leaping canoes). "This involved waka jumping over logs raised slightly above the water surface. Very popular with spectators, it took a lot of skill." A regular feature of regattas, waka racing was a sport enjoyed by both Maori and Pakeha from the mid-19th century. "This is our first painting by Walter Wright and it really is a stunning piece."

Initiated in 2002 by the Trust's inaugural chairman, the late Johnny Lepper, The Heritage Collection contains more than 120 works of art and has a total value of almost \$3 million.

Mr Hall said The Collection had been professionally reviewed last year. “We are now selling limited works; those of less significance and where we have a number of works covering the same subject, to help cover the cost of more important acquisitions.” The two paintings cost \$150,000 (Goldie) and \$16,000 (Wright) respectively.

The Heritage Collection can be viewed on the Trust’s web site
www.rotoruatrust.org.nz

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