

Press Release For immediate release, 9 October 2008

Curator salutes Australian artist as City Gallery prepares to close for major building project

Final week of record-breaking exhibition Fiona Hall: Force Field

The extraordinary and exquisite world of artist Fiona Hall will be celebrated by co-curator Gregory O'Brien on the last day of the exhibition on Sunday October 19 at 2pm. In Exit from Eden: Euphoria and despair in the art of Fiona Hall, an illustrated lecture, O'Brien will trace patterns of light and darkness in Hall's art and consider the artist's work as both exaltation and a lament. But it's not just exit Fiona Hall, it's also the last chance to see City Gallery before its development project that will see it closed until Spring 2009.

City Gallery Wellington's \$4million extension, designed by award-winning architect Stuart Gardyne of Architecture+, will involve a new two storey addition as well as seismic strengthening of the existing building. The new wing will include a multi-purpose auditorium with a new Russell Hancock Gallery replacing the existing cinema on the ground floor. Walk-through pedestrian access provides a link from Harris Street to Civic Square. Upstairs there will be two new gallery project spaces, the Michael Hirschfeld Gallery dedicated to the work of Wellington artists and the Deane Gallery dedicated to the work of Maori and Pacific Island artists as well as a reading room/AV space.

The enlarged, new-look City Gallery Wellington is scheduled to re-open in early September, 2009.

Fiona Hall: Force Field is curated by City Gallery's Paula Savage and Gregory O'Brien, with Vivienne Webb (Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney). The exhibition also features sculpture, installation, photography and video works from the 1970s to the present. Australian arts commentator John McDonald believes Hall's imagination to be "so fertile that an artist could base an entire career on any of the phases she has *explored and discarded*". Hall possesses "*an offbeat sense of humour and a work ethic that would put the pyramid builders to shame*". Sydney Morning Herald, 19 April 2008

Hall transforms everyday materials and objects, incorporating a diverse array of techniques, that are often domestic in their origins: Coca-Cola cans are shredded and knitted into a cloak (The Social Fabric, 1996); US dollar bills are woven to create exquisite birds' nests (Tender, 2003-05); Tupperware containers are transformed into a stunning backlit installation (The Price is Right, 1994); glass beads are threaded and knitted into an intricate flower or a skull (Understory, 1999-2004); and in her most well known series of works (Paradisus terrestris, 1998-99), sardine tins are reconfigured into miraculous sculptures.

EXIT FROM EDEN : Euphoria and despair in the art of
Fiona Hall
Sunday 19 October, 2.00pm
City Gallery Auditorium
citygallery@wmt.org.nz, www.citygallery.org.nz
Admission: FREE
For further information or images, please contact:
Rachel Healy, Publicist T: 04 801 3959, 027 687 4226, E:
rachel.healy@wmt.org.nz

Principal Sponsor:



Fiona Hall: Force Field was developed in partnership with Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, where it opened March 2008. It will travel to Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Wai Whetu, 4 December 2008 to 1 March 2009. Supported by the Australian High Commission. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue, generously supported by Dr Roderick and Gillian Deane. Fiona Hall undertook a residency at Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland, enabling the development of New Zealand-based works. City Gallery Wellington is managed by the Wellington Museums Trust with major funding support from Wellington City Council.