MEDIA STATEMENT
For Immediate Release

Antarctica New Zealand announces Invited Artists

New Zealand writer Owen Marshall and painter Peter James Smith, are the two recipients of the 2009/10 Antarctica New Zealand Arts Fellowships.

Timaru-based Marshall and Melbourne-based Smith will travel to Scott Base, Antarctica in January next year to take part in the programme, which targets prominent New Zealand artists.

The Antarctica New Zealand Arts Fellowship programme seeks to increase understanding of Antarctica and its international importance through the work of New Zealand’s top artists. Antarctica New Zealand CEO Lou Sanson said, “The Fellowship gives New Zealand artists a rare opportunity to explore artistically the concept of Antarctica and the world-leading science programme we have down there and we hope that the experience of living on the ice will open new doors for our artists and inspire them to expand their creative work.”

Owen Marshall is a critically acclaimed New Zealand writer who has written/edited 23 books. He has an honorary Doctor of Letters from the University of Canterbury, where he is adjunct professor and he has held the Katherine Mansfield Memorial Fellowship in Menton, France. His novel *Harlequin Rex* won the Deutz Medal for Fiction at the 2000 Montana New Zealand Book Awards. Owen Marshall is considered by many critics as among the finest, if not the finest, of New Zealand’s short story writers.

“The Antarctica New Zealand Arts Fellowship programme is a fantastic opportunity to go where very few people get to go,” said Marshall, “I recently was part of a delegation to China and found that very interesting. I imagine the Antarctic could hardly be more different, but no doubt equally fascinating in its own way, and I look forward to gathering new experiences. I consider myself very fortunate to have the opportunity.” Exposure to Antarctica and the science that takes place will provide a unique challenge to Owen Marshall’s work which is based on New Zealanders’ unique relationship to place.

Peter James Smith’s work gathers together phases of scientific endeavour by placing data, text, references and graffiti across landscape imagery. This mix of mathematics, history and landscape painting provides a unique cocktail of art and science. He has exhibited extensively since 1988 in both New Zealand and...
Australia. He is Professor of Mathematics and Art at RMIT University in Melbourne, where he is head of the School of Creative Media.

“It is a privilege to be invited to one of the last quiet places on earth,” said Smith. “As a painter I want to engage in the physical presence and scale of the place and sense its history. The statistician in me wants to delve into the data, models and theories of the scientists. Without doubt this will be an opportunity of a lifetime.”

Through their creative explorations, Owen Marshall and Peter James Smith will continue the legacy of New Zealand Artists on the Ice that goes back over 50 years of New Zealand’s involvement with Antarctica.

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