

8. COUNCIL UNDERWRITING OF ‘TREASURES FROM THE CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD COLLECTIONS’ OLD MASTER DRAWINGS AND RARE WORKS IN PRECIOUS METALS

RR 11215

Officer responsible Art Gallery Director	Author Tony Preston
Corporate Plan Output: Exhibitions	

The purpose of this report is to present a proposal to bring an exhibition from Christ Church College, Oxford, after which our city is named, to the Robert McDougall Art Gallery for the province’s 150th anniversary.

The result of extensive collaboration over several years between the Robert McDougall Art Gallery and Christ Church, Oxford, the Gallery plans to exhibit *Treasures from Christ Church, Oxford Collections* from 20 October, 2000 – 11 February, 2001, with a special opening reception in our Centre Court on Thursday 19 October. This exhibition is not only the most important and valuable installation scheduled for the 150th anniversary celebrations of the founding of this city (by far-sighted and entrepreneurial Christ Church, Oxford graduates), but very significantly, the major show which closes the present Gallery’s temporary exhibition programme.

Presented for the first time in New Zealand, this exhibition features very rare Old Master drawings and silver and silver-gilt treasures from a world-renowned collection. The exhibition will showcase works from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries with a combined worth of nearly NZ\$50 million dollars, to be indemnified by the Government through the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

This is the first time Christ Church, Oxford has permitted both drawings and rare College and Cathedral plate to travel as a major exhibition to the Southern Hemisphere, and it is the first time such a collection has ever visited New Zealand.

The exhibition contains 45 rare and valuable drawings, and highlights include the first drawings by the Renaissance genius Michelangelo to visit our shores, and sumptuous sketches by Raphael, as well as the Baroque masters, Annibale and Agostino Carracci. Also included are 15 internationally significant works in precious metal from the College’s famous collection of gold and silver artifacts. These works have a rich and fascinating history, and date from an exquisite Catalonian chalice of 1560, to grand early eighteenth century silver tableware. One of the most significant loans is the great silver gilt presentation service of 1660-61 (which the King presented to Christ Church on the Restoration of the Monarchy) in acknowledgement of the College’s commitment to the Royalist cause.

This collection of irreplaceable works will provide a fascinating insight into the period that produced such masters as Michelangelo and Raphael, who profoundly influenced the history of Western art. Moreover, it reveals their later influence on the drawings of the Mannerist and Baroque artists such as Tintoretto and the Carracci brothers, who are also represented.

Due to the significance of this show the Robert McDougall Art Gallery will be running a number of related seminars and educational programs for children and their families, as well as scholars.

This exhibition is a registered Turning Point 2000 Heritage event.

Christchurch will be the only venue in New Zealand for this remarkable exhibition, and the significance of this gesture for our Sesqui-centenary by the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, Oxford cannot be over-estimated.

Since negotiations commenced in 1996, currency fluctuations between the pound sterling and the New Zealand dollar have unfortunately significantly increased the costs for us. We only received detailed costings from Oxford on 24 November, and are now seeking Council under-writing of \$110,000. Without this financial undertaking from the Council it would be irresponsible to proceed with the exhibition, because significant conservation, framing and crating costs will be incurred in the UK, once the contract is signed.

The budget for the exhibition is as follows:

Payments	Cost
Christ Church Oxford Cost	\$191,300
Exhibition Cost	\$42,750

Total	\$234,050
Recoveries	
Sponsorship/grants	15,000
Catalogue/publication sales	2,500
Admission charge	70,000
Postponement of George French Angus exhibition	\$37,500

Total	\$125,000
Net shortfall	\$109,050

Every effort is being made to recover costs - sponsorship is being sought within New Zealand, and Mr Haydn Rawstron, Chair, Canterbury Association 2000 (of which Her Majesty the Queen is now Patron), has offered invaluable assistance with potential London-based supporters.

Given the historic significance of the exhibition, the Committee unanimously agreed to support the proposal to bring a collection of works from Christ Church College, Oxford to the Robert McDougall Art Gallery for the province's 150th anniversary. To ensure that cost is not a barrier to local people attending the exhibition, the Committee also agreed that admission charges should be set at an appropriate level.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Council agree to provide funding of up to \$110,000 for the exhibition.
 2. That staff report on alternative funding sources and a level of charges which would make the exhibition accessible to the Christchurch community.
 3. That after the exhibition a report be furnished to the Strategy and Resources Committee on the financial outcomes.