

Wai Art Column by Anna-Marie Kingsley

“Mum, why are you selling me?” Cried an indignant Small. Dang I thought, there goes that ploy for more painting time.

“I’d never sell you sweetie” I backpedaled furiously.

“But there’s my picture on the wall, you’re selling me!”

“No honey, that’s not for sale, that’s just for people to see.”

“Okay” said a much calmer Small, “What about Daddy, are you selling him?”

The Wai Art Portrait Exhibition has another 5 days to go before most of the much loved paintings return to their homes. I must say I was surprised to see that exactly half the portraits are for sale. Obviously I’d transferred my own personal preferences and assumed that all artists would have the same feelings towards their family portraits. Beer bottles and taps although lovely; I don’t have a lot of attachment to and don’t mind flogging them off. But a picture of the Small or Him Outdoors, I didn’t even contemplate it.

What has made this particular exhibition especially meaningful and has really added value to the viewing experience are the explanations of why the artist painted whom they did. We have placed all the descriptions beside their artworks. Some are particularly moving, some sad, some hilariously funny. Almost all add something to the way the artwork is perceived.

We think that the Portrait Awards is Wai Art’s best exhibition yet. It is fantastic. It really does need to be seen in the flesh, so to speak, but it can also be viewed on line at www.waiart.org.nz Him Outdoors comes indoors occasionally and kindly alters the Wai Art website for us. Given that over a third of the entrants were from out of the Wairarapa region we did jolly well in there competing with the big guns! Six of the ten finalists were Wairarapa artists. Nip down and take a look, the exclusively portrait exhibition won’t be back for another two years, so it is worth taking the time to visit it while it is on.

Carterton Exhibition Center

Wai Art Portrait Awards runs till Sunday 22 February. Open 10am to 4pm every day.

Allison Hudson and Christine Parker’s art exhibition opens on Saturday 28 February.

Katz Gallery

'Tech Nouveau' opens on 14 March. This exhibition combines the pastel and pencil artwork of Carol Banner and the computer generated artwork of digital artist AJ. Hunter.

Aratoi

Currently showing at Aratoi is "Space to Space" featuring new work by Jan Eagle.

Main Artery, an exhibition by local Wairarapa artists opens Saturday, 21 February