

MEDIA RELEASE

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Art Gallery Director bids Auckland farewell

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki Director Rhana Devenport is heading for Australia to take up the position of Director, Art Gallery of South Australia. After five years in the top role, she leaves the Gallery on 21 September.

While looking forward to an exciting new challenge across the Tasman, Devenport said she remains “a strong and enduring advocate” for Auckland Art Gallery.

“I have tremendous faith in, and profound admiration for the Gallery, its people, its legacy, its collections and its positive cultural impact on Aotearoa New Zealand. I have learned a tremendous amount during these five years and have been impressed daily by the astounding levels of professionalism and commitment of my team.

“I am proud of what I have achieved during this time and have enjoyed making what I trust will be seen as a lasting and positive contribution to the Gallery’s success and future.”

According to RFA Chief Executive Chris Brooks, her impact has been significant, both on the strategic direction of the Gallery and on its staff and stakeholders.

“Rhana’s leadership has positioned the Gallery for success, establishing strong long-term partnerships, philanthropic support and a range of engagement programmes as part of her transformational legacy,” he said.

“This includes the introduction of the Advancement Team and a highly successful new Membership programme, together with Contemporary Benefactors and International Ambassadors programmes. Rhana also established the Public Engagement Team with a strong commitment to outreach across Auckland, especially for our Māori, Pasifika and Asian communities.

“As well as leaving the Gallery with positive local stakeholder relationships, she has expanded the international reach of the Gallery significantly.”

Brooks cites the highly successful Gottfried Lindauer exhibitions presented in Berlin, Pilsen and San Francisco, and the Gallery’s partnership with Creative New Zealand to present New Zealand’s official pavilion at the *Biennale Arte 2017* in Venice as examples.

“With strong visitor numbers and world class exhibition programmes, Rhana has made a lasting contribution and helped to cement Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki as a cultural leader that truly strengthens and enriches our communities.

We wish her every success and thank her for her outstanding leadership over the last five years.”

Recent acclaimed Auckland Art Gallery projects include *Light Show*, *The Body Laid Bare: Masterpieces from Tate*, *The Māori Portraits: Gottfried Lindauer’s New Zealand*, *Lee Mingwei and His Relations*, *The Corsini Collection: A Window on Renaissance Florence* and the recently opened exhibition, *Gordon Walters: New Vision*.

Alongside these major exhibitions the Gallery has hosted a series of highly engaging family projects such as *Cubic Structural Evolution Project* by Olafur Eliasson, Yayoi Kusama’s *Obliteration Room* and the current *From Pillars to Post: Project Another Country* by Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Kat Saunders
Senior Communications and Marketing Adviser
kat.saunders@rfal.co.nz
022 645 0845

About RFA

Regional Facilities Auckland (RFA) enriches life in Auckland by engaging people in the arts, environment, sport and events. With our six divisions – Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland Conventions, Auckland Live, Auckland Stadiums, Auckland Zoo and New Zealand Maritime Museum – we strive to create rewarding visitor experiences and positive outcomes for Auckland. Our innovative and creative programmes delight more than four million visitors a year as we present engaging and accessible experiences across the city every single day.

As one of six Auckland Council organisations, we are a charitable trust governed by a board. Our landmark venues include ANZ Viaduct Events Centre, Aotea Centre, Aotea Square, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, Auckland Town Hall, Auckland Zoo, Bruce Mason Centre, The Civic, Mt Smart Stadium, New Zealand Maritime Museum, QBE Stadium and Western Springs Stadium.

About Auckland Art Gallery

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki is a cultural leader, playing a vital role as an inclusive hub for creativity for the city’s diverse communities. Its thought-provoking, immersive experiences and public programmes enrich the lives of Aucklanders and visitors alike.

With multiple exhibition spaces spreading across four levels, it houses a remarkable collection of nearly 17,000 New Zealand and international artworks. Along with displays of iconic work from its permanent collection, exciting temporary exhibitions offer fresh ways to think about art and participate in creativity.