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MEDIA RELEASE

More Te Papa art treasures on display in Whangarei

Whangarei Art Museum is set to unveil the last two works of this season's *Unpacked* – *Treasures from Te Papa*.

The first, Peter Stichbury's *Chester Karnofsky*, 2004, will go on display on October 23rd, and offers a contemporary twist on the painted portrait.

Petrus van der Velden's, 1893, *Mountain Stream, Otira Gorge*, picturing a dramatic South Island landscape, will then go on display in January 2016.

Whangarei Art Museum's director Ruth Green-Cole says, "Showcasing a selected work every three months provides Whangarei Art Museum's visitors with an exceptional opportunity to see significant works of art from New Zealand's national collection."

Unpacked is part of Te Papa's broader programme to bring art from the national collection to regional museums and galleries.

The Whangarei Art Museum and Te Papa worked together on the rotating programme of art, which features a different work in the space every three months.

"Making New Zealand's national treasures accessible to more people in more places is a priority for us," says Te Papa's Chief Executive Rick Ellis.

"It's wonderful that visitors to Whangarei Art Museum will have the opportunity to experience these two fascinating works."

Te Papa's Historical New Zealand Art Curator, Dr Rebecca Rice says, "Peter Stichbury is a contemporary artist with an international profile whose work explores the strangeness of beauty."

Of this painting she says "Like many of the people in Peter Stichbury's portraits, Chester appears doll-like, with quirky facial features, large eyes, and exaggerated lips."

"The portrait leaves us guessing – imagining pasts, presents, and futures for this boy who is eternally stuck in time," says Dr Rice.

Of the Van der Velden painting, Dr Rice says, "Within months of his arrival in New Zealand in 1890, Van der Velden was inspired by the landscape of Ōtira Gorge, deep in the southern Alps."

"His paintings of this dramatic landscape have become iconic in New Zealand's art history."

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Background on Peter Stichbury (1969-) New Zealand

Peter Stichbury is a contemporary artist who graduated from Elam School of Fine Arts in Auckland in 1997 and won New Zealand's prestigious Wallace Art Awards the same year. He is currently represented by Michael Lett in Auckland and Tracy Williams, Ltd, in New York.

Background on Petrus van der Velden

(1837–1913), the Netherlands/New Zealand

The Dutch artist, Petrus van der Velden, arrived in New Zealand in 1890. He was already a mature artist with an established reputation in Dutch art circles. Vincent van Gogh described him as a 'solid, serious painter' who he hoped to come into closer contact with.

Van der Velden soon found his muse in the landscape of Ōtira Gorge, deep in the Southern Alps. His paintings depicting this region have become iconic in New Zealand's art history. He believed that studying nature could bring one into closer communication with God, and he sought 'solitary places that still bear the impress of the Almighty Hand'. Ōtira Gorge offered such a setting, and there he painted 'from morning until evening every day in spite of the cold and wind'.

Petrus van der Velden's influence on other artists extended well into the 1900s. His symbolic use of light and dark was later picked up by celebrated modernist artist Colin McCahon.



Peter Stichbury (1969–), New Zealand, *Chester Karnofsky* 2004, acrylic on linen. Purchased 2005 (2005-0004-1)



Petrus van der Velden (1837–1913), the Netherlands/New Zealand *Mountain Stream, Otira Gorge* about 1893, oil on canvas. Gift of Sir Charles Norwood, 1936 (1936-0001-1)