



Spotlight on Sir James Wallace

News: 14 June 2011

Businessman and arts patron James Wallace has been appointed Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to the arts in the 2011 Queen's Birthday Honours list. The knighthood officially recognises Wallace's long record of supporting the arts and generous philanthropy.

Wallace, a Waikato-based primary industry entrepreneur, began collecting New Zealand art in the mid-1960s, with a particular focus on the work of emerging artists. In 1992 he transferred his collection to the newly established James Wallace Arts Trust, which since 2010 has been based in the historic Pah Homestead in the beautiful setting of Auckland's Monte Cecilia Park.

Sir James' original aim was to assist emerging artists through both patronage and promotion through exhibitions. Nothing is ever sold from the Trust, so that the body of works, now numbering over 5,000, will remain in its entirety as a cultural resource for present and future generations. Wallace continues to fund the Trust as a way to support New Zealand art.

Twenty years ago James Wallace also established the Annual Wallace Art Awards. These awards are now the longest surviving and richest annual art awards of their kind in Australasia, amounting to over \$160,000 and including artist residencies in New York and Switzerland.

Sir James Wallace is the founding trustee of various charitable trusts. He is the founding underwriter of the Auckland Chamber Orchestra and founding patron of the Auckland Theatre Company, NZ Opera, NZ Ballet, and a member of the board of the Auckland Philharmonia. In 2001 the then Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, Helen Clark, appointed Wallace to a three-year term in the NZ Film Commission.

Sir James hopes his knighthood will encourage others, including wealthy businessmen, to get involved in the arts. "Wealthy young lawyers and businessmen don't seem to put their hands in their pockets for anything in particular, and they need to because we won't last that long. I think those younger lawyers and businessmen are just too self-centred and not willing to sacrifice anything, too greedy in fact."

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