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AUCKLAND ART GALLERY
PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FAREWELL PETER TOMORY

Peter Tomory, the second full time professional director of the Auckland City Art Gallery, Emeritus Professor of Art History and collector and connoisseur of fine European prints, died on Tuesday 25 March in Wales where he had lived for almost a year after moving from Dorset, England, his home since retirement. He was aged 86.

News of his death will sadden many who were inspired by his work at a formative time in the Gallery's history. On behalf of the Gallery's staff and its community of support, director Chris Saines expressed sadness at the loss of someone now widely regarded as its most influential director.

Chris Saines said, "As a student at La Trobe University in Melbourne, where Peter taught until the end of his academic career, I was among a privileged group of graduate students who enjoyed the enormous hospitality of a highly learned and passionate art historian."

"We were a fortunate few, invited home for a glass of wine to engage in some wide-ranging discussions about art and to examine at close range the many Old Master prints which Peter had acquired especially for teaching. Others who knew him will have their own memories of an extraordinary man and an inspiring teacher."

The Auckland Art Gallery acquired 124 prints from Tomory's private collection in 2004, now known as the Peter Tomory Collection. That acquisition will stand as an enduring tribute to his remarkable art historical scholarship and his print connoisseurship.

The Gallery has inherited much from the Tomory years. During his directorship, from 1956-64, he formulated policies aimed at creating, as he himself said in 1958, "a seriously planned collection of European and New Zealand painting and sculpture that will stimulate, give pleasure and educate not only the present but also future generations of New Zealanders."

Tomory worked closely with the painter Colin McCahon, who worked at the Gallery until 1964, and together the two played a critical role in recognizing and promoting a then comparatively rare institutional focus on New Zealand art, both historical and contemporary.

As an educator, Tomory knew the importance of scholarship and pioneered the research culture that thrives at the Gallery to this day. He expanded the research library and founded the Gallery Quarterly. While it ceased publication in

1978, the Quarterly's legacy was consciously built upon when the library published the first issue of *Reading Room: a journal of art and culture* in 2007.

Tomory's acquisitions legacy includes modernist prints and sculpture, modern British art, 16th and 17th Century Italian paintings and perhaps most famously, the remarkable Henri Fuseli watercolor collection he discovered in a private home in Dunedin. Subsequently acquired for the Gallery, this collection of 37 works remains one of the most significant and much borrowed parts of its international holdings.

In 1985 Tomory stated: "I always intended, where I went, to build up the best thing I could." A distinguished academic career, a high standard of research and a commitment to education and to publishing; the building of a renowned print collection and an exceptional contribution to the Auckland Art Gallery's then formative national and international reputation; each a testament to the lifetime of achievements of a remarkable and much admired man.

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