

The Miniatures

An Adventure in the Bren Collection, by Stephanie Johnson
26 September 2009 - 11 April 2010

Award winning novelist and screen-writer Stephanie Johnson has collaborated with the Hawke's Bay Museum & Art Gallery to write a new children's short story *The Miniatures*. Johnson was inspired by a fascinating collection of miniatures held in the Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust's collection. The museum has brought these miniatures and Stephanie's magical story together in an exhibition for all ages to enjoy.

The Bren collection of miniatures was assembled by the Right Reverend Robert Bren in London in the 1930s and 1940s. His collection was housed in a specially made bookcase with 20 rooms, each furnished down to the smallest details of miniature oil paintings, electric lights and even a working piano. When Bren died in 1957 his widow Mrs Gladys Mary Bren immigrated to Napier. The miniatures, totalling over 2000 individual pieces came with her to New Zealand packed in Huntley and Palmers biscuit tins. In 1958 she donated Bren's miniatures to the Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust - Ruawharo Ta-u-Rangi, where they have since become one of the treasures of this collection.

A single black and white photograph from 1945 and five small dolls remain the only clues to the stories which inhabited the rooms of Bren's original display. It is these secret stories which inspired Johnson to bring the collection back to life and with a new cast of characters she weaves a magical moment around these tiny objects and creates a world of adventure and excitement which will capture the imagination of young and old alike.

Come to the museum, leap into a fantasy world and be delighted by this unique collection and the storytelling talents of one of New Zealand's favourite authors. There will be a range of activities surrounding the exhibition for all ages to enjoy - visit our website or contact HB MAG for more information on how to get involved!

Exhibition related events

Exhibition opening at the SPECIAL TIME of Saturday 26 September 2009 at 11am
Children bring your parents, grandparents, friends and family to the opening of *The Miniatures*. Stephanie Johnson will be on hand to welcome you all into the imaginary world of the Bren collection miniatures.
Free Entry. Limited numbers, please RVSP to reception by Wednesday 23 September.

Brunch with Stephanie Johnson
Sunday 27 September 2009 at 10.30am
The Friends of the Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust - Ruawharo Ta-u-Rangi invite you to join Stephanie Johnson for a special event. Enjoy a delicious brunch and hear Stephanie's presentation *'Talking with the Dead - Weaving History into Fiction'*.
Tickets \$35, or \$32 for Friends
Scenic Circle Te Pania restaurant, Marine Parade, Napier
Tickets available at HB MAG reception and Poppies Bookshop in Havelock North.



School Holiday Storytime

Wednesday 30 September & Wednesday 7 October 2009 at 11am

Bring children and grandchildren to the gallery and hear *The Miniatures* read aloud then explore the exhibition.

Entry by gold coin donation.

School Holiday programme activities:

All sessions 10am - 12noon

\$18 per child, includes all materials.

Bookings for holiday programmes can be made at HB MAG reception.

Payment must be made at the time of booking. Please book early to ensure you don't miss out!

Tuesday 29 September 2009

The Miniatures - Peg Doll Families (suitable for ages 5-8 yrs)

Visit the wonderful Bren collection of miniatures on exhibition at HB MAG and then make your own family of peg dolls to take home.

Thursday 8 October 2009

Fantastic Furniture (suitable for ages 8-12 yrs)

Many of objects in the Bren collection of miniatures were hand-made - in this workshop you will visit the exhibition and then create your room with furniture.

Bio - Stephanie Johnson

Stephanie is a sixth generation New Zealander and the author of over a dozen books - novels, poetry and collections of short stories. She has also written for the stage, radio and screen. Most of her work is set here in Aotearoa, both during recent times and in the past. She has received numerous literary prizes and awards.

Since 1988 Stephanie has worked as a creative writing tutor at various summer schools and evening schools in Australia and New Zealand. With Witi Ihimaera, she established the Masters in Creative Writing at the University of Auckland and co-taught that degree from 2004-2006. Stephanie is co-founder (with Peter Wells) of the Auckland Writers and Readers Festival, a highly successful international festival that runs every year in late May.

Literary prizes and awards include the Deutz Medal for Fiction, Montana Book Awards, 2003 (for *The Shag Incident*), Literary Fellow at Auckland University, 2001, Belief short-listed for Montana Book Awards, 2001, Katherine Mansfield Fellow, Menton, France, 2000, The Whistler third prize in Montana Book Awards, 1999, Leading Writers' Grant, Creative New Zealand, 1997, winner of Dymocks/Quote Unquote Reader's Poll, Best New Zealand Book 1996 (for *The Heart's Wild Surf*), Crimes of Neglect shortlisted for Wattie Book Awards, 1993, Bruce Mason Memorial Playwright's Award, 1985.

For more media information please contact

Pam Joyce

Marketing Team Leader

P: (06) 835 9245

E: pjoyce@hbmag.co.nz



HAWKE'S BAY MUSEUM & ART GALLERY NAPIER

PO Box 248 9 Herschell Street Napier Tel: 06 835 7781 Fax: 06 835 9249 Email: info@hbmag.co.nz