

About the history of Chrysalis Seed

In 1995, founding directors Peter and Jessica Crothall, received the initial vision for Chrysalis Seed - to generate multiplying artists groups in a subculture centred in Jesus. The mission was to equip artists to integrate their art and faith and reconcile art and faith communities. The primary focus of Chrysalis Seed, which was legally constituted in 1998, has always been to encourage and empower contemporary visual and professionally minded artists.

We have explored a range of different ways of outworking this vision including a range of artist groups and collectives, publications, catalogues, a poetry anthology, various newsletters, an arts festival, a library of art and faith resources, our website and the recently developed online social network www.csartspace.org.nz Chrysalis Seed has also facilitated seminars, organised an Easter arts festival and produced the poetry anthology *With Our Eyes Open*.

The mostly widely known service, however, offered by Chrysalis Seed, was the production of the *CS Arts* magazine between 2001 and 2008 with a national distribution to artists and arts institutions. Copies of the magazine are available on this website under [magazine archives](#) *CS Arts* started out as a two-sided newsletter in 2001, distributed to 200 supporters and artists and grew into the 36-page edition last produced in 2008. With a print run of 12,000, this final edition went out to a mailing list of 6,000. It was sent to a cross section of individual artists, art schools, high schools, contemporary galleries, and libraries across New Zealand and internationally. Through interviews and articles, *CS Arts* aimed to showcase what Christian artists and spiritual seekers were doing in the contemporary arts community, as well as reveal how their personal faith impacted their lives and work. Moana Tipa explored the intersection between Maori identity, contemporary art and Christian faith in Aotearoa through a series of interviews commissioned and published between 2005 – 2006.

Key achievements

The team 1999-2010: our team of staff and key contractors, always small and cohesive, grew from a team of two in 1999 to 12 at the height of the production of the magazine in 2008. Volunteers have helped with mailouts and exhibitions, lead artist groups and served on the Trust Board.

Group exhibitions 1998 - 2009: most years we have held a group exhibition at the *Centre of Contemporary Art* in Christchurch, New Zealand. Between 1996 and 2009, 18 group exhibitions were held including two at the Peter Rae gallery in Dunedin and one in Nelson in association with [The Suter Art Gallery](#) and Auckland artist [Allie Eagle](#).

Website and social network 2007 - 2010: this website was carefully designed and re-developed for artists in 2007. It was intended to connect artists and fine arts students with information that could help strengthen their professional arts practice, their faith and the fit between the two. By February 2010, our new social network [csartspace](#) has grown to 540 members. [csartspace](#) was started in October 2008. We wanted this tool to be the part of our website that would be driven by artists and be fully interactive for them. This site has huge potential as a way to break isolation for artists of faith online. It can connect the most isolated artist with information, networks, groups and other artists with similar interests and passions around NZ and beyond.

A national network and new groups: directors Peter and Jessica Crothall undertook networking tours to visit artists, galleries and art schools around New Zealand in 2003, 2005, 2007 and finally in 2009. As well as increasing the

membership and more use of csartspace, the four-month journey of 2009 resulted in seven new groups based in Invercargill, Dunedin, Waikanae, Whangarei, Lower Hutt and New Plymouth. Also in 2009, two regional gatherings of artists happened in Lyall Bay (Wellington) and at Waikanae (Kapiti Coast). Links were strengthened with existing groups in Christchurch, Auckland ([St Paul's Arts and Media](#)) and Wellington.

Global movements and networks: visits to sister organisations and conferences in the UK and USA 2000, 2007 and 2009 reinforced our relational links with a growing global movement of Christian artists that has been evolving for over 30 years. These organisations include: Christians in the Visual arts, International Arts Movement (Mako Fujimora) Artisans (Steve Cole), the Arts Centre Group, Genesis Arts (Nigel Goodwin) and Fuller seminary (William Dyrness).

Other stakeholders in NZ: Otago University Theology department (Murray Rae) and Knox School of ministry (Jason Goronchy), Laidlaw College (Alistair McKenzie and Steve Graham) and the Bishopdale in Nelson (Tim Harris) all are key players in then emerging conversation between theology, leadership training and the arts in New Zealand, and have enthusiastically supported the work of Chrysalis Seed. This is most clearly encapsulated by the major works of leading Christian artists installed in the new campus of Laidlaw College in Condell Ave, Christchurch.

Curating art for worship: Mark Pierson, Mike Riddell, Steve Taylor and Peter Majendie have also been valued supporters, as they have explored creative ways of curating art for worship experiences. Contemporary Stations of the Cross were pioneered by Mark and most dramatically developed by Dave White in the ambitious works installed in the Hamilton Gardens for six years, every Easter between 2004-2009.

Artist's symposium and exhibition in Dunedin Jan 2008: in January 2008, we worked with Murray Rae to organise an artist's symposium at Otago University, which attracted about 25 artists from around the South Island and Australia. This was part of the visit to Otago by Scottish Professor Trevor Hart, who took a summer intensive school on Theology and the Arts. The course ended with an exhibition at Salisbury House Gallery showcasing some of the work by artists at this symposium.

Developments in 2010

In February 2010, an extensive collection of art and faith library resources was relocated to Dunedin under the care of Hewitson Library at Knox College, and is available to the public.

By the end of March, Chrysalis Seed offices in The Arts Centre will be vacated; this website downsized and csartspace handed to another entity to manage. Our last staff member, Gisela Kraak completed her 3.5 years with us on 12 February. This marks the end of a decade of staff generated services for artists through Chrysalis Seed.

The vision and work of Chrysalis Seed in New Zealand continues in more organic ways, even with the end of its organisational life and direct services.