

Media Release

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Came a Hot Sundae: A Ronald Hugh Morrieson Festival A ONE DAY SCULPTURE Project by Liz Allan

Looking for an art excursion this Labour Weekend? The Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and ONE DAY SCULPTURE have the answer.

New Zealand artist Liz Allan is set to commemorate the life and literary works of one of South Taranaki's most colourful characters - Ronald Hugh Morrieson.

On Sunday 26 October, *Came a Hot Sundae: A Ronald Hugh Morrieson Festival* will be a day-long festival held in Hawera, South Taranaki. Featuring films, readings, music, entertainment, an award ceremony and further festivities, the day promises to offer something for everyone.

A renowned author and musician, Ronald Hugh Morrieson lived his entire life in Hawera. He was attributed with forging the genre of Taranaki Gothic through his books *The Scarecrow*, *Came a Hot Friday*, *Predicament* and *Pallet on the Floor*, all of which except *Predicament* were made into films in the 1980s.

Morrieson's novels echo the people, livelihood and milieu of South Taranaki and although he died in 1972, he remains a contentious figure in the region.

The stigma of this uneasy relationship was revealed in 1992 when the author's family home was demolished to make way for a Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise.

Curator Melanie Oliver says that for this one day Morrieson becomes the lens through which the stories and shifting identities of the South Taranaki region can be celebrated.

"Morrieson found his characters in the places where people dally – bars, parties, dances, marae – and in this way his approach is perhaps similar to Liz Allan's own, addressing notions of community, value and exchange."

By drawing together a range of community groups Allan hopes to provide a space for sharing the stories of South Taranaki people, mingling the real with the fictional.

Allan says “From small town New Zealand to little city Wellington Morrieson’s reputation stretched across the lands, the festival promises to be a celebration of his artistic legacy in all its myriad forms – ONE DAY for all.”

Allan is coordinating this festival as part of ONE DAY SCULPTURE, a New Zealand-wide series of 24 hour, temporary public artworks. ONE DAY SCULPTURE is a Massey University College of Creative Arts, School of Fine Arts, Litmus Research Initiative.

Allan is also the 2008 Govett-Brewster New Zealand Artist in Residence, a partnership with Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki supported by Creative New Zealand.

The festival will include:

- Screenings of *The Scarecrow* at Hawera Cinema 2 (12.40pm and 7.05pm, tickets \$7.50)
- Music and entertainment in the Hawera Town Square (12 noon – 5pm)
- The opportunity to visit the attic where Morrieson’s books were scribed (11am – 3pm)
- Readings from Morrieson’s novels at KFC, Hawera (3pm)
- Scarecrow dress up competition (1pm in the Hawera Town Square)
- A Hawera walking tour map plotting features from the town and Morrieson’s books (available from the Hawera Town Square, 9am – 5pm)
- 21st anniversary celebration and award ceremony for the Ronald Hugh Morrieson Literary Awards 2008 (7pm at St Joseph’s Hall, RSVP to pamela.jones@stdc.govt.nz)
- Further festivities at Morrieson’s Café and Bar (from 9pm)

Information and maps will be available at the Hawera Town Square on the day.

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For more information, high resolution images and to arrange interviews please contact:

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