

Petrus van der Velden (1837–1913) arrived in Christchurch in June 1890 having emigrated from the Netherlands with his family. He brought with him a wealth of experience as a professional painter, and had worked and exhibited alongside major Dutch painters of his generation, including prominent members of the Hague School. Within seven months of his arrival in New Zealand van der Velden travelled to the Otira Gorge, which lies in the heart of the Southern Alps, 160 kilometres northwest of Christchurch. This trip, and a subsequent second visit made in 1893, had a profound effect on the artist and the resulting paintings were to become some of the most successful and celebrated of his career. More than his colonial contemporaries, van der Velden captures the very essence of our New Zealand landscape in these works – a landscape untouched and unsullied by human presence. Van der Velden’s paintings of Otira have continued to resonate with successive generations of art audiences since they were first painted 120 years ago.

Van der Velden: Otira brings together major examples of van der Velden’s Otira paintings and drawings from public and private collections throughout New Zealand. It places them alongside work based on the Otira by his colonial contemporaries as well as that of contemporary artists who have worked at Otira, responded directly to van der Velden or explored the subject of falling water.



Exhibition sponsored by:



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