

Media release

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 5PM Friday, 20 November**

## **The Exceptional Exhibition – Richard Taylor supports Sichuan earthquake relief work by taking Weta Workshop art to China**

WELLINGTON—New Zealand special effects entrepreneur Richard Taylor has organised to take a unique collection of art, props and sculpture to Chengdu in China. This exhibition will also premiere a significant collection of fine art paintings from Greg Broadmore, the creator of *Dr Grordbort's* – a property that Richard Taylor and Partner Tania Rodger have developed with Broadmore over the past four years.

All ticket profits from *The Exceptional Exhibition – Weta Workshop introduces the World of Dr Grordbort's* will be donated by Taylor and Rodger to relief efforts for the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan province, China, where the exhibition is being held.

“This devastating earthquake has left hundreds of thousands of people homeless,” Taylor says.

“We felt if we were fortunate enough to host this exhibition in Chengdu we would donate the profits from door sales to the people of the Sichuan province. The Sichuan Quake Relief Organisation is helping in many ways with assistance for people whose families and lives were lost to the earthquake and helping rebuild significant infrastructure,” he says.

The five Academy Awards© Richard Taylor and the Weta Workshop team won for *Lord of the Rings* and *King Kong* will be on display.

The main feature of the exhibition is the work of New Zealand artist Greg Broadmore, who created the fictional universe of *Dr Grordbort's* and *Dr Grordbort's Infallible Aether Oscillators*, which have been developed by Weta Workshop as a line of art collectibles. The rayguns are 1:1 scale antique styled sci-fi hand weapon props, evoking the nostalgia of a lost age of exploration and discovery.

Taylor, Rodger and Broadmore have also developed *Dr Grordbort's* into the areas of merchandising and publishing and hope to create a feature film of this world.

*The Exceptional Exhibition* will run from December 5 to January 15 at the Sichuan Provincial Museum in Chengdu. A VIP opening involving New Zealand and Chinese dignitaries will be held on December 4. They will be joined by film and art community luminaries.

After the exhibition closes in Chengdu, Weta Workshop intends travelling the *Dr Grordbort's* artwork around the world. Future venues are being finalised at this stage.

### **Fostering the future of China-New Zealand relations**

“This is a collaborative effort with good intention,” Taylor says. “We have had great support from the local government in Chengdu and an amazing amount of enthusiasm in New Zealand among our own government to try and foster this complementary relationship.”

Taylor was among the select group of New Zealand business leaders chosen to attend the signing of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between China and New Zealand in 2008, the first FTA signed by China. New Zealand is now affectionately known as China's favourite Little Brother.

“I could see that there was a significant intent between the two countries to form allegiances at a political and business level that would complement New Zealand and China. But I also came

to appreciate that we needed to explore a way to really create a signature for this union through a sharing of art and culture between the two countries,” Taylor says.

“The opportunity to take this art exhibition to China gives us a forum in which to explore this idea. It is an opportunity to discuss how the establishing of the trade agreement could help elevate a sharing of art and culture between New Zealand and Chinese artists. This is something I am hoping to explore while I am in China.”

## **How the exhibition came about**

Earlier this year Richard Taylor won the Supreme World Class New Zealander honour awarded by the Kiwi Ex-Pats Association (KEA).

“This got me to thinking that there must be opportunities for us to interact with key Kiwis abroad, especially in the country that we are most interested in developing business opportunities with and that is China. I then met ex-pat Gavin Crombie, who has lived in Chengdu for 15 years,” Taylor says.

Crombie is the founder and chief executive of IDFGlobal, an architectural visualisation company, and Green Leaf Film Studios, headquartered in Chengdu. He wrote the best selling business book *The Way of the Dragon*, a dissertation on doing business in China which is currently used in more than 15 MBA programmes around the world as course material.

Taylor shared his ambition to develop a fine art exhibition centred on Greg Broadmore’s invention of *Dr Grordbort’s*.

“Gavin and I agreed that the exhibition would be exciting to share with the young people of his city, which has 27 universities and a great deal of contemporary art and design development going on,” Taylor says.

Christchurch-based entrepreneur Kenji Steven, who has China-New Zealand business ties with Crombie, was keen to help and he arranged for Infiniti Capital and Milestone Capital to sponsor the exhibition.

## **The host city**

Chengdu is tucked away at the foot of the Himalayan Plateau and is home to China’s national treasure, the panda. The city has many similarities with New Zealand: a knowledge economy, exceptional educational facilities, lakes, mountains and rivers.

“Chengdu is a city with a claim to be the oldest city in the world. It has incredible history, culture, scenic beauty as well as a place in Chinese history where many of the technological innovations that made China famous were invented – the first paper money, the first bank, the first moveable type printing, silk spinning, the first place tea was drunk and the first place the wheelbarrow was used. As a city it has regularly punched above its weight,” Crombie says.

“As a long-term resident of Chengdu I am aware of the incredible synergy between the country of my birth, New Zealand, and my adopted home,” he says. “After listening to the Mayor of Chengdu Ge Hong Lin in late 2008 call for the establishment of an international film industry, I have been looking for ways to bring the best in the world to Chengdu.

“There are few better in the world of movies than Richard Taylor, who has a string of enormous successes behind him including the biggest fantasy trilogy of all time – *The Lord of the Rings*. Bringing Richard Taylor, one of New Zealand’s national treasures, to Chengdu is a privilege,” Crombie says.

## **Generosity from the international film community**

Generosity in the international film industry has enabled the exhibition to be realised.

The Chair of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has kindly permitted the Academy Awards© Taylor has won for *The Lord of the Rings* and *King Kong* to travel with Taylor to China.

“Interestingly, the Chengdu Government has suggested that exhibiting the Oscars that were won for *The Lord of the Rings* and *King Kong* would have a good resonance with the public in Chengdu as they will relate this to the Academy Awards© that they see each year,” Taylor says.

“In turn, it will further emphasise that no matter what corner of the world you may be from as a film maker, the Academy offers a celebration to any nation and any culture in the art of film making,” he says.

## **The conception of *Dr Grordbort's***

*Dr Grordbort's* began as a series of nine acrylic paintings of rayguns that Broadmore created in his spare time while working on *King Kong*. He is an illustrator, writer and conceptual designer for Weta Workshop who has worked on *District 9*, *King Kong*, *The Lion*, *the Witch and the Wardrobe* and many other films.

*Dr Grordbort's* is the product of a lifetime love of science fiction. His universe has evolved as a concept in recent years, but *Grordbort Industries* remains fixed in an historical time when rayguns were the essential accessory for intrepid explorers.

Taylor and Broadmore decided to transform the paintings into art objects or collectibles, a new venture for Weta Workshop, which had been creating licensed collectibles from its film work. The project harks back to the classic sci-fi serials of yesteryear and the books reveal the back stories and mythos of the collectibles line.

*Dr Grordbort's* now spans two books published by Dark Horse Comics, several raygun collectors' pieces, hundreds of illustrations, digital paintings and sculptures, and the potential of a motion picture sometime in the near future.

“One of the things I am fascinated with is how science fiction has been projected over time, and I'm particularly fascinated with illustrative sci-fi from the turn of the last century through to the 1930s,” Broadmore says. “It appeals to me on a stylistic level as art and I love looking at interpretations across history of what the future might be.”

The humour also attracts him. “A lot of science fiction is not intended to be humorous but when you look at it in hindsight, many of the projections are so over the top and they can't take into account where history and society will go, so you get these very out-of-sync anachronistic ideas playing against each other.”

As a child, Broadmore loved the black and white serials of *Flash Gordon* and *Tarzan* and the black and white version of *King Kong*.

His latest *Dr Grordbort's* adventure will hit international bookstands this month and is being released in New Zealand this week: *VICTORY– Scientific Adventure Violence for Young Men and Literate Women*.

## Sharing experience and philosophy

Richard Taylor and Greg Broadmore will also host a series of public lectures while they are in Chengdu, focusing on the pursuit of art as a career.

“It is a series of lectures and tutorials that will hopefully help the young people who come and visit the exhibition and attend the talks to appreciate the possibilities of a career within film or television,” Taylor says.

“You can work in the film industry in any corner of the world and still get the culture of your country and the efforts of your team onto the world stage through your artistic endeavours in cinema.”

There will be special effects make-up and sculpture demonstrations and lectures on animation, make-up, costuming, design and sculpture.

“It is a chance to showcase the New Zealand film industry and look for allegiances between our two industries. The Chinese film industry is growing at a significant speed and they will eventually want to make international pictures. To that end it would be fantastic if they considered New Zealand as a destination for their work,” Taylor says.

## Thank you to the exhibition sponsors

Staging *The Exceptional Exhibition – Weta Workshop introduces the World of Dr Grordbort’s* would not be possible without sponsorship and support.

The exhibition is presented by Richard Taylor, Infiniti Capital and Green Leaf Film Studios. Richard Taylor’s time and talent have been provided free of charge.

The key sponsor is Infiniti Capital, a Hong Kong headquartered investment management firm with extensive back and middle office capabilities in Christchurch, New Zealand. Infiniti Capital has historically specialised in emerging manager hedge fund of funds mandates, alongside offering bespoke solutions for institutional clients. Its assets under management and advice total over US\$1 billion.

“We are honoured to support *The Exceptional Exhibition – Weta Workshop introduces the World of Dr Grordbort’s* and hope the developing relationship between Richard Taylor and Gavin Crombie will lead to closer ties between Chengdu and New Zealand,” says Kenji Steven, chairman of Infiniti Capital.

Another sponsor is Milestone Capital, a New Zealand-based private investment group with interests in clean technology and innovative companies. Through its Rutherford Innovation Fund, Milestone Capital is collaborating with the regional Chinese Hi-Tech Government in Chengdu to house the Chinese operations of New Zealand companies which are expanding into the Chinese market. Gavin Crombie is on Milestone Capital’s advisory board.

“The long-term future of New Zealand depends on how it can interact in a commercial and creative way with China,” Crombie says. Ends

## More information & contacts

For more information visit: [www.exceptionalexhibitionchengdu.com](http://www.exceptionalexhibitionchengdu.com), [www.wetaworkshop.com](http://www.wetaworkshop.com), [www.drgrordborts.com](http://www.drgrordborts.com), [www.wetaNZ.com](http://www.wetaNZ.com), [www.gregbroadmore.blogspot.com](http://www.gregbroadmore.blogspot.com), [www.greenleaffilmstudios.com](http://www.greenleaffilmstudios.com), [www.idfglobal.com](http://www.idfglobal.com), [www.infiniti-capital.com](http://www.infiniti-capital.com), [www.milestone-cap.com](http://www.milestone-cap.com)

Media contact: **Janine Ogier**, Convergence Communications & Marketing, Christchurch  
phone 0277 534 360

VICTORY book launch information: phone Magnus Hjert at Weta on 04 380 3023

**Richard Taylor is holding a media conference at 2.45pm Friday, 20 November at the Weta Cave, on the corner of Camperdown Rd and Weka St in Miramar, Wellington, but otherwise will not be able to undertake any interviews due to time constraints.**