

“Gallery Exhibition ‘Close to Home’ for Renowned Painter”. From the article published in the Otago Daily Times 30 July 2026 by Grant Miller.

He is well known for his landscape paintings, but renowned artist Sir Grahame Sydney is delighted some of his wider work will soon be in front of a broader audience. Some include the human figure. One painting among more than 30 to be displayed in the upcoming 'Close to Home' exhibition at Milford Galleries in Queenstown is a self portrait.

The exhibition reflects a range of work since the 1990s. It is the first solo exhibition for Sir Grahame in 15 years. Nearly all the exhibits have never been viewed publicly before.

“The real point behind it is that for several decades I’ve been doing my work and selling it privately” the 78 year old Central Otago painter said. Paintings went directly from his studio into private hands and he was conscious the vast majority from the past 25 years had not been seen publicly. His wife Fiona had modelled in some of his figure paintings.

“I want them to be seen, because I think they really matter” said Sir Grahame.

The exhibition came about after an approach from Milford Galleries. It is to run for a month from August 22.

“Most of these paintings are being loaned from relatively close to the Queenstown area” Sir Grahame said. “And they do very genuinely reveal what’s been happening in your life, what you’ve been caring about and what’s mattered. Whenever I encounter a painting after a long separation, I can immediately remember everything that was going on with me at the time”.

Milford Galleries senior consultant and curator Vanessa Eve Cook said Sir Grahame was widely regarded as one of New Zealand’s most significant living artists. The exhibition would be a way to show the breadth of his practice, she said. “He’s an absolutely iconic landscape painter but it goes far beyond that...he’s talking about belonging to a place and a home, memories and how we relate to places...the emotions we connect to them”.

Milford Galleries’ two major exhibition spaces are in Dunedin and Queenstown. A fit-out was completed at the Queenstown gallery last year Ms Cook said. “It’s wonderful to be able to have this show – and especially in our Queenstown gallery, where it is close to home”.

The exhibition ‘Close to Home’ runs 22 August to 23 September 2023.