

Mother hunts for her daughter's lost artwork

by Hayden Donnell

A concerned North Shore mother is looking for hundreds of her autistic daughter's drawings which she says were given away without their permission nearly three decades ago.

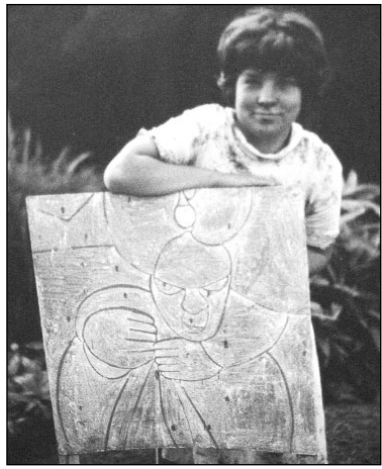
Dawn King says much of her daughter Susan's intricate artwork was given away to workers, volunteers and guests at an IHC-run school in Northcote, which she attended for more than a decade.

The drawings, which became Susan's only means of expression when she stopped speaking at age four, were so good that Elam art school invited her more than once to demonstrate her style and ability for their students.

Susan, who is now 54, received a signed certificate from the Queen in 1970 congratulating her on the excellence of some of the sketches she sent to be displayed in British exhibitions. The certificate was lost after it was lent to Susan's school.

King says although she has many folders containing thousands of Susan's drawings, she probably only has half of the total.

"Getting the drawings back will mean Susan's talent will be cared for and remembered," she says. An intellectually



ART: A young Susan King with her artwork.

handicapped child, Susan showed enthusiasm for art from pre-school onwards, creating hundreds of accurate and expressive sketches on old envelopes, scrap paper and letters.

Over 23 years, she amassed a body of work that Takapuna art gallery owner Wendy Harsant describes as astonishing, not just for its size, but for its unique style. However, in 1978 at age 27, Susan suddenly stopped drawing.

King says she had no idea why, until 23 years later when she was stopped in a shopping centre by a woman who recognised Susan.

The woman said that in 1978, after an offer from Elam art school to take Susan away a few times a week to show their students her creative process, Susan's pens were confiscated and the drawings that hung on her wall taken down.

King says the IHC facility Susan was staying at wanted her to keep working in their sewing room, where she was good at making rugs and mats.

The woman, whose name King can't recall, also said while Susan was staying at Kingswood School in Northcote, many of her drawings were given away to the school's workers and visitors.

Peter Iverson, who was principal of Kingswood School between 1970 and 1975, says he once found a book of Susan's drawings on a shelf around school, and was so impressed with their quality that he took them home.

When he was talking to Susan's sister Petita recently, he learned that the family was searching for the drawings and promptly returned them.

Iverson says he believes any work done by students at the school should have been the property of the students or their family. He doesn't believe the school had that attitude before he arrived however, and thinks



ARTIST: Susan King with some of her drawings.

many of Susan's drawings may have been given out to visitors.

"I've heard people tell me that they had been given pictures if they expressed an interest.

"They should really go back to the family."

He says there would have been visitors to the school every week, and if many of those who showed an interest in Susan's art were given copies, her drawings could be all over the place. Meanwhile King can look over her incomplete picture archives and hope that

there are more people like Iverson out there.

She says she knows somewhere there are people with Susan's drawings, but finds it difficult to spend time looking for them while she is taking care of Susan at home.

One of the first things she'd like back is the certificate Susan received from the Queen about 35 years ago.

"I lent that to the school for a year or so and I still haven't got it back."

TV student wins three awards

by Snehal Morris

God was who Steven Mahoney thanked most when he made a clean sweep of the television awards at the AUT School of Communication Studies awards evening.

Mahoney's hard work in the final year of his Bachelor of Communications Studies degree won him awards for excellence in documentary production, excellence in corporate and community videos and the graduate of the year award.

"My philosophy in life is to do everything that is important with excellence and I will be noticed," says Mahoney.

His documentary followed a woman named Sue Colloney who was trying to find her Maori heritage.

Mahoney followed Sue through an emotional journey until she found her marae. He says it was not easy but his enthusiasm took him through it.

The television curriculum leader at AUT, Eileen Lavranos, says: "It wasn't surprising for me that Steven took all three awards.

He is very academic and has been an outstanding student."

Mahoney is now employed by Maori Television Services, a job he landed after students were invited to visit the studios.

He is working in the tapes department doing what he says is a basic "step in the door" job.

Lavranos says: "He doesn't mind trying anything and has a lot of enthusiasm and that's why he is in a television working environment already."

Mahoney says the communication degree has given him a full grounding in the media industry.

The full awards:

Communication studies:

Top Student Certificate in Communications Studies: **Kylie Rosan**

Top Year One student Bachelor of Communications Studies: **Teresa Twyford**

Top Year Two student Bachelor of Communications Studies: **Sarah McDonald**

Excellence in Communication Theory: **Sia Aston**

Top Year One Master in Arts in Communications Studies: **Anna Harris**

Postgraduate:

Excellence in Post Graduate Research: **Bridget Conor**

Scholarships:

AUT/PIMA Scholarship for Bachelor of

Communications Studies: **Kathryn Harron**

AUT/PIMA Scholarship for Graduate Diploma in Public Relations: **Ruth Masani**

Journalism:

Excellence in Broadcast Journalism: **Grace Edwards**

Excellence in Magazine Journalism: **Patrick Crewdson & Zoe Hooper**

Graduate Journalist of the year: **Grace Edwards**

Outstanding Graduate in the Graduate Diploma in Journalism: **Amanda Cameron**

Public relations:

All Round Excellence in Public Relations: **Michelle Stewart**

Post Graduate Project in Public Relations: **Jean Yang**

Top Public Relations Graduate from the Bachelor of Communications Studies: **Aisha Ahmed**

Outstanding Graduate in the Graduate Diploma in Communication and Public Relations: **Phillipa Prentice**

Multimedia:

Excellence in Web Media: **Scott Mannion**

Excellence in Videography: **Claire Russell**

Multimedia Diploma Graduate of the Year: **Jonathon Skipper**

Multimedia Graduate of the Year Bachelor of Communications Studies: **Ling Mei Fiona Gan**

Advertising creativity:

Advertising Creativity Graduate of the Year Bachelor of Communication Studies:

(Art direction) **Kelly Palmer**
(Copywriting) **Gemma Bridge**

Advertising Creativity Graduate of the Year in the Graduate Diploma:

(Art direction) **Jason Joe**
(Copywriting) **Christopher Long**

Sandy Short Scholarships Bachelor of Communication Studies Advertising Creativity Majors 2005: **Kara Day & Helen Steemson**

Radio:

Best Documentary: **Laura Wiltshier**

Radio Graduate of the Year: **Julia Harrison**

Television:

Excellence in Documentary Production: **Steven Mahoney**

Excellence in Corporate and Community Videos: **Steven Mahoney**

Television Graduate of the Year: **Steven Mahoney**



CLEAN SWEEP: Steven Mahoney with Sue Woodfield from TV3.

Time for Islam to change, says visiting professor

by Sarah Kaci

Islam needs to change in a modern, evolving world, Prof Omar Nahas, told students and the public at a University of Auckland seminar last month.

Describing himself as a "researcher and an activist", Prof Nahas said Islam has to face issues of homosexuality, blood transfusion and food manipulation.

Nahas is a researcher at the Centre for Islam in Europe at the University of Ghent, Belgium. He said that by giving lectures, writing articles and working for social services in Belgium and the Netherlands, he was trying to make people think about Islam in a new way.

Elizabeth Eastmonde from the university's Department of History asked Nahas to give his lecture.

"We hear a lot more negative things about Islam than positive. For example, the word jihad doesn't only mean holy war, it has a less known positive meaning which is the individual jihad to do your best and be useful to others."

Nahas's main aim in Auckland was to promote reflection among Muslims on how to deal with new social issues. "How, for example, does Islam consider blood transfusion, food manipulations or internet?"

"The relationship between Islam and society is not a fixed relationship," said Nahas.

Taking the example of homosexuality, Nahas said that Islam doesn't really accept it, but it does exist.

"There are some parts of Islam that need changes in the context of today's societies. How homosexuality is considered by Muslims is one of the problems which have to be solved within

Islam. We need to emphasise the dignity of human being, the dignity of people who are different."

Several Muslims in the audience did not agree with Prof Nahas' comments on the evolution of Islam.

One of them was Karima, 24: "I am not really happy with what he said. There is no need to change the religion to evolve with our society."

Karima's parents are originally from Egypt, but she was born in Australia.

"I grew up in Australia and I have never had to change the rules of Islam. If you want to be a Muslim you have to apply the religion."

Karima has been wearing the scarf since she was nine. "At the beginning, I followed my parents' influence but now it is a personal choice to wear the scarf."

People are still curious about Islamic customs and often ask questions, says Karima. "Sometimes people ask me questions about my scarf just to pull me down. It is often hard to justify yourself."

But Karima has been living in Auckland for five months and so far "not a single negative thing happened. I work in a hospital and I've never had troubles with any doctors, nurses or patients".

Nahas says: "As New Zealand is multi-ethnic, it is a country where Islam can find its place. New Zealand is developing a model of diversity which is very useful for the rest of the world as an example."

When told that his ideas about evolution of Islam might be controversial, Nahas replies:

"I guess I am a relaxed Muslim. I might go a bit far sometimes but I am proud of it, and it is needed."

"We hear a lot more negative things about Islam than positive."

