

## World's Largest Painting, 10 May 1990 Armidale NSW.



With thanks for permission from Mr Ian Johnstone who edited this article from memoirs provided by Dr Jim Irvine (Master of Robb College from 1981 to 1990) and which will appear in Ian's latest book to be released in 2021; "Armidale - A History in Photos and Stories"

Students of Robb College UNE, assisted by students from other UNE colleges and Armidale schools, completed the World's Largest Painting and received a Guinness Book of Records Certificate certifying that "The Largest Painting Measured 102.93 x 65.38 metres and was painted by students at Robb College at Armidale, NSW, Australia in May 1990", signed by Donald McFarlan and Morris McWhirter. It was included in the *Guinness Book of Records* 1991 to 1994.

Amanda Bishop, Projects Officer for the Robb College Junior Common Room, initiated the Project. The painting was completed with the support of students from Robb, other UNE colleges and high school students in Armidale. It was under the overall guidance of UNICEF Australia's Goodwill Ambassador and Sydney Artist, Mr Ken Done.

The photo captures Bill Andreas (1990 JCR Vice-President and Painting Coordinator), Ken Done and Amanda Bishop (1990 JCR Projects Officer) when working on the final seven paintings.



Dr Jim Irvine, Master of Robb College from January 1981 to December 1990, described the Project:

When completed, the World's Largest Painting was a patchwork of 2,747 individually painted 1.5m x 1.5m calico squares, covering a surface area of 6,727m<sup>2</sup>; and measuring 102.93m by 65.38m, with a superimposed giant 'smiley' face and black border, a title, and stylised Robb and UNICEF crests in the bottom corners.

All the rolls of painted calico were laid out and sewn together on the Sports Union's Consett Davis AFL field. School and university students had been supplied with



brushes and access to cans of brightly coloured, water-based Watty house paints. Painting of individual squares began in March and continued every day into early May. Every artist created one or more depictions of “Children and Childhood” onto these calico squares. The squares were then sewn together. John Meredith, son of Ben Meredith, the first Robb College Master, in a non-stop marathon effort over six days and nights, completed the sewing with a small, dedicated band of helpers.

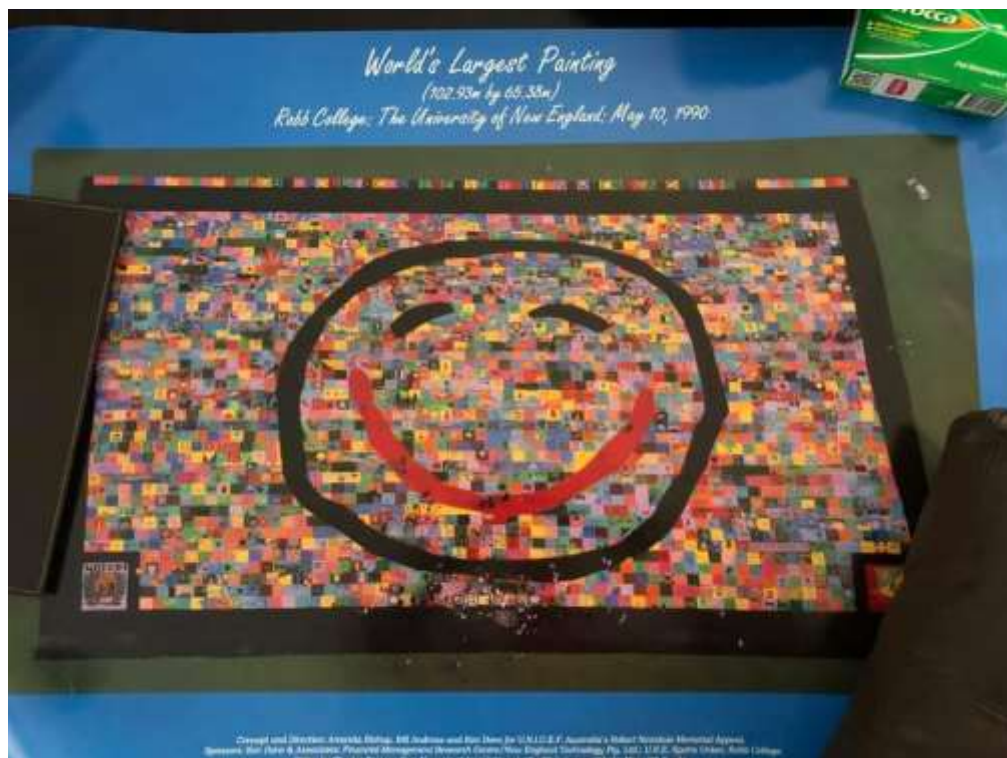
Ken Done flew to Armidale, on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1980, painted and signed the final seven squares along the bottom row. The painting was photographed from the air by a professional photographer sitting in a small fixed-wing open aeroplane, to meet the standards required by the Guinness Book. The giant painting was formally measured by local Rotarians to verify its authenticity and dimensions.

In October 1990, a cheque for the \$17,500 dollars raised was handed to Film Actress and International UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, Audrey Hepburn in Sydney by Jim Irvine, Amanda Bishop and Bill Andreas. The donation supported UNICEF Australia’s Robert Nestdale Memorial Appeal for work in Malawi. Robert Nestdale was a former UNE student.



The painting was depicted on one of UNICEF’s 1990 Christmas card and five of the seven framed Ken Done paintings were awarded to sponsors, organisers and to Robb College, with the remaining two auctioned and raffled at the 1990 Robb College Art Exhibition.

For more details see Dr Jim Irvine’s article: “Reflections on Robb College in the 1980’s”  
Go to [www.robbcollege.com/history-heritage-people](http://www.robbcollege.com/history-heritage-people)





# GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS PAINTING

1993

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Theatrical mask.

## Painting

**Origins** The world's oldest examples of art are possibly pieces of bone bearing geometric engraved marks, dated to c. 350 000 years ago from an Old Stone Age site at Bilzingsleben, near Erfurt, Germany. The oldest known extant and dated examples of representational art are from layers dated to c. 25 000 BC from La Ferrassie, near Les Eyzies in the Périgord, France, where blocks of stone engraved with animals and female symbols were found. Some blocks were also decorated with symbols painted in red ochre.

**British Isles** The earliest example of an engraving found in Britain is of a horse's head on a piece of rib-bone from Robin Hood Cave, Creswell Crag, Derbyshire. It dates from the Upper Palaeolithic period of c. 15 000–10 000 BC.

**Largest** The largest-ever painting measures 6727.56 m<sup>2</sup> 72 437 ft<sup>2</sup> after allowing for shrinkage of the canvas. It is made up of brightly coloured squares superimposed by a 'Smiley' face and was painted by students of Robb College at Armidale, New South Wales, Australia, aided by local schoolchildren and students from neighbouring colleges. The canvas was completed by its designer, Australian artist Ken Done, and unveiled on a playing field at the University of New England at Armidale on 10 May 1990.

**'Old Master'** The largest 'Old Master' is *Il Paradiso* by Sandro Botticelli (1465–1510) and his son Domenico (1565–1637) on the east wall of the Sala del Maggior Consiglio in the Palazzo Ducale (Doge's Palace) in Venice, Italy between 1587 and 1590. The work is 22 m 72 ft 2 in long, 7 m 22 ft 11½ in high and contains some 350 human figures.



■ Largest art gallery  
The Winter Palace and  
neighbouring Hermitage in  
St Petersburg, Russia  
house nearly 3 million  
works of art in 322