

Tai Tapu *Sculpture* Garden



New Zealand
2023



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Cover: Neil Dawson *Vortex* (2016)

Half title page: Reflection of Bing Dawe's *Towards repair – Gorse as a nursery – Composition with gorse, NZ beech and tuna, from Hinewai* (2022)

This page: Tim Main *Wrens* (2022), reclaimed oak and ceramic

Contemporary photographs © 2023 Brian High

Historical photographs by Annabel Menzies-Joyce

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But the work involved in staging the annual event is ongoing. Each year, proposals are sought for works that fit within the bounds of Tai Tapu Sculpture Gardens criteria. Melissa:

We are interested in concepts for three-dimensional sculpture in all media suitable for an outdoor exhibition; participatory, socially engaged or performance works; light works and sound pieces – highlights over the past years include sound works by Annabel Menzies-Joyce, Olivia Webb and Ivan Clayden. We consider the calibre, originality, appropriateness and robustness of the concept for the purpose of the event. Generally, we do not exhibit work that has recently been shown elsewhere as we aim to offer our visitors a fresh exhibition.

The deadline for proposals falls each October, so giving five months to liaise with artists, determine the shape and feel of the show, prepare sites and promote the event before installation the following February.

For participating artists, the exhibition provides an opportunity for sales but also an ongoing relationship with the site, access to curatorial feedback and the opportunity, particularly for younger artists, to discuss ideas, test new materials and engage with other artists and art buyers. Which means everyone wins, says Melissa: “Artists get paid and the new owners enjoy living with these wonderful works. We’ve helped to build people’s collections and we’ve introduced collectors to artists and artists to other artists which has led to new relationships and collaborations.”

Top: Matt Akehurst *Waiting* (2022)

Bottom: Matthew Williams *Shimmer* (2022)



Hamish Southcott *Who let the cat out of the bag* (2016)





Follow Me (1993)

Concrete

Dimensions: 2300 × 4050 x 1260 mm

Purchased 2014

This formidable work was developed from a much smaller piece in white clay entitled *Human Caterpillar* (1989). Essentially, it is a dance work – a conga line – but as writer John Newton suggests, it might also be read not as four figures but one figure, repeated, “as in a series of stopped frames, or one of those ‘ascent of man’ timelines that depicts our ancestors learning to walk upright”.⁶

Annabel and Peter loved the work when they first saw it in 2013 on the lawn of an architect’s firm in the city. They knew they had a forum for the work but moving the nine-tonne sculpture was never going to be easy. In May that year, pre-winter rains had made the ground too soft to complete the installation on the desired spot at the far south end of the Garden. For the rest of winter, it sat at a halfway point before being moved into position when the ground had firmed up. Its scale, joyous movements and curvaceous forms have made *Follow Me* a favourite with visitors of all ages.



CREATING PATHS

The installation of often large art works and the access requirements for visitors of all ages and physical ability throughout the year demand a robust and well-maintained network of paths and walkways. The initial landscaping plan delineated a basic series of walkways to take visitors from the main grassed area along natural corridors of bush, beneath the growing canopy of podocarps and behind and between the ponds. To ensure access for hiabs, trucks and trailers, low lying branches are regularly lopped to maintain four × four metre passageways. Paths used only for walking can be narrower, but still need regular maintenance. Pruning or plant removal are also undertaken to provide space or sudden sightlines for the sculptures, allowing them to be walked around or viewed from a bend in the path. For Alison Erickson's *Bureaucracy and the huia* for example, trees were moved to give the work a towering prominence within a small and unexpected space. Sam Harrison's *Veiled Embracing Figures* stands within a green grove of kōwhai trees (one had to be removed for installation). Pauline Rhodes' *Flow Boat 1 & 2*, in comparison, nestle in the grassy shallows of the pond's edge.

As the trees gain height, the taller trunks leave spaces beneath the canopy for new pathways. These have provided opportunities for low-lying shrubs and

groundcovers and a space for smaller sculptures, even a pet cemetery – macrocarpa slabs topped by small cast glass sculptures mark the passing of dogs Plato, Finnie and Momo – so providing a sense of mystery and discovery for visitors.



The Zig-Zag bridge, inspired by Japanese gardens