

This resource has been designed for you, as teachers, to help you further understand the themes of Sculpture on the Gulf. Its aim is to empower you to engage your students with the contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand sculpture that you will see during your visit to Waiheke Island.

We want to encourage students' thoughtful reflections through their own subjective criticality. Sculpture on the Gulf welcomes subjectivity and encourages interpretation through a personal lens, asking students to feel and respond to what's in front of them.

Sculpture on the Gulf

Contemporary Aotearoa/NZ sculpture encompasses installation, environments, performance, soundscapes, three-dimensional objects and audience participation. In this exhibition artists draw on a range of materials both ephemeral and permanent, and have engaged with a diverse range of technologies/processes to create their sculptures, from the handcrafted to factory fabricated. They explore a range of contemporary issues related to time, movement, space, and context, particularly our relationship to this landscape and the experience it engenders.

Matiatia Bay and its coastal walkway, the site for this exhibition, has strong meanings and associations for all who have come to call the island home. Particularly for local Māori, whose ancestors are buried here and remnants of their early settlement can not only still be seen in the landscape, but permeates deep into the ground. This rich cultural overlay, or korowai – cloak, are both of a contemporary and historic nature and through an awareness of these places we are all able to gain a deeper understanding of the significance of this land.

Themes

We want to acknowledge the very important historical and ongoing significance of this land to Māori and to Ngāti Paoa in particular. Therefore, we have used the Mauri Model as an assessment framework. This model takes into account the integrity of four themes of which we advise you to be selective in view of your own learning outcomes and follow up back in the classroom:

1. Environment and integrity of the ecosystem
2. Cultural wellbeing and integrity of identity
3. Community and social wellbeing
4. Whanau and economic wellbeing

The Environment // Integrity of the ecosystem

There are a number of works that you will encounter that engage with ideas of landscape and environment. They traverse notions of environmental decline, climate change, human affect and future scenarios.

Unlike sculptures inside galleries, these works can directly interact with their subject matter, and comment on its surrounds. Certain sculptures are directly linked to the Waiheke landscape and environment, and some are engaged in the broader global conversation.

Some questions that these sculptures may ask of you, or that help you to think about their relationship to the environment are as follows:

- What components of the sculpture encourage you to become aware of the environment?
- Some sculptures use their title, materials and site to tell a story. How is this particularly relevant in an outdoors context when speaking about environmental issues?
- Do you think you would read these sculptures differently if they were situated somewhere else? Would they still have the ability to tell the same story?
- Why do you think so many artists are using their practice to talk about environmental issues? How do you think it is helpful, or not?

Cultural Wellbeing // Integrity of cultural identity

This land holds a powerful and significant history for Māori, and there are sculptures along the walkway that consciously engage with the reasons this place is of cultural significance to them. The stories that these works tell are of colonisation, history, genealogy and cultural representation, allowing this landscape to tell its story whilst maintaining and upholding the integrity of cultural identity. It is with this knowledge that we ask of you to be respectful, insightful and aware when on this walkway.

We all hold our own cultural identity and engage with this in different ways. Amongst the sculptures, there are multiple artists exploring their own identity and how they fit into the context of Aotearoa New Zealand as a place of diverse cultural heritage and practices.

Some questions that these sculptures may ask of you, or that help you to think about their relationship to cultural wellbeing are as follows:

- What kind of materials or shapes in these works explore cultural integrity? Are they familiar to you? Why do you think the artist has chosen to explore them in this context?
- How do these works use site as a prompt for thinking about identity? Why do you think they have done that?
- Some works draw on cultural histories to tell their story. Why is this important and how do these stories connect us to today?
- There is a work that is particularly site specific. Why do you think this site has been chosen for this piece and how might this be related to cultural identity?

Community // Social wellbeing

Sculptures share our space which make them inherently social; we interact with their physical being as we move around or through it, study it or sometimes, listen to it. Some sculptures ask us to participate and without an audience, wouldn't fulfil their completion.

There are sculptures amongst this event which ask us questions surrounding interactivity and connectivity, function and failure, context, and process and outcome. They invite the hands, eyes, and ears of others to partake in the active process of the works and prompt us to think about the potential of sculpture and where it lies within our everyday.

Some questions that these sculptures may ask of you, or that help you to think about the ways in which they explore community are as follows:

- Does the sculpture actively invite your participation? In what ways does this participation change its process?
- Does the sculpture encourage social experiences? How does it do this and why would this be the artists intention?
- Does the sculpture ask you to think about process? Why do you think an artist would make a work that is not entirely based on outcome?
- Does the sculpture affect one of your senses? How might this be used to connect you to not only the work but the environment and its people?

Whanau // Economic wellbeing

Utilising the term economic creatively, we have extended it to think about value and the nature of exchange. In the realm of sculpture, this can be applied to ideas surrounding form and material and how these concepts may be used to tell stories.

These sculptures could get you thinking about their formal qualities and the ways artists engage with ideas surrounding form differently. Some examples of form that you may encounter on the walkway are three-dimensional objects, architecture, sound, and installation (separate components that make a whole).

All artists take basic materials and transform them; they are translating the primary value of the material and injecting it with a symbolic meaning through the artist's creative process. These symbols are then exchanged with the audience and provide clues to further understand the artists intention.

Some questions that these sculptures may ask of you, or that help you to think about the ways in which they explore whanau are as follows:

- Do all sculptures use form as a key component to convey its meaning? How so?
- How can form elaborate on the sculptures meaning? Can sculptural forms manipulate space? How and why would they do this?
- How can the value of a sculptures form and material be changed between different contexts?
- Do any sculptures use symbols and signals to convey meaning? How are these used and why?
- Do you recognise the material used in the sculpture? How has the artist transformed it in their process?