



New Zealand's foremost outdoor sculpture exhibition to return in February 2024

5 April 2023: Perpetual Guardian Sculpture on the Gulf is set to once again adorn Waiheke Island's magnificent coastal landscape when it returns on 24 February 2024.

This renowned outdoor sculpture exhibition has been a unique contribution to the cultural life of Aotearoa since it first took place in 2003; organisers say the 2024 event will continue the conversation between sculpture and site through multiple significant works as it celebrates its twentieth anniversary. For the third consecutive time, it will be generously supported by naming rights partner, Perpetual Guardian.

"Art drives positive change across our communities and many of Perpetual Guardian's clients give generously to the arts as they structure their legacies," explains CEO Patrick Gamble. "We look forward to working closely with event organisers as they challenge the country's leading sculptors to create pieces which challenge and inspire us all."

According to Sculpture on the Gulf Director, Fiona Blanchard, next year's event will build on the success of SOTG 2022 in developing the exhibition as an internally renowned biennale. Two new, highly accomplished curators have been appointed to develop a framework for the exhibition which will deliver a refined number of ambitious projects.

Robert Leonard is a contemporary art curator and writer who is currently Director of Brisbane's Institute of Modern Art. He has worked throughout Aotearoa New Zealand — for City Gallery Wellington, Auckland Art Gallery, Artspace, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, and the National Art Gallery — and has twice curated New Zealand representation for the Venice Biennale.

"Sculpture on the Gulf is a big deal: a success story with big audiences which is well-established on the art calendar," Leonard notes, "but I want to explore how it might evolve and what it could become — to what extent should it meet existing expectations, and how can it play with them or even defy them? What can it do that it hasn't done already?"

Leonard is joined by Brett Graham (Ngāti Koroki Kahukura, Tainui): a sculptor who creates large-scale works that explore indigenous politics and philosophies, and histories of imperialism and colonisation. In 2020, he presented his major exhibition *Tai Moana Tai Tangata* at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery to critical and popular acclaim; his works have also featured in the 2017

Honolulu Biennial and 2010 Sydney Biennale, and his collaborations with Rachael Rakena featured in the 2006 Sydney Biennale and 2007 Venice Biennale.

Having previously been involved in Sculpture on the Gulf – as a member of the selection panel in 2007 and as an exhibiting artist in 2017 – Graham says as an artist he is excited by the prospect of working with creatives whose work addresses the challenging issues of our times, on a scale befitting the dramatic landscape of the headland.

“Sculpture on the Gulf has been the popular face of sculpture in Auckland for decades. New Zealanders and overseas visitors have enjoyed making the pilgrimage to Waiheke, and many of New Zealand’s major artists have contributed works at some point. Robert and I have been given the opportunity to reconsider what sculpture might be now, and present work that locates the event firmly in the Pacific.”

Event organisers are now calling for New Zealand artists to submit concepts for recent, existing, or new outdoor sculptures that respond to the spectacular setting and environment of Waiheke and Tīkapa Moana (the Hauraki Gulf) – specifically the two-kilometre stretch of coastline along the Waiheke headland from Church Bay towards the Te Atawhai Whenua Reserve and Matiatia.

“Inspiration for proposed works can be drawn from the coastal elements of the natural environment, mana whenua, social, historical, and cultural contexts, visitors, and local community or beyond,” Blanchard explains. “The potential for ‘sites’ of engagement is local, but global in the connection to people and place.”

New Zealand artists interested in being considered can submit a **1-page expression of interest before May 5, 2023**. To submit a proposal and for more information about the call for expressions of interest email exhibitions@waihekeartgallery.org.nz

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For more information:

Visit www.sotg.nz for more information on *Perpetual Guardian Sculpture on the Gulf 2024* and curators.

For images of *Perpetual Guardian Sculpture on the Gulf 2022*:

<https://www.peterreesphotography.com/Private-galleries/Events/Sculpture-on-the-Gulf>

Password to download images is Waiheke. Please credit images to Pete Rees.

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