

sculpture
on the gulf **Waiheke**
Island

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The Ocean Remembers the Shore

Perpetual Guardian Sculpture on the Gulf 2027

26 FEBRUARY TO 29 MARCH 2027

Perpetual Guardian Sculpture on the Gulf 2027

Open Call for Expressions of Interest

SEPTEMBER 2025

Key Information

- Sculptures by Aotearoa and international artists
- Open to emerging and established artists
- Thousands of visitors over 4 weeks and 5 weekends

Overview

Since the first event in 2003, Sculpture on the Gulf has become established as a renowned outdoor sculpture exhibition, a unique contribution to the cultural life of Aotearoa New Zealand. The event harnesses the potential of contemporary sculpture to activate the environment, creating opportunities for audiences to experience the power and beauty of sculpture in the landscape.

Perpetual Guardian Sculpture on the Gulf 2027 will continue the conversation between sculpture and site through multiple significant works. Established as a biennial exhibition, Sculpture on the Gulf has an open brief to support all forms of sculpture that prompt thinking and feeling and involve a breadth of modes of engagement and reception.

Perpetual Guardian Sculpture on the Gulf 2027 will be structured according to a dispersed site model, featuring contemporary, site-responsive sculptures across an extended coastal landscape and within the Oneroa hub housing the Waiheke Art Gallery, Artworks Theatre, Cinema and Library.

The Curators

Heather Galbraith

Heather Galbraith is a curator, writer and educator from Tāmaki Makaurau, who has held senior curatorial and management roles at St Paul St. Gallery AUT University, City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, and Toi Rauwhārangī College of Creative Arts, Massey University, where she is a Professor of Fine Arts. Galbraith was part of New Zealand presentations at the Venice Biennale (2009, 2013, 2015) and Managing Curator for SCAPE Public Art, Ōtautahi (2016, 2017, 2018). Recently, she curated Judy Darragh: Competitive Plastics and is the curatorial member of the Trans-Tasman Deep Material Energy collective of jewellers/object makers. Governance roles include serving as a board member for Wheako Pōneke Experience Wellington and chairing the Contemporary HUM Arts Trust.

Benjamin Work

Benjamin Work (b.1979) is a Tāmaki Makaurau-based artist of Tongan and Orcadian/Shetlander lineage, holding an MFA from Elam School of Fine Arts. His practice integrates contemporary and traditional influences, reflecting the layered complexities of Moana Oceania identity, and centres on what he terms tu'u vaha'a "occupying the in-between", a space through which he navigates the stories of his maternal lineage and his lived experience in Aotearoa. In 2024, he was awarded an artist residency at Parehuia, McCahon House, and became the inaugural winner of the Fatu Feu'u Pacific Arts Prize. His work continues to be exhibited locally and internationally and is represented in major collections, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Auckland Museum, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).

The Brief

Co-curators Heather Galbraith and Benjamin Work have created the curatorial framework *The Ocean Remembers the Shore*, inspired by Waiheke Island's long history of offering shelter to those seeking safety and connection, which is reflected in its original name, Te Motu Ārai Roa/ The long sheltering island.

Title: *The Ocean Remembers the Shore*

Subtitle: *Te motu ārai roa/ The long sheltering island*

Sculpture on the Gulf is calling for Aotearoa and international artists to submit concepts for recent, existing, or new sculpture conceived for the 2.4km stretch of coastline along the Waiheke headland from Church Bay towards the Te Atawhai Whenua Reserve and Matiatia. In 2027, we will feature works and events in the Oneroa township, alongside the exhibition of gallery-based works by the SOTG 2027 artists at Waiheke Art Gallery.

The co-curators note, "*The ocean is not just a body; it is a memory keeper. Sculpture becomes a way of listening to the ocean's memory. The shore and the coast are where land and water, humans and non-humans, the past and the future come together in an ongoing dialogue.*"

The exhibition includes four sub-themes to which we invite artists' proposals to respond and connect.

sculpture on the gulf

Waiheke
Island

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Thematic sections

The Ocean and the Shore

Regeneration

Shelter

Connections or Connectedness

Aotearoa New Zealand artists interested in being considered can submit a 1-page expression of interest to exhibitions@waihekeartgallery.org.nz before **5pm Friday, October 31, 2025**. A more detailed outline of the thematic and contextual framework can be found at sotg.nz

Please include:

- the concept for your work.
- any images or drawings/renderings.
- key logistical factors relating to installation.
- any exhibition needs.
- if there are particular sites/contexts that you would like your work to be considered for.

Work needs to be robust enough to withstand the conditions of a coastal environment (sun, wind, rain, salt) and consider the parameters around site access and environmental concerns for placement and footings.

Selected artists will be assisted to deliver and present their works for the exhibition to be shown on Waiheke Island, Tāmaki Makaurau/ Auckland, from Friday 26 February until Monday 29 March 2027 (with installation taking place during January 2027 and deinstallation taking place during April 2027).

Practical considerations:

- Dates – exhibition opens Friday 26 February, running until Monday 29 March 2027.
- The environment of Waiheke can be demanding – the combination of sun, wind, rain, and salt needs to be taken into consideration when choosing materials and installation plans. SOTG can install signage to inform people not to touch and climb but cannot guarantee that visitors will heed these notices. These aspects also need to be considered in terms of fabrication.
- Selected artists will need to provide completed drawings by 31 May 2026.
- All artworks need to be ready to transport to the island by early December 2026.
- The artist or a designated person must be available to work with the installer during installation and deinstallation (January and April 2027).
- Artists also need to submit a related work/s for the gallery Group exhibition that will take place at Waiheke Art Gallery at the same time as SOTG. These could be maquettes, related small works or editions.
- Terms and conditions for sales of work will be shared if your submission is progressed.
- There are parameters around where works can be sited, the degree of feasible structural foundations, and access is variable. If you have a specific site in mind for which you are proposing work, please discuss it with a member of the SOTG team.

Costs covered by Sculpture on the Gulf include:

- Selected new sculptural works – an artist fee/contribution towards production costs of NZD 4,000 (\$2k fee, \$2k materials).
- Selected existing sculptural works – an artist fee of NZD 2,000.
- Agreed freight, Fullers 10 trip ferry pass, installation/de-installation (artist or their representative must be present), engineering costs, consent costs, sales and marketing, including the SOTG website, guidebook, and artwork signage. NB freight from outside of the Auckland metropolitan area must be budgeted and agreed by SOTG in advance.
- SOTG may be able to help with limited sponsorship for materials and fabrication.
- SOTG may be able to help with pairing a patron with an artist.

The 2027 Curatorium (comprised of Curators Heather Galbraith and Benjamin Work, alongside SOTG Curatorial Committee members Kriselle Baker, Fiona Blanchard, Richard Maloy and Jeanine Clarkin) will make the final selection of projects and reserve the right to engage artists through direct invitation. The selection of works will consider project strengths, alongside the response to place and contextual engagements. The selection aims to include a breadth of practitioners (culturally and generationally), working across a range of processes and materials – from object-based to more ephemeral or socially engaged.

We welcome Expressions of Interest from those who whakapapa to Waiheke and/or to other islands in the Tikapa Moana o Hauraki, and the 19 recognised iwi of Tāmaki Makaurau.

Sculpture on the Gulf 2027 Curatorium