

Art in the Open

WORDS SHARON STEPHENSON

GET OUTDOORS AND APPRECIATE SOME SPECTACULAR KIWI ART ALONG THE MANY SCULPTURE TRAILS DOTTED AROUND THE COUNTRY.

"You should write about New Zealand's sculpture trails," suggested the editor.

"New Zealand's what?"

"You know, outdoor galleries where the public can interact with art."

No, actually, I didn't. But that's what you get for being a cultural philistine.

So, having identified a glaring gap in my knowledge, I was delighted to discover that sculpture trails and parks are tucked all over this green and lovely land of ours. New Zealand's permanent and temporary sculpture trails feature art as varied as life-sized giraffes to wind-activated kinetic works, and record and honour moments of history, define the surrounding landscape and make elegant and evocative statements. Some "pop up" for summer and others are permanent. Best of all, most are free.

CONNELLS BAY SCULPTURE PARK – WAIHEKE ISLAND

Owners John and Jo Gow's vision was to bring together art and nature. They've achieved that on their spectacular 25-hectare property at the south-eastern corner of the island. Open by appointment from October to April, their collection features more than 28 works from artists such as Phil Price, Neil Dawson, Paul Dibble and Virginia King. The sculptures are set among walking trails that once were the domain of sheep.

Connells Bay also features regular photographic exhibitions and, should

you wish to spend longer than a few hours, an historic building has been turned into a comfortable guest cottage.

www.connellsbay.co.nz

BRICK BAY SCULPTURE TRAIL – MATAKANA

Sculpture and wine – at Brick Bay the two easily entwine. Fifteen minutes out toward the coast from Matakana, this 2km sculpture trail winds through a landscape of native trees and palms, birdlife and paddocks, and features an ever-changing exhibition of about 45 contemporary pieces.

Best of all, after you've had your fill of art, there's ample opportunity to enjoy a glass of product and food from the adjacent vineyard. The unique Glass House was designed by Noel Lane and is the perfect place to finish a trip to Brick Bay.

www.brickbay.co.nz

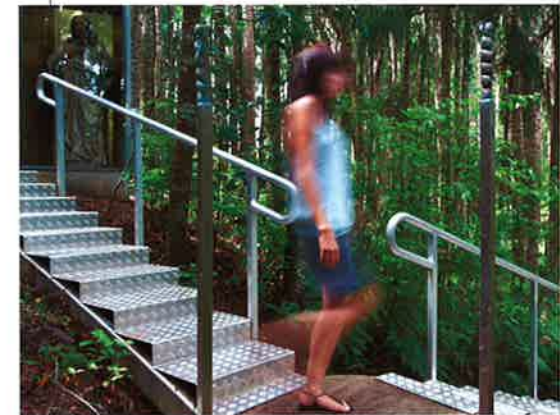
KAIPARA COAST SCULPTURE GARDENS – KAIPARA

The 40-minute drive from Auckland in rush-hour traffic is worth it to experience this tranquil, secluded 1km rural walk that overlooks the spectacular Kaipara Harbour. Owner David Bayly has turned the valley next to his plant centre into a trail that features more than 60 sculptures by established and emerging New Zealand artists in a setting that takes in native bush and ponds.

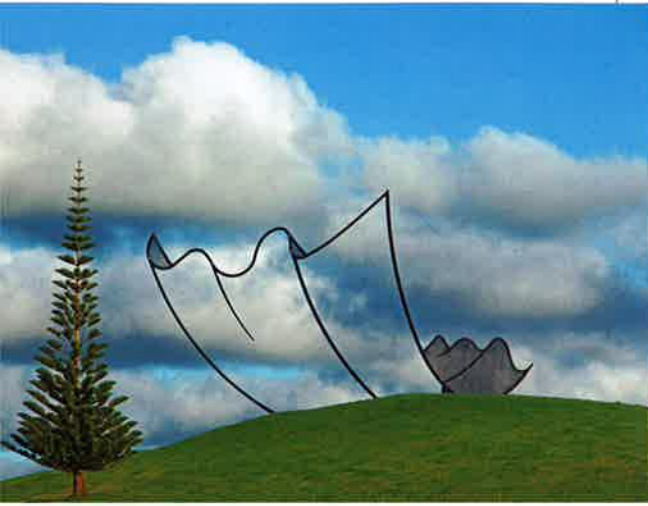
www.kaiparacoast.co.nz

OPPOSITE PAGE: *The Baptism Of Christ*, by Terry Stringer, at the Zealandia Sculpture Garden in Warkworth.

BELOW: Walking through the Zealandia garden and (bottom) *Nikau*, by Ian Athfield, in Wellington's Civic Square.



BELOW: *Horizons*, by Neil Dawson, on Gibbs Farm, Kaipara Harbour.



LEN LYE

Lye was a Christchurch-born artist known primarily for his experimental films and kinetic sculpture. Although Lye relocated to the United States, when he died in 1980 much of his work was returned to New Zealand and is now housed at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery in New Plymouth. Lye's sculpture can also be found in the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Berkeley Art Museum.



NEIL DAWSON

One of this country's most famous sculptors bases his work on large-scale civic pieces crafted from aluminium and stainless steel, often using a lattice of natural forms. Dawson's work also features prominently overseas, including at the Pompidou Centre in Paris and Queensland Art Gallery. Born in Christchurch, Dawson taught drawing and design at Christchurch Polytechnic from 1975 to 1983, but has worked as a full-time sculptor since the late 1980s. He was awarded an Arts Laureate by the Arts Foundation of New Zealand in 2003.



GIBBS FARM – KAIPARA HARBOUR

Art has to be pretty spectacular to compete with the largest harbour in the Southern Hemisphere. At this private collection, where admission is by appointment only, it is.

Tapping into Alan and Jenny Gibbs' 40 decades of art collecting, the farm features a who's who of sculpture, with works from local and international artists such as Len Lye, Ralph Hotere, Richard Serra, Anish Kapoor and Richard Thomson. For my money, it's one of the best collections of sculpture anywhere in New Zealand.

www.gibbsfarm.org.nz

ZEALANDIA SCULPTURE GARDEN – WARKWORTH

Open by prior appointment only, this private collection is a fascinating journey into New Zealand sculptor Terry Stringer's work (and that of his contemporaries). A 45-minute drive north of Auckland will find you wandering around exquisite sculptural pieces nestled among towering stands of kauri, while others sit on rolling hillocks, framed by native bush. There's a cost for admission but this includes a guided tour of the five exhibition spaces, including an enclosed garden and gallery exhibition.

www.zealandiasculpturegarden.co.nz

THE SCULPTURE PARK – WAITAKARURU ARBORETUM, WAIKATO

New Zealand's largest outdoor sculpture gallery, this derelict quarry was transformed into a 17-hectare garden and



CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW: *Cones*, by Neil Dawson, at Dunedin Public Art Gallery; *Vanish*, by Gregor Kregar, at Connells Bay Sculpture Park, Waiheke Island; *John Plimmer And Fritz*, by Tom Tischler, Ross Wilson and Judy Alexander, at Plimmer Steps, off Lambton Quay, Wellington; *The Best Laid Plans Go West*, by David McCracken, at Connells Bay; *Zephyrometer*, by Phil Price, on Evans Bay Parade, Wellington.

arboretum in the 1990s. The Waikato Sculpture Trust holds three curated exhibitions annually at the park. At any given time there are at least 60 sculptures to discover along the 2km nature trail. There's an admission cost but that includes the arboretum, which contains regenerating forest and native species, in addition to some of the world's rarest trees.

www.sculpturepark.co.nz

WELLINGTON SCULPTURE TRAILS

It's not called New Zealand's art capital for nothing. Wellington provides ample opportunity to engage with public artworks at the Civic Square Sculpture Trail, which features Neil Dawson's famous fern "orb" suspended above Civic Square as though without attachment.

The Waterfront Sculpture Trail includes work by Tanya Asken and Paul Dibble while, across town, the Wellington Botanic Garden Sculpture Trail includes New Zealand's only public sculpture by one of the most famous sculptors of the 20th century, English artist Henry Moore's *Bronze Form*.

www.wellingtonnz.com/sights_activities/sculpture_trails

LOCHMARA LODGE SCULPTURE TRAIL – MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS

An entertaining exploration across five hectares of "living gallery", this trail features works by artists such as Bodhi Vincent and Anna Korver which are tucked among the bush, overlooking the bay and in the lodge's gardens.

The trail incorporates sculpture in a variety of mediums, from living trees to stone, wood and mixed media. All the artworks

are for sale and a minimum of 15% of sale prices go to environmental projects. A special bonus for children is the Great New Zealand Art Treasure Hunt Map which not only turns kids into art explorers, but also helps foster an appreciation of sculpture.

www.lochmaralodge.co.nz/jac_sculpturetrail.asp

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY SCULPTURE TRAIL – CHRISTCHURCH

More than 4000 sculptural works make this one of the region's largest art collections. Each work comes from the university's art collection and the trail features works by sculptors who have either taught or studied at the university. The trail, which runs across the Ilam and Dovedale campuses, includes such artists as Ronnie van Hout, Jeff Thomson and Noel Gregg.

www.canterbury.ac.nz/sculpture/

OTAGO SCULPTURE TRAIL – DUNEDIN

Feel like a spot of Pam McKelvey or Judith Bluck? Then take the North City Walk, which includes the Dunedin Library, Otago Museum, the police station and hospital. Or there's the South City Walk, which takes in the famous sculpture of Robbie Burns by Sir John Steell and Peter Nicholls' more contemporary work, *Toroa*.

And when your feet grow weary, there are a range of sculpture "drives" that cover the Port Hills and the North Coast and include works by Wayne Everson and Ruth Myers.

dcc.squiz.net.nz/visitor-centre/what_to_see/otago-sculpture-trails