Sculpture Walk Wellington City

Map Inside
A walk through the heart of the smallest capital in the world from Parliament Buildings to Te Papa Museum.

In Maori Wellington has three names:
- Te Whanga-nui-a-Tara - The Great Harbour of Tara;
- Pōneke - Port Nicholson;
- Te Upoko-o-te-Ika-a-Māui - The Head of the Fish of Māui.

**Time:** 2-3 hours.
KAIWHAKATERE

Or The Navigator sculptures are based on the tools of navigation. Throughout Polynesia, the navigator is exalted as pathfinder, innovator and visionary – qualities necessary for discerning leadership. The three shapes represent a Manu (bird's head), a Waka (canoe) and a Tuahu (an altar of stones). The bird guides the navigator, the waka symbolises a hopeful new beginning, and the Tuahu, built on arrival in a new land, suggests promises and challenges. Brett Graham’s work references his Maori and European heritage. The works may not directly invoke Maori sculptural tradition, nonetheless they speak to that tradition in their titles and concept.

Artist: Brett Graham

SEISMIC

4 independent disks, strewn round the site to evoke a sense of randomness. Seismic is intended to be a sculpture that you pass through and perhaps contemplate the precarious nature of our environment along the way. Each disc tells of an event:

- Topographical Map Section references the location and marks the exact path of a segment of Wellington’s fault line;
- Seismic Shock records the earthquake itself;
- Disrupt speaks to the earth moving and the disruption that takes place; and
- Split tells of the result of an earthquake and the opening and movement of tectonic plates.

Artist: Louise Purvis
3 **RUAUMOKO**

Two concrete columns: one horizontal and broken into two pieces sinking into the footpath, the other vertical and crowned with a mass of bronze lettering that refuses or is unable to issue its message to the contemporary world. Ruaumoko is the Māori God of Earthquakes and Volcanos. In ancient times, the sky father Ranginui and the earth mother Papatuanuku had an unborn child, Ruaumoko who stayed in his mother’s womb to keep her warm. When he moves, the earth shakes. The piece was constructed from materials salvaged from the demolition of the old State Insurance Building, the first structure in the city designed to resist the effects of earthquakes.

*Artists: Ralph Hotere and Mary McFarlane*

4 **SHELLS**

The site of the work sits on a part of the original Wellington foreshore. Drawing on this past, the work has five shapes based on mussel, paua, scallop, whelk and turret. The surfaces of each shape are covered with numerous found objects that have been individually cast, built into the moulding and poured as one. A chicken leg, toys, hardware and other objects sit alongside objects. They suggest modern day fossils. Shells are made of a reinforced concrete painted in ‘pearlised’ pastel colours.

*Artist: Jeff Thompson*
5 WOMAN OF WORDS
Woman of Words celebrates the life and work of Katherine Mansfield (1888 – 1923), a Wellington born prominent writer. The stainless steel figurative work is entirely laser cut with quotations from Mansfield’s journals and short stories. Katherine Mansfield’s ambition was to be seen first as a writer and then as a woman. With this in mind, the work is designed to capture the essence of Katherine Mansfield while celebrating her literary heritage. During the day the sculpture reflects the colour, movement and ambience of the surrounding area. At night, illuminated from within, the work becomes a lantern of silhouetted words.
Artist: Virginia King

6 SPINNING TOP
A spinning top, in Maori “potaka” are common to both European and Maori cultures. The stainless steel giant top is a European version of the potaka with Maori references in the hieroglyphics. The 11 symbols on the lower side are astrological, and the 12 on the upper side trace the history of Whanganui-a-Tara (Maori name of Wellington Harbour). Only 11 pictographs, rather than the expected 12 represent the astrological calendar, where one symbol is held in reserve – the artist’s gesture that the Maori approach is not revealing all of your information. The artwork makes whimsical reference to an old vehicle turntable previously on the site.
Artist: Robert Jahnke
7 INVISIBLE CITY

The work is a collaboration with blind poet, Peter Beatson of Palmerston North. His poem Invisible City is Beatson’s epitaph for the death of his guide dog and an insight into the navigational difficulties blind people can encounter when their sonic charts are destroyed by the wind. The sculpture has a defiant muteness, it references the shape of the buildings and commands attention like two pages of a book. The stainless steel of this sculpture and the magnified Braille text suggests a message, but the artist chooses to deny us access, raising issues of communication in the contemporary world, and the difficult interface between the disabled and the rest of the community.

Artist: Anton Parsons

8 PROTOPLASM

The work looks at the study of matter, protoplasm being the inside active part of any living cell. The pebbles and movement simulate random active biological cells whose contents are always in motion. The sculpture looks simple, yet it is incredibly complex and highly engineered kinetic work. Each disk rotates independently of the others and turns around a central axis so that views of the work are constantly changing as winds eddy around the art.

Artist: Phil Price
JOHN PLIMMER

The bronze sculpture is based on a photograph of John Plimmer taken around 1900. The Father of Wellington, John Plimmer (1812-1905), lived at the head of what is now Plimmer Steps. His dog, Fritz, was a constant companion for many years. Plimmer sailed to Wellington with the New Zealand Company, arriving in 1841 and spread his influence widely around the city. He worked initially as a carpenter and a builder before shifting his focus and contributing enormously to the political and commercial development of Wellington. Plimmer planted an oak tree in his garden in the mid-1800s and it still stands, on the left near the top of the steps.

Artists: Tom Tischler, Ross Wilson, Judy Alexander

SKY BLUES

The work comprises seven slim tapering poles, each supporting twisting spirals of blue neon light. It is nearly eleven metres tall and set out in the pattern of a Fibonacci spiral or koru shape. Expatriate NZ artist Bill Culbert has written of SkyBlues: “In daylight the neons are against a blue sky, fragile glass blue lines with fine steel supporting structures. Night time will make the artwork vibrate in a different way with the strong vertical movement of electric light at full power. The writing hand moves vertically up and down in space always changing to the moving viewer. Dawn and dusk the blue neon will be ever changing as with rain, winds and clouds. SkyBlues is light energy, the verticals and drawn lines that move, shimmer, swirl blue in cityscape.”

Artist: Bill Culbert
1. KAIWHAKATERE
   Bowen St opposite The Terrace

2. SEISMIC
   Bunny St

3. RUAUMOKO
   Corner of Lambton Quay and Stout St

4. SHELLS
   Corner of Waring Taylor St and Lambton Quay

5. WOMAN OF WORDS
   Midland Park, Lambton Quay

6. SPINNING TOP
   Woodward St

7. INVISIBLE CITY
   Corner of Lambton Quay and Grey St

8. PROTOPLASM
   Corner of Lambton Quay, Featherston St and Hunter St

9. JOHN PLIMMER
   Corner of Lambton Quay and Plimmer Steps

10. SKY BLUES
    Post Office Square, Jervois Quay

11. DE L’AUTRE COTE
    Post Office Square, Jervois Quay

12. NGA KINA
    The Waterfront along Customhouse Quay

13. WATER WHIRLER
    Pier off Frank Kitts Park, The Waterfront

14. ALBATROSS
    Frank Kitts Park, The Waterfront

15. CITY TO THE BRIDGE
    Civic Square to the Waterfront, over Jervois Quay

16. GRAND HEAD
    Victoria Street, between Bond St and Wakefield St

17. ANCHOR STONE
    Civic Square

18. THE PHILANTHROPIST’S STONE
    Lower Cuba Street

19. THE BUCKET FOUNTAIN
    Cuba Mall, between Dixon St and Ghuznee St

20. SOLACE IN THE WIND
    The Waterfront, behind Te Papa Museum
De l’Autre Côté, in French for “on the other side”, is an interactive French telephone booth. Two telephone booths – a French “cabine” in Post Office Square plays anonymous sounds of life and nature in Corsica, while on the opposite side of the world, a New Zealand booth in Ajaccio, Corsica, plays sounds from New Zealand. The mirrored floor and ceiling give the illusion of a tunnel drilled through earth to Corsica. By lifting the receiver, you can hear and experience anonymous sounds from the other side of the world.

Artist: Elie Cristiani

Nine giant Kina shells (sea urchins) acknowledges the history and physical geography of the area including the Kumutoto stream which flowed from Woodward Street to the sea. The stream isn’t actually gone. It still runs from its spring through an underground concrete tunnel to its outlet at the Kumutoto Wharf on the Waterfront, which now sits on reclaimed land. The Kina are raised from the seabed and held against the south-facing seawall by stone rip-rap, which is visible at low tide. At high tide the stone and the lower portion of the kina shells are under water. At night, the sculpture is illuminated by colour changing lighting.

Artist: Michael Tuffery
WATER WHIRLER
A motorized pole emits water from jets set into its length as it oscillates, revolves and gyrates. Motors, springs, pivots and weights control the movement of the tube and were designed together with a computer programme to choreograph the movement and water patterns. The water ballet lasts around 10 minutes and is scheduled daily at 10, 11am and 12, 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10pm but remains off due to high winds or maintenance. In the 1960s Len Lye envisioned several sculptures that went beyond the technology available at the time. He once said ‘My work will be pretty good for the 21st Century’ and he expressed the desire for these large-scale works to be built posthumously.

Artist: Len Lye

ALBATROSS
Albatross is three tactile and abstract shapes interacting with each other, with the water evoking rocks and the sea. The curves of this sculpture look like the wings of an albatross and the water flowing over the sculpture intermittently turn it from a sculpture into a fountain. The use of water is based on artist Tanya Ashken’s observations of the effects and patterns created by tidal water flowing through rock pools. Seabirds have been at the centre of her art since she immigrated to New Zealand with her husband, New Zealand artist John Drawbridge. She has been especially fascinated by the albatross “its size, its power and its awesome grace”.

Artist: Tanya Ashken
CITY TO THE BRIDGE

In refer to traditional Māori culture and legends The City to Sea Bridge tells the story of Maui (a cultural hero) fishing up the North Island, with the bridge representing the fish’s tail and Civic Square representing the fish’s body. On one side of the bridge, constructed of timber, there are two taniwha (in Māori mythology, taniwha are beings that live in waters) called Ngake and Whātaitai. On the other side are two manu (birds). Other sculptures are whales, patiki (flounder), fish and on metal poles a star and the phases of the moon. The bridge provides a physical and conceptual space through which different cultural meanings are played out.

Artist: Para Matchitt, John Gray, Rewi Thompson

GRAND HEAD

This over-sized head looks as though it is the last remaining piece of a huge ancient statue of a Roman emperor. The intentionally distorted perspective makes Grand Head look naturalistic from only some angles. The sculpture is hidden by trees and located in a poor position to view. This has been described as a prime example of not allowing artists appropriate time to engage with the spaces where the sculptures were to be located.

Artist: Terry Stringer
17 ANCHOR STONE
Anchor Stone commemorates the location’s earlier function as a fishing spot, before the reclamation of Wellington Harbour. It is carved from Taranaki andesite and is polished around the rope for the hole, suggesting age and frequent use.
*Artist: Ra Vincent*

18 THE PHILANTHROPIST’S STONE
At over 6 metres high the sculpture sits upon a pedestal and includes a tall blue Corinthian column and hand carved capital, with a large gold-plated bronze nugget on top. Protruding from the nugget are candles with hand-blown glass lights which at night illuminate the sculpture and its surroundings. The gold nugget references the gold rush that brought London born Thomas George Macarthy (1833 – 1912) to New Zealand, where he became a prominent Wellington businessman and philanthropist.
*Artist: Scott Eady*
**THE BUCKET FOUNTAIN**
An iconic kinetic sculpture, often named as the Wellington landmark, consists of a series of “buckets” that fill with water until they tip, spilling their load into the buckets and pool below. The Designscape magazine, in an article from 1969 describes the fountain: “Admirable in concept, as something different and interesting, the mobile has not had the careful thinking out it obviously needs [...] with sporadic and sudden cascades of water often missing the bucket below, or hitting as it swings upside down, with resulting large splashes onto the pavement and roars of laughter from onlookers”.
*Artist: Burren and Keen*

**SOLACE IN THE WIND**
Wellington’s favourite (People’s Choice Award in 2008) a rather lonely, naked statue, leaning out vulnerably, embracing the elements evokes a desire to be alone with one’s thoughts. Its physicality reflects a psychological state that many people would identify with. Yet the expression on the face is deliberately ambiguous. Retaining a classical sense of strength and control it captures that moment before letting go, both physically and emotionally. Max Patte: “This city and its elements have been the inspiration for this work [...] the location where the sculpture will reside [...] is significant for me. It represents a time and place where I have felt so much. Wellington is truly a unique place to live.”
*Artist: Max Patte*
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