





wellington sculpture trust

Rita Angus used to grow her own vegetables

Glen Hayward

The fourth installation of the Four Plinths Sculpture Project



plate. The motif includes a few ferns. She plans to name the cottage. Maybe Fernbank Studio? She's not painting today, just pottering about. The wooden floorboards creak as she walks along the verandah and down onto the path. A magnolia petal falls onto her plate. Last year at the cottage in Mangonui she'd kept a vegetable garden, it might be something she could do here too?

4. Summer, 2014

Time travels. Four shards of crockery enlarged, carved in macrocarpa and painted in enamels now stand on the four bollards between Te Papa and Circa Theatre. *Rita Angus used to grow her own vegetables* is the title of Glen Hayward's new public sculpture, the latest artwork in the 4 Plinths series run by the Wellington Sculpture Trust. Hayward took the title from Jill Trevelyan's Biography *Rita Angus: an artist's life*. "Like Rita, a lot of people used to grow their own vegetables," Hayward says. "I was thinking about gardening and how Penny, the volunteer who collects the fragments of crockery from the garden at Rita Angus House, is partly motivated by the discovery of the shards."

Flanked by the national museum and buffeted by the Wellington wind the four shards of pottery originally excavated from Rita Angus's garden have become monumental relics. Larger than life, held up for close inspection. Hayward's work is the fourth in this series and is launched as part of the 2014 International Festival of Arts. Over the next two years the macrocarpa shards will be weathered by the wind, the enamel paint exposed to the elements. *Rita Angus used to grow her own vegetables* is a testament to the way history is assembled from broken facets. Treasure salvaged from shards.

2. Autumn, 2011

A volunteer works in the garden at Rita Angus House. She kneels at the edge of the grass, digging with a small trowel. Only the roof of the cottage can be seen from the road. She is tucked away from Wellington and the rest of the world down here. The wind picks up pace, gathers it sails through the gully, gives the Magnolia tree a good shake. The garden is wild, the earth smells damp and rich, a pale worm inches through the soil. She keeps sifting the ground, until the trowel strikes something man-made. She puts the trowel aside, digs with her garden gloves. Another piece of crockery. She dusts away the dirt, inspects the shard. This one is decorated with a floral pattern in blue lines. Could be from a cup? Something from Rita Angus's time? Or more recent, maybe an op shop haul; a mismatched cup picked up and put down by the flatters that moved in and out of the property after Angus's death. How did it end up in the garden? Hands that once cradled the cup gather like ghosts. A party, late night, the lawn barely lit from the glow of the verandah, a young person swigging whiskey from the cup, a rolled cigarette between lips, "Here, have a sip," the cup passed in the dark, then dropped, crushed under foot. The shard is a little piece of history. A part of the house. She puts it in her pocket. An old habit. She always saves the shards.



3. Spring, 1955

Pale petals lie in gusts underneath the Magnolia tree. The rustic weatherboard cottage is modest, a lean to kitchen, one bedroom and a small space for a studio, but it's enough. Rita Angus has a good feeling about the place. She fixes a plate of fruit, reaches into the cupboard. A floral pattern decorates the white porcelain

Rita Angus used to grow her own vegetables

Megan Dunn

1. Winter, 2012

Glen Hayward reaches up and grabs a jar from the shelf of the shed. The jar is covered in a layer of dust. Inside, a miscellany of shards. He picks a few pieces out, inspects the jagged edges of each shard, notes the pattern on the crockery. The bloom of a flower, the curl of a fern. Another shard is decorated by two bands of red lines. The lines must have once raced around the rim of a dinner plate. The shape of each shard is triangular. He imagines the shards enlarged and standing up in a line outside like huge modernist sculptures. Each piece invites contemplation: the attempt to reimagine the whole.

Hayward discovers the jar of broken crockery during his three-month residency at the Rita Angus Cottage on Sydney Street in Thorndon. One of the volunteers collects the shards. The jar contains the hauls from amateur archaeological digs conducted in the garden. Rita Angus lived in the property from 1955 until her death in 1970. The cottage was her home during a significant portion of her career. The Magnolia tree on the grounds has also earned its place in history: Angus painted the tree several times and it is now a listed historic tree, protected by the Wellington City Council.

The cottage is currently used as an artist's residence, kept "as it was when Rita lived in it." During Hayward's 2012 residency he carves a replica of Neo's office cubicle from the film, *The Matrix*. He's an artist known for producing meticulous woodwork sculptures: a set of security cameras, a football, a collection of cardboard boxes. His uncanny sculptures replicate reality; they function as decoys painted to look lifelike. Hayward is interested in remnants. He notices the jar of shards.

THE PROJECT

The Four Plinths Sculpture Project is an undertaking of the Wellington Sculpture Trust.

The four plinths are the massive bollards situated on the waterfront between Te Papa and Circa Theatre. It is here the Trust has made a departure from permanent to temporary public art, and showcases New Zealand sculptural practice with biennial temporary sculpture installations: The Four Plinths Sculpture Project.

The project forms part of the New Zealand International Arts Festival's visual arts programme.

The aim of the project is to foster art, artists and audience interactions, and to provide an opportunity for established and emerging artists to work in the area of large-scale public sculpture.

It is a great opportunity to enable artists, through temporary sculpture, to realise a public artwork with all the challenges of scale, robustness and rigour that come with working in a tough environment and in a highly visible space.

For the fourth Four Plinths installation, the Trust acknowledges with warm appreciation its major sponsors, Wellington City Council, Wellington Waterfront Ltd and the Wellington Community Trust as well as the support of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Printlink and Seresin Wines.



THE ARTWORK

Glen writes, "The volunteers have gathered shards of broken pottery from the Rita Angus house garden....these have been deemed worthy of collection similar to Te Papa's function and they are of or from Wellington. They are fragments of a whole and this ties them to modernist sculpture yet they are artificial because of their decoration."

"Enlarging the shards parallels in physical space the effect of the slow examination of the original pieces – they grow larger in the mind's eye."

Constructed of laminated macrocarpa and painted to the finish of crockery, the shards are 50 times the scale of the originals with the patterns carefully reproduced.



THE ARTIST

Rita Angus used to grow her own vegetables has been designed and fabricated by the noted Hokianga based artist Glen Hayward, inspired by his residency at the Rita Angus Cottage in Thorndon, Wellington.



Glen Hayward holds a Doctorate of Fine Arts from Auckland University and is an arts tutor at the Rawene Campus of North Tech College. He has exhibited in major galleries in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, and in numerous other venues around the country. He has been awarded other residencies in New Zealand and abroad.

His approach to art is to treat it as a "conversation" with the public. In the current project he "acknowledges the place of the viewer, so that they are rewarded whether up close and looking from underneath, or from a mid-distance or potentially viewed from above via, say, Google maps."

THE WELLINGTON SCULPTURE TRUST

The Wellington Sculpture Trust was established in 1982 to enrich Wellington through sculpture and public art. The Trust commissions quality, contemporary public sculptures, supports the creative arts in New Zealand and gives artists the opportunity to make large scale public works. It makes contemporary sculptures accessible to as large an audience as possible, to increase knowledge of New Zealand contemporary artists working in this art form.

The 26 sculptures the Trust has placed around the City and the Botanic Gardens over the past 30 years have become an outdoor gallery of many of the most distinguished sculptors in New Zealand, and together showcase the country's contemporary sculptural practice.

The Trust is an independant voluntary organisation, with an established expertise in commissioning public art. It works in partnership with the Wellington City Council and other parties and raises funds from trusts, Wellington businesses, and individuals through donations and sponsorship arrangements.

Wellington Sculpture Trust Trustees:

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