

The Idea

In a first for the Wellington Sculpture Trust, a single artist has been selected to provide a significant place-making landmark artwork, for a site near Wellington’s waterfront.

The Trust approached Seung Yul Oh for design concepts after being drawn to his multi-media, idiosyncratic practice, and his ability to play with scale, spectacle, and participation. He is well known for his whimsical artworks, which mark a place.

The Trust sought a work that could not only hold its own in the landscape, but also eloquently enhance the landscape.

The chosen site within the large and much-loved Waitangi Park, is within the coastal planting in the old shipping dry-dock (the graving dock coastal terraces).

Able to be seen from near and far, the sculpture will appear to be nestled within the vegetation from many viewpoints, but in fact it will sit at the end of a path located within the former dock, creating an element of concealment and discovery.

It will have a strong visual presence, appearing to be hidden, inviting viewers to seek it out where they first need to find the path, leading to a more intimate engagement with the work.

The creative concept and the highly polished, mirrored surface of the work provide a contrasting element to the natural environment within the park. The reflective nature of the sculpture is paramount in capturing the movement of the surrounding vegetation and the sky, as well as the viewer themselves within the wider setting.

The work is highly engineered with a delicate point of connection to the ground, gently touching the concrete path and appearing to be visually suspended through clever concealment of its foundations.

Just like a Google pin drop, *You Are Here* is a dramatic statement and marker of site. The inverted tear drop made of stainless steel will reflect the grasses and plants surrounding it and all those who take the path less

trodden to stand at its base and, in reflection, become part of the much wider park, sky and city backdrop.

The Ahu Whenua Trusts: Wellington Tenths Trust and Palmerston North Māori Reserve Trusts have generously presented *You Are Here* with a name and whakataukī to enrich the work, context and significance:

Kimi (Seek) – signifies the actions to seek, look for, delve, search, or hunt.

“Kimi hōroa, kimi hōrapa” (Seek far and wide) – This whakataukī advocates for extensive exploration and the pursuit of knowledge and understanding in a broad, sweeping manner. It captures the notion that one should not confine their exploration to known areas but should rather broaden their search to acquire diverse perspectives, comprehensive insights, and wisdom.

The name ‘Kimi’, along with its accompanying whakataukī, not only aligns with the artist’s vision for viewers to ‘engage in multiple perspectives’ but but also holds deep cultural significance.

“As mana whenua, our connection with the land where the sculpture is situated is profound, both in its physical presence and its spiritual value. This land has sustained our ancestors for generations and is steeped in a diverse and rich history. Therefore, when we invoke the name ‘Kimi’ in a mana whenua context, we urge observers to not only acknowledge the immediate presence of the sculpture but also to explore the intricate web of narratives and hidden treasures associated with the site.”

At 5 metres high, the work will function as a beacon in the park, demanding closer inspection.

The Site

Waitangi Park is a six-hectare urban park in the centre of Wellington, covering 30 percent of the inner-city waterfront.

Bound by Oriental Parade, Cable and Herd Streets, the large grassed area provides an array of recreational uses including a skate park, playground, and pétanque court, all with a cultural and ecological overlay.

One of the most distinctive features is the re-created wetland gravels designed to filter and cleanse the Waitangi Stream, which for years ran in an underground storm-water culvert.

The Waitangi Stream once fed a more extensive wetland used for centuries by Māori for food-gathering, as a source of fresh water, and as a place to launch waka.

After the land reclamations of the 1800s, the stream was culverted to become part of the underground storm-water system.

Today with its sophisticated and effective environmentally sustainable design, it has provided a benchmark for landscape design.

Cultural narratives and histories are central to the design of the park, with interpretation and a waharoa and pou carved by local artists. Other interpretive elements of the original design included the graving dock, pōwhiri mound and waka landing areas.

It was always the intention of the park’s designers, Wraight Athfield Landscape+Architecture (WALA), that there would be further permanent artworks in the park.

For this reason, the Trust has worked closely with WALA, the Waterfront’s Technical Advisory Group, iwi representatives and the Wellington City Council.

This work by Seung has been enthusiastically greeted by all and will be a powerful addition to the enhancement of the physical environment and the enjoyment of the park by Wellingtonians.

Funding and administration

The Wellington Sculpture Trust has the support of the Wellington City Council (the site owners), the Port Nicholson Settlement Block Trust, the Wellington Tenths Trust, as well as the Wellington Waterfront’s Technical Advisory Group.

We anticipate installation of the work will take place early in 2025.

As with all the Trust’s works, Wellington City Council will assume ownership on completion of the work and be responsible for its ongoing maintenance.

Project Budget

The budget for the project and the target for fundraising is \$600,000. An ambitious target but this is the amount required to do a work of this scale, engineered to perfection on a site of this importance.

Created in marine grade stainless steel, the work is to be manufactured by Global Stainless Ltd, the company integral to the installation of the crenulated façade of the Len Lye Centre in New Plymouth and the manufacturers of such fine works as Anish Kapoor’s work *Tall Tree and The Eye*, located in the courtyard of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts.

This is a work that Wellington can be proud of, and its citizens and tourists alike will seek it out through its environmental maze.



Donations for Kimi / You Are Here

I wish to donate \$ to the Wellington Sculpture Trust towards the cost of this major artwork for Wellington City’s Waitangi Park.

I have deposited this amount into the Trust’s account:

Wellington Sculpture Trust
06 0501 0897119 00

☐ I wish to be recognised as a donor under the name below

or

☐ I wish to remain anonymous.

Name

Email

Phone



How you can help

We are seeking donations or pledges for Seung Yul Oh's work, *Kimi / You Are Here*. All donations will go directly to the contract cost of the artwork and the Trust will meet all administrative and other costs separately.

Please find the form for donations on the reverse side of this section.

Donations are eligible for a full Government tax rebate for charitable donations. The Wellington Sculpture Trust is a recognised charity, registered under the Charities Act.

The Trust will publish and recognise all donations except where anonymity is requested.

Donors gifting \$5000 or more will be recognised on a permanent plaque to be placed on the site near *Kimi / You Are Here*. Any contributor of over \$30,000 will be additionally recognised as a principal sponsor, in appropriate ways as agreed.

Seung Yul Oh

“Seung Yul Oh is one of the bright talents to have emerged on the New Zealand art scene in the 21st century. His work encompasses a wide range of media, including painting, drawing, sculpture, sound, and video.”

New Zealand Arts Foundation

Born in Seoul, Korea in 1981, Seung Yul Oh moved to New Zealand to study at the University of Auckland's Elam School of Fine Arts, where he graduated with a Master of Fine Arts. He is now permanently based in New Zealand and continues to show internationally.

Seung has completed a number of high profile public art works in New Zealand and abroad. Some of his latest works include *Orbit* (2023), a pair of 6.5 metre high infinity symbols made of mirror-finished bronze that dramatically cantilever over the entrance of the 101 Collins Street lobby in Melbourne, *Anechoic Assemble* (2022), a series of multi coloured and mirror polished stainless steel spheres and half spheres, located in the lobby of the Cordis Hotel Auckland, *Form in Formation* (2018), commissioned by the Nelson Sculpture Trust, *Conduct Cumulus* (2017) commissioned by SCAPE Public Art, and *Upon a Pond and Drop a Loop* (2017) commissioned by the Auckland Council.

Seung Yul Oh was the second recipient of the Harriet Friedlander Residency which, with support from the Arts Foundation, allowed him to undertake an artist residency in New York in 2011.

He has created an instantly recognisable and idiosyncratic practice combining elements of East Asian popular culture with ironic references to high Western art history. He is well known for whimsical art works that toy with scale and exist somewhere between spectacle and participation. Long resisting a conventional approach to form and material, he redefines and challenges ordinary objects and spaces in ways that are both light-hearted and serious.

In 2013, *Periphery*, a forest of towering yellow and white pellet-shaped inflatables that audiences pushed their way through was selected by influential Japanese curator Yuko Hasegawa for the prestigious Encounters section of Art Basel Hong Kong. This showing led to Seung being named as one of the rising stars of the Asian art market by the UK's Guardian newspaper.

Wellington Sculpture Trust

The Wellington Sculpture Trust was established in 1982 and is dedicated to enriching Wellington by providing contemporary innovative public art for the city. In its 40 years of existence, the Trust has brought to the city 30 permanent works and 11 large scale temporary sculptures that have encouraged and supported sculptural practice in this country, challenging and enhancing the lives of the people of Wellington.

Most of our sculptures are by prominent New Zealand artists. Their contribution to our cityscape is enduring and amplifies the creative atmosphere of the city, making art accessible to everyone, and raising awareness, understanding and appreciation of contemporary public sculpture. The sculptures can be viewed on our website: www.sculpture.org.nz.

The Wellington Sculpture Trust is a voluntary, charitable organisation and was the first of its kind in New Zealand. It has become a model for similar organisations now established around the country.

Through the experience we have gained commissioning sculptures and overseeing their installation we are now called upon to advise on many projects other than our own.

‘This hollow and empty invisible void alighted upon a location, absorbing its surroundings to manifest itself.

“Its intangible physicality exists solely by the breath of perception breathed into it. It continually negotiates the potential for growth and the vanishing of its mass, both from within and beyond the surface.

“The site gives an opportunity for both the viewer and the work to engage in multiple perspectives to experience together. The context of a public park with multi purposes, invites a variety of people to confront, surprise, reflect, remember, and grow with the work.”

Seung Yul Oh
Artist



Kimi You Are Here Seung Yul Oh

An ambitious new work that will transform Waitangi Park, providing an alluring beacon to draw people into its centre and reflect upon their environment.