



Mangemange Climbing
Cast and fabricated bronze, 1000 x 460 x 185 mm

Come What May
Bronze and concrete, 550 x 155 x 155 mm

JIM WHEELER - *Following Nature*

At the root of Jim Wheeler's practice is his adoration for the earth. This sculptor's forty year practice has been spent in service to Venus and Mother Nature. Standing at their altars, the artist pays homage to the Aotearoa terrain through sculpture. Wheeler acts as a student of the forest, taking to its groves where he lies in wait, observing its ebbs and flows before casting its undulations into metal - each sculpture like an offering back to their architect.

Wheeler's work is a blend of botany, biology, and beauty. His expert knowledge of and respect for the earth translates into works of technical mastery. A sprig blooms from a block - causing the block to splinter. Mangemange blossom out of aureoles - not curling around the aureoles, but sprouting from them. The reverence these works convey is not only of nature's splendour, but also its fundamental power. Nature will not be contained, or as Wheeler himself puts it, *nature will thrive with or without our presence.*

When selecting from nature, Wheeler looks for structure and function. That is what draws the artist to Mangemange or *Lygodium articulatum*, the only climbing native fern in Aotearoa. Wheeler is inspired by its communal and adaptive character, able to dance up into the forest canopy, while nesting its stems low in the forest bed. It is the latter characteristic that stirs the artist to revisit particular flora, like Mangemange, numerous times. The artist describes his process like that of a *slow cooker* or *computer with many tabs open*. Like nature itself, the sculptor takes his time with his ideas, returning to forms and expanding on them in new ways.

This exhibition is a product of Wheeler's dedication - to his practice and to the earth. His sculptures stand not as earthly relics, but as reminders of nature's majesty. Wheeler represents nature in the hope that cultural permanence may protect it from the damage we wreak upon it and open our eyes to its virtue.

Alanna O'Reilly - 2022

JIM WHEELER

Following Nature



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"In essence my sculpture is a spiritual practice; to engage in finding clues to human nature in the natural world. I try to illustrate the interconnectedness of all living things and their interdependence within the environment. Nature is our greatest model, a perfected system, and should be seen as a source of inspiration for our own society."

- Jim Wheeler

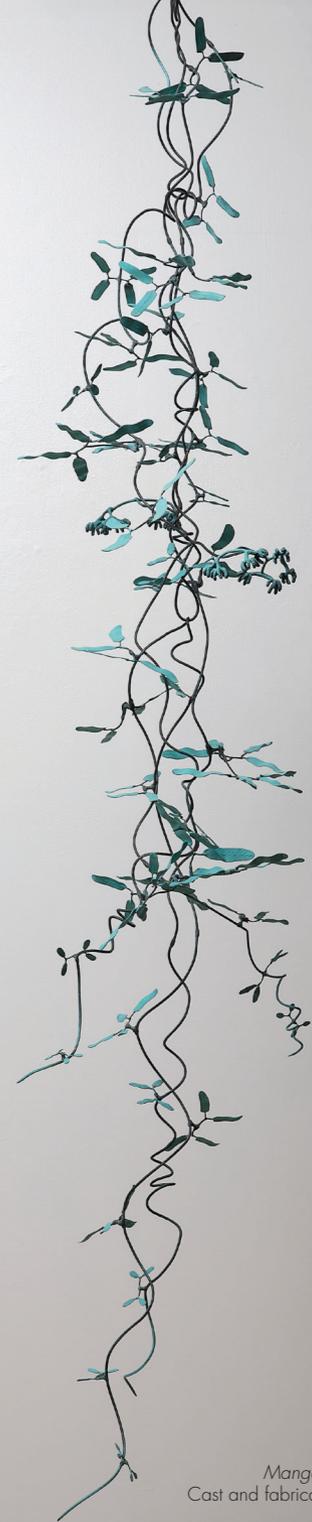
Mangemange - Rocky Bay
Cast and fabricated bronze, 620 x 590 x 115 mm
Unique



Five Finger Fruit
Bronze, 550 x 330 x 330 mm
Series of 5



Puriri - Form of Nature
Bronze, 405 x 180 x 215 mm
Series of 10



Illustrated cover: *Pohutukawa New Leaves*
Bronze, 875 x 325 x 200 mm
Series of 5

Mangemange - Homage to an Unsung Hero
Cast and fabricated bronze, brass and copper, 3.3 m
Unique