

ARTIS

G A L L E R Y

JOHN EDGAR ONZM

b. 1950 – 2021

John Edgar is an internationally renowned New Zealand sculptor, who worked with stone, jade, metal and glass. An environmentalist, Edgar was a central figure in stone carving from the early 1980's.

In 2009 John became an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) for services to art, in particular, sculpture.

“Edgar has been slicing, altering and reassembling banded stones since the early 1980s; it is perhaps his signature mark as a stone sculptor. They range from pebble-sized stones that can be held in the palm of your hand....to the towering red and grey granite-banded Transformer (2004) in the Auckland Domain that reaches to more than three-and-a-half metres”. (Peter Simpson, “Array, Arc & Ballast, Art New Zealand, Summer, 2009)

John travelled widely, notably to his ancestral home of Scotland, where he collected stones from historic Scottish quarries to combine with New Zealand stones. The resulting exhibition, Ballast – Bringing the stones home, was exhibited at the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh in 2009. Ballast was a celebration of the strong and enduring cultural connections between our two countries and a personal journey of discovery for Edgar. In a fitting finale, John gifted the Ballast exhibition to Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand, where it will be admired by many for years to come.

“One of the most impressive aspects of John’s work was his ability to work at scale. The very nature of the mediums he chose meant that large equipment and heavy lifting was often required, but his great skill was in making the improbable appear simple.” (Leigh Melville, Art & Object, Auckland)

In John’s words::

“My endeavours to control the powerful modern tools available has led to a refinement and minimalization in my work, the simplicity of the carvings belying the processes involved, bringing into balance the elements of concept, material and process. “

Key stages in his career have been covered with nationally touring exhibitions - Calculus 2002-2004, Lie of the Land 1998-1999, Cross Country, 1996 and Making Amends 1993-1995. In 2012, his sculpture Lie of the Land was installed in the Savill Garden, the New Zealand Garden at Windsor, United Kingdom.

Edgar’s public sculptures in Auckland are in the Auckland Domain, Queen Street and Waitakere City Civic Centre. Edgar was actively involved in conservation and environmental projects and was the President of the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society.

EDUCATION:

1972 BSC (Hons) University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

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SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2009 Arc, Artis Gallery Auckland
- 2006 Core, Artis Gallery, Auckland
- 2004 Phases, Janne Land Gallery, Auckland
- 2003 Flags, Artis Gallery, Auckland
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- 2001 Sum, Artis Gallery, Auckland
- 1999 Digit, Artis Gallery, Auckland
- 1998-99 Lie of the Land, touring exhibition, New Zealand
- 1996 Insignia, Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt, Fisher Gallery, Auckland
Cross Country, touring exhibition, New Zealand
- 1995 Badge, Fluxus, Dunedin
- 1994 Light Relief, Fingers, Auckland
- 1993 Panacea, Fluxus, Dunedin, Crawford Gallery, Sydney, Australia
- 1992 Making Ends Meet, Fingers, Auckland
- 1989 Stone Lines, Survey Exhibition, National Museum, Wellington,
Auckland Museum, Auckland
- 1988 Land Tokens, Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt
Stones in Glass Houses, Villas Gallery, Wellington
Rock Erosion, Fingers, Auckland
- 1986 In China, Villas Gallery, Wellington
- 1984 Cardinal Points, Janne Land, Wellington
- 1983 Signs of the Comet, Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt
- 1981 Detachments, Auckland Museum, Auckland
- 1979 On the Tail of the Dragon, Denis Cohn Gallery, Auckland

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CURATED PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS:

- 2002 *Calculus*, touring exhibition, New Zealand
- 1998 *Lie of the Land*, touring exhibition, New Zealand
- 1996 *On Form*, Lopdell House Gallery, Titirangi, Auckland
- 1993 *Making Amends*, touring exhibition, New Zealand
- 1989 *Stone Lines*, Survey Exhibition, National Museum, Wellington,
Auckland Museum, Auckland
- 1985 *Pakohe*, Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt

SELECTED PUBLIC & PRIVATE COLLECTIONS:

- Auckland Museum, Auckland
- Te Papa Tongarewa, Museum of New Zealand, Wellington
- Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt
- Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch
- Left Bank Gallery, Greymouth
- National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
- Bank of New Zealand, Wellington
- Custance Collection, Wellington
- Tamaki Campus, The University of Auckland, Auckland
- Da Free John Collection, United States
- The University of Auckland, Tamaki