

ARTIS

G A L L E R Y

LLEW SUMMERS (1947 - 2019)

Llew Summers, who was based in Christchurch, is known for his distinctive sculptures of the human form. His monumental sculptures in bronze, concrete, marble and stone are highly visible in public spaces throughout New Zealand.

Since his death in 2019, ARTIS has continued to represent Summers – with editions that have been released by his family.

Self-taught, he began exhibiting in 1971, and has had over 50 solo exhibitions throughout New Zealand, as well as participating in numerous group shows. His work is held in corporate and public collections throughout the country, as well as by private collectors in New Zealand, Australia, Germany, USA, the UK, Switzerland, Greece, Malawi, Sweden and Finland.

He won several awards including the *BNZ Art Award* and the *BP Art Award* in the 1980s, and the *Arts Excellence Award (Community Trust, Christchurch)* in 1997. He had a keen interest in literature and collaborated with poet Bernadette Hall on *The Stations of the Cross* for the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Christchurch.

That work caused controversy, with his sculptures in several cities throughout New Zealand having provoked outcry and letters to newspapers. However, he was never one to retreat from a challenge or compromise his integrity.

Llew Summers contributed beyond his art in many ways – such as offering residencies for emerging artists at his studio; donating works for special causes; and loaning his personal collection of artworks (by other leading and emerging artists) for exhibition.

Summers' large bronze work, *'Butterfly'*, was purchased by Auckland Botanical Gardens as a permanent placement in 2007. His figures have a remarkable sense of lightness, movement and harmony, despite their size.

The book titled *'Llew Summers: Body and Soul'* by John Newson, was published in 2020. This book covers the work and life of one of New Zealand's most recognisable sculptors, a man of great warmth and astonishing vitality, whose works are daring, sensual and provocative.

"What's important to me is to get a balance between the physical and the spiritual in life. We're given a soul and we're given a body. Sculpture provides a nice balance, because works can be made which are meaningful, but they require your physical body to produce them. Rather than just being clever or smart, the work must have soul."