

JIM WHEELER

Born in Wadesboro North Carolina, the son of a professional forester, Jim Wheeler describes himself as an 'amateur botanist', studying both art and biology at University. His interest in plants and how plant communities evolve, continues to inform his sculptural practice today.

Jim Wheeler graduated BA with Honours at the University of North Carolina, before becoming an apprentice at the Johnson Atelier Technical Institute of Sculpture in the 1970s. In 1981 he immigrated to New Zealand to help set up the Art Works sculpture foundry.

A member of *Medal Artists New Zealand*, his reputation as one of the country's foremost bronze sculptors has led to a number of significant commissions, including the NZ Olympic Academy Leonard A. Cuff Medal, The Arts Foundation of NZ Governors' Medal and the America's Cup Medal.

Jim Wheeler's large-scale commissions are grounded in nature and exemplify both his skill as a sculptor and his passion for environmental issues. One such commission, *Pohutukawa/Rata Descending*, measures 2.5 metres across and can be seen, suspended mid-air, in the atrium of 280 Queen Street, Auckland. The installation commemorates the vanished natural environment. It recalls the time before Auckland was built, when Queen Street was still a streambed. On the bush-clad hillside, trees would have overhung this stream and a 'falling' Pohutukawa or Rata flower would have been a commonplace sight.

A full-time art practitioner since 1989, Wheeler has been exhibiting for over thirty years. His work is held in The British Museum, London; The Weatherspoon Art Museum, USA; The Auckland Museum and The James Wallace Trust. He has been included in major New Zealand sculpture exhibitions including Sculpture in the Gardens, Auckland Botanic Gardens, Brick Bay Sculpture Park, Sculpture Onshore and Sculpture on the Gulf.

ACADEMIC HISTORY

1980-1979	Johnson Atelier Technical Institute of Sculpture, Princeton, New Jersey, USA
1975-1973	University of North Carolina at Greensboro Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art (cum laude)
1973-1971	University of the South Sewanee, Tennessee, USA.

WORK HISTORY

1999	Three Foot Six, Lord of the Rings, Wellington: Supervisor, Rock/Foam Dept.
1995-1996	Manukau Institute of Technology, Lecturer in Sculpture at the School of Art & Design
1981-1989	Art Works Studio Ltd, Auckland: Helped establish and run this Fine Art, bronze casting foundry.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2022	<i>Following Nature</i> , ARTIS Gallery Auckland
2015	<i>Nature as Metaphor</i> , ARTIS Gallery, Auckland
2010	' <i>Stalking Nature</i> ' – ARTIS Gallery, Auckland
1997	<i>The Presence of Trees</i> , Ferner Galleries, Auckland <i>Sacred Sights</i> - The Drawings Gallery, Auckland
1990	<i>Pumphouse</i> , Auckland
1986	<i>Recent Bronzes</i> , RKS Art, Auckland
1982	<i>Landscapes, Monuments and Variations on a Torn Circle</i> , RKS Art, Auckland
1981	<i>Diametrical Bronzes</i> , RKS Art, Auckland

COMMISSIONS

2003	New Zealand Olympic Academy, Leonard A. Cuff Medal
2002	Arts Foundation of New Zealand, Governors' Award designer
2000- 2001	<i>Kanuka Bonsai</i> , private commission
2000	XXX America's Cup 2000 NZ, Winner & Contender's Medal
1998, 97, 95, 94	PA Consulting Group. Annual Corporate gift
1997	Scott's College, Wellington, Information Technology Award
1996	<i>Genesis: Courtyard bronzes of volcanic islands and lava flows</i> , Hobson Gardens, Auckland
1995	<i>Battle for the Solomons</i> , commemorative WWII medal, Ferner Galleries, Auckland
1990	Craig Steele Trophy, Auckland Grammar School.

AWARDS/HONOURS

1999	British Museum purchase of medallion, <i>Balanced Change</i> , for the exhibition <i>Size immaterial: hand-held sculptures of the 1990s</i> .
1996:	Research grant from Manukau Institute of Technology to develop alternative bronze casting process.
1992:	QEII Arts Council Grant to build a bronze casting studio.