

Start a relationship with Aaron McConchie

‘It’s about trying to get people to stop and observe their surrounds, and about their interaction with the artwork,’ says Aaron McConchie, artist and sculptor of Mangawhai. ‘I make the art I want to make and if people like it, that’s great, but I don’t mind if people hate it because a strong reaction is better than no reaction. If people are ambivalent about my work then I haven’t done my job.’

Aaron’s work covers a wide range of size and medium, going from small to large, wood to metal, cardboard to plastic (only recyclable!). ‘I have a conceptual theme that runs through my work but I don’t have a visual theme. I work with whatever medium fits the concept and the space.’

Space and surroundings are very important to Aaron, as is the relationship between artist and viewer. ‘I want people to look at the world around them, look at my work, and think about how they relate to that. I hold the viewer in high regard with respect to the merit of an artwork.’

One of Aaron’s early works was making an edition of crushed Coke cans that were just plain, white plaster casts. ‘I enscribed my name and e-mail address on the bottom of them so people could get in touch with me when they found them. I scattered them all over Auckland, under park benches, wherever you would find rubbish. I got about 30 e-mails back from that which was fun.’

More recently, his work has tended towards larger, outdoor sculptures, and he has an ongoing presence at NZ Sculpture Onshore, an annual event at Devonport. ‘Often, you can stand on or in my work, or sit on it, that sort of thing. I made some giant flippers (as in a pinball game) for NZ Sculpture OnShore and the idea is that the viewer, in interacting with the flippers, becomes the ‘ball’ in the game. People become part of the artwork and that’s really rewarding.’

Aaron has also had a number of works appear at the Splore Festival, his most recent being a 6.5m-tall asymmetric tent with a two-flight staircase inside. ‘There was a little window at the top where only one person could fit which brings it back to the single person viewer which interests me.’

Aaron is going to have work on show at the Owhango Summer Sculpture Show, National Park, in January. The flippers can be seen at the sculpture park at Auckland Airport, behind Butterfly Creek, and a work of Aaron’s is usually in residence at the Kaipara Sculpture Gardens. Get out there and find his work because it is provocative, interactive and fun, and Aaron wants to have a relationship with you.

‘Attention spans these days get shrunk down to seconds so it’s appealing to try and make people think about an artwork for a bit longer than that.’

aaronmconchie.com and all social media channels