

New SCAPE Managing Curator bringing an inspiring new season of public art to Ōtautahi

The artists for SCAPE Public Art Season 2023 have been announced, and the line-up promises to deliver a dynamic, youthful season of temporary artworks in central Ōtautahi Christchurch.



From top left: Ming Ranginui, Te Ara Minhinnick, Synthia Bahati, Susu, Tūi Matira Ranapiri-Ransfield, Denise Porter-Howland, Priscilla Rose Howe, Maioha Kara

SCAPE Public Art has confirmed the new season dates for 2023, a 12-week festival of free-to-view public art running from 25 November 2023 to 17 February 2024. The SCAPE season is a highlight in the cultural calendar in Ōtautahi, comprising eight new temporary artworks that will serve as the perfect incentive for residents and visitors to head out and explore their city this summer.

Season 2023 is the first in Tyson Campbell's three-year tenure as SCAPE's new Managing Curator. Campbell hand-picked each of the eight season artists for their unique interpretations of the season theme, *The Gift*.

"*The Gift* is an invitation for people to consider the material, symbolic and metaphoric possibilities of gift-giving within communities," says Campbell. "It's something that can be interpreted in terms of capitalism and the pressure of gift-giving linked to the public holidays and personal celebrations that emerge throughout the year. Symbolically speaking, a gift can also be something like imparting knowledge to a descendant, or a relational gift – like a really good mentor who can change the way you see the world. *The Gift* is an exchange of things between people and it is with this theme that I hope to broaden and extend the possibilities of gifting."

The lineup of artists for 2023 represents a diverse cross-section of creative communities and cultures from around Aotearoa. Their newly commissioned artworks will range across a variety of different mediums and locations that will surprise, delight and challenge the public.

Among the lineup this year are several multi-disciplinary artists, including Tāmaki Makarau-based Denise Porter-Howland who works primarily with ceramics; Susu, a Taiwanese artist also living in Auckland, who produces interdisciplinary works in digital fabrication, moving image and installation; and Tūi Matira Ranapiri-Ransfield, a direct descendant of Kāi Tahu pōtiki chiefs Kōrako, Taiaroa, Haereroa, Karetai. Tūi is a highly skilled Māori performing artist, creator, composer and artist in the contemporary dance industry who intends to produce a sculptural work alongside the Ōtakaro Avon River that speaks to the rich Māori history of the Taumutu-Waitaha Canterbury area.

They are joined by two young artists at the early stage of their careers: Maioha Kara, a Pōneke-based artist whose practice draws on Te Ao Māori narratives, and Ming Ranginui, also based in Pōneke, who reimagines everyday objects into sculptures, often dressed in satin and her signature smocking.

Some of the artists take inspiration from their communities, like Synthia Bahati, a photographic artist who grew up as part of the African community in Auckland. Her work is informed by fashion and driven by the people around her as well as her own lived experience of Blackness living in Tāmaki Makarau. Ōtautahi Christchurch artist Priscilla Rose Howe, who is also this season's Community Engaged Artist, creates figurative works that explore ideas around queerness and phenomenology, and plans to create space for queer communities through their Season 2023 artwork.

Finally, Te Ara Minhinnick is a ringatoi (artist) with roots in Waiuku who constructs installations that interweave the area's historical, political, and material matter of whenua (land), uku (clay), and wai (water).

"I chose these artists because their practices have a new perspective and are tied to power and place," Campbell says. "They each provide compelling autobiographical narratives of how art can be presented in public. It's very exciting to me because their SCAPE projects give these artists opportunities to expand their practice outside of the galleries and to think about how public space can materially transform their skill set."

Executive Director Richard Aindow expects to see some thought-provoking artworks produced this season and is eagerly plotting ways to connect the community around them.

"Many of the artists have strong messages to convey with their work and we don't plan on being quiet about it," he says. "Their gift to the community will be multi-faceted: bringing groups and communities together, inspiring playfulness, generating conversations, even pushing comfort zones."

The eight season artworks will make up an engaging public walkway around the central city. A programme of free public events and experiences, including guided walking tours of the artworks, will be available to book throughout the season, and residents and visitors can explore our city's permanent artwork collection on SCAPE's legacy artwork walkway all year round.

The 2023 season will also feature two sculptural and two mural artworks from the winners of the Re:ACTIVATE Aspiring Artists competition, open to young people aged 5-18 from around Canterbury. Always a crowd favourite, the Re:ACTIVATE programme gives young people an opportunity to respond to the season's theme and have their work produced for public display in The Arts Centre Te Matatiki Toi Ora.

For immediate release – Wednesday 2 August 2023



“This is going to be a really exciting season putting the spotlight on a group of dynamic, contemporary young artists, many of whom will be working in public space for the first time,” says Aindow. “We have big things in store, literally in some cases, and can’t wait to share them with the people of Ōtautahi.”

SCAPE Public Art’s 2023 season runs from 25 November 2023 to 17 February 2024 in central Ōtautahi Christchurch.

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For media comment, more information, interviews, and imagery please contact:

Richard Aindow

Executive Director

SCAPE Public Art

Mobile: +64 21 844 210

Email: richard@scapepublicart.org.nz

Eva Urlwin

Marketing and Communications Coordinator

SCAPE Public Art

Mobile: +64 27 366 2016

Email: eva@scapepublicart.org.nz