



ART IN THE GARDEN

Add something unique to your garden with a piece of art and complement any outdoor space

Story: Sandra Batley

New Zealand's stunning natural landscape provides endless inspiration for artists, photographers, garden designers and sculptors alike. Our iconic scenery is captured and represented in the hands of talented creative people passionate about their art and the beauty they experience.

Art adds that special personal touch to the interior of your home. Whether it's a contemporary piece or old-world fine art, each can create a different ambience in the home and trigger a different experience for each person viewing it.

There's a growing interest for sculptors and artists to present their work set among the natural environment, thereby uniting art and nature. Viewing these pieces in various mediums and styles within different plant and land forms takes on a whole new dimension, making for a unique experience.

A stunning local example of this is Zealandia Sculpture Park, 45 minutes' drive north of Auckland. Carefully sited within the grounds of Zealandia is a collection of

sculptor Terry Stringer's work, together with pieces by colleagues. Exquisite sculptural pieces nestle among towering stands of kauri trees while others simply sit on rolling hillocks of grass with the native bush behind to frame them.

Another unique location is Connells Bay on Waiheke Island, one hour out of downtown Auckland by boat. An ever-changing collection of contemporary work by established and emerging artists is showcased around a park-like landscape overlooking the Hauraki Gulf. Jan and John Gow had the vision and patience over time to create a special iconic landscape rich in drama and interest.

An internationally known sculpture garden in Surrey, England, is unlike any typical English cottage garden. The Hannah Peschar sculpture garden really is a magical place. It is the result of the collaboration between two very talented people over a period of 20 years. Anthony Paul (born in New Zealand) designs from a studio based in the grounds, where he and his wife Hannah live.

Broad-leafed plants and mature trees frame and enhance an inspiring collection of contemporary sculpture by some of the finest artists in Britain. The lush water garden and woodlands surrounding a 16th century black-and-white cottage make a remarkable setting for this collection.

These are some wonderful examples to draw inspiration from. But what makes these places so special? Is it the sculpture? Or is it the garden? Perhaps it's the stunning locations. In fact, it's the magical combination of all these elements that makes these places unique and interesting.

For the average homeowner it's possible to create the same effect on a smaller scale to enhance even the smallest garden or courtyard. This is such a personal, creative process that you really can't go wrong — there aren't any strict rules to follow. If you love art and you love gardens, why not combine the two and create your very own outdoor gallery.

First, choose your piece of sculpture. Depending on your budget, you can get one commissioned by your favourite artist or visit a

1. *Firedance* by Grant Palliser, Flaxmere Gardens.
2. *Eclipse* by Leah Frazer Henderson, Flaxmere Gardens.
3. *Wind Series 4* by Gary Baynes, Flaxmere Gardens.
4. *Satellite Spy* by David Carson, Flaxmere Gardens.



gallery, gift store or local garden centre to buy one. Smaller towns often have boutique craft shops with interesting garden sculpture made by local artists. Another idea is to make your own, one that reflects your personality and style. Metal, corrugated iron, stone, pottery, mosaics, concrete, copper and wire are all useful materials to buy or reuse and get creative with.

If you are making your own, there are pottery, mosaic, metal and woodwork classes available to help get you started. Inspiration can come from your garden or nature itself. Abstract or exact representations of foliage, flowers, seeds, animals and the surrounding landscape can be crafted into a stunning, unique piece of sculpture for your garden. It can be a static piece or one that interacts with the wind, sun and rain. It must, however, be suitable for the outdoors and be able to withstand all kinds of weather.

Placing the pieces is an art in itself. The size, materials and position of the sculpture should be carefully chosen to best enhance the environment. Scale and proportion are →





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OUT AND ABOUT

New Zealand has many sculpture gardens to visit. Whether you're looking for inspiration for your own backyard or you just want to admire the beauty of art in nature, the following places are worth a visit:

Art in a Garden

Located an hour's drive from Christchurch in Hawarden, Art in a Garden features the work of some of New Zealand's most talented artists and sculptors, set in one of New Zealand's top gardens.

www.artinagarden.co.nz

Zealandia Sculpture Garden

Zealandia is situated north of Auckland and is a sculpture garden designed to surprise the viewer with a sculptural vision of pastoral New Zealand landscape.

www.zealandiasculpturegarden.co.nz

Connells Bay

Located on Waiheke Island, Connells Bay brings art and nature together in a rural and coastal environment.

www.connellsbay.co.nz

Brick Bay Sculpture Trail

In the heart of the Matakana Coast, the Brick Bay Sculpture Trail showcases contemporary sculpture by established and emerging artists.

www.brickbaysculpture.co.nz

Flaxmere Garden

Located on the edge of the Southern Alps, 1000 feet above sea level, Flaxmere is a large country garden that has been carefully integrated into the natural landscape.

www.flaxmeregarden.co.nz

important; a piece that is not balanced with its surroundings can look out of place or awkward, especially in a small space. It can be placed in a prominent position for immediate impact and can be viewed from indoors or hidden among the garden itself for an element of surprise.

If you have a modern home with a display of art by contemporary painters, you might want to place a piece of abstract art or sculpture in stainless steel or glass in your garden to coordinate with the home's interior. If you live on a large block of land, you have the opportunity to use bigger pieces in several places around the garden to make a statement. Materials such as salvaged timber, stone and concrete look at home in a rural garden.

Wall art and sculpture can be used to decorate courtyards and patios and provide interest whatever the season. Where there is little or no natural vistas, sculpture can provide

that all-important architectural statement or focal point in a small space. Follow the design principle of less is more. Over-designed, cluttered spaces look busy and contrived, so choose the piece carefully.

Finding or making a piece of sculpture and locating the right place for it in the garden is a very rewarding experience, adding a very special touch to any outdoor space. ■

5. *Stainless-steel fern by Virginia King, Connells Bay Sculpture Park. Photography by Sally Tagg.*

6. *Necklace Goblet by Christine Hellyar, Connells Bay Sculpture Park, Photography by Rob Suisted.*

7. *Fortuna by Terry Stringer, Zealandia Sculpture Garden. Photography by Simon Devitt.*



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