

## Sixteen-metre tall sculpture to light-up city skyline

After months of intense preparation and five days of installation and testing, Christchurch's newest permanent public artwork will light up the city skyline from Friday 4 October.

Sēmisi Fetokai Potauaine's striking, sixteen-metre tall *VAKA 'A HINA* will tower over Rauora Park in the East Frame from next Friday, adding a magnificent touch of Pasifika culture to this refreshed area of the city on the eve of SCAPE Season 2019.

Commissioned by SCAPE Public Art, it's the first time a Pasifika artwork of this scale has been installed in Aotearoa New Zealand. It's the culmination of a huge community collaboration between art and industry, with a key partner being Creative New Zealand.

"We appreciate the significance of this work by Sēmisi Fetokai Potauaine and are thrilled to have supported this project, alongside others," says Cath Cardiff, Creative New Zealand's Senior Manager, Arts Development Services.

The installation starts at 6am Monday 30 September when the sculpture is erected onto a massive foundation that contains the equivalent of 40 baths of concrete, and two tonnes of re-inforcement – about the same mass as a family car. Next week, testing will be carried out on the sculpture's eight lighting programmes that can be tailored for specific events.

*VAKA 'A HINA* is comparable in scale to New Zealand's largest public sculpture *Fanfare* (2014/15), by Neil Dawson, located on the Northern approach to Christchurch, and Antony Gormley's *Angel of the North* – both 20 metres tall.

SCAPE Public Art Executive Director Deborah McCormick says the sculpture combines Pasifika culture with striking geometry, embodying the unique qualities of all those who make up the Christchurch community.

"It's not the first time SCAPE has worked with the Pasifika community but, given the scale of this sculpture, it really is next level – it's a big gesture and a real milestone for this community.

"*VAKA 'A HINA* will have a resolute, continuous presence during day and night, acting as a visual cue of our city's cultural diversity. It will be a new landmark for Christchurch and a gift that wouldn't have been possible without the support of our many partners."

As well as Creative New Zealand, other key partners for the project are Christchurch City Council, Ōtākaro Ltd, Deloitte, Anderson Lloyd and BECA. RCP has managed the project,

while engineering design experts GHD turned Potauaine’s artistic vision into reality, working closely with lead legacy sponsor John Jones Steel who made the structure.

Excavation for the foundation was done by ProTranz Earthmoving and McMillan Drilling, before Leighs Construction oversaw the re-inforcing and concrete pour that were done by Allied Concrete and Fletcher Steel. Aotea Electrical have installed the Signify lighting, while Higgins is overseeing traffic management.

Potauaine and his family will be in Christchurch all of next week to oversee installation of the sculpture – the 15<sup>th</sup> legacy (permanent) artwork produced by SCAPE Public Art for the city.

ENDS

[Please refer to high resolution image folder here](#)



Sēmisi Fetokai Potauaine *VAKA 'A HINA* 2019 Rauora Park, Christchurch (site render – night). Image courtesy of the artist. Commissioned by SCAPE Public Art.

**About the Artist**

Sēmisi Fetokai Potauaine works as a multi-media artist, across a number of disciplines, notably architecture, sculpture, tattooing, painting, weaving and computer graphic designing. Sēmisi was born, raised and trained in the old culture in Tonga, and educated in Aotearoa New Zealand and abroad in art and architecture. His practice, lectures and research concentrates on *ta-va* (time and space), culture and language, theory and practice and, art and literature amongst others. He has co-authored books and book chapters, published book chapters and journal articles, and is the principal illustrator of a new Pacific children's book series.

In 2017, he was commissioned to create *MANUĒSINA* (White bird/White angel) for Sculpture on the Gulf at Waiheke Island. He was commissioned in 2012 for the production of the Ministry of Tourism Tonga for *Tunavakamea & Hinavakamea*, two 8 metre high steel sculptures for Nuku'alofa's waterfront. He was awarded the Commonwealth International Connections Art Residencies 2009, where he produced a number of works ranging from graphic art to steel and wood sculptures at Cambridge University, United Kingdom.

**About the SCAPE Public Art Trust**

SCAPE Public Art installs public art in Christchurch all year round with a focus on the annual Seasons. SCAPE is the Christchurch expert in the installation of public art, and the SCAPE Public Art Seasons are New Zealand's premier public art events.

Held in Christchurch's central city public spaces and supported through a range of partnerships, the Seasons showcase leading national and international contemporary artists, and provide a springboard for emerging local talent. Artworks in the Seasons are created as a result of close collaboration between art and business. This is a highly regarded model world-wide.

Our Seasons provide an opportunity to focus on the introduction of new artworks whilst maintaining focus on the impressive base of legacy pieces. [www.scapepublicart.org.nz](http://www.scapepublicart.org.nz)

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