

At the bay

Art trail recontextualises sculptures in an immersive natural landscape.

Brick Bay is nestled in a coastal valley one hour north of Auckland. Here is a true sensory experience, with salty sea breezes and the sounds of native birds – kākā, tūi, pīwakawaka, kererū – interwoven with sound installations by artists such as Sam Hamilton, Olivia Webb, Ivan Mršić and Sharonagh Montrose along the meandering trail.



Rohan Wealleans, *The Psychosis Chamber of the Oracle*, 2012, wood, polystyrene, fibreglass, found object, sheepskin, crystals, paint, approx 2100 x 1250 x 2350mm, Brick Bay Sculpture Trail. Photo: Tanja Dove

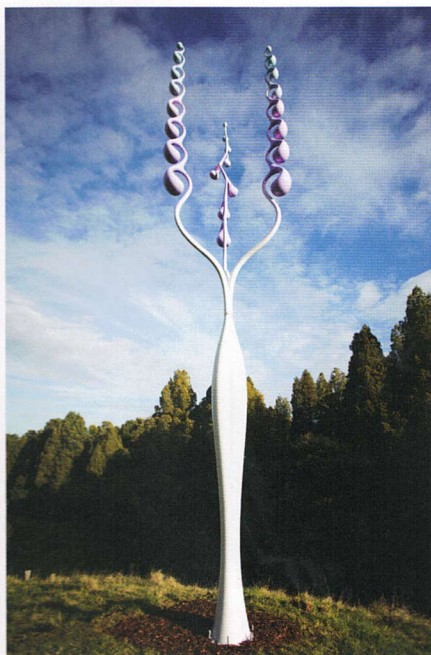
The Glass House at Brick Bay, architect Noel Lane's celebrated pavilion, cantilevers over a water-lily filled lake. Photo: Brick Bay

Phil Price, *Chrysalid*, 2019, carbon fibre, epoxy metals, precision bearings, 10,800 x 9200mm, Brick Bay Sculpture Trail. Photo: Tanja Dove



The Glass House, architect Noel Lane's celebrated pavilion, cantilevers over a water-lily-filled lake and houses an attractive restaurant that uses ingredients sourced from the Brick Bay farm and local Matakana producers. There is a boutique vineyard, an olive grove and beehives onsite. The work of nearly 70 New Zealand contemporary artists can be experienced in a sublime native environment and all artwork is for sale.

New sculptures are installed at Brick Bay regularly during the months leading up to summer. Recently arrived on the trail is a towering 10.8-metre sculpture by kinetic maestro Phil Price. The work is titled *Chrysalid*, after John Wyndham's 1950s science-fiction novel set in a post-apocalyptic world. The precise engineering of its blue and mauve carbon-fibre tendrils makes *Chrysalid* move in more than 22 ways, creating a hypnotic dance on the land. A significant sculpture by Virginia King is also new on the trail, suspended from the trees in the native bush. *Kauri Forest Canopy* comments on the role of art in nature, and the threat climate change poses. It was commissioned in 2000 as a public artwork and has found a new home at Brick Bay. The work is a memory of kauri forests lost, ghosts of



the past, and a pertinent warning of the current threats of kauri dieback and the need to protect our environment. King has recently returned from exhibiting in Venice with the Global Art Foundation (GAA) in *Personal Structures*, a prestigious 2019 Venice Biennale collateral exhibition.

Another work that has found a new home on the trail is by Rohan Wealleans. *The Psychosis Chamber of the Oracle* is the largest sculpture the artist has made. Repurposed from a found object, it was once actor Kevin Smith's head as the character of Ares in the series *Xena: Warrior Princess* and *Hercules*. Taking the sculpture out of the art gallery context and displaying it by the lake creates an interesting outdoor regeneration. Wealleans' technique of building up paint to create stalactites or little pyramids, then carving meticulously into the paint, here creates a grotto inside the head. This is an interactive work evoking fantasy and science fiction, enticing the viewer inside a sheepskin-lined chamber to hang out with the *Oracle* and gaze up at its crystal ceiling.

The annual Brick Bay Folly has recently opened to the public, celebrating the intersection of architecture and sculpture. This year's winner is *The Wood Pavilion*, designed and built by four first-year Master of Architecture students at the University of Auckland's School of Architecture and Planning – Leo Zhu, Dorien Villiamu, Daniel Fennell and Wenhan Ji – with the help of industry mentors. They have built a structure immersing the visitor in a spatial experience of light and materiality; the interior is open for exploration. It is a contemplative resting place for visitors and a celebration of the architectural qualities of wood.

Cultural organisations are in a unique position to challenge, inform and engage audiences in conversations about the environment, and Brick Bay achieves this through recontextualising art in a natural New Zealand habitat while providing easy access for all. brickbaysculpture.co.nz