

**SISTER CITY AIR NEW ZEALAND  
AWARDS**

**“THE SPHERES” BY KAREN GENOFF  
CHRISTCHURCH-ADELAIDE SISTER CITY  
GARDENS PUBLIC ARTWORK**

**ADELAIDE SISTER CITY GARDEN,  
HALSWELL QUARRY**

**ENTRY CATEGORY: CULTURAL**

**CHRISTCHURCH-ADELAIDE SISTER CITY  
COMMITTEE**

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**Contact: Deborah McCormick  
C/- Art & Industry Biennial Trust  
PO Box 763  
Christchurch 8015  
Ph: 03 365 7990  
Fax: 03 365 7994  
Email: [artandindustry@xtra.co.nz](mailto:artandindustry@xtra.co.nz)**

Executive summary

*The Spheres* was commissioned by the Christchurch-Adelaide Sister City Committee for the Adelaide section of the Sister Cities Garden in Halswell Quarry, as a symbol of the Christchurch-Adelaide Sister City relationship. The work was chosen from a limited competition commission between two Adelaide artists, Andrew Stock and Karen Genoff, from which Genoff's design was chosen for development. Genoff's design consisted of two bronze spheres decorated with eucalypt pods and was mounted on stone plinths made of Halswell Quarry stone. The finished work was sited at the entrance to the Adelaide Sister City Garden, unveiled in November 2002 and gifted to the city of Christchurch.

*The Spheres* is seen as the first stage of a public art exchange between Christchurch and Adelaide – in the future it is anticipated that a Christchurch artist will make a public artwork for a public space in Adelaide.

### Objective

To develop a public artwork in both Christchurch and Adelaide – as a contemporary cultural exchange and a signifier of the Sister City relationship between both cities that focuses on the relationship between people and the environment.

### Activity

Deborah McCormick was invited to become a member of the Christchurch-Adelaide Sister City Committee in March 2001, during a visit by Adelaide based Urban Arts Consultant Richard Brecknock which was facilitated by the Art & Industry Biennial Trust of which she is the Director. It was during Richard's visit that the concept for a public artwork exchange between the two sister cities Christchurch and Adelaide was seeded after discussion between Richard, Vincent Chew (Chair of the Adelaide-Christchurch Committee) and Deborah.

As a member of the committee, Deborah McCormick acted as project manager and reported to the Christchurch-Adelaide Sister City Committee. The project was also monitored by the Art & Industry Biennial Trust; and the Art in Public Places Working Party at Christchurch City Council. A report was presented to the Art in Public Places Working Party at Christchurch City Council and approval given to proceed to invite two artists to respond to stage-one of the brief with design concepts. The Art in Public Places Committee also reviewed the stage-one design concepts.

A report was later presented to the Parks and Recreation Committee to detail ownership of the artwork with the recommendation being that the Christchurch-Adelaide Sister City Committee gift the artwork to the Christchurch City Council. Richard Brecknock assisted the artwork commissioning process from Adelaide by representing the project within the Adelaide Sister City Committee at the Adelaide City Council and by selecting Adelaide artists to submit stage-one designs. Richard Brecknock has written the Adelaide City Public Arts Policy and is at present undertaking a "master plan" for the implementation of public artworks – with the suggestion that this Sister City model could be included within the "master plan". Richard supplied a shortlist of Adelaide artists to be invited to respond to a brief with stage one designs for an artwork in the Sister City Garden. These were: Karen Genoff; Mark Blackman; Andrew Stock; Leo Neuhofer; Marijana Tadic; Trevor Wren; and Darryl Pfitzner. Two of these artists, Karen Genoff and Andrew Stock, were invited to respond to stage-one of the brief with designs.

The brief contained: an introduction to the Halswell Quarry and the Adelaide Sister City Garden site in particular; the client's vision statement for the site; the brief for the artwork itself (which includes issues such as: the artwork's sympathy to the site's function; need for minimum maintenance; location in designated area; need for work to be robust; and take into account context of the Sister City Garden/Quarry); artist's responsibilities; and breakdown of the three stages (design concepts; selection and development of selected concept; fabrication and implementation of artwork). The brief also has four appendices: site plans and images of the Adelaide Sister City Garden; project selection team and working party; budget; and contractual arrangements and parties' responsibilities.

Deborah travelled to Adelaide in 2002 to meet with Karen Genoff and Andrew Stock to collect their proposals, and to view Genoff's major exhibition "The Hem of Her Dress" as part of the Adelaide Festival of Arts. From these responses Karen Genoff's proposal for Entrance Markers was selected and Karen was commissioned to produce 'The Spheres' public artwork for the Adelaide Sister City Garden in Halswell Quarry.

In July 2002 Karen travelled to Christchurch to view the site and to meet with the Adelaide Committee, Parks Unit and Halswell Quarry Staff to choose a site and finalise the designs and construction for the artwork.

On Genoff's return to Adelaide the work was cast in bronze using a lost wax process. This medium has a timeless quality and its patina changes slowly over time. The work's base was local New Zealand stone provided by the Christchurch City Council City Solutions Unit and Halswell Quarry Park. After fabrication in Adelaide the artwork was transported by air freight directly to Halswell Quarry Park on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2002 for storage.

The work was unveiled by Christchurch Mayor Garry Moore and Councillor Bob Angrove from Adelaide City Council on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2002 at Halswell Quarry.

Entitled *The Spheres*, Karen Genoff's sculptural entrance markers for the Christchurch - Adelaide Sister City Garden are two bronze spheres, 600 mm in diameter and covered with a pattern incorporating eucalypt pods collected from around the Adelaide Parkland and Linear Park Environs. The markers aim to capture something of the beauty, geometry and symmetry of two particularly striking eucalypts, *Eucalyptus Erythreocorus* and *Eucalyptus Cornuta*. Whilst these eucalypts are not strictly indigenous to Adelaide they are abundantly planted throughout the Parkland Environment, Linear Park and the suburbs around Adelaide where they attract many native birds.

The markers are mounted at viewing height onto plinths made from the local Halswell Quarry stone. The sculptures are designed to be touched and their detail and surface patterning explored.

#### Community participation – how the project stimulated community involvement

Each of the six Sister-City Gardens that make up the Botanical Collections project for The Halswell Quarry Gardens has special defining features that relate to the respective cities' culture, expressed through plantings, artworks and features. The gardens will become a highlight for the community; recording the relationships the City and its residents have with different cities, peoples, cultures and beliefs.

#### Awareness – how programme enhanced awareness of Sister City activities

Media coverage of *The Spheres* in *The Southern Mail* (Wednesday December 4, 2002); *Christchurch Star* (December 4<sup>th</sup> 2002) and *City Scene* (December/January 2002/2003) and on the Christchurch-Adelaide Sister City website hosted by the Christchurch City Council website on [www.christchurch.org.nz/SisterCities](http://www.christchurch.org.nz/SisterCities)

#### Benefits – what the organisation and the community received through the project

Benefits as a result of the project are:

- project-based employment for an Adelaide artist
- the enhancement of the Adelaide Sister City Gardens with a suitable artwork and symbol of the sister city relationship Christchurch has with Adelaide
- the enhancement of the Christchurch-Adelaide Sister City Committee's role in the arts sector
- goodwill between the organisations involved, ie. Art & Industry Biennial Trust, Adelaide Festival, Brecknock Consulting and other bodies which could lead to future commissions and cooperative artistic ventures between the parties, Christchurch and Adelaide.

The project is also seen as the first part of a reciprocal public art exchange wherein a Christchurch artist could be invited to design a public artwork for Adelaide, providing commission-based employment for the artist and an opportunity for artistic exchange.

Funding to commission a Christchurch artist's project for Adelaide is currently being sourced in Adelaide through the Adelaide City Council Adelaide-Christchurch Sister City structure.

### Other relevant information

#### *About the Artist*

Karen Genoff lives and works in Adelaide. She graduated with a Bachelor of Education in Fine Art at the University of South Australia in Underdale and works part time as an art teacher. Karen has been a professional artist for 26 years and has had many solo exhibitions and public art projects, including several large public commissions in and around Adelaide. She also represents Australia with work near the Australian Embassy in Tokyo.

Speaking from Adelaide, the artist said that *The Spheres* project was “one of the smallest I have ever worked on but to date represents one of the most challenging because it has meant translating the fragile and ephemeral into bronze. It represents my eighth public commission and my second international commission.”

The work draws upon the artist’s experience growing up in the Adelaide suburbs with its parks and gardens. As a child Karen Genoff played among the Eucalypts that surrounded the football field at her school.

“The Eurythrocorys we played with, small red falling stars, little treasures to be gathered, wondered at and incorporated into numerous games, and then forgotten,” recalls the artist. “The point Eucalyptus caps of the Cornuta served as witches’ fingers to taunt and to tease. There was a wealth of learning and engagement to be had beneath the boughs of such trees; the leaves, fruit, flowers and capsules all providing rich material for a child growing up in suburban Adelaide.”

Genoff also sees the work as marking the entrance to a ‘wirra’ – the Kaurna word for ‘bush.’ The word connotes the recreation of the original natural environment of a place – as the Adelaide garden can be said to do.

The Kaurna people lived on the forest plains where Adelaide now stands.

#### *The Site*

Halswell Quarry is a unique park, with an unusual combination of recreational walks, historic sites and botanical collections. Important historic buildings from the quarrymen’s days are being preserved, and the rock face is now a quiet amphitheatre facing onto a parkland of short walks and wetland ponds.

Six individual areas are being developed within the Quarry to represent the special character and beauty of Christchurch’s sister cities. These are: Adelaide (South Australia); Christchurch (England); Gansu Province (China); Kurashiki (Japan); Seattle (USA); and Songapa-Gu (Seoul, Korea).

The Adelaide Sister City Garden is part of the overall Sister Cities Botanical Collections project for Halswell Quarry. This project involves developing a botanical parkland that features garden landscapes in the style of Christchurch’s six Sister Cities, as well as Canterbury native planting. The landscaping of the areas has been determined after extensive consultation with each of the Sister Cities and plants within each area are all natives of their respective regions.

Each botanical collection has 1,000 square metres of land suiting the plant types from each Sister City region. This enables many diverse species of plants to be grown within a small distance of each other. Groundwork started in 1999 and the first trees were ceremoniously planted in June that year.

The Quarry also features excellent car parking, toilets, picnic areas and a visitor center. A scenic walk goes right around the dramatic quarry face, and there is a network of walking trails throughout the reserve. The Sister City plant collections are still in their infancy, but extensive planning of indigenous species is being undertaken and there are seats and sculptures throughout the park.