

R i c k S w a i n
S c u l p t u r e

Photography by Rick Swain

Catalogue by

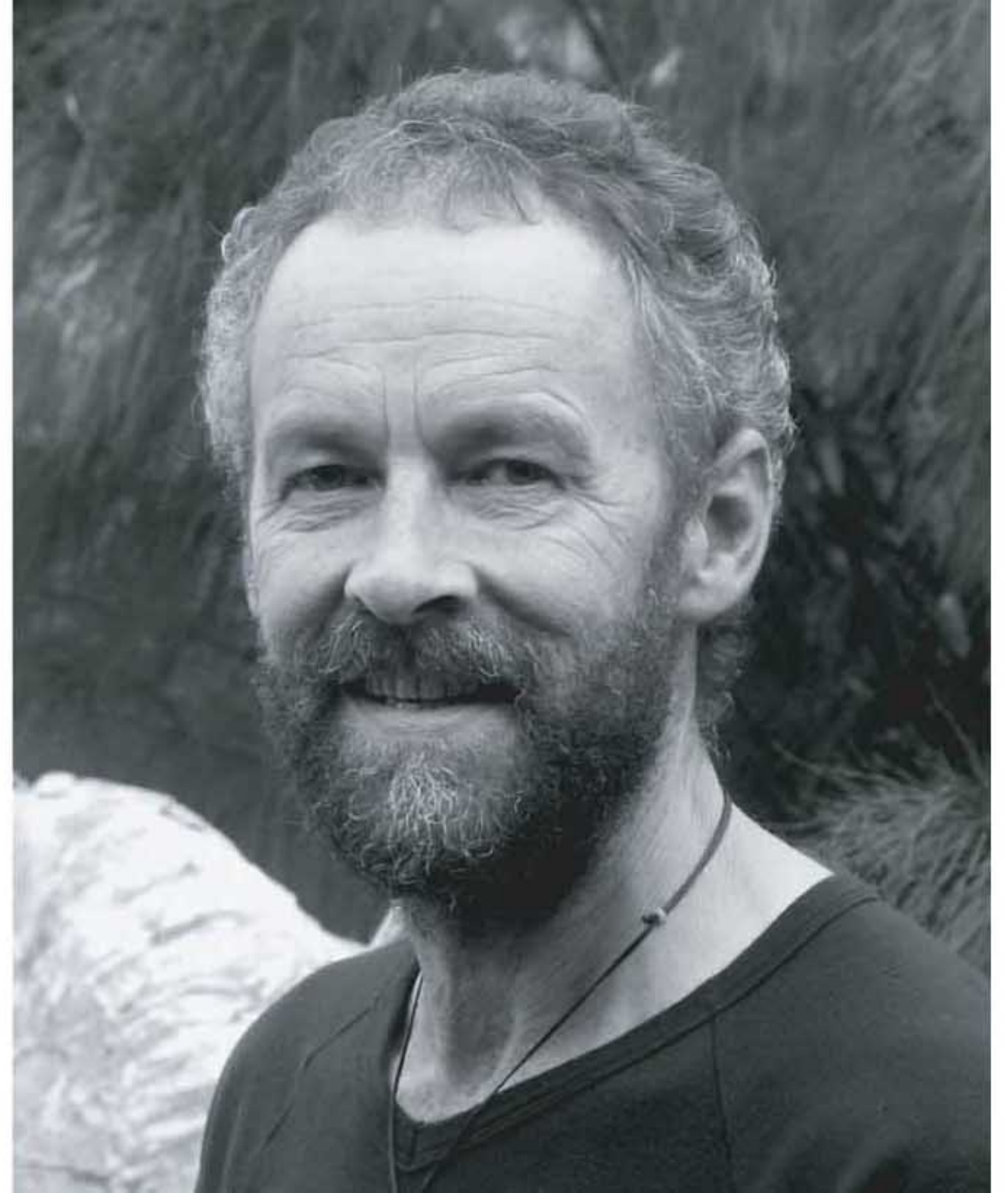
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A Touch Of Contemporary
NEW ZEALAND
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Rick Swain, Wood Sculptor

Rick Swain began sculpting in the early eighties. The sense of freedom he found in the creation of abstract forms in wood was a welcome alternative to his background in engineering design and photography.

"My current works are increasingly simple in form. I am using variations in the density of natural colour, some added colour, and the surface texture provided by tool marks to create visual and textural boundaries"

Rick's unique works reflect his love of human and natural forms and his deep understanding of this warm organic medium. His works are to be found in private, corporate, and government collections in New Zealand and throughout the World.



BLUE MOORING #1
2004
750 mm H x 340 mm W x 350 mm D



BLUE MOORING #2

2004

850 mm H x 350 mm W x 260 mm D



BLUE MOORING #3
2004
670 mm H x 430 mm W x 240 mm D



ORIGINS# 17

2004

620 mm H x 370 mm W x 220 mm D



Origins #18

2004

520 mm H x 270 mm W x 210 mm D



WOOD STONE WATER #1

2004

360 mm H x 430 mm W x 230 mm D



WOOD STONE WATER #2
2004
130 mm H x 600 mm W x 380 mm D



POISE

2004

350 mm H x 360 mm W x 180 mm D



PRELUDE #5

2004

580 mm H x 370 mm W x 210 mm D



PEACE KEEPER

2004

650 mm H x 370 mm W x 230 mm D



SPRING

2004

630 mm H x 320 mm W x 290 mm D



PORTRAIT (TO R.K.O.)
 2004
 470 mm H x 300 mm W x 300 mm D



Link photo by Koru-hk.com

LINK
 2003
 670 mm H x 340 mm W x 240 mm D



37 DEGREES SOUTH
 1998, 1400 mm H

FRAGMENTS
 1994, 310 mm H
 Fragments photo by Koru-hk.com



KAURI VESSEL
 1996, 800 mm W



SANCTUARY
 1987, 720 mm H

WINDFORM #3
1996, 500 mm H



DUNES
1980, 600 mm H



PRELUDE #3
1998, 600 mm H



LIMBS
1985, 580 mm H

The thoughts behind the pieces.....

BLUE MOORING

The remainder of the Kauri beam I had been using was about 70cm long, and tapered from its full depth of 34cm to almost nothing at the end. I hadn't considered using it as there were a few stress cracks and numerous bolt holes, including a couple approximately 25mm diameter passing right through. On closer inspection I discovered from the paint work that the cracks had probably opened when the building was first erected, and had been stable since then. I decided to invest a little time to carve out the cracks and most of the bolt holes. I found the resulting roughed-out form with its long taper to be quite pleasing, and with the thought that the original shape had been used to tie the roof beam and wall column together, I decided to finish the piece in the abstract form of a mooring. I could not remove all of the iron stains from the inside surfaces without destroying the form created, so gave these surfaces a sprayed finish in a colour which reminds me of the waterfront, sea and sky. For Blue Mooring #1, I also decided to leave the three bolt holes in the outer surfaces natural to show a little of the piece's history. The triangular rebates are simply to define the limit of staining and tie in with the overall form.

FRAGMENTS

Two of the pieces which make up "Fragments" were exactly that scraps tossed out by a wood turner, which for some reason caught my eye. The third, a small piece of Jarrah, I had been saving, obviously for the task of holding the two pieces of Kauri together.

ORIGINS

The 'Origins' Series of works evolved during my wife's pregnancy with our youngest daughter, Tania, by viewing of her ultrasound image in the womb. The form was an abstraction of the developing life form, hence 'Origins'. In following pieces of the series, I have expanded on the original ideas, but they all relate to that development and unfolding of new life. The negative space in the centre of these sculptures follows the outline of the foetus while the overall shape is that of an egg. While using the basic form which is present in most of my Origins series pieces, I rely on the characteristics of the timber and the shapes of the material remaining after nail and stain removal, to lead me towards the details which make each piece individual. In this piece I used two small remaining iron stains (which I detailed and stained uniformly) as the starting points for an implied connection between the inner and outer surfaces, creating flow and suggesting continuity.

PEACE KEEPER

This piece of timber had been invaded by several old forged metal spikes (over 20cm long and sometimes embedded up to 15cm into the wood). Removal is difficult as they are often brittle and firmly rusted in place. After removal and rough shaping of the remaining material I was confronted with a form I found somewhat war-like. At the time N.Z armed forces were being deployed in several countries as part of International Peace Keeping units, and I guess this played on my mind. I have tried to portray some aspects of the role. Warlike in appearance, yet showing a very humane side. Vigilant. Armed with restraint.

PORTRAIT (TO R.K.O.)

I started with an offcut which was almost a cube with a tenon poking out the end, left over from "LINK". Lots of nail holes and resulting stain, but very stable. The only thought I had was to try an almost spherical form with the lower section cut off. After rough shaping and removal of all the nail holes I sat it on the bench on the tenon which still remained. The tenon became a neck, and the form a head or helmet. The initials R.K.O. belonged to a close Canadian friend who had a passion for motorcycle riding. This became my tribute to his life.

PRELUDE

The first piece in the "Prelude" series was squeezed from the end of a Kauri beam which originally measured 6m x 40cm x 30cm. "Last and first" kept coming to mind as I worked on it. The last of the timber, and yet the first of a series of works simpler and purer in form than I had attempted to at that time. Many specific titles came to mind as I completed the work, but I chose Prelude (an introduction) rather than something more specific, in fear of excluding the other feelings. "Prelude #5" is a continuation of those thoughts.

SANCTUARY

The timber for this piece came from a Jarrah stiffener which had been bolted to a large Kauri beam. Much of the original timber was cracked, and stained by the large steel bolts which had held it in place. The form evolved after removal of damaged material. The title came from the feeling of a safe internal space, mostly surrounded by protective walls.

SPRING

I have borrowed the void form from the Origins series as the core of this piece, which suggests to me the season of growth, or the unfolding of new life.

37 DEGREES SOUTH

This work was produced some considerable time after my move from Auckland to Coromandel. I had begun to feel quite settled, and became aware that, although there were massive differences in population and lifestyle between the two locations, there were also some similarities. I chose the fact that both locations lie on the same latitude to entitle the work 37 degrees South. The sail form is representative of the interest both communities have in all things nautical.

WINDFORM

Once again inspired by the proximity to the sea, the wind and sailing. This work was carved from one block of demolition Kauri timber.

WOOD STONE WATER

Some time ago I offered to create a water feature for my sister and her partner who were building a home in Australia. After some research and much experimentation I installed the finished piece (which included wood stone and water) at the entrance to their home. I was reminded of the many times during my life when I have been fortunate enough to spend time by rivers lakes or the ocean, and the tranquility I have often experienced in those situations. I have always collected stones, but never tried to carve them. I simply find the abstract forms nature creates are inspirational.

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