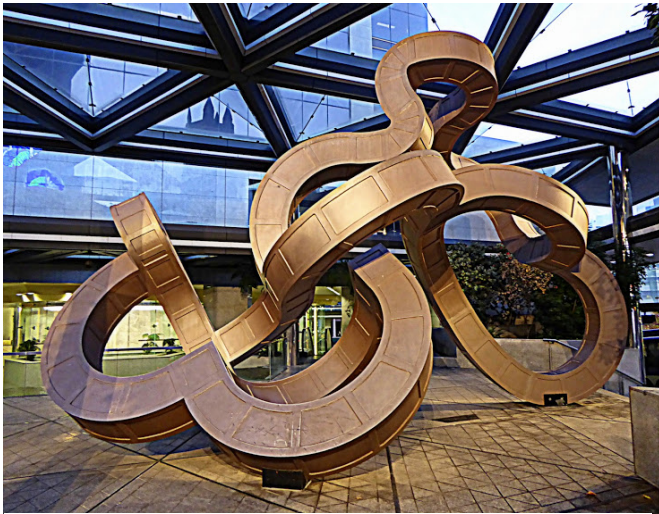


# Half a billion dollars collecting dust:

## Art owned by local councils but hidden from the public



*Richard Deacon's 'Nobody Here But Us' worth  
\$2.5m in Auckland*

Few would be surprised to learn that councils across New Zealand own significant portfolios of art. Most local galleries, museums and public sculptures are owned and operated by councils. But what would astound most people is that the vast majority of these artworks are hidden away from the public. Our research shows that what is on display is the tip of the iceberg of what ratepayers own and maintain.

Through requests for information to every territorial authority under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, we can reveal that of the \$566 million of art owned by councils, **only 7% are on public display.**

Most of art owned by council has been donated or bequeathed for the purpose of allowing the public to enjoy it. While it would be inappropriate to sell artwork donated to local bodies, many larger councils designate part of their budget every year to purchasing new works of art. At a time where councils are imposing annual rates increases higher than the rate of inflation, this research suggests that councils should reconsider where their priorities lie.

We were pleased to learn that after we had requested information from Wellington City Council, they made the decision to move their most expensive piece, a Portrait of Te Puni, to the Council's public foyer for all to see. We hope that this research will compel other councils to follow suit.

### Key findings:

- Local councils in New Zealand (excluding regional) own at least \$568,393,020 of artwork, made up from at least 173,514 pieces
- The amount of artwork on public display is only 7%
- Auckland Council has the most valuable collection of artwork, making up almost half of the country's collection at \$276,981,903
- Whakatane District Council has the least amount of works on public display, with only 0.2% of its \$8.75 million collection on display for the public to enjoy

## Top five most valuable art collections:

Council	Value of Collection	Number of Pieces
Auckland Council	\$276,981,903	17,696
Dunedin City Council	\$80,332,700	9,835
Christchurch City Council	\$69,103,000	6,733
Hamilton City Council	\$22,541,500	3,378
Wanganui District Council	\$22,000,000	8,338
Timaru District Council	\$15,000,000	1,500

## Lowest percentage on public display

Council	Percent on public display	Number of Pieces
Whakatane District Council	0.2%	102,700
Rotorua District Council	0.7%	1,823
Hutt City Council	1.0%	3,181
Wanganui District Council	1.3%	8,338
Palmerston North City Council	1.8%	1,251
Hamilton City Council	2.7%	3,378

## Most valuable pieces owned:

- Auckland Council – Richard Deacon’s *Nobody Here But Us* sculpture - \$2.5 million
- Hamilton City Council - Ralph Hotere’s *Founders Theatre Mural* - \$2.225 million
- Whakatane District Council - *Tauihu* - \$1.4 million
- Invercargill City Council *William Hodges Maoris before a waterfall* - \$900,000
- Gisborne District Council - *Millennium Wall*, \$729,304

## Sources and methodology:

All information was obtained through Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act requests.

When calculating the proportion of art on public display, only the councils who provided figures for both amount of items held and number on public display were used.

Total values for collections were often not available. Many councils do not insure total collections and do not often have comprehensive and up to date lists of values.

Nelson City Council refused to provide the information requested.

Some councils refused to provide the value of the most expensive items on the basis that it may encourage theft or crime

## Raw data:

Council	Pieces of Artwork	Value	Percentage on public display
Auckland Council and CCOs	17,696	\$276,981,903.00	46%*
Upper Hutt City Council	12	\$507,000.00	100.0%
Porirua City Council	76	\$186,919.80	67.1%
Palmerston North City Council	1,251	\$4,020,716.00	1.8%
Hutt City Council	3,181	\$13,000,000.00	1.0%
Tauranga City Council	150	\$800,000.00	13.3%
Dunedin City Council	9,835	\$80,332,700.00	Unknown
Hamilton City Council	3,378	\$22,541,500.00	6.6%
Wellington City Council	491	\$4,890,960.00	28.1%
Christchurch City Council	6,733	\$69,103,000.00	Unknown
Waitaki District Council	1,740	\$2,779,000.00	85.5%
Masterton District Council	2	\$141,835.00	100.0%
South Taranaki District Council	35	\$85,560.00	82.9%
Thames-Coromandel District Council	16	Unknown	100.0%
Queenstown-Lakes District Council	23	\$772,745.00	100.0%
Southland District Council	227	\$69,330.00	100.0%
Manawatu District Council	1	\$850.00	0.0%
Ashburton District Council	217	\$111,354.00	35.0%
Horowhenua District Council	10	\$40,000.00	100.0%
Matamata-Piako District Council	62	\$40,946.00	96.8%
Taupo District Council	752	\$1,983,646.00	47.1%
Whakatane District Council	102,700	\$8,750,174.00	0.2%
Selwyn District Council	31	\$55,000.00	64.5%
Wanganui District Council	8,338	\$22,000,000.00	1.3%
Timaru District Council	1,500	\$15,000,000.00	12.0%
Marlborough District Council	67	\$203,090.00	80.6%
Western Bay of Plenty District Council	6	\$43,000.00	100.0%
Waipa District Council	135	\$107,000.00	12.6%
Nelson City Council	Refused	Refused	Refused
Gisborne District Council	27	\$14,461,431.00	100.0%
Tasman District Council	4	\$35,661.09	100.0%

\* Regional Facilities Auckland was unable to provide this information so has been excluded from this calculation.

Waimakariri District Council	28	Unknown	100.0%
Kapiti Coast District Council	38	\$147,252.00	100.0%
Invercargill City Council	1,351	\$4,000,000.00	Unknown
Napier City Council	2,371	\$8,831,927.00	3.3%
Far North District Council	4	\$18,000.00	100.0%
Waikato District Council	35	Unknown	42.9%
Rotorua District Council	1,823	\$10,713,675.00	0.7%
New Plymouth District Council	7,980	\$705,870.00	58.6%
Hastings District Council	55	\$1,073,093.21	100.0%
Whangarei District Council	544	\$2,341,510.00	13.4%
Kaikoura District Council	6	\$94,000.00	0.0%
Mackenzie District Council	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Kawerau District Council	24	\$16,220.00	100.0%
Waimate District Council	11	\$5,600.00	100.0%
Carterton District Council	3	\$125,702.05	100.0%
Wairoa District Council	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Opotiki District Council	0	\$0.00	
Westland District Council	33	\$11,700.00	90.9%
Stratford District Council	0	\$0.00	
Otorohanga District Council	8	\$5,000.00	62.5%
South Wairarapa District Council	3	\$10,000.00	100.0%
Waitomo District Council	1	\$209,000.00	100.0%
Buller District Council	0	\$0.00	
Hurunui District Council	48	\$420,000.00	100.0%
Gore District Council	20	\$9,700.00	100.0%
Ruapehu District Council	23	\$63,550.00	100.0%
Central Hawke's Bay District Council	6	\$5,000.00	100.0%
Grey District Council	0	\$0.00	
Rangitikei District Council	7	\$18,400.00	100.0%
Clutha District Council	No register	No register	No register
Tararua District Council	0	\$0.00	
Central Otago District Council	28	\$115,000.00	100.0%
Hauraki District Council	8	\$208,000.00	100.0%
Kaipara District Council	4	\$55,120.00	100.0%
South Waikato District Council	111	\$144,380.00	91.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>173,269</b>	<b>\$568,393,020.00</b>	<b>7.0%</b>