

Young Maori Artist's Whale Tale voted top 20 in first Public Art Exhibition in Auckland

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Pictured above: Māori artist Chelsea Logan-Porter with her original design, 'Whale Spirit' on location at Auckland's Queens Wharf with admiring local fans as part of WWF-New Zealand and Auckland Unlimited's *Whale Tales* Public Art Exhibition

Young Māori artist Chelsea Logan-Porter's 'Whale Spirit' sculpture artwork has been installed at Auckland's Queens Wharf as part of the *Whale Tale* public art exhibition. 'Whale Spirit' is Logan-Porter's first piece displayed on such a scale.

The sculpture is one of 80 individually designed *Whale Tales*, each standing almost two metres tall, which form a public art trail around Auckland. The tail shape is inspired by the Hauraki Gulf's native Bryde's whale, a critically endangered whale species.

The *Whale Tale* exhibition is backed by WWF New Zealand and Auckland Unlimited to raise awareness and funds to support protection and restoration of Aotearoa's marine environment.

Using the exhibition's *Whale Tales 2022* app, visitors have been scanning and voting for their favourite artwork since the exhibition opened in January. Logan-Porter's 'Whale Spirit' has been scanned almost 1,000 times and marked as a favourite by more than 50 visitors, placing it in the top 20 of all *Whale Tales*.

Chelsea Logan-Porter said: “I’m pleased to see fellow Kiwis engaging with *Whale Spirit* and to watch it being photographed, favourited and shared is wonderful. I’m so proud of the sculpture and to hear the public is being voted in the top twenty is fantastic.”

‘Whale Spirit’ is inspired by the bright bioluminescent phytoplankton creatures of the sea and is a tribute to Logan-Porter’s heritage, or whakapapa in te reo Māori, as it includes intricate Māori patterns and designs.

WWF-New Zealand’s CEO Livia Esterhazy said: ““Whales have been singing their own stories for generations and now is our opportunity to amplify their voices. Aucklanders’ response to the Whale Tales art trail has been immense and the reaction to Chelsea’s Tail has been especially positive – people love it. So many people have been out and about finding their favourites and taking their part in this magical journey. We’re so pleased to have Princess on board to support our initiative to protect and restore our moana, particularly the Hauraki Gulf.”

Logan Porter’s work has been funded by the Princess Local Partnerships program, which sees Princess Cruises’ guests supporting community-based activities that focus on conserving New Zealand’s natural heritage and celebrating its rich culture.

Princess Cruises has committed to donating an additional \$1 for every scan of ‘Whale Spirit’, up to a maximum of \$5,000. The proceeds will go towards WWF’s critical mission to protect and restore the mauri (life force) of our ocean.

Stuart Allison, Senior Vice President Princess Cruises Asia Pacific UK & Europe said: “We’re delighted ‘Whale Spirit’ is being displayed at Auckland’s Queens Wharf where our Princess ships have been regular visitors over the years. Chelsea’s work is extraordinary and we’re proud to support such a fantastic young artist as part of an exhibition that promotes the protection of our oceans for the future generations. Princess is delighted to get behind this initiative with the assistance of our valued guests.”

The exhibition runs until 18 April. A farewell weekend celebration will be held at Auckland’s Silo Park. Each sculpture will be auctioned and the money raised will be donated to WWF-New Zealand.

The Princess Local Partnership Program was launched 2019 with a \$100,000 donation from Princess and further funded by guests donating \$2 via their onboard account. In the Bay of Islands, the program is sponsoring local conservationists to create healthy populations of Kiwi and other native birds in the Opua State Forest. It has also involved engaging local children in decorating and placing penguin houses on the shoreside in Waitangi to help protect bird life.

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