PUBLIC ART trail
ART AND THE RIVER

Dedicated to a better Brisbane
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The Art and the River Trail is a 2.4 kilometre walk that meanders along the river’s edge on the Kangaroo Point boardwalk. The walk begins at the Maritime Museum, South Bank and ends at the Thornton Street ferry terminal, after taking a detour to the top of the cliffs at Kangaroo Point Park.

The trail, through its artwork and heritage, tells the story of the river’s maritime and industrial history. It includes sculptures that evoke memories of World Expo ’88 and artworks that celebrate the beauty and grandeur of the surrounding Kangaroo Point cliffs and the river.
Two key themes are evident in the Art and River Trail: art as celebration and the riverine environment.

The first part of the trail starts on the Kangaroo Point boardwalk at the Maritime Museum and extends to the Riverlife Adventure Centre (formerly the Naval Stores). The 13 part sculptural series *Man & Matter* populates this section of the trail. Originally commissioned for the Expo ’88 sculpture park, *Man & Matter* recalls the times when Brisbane threw its biggest party, World Expo ‘88.

Along this first section of the trail are opportunities to discover Brisbane’s history, passing significant heritage sites such as the South Brisbane Dry Docks and Coal Wharves remnants, and the Kangaroo Point Cliffs.

The second part of the trail starts near the Riverlife Adventure Centre and ends at Thornton Street ferry terminal. Here the artworks focus on the river - its energy, beauty and strong sense of place. Some artists explore ways to harness solar and wind energy in their artworks, some pay tribute to the traditional owners, while others consider the formation and archaeology of the surrounding cliffs and river.

The second section of the trail also has important heritage sites including the Naval Stores.

The third part of the trail is on top of the cliffs at the newly built Kangaroo Point Park, where visitors can enjoy the panoramic views of the Brisbane River and the Botanic Gardens. Like the artworks below on the boardwalk, the artists in the park have responded to the natural environment and created artworks inspired by the sun and the interplay of light and shadow, the spiral form of the nautilus shell and man’s relationship with nature.

Please note that the steps leading from the Kangaroo Point boardwalk up to the Kangaroo Point Park are very steep and should be carefully accessed. The formal access is via River Terrace.

Visitors can take a walk or bike ride along the paths on Kangaroo Point boardwalk and enjoy the recreational facilities in the parklands including picnic spaces, rock climbing sites, river activities and historic sites. They can also enjoy travelling on the river using one of Brisbane City Council’s regular CityFerries, CityCats or CityHoppers. Timetables are available at ferry terminals.

To discover more Council walking trails, visit [www.brisbane.qld.gov.au](http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au)
SECTION A
1. Man & Matter and World Expo ‘88
2. Biomechanical Pelicans

SECTION B
3. Sunflower Mobile
4. Reflections at Midday
5. Fish Fossil
6. Geerbaugh’s Midden

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7. Flickering Wind Generator
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9. Venus Rising: Out of the water and into the light
10. Seven Versions of the Sun
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PUBLIC ART
trail
ART AND THE RIVER
In 1992, the Queensland State Government with funding contributions from Brisbane City Council upgraded Lower River Terrace to create Kangaroo Point Boardwalk from the Maritime Museum to the old Naval Stores. As part of the upgrade, the Queensland Government reinstalled Peter D Cole’s 13 part series, Man & Matter from the World Expo ‘88 South Brisbane site and commissioned a new work, The Biomechanical Pelicans by Christopher Trotter.
In Australia's bicentennial year, 1988, Brisbane was host to a six-month party, World Expo ‘88.

To showcase Australian art for the duration of the festivities, Expo ‘88 commissioned some of Australia’s leading artists to exhibit alongside internationally renowned artists in the Expo ‘88 sculpture park.

With sculptures loaned from galleries and museums all over the world, the Expo ‘88 curators formed a collection of 90 artworks that responded to Expo’s ‘Leisure in the Age of Technology’ theme and illustrated “… the interdependence of art and technology. Water, sound, light and motion merge with the respective mediums of steel, bronze and wood, in reassessing the traditional limitations of sculpture”. (The World Expo ‘88 Collection: Phillip Bacon Galleries)

Peter D Cole’s Man & Matter sculptural series was one of the works commissioned by Expo ‘88. Relocated to Kangaroo Point Boardwalk in 1992 as part of the parklands upgrade, this is the series of sculptures that can be seen throughout the first section of the Art and the River trail. To fully appreciate Cole’s artwork, it helps to understand the scale of Expo ‘88 and how much the people of Brisbane enjoyed the party.

The site chosen for Expo ‘88 was South Brisbane. As the government began land resumptions, protests from displaced residents impacted the project. However, by July 1985 Stanley and Grey Streets had been closed and demolition had begun.

Architects, Bligh Maccormick 88, created the vision of Expo ‘88 including the eight famous canopies that provided shade throughout the site. Deputy Premier under the Bjelke-Petersen Government, Sir Llewellyn (Llew) Edwards, was appointed Chairman of the Expo ‘88 Authority.

Expo ‘88 was opened on 30 April 1988 during a ceremony attended by Queen Elizabeth II. Fifty-five international participants, including 36 nations, participated in Expo ‘88.
The first historic site on the trail is the South Brisbane Dry Dock which was closed in 1973 and is now part of the Queensland Maritime Museum.

By the 1870s, the South Brisbane docks had become extremely busy. It became apparent to the government that a facility for maintenance, repairs and refitting of vessels was needed. In 1875 the chief engineer for Harbours and Rivers, William D Nesbitt, designed the South Brisbane Dry Dock. Using the best materials, including Helidon stone, the dry dock was officially opened on 10 December 1881. The material extracted from the construction site was used throughout South Brisbane to build up streets. Initially, the dry dock was able to take vessels measuring 98 metres in length. However, an additional 30 metres were added in 1887 to accommodate larger ships. The dry dock proved to be profitable for the government with an average of 60 vessels each year using the dock.

When filled with water, the dock was also used as a swimming pool for swimming carnivals.

Many believe that Expo ‘88 was Brisbane’s coming of age, as the city experienced different cultures, food, lifestyle and entertainment. The Courier-Mail described Expo as “bridging the yawning gap from a hayseed state to an urbane, international future”. The number of visits over the six months exceeded 15.7 million.

The closing ceremony was held on 30 October 1988, the closing song, The Carnival is Over, was performed by the Seekers and was an appropriate end to Brisbane’s biggest party.

Large, temporary pavilions showcased each country’s displays. Favourites included Canada, New Zealand, Nepal, Japan and the USSR. The German Beer Hall was a popular night spot where steins were left on tables as the chicken dance took place.

Expo ’88 was open every day for six months between 10am and 10pm. Street performers, day and night parades, daily fireworks and laser shows set to music, rock concerts, street art, the monorail, amusement park and aquacade were all added attractions. Weekly themes including ‘towards 2000’, ‘heritage’ and ‘planet earth’ added to the variety. Brisbane residents who fondly remember Expo tell of the exciting vibe and carnival atmosphere, as well as the amazing array of international foods.

**ARTIST** Peter D Cole

**MATERIALS & DATE OF INSTALLATION** Painted mild steel, 1992
The only exceptions to the Man & Matter artworks on the first section of the trail are Christopher Trotter’s two stylised pelicans that sit upon a river pylon, near the Captain Cook Bridge.

The Biomechanical Pelicans were Trotter’s second public commission and early evidence of Trotter’s interest in environmental themes and the concept of renewal through recycling. Since this early work, Trotter has continued to refine his concept of sustainability and the use of recycled materials is an intrinsic part of his work.

Trotter explains, “the pelicans reference the time when our waterways were healthy. The element of recycling in my work is important to me and helps promote the concept of creative solutions to future generations”.

**ARTIST** Christopher Trotter  
**MATERIALS & DATE OF INSTALLATION** Found metal and concrete pedestal, 1995
In 1995, the Queensland Government, with funding from Brisbane City Council, extended the Kangaroo Point Boardwalk to Thornton Street ferry terminal and installed six new artworks.

The common themes that tie these works together are the artists’ responses to the riverine environment and the Kangaroo Point Cliffs. Key historic sites along this section of the boardwalk include the Kangaroo Point Cliffs, the former Naval Stores and remnants of the South Brisbane Coal Wharves.

KANGAROO POINT CLIFFS

These sheer cliffs were once steep hills covered with scrub. With the establishment of the Moreton Bay Penal Colony (1824-1839) on the opposite side of the river, a need for suitable building materials became apparent. In 1826, under the direction of Commandant Patrick Logan, the convicts began to quarry for stone, known as Brisbane Tuff, at Kangaroo Point.

Much of Brisbane’s infrastructure has come from the stone in the Kangaroo Point Cliffs including the rock used for many of the river walls, the stone kerbing throughout the city and in the older suburbs, and early drains under the city. Churches, houses, schools and bridge abutments in Brisbane have also used this stone.

The quarry was closed in 1976 as it became clear that most of the Brisbane Tuff deposits had been extracted.
SUNFLOWER MOBILE

Set against the backdrop of the Kangaroo Point Cliffs, this large sunflower draws energy from its solar powered panels. In turn, the panels activate the three metre flower head which spins on top of its stem. The speed with which the flower head rotates depends on how much of the sun it receives.

The artwork lives and interacts with the environment in the sense that it converts energy from the sun and creates movement.

ARTIST Jonathon Coleman
MATERIALS & DATE OF INSTALLATION
Stainless steel, shinkolite sheet, 1995

REFLECTIONS AT MIDDAY

Jandy Pannel has created a sundial embellished with astrological symbols and text wrapping around its circumference. The sundial shows the hour points from earliest time at sunrise to the latest time at sunset.

ARTIST Jandy Pannel
MATERIALS & DATE OF INSTALLATION
Outer circle cast in bronze, stars in glass, set in concrete base, 1995
Drawing inspiration from the surrounding cliffs and the Brisbane River, Christopher Trotter explains how Fish Fossil evolved from an interest in what lay beneath the cliffs and the element of discovery. “This was my first fossil style of work…I created an organic steel skeletal form made from discarded components and laid them in a panel of wet concrete. I jackhammered them out again like an archaeologist revealing a true fossil”.

**ARTIST** Christopher Trotter

**MATERIALS & DATE OF INSTALLATION** Found metal, cast concrete, 1995

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**FISHER FOSSIL**

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**FORMER NAVAL STORES**

The Queensland colonial government constructed the Naval Stores between 1886 and 1888 as a reaction to the Russian Scare, when a fear of invasion gripped Queensland after the Russian Navy was spotted in the Pacific Ocean. To boost Brisbane’s military defences, the government commissioned two gun boats. The Gayundah and the Paluma became the first ships in the Queensland Navy.

In the early 1890s a set of timber stairs was constructed that led to St. Mary’s Anglican Church at the top of the cliff. The masonry church became Queensland’s naval chapel. In 1987 the Australian Defence Force sold the site to Brisbane City Council. Only one of the original stores remains.
Ron Hurley’s Geerbaugh’s Midden has been described as a “celebration of the cliffs by the Rainbow Serpent and inspired by conversations with an old man by the name of Geerbaugh. Geerbaugh was the last traditional member of the Waka Waka nation”.

The description goes on to explain the symbolism in the artwork: “Each of the six poles represents a star in the Southern Cross and each of the six clans mentioned above is a reminder of a history that is denied and seldom spoken about”.

Growing up in an urban environment, Hurley elaborates on his concerns about the treatment of Aboriginal people and how this shaped his arts practice:

“Fortunately, since the 1960s I have witnessed remarkable developments in attitudes, education and understanding. It is from the many layers of my urban existence that my visual vocabulary has developed.

My fascination with the way my ancestors survived, and the way Indigenous people on the East Coast have had to bear the full force of colonisation since 1788, has largely shaped my visual arts language.

As an individual I have become stronger daily, in my appreciation of and pride in my ancestry”.

(www.ronhurley.com)
The South Brisbane Coal Wharves were opened on 2 June 1884. Agitation by the West Moreton coal owners to the colonial government requesting a rail link to deep water anchorage facilities, led to the construction of the wharves and a railway siding that extended from the Ipswich line. The coal could be delivered directly to the wharves by train and then unloaded straight onto the ships.

By the mid 1900s the demand for the South Brisbane wharves declined as larger port facilities had been built in other areas along the river. In 1960 the siding was removed and in 1974 the wharf was demolished.

**Flickering Wind Generator** is another installation about sustainability by Johnathon Coleman. Installed at the top of a shelter, the rotor blades of this piece turn in the wind and convert wind energy into electrical energy through a series of electromagnetic charges.

**ARTIST** Jonathon Coleman  
**MATERIALS & DATE OF INSTALLATION** Painted steel, shinkolite, solar panels, 1995

**South Brisbane Coal Wharves Remnants**

The South Brisbane Coal Wharves were opened on 2 June 1884. Agitation by the West Moreton coal owners to the colonial government requesting a rail link to deep water anchorage facilities, led to the construction of the wharves and a railway siding that extended from the Ipswich line. The coal could be delivered directly to the wharves by train and then unloaded straight onto the ships.

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Mona Ryder has welded, fabricated and bolted together various thicknesses of galvanised steel to form the sculpture *Crossover Guardians*. Ryder’s intention was to create sculptures that act as guardians or beacons over the river and the ferry. The tall oar-shaped pieces resemble the cross bars of the Story Bridge and reference the history of the row boat which was the main form of transport in the early settlement of Brisbane.
In 2010, the former TAFE site adjacent St Mary’s Church was redeveloped by the Queensland Government to create Kangaroo Point Park. Perched atop the cliffs, the recreational park provides panoramic views of the city and river and includes a café, playground, barbecue facilities and promenade along the edge of the Kangaroo Point Cliffs.

The park comprises five artworks. *Venus Rising* by UK artist Wolfgang Buttress was selected from an international competition and commissioned following a statewide poll. The other four artworks are by Australian artists – *Seven Versions of the Sun* by Daniel Boyd, *The Green Room* and *Afforest* by Nicole Voevodin-Cash, and *Untitled-Wormholes* by Alexander Knox.

There are a mixture of forms in the park that range from interactive artworks, iconic sculptures and landscape art. All of the artworks are site specific, responding to the natural environment, cultural heritage and the theme of urban recreation.
VENUS RISING: OUT OF THE WATER AND INTO THE LIGHT

Venus Rising is a 23 metre, polished, stainless steel structure that radiates silver or a deep gold depending on the intensity or position of the sun. The shape of the artwork emulates the spiral form of a nautilus shell with hundreds of interlocking rings and tubes that twist up to the open sky. It is possible to enter at the base of the artwork and look up through the spiralling structure to the sky.

The artist, Wolfgang Buttress, says the significance of the Kangaroo Point Park site to Indigenous and local people shaped his approach to the creation of Venus Rising: “One of the most obvious things to do when you are in this park is to look back at Brisbane and its fantastic skyline, but this skyline only exists because of the river and sky so rather than look horizontally I wanted to make the connection vertically, between the water the rocks and the sky. It is a connection to what has happened here before, of moving forward and I hope a connection to nature”.

Inspired by the power and symbolism of the Indigenous Morning Star Poles, the artist named the artwork Venus Rising. Morning Star is the name given to the planet Venus just before sunrise when it is at its brightest.

ARTIST Wolfgang Buttress

MATERIALS & DATE OF INSTALLATION
Stainless steel, 2011

Queensland Government: Art + Place program
Seven Versions of the Sun is a series of seven viewing platforms or arbours along the main promenade adjacent to the Kangaroo Point Cliffs. Each shelter is located to draw attention to the stunning views of the river and the city.

The screens that form the canopy of the arbours are electroplated to create a luminous and reflective surface. From Lower River Terrace below, the screens appear a shimmering, warm gold against the blue sky. Underneath the arbours, the shelters exude warmth, casting shadows through the laser-cut sun motifs and create an interesting interplay of light and shadow over the landscape.

Daniel Boyd explains why he was inspired by the universal and timeless theme of the sun:

“The driving component of Seven Versions of the Sun is people moving through the landscape, connected by a common signifier, the sun. People and their journeys overlap...

The sun becomes a symbol of this process irrespective of what place in time one passes through a specific landscape”.

This symbolism and site resonate with Boyd. His Aboriginal ancestors once lived in the place now called Kangaroo Point.

ARTIST Daniel Boyd
MATERIALS & DATE OF INSTALLATION
Electroplated aluminium plate, 2010
Wormholes is a compilation of fun, boldly striped, wormlike fantasy creatures that feature a soundscape of people and events from years gone by. Alexander Knox worked with musician Michael Munson to create sounds drawn from the history of the site – the voice of an Indigenous narrator, the squeals of children playing in the former Kangaroo Point Primary School, birds, frogs, ships’ whistles and church bells.

Knox explains that Wormholes is intended as an interactive piece: “…where children (and adults) can discover the site and its histories through a combination of free form, exploratory play and exploration without overly prescribing particular activities or readings. The work’s vaguely zoomorphic forms suggest any number of fantasy creatures and scenarios whilst remaining formally abstract”.

**ARTIST** Alexander Knox

**MATERIALS & DATE OF INSTALLATION**
Mild steel, coated in an acrylic urethane enamel paint, 2009
THE GREEN ROOM AND AFFOREST

The Green Room (pictured above) is a soft amphitheatre, a genre of art often referred to as ‘land or earth’ art.

Nicole Voevodin-Cash explains that it is a direct reference to the theatre where the city is the stage: “A theatre of the everyday puts on a spectacular show at night as the lights of the cityscape come on to take centre stage”.

Afforest (pictured left) is the result of extensive research on traditional gardening techniques of espalier and pleaching. Described as a living artwork, Afforest is a series of grafted and shaped flame trees that “exaggerates and heightens our relationship with nature, emphasising man’s manipulation and control over nature and our role within the natural environment”.

ARTIST Nicole Voevodin-Cash

MATERIALS & DATE OF INSTALLATION
GREEN ROOM - Turf, soil, tuff stone, and LED lights. AFFOREST - Hoop Pine (Araucaria cunninghamii), Bumpy Ash (Flindersia schottiana), Wollemi Pine (Wollemia nobilis), Kauri Pine (Agathis robusta), cycad (Cycas revoluta), Queen’s Wreath (Petrea kohautiana), grafted Flame Tree (Brachychiton acerifolius), and Bunya Pine (Araucaria bidwillii), 2010
KANGAROO POINT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kangaroo Point Park is located on the site of the former Kangaroo Point State School. In the 1850s the Kangaroo Point area consisted of a few scattered houses, farms and industries such as sawmills and brickworks.

The Kangaroo Point School was established on this site in 1867 and was one of the first government funded schools established in Queensland. By the 1950s enrolment numbers had reduced and in 1965 the school was closed.
PUBLIC ARTtrail
ART AND THE RIVER

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