



Embargoed Thursday 12am

First Nations artist creates giant floating art garden for Queen's Wharf Brisbane

Concept image of the artwork can be found [here](#)

An enormous 15 metre floating art garden depicting native plants by exciting First Nations artist Tony Albert has been unveiled, adding to the growing multi-million-dollar collection of public art earmarked for the transformational Queen's Wharf Brisbane.

Titled *Inhabitant*, the bold, botanical artworks of Australian flora, including Banksia, Desert Pea and Waratah, will be fabricated in marine-grade aluminium and raised four metres above the porte-cochere drive-through entrance to Brisbane's new entertainment precinct.

A background greenery of live native plants will extend the full length of the William Street underpass.

Tony Albert, the Brisbane based contemporary artist behind the revamped Sydney Football Stadium's high profile blue seating artworks, said he was "honoured" his "epic in scale" garden was included in the iconic public art project.

"Brisbane is part of my heart and I'm so grateful to be accepted and work and consult with the local community," he said.

"As an artist these kinds of opportunities are unprecedented, especially in the way in which you can communicate with an audience.

"Where a city is quite barren of indigenous indicators in the same way as sculptures of women are with an over-representation of older white men, I can advocate for an indigenous voice in the public space.

"We need aspirations for our children and need that visibility as part of the landscape."

Mr Albert described *Inhabitant* as multi-layered and included a playful twist in his selection of flora.

"I wanted something bright and vibrant that people will identify with Australia and also the indigenous people, but there's a deeper story to it," he said.

"When you look at the way the oldest surviving culture has looked after, maintained and cherished the landscape, it has these beautiful and symbolic ideas of caring for country.

"I was going for iconic and to represent native flowers from across Australia, apart from one – the South African protea, which always gets mistaken for an Australian native.

"I love little playful interventions so trying to spot them will provide some fun."

The Townsville-born aboriginal artist has built an impressive portfolio of prestigious commissions and accolades, including a sculpture to commemorate indigenous soldiers for

the Sydney Hyde Park War Memorial and representations in the National Gallery of Australia and Brisbane's Gallery of Modern Art.

Director of the Institute of Modern Art Liz Nowell, part of the Specialist Arts Advisory panel, which is curating the comprehensive collection of artworks to be installed across the tourism precinct's 7.5ha of public space said *Inhabitant* carries "an important and powerful message."

"Tony Albert is one of Australia's foremost contemporary artists, and his international career began right here in Brisbane. It seems fitting that such a significant work, by an artist who is so embedded in this city should take pride of place in Queen's Wharf Brisbane," Ms Nowell said.

"Our cities and towns are filled with bronze monuments, honouring colonial figures that many of us would not be familiar with," she said

"It's critical that these statues are counterbalanced with public art from First Nations people.

"Tony's creation is visually arresting as an homage to the Australian landscape, but also as an evolution of his longstanding artistic interest in the cultural misrepresentation of Aboriginal people.

The Star Entertainment Group Interim CEO Geoff Hogg said *Inhabitant* will be a striking welcome to Queen's Wharf Brisbane.

"Domestic and international visitors, including for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games want greater authentic cultural experiences," Mr Hogg said.

"Tony's beautiful floral artwork will offer our guests a path to learn more of the rich culture, history and stories of our state's first inhabitants.

"It's an important contribution to our public art project, a valuable asset to the community and will be a long-standing legacy we are proud to be part of."

The Specialist Arts Advisory panel is being led by highly regarded art figure Philip Bacon and as well as Liz Nowell includes leading Indigenous curator and arts administrator Avril Quail.

All artworks will be in place for the development's planned staged opening from the second half of 2023.

Other artworks already announced include:

- An eight-metre high, eight tonne bronze sculpture by internationally renowned artist Lindy Lee
- A supersized mosaic wall mural of Australian lungfish by local artist Samuel Tupou
- A high-tech interactive digital light installation for the heritage listed The Printery Office by husband-and-wife team Alinta Krauth and Jason Nelson
- Sheila, a larger-than-life five tonne goddess-like bronze sculpture by Justene Williams

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