

Sculptures set to “blow community away”

Buller district residents and visitors can expect to see an exciting series of sculptures pop-up in locations across the region in the coming months.

The hard work, sweat and artistry of two weeks' solid stone carving culminated in a successful unveiling event for the Kawatiri Sculpture Symposium on Friday night (20 May 2016). Over the previous two weeks, Tai Poutini Polytechnic students joined local and international artists to produce a series of carvings for the West Coast community to enjoy. The event, run by the Buller Arts and Recreation Trust and supported by the Polytechnic, aims to revitalise public spaces across the district by challenging artists to produce works for public display in a demanding environment.

Buller Community Development Facilitator Pete Howard says it has been an amazing experience to watch students work alongside established artists to produce some stunning works of art. “The students have really stepped-up in what has been a mammoth challenge. The series of public works will be a fantastic showcase of the skills we’ve all watched in real-time over the two weeks. We are finalising locations now and people can expect to see them installed within the next three to six months.”

The two-week symposium saw sculptors work in front of the public under tight timeframes to produce pieces for display across the district. The aim is to revitalise public spaces by displaying the finished works, which explore the theme of “rejuvenation” through Buller’s history and the local flora and fauna. Around 150 people attended the unveiling night last week, and there was strong interest in the auction for small sculptures made by Polytechnic students.

TPP Jade and Hard Stone Carving Tutor Sheree Warren says it was an amazing experience for students, who had never before been exposed to this level of professionalism and pressure.

“The whole event has been ambitious and I think the end results are going to blow local residents away. It’s a massive undertaking to carve a sculpture in just two weeks and working with established artists has been really inspiring for the students.”

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