

**Gill Gatfield**  
***Zealandia* in Venice 2018**

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Sculptor Gill Gatfield is the only New Zealand artist invited to participate in 'Time, Space, Existence', an exhibition curated and presented by the Global Art Foundation, at the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale which opens on 25 May and runs until 26 November. For this international event, Gatfield has created *Zealandia*, a monumental sculpture carved from a single piece of rare New Zealand stone.

Gatfield's sculpture will be prominently sited in the Giardini Marinaressa, between the Biennale's main venues, the Arsenale and the Giardini, alongside works by renowned artists and architects from across the globe, where it will be seen by an estimated 250,000 visitors over the exhibition's six-month duration.

Carved from unique stone extracted from the remote mountains of New Zealand's South Island, *Zealandia* combines ancient materials, technical innovation and minimalist form. Twin slabs defy gravity, stretching up from an Italian granite pedestal. Like shifting tectonic plates, the stone panels slice through each other. Exposed striations capture striking snapshots of primordial time.

From the earth and of the earth, *Zealandia* registers the discovery of Zealandia, the 8<sup>th</sup> continent, a submerged landmass with small islands rising up from the Pacific Ocean.



The sculpture outline is an X figure that will replicate in shadow on the ground, creating XX - the female genetic code. Streaked with minerals and crystals that shimmer like silver and gold, the veined surface suggests skin and muscles. The stone flows like the folds of a majestic robe. Gatfield's X form challenges the classical Renaissance proportions of the ideal Man, developing instead an elegant hour-glass figure with outreached arms, high waist and slim proportions.

Over 100 million years old, the stone is a precious natural material found only in New Zealand. The artist notes: "From the moment I first saw the stone, *Zealandia* took shape. I knew this sculpture needed to rise up and intersect - like the tectonic plates that shifted, resulting in an uplift that formed this stone. The sculpture embodies the qualities of strength, fragility and resilience."



*Zealandia*, which stands 2.3 meters high and weighs over 1.5 tonnes, has travelled 42,000 km by sea en route to Venice. The large block of raw quarried stone was first shipped from New Zealand to China to be cut and then returned by sea to New Zealand for Gatfield to create the futuristic sculpture with a team of NZ engineers and fabricators. In taking *Zealandia* to Italy - the home of stone and classical sculpture, the artist reverses the flow of the stone trade and of art history.

*Zealandia* will be located in Giardini Marinessa for six months, alongside the Pakistan National Pavilion and projects by University of Cincinnati and the US Polish architect Daniel Liebeskind.

Alumni of this international exhibition curated by the Global Art Foundation include: Louise Bourgeois, Yoko Ono, Marina Abramovic, Vito Acconci and Mies van der Rohe Foundation.



## THE ARTIST



New Zealand artist Gill Gatfield (MFA Hons.) creates powerful minimalist sculpture from rare stones and unique timbers. Her elegant abstract forms create thought-provoking and contemplative spaces within architectural and natural environments.

Gatfield's work has been exhibited internationally in curated exhibitions in NZ, Australia, USA and Europe. She has undertaken significant public commissions and is no stranger to sending large works around the globe. In 2015, she presented a four tonne black granite sculpture *The Kiss* in Aarhus, Denmark. That project won a coveted international CODAaward in 2017.

From mid-May, the artist will be based in Venice, overseeing the siting and installation of *Zealandia* and taking part in the Architecture Biennale opening formalities and artist symposia. She will present a paper on *Zealandia & Baroque Abstraction* in a public lecture hosted by European Cultural Centre on 27 May in Giardini Marinaressa. In June, Gatfield's practice will be presented in New York at the 2018 American Institute of Architecture Conference, attended by 25,000 delegates from 85 nations.

### KEY INFORMATION:

Artist website: [www.gillgatfield.com](http://www.gillgatfield.com)

### 'Time, Space, Existence' 25 May – 26 Nov 2018

Openings Thursday 24 May and Friday 25 May, 17:00 -19:00

Curated by Global Art Affairs Foundation

Hosted and supported by European Cultural Centre

<http://www.europeanculturalcentre.eu/index.php?page=15&lang=en>

In conjunction with the Venice Architecture Biennale

### Artist public lecture 27 May 2018, 16:00 – 18:00

'Baroque Abstraction: *Zealandia* - A Romance between Conceptual Abstraction and Italian Baroque'

Giardini Marinaressa, Venice.

### IMAGES:

Gill Gatfield, *Zealandia (At Home)* 2018 ©Gill Gatfield. Photo: Conrad Morley/Craig Potton Rainforest NZ.

Gill Gatfield, *Zealandia* 2018 (detail)

Artist Portrait Photographer: Rachel Spillane

### CONTACT DETAILS:

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