



Timatātanga Hou Camera Obscura: an introduction

*Mai te pō ka puta
Ki te whei Ao
Ki te Ao mārama*

*From the darkness
the dawn is born
and enlightenment appears*



Timatātanga Hou Camera Obscura 2020

What is it and where is it?

Timatātanga Hou is a large interactive sculptural structure in Whangārei's town basin and is situated on the Hātea Loop walkway next to Te Matau ā Pohe bridge.

Link to this [Map](#) to find its location.



*Timatātanga Hou project team
(Diane Stoppard, Felicity Christian,
Trish Clarke) inside the trial camera
obscura room.*

It is a working camera obscura, with an aperture that allows light from outside into the central room - this focuses the light and projects the outside view onto the walls in a moving and inverted real time movie!

The stories behind it

Timatatanga Hou translates from te reo as 'new beginnings' and describes the sensation of travelling into the obscura room and viewing Te Ao (the world) in a new way.



A photograph from inside Timatatanga Hou Camera Obscura showing the inverted view of Te Matua o Poe bridge that is projected on the walls.

This 8 meter spiral weathering steel sculpture, which surrounds a camera obscura room, was created by Architect Felicity Christian, Photographer Diane Stoppard and Sculptor Trish Clarke.

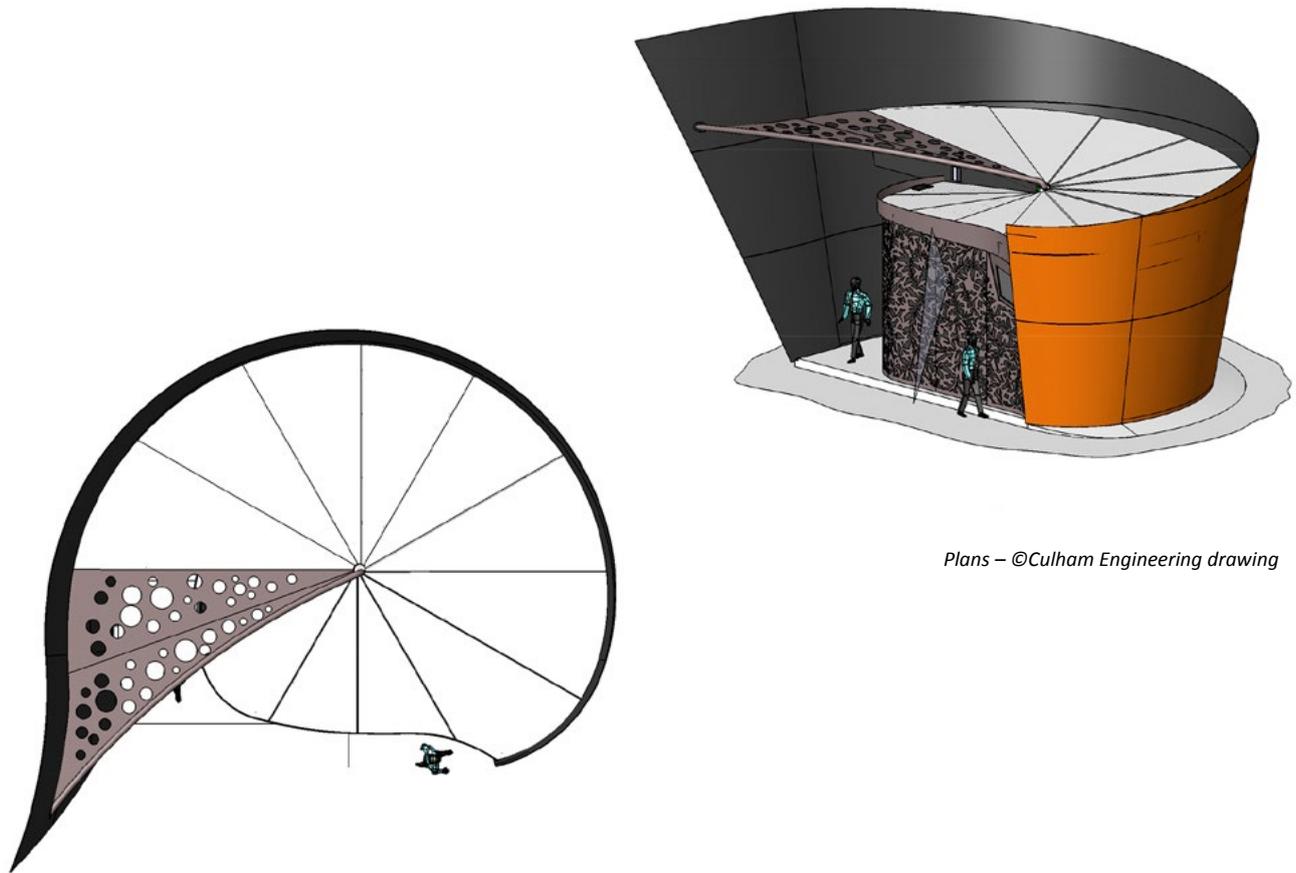
The idea began when the Whangarei District Council sent out a call to create a sculpture park at the time of the Rugby World Cup in 2011. Diane, an obscura fanatic engaged Felicity and between the two of them the current spiral footprint, offering the viewer a journey into the obscura room without use of doors, was created. Sculptor Trish Clarke joined the Team and the current design evolved.

The design of this camera obscura is based on te awa Hatea environment and the maritime history of Whangārei.



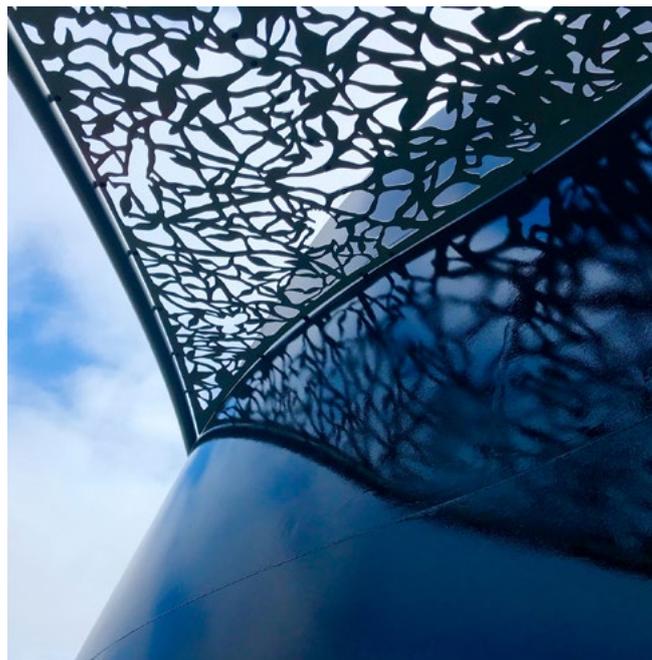
Timatatanga Hou Camera Obscura 2020

The soaring steel exterior represents the bow of a ship and the exposed welds celebrate Whangārei's ship building craft.



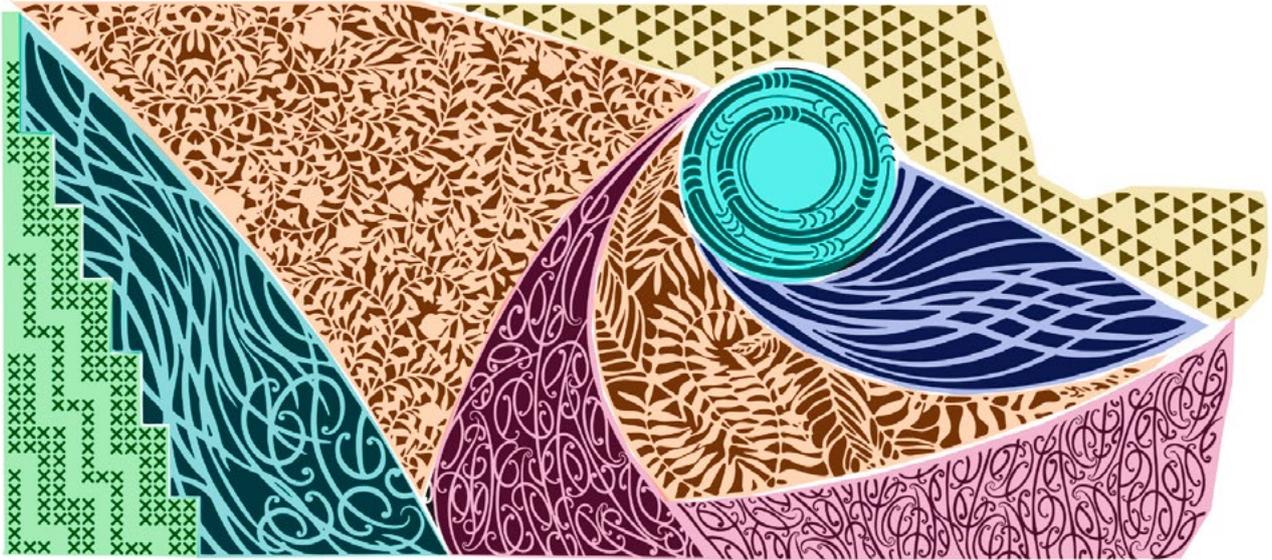
Plans – ©Culham Engineering drawing

The spiral roof design blends the form of a snail with the aperture of a camera lens. This also allows visitors to walk freely into the camera obscura, from daylight to the complete dark (needed to make the camera work), without having to pass through a door.



Canopy pattern, Timatatanga Hou Camera Obscura 2020

The canopy reflects the shadows of the mangroves edging the river.

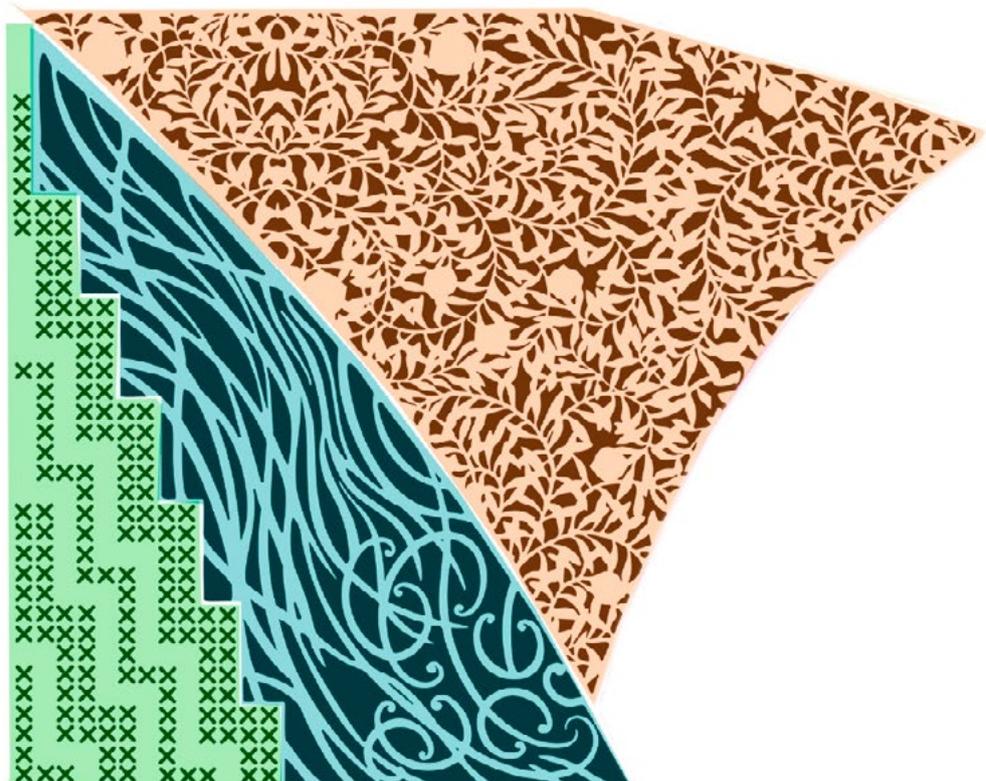


© Trish Clarke

The detailed design on the front of the camera obscura weaves together the Māori and European stories of this environment and is the work of artists Trish Clarke and Poutama Hetaraka. (see details below for explanations of each pattern)

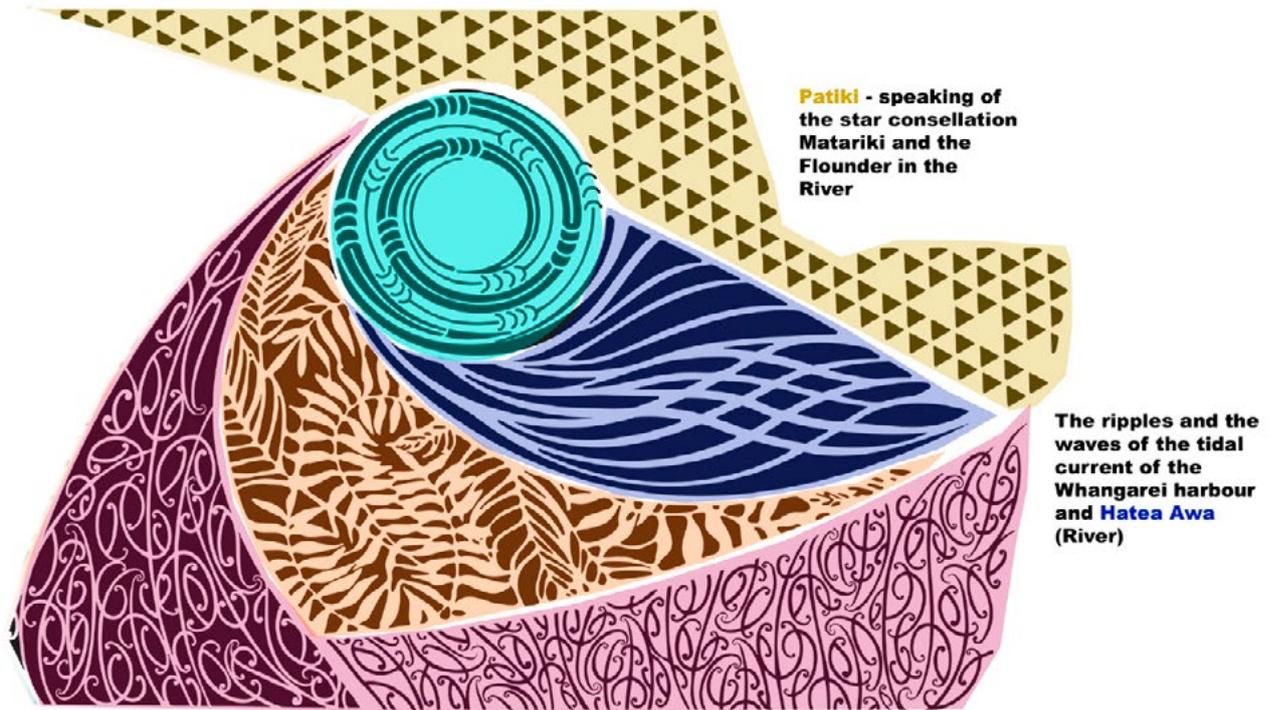
Decorative flora design of the kauri leaves and cones, celebrating the mighty Kauri of Te tai Tokerau, it's Maunga (mountains) and use in waka and ship building

The Kowhaiwhai moves into the lines of tuna (eel) representing the life forms in the River



Poutama - representing the pillars of community, striving for more as a community.

Una Una Hi, a unique design to Te tai Tokerau, representing the fish scales that cling to the great fish of Maui. This is the eye of the Camera Obscura



Patiki - speaking of the star constellation Matariki and the Flounder in the River

The ripples and the waves of the tidal current of the Whangarei harbour and Hatea Awa (River)

Kowhaiwhai - The people of Whangarei moving fluidly in all directions. Connections with the environment



This project had huge community support with over 50% of funds secured from local businesses and residents. The Whangarei District Council agreed to site the Sculpture next to the Hatea and take ownership on behalf of the people of Whangarei. The final funds were procured from the Provincial Growth fund and construction completed by November 2020. It was officially opened by Her Worship the Mayor, Sheryl Mai on 20 Nov 2020.



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This resource is free to download and use for educational purposes. It was researched and written in conjunction with the Photography Department, Bachelor of Applied Arts, NorthTec and with assistance from NorthTec Research Committee.