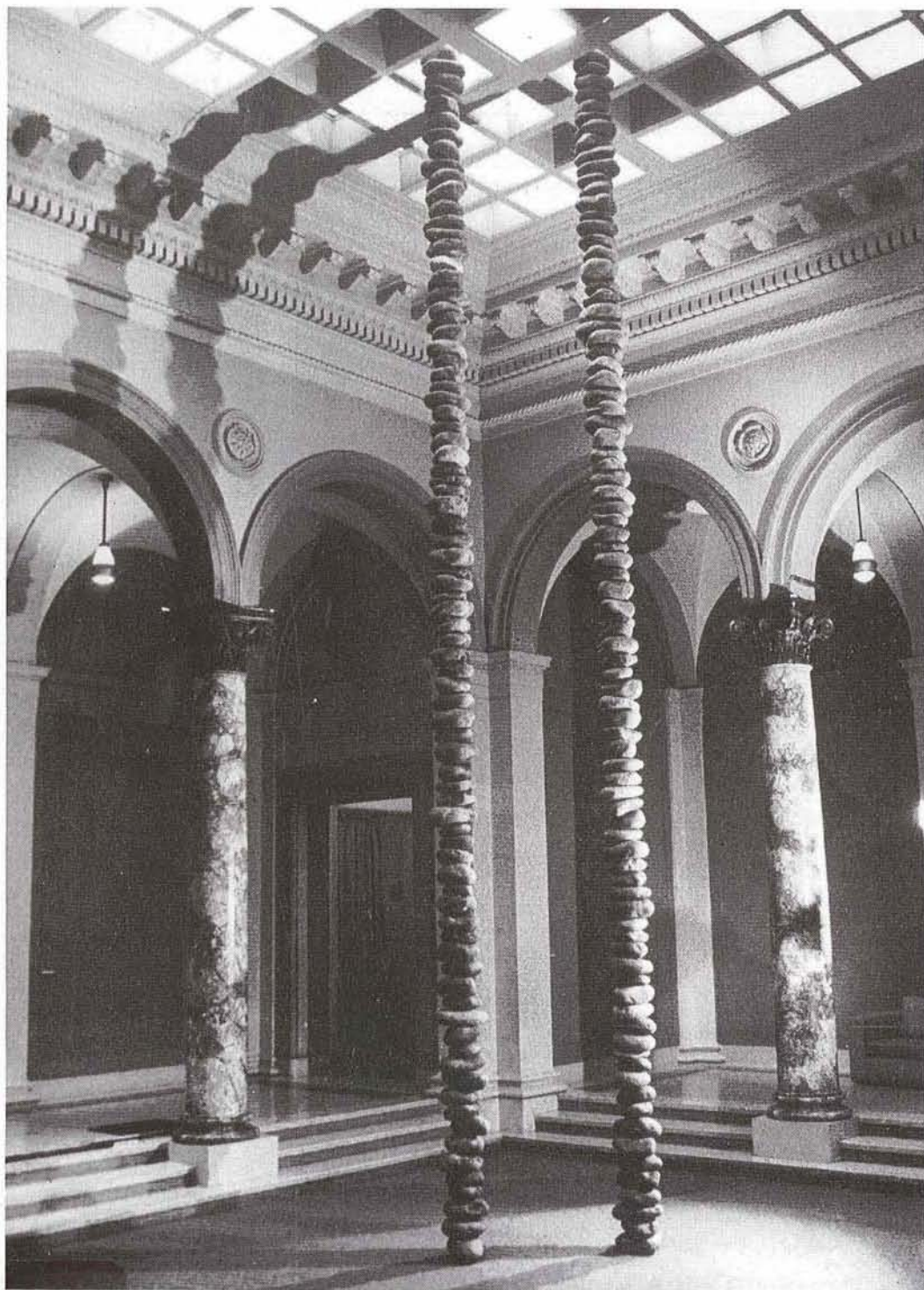


# South Island Rock Pillars

Chris Booth

Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Centre Court Installation  
April - June , 1989.

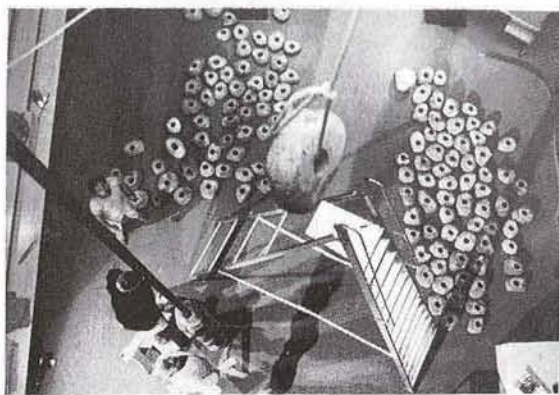
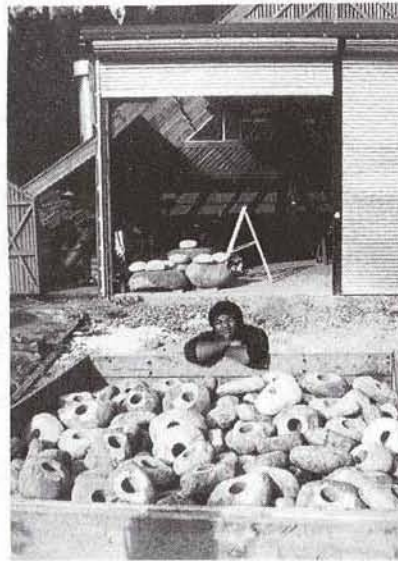


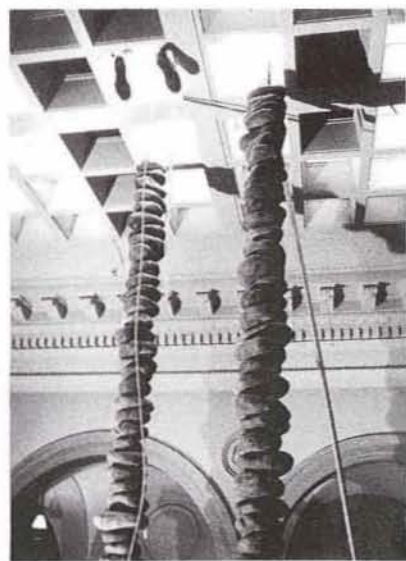
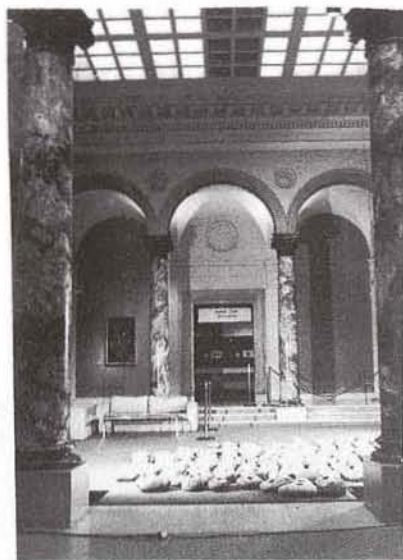
Chris Booth is described as 'a New Zealander and a far Northerner, a lover of nature, of human beings and of our ancient heritage', and it is reference to these goals, aspirations or experiences that we can best approach an understanding of the ideas embodied in his recent works. his respect and concern for the Earth, its fragile air and space, its ecosystems and in particular for new Zealand Aotearoa, is well illustrated by his use of natural materials in his works. Rocks, logs, sticks and other 'found' materials have featured prominently in his sculptural works during the past 15 years. Where they were found and where they are placed in the final installation is all vitally important to each work. Also central is Booth's interest in and concern for his fellow human beings, and for their culture and for their cultural heritage. All these are reflected in most of Chris Booth's works and are obviously featuring

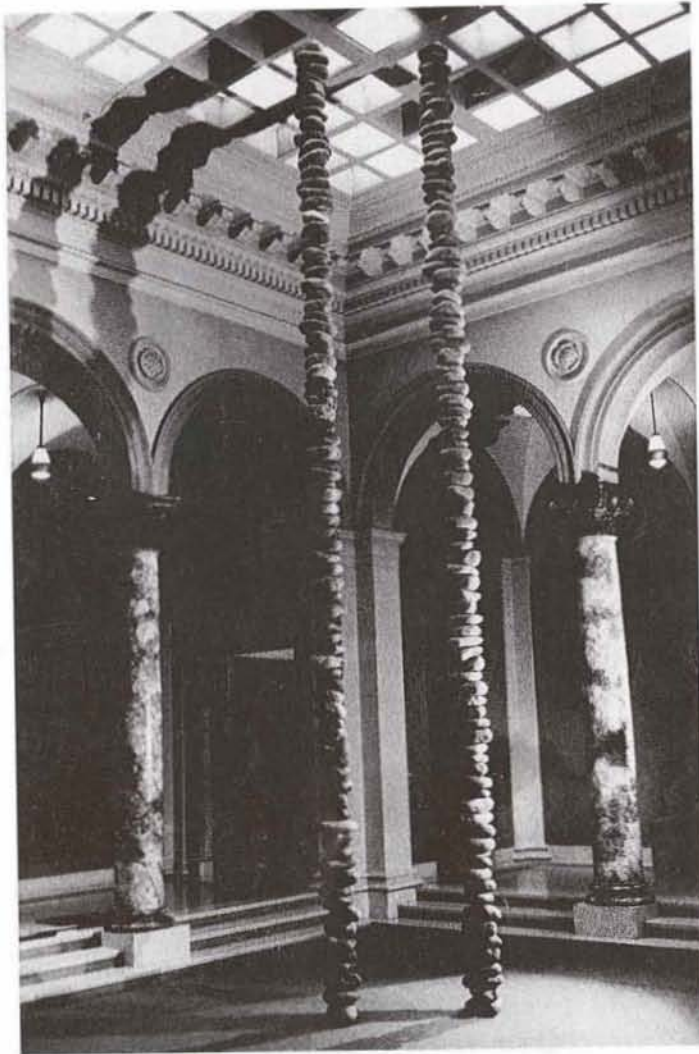
in South Island Rock Pillars.

However, for this artist 'process' - that is the stages in which the work is built, is also a highly significant element in this finished work, as each stage in the process brings in its work related concepts, ideas and associations. For that reason, this pamphlet discusses the South Island Rock Pillars installation by way of its construction.

The following photographs follow the process involved in the construction of this work. It begins with the collection of the river worn boulders in the Kaikoura and Buller Gorge regions (aided by two English tourists), through the rail freighting of the rocks to the artist's studio in the far north where they are modified with diamond tools by Eugene Hanson and Tuohu Takimoana. Following the arrival of the rocks at the McDougall Art Gallery the final 'growth' process of the South Island Rock Pillars begins.







Finally we are presented with the finished installation - South Island Rock Pillars. From the unitary accumulation of one stone upon the other we sense a statement about the strength and durability of these ancient pieces of our natural landforms. Here they are transported into columns of quiet elegance and beauty. Their relationship with the architecture around them is clearly stated. "They are," says the artist, "a comment on man's mark on Mother Earth...; they are also symbols of the spirit of much of the South Island."

Chris Booth's sculptures challenge and enlarge our awareness and our sensitivities towards both our natural and our cultural environment. In responding to the South Island venue, and in particular to this specific site inside the McDougall Art Gallery, Chris Booth characteristically invites us to consider our own assumptions of attitudes as inhabitants of Aotearoa, New Zealand.

His work is always a challenge to our complacency or if you like, our state of 'unawareness' and frequently these challenges are made in structures of seemingly stark simplicity. However, as this document has tried to explain, it is not solely their simplicity nor their formal elements of mass, or colour which feature in the work. Rather much of their significance lies in their thought-provoking associations and their subtle statements by way of comparison and process. South Island Rock Pillars stand as a sophisticated, poised comment made in physical form.

#### Biographical Notes

- 1948 Born Kawakawa, New Zealand  
 1962-67 Northland College, Kalkohe. Art Teacher, Selwyn Wilson.  
 1967-68 Ilam School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury, Christchurch.  
 1968 Worked in England & Italy, studying sculpture. Produced and exhibited own works. Exhibited at the Penwith Society of Arts in Cornwall. On the recommendation of Barbara Hepworth, a work was purchased by the Cornwall County Council for their collection at Truro in Cornwall.  
 1970-76 Returned to New Zealand. Established workshop and bronze foundry at Kerikeri, Bay of Islands and has been annually exhibiting in N.Z. and abroad since 1973.  
 1976 Sculptural Lecturn, Old Colonial Church of St James, Kerikeri.  
 1977 Sculpture to commemorate opening of first Marine Reserve, Goat Island Bay, Leigh.  
 1976-78 Moved to Totara North, Whangaroa. Re-established workshop. Started Husband and Wife handmade flax paper workshop.  
 1979 Moved to Auckland  
 QEII Arts Council of New Zealand grant.  
 Finalist, Aotea Square Water Sculpture Contest. Designer, Mercury Theatre, Auckland.  
 1982 Frances Hodgkins Fellowship, University of Otago, N.Z.  
 1983-84 Nga Rimu o Puketū, National Art Gallery, Wellington.  
 1984 QEII Arts Council of New Zealand travel grant to attend Sydney Biennale and sculpture project in Dunedin.  
 1985 QEII Arts Council of New Zealand grant.  
 1986 Private Commissions: Michael Hill, James Wallace, John Mathews.  
 1987 Boulder sculpture, Marsden Close Condominium, Paihia.  
 1988 QEII Arts Council of New Zealand grant - Italy. Whilst in Italy, constructing sculpture for exhibition, a 3,000 sq ft purpose built studio constructed in Kerikeri.  
 Continued construction on a 16 metre high A.M.P. sculpture commission for Auckland Central. Continued construction of Rainbow Warrior Memorial Sculpture commission, Mātauri Bay, N.Z.  
 1988-89 World Expo '88, Brisbane. '0311' construction. A.M.P. Commission - 16 metre boulder/aluminium/ stainless steel water sculpture, Victoria Street East, Auckland.  
 Mātauri Bay Trust/Ceramco N.Z. commission, memorial to commemorate sinking of Rainbow Warrior, Mātauri Bay, Northland.  
 1989 Artist's Project Installation, 'South Island Rock Pillars' Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch.

