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**Media Release
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Giant webs weave a connection between Auckland Art Gallery and Albert Park



John Ward Knox, *Hardly Held Lightly*, 2015, steel chain. Commissioned by Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2015. Supported by the Chartwell Trust and the Contemporary Benefactors

Artist John Ward Knox's super-size sculpture *Hardly Held Lightly* opens tomorrow, Saturday 24 October, at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki.

More than a kilometre of industrial chain spun by Ward Knox into three vast weavings joins the trees of Albert Park to the Gallery's eaves in this site-responsive art work.

Ward Knox was commissioned by Auckland Art Gallery, as part of an ongoing series of contemporary art commissions by emerging artists for the North Terrace, to connect the exterior of the Gallery building with the surrounding park.

While the timing appears apt because the sculpture has been installed just before Halloween, Ward Knox was more attracted to the working science the spider brings to its temporary home than to the ancient cultural symbolism associated with spiders and their webs.

Ward Knox acknowledges the balance between effort, purpose and fragility in *Hardly Held Lightly*.

This intricate form of pattern-making hangs in tremendous weight and outsized scale between the protected trees in the historic Albert Park and the Gallery's North Terrace.

Auckland Art Gallery Director Rhana Devenport says the Terrace commissions offer exciting opportunities for the Gallery to work with artists in fresh ways.

'John Ward Knox is a perfect choice at this time. As a young and ambitious artist with a heightened and particular sensitivity to site, materials and space, he has created an exquisite response to this beautiful and unique environment,' she says.

'We're tremendously proud to support an artist of such clarity and vision to create a new work to this expansive scale.'

Auckland Art Gallery Curator, Contemporary Art, Natasha Conland says the artist was chosen because of his ability to create a lightness of touch and movement even within the most traditional of materials.

'Ward Knox's work ranges across all art forms – the quality of which is their ability to generate oppositional forces – heavy industrial chain becomes light then emerges imitating a wondrous and complex natural design such as the spider web,' she says.

'John is attracted to the complexity of their forms, their physical problem solving, and their fleeting life span.'

The ongoing series of sculpture commissions by New Zealand artists is proudly supported by the Chartwell Trust. Ward Knox's commission is also supported by Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki Contemporary Benefactors. Previous artists in the series include; Kate Newby, Sriwhana Spong, James Oram, Mladen Bizumic, and most recently, Seung Yul Oh.

(ends)

Contact:

Olivia Boswell, Communications Officer, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

M +64 21 952 759

E Olivia.Boswell@AucklandArtGallery.com

W www.aucklandartgallery.com

Exhibition Details:

John Ward Knox: Hardly Held Lightly

When: Saturday 24 October 2015 to Sunday 5 June 2016

10am to 5pm daily except Christmas Day

Where: Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
Corner Kitchener and Wellesley Streets
Auckland, New Zealand

Admission: Free