Explore the city through their eyes. Visit the galleries that have displayed and celebrated their work. View examples of the extraordinary public art that populates the Newcastle landscape.

This walking tour starts at Obelisk Park, one of the favourite drawing spots of Newcastle's most celebrated adopted artist, Margaret Olley. It concludes at Newcastle Art Gallery, home to a collection of more than 6,100 works of art that belong to the people of Newcastle.

The Artists' City

Newcastle has nurtured, supported and inspired generations of artists.

Evolution 1

Sandra Minter-Caldwell's sculptures Evolution 1 reflects on Newcastle's migrant heritage. Consisting of five 1.8 metre tall figures, four figures represent Newcastle's migrant heritage.

Evolution 1 (detail) Sandra Minter-Caldwell 1998, cast bronze

The Arts Centre

Consisting of five 1.8 metre tall figures, four figures represent the Aboriginal people who were already here and the traditional owners of the land.

Minter-Caldwell studied at Newcastle University and first exhibited her work to the public at Watt Space, the student gallery of the University of Newcastle, in Auckland Street.

Explore Newcastle's art and artists through a self-guided walking tour of the city.

Newcastle Art Gallery

Laman Street, Cocklebay
Tuesday to Sunday 10am – 5pm, closed Monday
www.nag.org.au

Newcastle Museum

Woolmarket Way, Newcastle
Tuesday to Sunday 10am – 5pm, open Monday during school holidays
www.newcastlemuseum.com.au

Newcastle Region Library

Ground Floor, 15 Laman Street, Newcastle
Monday to Friday 9.30am – 2pm
Saturday 9.30am – 2pm

Newcastle City Hall

290 King Street, Newcastle
Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm, closed public holidays
www.newcastlecityhall.com.au

Audio and other information


1 Captains James Cook Monument/Fountain (detail) Margaret Hunter 1965–66, terracotta copper clay model structure, vandalised and partially restored posthole 2013.4.4.5.9

2 Renew Newcastle, The Mall

In 2008 many buildings in Hunter Street Mall were empty and the remaining businesses struggled to attract customers. Festival director, broadcaster and former Novocastrian, Marcus Westbury led an idea of co-opting property owners to offer empty buildings to artists on short-term leases. The idea evolved into Renew Newcastle.

In 2009, in its first year of operation, Renew Newcastle found homes for 40 creative enterprises in 25 vacant properties. The program has facilitated a diverse range of initiatives including galleries, artist studios, publishers, film studios and retail shops.

Renew Newcastle continues its work today and you can discover the spaces throughout the Mall and wider city. One of its most ambitious projects is The Emporium which has turned the original David Jones building into a hub of shops and exhibition spaces for local artists.

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Located outside Newcastle Museum, *The Adaptable Migrant* by artists Sune Bleach and Andrew Townsend also explores Newcastle’s migrant history.

Inside the camellia are sculptures representing the memories and culture people bring with them when they begin a new life in a new place. Among these items are objects that speak of Newcastle. The thistle is a reference to the city’s Scottish heritage, while the hammer and sewing machine speak of industry and the canary of coal mining. The sculpture is affectionately called Constance by Newcastle Museum staff.

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**Foundation Seed**

*Foundation Seed* is the tallest piece of public art in Newcastle, standing 14 metres high. It was created by John Turier, an artist, musician and qualified plumber who has lived in Newcastle since 1975. He studied visual art at both the Newcastle Art School and Newcastle University between 1988 and 1990.

*Foundation Seed* is inspired by the Red Cedar trees that grew in the Newcastle area during the 18th and 19th Centuries. The sculpture’s base references the seed of the plant and the moving upper section recalls the foliage. Surfers are known to judge the surfing conditions by the wind turning the leaf.

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**James Cook Memorial Fountain**

Newcastle’s reputation for commissioning bold public art from talented sculptors was formed in part by sculptures like the James Cook Memorial Fountain.

In 1961 Newcastle City Council held a competition to find an artist to create an illuminated fountain for Civic Park. Sculptor Margel Hinder produced the winning design to commemorate Captain James Cook’s discovery of the East Coast of Australia in 1770. Hinder aimed to develop a fountain in which the water and light, the body and the soul, the spirit and the mind were in harmony.

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**Figure Group, Newcastle Region Library**

In 1954 five Australian artists were invited to produce concepts for a commemorative sculpture that would adorn the entrance foyer of Newcastle’s War Memorial Cultural Centre (Region Library). Lyndon Daddow was the successful applicant. A combat veteran of WWII, Daddow had also been an official war artist with the AIF. After initial controversy, with many calling for figures that more closely reflected the normal proportions of the human body, the work was approved and production commenced. The Newcastle Herald would go on to describe Daddow’s design as a representation of the participation of both sexes in war and peace. Human beings emerging from great suffering with their heads held high... beings tortured and strong with a dignity wrung from victory over suffering.

Formally titled *Figure Group*, the sculpture was dubbed ‘Dave and Mable’ by the founder workers who carved it and is known by many Newcastleans as ‘Him and Her’.

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**Climbing sun over the Hunter, Newcastle City Hall**

John Olsen, born in 1928, is another renowned Australian artist from Cooks Hill. He has travelled widely across Australia interpreting the unique landscape in vivid detail through his artworks. In 1964 he painted *Lift Burnt*, a ceiling painting for the home of Sydney artist Thelma Clune which has since been donated to the Newcastle Art Gallery.

In 1980, Olsen was commissioned to paint a mural for the foyer of the newly refurbished Newcastle City Hall. *Climbing sun over the Hunter* still lights up the entry at the top of the stairs on level two.

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**Newcastle Art Gallery**

Newcastle Art Gallery was opened by His Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on Friday 11 March 1977. It was the culmination of decades of work to realise the belief that Newcastle could be known for art as well as industry.

_newcastle Art Gallery is a pioneer. It is the first purpose-built regional Art Gallery in Australia. Since its inception, it has collected over 6,100 works and is considered one of the most significant public collections in the country._

Today the gallery hosts a variety of shows drawn both from its own collection and travelling exhibitions. Its expansive collection hosts a diverse range of art, from the paintings of early Newcastle by Joseph Lyett, to the works of prominent contemporary artists like Patricia Piccininni.

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**The Pope Collection**

The germination of both the city’s Art Gallery and library’s collection emerged from the generous donation of one man’s collection to the city.

Dr Roland Pope was a Sydney-based ophthalmologist and one-time cricketer for Australia having played three games for the Australian team in 1930. He had a notable Australian art and literature collection which he generously gifted to the city in 1945. The bequest of 137 Australian paintings was made on the condition that the city construct a gallery to house them. At an exhibition in Sydney to recognise the donation, John Metcalfe, Principal Librarian with the Public Library of NSW, mused on Pope’s motivations.

Metcalfe remarked that Newcastle hosted the largest population of people without access to the cultural facilities enjoyed in capital cities. He also commented that the people of Newcastle, living in a city defined by mining and industry, were beginning to question what would happen to their town when the coal ran out and the industries moved on.

Pope’s collection not only provided a foundation for Newcastle’s most prominent cultural institutions, it also helped redefine the city beyond its grimy industrial identity.