

Board Culture & Urban Art

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Artists from Wellington's Weta Workshop and Totem Decks recently held an exhibition on artistically designed skateboards at the [Underground Arts and National Tattoo Museum](#). Due to its popular appeal, the exhibition ran for an extra 10 days from 23 Sept until 18 October. But the exhibition was not only successful in New Zealand - on the evening before the opening the curators were suprised by a call from the British Museum inquiring about purchasing some of the works.

The Underground Arts and National Tattoo Museum manager Steve Maddock was overjoyed when he learned that the BM had purchased some of the intricately laser-etched skateboard decks in his subcultural **Board Culture** exhibition.

“Some of these designers are huge. There are people who have worked for Disney, Marvel, Weta and Warner Brothers [...] It’s amazing having these artists involved. This is one of the biggest exhibitions we have ever had”. Among other items, the exhibition featured decks created by some of the people at Weta such as Greg Broadmore, Leri Greer and Christian Pearce. Other contributing artists included multi-award-winning American cartoonist Frank Cho (New Avengers, Liberty Meadows), New York pin-up artist Alberto Ruiz, Disney animation designer Ron Cobb (Sleeping Beauty, Star Wars), and filmmaker Wojciech Wawrzyniak (Love Hurts).

Regarding the interest from the BM, Maddock added “They wanted the decks with Aboriginal designs on them”. These were selling for \$1000 to \$2500 AUD each. The exhibition was secured on the recommendation of Oscar-winner Richard Taylor of Weta, who has been a long-time friend of Maddock's and the Museum. Despite support from such high profile people, the Tattoo Museum

remains little known outside the alternative community. Regardless, Maddock promises that it will remain a staunch supporter of the local alternative arts scene. He extended the exhibition to allow Wellingtonians a chance to see the decorated decks, now sanctioned by one of the most internationally recognised institutions for collections as a part of the world's cultural heritage. And it's not the first time that 'alternative sports' equipment has been used as the canvas for contemporary art. In 2003 Surfer's Against Sewage ran an exhibition around the UK called Longlife which featured the works of 10 artists, who designed a variety of artistic surfboards which they donated to SAS for auction at the end of the tour. The artists included Maia and Damien Hirst, the graffiti artist Banksy, the professional surfer Laird Hamilton, Paul Kaye of Dennis Pennis fame, the American Surf Culture designer Jamie Carson, the musicians Richard D. James of the Aphex Twin and David Hewlett of Gorillaz and Tank Girl. The auction raised in excess of £77,000. This month sees the second version of that exhibition and auction, ***Drawing Boards***, a collection of 14 surfboards, this time made on eco-friendly prototypes. Tracey Emin, Sir Paul McCartney, Kurt Jackson, Nick Walker, Beejoir, Pure Evil, Eine, Mau Mau and Gavin Turk are amongst the artists that feature.

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~~The directors of Bonhams were so impressed with Surfers Against Sewage's **Drawing**~~

Boards collection that they decided to move the artworks to feature as the centrepiece to their [Urban Art auction](#) on Thursday, 23rd October. The boards will be displayed at Bonhams' New Bond Street gallery for the event and images of the collection will be used on auction invitations and as part of Bonhams' publicity - a move that will help raise valuable awareness for SAS campaigns as well as attract attention from wealthy international bidders.

Surfing's long-standing association with counter-culture movements such as urban art, along with the inclusion of both leading contemporary artists and street artists means the collection is well placed to feature as one of the UK's most eagerly anticipated urban art events of the year.