

# Artist's 'icon' for Mercury Bay

**KELLEY TANTAU**

A Whitianga sculptor is hopeful one of his pieces will come to life in time for the next transit of Mercury in November.

Hans-Leo Peters has designed two potential sculptures inspired by Captain James Cook's arrival at Mercury Bay, that he hopes will get community backing.

The sculptures will both be made from stainless steel. The first model shows a "sky wheel" with numerous spheres designed with the date November 9, 1769 - the date of Cook's observation of a transit of Mercury - in Braille.

Two beams could show the Māori and New Zealand flags, to symbolise the country's history, Peters said.

The second model shows the Mercury transit as a large sphere symbolising a globe, with November 9, 1769 shown through smaller spheres around the middle.

Peters presented his proposals to the Mercury Bay Community Board on April 10, and, in a letter of response, the board said that if the community showed support, they would be prepared to consider a suitable location for one of the sculptures.

"This year, the Mercury transit will happen on November 12, and, after 250 years, our history comes live again.

"That gave me the idea to create the Mercury Transit Sky Sculpture as an icon for Whitianga... as a

symbol for the Mercury Bay Area in New Zealand's history," Peters said.

A transit of Mercury across the sun takes place when the planet Mercury passes directly between the sun and another planet. During a transit, Mercury appears as a tiny black dot moving across the disk of the sun. After this year's transit, the next will not occur until November 13, 2032.

Peters' ideal location for the sculpture is Shakespeare Cliff, off Purangi Rd near Ferry Landing, and his goal is for the chosen artwork to become a "landmark, to which visitors from all over the world would come".

Originally from Germany, Peters arrived in New Zealand on Boxing Day, 1997, and after viewing a Nikau Palm painting, fell in love with the country's beauty.

Three days later, he purchased a property in Coromandel.

He uses Braille, a form of writing used by people who are visually impaired, as a "code in the arts, to create the invisibility of the essence".

Peters has been a self-employed goldsmith and metal artist since 1966. He has numerous awards under his belt, including the Diamonds International Award for 1965, 1967, 1968, 1990, and 1994, as well as the World Coloured Diamonds Award in 1992.

For information, visit [www.golden-art.com](http://www.golden-art.com)



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