Radiance



Radiance rises three metres from its cast concrete base, catching the colours of its surroundings in the folds of polished steel.

A$15,000 • Available

Thomas Westra created Radiance to mark twenty-five years of shaping steel and to celebrate the human spirit. He chose 316 stainless steel for the way its polished surface gathers light and reflects the colours around it. As he worked the raw steel to a high polish, Westra felt he was charging the sculpture with light. The glow that emerged gave form to his idea of the light people carry within them.

From a distance, the eye follows the light up the three-metre column. Up close, the steel appears to gather around 88 bronze buttons like the upholstery of a deeply tufted chair. Westra formed and textured each button individually, bringing warmth to the cool steel. It was his first time shaping stainless steel in this way, and he wanted the finished work to evoke the comfort and quiet luxury of settling into that chair.

Polished 316 stainless steel with 88 individually formed and textured bronze buttons secured with stainless steel bolts. Cast concrete base.

300 cm high × 100 cm wide × 100 cm deep.

Radiance up close



The curved steel gathers colour from its surroundings.



Looking up along the repeating pattern of the column.

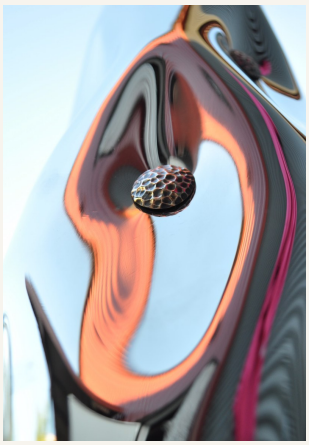
How it was made

Radiance began as a four-metre length of unpolished 316 stainless steel pipe, 150 mm in diameter. Westra cut one metre from the pipe to test ways of shaping the high-tensile steel. Through those trials, he developed custom tooling for a 60-tonne hydraulic press. He then used the press to form 88 impressions in the remaining three-metre length, keeping their shape and spacing consistent so the geometric pattern continued the full length of the column.

Polishing was one of the most labour-intensive stages. Westra worked over the entire surface with progressively finer grades of abrasive, following the raised curves and reaching into each recess. He finished the steel with a polishing mop to bring it to a mirror finish.

Westra cut and formed each of the 88 bronze buttons by hand, gave each its own texture, then patinated the bronze. He secured each button to the column with a stainless steel bolt welded to the back of the button.

For the 300 kg concrete base, Westra made a custom mould to give the casting its convex profile. The column is bolted to the base, and a separate cast concrete collar sits at the foot of the column to conceal the fixings.



One of 88 individually formed and textured bronze buttons.



Polished steel draws inward around the buttons like tufted fabric.