

# Vancouver Biennale: New West gets the WOW factor

## Heavy shipping containers defy gravity in a dramatic new public artwork

BY KEVIN GRIFFIN, VANCOUVER SUN NOVEMBER 24, 2015



Workers finish placing the WOW Westminister art installation on the New Westminister waterfront Monday. WOW New Westminister, by José Resende, is one of the Vancouver Biennale outdoor artworks and consists of four 40-foot high shipping containers cantilevered into the shape of a 'W.'

**Photograph by:** Ric Ernst, PNG

The Vancouver Biennale has WOW-ed New Westminister with a new public artwork.

Called WOW Westminister, the dramatic installation was installed Monday. It's made out of four shipping containers that appear to defy gravity as they balance on end and point up to the sky. They have been assembled in two V's to form a W.

Marcello Dantas, senior curator for the 2014-2016 Biennale, said the work is about seeing familiar objects in an entirely new way.

"It's about gravity," Dantas said. "It's about objects that you normally see one way and aiming to the sky in a direction you don't normally think of seeing them."

As well, the four containers speak to The Royal City's past and present as a point of convergence in the worldwide shipment of goods.

## Who?

WOW Westminster is by Brazilian artist José Resende.

## Where?

It's located in Westminster Pier Park, which is between Front Street and the railway tracks on one side and the Fraser River on the other. The park is accessible by a pedestrian overpass and from Fourth Street via the Front Street Parkade.

"It speaks to the heritage of New Westminster," Dantas said. "You can see it from the road, you can see it from the railway, you can see it from boats."

## How big?

The four used, pre-rusted containers weight a total of 15.4 tonnes (34,000 lbs.). Each one is 12.1 m long (40 feet). The four containers are welded into place on two bases on top of the pier.

## How much?

New Westminster has spent \$120,000 on three Vancouver Biennale public art works. WOW Westminster is a legacy work meant to stay beyond the end of the biennale. The temporary works are Public Furniture/Urban Trees by Hugo Franco on the waterfront esplanade between Renaissance Square and Reliance Court and 31 Blue Trees by Konstantin Dimopoulos in three locations in Pier Park, in front of city hall and on Royal Avenue.

## When?

The public unveiling of WOW Westminster takes place Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Guided walking tours start at 11:30 a.m. and continue to 2:30 p.m.

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