

Waiheke Emerging Artist Award

Aim

The project aims to bring the island's artists into the process through which the Board is trying to develop a "a collaborative community arts strategy". The Board's current attempt is focussed almost entirely on Artworks which long ago ceased to provide a home for artists.

There are about a thousand artist-makers on Waiheke involved in a wide range of art community-based practices (weaving, kapahaka, photography, poetry, singing, film-making, drama, circus, fashion, fine art, creative writing, etc.) and they use a wide range of local resources such as sheds, halls, cafes, shops and galleries. It is diversity of this activity that makes us an especially creative community.

An Emerging Artist Award

An Emerging Artist Award will provide encouragement and support for new (mainly younger) artists who have achieved some local success in their chosen field of the arts. It will provide meaningful encouragement and support at a critical stage in becoming an artist, where it is necessary to begin to present your work as a coherent whole and with a future trajectory.

The Award

The Award will be given to one or more Waiheke artists in any discipline who have created a significant body of work that shows potential but who have yet to achieve recognition beyond Waiheke.

The Award is not primarily competitive but will be supportive of all who enter, through appropriate mentoring, feedback and exposure.

There will be an Award Event which will aim to be a celebration of the work of all entrants, with the winner(s) being given additional support to take their work further in specific ways (e. g. participating in festivals, workshops, competitions).

Who will benefit?

- 1) **Those who are just setting out** will be given a short-term goal to enter for the Award within one or two years. This will be a great incentive to develop and improve the quality of their work.
- 2) **Those who are eligible for the Award** will need to take their practice seriously and consider it in an holistic way. They will begin to discover what it means to take themselves a little more seriously as artists.
- 3) **Those who enter for the Award** will gain valuable experience as presenting their work as a coherent whole and gain feedback and exposure.
- 4) **Those who receive the Award** will get public recognition which will be something to put on their cv and be a great help in the future. They will also get

encouragement and financial support to take their work out into the bigger art world.

- 5) **The reputation of the whole island** will benefit from being identified as supporting new artists and making their work accessible.

How it will work

- Month 1 The Co-ordinator will consult widely among practitioners and create a Selection Panel for 2020 consisting of five local art practitioners. The Panel will be balanced in terms of gender, ethnicity and art practice.
- Months 2-4 The Selection panel will meet to decide on the criteria for the Award, the process and timetable, and the means of distributing information about the new Award.
- Months 5-9 Information about the Award will be disseminated and queries handled.
- Months 10-12 Selection of Award winners, feedback to all entrants, arrangements for a suitable Award event.
- Month 12 The Award Event.

Funding

This project is a direct response to the \$10,000 which the Board indicated was available to the “Kāhui Creative Waiheke” and would operate within that limit.

<i>Months</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Budget</i>
1-4	Meeting expenses	250
5-9	Advertising and promotion	3,750
10-12	Award Event	2,000
12	Winner’s Awards	4,000
	<i>Total</i>	<i>10,000</i>

A detailed budget will be dependent on the views of the Selection Panel.

In addition all members of the Panel will give their time *pro bono*.

Future

This is initially a one year project, but if successful then the Award could become an annual event. In future years it is hoped that the Award will attract sponsorship from the wider community once it has a track record and so would require steadily decreasing funds from the Board, becoming fully self-funding within three years.

Co-ordinator

Successful art projects tend to be led by an artist with a vision and often do not easily comply with rules and procedures developed from other disciplines.

To get this project off the ground I am prepared to act as Co-ordinator for the first year (but would happily stand aside if someone else was better suited).

From 1990-2005 I was employed at a senior level within several art colleges as they became part of universities, holding Professorial positions at Exeter School of Art & Design (UK), Malmö University (Sweden) and University of Waikato (NZ). I learned to work with 17 different art disciplines and participated in many international projects.

On retirement in 2005 I came to Waiheke and put that aside, rolling up my sleeves and getting Artworks Theatre back on its feet, raising \$70,000 for the new seating, acoustics, sound and lighting systems that are in use today. I went on to found Grow Your Own Productions which, among other things, ran five Waiheke Playwrights Festivals involving over 120 local people in their production. I have also helped the Red Shed develop a programme of community exhibitions and have been a Cinema volunteer since 2006. I now teach a course through Adult Learning.

Grow Your Own Productions disbanded last year after raising about \$35,000 for local causes and never charging more than \$15 for a ticket.

Local Board Plan

Council and the Local Board have put far more resources into Artworks than into artist-makers and their organisations. “*Creative activities originating from, or occurring in, the Precinct attracted 89% of all Auckland Council arts and culture funding distributed on Waiheke in FY 2016/17*” (Community Arts And Culture Needs Assessment 2018). This would seem not atypical of the past 10 years. In addition, Phase 2 of the Master Plan for Artworks entailed demolishing the studios and re-styling the courtyard which cost, I believe, in excess of \$1 million.

The Board has indicated a desire to be more inclusive: “*Use community grants and partnerships to support community-led activities using local facilities*” (Local Board Plan 2017) and “*We are supporting our arts community to develop a collaborative community arts strategy which will support future local board decisions.*” (LB Agreement 2019/20).

If the Board genuinely wishes to see “a collaborative community arts strategy” then it needs to first make access to funds more equitable. The proposal for an Emerging Artist Award is an attempt to nudge the Board into acknowledging the community of practicing artist-makers. It will also be a constructive step towards building meaningful collaboration in the future.