

NEWS

Mixed media artist wins residency retreat for 2022

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Mixed media artist Cassandra Barnett (Raukawa, Ngāti Huri, Ngāti Pākehā) has been selected as Auckland Council's 19th Artist in Residence.

Primarily a writer and poet, Cassandra also creates language-based watercolours, prints and small-run handmade books.

Aspects of her residency will be incorporated into prose poems and will be partnered by some paintings, which she hopes to print together as a small book after her residency.

Cassandra is delighted to be this year's Artist in Residence and says now is a good time to explore the concept of rāhui.

"We have talked about rāhui as a way of protecting the majestic kauri in the Waitākere area for over three years. In that time, the term has also entered the social lexicon, being used regularly in the news and even regarding COVID-19. I want to explore some of the nuances and misunderstandings surrounding this protocol."

The Wellington-based artist spent her formative years living on the fringes of Waitākere Ranges Regional Park, exploring nearby bush reserves and beaches.

While lecturing at Unitec she lived in West Auckland. She retains a strong bond with the Waitākere Ranges and is looking forward to reconnecting with the rohe (area).

“I love getting out into nature, primarily through tramping, which is something I started doing growing up in the shadow of the Waitākere Ranges.”

Cassandra says that she is undaunted with parts of the residency where she will be without electricity and isolated.

“I’ve been really longing for a chance to retreat at length into the ngahere (forest), to be surrounded by it and to feel its natural rhythms. I know that the work I develop during this time will really benefit from this reconnection.”

Councillor Alf Filipaina, Chair of the Auckland Council’s Parks, Arts, Community and Events Committee says he is excited to see what Cassandra creates during her residency.

“The selection committee were impressed by her desire to delve into the concept of rāhui as cultural, creative and environmental practice. We are looking forward to what she is able to draw out in her poetry and art.”


Cassandra is the nineteenth resident to participate in this residency programme which has been showcasing art in Auckland Council regional parks since 2008.

The residency provides accommodation and a workspace within a regional park for an artist to use to create new work.

That work will be shared with park visitors and the public once finished.

Cassandra will be based in the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park, near Anawhata for eight weeks during October and November this year and is grateful for the opportunity.

“My heartfelt thanks to Te Kawerau a Maki as mana whenua and Auckland Council for the invitation. 'Nei rā te mihi ki a koutou katoa.”

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