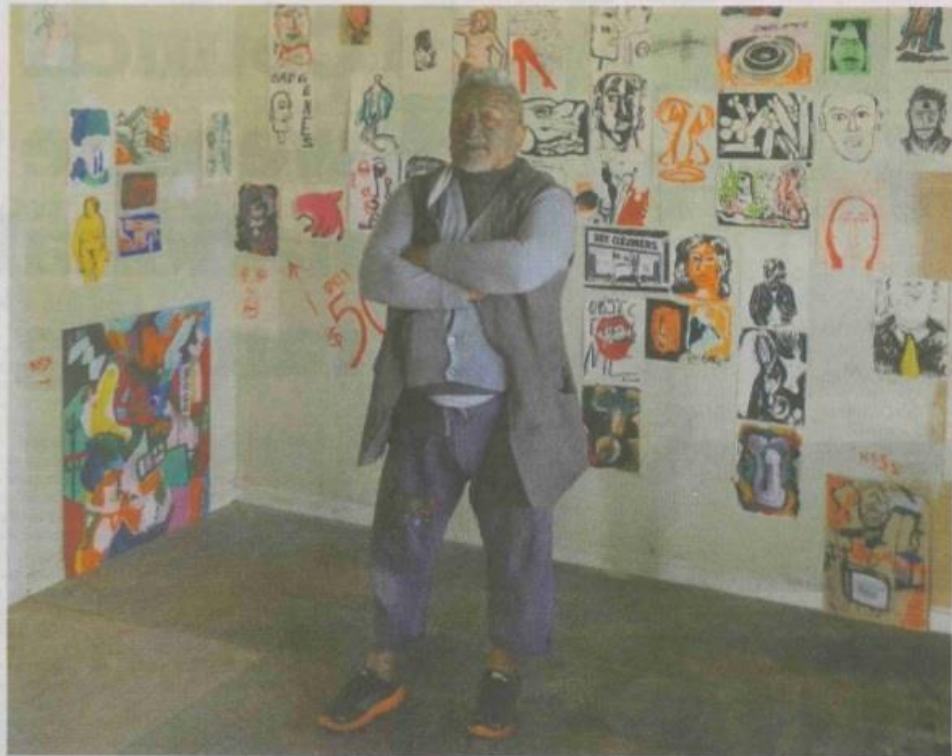


UPLIFTING ART: Tame Iti at the Taneatua Gallery poses in front of some of the work created by six Wintec students.

Photo Karla Akuhata
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Taneatua to become Bay's hot spot for art

Karla Akuhata
Staff reporter

GRAPHIC depiction of intimate female anatomy in the Taneatua Gallery isn't the only interesting discussion point emerging from the once-dilapidated house.

On a dreary winter's day, Tame Iti sits at his desk in a room that was once the kitchen in a house behind the Taneatua shops.

The house, bought by Mr Iti's cousin Laurence Hughes, has been somewhat restored. There are new windows, new timber to replace rotting boards on the deck, and the weeds have been cleared away.

But inside, holes and graffiti remain. The house, now the Taneatua Gallery, is being used to exhibit artwork created by six polytechnic students studying at Wintec, in Hamilton. One has incorporated a vagina into each of her works. Their exhibition is named Kiore.

Mr Iti said he wanted exhibitions to work around the holes and graffiti because they were

part of the house's story. He said this approach was inspired by exhibitions he had seen in Europe.

"When I was in Germany I went to a gallery in Berlin. It was in a block bigger than Whakatane town centre and a group of artists took it over and held exhibitions in it.

"I was really impressed how they took it over and did it."

Mr Iti said he wanted to give young artists a chance to be exhibited so, hopefully, they inspired others in the community.

"I had a whole heap of kids come in here yesterday and they were asking me questions and I asked them questions.

"What I told them is it doesn't have to be nice and beautiful images. Art is a depiction of what they are thinking.

"I would like to see a lot of Tuhoe artists exhibited. I want them to see these kind of works and realise it is not just all drawing little pieces. They have to be more confident. We come from a long line of artists.

"You don't have to be a slave working for someone else; you can work for yourself and do the

things you love.

"You can be self-employed and not in a co-dependency syndrome.

"The goal is to expose Taneatua to art – it is uplifting for the township, for Taneatua."

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- Tame Iti

Mr Iti said the next showing would be some of the Iti exhibition, which involved photos of him, Tuhoe people and Te Urewera, taken by Wellington-based photographer Birgit Krippner.

It was shown at the Harvey Milk Photo Center in San Francisco during April. The exhibition would take place at the Taneatua Gallery from June 18, once Kiore finished.

Mr Iti said plans were afoot

to host work created by Michael Tuffery, a New Zealand artist with Samoan, Rarotongan and Tahitian heritage, who had spent a lot of time working with young people.

That exhibition would be followed by a showing of Tuhoe artist Ati Teepa's work. He lived in Wellington and worked at Te Papa museum.

Mr Iti said he was working with Shona Hammond-Boys, who managed the Opotiki Art House. He said he also planned to hold ta moko (traditional Maori tattooing) seminars at the Taneatua Gallery this summer.

In July and August he wanted to exhibit his own paintings, including some of the art he created while in prison after being found guilty of firearms charges.

"I will be bringing all of my old works and some new works out for people to see. It will be called Te Whakapirings, which means bringing together because I will be bringing together all of my works."

He said his ultimate goal was to make Taneatua the Bay of Plenty art capital