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Te Maranui Hotene.

Maori artist wins award

Katee Shanks

Te Maranui Hotene has graduated from his arts degree with first class honours and begun his Masters journey.

His days are spent within the Taneatua Gallery studio "just painting".

The last time the Whakatane News spoke to Te Maranui he had just opened his *Chur* exhibition at the Taneatua Gallery. He was the second artist to show his work at the gallery after its establishment early last year.

On Tuesday night we were back at the gallery with Te Maranui as he was awarded The New Zealand Children's Art House Foundation Trust Iti Waewae Award for 2016.

The award was first given in 1998 to give recognition to a Maori student who exhibited outstanding skills.

Since then recipients have been actors Keisha Castle-Hughes and Opotiki's James Rolleston. In 2011 the Iti Waewae Award went to local student and artist Xaviah Timutimu Young and last year it was awarded to Opotiki's Eric Collier.

Eric starred as the lead character in the movie *Oku Moe Moe*, based on Shona



Art from the Chur Exhibition.

PHOTOS/KATEE SHANKS

Hammond-Boys' book of the same name. The award has also been given to orators, jazz musicians and a fashion designer.

As New Zealand Children's Art House Foundation founder and director, Mrs Hammond-Boys said the award recognised emerging talent within Maori artists under 25.

"To be considered for the Iti Waewae Award, nominees must be humble, they must be someone who is a role model and someone who can see the 'bigness' of the award," Mrs Hammond-Boys said.

"This is us [the panel of judges] saying we recognise

you and your work and we expect you to go on to great things."

She praised the work of artist Tame Iti who had been instrumental in the formation of the Taneatua Gallery.

"We need people like Tame, people who create places where people can come together and be inspired. People who will leave a legacy behind when they are no longer with us."

She also congratulated Te Maranui's parents for supporting and encouraging their son and allowing him to dream. Opotiki Children's Arthouse kaumatua Jim Wikotou was on hand to offer Te

Maranui employment with the Opotiki Arthouse.

"We want you to pass on your talents to our tamariki," Mr Wikotou said.

Tame Iti spoke of his first meeting with Te Maranui.

"We were the only two brown faces at an event," Mr Iti joked. "I found out who he was and asked if he would like to be part of the Taneatua Gallery."

He said the gallery had been amazing for locals. "It is a place for people to come to feel inspired, whether it's by words or colours or shapes."

Te Maranui said he was humbled by the Iti Waewae Award.