



□ Linda-Anne Martin and Bruce Kenyon admire the work on display at the Gifted Sands exhibition.



□ Gifted Sands organisers Desna Whaanga-Schollum and her mum Mere Whaanga are all smiles having put on another top quality art exhibition.

Gifted Sands reveals art treasures

GIFTED Sands was as popular as ever with people queuing before the doors opened on its first day.

Mahia's annual art exhibition, which showcases the work of Rongomaiwahine artists, was held during the last week of December.

Organiser and artist Desna Whaanga-Schollum said when they first opened the doors on the first day the venue, Mokotahi Hall, was packed.

Organiser and artist Mere Whaanga said approximately 900 people attended the exhibition and the sales were similar to last year.

There were also several inquiries for commissioned work.

"The regular artists are proving popular," she said.

Ms Whaanga said the second day seemed busier than the first which she

attributed to the article in the December 29 edition of the Wairoa Star. The article showcased artist Alby Gray who exhibited work at Gifted Sands.

"People were telling us they had seen the article and had to come along and take a look," she said.

This year 24 artists exhibited, four of whom were new to the event.

"We've got a core group of artists who exhibit and on occasion someone new moves to the area and hears about the exhibition or has relatives who exhibit," said Ms Whaanga-Schollum.

There were approximately 140 works exhibited, which is on a par with recent years.

Having been held for 12 years Ms Whaanga-Schollum said the exhibition had grown a lot since its inception as had the quality of the art.

Exhibiting artists range from kuia who have a traditional harakeke background to emerging artists working in clay and cast glass. Others work in stone, pounamu, pingao, kiekie, watercolours, acrylics, Number 8 wire and driftwood, pastels, photography, textiles, silver and paua shell, feathers and fibre.

Ms Whaanga said the exhibition went smoothly and having worked together now for 12 years, the team behind it had got the setting up and taking down of the exhibition down to a fine art.

"It was just enjoyable," said Ms Whaanga.

"There were so many repeat buyers and supporters who keep coming back and are now bringing their family with them," she said.

This year Ms Whaanga-Schollum is hoping to hold art workshops throughout the year, although this is dependent on sourcing the funding.

"For many, Gifted Sands is the only time the artists get together with other artists.

"These workshops would provide a chance for artists to get together, learn new techniques from each other and take a new direction in their work."



□ ABOVE: Gifted Sands artist Joan Ropiha stands proudly with her artwork.

□ RIGHT: Wairoa artist Jessie Christie Smith exhibited a variety of pieces including a taaniko purse, bell and belt, red raku clay, pounamu jewellery, korowai, piupiu and a headband set for a doll.



□ BELOW: There was a variety of artwork on display at the Gifted Sands exhibition which sisters Libby and Rosa Campbell enjoyed looking at.

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