

## Art winner has people power

KRISTINA RAPLEY 14:11, Mar 17 2010



PICTURE PERFECT: Whitford artist Helene Henare, who is the 2010 Estuary Artworks People's Choice winner.  
Photo by: *FIONA GOODALL*

This painting is the people's favourite – by a landslide.

Helene Henare has won Estuary Artworks People's Choice award for the second year running.

She picked up \$450 prizemoney.

The annual competition was hosted by Uxbridge Creative Centre in Howick, with the theme of protecting the Tamaki Estuary.

Three judges determined the winner, Auckland artist Brendan McGorry, and exhibition visitors voted for their favourite in the people's choice category.

Mrs Henare says she was thrilled when she learned of her win.

"I had a lot of local support, and would like to thank everyone who voted for me."

Uxbridge curator Melissa Elliott says Mrs Henare was a clear winner with 48 votes, 31 ahead of the next placegetter.

"I think the community love this kind of artwork," she says.

"This was a contemporary exhibition so some of the art was a little harder to figure out.

"People could really relate to Helene's piece," Ms Elliott says. "For the artist, it must be a real thrill to know that your artwork was the favourite of most people who came along."

Mrs Henare's painting, titled Tohungia te Mana i te Whenua, which means preserve the life of the land, was of Tahuna Torea Reserve, where there is a bird sanctuary. She painted it from the viewpoint of a bird flying over the estuary about to land.

The Whitford artist has been painting for only about four years after joining an art class and discovering she had a talent for it. "I had always liked art, but had never really learnt how to paint."

She describes her style as realism, but with a quirky edge.

Although she still works part-time, she says being able to be a full-time artist would be "an absolute dream".

Her painting will be on sale at a Howick Art Group exhibition at Bucklands Beach Hall this Sunday from noon to 6pm.

Mrs Henare also makes gift cards and prints featuring picturesque local images.

These are sold at numerous local shops including Uxbridge Creative Centre gift shop and the Howick Historical Village.

Visit [helenehanare.co.nz](http://helenehanare.co.nz), for more information on her work, and [uxbridge.org.nz](http://uxbridge.org.nz) for further details of exhibitions at Uxbridge Creative Centre.

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