

# the guide

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



**IT'S A BEAUTIFUL LIFE:** Costumer Ron Te Kawa says My Beautiful Life is more than an outlet for flogging frocks — arty and interesting as those frocks may be: “I see it as being more of a studio than a shop,” he said. “There’s always something going on here.”  
Picture by Rebecca Grunwell

## Artists mark month by opening doors

ARTS  
by Kristine Walsh

**R**ON Te Kawa reckons that people don't spend quite enough time counting their blessings. Life, he says, should be a celebration — a riot of colour, a grab-bag of good times.

That could be why, on the day The Guide dropped in, Te Kawa was sporting a blisteringly orange hessian hat and a fabulously-floral vintage towelling shirt.

And it is certainly why he has chosen to name his new shop-cum-studio My Beautiful life.

“We have so much to be grateful for but it's too easy to focus on the negative things . . . I don't think we say positive things enough,” he says, rearranging the cacophony of reworked vintage garments crammed into his chaotic Kaiti shop.

“This is just my way of saying it. Life! It's beautiful!”

One thing Te Kawa has to be grateful

for is that he moved back to his hometown of Gisborne in May, keeping him well clear of the catastrophic earthquake in Christchurch, where he has lived in recent years.

“I would have been okay if I'd stayed. My crusty old house was one of the only ones that wasn't even touched,” he said. “But I'd come up here to work with Tawera (Tahuri) at her gallery and I just fell in love with the place all over again.”

An artist/fashion designer with a bent for politically-charged costumery, Te Kawa opened My Beautiful Life six weeks ago and is developing it into an active artspace.

By the weekend he will have painted the side room that will serve as a studio for the workshops he plans to do.

(In the past he has done everything from teaching kids how to transfer graffiti art to garments, to helping Wellington refugees express their ideas about freedom via textile art.)

That is why he is on the list of more than a dozen local artists who will this weekend open their studios as part of the inaugural Creative Tairāwhiti October Arts Month.

Painters, printmakers, potters, jewellers, textile artists and more have agreed to throw open their doors to offer members of the public an insider's view of what goes on in a creative space.

“It will be a wonderful opportunity for people to discover the creative talents of locals around the district and enjoy a cruisy Sunday browsing the studio trail,” said Darnelle Timbs, of Creative Tairāwhiti.

Arts Month is designed to be a city-wide celebration of Tairāwhiti arts and culture that also incorporates visual arts shows, music performances and other creative endeavours, she added.

“Basically, we want to maximise the exposure of our local arts and cultural sector and get as many people from the community as possible involved.

“Overall, the aim is to support and aid the development of arts and culture in our region, for the good of business and the community at large.”

**It will be a wonderful opportunity for people to discover the creative talents of locals around the district and enjoy a cruisy Sunday browsing the studio trail**

— DARNELLE TIMBS

### ► Openhouse

■ The October Arts Month Open Artists' Studios will be available for viewing from 10am this Sunday, October 3, with participating artists including Ron Te Kawa (33 Harris Street); Jo Tito & Todd Sheridan (140 Russell Street); Tania Short & Martin Page (624 Wainui Road); Erica Holden, Staple, Studio 66 & Earth Art (upstairs, Poverty Bay Club); Seymour May (17 Clifford Street); Huw Lloyd (33 Salisbury Road); Debs Clarke (18 Rutene Road); Rowan Belcher (40 Childers Road); Sher Green (29 Sirrah Street); Raewyn Theobald & Phillipa Knight (5 Pine Street); Peter & Romilly Brown (124 Fox Street); Bardo Henry (Mountain View Cafe, Ruatoria); and Deborah Hope (17 Apatu Street, Wairoa).

### ► Inside The Guide

■ It's swampy, sticky, down-home blues with a distinctly rocky edge, and this week touring Auckland band The DeSotos are bringing those blues on down to Gisborne — pg 24

■ The sea can be a livelihood, a passion, an irresistible physical magnet . . . artists Juliet Bowen and Anna Cirolli Brown explore what it means to them — pg 25

■ The long-haired larrikins of the 1960s and 1970s are now seen as being leaders in their field. Today, a pair of local filmmakers are documenting the surf scene of the time. “It's about G-Town, and how we changed the world!” — pg 26

### Work by floral artists to be seen about town

**F**OM Japanese ikebana to Victorian romanticism, and with one foot in the arena of architecture while the other is in the horticultural field, floral art is a traditional art form that comes in many guises.

And to promote their endeavours, members of Gisborne Floral Arts Society and the Poverty Bay Garden Circle have planned to install displays around the town as their contribution to the inaugural October Arts Month.

Installations will be seen at city centre stores, as well as at the H B Williams Memorial Library.

Organisers Creative Tairāwhiti say they will add to the contribution made by visual arts exhibitions, open studios and music events in making October a particularly arty month.

“We are also releasing a Pocket Guide to Creative Tairāwhiti,” said spokeswoman Darnelle Timbs. “So keep an eye out for the brochure about town . . . it is your comprehensive guide of where to access the arts in our region.”

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