

Wonderful Water

WORDS BY VIVIENNE HALDANE



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Cathy Carter loves water. "Being either in it or on it is my happy place," says the artist, whose photography often focuses on that medium.

To her, it's not only a fascinating subject that provides endless inspiration, she is concerned about protecting it as well: "I love its reflective qualities and how its colour changes with the weather, and I'm passionate about water quality and availability, because, without it, there is no life."

Cathy comes from a large family (her brother is Olympian athlete, Hamish Carter), who spent every summer at their bach at Pauanui on the Coromandel Peninsula. She has fond memories of long, hot days spent water skiing, surfing and running around the beach without a care in the world.

Cathy's favourite water sports are paddle boarding and boogie boarding. "Paddle boarding is great for taking photos; you can venture up rivers, and it gives you a perspective from out at sea.

"It also gives me the flexibility of being able to take photos in or under the water in these remote locations, because of the leg rope that attaches me to the board."

When I spoke to Cathy, she was looking forward to spending a few weeks in residence at Waimarama Beach during November and December, courtesy of Muse Gallery in Havelock North.

"I can't wait. My husband and I used to bring our children here when they were young, so, yes, lots of happy times.





An award-winning photograph — part
of a series called 'Immersion Elegance'



"It will be an opportunity to see changes in beach conditions since then and make some new work too. I am also really interested in the Māori mythology of the area. •

"There's a legend about a young boy who fell into a lake at the southern end of the Tukituki River.

"The two taniwha who lived in the lake squabbled over him, and their struggle caused the river to split into two rivers: the Waipawa and Tukituki Rivers, thereby draining the lake.

"I hope to be able to talk to the locals to find out more about this and other legends connected to water in the region."

Work from her Waimarama sojourn will appear in an exhibition at Muse Gallery. Titled 'Waimarama, Reflecting on Water,' it opens January 25 and continues until February 21.

A late start as a full-time artist, after a career in television and advertising, hasn't been a hindrance at all; in fact, she's taken off like a rocket and is still going full speed.

Having studied first at Manukau Institute of Technology where she graduated with a Diploma of Visual Arts, then AUT where she gained a Masters of Visual Art with Honours, she immediately began exhibiting and has shown in Auckland, Wellington, Sydney, Paris, Poland and New York.

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Cathy's photograph of revellers enjoying Waikiki's stunning blue waters

he's also been a three-times finalist in the prestigious Wallace Art Awards.

Cathy says she's had "a roller coaster of a year – it's been exciting and full on", with work in nine exhibitions. "It will be nice to get out of Auckland and have some time alone in Hawke's Bay to create a new body of work."

There's plenty more to come in 2018 too. After Muse Gallery she and her sister-in-law, Taranaki artist Amanda Jewlett, will co-exhibit at Percy Thomson Gallery in Stratford followed by arTHAUS Gallery in Orakei. She's also planning a collaborative exhibition in Sydney with a mixture of NZ and Australian artists.

Asked if she ever runs out of inspiration she says, "Never. There are always so many ideas running through my head that I can't wait to access."

Her family is proud of what she has achieved and, in spite of her mother advising her to get a sensible career and keep art as a hobby, Cathy is pleased she eventually followed her dream. "It's hard to pursue an artistic career when you don't come from an arty family; we were very sports oriented, so there weren't any role models in my field."

And as for her trip to Hawke's Bay, she says, "I am a real foodie, and I love wine, so I can't wait to see what's on offer."

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Visit her website to view more of her work at www.cathycarterartist.com



Clockwise from top: Napoli, Immersion Elegance series, Magenta Seaweed, Purple Kiss



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