

Residency a first for region

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Arts reporter

TWO contemporary Christchurch artists have become the first creatives to take up a new Volcanic Artist Residency Programme developed by Whakatane Museum.

Edwards + Johann (Victoria Edwards and Ina Johann) will also hold an exhibition of their work and a gallery talk during their 12-day residency.

The exhibition, *From The Edge of Spaces*, opens at Te Koputu, Whakatane's library and exhibition centre, on Saturday, and the collaborative artists will hold a free talk at 11am on the same day.

Edwards said their exhibition would include already existing work as well as new work they were developing during their residency. They described the installations as "dynamic and evolving".

"We have brought some work with us and now we have also started making new elements that will change over time."

The residency has a geothermal and geological theme and the artists are journeying to Whakaari (White Island) today where they will meet with scientists and environmentalists, and begin research towards

their new body of work involving volcanic phenomenon.

The pilot residency has culminated in a work-in-progress installation for the front window at Te Koputu. This is titled *Perilous Edges* – what lingers in the mist 2018 – an installation using local rocks and materials that are cast in plaster.

"They are dipped in a solution that changes, not only its colour, but also causes a crystal-like structure to grow on them.

"It also changes over time, more crystals grow and the colours change – the same as White Island is constantly changing."

Included in this installation will be historic photos of Whakaari dating back to 1914. Johann said details of the photos would be presented, giving them an abstract feel.

Their exhibition will also include a video diptych, *Only Ghosts Glow in the Dark*, commissioned by the Wallace Trust in 2017.

The artists, who have worked collaboratively for 11 years, said the volcanic theme was close to their hearts as they had lived through the Christchurch earthquakes and came from the "shaky" Banks Peninsula.

They have also had residences in Europe, and said a residency enabled them to focus complete-



CONTEMPORARY: Ina Johann, left, and Victoria Edwards, known as Edwards & Johann, work on their installation, *Perilous Edges*, part of their exhibition at Te Koputu. Photos Louis Klaassen D6852-20

ly on their art.

"We will take a lot back to Christchurch and continue to work from this experience."

Whakatane District Council museum and arts director Eric Holowacz came up with the idea of an artist residency programme a few months ago, but it has come to fruition very quickly.

He said an exhibition by Edwards + Johann was already in the pipeline when they expressed a great interest in exploring White Island from an art perspective.

He said that gave them the motivation to get the residency going, in partnership with the council and other organisations.

"We got White Island Tours on board and Nicholson Motors provided a car.

"The development of an artist-in-residence programme that connects creative people with our active offshore volcano is a unique opportunity," he said.

"It combines the earth sciences, subterranean energy and creative people to inspire new artistic developments."

Mr Holowacz said the residency programme would be extended to all creatives – composers, choreographers, poets and more.

As the museum develops and refines the idea over the coming months, it will begin inviting artists and cultural manag-

Perilous Edges
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ers from across New Zealand to propose a project, spend time in residence, and learn about local geothermal wonders.

The exhibition runs until June 28.