

## **Additional background information**

### **Big 'A' Creative Space Award 2011**

#### **Winner: King Street Artworks, Masterton:**

**Judges' comment:** "This was the hardest category to judge and ranged from the grassroots to well-established spaces providing extensive programmes. The three shortlisted nominations make a valuable contribution to their communities. In the end, King Street Artworks had the edge because of its clear vision and kaupapa; the breadth of its programmes and activities; the way it meets the artistic needs of both the individual and the community; and its use of the arts to confront social issues. Its high-quality publications reflect well on its professionalism and standards of excellence."

**Some background:** For more than 14 years, King Street Artworks has provided a welcoming, friendly and safe environment in which anyone who has used mental health services can help themselves to the healing power of art.

Artists using the creative space in King Street, Masterton, speak of self-worth, whānau, pride, trying new things, succeeding, failing and being okay to do so.

Co-ordinator Ian Chapman says the world is left outside: "It is a place where you can forget about the bills, the kids, the housework, the illness, the medication, the stigma. A place where you can be the *you* you've always wanted to be and were a little afraid to try."

King Street Artworks has an open-door policy so anyone in the community can access the workshop. Materials, use of equipment, facilities and tutorials are free.

"If people choose to tell us about their illness or background that's great but it's not critical," says Ian. "We are not clinicians or social workers. We are artists who see people for their creative potential."

Saturday sessions are held for people who work during the weeks. There's also a women-only day to make it easier for women who might not be comfortable in a mixed group. An outreach programme is held in Featherston "to give as many people as possible access to the arts by taking it to them".

Families are encouraged to be part of the creative space – working alongside the artists, popping in for a cup of coffee to see what their family member is doing, or attending exhibitions at King Street and galleries around the district.

"We acknowledge the importance of family in the healing process," Ian says. "We know that after a day creating, mum or dad, brother or sister can go home in a better position to cope with the stresses of everyday life."

Ian says the creative space works in partnership with artists and the wider community to provide the best service it can.

"We are a family, a community to be part of, a place to go, a reason to get up. We open at 10am and there are always people outside at 9.45am."

In a hand-written note attached to the nomination, one artist described King Street Artworks as "very beneficial".

"I have been diagnosed with something and am no longer able to work. I was brought here to King Street Artworks and found that I can do art and also do things with clay ... I come here four days a week. This is a lifeline for me."

[www.kingstreetartworks.co.nz](http://www.kingstreetartworks.co.nz)

## **Finalists**

The other finalists were **Artsenta** of Dunedin and **Pablos Art Studios and ROAR! gallery** of Wellington.

Artsenta is a community-based art workshop for people who use mental health services. It was established in 1986 and currently provides services to more than 200 people a year. The judges described Artsenta as "a wonderful example of an organisation meeting individual artistic needs within the wider community. We like the wide range of artforms it offers, its community outreach and its sometimes quirky activities."

Pablos Art Studios and ROAR! gallery provide an environment where people with experience of mental illness are supported to transform their lives. The judges described Pablos and ROAR! as "a vibrant space with a strong vision, a structured programme, a high standard of regular exhibitions and profile in Wellington. Its agenda to change lives through art is impressive."