

ART BY RIWA LTD
RIWA WAWATAI

Emerging Business Award Finalist



In 2011, due to ongoing pain from a back injury, I decided to change my career. This also coincided with beginning a Toi Whatu course at Te Kokiri Development in Levin (a satellite of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, TWoA). I fell in love with this art form, so continued the following year with a Toi Raranga course. In 2013, I enrolled at TWoA in the Maunga Kura Toi degree and graduated in June 2016. During my final year, I won the AST Dr Diggeress Te Kanawa Memorial Award, a very proud moment of my Toi Māori journey. After finishing my studies, I decided to spend time traveling the country to meet and share knowledge with other kairaranga. As fate would have it, my newly acquired house bus broke down in Napier and I ended up parking and living at the Waiohiki Creative Arts Village (Napier), a space which hosts a variety of artists in residence, galleries, and a shop open to the public. I decided to turn my knowledge into my new career, and Art by Riwa Ltd was born. I worked on developing a design for a wahakura, which has been (and still is) one of my greatest passions. In April 2016, the final design was reached and my wahakura was named Wahakura Rīwā, meaning to hold and protect your treasure. By May 2016, I was running my first noho wānanga for my Wahakura Rīwā, and then started my first "Raranga for Pēpe" night class course, teaching beginners the techniques required to make their own Wahakura Rīwā by the end of the course. In 2018 I turned my rented studio at the village into a classroom, where I now hold regular courses in: - Toi Raranga for Beginners - Toi Whatu for Beginners - Raranga for Pēpe - Wahakura Rīwā for experienced kairaranga I currently contract a team of five kairaranga to make Wahakura Rīwā to fulfil various contracts with DHB around te motu.