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WEST COAST JADE CARVER GETS TE PAPA HONOUR

Tai Poutini Polytechnic (TPP) Jade and Hard Stone Carving Programme Co-ordinator, Jayne Beaumont, has had a piece of her work purchased and placed on display at New Zealand's national museum, Te Papa in Wellington.

Jayne Beaumont's Pounamu Koauau (a traditional musical instrument of the Maori) was purchased from the Jade Factory in Hokitika last year by Te Papa and is now on display in Wellington as a symbol of national significance.

Beaumont's work is nationally recognised and she is regularly commissioned to create pieces including, most recently, for the former Prime Minister and now United Nations representative, Helen Clark.

"I was very excited to hear my Koauau was on display at Te Papa. I don't really see myself as a national jade carver but this news makes you realise that you are becoming one of New Zealand's recognised jade carvers."

The Koauau on display is usable and, according to Beaumont, makes "haunting sounds" when played. While made of Pounamu Jade, the piece also features mother of pearl shell inlays. "Traditionally flutes are made out of shell, wood, bone and, more rarely, stone such as soap stone. But in carving a Koauau out of Pounamu I wanted to create something that was traditionally Maori, from a traditionally Maori carving medium.

Not expecting the piece to eventually be sought-after by the prestigious museum, Te Papa,, Beaumont's hope at the time was that someone would be keen to bring it to life and make beautiful music from it.

Beaumont completed her Diploma in Jade and Hard Stone Carving at Tai Poutini Polytechnic in 2001, graduating as the top student in her class. TPP's new Jade and Hard Stone Carving programme gives students a range of skills to prepare for practical carving and academic study. This includes design, jade studies, Tikanga Maori, drawing, limestone sculpture, work experience and business studies.

The programme includes, not just jade carving, but also carving of other hard stones such as argillite, jasper, agates, obsidian- a volcanic glass, lapis lazuli from Afghanistan and many more. "Anything that is carvable, we try it," Beaumont says.

After completing three months of work experience she secured employment with Westland Greenstone as a Jade carver and was then employed by the Jade Factory, also in Hokitika.

Subsequently, Jayne was faced with a new opportunity that would allow her to take what she had learnt and apply it as part time tutor at TPP. "This then gave me the opportunity to carve at home while tutor at the same time," Beaumont says.

Now a full time Programme Co-ordinator at Tai Poutini Polytechnic, Beaumont continues to take commissions from the public for her sought-after work, which she completes in her purpose built carving studio at home in Hokitika.

You can view the Koauau at:

<http://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/objectdetails.aspx?oid=943842&term=Jayne+Beaumont>

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About Tai Poutini Polytechnic:

Tai Poutini Polytechnic (TPP) offers a range of exciting programmes, has had one of the highest course completion rates in New Zealand for the last 3 years, has low student to tutor ratios and great relationships with business and industry. TPP has campuses in Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Christchurch, Wanaka, Invercargill, Westport, Greymouth, Reefton and Hokitika. In 2010 Scholarships are available for most programmes (* Conditions apply)*