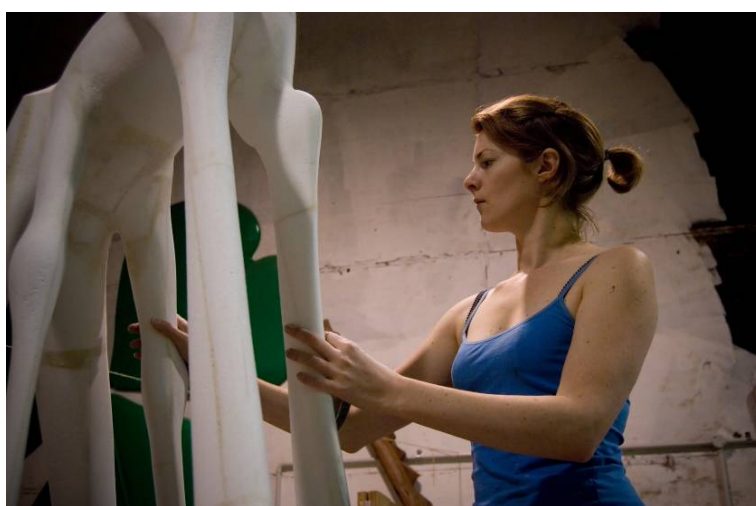


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YOUNG SCULPTOR WINS PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL AWARD

*Sculptor Cat Auburn announced as winner of the
2010 Olivia Spencer Bower Foundation Award*

Young Auckland sculptor Cat Auburn has been announced as the winner of the prestigious and highly coveted Olivia Spencer Bower Foundation Award. Auburn's sculptures are embedded with personal influences, have an accessible quality, reflect narratives of the *Carnavalesque*; and are oft in response to other artists, mediums and historical contexts. She was chosen from a record number of 128 applicants from around New Zealand to receive this much sought-after award. Auburn joins an illustrious list of former winners including Pauline Rhodes (1987), Ruth Watson (1992), Chris Heaphy (1995) and Saskia Leek (1997).



Sculptor, Cat Auburn at work

Auburn says "this residency is a great opportunity to get out of the dusty dark factory setting that I have been working in for the last three years. I have been planning a range of new projects that will take me out into new settings, such as the Canterbury countryside, and to pursue all of those little side projects that I haven't had time to explore. This award means the opportunity to be truly obsessive and to see what I am really capable of. I don't feel like I have hit my stride yet and this is the perfect environment in which to step up the pace and see how much further I can push myself."

Auburn has not looked back, since graduating from Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland with a post graduate diploma in Fine Arts in 2007, and is quickly being regarded as an exciting emerging talent. She describes her sculptures as "involving no trickery or deceit, they try to let you in so you can see how they are constructed and you can see the narratives for yourself." Preferring the title of 'sculptor'; by applying her hands to the more traditional processes of shaping and making her work, she describes her process as "physically laborious and because I am often working on my art after a full day at my job, I have to place a lot of restrictions around the way I work for safety reasons...such as not using a chainsaw after 6pm!" Auburn has exhibited in *Little Rain*, City Art Rooms (2009); *NZ Sculpture On Shore* (2008); has been a finalist in the 2008 *Wallace Art Awards* and was the recipient of the *Joseph Raynes Scholarship for Fine Arts*, Auckland University Bursary Award (2007), and is represented by Rob Garrett Contemporary Fine Art. She has also taught critical studies to students at Elam School of Fine Arts. Part of the award is the use of

an apartment studio in the Christchurch Arts Centre, in addition to financial support of \$30,000.

This year marks the 23rd recipient of this highly respected Award, which has a reputation as one of the most esteemed and valuable art sponsorships available in New Zealand for emerging artists. The selection committee for the 2010 award consisted of Louise Palmer, Lecturer in Sculpture at the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts, Brenda Nightingale, a Christchurch artist nominated by the Christchurch Art Gallery, and Paul Cullen, a Lecturer from Auckland University of Technology (AUT), nominated by Creative New Zealand.

Olivia Spencer Bower was a significant artistic presence in the Canterbury art scene until her death in 1982. She established the Foundation to offer financial assistance to promising artists and sculptors, with particular emphasis on future artistic potential rather than financial need. It was her intention to provide talented artists an opportunity to work for one year, free to pursue their own direction without the need to seek outside employment. In her will, Spencer Bower left all of her artworks to the Foundation, and these have been sold by the Trustees to form a capital base for this munificent award to continue in perpetuity.

Malcolm Ott, Trustee of the Foundation, says: "Olivia Spencer Bower never had any thought of making money as her art practice was more important to her. This award was her gift to the next generation of artists. She was always close and supportive of younger artists and enjoyed their ideas, energy and the promise of things to come. Her award is limited to non established artists to support the work and careers of deserving artistic talent. The spirit of the award is to encourage freedom to expand and experiment by providing one year to neither work nor consider financial burden. The award is in very good heart and will carry on into the future for many years to come. It has been huge work to get the culture of the award established and we are most grateful for our supporters the Christchurch Art Gallery, who have a substantial collection of Olivia Spencer Bower's works and those of the past recipient artists. The Award has helped position the careers of many important New Zealand artists, such as Pauline Rhodes – the first recipient in 1987 – Sandra Thomson, Seraphine Pick, Linda James, Joanna Braithwaite, Jim Speers, James Cousins, Bakah Carran, Hannah Beehre, Joanna Langford, Robert Hood, Eddie Clemens and most recently Clare Noonan in 2009. The Foundation Trustees are pleased to welcome Cat to that celebrated group."

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Images available on request

For more information please visit the Olivia Spencer Bower Foundation website www.oliviaspencerbower.org.nz or contact Malcolm Ott, Trustee, Olivia Spencer Bower Foundation, (03) 355 7355 or 021 665 516.