

Jess Santorik



About me

Kia ora!

I'm Jess Santorik founder of Santorik Creative. I am based in Raglan on the west coast of New Zealand, a beautiful seaside community where I was born and bred.

Maori culture has been an integral part of my upbringing. My family heritage is Pākehā/Māori, and I spent my primary school years in a bilingual Māori language unit. This provided me with a deep understanding of the Māori culture.

I grew up in a family of passionate surfers, with the Tasman sea as my backyard I have been surfing since childhood. I was fortunate enough to compete all around the world as a top ranked Kiwi surfer. During my travels I have come face to face with many diverse cultures, and these experiences have had a huge influence on my life.

I am inspired to share my story with the world through my carvings.

About my art

I have been carving and painting polyurethane surfboards by hand since 2005. The majority of my carvings are made from pre loved surfboards that may have been broken or outgrown, blanks deemed unusable for shaping. I draw my inspiration from my passion for the sea, surfing, Māori culture and my experiences travelling. Every individual piece tells a story.

I spent many years harnessing my skills, and my carvings are an integral part of my life. As my story unfolds, my art evolves. Becoming a mother to my beautiful daughter, has really enhanced my creative journey as an artist.



By the time she was old enough to spell and to understand the meaning of the word truancy, top surfer Jess Santorik was wagging school and riding waves for the day after hiding in the Whale Bay bus shelter as her mum drove to work. She'd make sure her wettie and hair were dry

before mum arrived home from work later that day.

But once the neighbours eventually “spilled the beans” it didn’t matter anyway because Raglan Area School’s Surfing Academy — New Zealand’s first — had started up and Jess was off the hook, riding waves in school time legitimately and well on the way to becoming the country’s top woman surfer.

Jess’s story, and others from fellow Raglan surfers Aaron Kereopa and Ken Thomas (KT), are among 19 profiles that make up a new book by Hawkes Bay-based surfer turned author Aaron Topp.

In *Creating Waves*, which follows on from a debut novel entitled *Single Fin*, he sets out to show “how surfing inspires our most creative New Zealanders”.

He targets artists, photographers, carvers, film directors and musicians from around the country, looking at how their love of surfing has shaped what they do and how they do it. Jess and Aaron — family friends from way back — carve surfboard blanks for a living when they’re not surfing, while KT paints over-sized acrylics on canvas.

The author details how each of them is lucky enough to find inspiration while also riding waves.

Says Jess: “I put the same feeling into my art as I put into my surfing.” And Aaron: “What I do on the surf is what I make on land.”

Meanwhile KT, who eschews the tortured artist image, says simply that “my art celebrates life”.

Extra reading (Raglan Chronicles which is the local paper):

<https://www.raglanchronicle.co.nz/raglan-art/2019/06/surfboard-carver-jess-santorik-is-making-waves-at-te-papa-store/>

Sourced from: <https://raglan.net.nz/local-surfers-profiled-in-new-book/> & <https://www.santorikcreative.com/> & <https://www.raglanchronicle.co.nz/raglan-art/2019/06/surfboard-carver-jess-santorik-is-making-waves-at-te-papa-store/>