



**Title:** "Rapture"

**Description:** Wairoa Muso friends jamming

**Photographer:** Henrik Moller

**Where, when:** Wairoa Museum, Tairāwhiti, March 2021.

**Sustainability?** A troop of Wairoa musos are seen here hamming it up in front of a stunning 6m-long painting by one of their band members, Joanna Tokona (second from right). Friends gathered to support Joanna in a time of grief for her lost husband Tāne. Joanna also painted her grief over the scarred landscape around Te Mahia, steep land which in retrospect should never have been cleared in the first place. The hills and Joanna are running into the sea.

Joanna quoted from William Guthrie Smith's famous treatise (1954) on Tutira Station which is nearby in Hawkes Bay (Te Matau-a-Māui). Guthrie-Smith, an early photographer and one of New Zealand's first environmental writers. He wrote one of the first warnings about erosion in the 1880s:

*"From the edges of the ancient slips the water-sodden fringes drip with clay; new red-raw wounds smear the green slopes, scalp-shaped patches detach themselves, slipping downwards in slush and turf. Sometimes a whole hillside will wrinkle and slide, like snow melting off a roof, its huge corrugations smothering and smashing the wretched sheep, half or wholly burying them in every posture".*

"Rapture" is one of my favourite photos because of the pain and love it shows us. In the end it is our love for people and the environment that carries us through down times and holds us fast for the long-term care and restoration of our land. We often express the belief that if the land is healthy, the people will be healthy - *Ka ora te whenua, ka ora te tangata*. That is undoubtedly true when you consider provision of food and shelter. It is the other side of the reciprocity between people and land that I believe we too often miss - if the people are healthy, the land will be healthy. So I'd rather we say *ka ora te tangata, ka ora te whenua* to emphasis the two way connectivity in play here. If we look after each other as people and create

supportive and just relationships, we are much more likely to set sustainability goals and collaborate to bring them into fruition.

**Photo notes:** This panorama is a stitch of three exposures of 1/100s at 18 mm focal length, f/5 aperture and ISO-2500. I had to sweep past the rabble, firing rapidly from their knee level to cope with their rapturous moving energy.

The light was low and uneven and there was little space between the painting and gallery wall, so it was a challenging image to capture and required a high ISO.

**Digital specs:** 8,700 x 3,800 pixels (33 MP).

**Key words:** People, love, support, grief, erosion, whenua, land ethic, Henrik Moller, Aotearoa, New Zealand, Sustainability.

**Price:** \$150 (incl. GST) for use of the digital image.

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**Donation:** The price includes a \$100 donation to a sustainability organisation or project of your choice, or otherwise for Wairoa Museum <https://www.wairoadc.govt.nz/our-district/wairoa-museum/>

I recommend that the donation goes to *Wairoa Museum* partly because it hosted Joanna Tokona's exhibition, but also because it is an amazing, community-led initiative that hosts local talent and shows local scenes. It was very moving to see the museum office walls covered in posters from past exhibitions, all with some connection to their community and reflection of their lives – that's building community resilience in action through the arts!

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