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Kelly Joseph is Kapiti Island's 2009 resident writer

Kapiti Island's Kaitiaki o Kapiti Trust announced today that writer Kelly Joseph (Ngati Maniapoto) will be Kapiti Island's resident writer during Matariki (Maori New Year) this year.

The 'Tau mai e Kapiti' Maori Writers' Residency 2009, funded by Te Waka Toi / Creative New Zealand and hosted by Kaitiaki o Kapiti Trust, allows an up-and-coming Maori writer to live and work on the northern end of Kapiti island for eight weeks.

'If I could dream up an ideal writer's residency for myself,' says Kelly, 'it would be this one. The island is so important culturally, historically and in a conservation sense. It has so many stories. It's incredible to imagine having two whole months to focus only on my writing in such an amazing place.'

Kelly Joseph has been involved in visual arts for several years, studying Fine Arts and graduating from the Rhode Island School of Design in the United States. When she returned to New Zealand in 2003 with her husband she worked at Massey University as an AV technician. Then she started a business, creating a range of original jewellery, t-shirts and toys for design stores in Wellington. She continues to have a passion for the visual arts.

'I've always loved the visual side of things,' she says. 'Even when I'm writing the story plays out in my head like I'm watching a film.'

Kelly was accepted into the prestigious Masters of Creative Writing course at the International Institute of Modern Letters at Victoria University.

'I finished that course last year,' she says, 'and it's been good to have a bit of a break from writing. But this residency has come at the right time for me. It's given me a real incentive to go forward with writing.'

Kelly plans to make a start on short film scripts while she is in residence on Kapiti Island, and says she admires the work of Miranda July and French filmmakers Michel Gondry and Jean-Pierre Jeunet. She writes about 'misfits who inhabit the fringes...searching for beauty, magic and acceptance in the dirty, sad corners of society.' Characters she created in her short stories during last year's course may re-appear in the film scripts.

Kelly was one of nearly 40 applicants interested in the residency, which is open to authors from all genres writing in both English and Maori. The residency will run from 22 June to 16 August 2009. John Barrett and whanau,

who live on Kapiti Island and run the Kapiti Nature Lodge, will be hosting Kelly during the eight-week residency.

'We're delighted to be sharing Matariki and Kapiti with Kelly, our second resident writer,' he says. 'We're very grateful to our supporters for seeing the residency through for another year. We're very much hoping it will become an annual thing – as far as we're aware there are no other residencies in the country aimed specifically at Maori writers.'