

First ever Queenstown Writers Festival 48-Hour Short Story Competition

Writers based in Otago and Southland are invited to feel the fear and do it anyway in a new competition as part of this year's Queenstown Writers Festival.

Writers will have 48 hours to compose up to 800 words of literary gold, over the festival weekend of 11 – 12 November, based on prompts released at 5pm on Friday, November 10.

The open section will be judged by award winning writer Steve Braunias, with the winner claiming \$500 cash and being published in the summer issue of *1964* magazine.

Cash prizes and book vouchers will be awarded to winning entries in the Rangatahi section (open to young people in years 9-13) and Tamariki (years 1-8) sections. Tamariki will have a longer period to prepare their work.

The competition is generously sponsored by Anna-Marie Chin Architects.

Principal Anna-Marie Chin wants to see more cross-pollination between creative disciplines, and believes imagination is the key to growing our minds.

"I see this as a platform for people of all ages to challenge themselves."

Having grown up in a world of Sunday morning radio stories such as *Thomas the Tank Engine* and *Bad Jelly the Witch*, she wants to encourage young people to use their imaginations to create images and words the way her generation did.

She looked forward to seeing a wide variety of entries.

"Writing is like a hand sketch. It creates a feeling, and everyone will interpret it differently," she said.

Three prompts will be released on the Queenstown Writers Festival website and via social media at 5pm on Friday, November 10.

Entrants will choose one of the prompts and respond in either fiction or non-fiction form.

They will only have the weekend to polish their diamond though, as entries are due on Sunday at 5pm.

Festival trustee Jen Smart said that often the most interesting ideas were formed under pressure.

“We’ve all seen the impressive work produced in the 48-Hour Film Festival – the spirit of this competition is the same.

“We’re inviting writers to put aside all those things that get in the way of starting, and just begin writing.”

“The aim is to encourage southern writers to produce a piece they might not have otherwise written.”

Unlike the 48 Hour Film Festival, though, entrants will have a choice in the stimulus they respond to, and the form in which they do so.

Open category judge Steve Braunias said he would be looking for characters that say and do things like real people.

“I want stories where things actually happen, and one or two beautiful sentences.”

The Rangatahi section will be judged by award winning screenwriter and author Michael Bennett (Ngāti Pikiao, Ngāti Whakaue), with the winner being given \$250 in cash and a book voucher.

A special Tamariki category will be judged by Queenstown author Jane Bloomfield. Unlike the older sections, Tamariki writers can begin work immediately as the three prompts are now available on the festival website.

Entries must also be submitted by 5pm on Sunday, November 13.

First prize is \$100 and a book voucher. Thanks to the generous sponsorship of Anna-Marie Chin Architects, there will also be four \$50 book vouchers for highly commended pieces in the Tamariki category.

More information and conditions of entry are available on the Queenstown Writers Festival website:

For further information please contact Queenstown Writers Festival trustee Jen Smart on 027 472 5460.

Sponsor Anna-Marie Chin is available on (03) 409 8881.