

Painting Navua

by Lola Akinmade

Wanderlust is a huge part of my life and drawing inspiration from my surroundings is what I do as an artist. Sharing different perspectives of places we've all been or yet to explore through art is a passion and style of mine. Whether it is looking up at a lamp on Quay St in Auckland or looking down at Marienplatz from St. Peters in Muenchen, I look for unique angles that shed new light on the subject. My rendition of the untouched Navua River deep in the heart of Fiji is one of my favorite pieces because it attests to a time in my life when I realized a dream; if only for a moment.

Arriving with my volunteer team at Checkpoint Five—Beqa (Mbengga), it still had not dawned on me why I was truly here and how I got here. Separating us from our destination—the remote village

of Beqa—was a river. Shallow yet so full of life, this river split the gorgeous hunter green scenery; providing a beautiful blue contrast to the surrounding colors.

All I knew at that point was that I had to wait...

Soon enough, competitors emerged on their mountain bikes across the river as villagers stood watching in awe. Helmets, backpacks, worn out feet, country

and team number patches all over, they came face to face with the Navua river and had to cross it to get to our side.

Then it finally hit me why I was there waiting for those amazing athletes. Volunteering with the Eco-Challenge in its final year before hiatus was the experience of a lifetime. Being within a race of that magnitude and seeing how all the cogs work together made me appreciate expedition

