

## **1. Tell us a little about yourself...where you are from, married, etc. (bio)**

I was born in Melbourne in 1968 and lived a 'gypsy' type lifestyle with my younger brother and sister, regularly moving from place to place. My parents had grand ambitions and fresh ideas with each move so I remember it was always exciting to pack up but emotionally torturous walking into the next 'new school'.

To date I've moved 34 times (including caravans) but like a tree I've grown roots here in Crossover (Victoria Australia) with my husband Chris and two beautiful dogs Garth and Tess and old horse Billy.

I'm a country girl at heart and experienced living on a number of large properties as a child, so I'm completely at home here surrounded by green pasture, rolling hills, dairy cattle and wild birds (paradise for an artist / hermit). I've been here for ten years now and my studio is an old (renovated) dairy.

## **2. At what age did you start painting, and what got you interested?**

From a very young age I loved drawing and writing poetry. I didn't have access to paint and brushes, probably due to moving about so much (and pencils were quick to pack up). My father and both grandfathers enjoyed drawing and I can remember myself and my brother Rodney spending hours upon hours drawing whenever we got a chance. Mum would often surprise us with a new 'Derwent' pencil and I'll never forget how exciting it was to smell the wood and admire the fresh colour!

But poetry was my pure expression of self. If I ever felt 'lost' or 'anxious' (common feelings in those days) I would completely lose myself in the rhythmic words. The sensation was so profound. From a very early age I was able to tap in to 'me within', to 'the source' and my worries seemed insignificant and I would be at peace again for a short period. Even reading my poetry late at night helped keep me sane (art therapy). It wasn't until years later that I learnt poetry is 'abstract', it all started to fit into place like a jigsaw puzzle.

I left school to work when I was 16; following on in my parents footsteps and working in a variety of fields hoping that something would 'fit'... I wound up working in regional television and producing which I enjoyed to some extent but still found myself sitting in the car during my lunch breaks madly writing poetry. I had a mid-life crisis at 25 which was the best thing that ever happened. I sold my car and enrolled to do my Diploma of Art in Ceramics (I had never touched clay before).

My whole being yearned to create and I allowed myself to be guided by instinct. These studies also included formal drawing classes and I had taken on additional painting classes too. The whole world seemed to open up before me and I fell in love with life itself. I discovered in those years that the raw materials have a life of their own and instead of manipulating them; I would work with them and allow them to take me on a journey within (like poetry did).

I became more and more intrigued by the process itself and continued on to complete my Diploma of Transpersonal Art Therapy in Melbourne where my mind was opened up to 'working in the moment'... to 'abstract expressionism'!

## **3. What part of Australia are you from?**

I live in Crossover (West Gippsland), Victoria Australia. Approximately 1.5 hours drive from our capital city Melbourne. <http://www.westgippsland.com.au/>

#### **4. How would you describe Abstract Expressionism to those who may not be familiar with the art form?**

For those unfamiliar with this style of work, it would be best to break it down first and look at 'Abstract': Not representing or imitating external reality. (Non-representational)

And 'Expressionism': to express emotional experience rather than impressions of the external world.

'Abstract Expressionism' is also known as 'Action Painting'. My work is furiously energetic, a free and spontaneous application of paint which allows the release of pure creativity of the unconscious mind.

'Spontaneous' doesn't necessarily mean 'quick' and certainly doesn't mean 'out of control'. It's about stepping into spontaneous itself and being 'in flow', being at one with the canvas and clear of mind in order to work in that zone and be taken on a journey within. I'm greatly influenced by my environment and what is occurring in my life at the time. When the paint dries and I become the viewer, it's obvious to me that my work is a visual diary of events.

This process is more akin to tuning in a musical instrument than it is to a traditional painting style and I work with rhythm, balance, vibrancy and pitch (in a visual sense) to a point of resonance. I work with the force of gravity, the thrust of energy and physical movement in those moments is recorded on canvas in paint. I walk out of my studio at the end of the day feeling physically exhausted...though the process itself is a spiritual comfort and quite addictive.

#### **5. Who, or what, inspires you?**

'Life' inspires me. I'm absolutely fascinated by the miracle of life on Earth. I'm fascinated by the Universe and what might be on the other side of it. I'm intrigued by Life after Death, by God and by the power of Mother Nature and why I might be here 'my purpose'.

I feel that I'm close to knowing something more, to seeing something more, to understanding something else when I'm in the process of creating. It 'feels like that' to me and it is this sensation that draws me back into the studio day after day.

I feel more like a mad scientist than an artist most of the time...and yet I have no answers. I don't experience 'creative blocks'; I simply make a start and then seem to be following a thread. It's excitably tormenting!

I became in-tune with this process during my studies in Transpersonal Art Therapy where I experienced working on the floor, working within the moment and often during meditation or after chanting and drumming sessions.

It was after this period when I first heard 'the Pollock comments' (often sarcastic) and I became curious. I started researching and learning more about this Jackson Pollock...I was intrigued to learn that he too had lived a gypsy type life as a child and had experienced Shamanism (as I did during my Transpersonal Art Therapy studies).

Over time I've become more and more fascinated by, energised by and absolutely inspired and excited by his work. Even though we are separated by lifetimes and continents, I feel a very powerful and personal connection that I honour and cherish.

## **6. Do you have any mentors?**

I have a number of mentors including my mother (and artist) Judi Money and husband Chris Major who both offer understanding, encouragement and belief in me and my work.

I've formed lifelong friendships with a number of my surrounding colleagues and time after time we have mentored each other and emotionally supported each other through the various cycles of living an artist's life.

I do however experience moments in my career when I feel quite alone and I'm not sure of the next step... (not inside the studio, but outside) and 'self managing' my career. Each step is a new one to me.

## **7. What are your goals, dreams?**

To be approached by a 'Peggy Guggenheim' who will be absolutely taken by my work, believe in my work and manage my career!

I would also love to create historically significant (and very large scale) works to be hung in and collected by State Galleries and Museums around the world.

To be known as Australia's great 'Action Painter' on a global scale.

To discover what's on the other side of the universe through my work (I don't ask for much).

## **8. Where can we view your work currently?**

I currently have work exhibiting in the Red Sea Gallery, Brisbane (Queensland) Australia and am in the process of organising my up and coming solo show in Melbourne (details soon) where I will also launch my new design label 'Kerrie Warren Designs' inspired by the Guggenheim.

Until I exhibit again in New York, you can view my work on-line at [www.kerriewarren.com.au](http://www.kerriewarren.com.au) and my studio is always open by appointment if you happen to be close by.

## **9. Tell us about your favorite piece, if you have one.**

Each piece is significant because it links to the previous and the following...like a chain of events, but I'm always most excited about the piece on the floor!

## **10. What does painting do for you on an emotional level?**

Painting emotionally stabilizes me and provides a spiritual comfort; it allows the release of pure creativity of the unconscious mind.

## **11. How much time do you spend working on each piece of art?**

I tend to work furiously over a 1 – 2 day period and then continue in a more subtle sense while the paint is drying (tuning it in) which is generally over the course of a week depending on the weather. I enjoy building my own stretchers and bonding with the canvas itself before I launch into it, it's like 'warming up' first.