

JEMALONG ART – JOANNE DUNN (paints as REID)

ORANGE NSW



Jemalong (Platypus) by Joanne Reid

Reasons why Joanne went into business

Joanne decided to use her natural artistic talents to change her life for the better, both from the perspectives of generating income and increasing her self esteem.

The story so far

Joanne Dunn (painting as Joanne Reid) is a Wiradjuri woman, born in 1965, at Lake Cargelligo in New South Wales, Australia. She now lives in Orange, New South Wales. Joanne is a self-taught artist, and during her career has developed her own style that often combines Aboriginal and European art forms. She is also experimenting with abstract pieces.

Joanne started “Jemalong Art” (meaning ‘platypus’) in June 2000, prior to which she painted for 8 years with various Aboriginal organisations.

In recent years, Joanne has held a number of exhibitions both in Australia and Nashville, Tennessee. She has developed her talents into a commercial enterprise with the assistance of the Parkes Forbes Business Enterprise Centre, a not-for-profit business advisory service.

In 2001, Joanne presented the first of a number of major exhibitions of her work in Sydney at the Country Embassy, hosted by Peter Croft, Chief Executive Officer of Parkes Forbes Business Enterprise Centre and the Department of State and Regional Development.

The exhibition was opened by The Minister for Small Business, the Hon Sandra Nori MP as part of the launch of the Indigenous Small Business Advisory Service and featured 42 art works by Joanne. In praise of the art, the minister said:

“The exhibition highlights the talent and drive that Joanne has to translate her creative pursuits into a successful business and a source of financial independence”.

Joanne's depiction of Australian flora and fauna and her unique use of traditional Aboriginal methods, has also created interest in Nashville, Tennessee, when Joanne's works were exhibited at the Centennial Park Arts & Crafts Centre as part of the Australian Festival in 2003.

Joanne made her first visit to Nashville in September 2006 where she exhibited her works as part of the Australian Festival.



*Joanne at the 10th Australian Festival, Nashville USA in September 2006
explaining Aboriginal art forms to school children*

Another major exhibition at the State Parliament House in Sydney was opened by the Premier of New South Wales, Mr. Bob Carr, and hosted by Peter Croft, Chief Executive Officer of Parkes Forbes Business Enterprise Centre. The exhibition consisted of 30 art works by Joanne and was on display for twelve months.

Joanne's works have also become sought after for official and private collections. One of Joanne's major works has been purchased to hang in the Orange Court House. Others have been purchased by the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales and State and Federal Parliamentarians.

Several of her works have been purchased by a Sydney based firm for T-shirt and wall hanging designs and manufacture.

Joanne's works extend from fine art, to sculpture as well as community projects. She designed the new welcoming signs located on the outskirts of Orange, New South Wales, at each point of entry to the city.

Joanne developed a totemic design in 2003 by adapting it to a land drawing, which will be the basis for construction of a giant platypus in Orange at the Gosling Creek Reserve. The overall theme for the site is "drawn from the land" which indicates that inspiration, ideas and materials are drawn from the site and pays tribute to Indigenous and non-Indigenous occupants of the area. The platypus design is the first component of the project which will become a land or earth art measuring 70 metres in length. The image will be visible from several sections of the park and from the air, connecting the entry signs from the outskirts to the city centre.

Another of Joanne's achievements includes use of her art works by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training to illustrate promotional materials for the Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program. Similarly, her work was selected to adorn materials for the Indigenous Self Employment Program. These arrangements were negotiated by the BEC.

Joanne teaches Aboriginal Art and Cultural Practices through the New South Wales Technical and Further Education system.

More recently Joanne was invited to participate in the "Water Works" showing held at the Orange Art Gallery in November 2005. The story behind Joanne's painting is:

"Waterworks is a thematic depiction of the history of the Orange waterways as seen through the eyes of a Wiradjuri woman. Its themes include the local river systems, ranging from Mount Canobolas to the Lachlan and including local fauna and flora".

Joanne was also invited to exhibit at the Careflight Exhibition, held in Orange, in December 2005.

Her latest project is a reconciliation project at Bowen Public School in Orange, New South Wales, which embraces the coming together of all children, with a particular emphasis on troubled youth.

Peter Andren, Federal member for Calare, is a great supporter of Joanne and has said in the context of Joanne's Nashville exhibition –

“This will be a great opportunity both for Joanne and to raise an awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal art in America.

Aboriginal art covers a wide spectrum from Central Australia and Arnhem Land and urban Australia, from ancient to so-called traditional and modern.

Joanne’s unique style has received wide acclaim, particularly her interpretation of nature and reconciliation themes”.

Funding (if any) to support their business development

Joanne has really not received any major funding to support her business.

Stakeholders within their business or who have helped them

Joanne is the sole stakeholder within her business

She has been receiving mentoring assistance from Peter Croft of the Parkes Forbes BEC for the last six years.

Business planning, how implemented and timeframes for the development of the business

Joanne does not have a formal Business Plan and tends to focus strategically on exhibitions and events.

These are planned and executed with mentoring support.

While this approach might seem ad lib the ever changing art world makes more rigid planning impossible.

Economic and employment impact

Joanne operates the business herself and at this stage does not employ anyone. As with a lot of Aboriginal artists she relies on income from outside the enterprise to support business operations.

Success factors and lessons learnt

Joanne has learnt that to be successful she has to be forthright in selling herself, and must visit a lot more places such as exhibitions, galleries, etc and to strengthen networks generally.

Advice to others contemplating the enterprise option

Joanne recommends to prospective business operators that they must put in a lot of hours and hard work and that success will not come overnight.

They will also have to learn to cope with disappointment which they will inevitably encounter.

Best practice

Joanne believes that an artist cannot stand still and must be constantly alert to changing themes, tastes, media and materials.

This can be best achieved through participation in formal training environments (Joanne goes to TAFE), by networking with others in the industry and by visiting galleries, exhibitions and the like.

Joanne also believes that professional advice should be sought rather than operating in the dark.

Contacts, links and resources

Parkes Forbes Business Enterprise Centre

Peter Andren, MP, Federal Member for Calare NSW

TAFE NSW