

Artist's Profile – Brett Jones

Brett A. Jones was born in 1966 in Redcliffe, Queensland. His family lived in the western outskirts of Brisbane until 1976. A move to the Gold Coast saw him attend art classes with Mr. Scott-Vandyke for a few years learning drawing and oil painting. During the next few years (while still at school) he painted and sold dozens of oil paintings, mostly in duo-tone and sometimes involving diptychs and triptychs of Australian landscape scenes. His inspiration in those days was Hans Heysen. He left school after grade 10 and completed the first year of a boilermaking apprenticeship in a shipyard on the Brisbane River before switching to a fitting and turning apprenticeship in the Brisbane City Council which he completed with honours in 1986. After working for an oil exploration company in western Queensland, he moved to Cairns and worked at Trinity Wharf, for a goldmine west of Georgetown, for the Far North Queensland Electricity Board, and for a large engine rebuilding company, while still developing his artistic skills at every opportunity. He moved to Hervey Bay in 1991 and worked for various engineering firms until an accident at work. He broke his left wrist and permanently injured his spine. There followed a few very hard years during which he turned fully back to his artistic roots. The intense personal drive to be an artist sent him searching for a way to achieve in the fine art world, within the limitations imposed on him by chronic severe pain (hurt to move, hurt to breathe).

He experimented with various mediums including wood, steel, aluminium, brass, spray-painting, leather, house enamel & pure tint, coloured pencil, watercolour and oil paint. He hand carved motorcycle parts, did custom paint jobs, hand made throwing knives from old car springs (which are things of great beauty and really just another form of artistic expression), painted a large mural which took two and a half years to finish and was started with a broken wrist, and set up a studio and tried to seriously re-engage with his oil painting past with a view to painting and selling originals. It took four months of pain to paint the first one (Canesmoke Sunset), which almost made him give up art for good.

"I sat like Rodin's Thinker for about three hours one day until finally realizing if I was going to give up producing originals for sale because of pain I might as well just do what I really wanted to and admitted to myself I'd really rather draw in monochrome than paint, pick the subject matter on a purely personal level, and not limit myself with time constraints and others expectations of what fine art is. It dawned on me after awhile (When I started winning art shows) that it didn't matter how long it took me to prepare for and complete a work if the results were good enough to be published as fine art prints".

He subsequently spent the next few years doing a series of works in graphite, each one taking many hundreds of pain filled hours to complete. Four of these prize winning works are now in print, with more to come.

"I always wanted to fully explore the concept of Chiaroscuro, to make people really believe there was a motorcycle, or bowl of fruit or whatever in front of them, using only the effects of light. For me 2B graphite lends itself to this perfectly as it represents all the grey tones from so close to white, that it is white unless compared to actual white, to black and every tone in between. White is the blank paper, but to the minds eye can be made to look like anything if its surroundings are the right shape and tone. My art teacher Mr. Scott-Vandyke told me when I was ten that if I wanted to draw properly, to draw the shadows and let the highlights take care of themselves. He impressed that on me all the time. I can hear him saying it like it was yesterday, instead of thirty years ago.