

Julie Poulsen
Biographical Profile

Julie Poulsen's instinctive creativity, curiosity and feel for colour and composition were informed by a diversity of climates and lifestyles in her formative years. From the deep green wilds of Papua New Guinea to the shiny, bustling Gold Coast and from traditional Toowoomba and the United Kingdom to frontier Cooktown, Julie's travels have fed her natural tendency towards exploration, discovery and experimentation.

Born and later educated in Brisbane from mid primary school, Julie spent a year with her family in Cooktown in 1977 before moving to Toowoomba to embark on a Diploma of Creative Arts. At the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education, in an era exemplified by non-directed arts study and limited formal tuition, Julie formulated a mind set of investigation which would characterise her future art practice. Tapping in to the sensitivities of printmaking, the gustiness of oils, the pliability of soft sculpture and the spontaneous bliss of drawing, each altered direction reflected the changing and intersecting pathways in Julie's life.

In the late eighties Julie manoeuvred back into painting, juggling work and motherhood as women typically do – with determination and efficiency. These early works mirror this energy, painted with a fresh, raw fervour, with multiple layers of child-like images reflecting her children's drawings.

Painting remained the focus until 2002 when the nature of her art practice shifted. The new works became light and open a combination of painting, drawing, printmaking and stitched assemblage. The change was a return to the source, an extension of works started at Art College. In 2005, an exhibition of new works at Cairns Regional Gallery was to clarify and establish this new direction for Julie in a dramatic way. *Décor Sermon* was 50 metres of artwork 148cms high covering the walls of the Loft Art Space. It was a raucous combination of materials – stitched panels, found objects and thought-provoking imagery – presented as a playful reinvention of the puffed up notion of the perfect interior décor.

In 2006 Julie turned her creatively analytical mind to commonplace café signage for her new body of work *Menu Board*. With trademark playfulness and wit, Julie played with the text, language and aesthetics of chalkboard café menus and roadside food stalls and reinvented them with new beauty and meaning. With Julie's poetic twist, the signs assumed cultural, geographical and even economic symbolism while retaining an intriguing ambiguity. *Menu Board* was exhibited at KickArts Contemporary Arts in Cairns in 2007.

Julie exhibited regularly at Depot Gallery from 2007 until its closure in 2013. The first show in 2007 *House and Land package*, addressed the pre-designed formulas that are applied to our lives in modern home building. The artworks tease out the local real estate script and the clichés of contemporary living and revise the modern Australian Dream with irony and intelligence.

House Portraits in 2009 and The Princess gets to hold the cats in 2011 are an attempt to capture the light and shade of memories and emotions that inhabit a home, embodied in part by the well-loved items that come together to tell a family's story.

These paintings are a patchwork of secrets – fragments of the artist’s home, life, self. They record this ever-evolving tableau at this moment in time, and give themselves up to the patterns that emerge.

Since 2007 landscapes have remained a common theme, sightseen interpretations of Far North Queensland. *Country for birds* in 2013 was an expansion on works produced for *Glimpse* a joint exhibition with Jenny Valmadre Cairns Regional Gallery in 2012. This major show was highlighted with a film produced by Catherine Hunter and documented by Bruce Inglis. In 2014 *North* was exhibited at 45downstairs and a selection of *Country for Birds* landscapes at Anita Traverso, both galleries in Melbourne.

A Residency at the Art Vault Mildura in 2015 meant an alternative landscape palette and fresh content including a series of large landscapes centred around the Pink Lakes; shown at Art Atrium Gallery in 2016.

An extended body of work on paper *Remainder+* initiated in 2009 was exhibited at KickArts in 2012. These works continue to stretch the boundaries of the established formulas for aesthetics. Exploring the charming imperfections in the discarded debris from energetic printmaking sessions, these often happy accidents are windows into the creative process and into the mind of the artist themselves. In the same way that film outtakes can provide insights into the character of a performer, these miscellaneous rejects reveal something of the heartfelt toil behind a finished work of art.

Recent group exhibitions include Sydney Contemporary Art Fair 2015 and 2017 exhibiting with Art Atrium, and curated shows ARTNOW FNQ 2015 and 2017 at Cairns Art Gallery. Also in 2017 *Iconoclasts* a curated figurative group show of Melbourne based artists which travelled from Umbrella Studio Townsville to KickArts Cairns.

Finalist in various awards including Heysen Prize for interpretation of Place receiving a special judge’s commendation, Paddington Art Prize judged by John Firth Smith, Rio Tinto & Martin Hanson Award judged by Nick Mitzevich, Sheraton Mirage Art Prize judged by Susan McCulloch and Ray Crooke, and the Fleurieu Peninsular Art Prize judged by Ron Radford, Rick Amor, Sarah Thomas as well as the Fleurieu Peninsular The Art of Food and Wine Prize.

With Julie’s touch, elements of the everyday take on a life of their own as unique works of art, testaments to her ongoing quest for new visual narratives and her delightfully unpredictable style.