



Nomadic artist finds peace in Bundaberg

BUDDING young artist Garry Johns is taking break from the hustle and bustle of city living to relax and enjoy the tranquillity of the Bundaberg district.

The 25-year-old from Paddington in Sydney's south has spent the last two years travelling the world after he fled to Nepal following the death of his girl-friend in a motor vehicle accident.

"I guess it all started there. We were planning on going around Australia and when she died I just fled. Nepal is really a great place to go and reconstruct your perspective," Garry said.

He has been on the road most of his life after his first visit to Nepal when he was just 15, yet despite his extensive travels and growing reputation as an artist he has still not been to Europe.

However, this is his next goal and he will spend the next three years travelling to Germany where he will take up residence at the Kunst Academy where he has been awarded a scholarship.

"I don't believe it is the final destination that truly matters, but the journey towards it," he said.

Having travelled more than 2000km in Queensland alone on his "push bike", which he built in Nepal and has used all the way on his journey so far, Garry is keeping his body as fit as his mind.

"The push bike is such a great way to travel, it is amazing not more people utilise its potential," he said.

Garry's bike, which is almost a work of art in itself, weighs

By Chris Leslight

more than 100kg which adds to the hard work of getting from one place to the next.

Despite the lack of a formal education (he left school at 14) Garry is a graduate from the school of life and brings this to his work.

"I try to raise people's awareness, both intellectually and psychologically, in my work. There are a lot of political, economic and social influences to observe in life and I try to capture these," he said.

"To capture and crystallise, that is what I do in my work. If you dream, live it; if you have a dream, chase it. Again it is the journey that really counts."

Having won a number of national arts prizes, Garry is subsidising his trip around Australia and on into Asia and Europe by selling his works on the road and through an art gallery in Sydney, like a travelling gypsy.

"This portion of the trip is to raise money and most of better works sell for a few thousand dollars. Ultimately it is not the money, but whether people like and understand what they see," he said.

"I have to take my sketching and painting tools as I paint whatever takes my fancy and places like Fraser Island have so much to offer as an inspiration."

Garry is planning on staying in Bundaberg for another two or three weeks before heading off with his German travelling companion towards his next stopover in Cairns where he will hold an exhibition.

ARTIST Mr Garry Johns poses in front of a massive sketch he did in a Coonarr tomato packing shed recently. Garry is currently taking a brief rest stop in Bundaberg before resuming his artistic journey around the world.

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