

## Johnathon Smith

### Bio

Born: Mildura 23 April 1987

School: Wentworth Primary School/Coomealla High School

Johnathon became interested in art from the early age of 8. He would often skip school to go out bush with his father and other elders where he would see animals in nature and knew from that point that in his heart he wanted to paint.

He started sketching cartoon characters (Bugs Bunny and Marvin the Martian) at home. He later enrolled in TAFE at Dareton where he started to experiment and use acrylic paints to do aboriginal art. His teachers Kathy Benchmark and Jo Hill (indigenous artist) both encouraged him to do indigenous paintings and to study different aboriginal artists who use lines and dots as their mark. Johnathon predominantly uses dots as his mark because he likes his art to be tidy; dots give a smoothness and roundness to his mark. Johnathon painted animals such as kangaroos and emus, much of which came from memory. His technique is often based on real object with a stylized outlook

He has two sisters and during the time Johnathon went to TAFE they were able to learn from him and encouraged each other artistically. He left TAFE in 2006 after 2 years of study and has continued to create art using acrylic paint which has a smoother finish which suited his style as it dries quickly.

Johnathon hopes to keep his culture going and eventually be able to use his art to teach younger aboriginal children the stories which he depicts. One of his favourite aboriginal artists is Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri. He is embarking on a traineeship through The Art Vault and is being mentored by local indigenous artist Lance Atkinson. He has enrolled in TAFE and hopes to finish certificate 3 in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture and Arts.

Johnathon now paints on a full time basis at The Art Vault and has already sold his paintings to various private collectors and local businesses.