# Jackie Moss

I knew I had something in common with Jackie Moss when she told me that she had won her first art competition when she was four years old. I had won mine for colouring in The Magic Roundabout (remember Dougal and Zebedee?) when I was five years of age. Jackie had won hers for a drawing of her father for a Father’s Day Drawing Competition. It is at this point that the similarities cease. Jackie has gone on to be a highly successful artist. Laughingly she tells me, “I loved colouring in then, I still do. Nothing much has really evolved.”

Jackie has always been happiest when surrounded by pens and pencils, scissors and glue. She studied art throughout high school and deferred her Graphic Design tertiary study offer after completing Year 12 in Canberra, instead happily accepting a suitably creative job within the visual merchandising department for Youngs/Grace Bros., gaining skills and design knowledge through window dressing, product promotions, dressing mannequins and interior displays across four stores. “It was a fun and creative job and a great team!” Her canvas was the window.

Returning to Melbourne in 1985, she gained employment as a junior design artist with Moore Business Systems in their art and marketing department, learning graphic design on the job, she tells me “the *old-school* way on the drawing board with Rotring pens and T-squares,” designing business forms and internal marketing material. She learned a huge amount about design and printing processes, a lot of technology which is now obsolete it today’s digital world.

Jackie married her husband Geoff at the Melbourne Zoo in 1989 and the first of their three daughters was born in 1992. Whilst she loved motherhood, she craved to get back to art, and always had some creative outlet on the go, school mosaic projects, set designs for the school plays, even wine labels. With connections in the rag trade she managed to secure some freelance work creating motifs for Jockey and Red Robin socks. Working from home as a young Mum she designed and then digitally coloured motifs for the boxer shorts, socks and children’s underwear and sent them through to the company who would create the placement prints.

She also started to illustrate books. She had found whilst reading books to her children as they were growing up that some were beautifully illustrated – and others poorly done. Keen to illustrate books herself, she set about preparing a folio to submit to publishing houses, particularly in the education area. Surprisingly, the first book Jackie ever illustrated, there was no contact with the author, she worked with the story manuscript purely via the publisher. Since then she has created many illustrations for quite a few publications, helping to engage the readers with delightful, colourful images. “I love the process of bringing the words to life with pictures, ‘a picture tells a thousands words as they say!’”

Around this time her father passed away having suffered from Alzheimer’s disease. Her eldest daughter wrote an incredibly touching story of how she had watched her ‘Papa’, the grandfather she knew and loved, slowly disappear from her, from a child’s perspective. It was such a touching story that Jackie approached the Alzheimer’s Association and found that they were in the process of developing a resource kit called ‘Ageing and Changing’ aimed at educating children of the changes that can occur in their grandparents. They were looking for an illustrator – and Jackie was thrilled and honoured to take on the project.

She has even written and illustrated her own book, *Me and My Family Tree*, which helps children understand that it is our differences and similarities, which make us all unique. “I had written the book at home over several years and finally made time to complete the illustrations during my drawing elective at TAFE.”

Through self-publishing her book and connecting with Monique Lisbon at Mono-unlimited, Jackie opened the door to other illustration opportunities and three more books followed.

When her youngest daughter was about to enter primary school a neighbour suggested that she approach G.A.T.E.WAYS (Gifted and Talented Education) a company developed in 1994 to support gifted and talented children who have special educational needs with a range of challenging and innovative programs. Jackie joined G.A.T.E.WAYS in 2002, firstly in a supervising role and soon after began preparing and presenting art based workshops for these talented young students.

Before long, Jackie decided it was time to commit seriously to her love of art and commenced a Box Hill TAFE Certificate III course in Visual Arts and Contemporary Craft which she enjoyed so much she decided to continue studying a Diploma of Visual Art at CAE, now known as Box Hill TAFE, Melbourne. As a mature age student she started her Diploma part-time in 2010, majoring in Oil Painting and graduating in 2013 where she says she “found her tribe”.

Jackie has been coming to the Bass Coast for over ten years now, originally enjoying holidays at Venus Bay where they found some ideal ‘dog-friendly’ accommodation via a pamphlet she happened to pick up from an art workshop attended in 2007 – serendipitous! The family have had several holidays in Inverloch since, and ended up buying a holiday house there in 2015. Now with adult children, she and husband Geoff plan to spend more time here in retirement, eventually! She and her family have explored many beaches and coves, and walked all the walks that they could. While exploring, Jackie takes stacks of photographs as inspiration for future artworks, including rock pools, and rock formations, shells and other interesting natural subjects that she comes across to replicate on canvas. She never tires of them.

She says, “I find inspiration in celebrating overlooked compositions, patterns, and forms. Observing beautiful leaves trodden underfoot, shells and tiles; searching for interesting shapes, reflections, details and surprising colour combinations in both my interior and exterior environments. Images of stillness and solitude found within the natural and human world are also themes I intuitively explore in my arts practice through drawing, painting and personal photography.”

Jackie held an exhibition at ArtSpace – ‘Coast Lines’ – from 19/2/2019 to 1/4/2019.