



GLASSY EYED



STORY BY ROBYN RANKIN
PHOTOGRAPHY MARC MCCORMACK

DANNIS PROWSE SEEMS TO HAVE MASTERED THE ART OF BALANCING THE CREATIVE AND COMMERCIAL SIDES OF HER ARTWORK

Getting the mix right: Dannis Prowse handles the combination of art and commercialism with aplomb. Hair by Antonella Vigarì at Hairdressers at Work, Moss & Spy navy & white 50's inspired dress \$549 from Tea Lily, White Jasper ring \$159; styling and make-up by Louise from Celebrations Makeup Artistry at www.celebrationsmakeup.com

Gemini is the answer. No, not to the question of model car driven, but to how artist and business woman Dannis Prowse balances the artistic and commercial sides of her creations.

This is a major simplification, but Dannis is best described as a glass artist.

She says she loves her artwork as it allows her to express herself, while the commercial side reflects the business side of her intellect.

A leadlight artist, teacher and business woman of 20 years, Dannis has expanded her repertoire with a little-known but exciting technique.

And her new skill has been recognised by the art community, as she won Cairns Art Society's Highly Commended Award at the Cairns Art Society's 64th Annual Exhibition, held in September.

In the Beginning (pictured) is one of her special laminart pieces, which she describes as a lifesize male torso.

The striking, almost deceptive piece is stunning not only for what is included, but also

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for what apparently isn't.

Dannis describes the process of laminart as securing smaller pieces of coloured glass to one solid pane of safety glass by a special method, thus ensuring it meets Australian safety standards.

Glass art can now be applied to/from a single window to a skyscraper.

She learnt the technique from a visiting German practitioner and has not looked back since.

Since selling her previous business, Dannis has spent the past year perfecting her laminart techniques and initiating her next business venture – laminart shower screens.

While she says the heat and humidity of the tropics has proven an added challenge, she is now in the process, with Glasstech of Stratford, of developing special shower screens.

She comes up with the designs and patterns, Glasstech cuts the glass with a \$3 million water jet cutter, and she uses the laminart technique to meld the smaller pieces with the solid base and complete the work.

Dannis, 48, describes fellow artists such as Jennie Scott as inspirational and supportive in her own endeavours.

She uses her art as a form of stress release, and as a woman who has suffered ill health, she finds that finding time to unwind is even more important than ever.

"When I go into the studio I've got no idea of what's going on in the outside world," she says.

The single mum, who always had a penchant

for art, started her first business when she decided she needed cash to give her daughter a solid education.

"I started off with one sheet of red glass and I made about 300 little red hearts on sticks and took them to florists for Valentine's Day. I think I made about \$800," she says.

Later she designed glass pieces for sale at the markets and the business then evolved into teaching others.

Acknowledging there have been hiccups and challenges along the way, she says everything has led her to the here and now.

"I've learnt my own self-worth and value," she reflects.

As for what's next, Dannis laughs and explains that as soon as she knows, we will.

"What's next? I'll know when I wake up and do it," she says.

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