I started life 1966 and was born in England, where at the age of 2 my parents migrated to Australia as "ten pound tourists". Where I grew up with my younger brother on the beaches of Sydney, outback towns of Carvaran WA, Brigalong VIC and major communities of Bendigo, Ballarat and Sale in Victoria. And like everybody in the arts industry, my career started petty much the same way. I was very interested in drawing and painting at a young age and encouraged by parents to study art further at school. Where at the age of 15 I entered into Queensland University to study an Associate Diploma of Fine Arts, with a part scholarship for sculpting in the early 80's. This is where the arts really opened up to me and over the next few years new and exciting ideas and techniques were explored. I must say I didn't do to well, but it was a worthwhile experience.

I find it very uncomfortable to be labelled an "artist" as I feel it is not an easy passion to pursue. In this field of endeavour you are always learning, changing and challenging yourself, to me it becomes addictive - to create and explore an idea and to successfully "pull it off" is an adrenaline kick - but only for a moment and then the questions, how can I do it better? Lloyd Rees once said on or near to the end of his life "I will never stop painting until I find the prefect light or prefect colour, but the challenge is to pursue the prefect painting" or words that effect. So to be called an "artist" in all its glory is never really achieved until the process is complete - until death. I hope this makes sense in a odd sort off way.

When I finished my time at Queensland University , it was the middle of the recession in the 80's and difficult to find employment in the arts Industry. I took a job as a cleaner in a pie factory in Victoria, which eventually led to a trade as a pastrycook Which I worked at for the next few years. I took a year off work to travel around Australia drawing and painting along the way with my then girlfriend (wife to be). It was a period of time that really kindled my interest in wildlife, especially birds.

After experiencing Australia close up and being inspired by the writings of people like Tim Flannery, I soon realized how unique Australian wildlife is - to be able to adopt and evolve to survive on a drop of water. The harshness of our environment means that we have the most resilient and beautiful wildlife in the world. I think our challenge, is to learn how to adapt and evolve along side our amazing wildlife and environment - a process which can enhance our quality of life whilst preserving that of the creature that we share this island continent with.

The early mornings required of a pastrycook took their toll and in the early 90's I returned University to study graphic design. I was fortunate to study at a time when computer technology was taking over the industry but traditional methods were still being taught. I then worked as a graphic designer for the next ten years or so as well as getting married and having kids, taking a particular interest in computer technology and what could be achieved with it. I moved in to a freelancing position, giving away the 9to5 routine and set up my own company called "Monkey Tail Design" which encompasses all aspects - graphic design, commercial Illustration (digital and traditional) and fine art.

Again during this period I was always drawing and painted wildlife. I had a solo exhibition in 1999 and I am proud to have exhibited in almost all WASA major Exhibitions for the last twelve years. Along with numerous group and community fine art exhibitions spanning over the last ten years.

I have always had the dream to move out of the city and build a dream house and studio in an idyllic country location with my wife and two kids (Jarrad and Emily). About 10 years ago we bought 25 acres of hilly granite outcrop country at Highlands, Central Victoria. Five years ago we made the move to Yea in a bid to turn this dream into reality. We took over the local video store to supplement the income of an "artist", which turned into a surprisingly good outlet for my artwork especially my recycled corrugated iron sculptures. We then spent 2.5 years building a mudbrick, off the grid, energy efficient house, which we moved into 6 months ago - plans are now in place to build a studio / gallery along the similar lines. My art work, fine art and sculpture are now in a number of outlets in country Victoria. For further details, a full resume, and a complete library of my artwork for the last 6 years are on my website (www.monkeytaildesign.com).

monkey tail design

Darren Gilbert

2742 Highlands Road Highlands VIC 3660
Mobile 0421 3784 51
Email gmgilbert@skymesh.com.au
Web www.monkeytaildesign.com