



## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY – KATHARINA RAPP

### Artist's statement

Often people say to me 'Your work reminds me of German Expressionism'. How the painting of a bird, or a woman, for example, can be 'German' is hard to define.

I have lived in many countries over the years, prior to settling in Australia, but my formative years, since I was born and grew up there, did happen in Germany. They say that when you are young, you acquire a 'cultural template' which stays with you for the rest of your life.

Expressionism, on the other hand, is not a movement like 'Impressionism', 'Fauvism', or 'Cubism', all of which delineate a one-off artistic direction. Expressionism is more of an artistic direction of the Twentieth Century as such; there is something more permanent about it, as it really concerns itself with the analysis of experience. This form of painting did first develop in Germany, and it was at its strongest during periods of social crisis.

The first signs of Expressionism happened, however, in the late Middle Ages, when artists like Matthias Grünewald explored deformation and exaggeration to enhance the dramatic moment; for instance, in the elongated finger pointing accusingly at Jesus in his Altar piece. In this way you achieve through the use of form a heightened expression of what you want to say. This can also be done through unconventional use of colour or by compositional means.

What has this got to do with the paintings you see on the walls?

I feel that I have German Expressionism in my blood, but that I turned it into something unique to myself. In contrast to the grim and socially sarcastic themes which dominated the War years, I have found a way of using form, colour and composition to speak to the viewer directly - not about *angst*, but about positive emotions, with an emphasis on the better moments in a woman's life.

I believe I have turned what was initially a 'dark art' into something joyful. It takes greater strength to remain positive than to point out what is wrong with this far from perfect world. Would you not agree?

..... Katharina Rapp 2011

<b>Place of Birth</b>	Tailfingen, Germany
<b>Citizenship</b>	Australian and European passports
<b>Apprenticeship</b>	Decorative Arts, Stuttgart, 1965 - 67
<b>University</b>	Sorbonne, Paris 1968 and 69 Loughton College, London to study English 1969 and 70 BA (Fine Art) at La Trobe University 1994 - 97

**Interests** German, English and French language and literature, and some Spanish.  
Architecture, visual arts, classical music, travelling, food and wine.

During her formative years Katharina lived in Paris, Geneva, Zürich, London and Edinburgh.

In Edinburgh she ran her own creative knitwear business and also opened the first Body Shop outside England in 1976. This was followed by a move to Melbourne, in 1982.

Katharina had always wanted to follow in the footsteps of her father, who was a painter. Since moving to Castlemaine in 1988 she has devoted all her energy and time to painting. Katharine is represented in various private collections in countries including Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Denmark, Great Britain, Ireland, France, South Africa, USA and Australia.

During 1997 an Australian art publisher asked for permission to publish a series of Katharina's paintings as cards. They depicted the evolving physical and emotional stages of a woman's life. Since then the art cards have become national best-sellers and in 2003 Katharina started to publish and to distribute them herself. Exposure via the cards makes it basically unnecessary for Katharina to exhibit in galleries. Art lovers find their way to her house – from as far as Paris and the United States - and they purchase directly from her studio or on-line.