

Chris Bond

Qualifications:

Bachelor of Arts (Fine Art) in
Painting, 1997

Bachelor of Arts (Fine Art)
(Honours) in Painting, 1998

Occupation: Artist

**The bond between one artist
and his art**

Artist Chris Bond is really excited about his new body of work for the 2010 Melbourne Art Fair, an exhibition of leading contemporary art.

He is designing catalogues in desktop publishing programs, printing them and making paintings from them about artistic and personal annihilation.

“Fun stuff,” he says. “It’s like making painted reproductions of exhibition catalogues for shows that I’ve never had and as I’ve become the subject of my work, it’s kind of autobiographical.”



The fact that Chris is still passionate about his art is to be applauded as things could have gone very differently.

In 2006 Chris became a single parent when his partner, Michelle, passed away from ovarian cancer. He had very little energy or motivation to make art even though he was surrounded by it every day as a gallery assistant at Brunswick's Counihan Gallery.

It was not until Jan Duffy from the Linden Gallery persuaded Chris to get involved in a group show called *Small Quiet Gestures* in 2007 that he felt compelled to work on an installation of various components based around his relationship with Michelle.

"It was a cathartic experience," says Chris, "And with the assistance and encouragement of many people, I managed to slowly get my life back on track."

Without life's harsh thunderbolts from the blue, establishing yourself and earning your keep is pretty hard for any artist. Chris says the first two years after graduating from RMIT were slow. It took him about three years of building up his confidence before he had a solo show. To build up his skills, he copied old masters; a practice he says was valuable as it helped him recognise the value of focus and patience.



He finally produced *A Brush with Death*, his first group showing, at LaTrobe Street Gallery, Melbourne in 2000. This was followed

by other group showings at RMIT Gallery and Bus Gallery as well as a studio residency at Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne from 2001 to 2003.

The residency paved the way from numerous solo and group exhibitions in Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney and in 2005 his relationship with the influential Nellie Castan Gallery in Melbourne sprang to life. He has had a solo exhibition there each year, bar his period of mourning.

While Chris' work has managed to find its way into private collections here, in the USA and South America, in the early days Chris says he had a DIY approach to marketing his work.

"I was predominantly showing in artist run spaces where the artist is often responsible for any marketing they wish to do. But now that I'm represented by Nellie Castan Gallery, a bit of the pressure has been taken off," he says.

But representation by a commercial gallery does not mean that the money comes rolling in. Thanks to the global economic climate 2009 was a "shocker" for most artists, Chris says.

He adds: "Given that it's not really selling essential commodities, the art market is often the first to crumble at the first sign of financial stress."

Such a climate does present challenges. Chris quit his assistant curator job at the Counihan Gallery last year to spend more time with his son and on his art. But with the art market still finding its feet, a mortgage, and a youngster to support, Chris will return to regular paid work soon.

That said, with the 2010 Melbourne Art Fair, boasting works from more than 900 artists and attracting up to 30,000 visitors each year, on the agenda, Chris is glad to still be producing art for such public consumption and thankful for all he learned at RMIT.



"Nearly all of my RMIT lecturers were practising artists themselves," he says, "and the combination of a sort of critical self-awareness encouraged by them, plus the social aspect of working with other artists in the same space, was really important as it allowed me to regard my work as a public rather than private endeavour."

And hopefully many private collectors will regard Chris' very public Art Fair exhibition with pleasure.

Find out more about RMIT's Master of Fine Art and Fine Art research degrees [here](#).

April 2010