

Southern Gazette

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BELMONT

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Bringing country to city

By **NICOLE STEVENS**

A RUSTIC studio surrounded by wetlands and wildlife on the banks of the Swan River is the backdrop for emerging Cloverdale painter Jilalga Murray-Ranui's exploration of self.

Murray-Ranui has won a year-long tenure as artist in residence at Garvey Park, Belmont, where she will continue to develop her contemporary indigenous style.

Her striking paintings reflect a youth spent surrounded by the vibrant palette of the Pilbara, her mother's home country.

Before moving to Perth in 2007, the softly spoken country girl had made a name for herself as a painter in Port Hedland.

"A lot of my art is a drawback to the Pilbara - its landforms, plants and animals," she said.

"As an urban Nyangumarta woman, it is hard to explain the feeling of painting that part of our country. It is a spiritual experience for me."

From her studio fronting a stunning montage of river and parkland, Murray-Ranui

will immerse herself in preparations for an exhibit at the Koorie Aboriginal Trust in Melbourne next year.

She said she was looking forward to exploring her father's Koorie heritage.

"I've been floating in different worlds, trying to work out who I am and where I fit. My artwork helps me explore that."

Murray-Ranui said her work had come along in leaps and bounds since moving to the city and she was keen to explore new ideas through her favourite medium, acrylic on canvas.

"Living up north where people knew my work I got into a comfort zone and when I moved to Perth I became a bit unsure of myself. After doing a master class in abstract painting at Victoria Park Arts Centre, it really helped unlock some hidden creative passion.

"I have got to a point where I don't mind what other people think of my work. I can paint for myself and I'm enjoying it more."

Murray-Ranui can be contacted through Belmont Small Business Centre for viewings or commissions.



Jilalga Murray-Ranui with some of her work.

Picture: Justin Benson-Cooper
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