

THE ART OF POCHOIR

MEL JONES



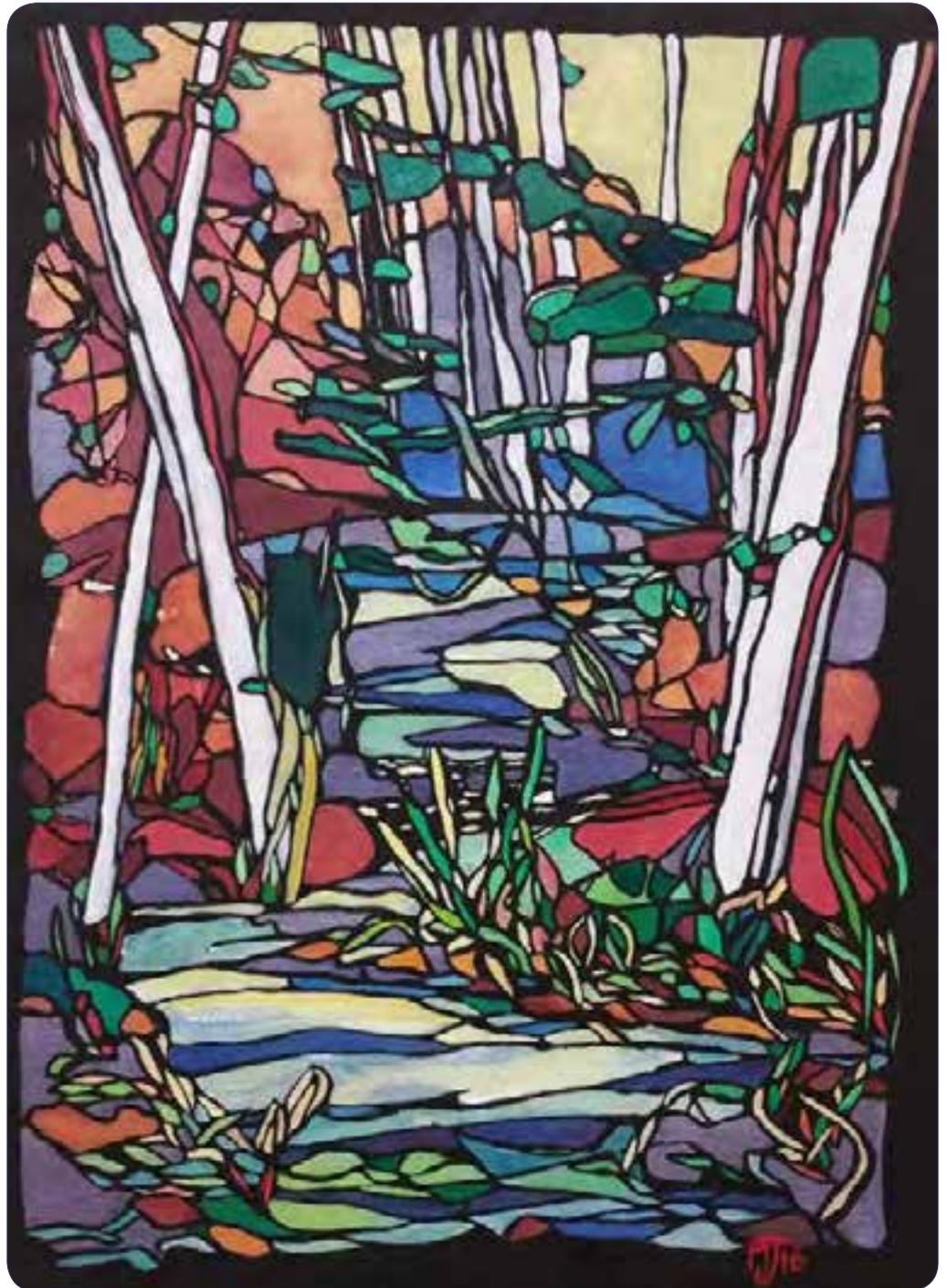
POCHOIR is the French word for stencil, although the technique isn't exactly stencilling as we know it. It probably originated much earlier in Japan but became popular in the late nineteenth century in Paris where it was mainly used by illustrators and designers to make patterns and architectural prints and as a way of making fine limited editions of illustrated books. Pablo Picasso and Joan Miró utilised the technique for book illustrations and Henri Matisse in 1947 used the technique in his illustrated book with handwritten text, *Jazz*.

the pochoir of many of the great names in French art have today become highly collectable works

Pochoir is an extremely time and labour intensive method of making prints, dependent on large numbers of highly-trained workers although offering a very simple form of high quality reproduction. Colour is brushed through layers of pre-cut stencils, each layer representing a new layer of the image. The technique was also used to add colour to black and white prints, such as etchings, engravings and lithographs.

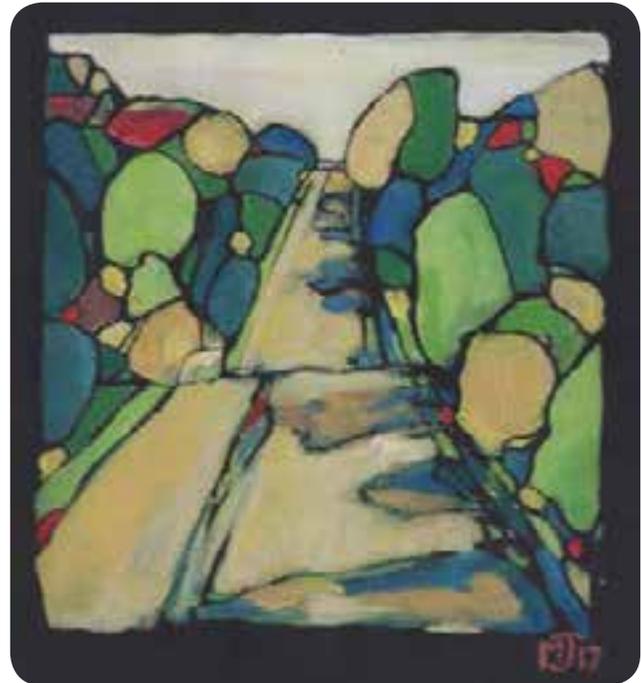
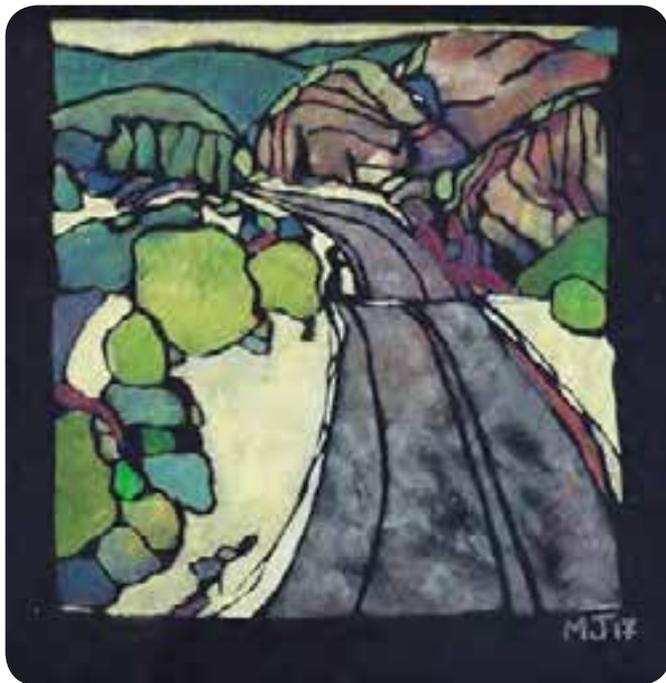
Pochoir was a very luxurious way to print images, entirely appropriate to the elegance and extravagance of the Art Nouveau and Deco fashion journals of the early 1900s. Lavish pochoir folios featured costume and textile designs and illustrations for bespoke furniture, wallpaper and architectural designs. As printmaking methods became more sophisticated and mechanised, the manual production of pochoir declined. Hundreds of ateliers existed throughout Paris in the heyday of pochoir but only one remains today, that of Jacomet.

It is interesting to scroll through the pochoir of the great artists which have become collectable today to find works of Joan Miró, Sonia Delaunay, Fernand Léger,



Paul Cézanne, Pablo Picasso, Maurice Utrillo and Raoul Dufy and ranging in price from £395 (Dufy) to £1,450 (Utrillo).

Mel Jones is an artist who has found her own way of utilising pochoir techniques to produce striking paintings in an art deco style with crisp lines and a vibrant palette. She also runs workshops where she introduces others to her particular stencilling technique. She has been exhibiting widely in group and solo exhibitions for many years and was artist in residence at Mt. Tomah Botanic Garden in 2012. Her most recent exhibition was *Connections* at Gallery One88 in Katoomba in November this year and some of the works shown there are featured on these pages.



LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF

I am Mel Jones—I am a businesswoman and a creative.

I own two businesses, a café in Katoomba called *True to the Bean* and *The Blue Mountains Tea Company*. I have operated *The Blue Mountains Tea Company* for about 5 years now, and I have owned *True to the Bean Café* for almost a year.

I am a creative. I have always been creative and always sought creative expression.

For the last 8 years I have focused mainly on the art technique of Pochoir and I create in this medium in my own unique way.

For me all of the parts of my life, my work and my creativity are connected, and at this time my business has come full circle in connection to my creativity and my life as a business woman. I don't seem to be able to have one without the other.

When I begin one of my workshops, I start by describing my creative journey with tea, and then we move on to art.

Top left:
On The Road

Right:
Katoomba to Leura

I am a Tea Master and blender for my own tea company.

There are many Tea Masters around the world and as tea is growing in trend for younger people I am sure I won't be the last to seek to learn more about this amazing beverage.

So why tea?

Because some of the best conversations I have ever had have been over a cup of tea.

Tea for me is not only calming, it invigorates. It helps me to slow down and enjoy the moment and it brings me comfort. When drinking tea with friends or family it brings connection to those we love. Tea is welcoming, calm, thoughtful and kind to our bodies.

A perfect cup of tea creates a perfect moment in time, and that solace, or comfort, or connection is what makes us human, and sometimes it is the best part of our day.