

Introducing ... Michael Jeffery

This former farm worker turned artist has blazed an impressive trail onto the national art world scene.

Power. Beaty. Raw. Those are words that can be used to describe the bold artwork of Adelaide's Michael Jeffery. Overnight, he has become one of the city's hottest artistic exports, selling out prior to opening night at every solo exhibition he's held, both here and in Sydney. In less than a year, his art has quadrupled in price.

What's the appeal? The artist himself is an interesting character. Gentle and softly spoken, his voice on canvas hints at an inner strength and deep thought; as much as he is a self-confessed nature lover, his muse is strictly urban; and his collection is a mix of works ranging from the downright beautiful to those that make you recoil from the power.

"My inspiration comes from things I find quite repulsive, such as street signs. From an early age, I was always into nature," explains Michael. "I get up about 8 am and paint from breakfast to teatime. Then, in summer, I paint up until I go to bed. And I virtually do that seven days a week."

His work often comes in a dream, so he keeps a notebook beside his bed to jot down what he sees in his sleep. It is formed from overlapping paint skins, which are created by painting onto plastic, then peeling off the resulting 'skins'. Stencilled graphics – including his signature, which becomes integral to the work, not just a stamp of ownership – give the work its urban edge. The Yang to the colours' Yin.

Michael has been painting for only the past six years, pushed into pursuing his passion by a back problem. Building on his success, he has shows planned for Melbourne and London, and in Adelaide at his representing gallery, Peter Walker Fine Art.

"When Michael's work comes in, I get excited. And that doesn't happen with every artist," says Peter. "There are some major collectors buying him. There is huge interest in showing his work. Everything is there for him to have a long and successful career."

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