

## Kenmore



# Gérard Maillé: a master craftsman working in Queensland

## Background

Gérard Maillé was born 17 May 1951 in the major fishing port of Sète in the south of France. Sète is a lively Mediterranean town with picturesque views from Mont Saint Clair, a network of canals and bridges and an array of colourful cafés lining the port. It is also the home of famous French composer and singer Georges Brassens. Sète is famous for its 'joutes nautiques', a water jousting tournament dating back to the 17th century.

Gérard studied art at the Académie des Beaux Arts from 1965 to 1969 and from there his artistic pathway evolved. In France, in the early years, he concentrated mainly on still life, landscape and seascape, being strongly influenced by the great classics, among them Caravaggio, Rembrandt, Magritte, Henri Cadiou and Jean Malice.

In 1986 Gérard immigrated to Australia where he continued his artistic career. He studied graphic/ commercial art at the Advertising Academy in Brisbane in 1988 and from there established his own graphic art business. He later did a course in traditional decorative finishes at the Institute of TAFE and established another business called Art on Walls, which is his main occupation today.

## Gilding

Gérard specialises in gilding, which is the application of gold to surfaces, using traditional European methods. He has, for the past three years, been working on private residences of historical importance applying 23 or 24 carat gold to decorative cornices and refurbishing antique furniture which includes applying decorative gilding.

He also gilds exterior architectural features such as gates, railings, lace effect and lamp posts. In this way, treasures of the past can be restored to their original beauty; or new treasures can be created in more contemporary style contexts. Clients are issued with a certificate of authenticity on completion of projects using real gold.

The art forms trompe l'oeil and murals are the other main features of Gérard's Art on Walls business.

## Trompe L'oeil

*Trompe l'oeil* (trick of the eye) is a form of illusionary art designed to deceive the viewer into believing that the painting is real. Trompe l'oeil originated in ancient Greece and was also used by the Romans. The technique was lost during the Dark Ages. It was revived during the Renaissance and became very popular in the Baroque period when it was used to render a room more interesting by making it seem more spacious, and by incorporating elements of fantasy in the form of structural features, objects and people.

Gérard finds that trompe l'oeil involves painting a scene so realistically that it looks like a natural, integral part of the area on which it is painted. 'I once painted a window scene, and after it was completed and hung on the wall, the client's cat tried to jump through the window. The client was astounded, and so was I.' Another time Gérard found two butterflies hovering around a flowering vine, which was part of a Tuscan landscape.

Gérard also offers an innovative style of painting, which he refers to as the 'window effect'. This is his personal style of trompe l'oeil where the frame of the painting replicates a window frame and sill. The window view with three-dimensional effect allows the onlooker to 'step out' into the scene of the painting. A vacant wall suddenly comes to life with a beautiful landscape or seascape view, bringing light and interest to a room. How more romantic and transporting than to look out your 'window effect' on to your dreamscape.

## Murals

Murals, or paintings on walls, can be executed in any style where a decorative element is required such as cafés, restaurants and pubs, or even private residences, and are permanent fixtures. Murals can also be executed on moveable panels and then fixed to the wall, making them easily transferable to other venues. Many business owners prefer this style.

There is so much scope for mural decoration. It can transform vast, ordinary areas into lively, inviting places, or make small, dark spaces light and spacious. Murals transform the uninteresting to the alive and enchanting. Gérard has completed murals for many commercial venues in Brisbane. He also created a fantasy mural picture story in the Mater Children's Hospital outside recreational area, covering more than 500 square metres – a hugely successful and popular project.

## Decorative finishes

Gérard incorporates a range of decorative finishes into his work, including marbling, wood graining, stone effect, French wash and decorative finishes on furniture.

His services include consultation for interior/ exterior art décor and colour design, this is an essential part of the process of finding the right art form for his clients. Gérard works very closely with his clients to ensure satisfaction and success for every project. His works and associated venues can be viewed on his website ■

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To view his works, go online to  
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