



Ever felt that 'creative urge' - especially when it comes to painting or drawing but thought... **"must cost a lot to do that!!"??**

Well **Michelle Valdivia** aka [Miss Shelly Seashells](#) who lives in Hervey Bay QLD, realised many people... young kids, disabled people & pensioners etc, weren't easily able to try out their creativity so she set up a series of public & private art sessions catering for a range of people and styles at very little cost...

Michelle explains how she got started & more in this short podcast.

Prefer to read?: [Scroll down for the full transcript!](#)

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TRANSCRIPT:

BRIAN:

Thanks for taking the time to listen to another **MyLife... MyStory** podcast, I'm Brian Pickering.

Recently, Kaye and I went to a local **'Sip Paint & Munch over Brunch'** session in beautiful Hervey Bay in Queensland, where I ended up having a lovely chat with local artist Michelle Valdivia, aka **Miss Shelley Seashells**

There's a link below to our initial chat, complete with pictures as she explains how those Sip 'n

Paint sessions work... But I thought we should find out a little bit more...

Shelley, thanks for your time again, now; a little bit of background, what got you started in all this?

SHELLY

Well, in 2018 I noticed that there was a gap within the sector for disability engaging within the arts, so that's where I generally started, so back in 2019 I launched '**Art for Fun**' for all abilities and all ages.



And I did it for a very reasonable cost generally so that I can reach the wider community in the sense that if they're on disability or pension and the affordability as well as accessibility to arts was really important.

There's no point in having an art session and it's only capturing maybe the top 10% of income earners... you know I want it to have the opportunity for all families and people to engage with the arts.

And unfortunately, it does come down to the price, like the cost factor, because materials can be expensive

(Yeah... yeah)

So I basically did a lot of art sessions on a daily basis back then, just before COVID, so there was almost two sessions a day of art classes across Hervey Bay, Howard and Maryborough, and obviously people enjoyed it because it was relaxing...

It wasn't something that was outside of their comfort zone. They felt very comfortable.

They felt that it was affordable and what they received was good value and accessibility in the sense that people with disability, like motor scooters or scooters or wheelchair bound, they were

able to access the environment to be able to participate in those classes, so that was really important as well, the venue...

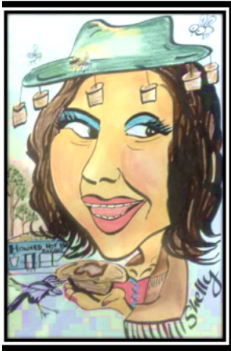
BRIAN:

That's fantastic... a great initiative, great initiative, so a lot of your work is certainly about the animals and all the rest, but do you do many portraits of people?

SHELLY:

PODCAST: Why I Started 'Miss Shelly Seashells' Art Sessions! - Michelle Valdivia

Written by Michelle Valdivia & Brian Pickering



What I'm known for is the caricatures. So not realism in the sense of portraits.

My portrait characters are just ones that you'd find at local markets internationally or at iconic sites around the world. You would have people with paper and pen just doing a quick sketch of somebody that's a tourist... So I extend that to not just being a tourist.

That could be a local personal family that will like a sketch she's a caricature of them or their family.

BRIAN:

So do you do portraits like that or a caricature... for example someone says, "look, here's a photo of myself, my wife and I'd love to have this"... You do that?.

SHELLY:

Yes

BRIAN:

I'll have to get a quote from you then!!

SHELLY:

Yeah, definitely... I've got two caricatures I'm doing now, So one is for a grandchild whose birthday is coming up at the end of the month, and then I'm incorporating his pets, so his ducks & chickens and his dogs and the other one is for a 40th birthday and I am doing a caricature of the husband and wife and the two children, as well as their pet dog.

BRIAN:

Ok, lovely... now the final question; with all the technology around these days, kids can get very creative. We've got a nine year old grandson in Melbourne and he's quite creative, you know... bought him one of those tablet things and whatever, but that's helped by the electronics as well.

What's your opinion about that for budding artists? Do you think we're going to lose this whole idea of, let's call it 'natural art with oil' etc?

SHELLY:

No... I think it's really important for any 1st century learner in the developing world to continue with accessing technology when they can. There's good and bad aspects of that with technology.

With things like drawing, it can lead that to developing their gross motor skills and the fine motor skills and the eye hand co-ordination, which a lot of children will need in handwriting, as well as that can be applied to a number of areas in their education and development.

So I think that exercising that eye co-ordination and that muscle in the brain that we need in the eye muscle, all of that is really important, and having that kind of manual aspect to creativity, so whether it's music, playing the piano or engaging with drawing and the technicalities of perspective, so looking at angles and distance and foreground background, that's really important, and the light and the shade and understanding that.

So capturing that through your eye and how you interpret the colour from the light, that, again,

is very different to your technology because they talk about the blue light with the technology and the damage that it can do to your eyes.

Again, anything that's excessive is no good.

BRIAN:

Mmmm of course of course... We do a lot of work with people, with voices and music and all the rest of it, and people say, "oh, I can't sing!"... and I say, **"everyone can sing... everyone"**, some are better than others, but everyone can sing!

Same with playing a musical instrument or whatever you know... **"Oh I sort of learnt piano, but I'm not very good at it!"** ... Or you could be if you tried harder.

What about art? My artwork was appalling... (*Shelly laughs!*) That's what I think! Could I get better?

SHELLY:

I remember your turtle... I don't find any artwork appalling. There's a different movement for different types of art. So there is a grotesque type of art. You know there is a grotesque movement in art, however, I'm not saying your painting was grotesque, I was just saying that it was abstract, it was contemporary, and I enjoyed it because it was your own natural ability.

I didn't want to put any of my skills to that, to correct anything...

BRIAN:

Could I get better now through practice?

SHELLY:

It depends because it's the perception on what people think art is.

So you were saying that you've done a terrible the way you explained your art but I really liked it.

BRIAN:

I guess I was trying to copy what you did...



SHELLY:

Yes if you're trying to make something identical, then it's not the same, but I appreciated it what you did because it was a natural skill.

BRIAN:

Everyone else that was there in this group there were about eight or ten of us or something and that was so good I just couldn't believe how good people were.

SHELLY:

So all those people haven't painted before, so you can see that the turnout of their art or their masterpiece is something that is quite fitting like either for a gift or for them as a keepsake, as a memory, and then what happens is a lot of people because they had that first experience and we're really comfortable and they felt that was a fun and they created something as well, within those few hours that they tend to come back the next time, so there's quite a lot of regulars.

BRIAN:

Yes we'll be back!... Well, look thank you for joining us on MyLife... MyStory Shelly.

SHELLY:

Thank you very much, Brian

We also did a '**Podcast With Pictures**' with Shelly here: <https://bit.ly/MissShellySeashells> - with a link to her Facebook page there!

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