

James de Blas Biography

James de Blas is a Australian Artist whose work is primarily focused on Mythical Surrealism. James is an innovative painter, who uses storytelling to give meaning to his work.

I began to study art seriously in 1991 at the Epi-Centre School of Encouragement — as it was called — in Byron Bay with artist/sculptor Roland Weight and painter Bernard Moore. I studied drawing for three years.

Much of my art is about man's struggle with mental illness. His long and enduring suffering in the underworld — an experience which polishes the perfect self and brings about spiritual independence and liberation.

First diagnosed with chronic psychotic paranoid schizophrenia in 1979, I was admitted to mental institutions annually — mostly in an involuntary capacity. But in 1993 I made a decision to radically change my life. Aided by the new drugs, Clozapine and then Zyprexa, I committed to abstain from all recreational drugs, tobacco and alcohol. I also took up daily meditation. This practice combined with my unique brand of cognitive therapy created new neural pathways of positivity and well being which offset unhealthy thought patterns from the past. With this change the annual cycle of psychotic episodes abated.

My art began to flourish. I produced three books; *The Dinosaur that Loved to Touch*, *The Golden Grasshopper* and *The Blue Hairy Boy*. The work I am currently undertaking has two foci — *Still Life* and the creation of *The Humopia* legend. Humopia is a planet stricken with Schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, loneliness and poverty; difficulties it must overcome in order to survive and ascend into the pure and positive worlds. My goal is to develop this legend into a computer game and film.

Transformation is possible. I have not had a relapse or hospital admission in 16 years. I believe any negative state has its positive opposite and that through inner work we can harvest the opposite of all the negativity in our lives.

In 2004/05 I studied Graphic Design at the East Point College of Visual and Communication Arts in Kingscliff NSW.

In 2005 I participated in my first international art exhibition at the Sala Barna Gallery in Barcelona Spain — exhibiting paintings from *The Blue Hairy Boy* Series.

The following year in 2006 I participated in *For Mathew and others Journeys with Schizophrenia* at Campbell Town Regional Art Gallery, Ivan Doughty Gallery in Paddington Sydney and Bundoora Homestead Art Centre in Melbourne. These included paintings from *The Blue Hairy Boy*, *The Golden Grasshopper* and *The Humopia* Series. At the conference which accompanied the exhibition I sat on a panel with artists Martin Sharp and Simon Champ. Our discussion with ABC presenter Natasha Mitchell was broadcast on Radio National's *All in the Mind* program.

In 2007 five paintings from Humopia were included in *The Australian Response to Ufos and Aliens*, an exhibition at Penrith Regional Art Gallery.

The next year 2008, I was invited to exhibit in the Cosmic Consciousness show at the Ico Gallery in Tribeca, Lower Manhattan, New York. Again these paintings were from The Humopia Series.

In 2009

- February: solo exhibition of Still Life at Legge Gallery, Redfern, Sydney.
- February: guest speaker Anne Ferran exhibition at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery — an examination of Tasmania's women's penal system, early mental asylums and the modern mental hospital.
- August: Annie's Lane Winery SALA Exhibition — The Humopia Series and Still Life.
- December: Florence Biennale Italy — The Humopia Series and Still Life.
Unfortunately due to my financial situation I will not be able to attend