



# natalie kUBE

An 'aha moment' at the age of 10 set Natalie on her life course in designing and making jewellery - a direction that has seen her creative talents blossom.

## When did you first realise your love for such unique jewellery?

When I was little, I used to love fossicking around my dad's garage and storeroom for tools and bits and pieces. I would try to make objects and remember when I was about 7-years-old, collecting some paint, wood, nails and a hammer and thinking I could make a big dog house for my dog with those few things!

This then progressed into making jewellery, where I would turn the objects found into necklaces or rings or earrings to wear. It wasn't enough to just make objects. I liked the idea of wearing a piece I had made around my neck or on my wrist or ears, and I always loved getting my hands dirty and playing with tools - which may have derived from my grandfather, who was a fitter and turner in his day.

My dad was a painter and decorator. He had plenty of tools and was always doing painting, doing handy work and fixing things, and I loved helping him around the house, as well as going to jobs with him.

When I was 10, I remember receiving a beautiful sterling silver flower ring from my favourite aunty, and I think from that moment it was clear to me and I knew I had a passion for jewellery. I always ended up doing sculptural pieces in High School, and my Year 12 art major work was a sculpture also, which showed that I loved the presence of a 3D object. So it was pretty obvious to me at that point that I loved jewellery and wanted to pursue it.

## Tell us about your background and qualifications in jewellery and object design.

I did several private silver smithing courses back in 1997 and 1998 and really loved it with such passion and after a year off, I was missing making jewellery. In 2000 I enrolled to the Advanced Diploma in Jewellery and Object Design at the Sydney Institute of Technology in Enmore, which was a full time course.

The attractiveness of this particular course as opposed to the university courses was the large amount of hours in the workshop and the high reputation of the course itself. I had met many ex-students who highly commended the course, the teachers and the quality workshop time that it involved.

After visiting the workshop, I knew I wanted

to be a student there and started the course in 2000.

The course itself is an experience that I will never forget, challenging me in design aspects and techniques that I remember and utilise to this day. The teachers were fantastic and passionate, and my favourite teacher was German. Her manner often reminded me of my father, and she would push me to excel and exceed even my limitations.

## What inspired you to enrol, and what were the main principles of the course?

I decided at the end of 1999, after taking a year off from making jewellery, that I yearned to make jewellery and I was going to give up my well paying full time corporate job to live my dream and be a poor student - much to my father's shock. I expressed my interest in the course at that time and received all the information and initial application to enrol.

This involved a questionnaire, a 2 dimensional design test and submitting still life drawings of fruit and vegetables and technical drawings of tools. I was surprised at how intensive the application process was, and after that I received all the information to apply in the new year.

The course was primarily design based and involved other modules about jewellery such as photography, computer design and life drawing, but mainly involved workshop projects that meant a lot of time designing and then making the piece in the workshop utilising techniques learnt along the way. I was fortunate to have done the private silver smithing courses earlier, as it lent me an advantage to the technical side of the making process that I felt some students didn't have coming fresh into the course.

## What keeps you passionate about the jewellery industry?

I love that there is still so much for me to learn, even after being in the industry for 13 years. I am so hungry to experiment with more techniques and learn more about stones, processes and apply and mix techniques learnt to new materials. My mind is constantly ticking over with ideas for new designs and media, and some days I can't wait to get into the workshop to make these ideas come to fruition.

I love that everywhere I look there is something that I see either in nature or otherwise that could potentially become a piece of jewellery! It

almost is overwhelming at times, as I don't have enough time in the day to bring these ideas to life. Translating life into form for me is a constant challenge, and this is what excites me and keeps me excited about jewellery.

## A lot of your men's pieces are quite industrial looking, with wood and metal detail. What influences this style?

Living in Sydney, I found that there was a lack of men's jewellery that made a bold statement that was wearable.

Sure, I would see Gothic jewellery and cheap jewellery on men in the inner west, where I lived, but there were no pieces that really stood out to me. It inspired me to make designs that were solid and strong looking, with a real masculine appeal. The use of wood is very appealing to men, as it's not very common, and I am looking at expanding the wood range to a women's range also.

Possibly all those hours spent in my dad's garage and storeroom making things influenced the nuts and bolts and heavy styles of the industrial looking pieces.

## What are some other recurring themes shown throughout your jewellery range?

Flowers! I love flowers ... I think when looking at my collection, that is the one thing most people notice. I always loved them from that moment when I received that sterling silver flower ring when I was 10. Then, right through my studies I always tried to implement flowers into my projects, much to my teachers' dismay. As for the conceptual course I was doing, the flower was much too 'obvious'.

I also love solid and chunky pieces - things that were heavy hammered and worked. I love the idea that when someone picks up a piece of one of my more solid pieces, that it feels as heavy as it looks and that it has obviously been worked in a technique that has been used for thousands of years.

There is something primal and instinctively natural to me in hammering a solid piece of metal and changing its form into something completely different; that's why I love it so much.

Then there are quirky pieces such as my coffee cup and spoon necklace, which is derived purely from my obsession with drinking great coffee!

## What do you enjoy about designing and creating such unique pieces?

I enjoy the timelessness of handmade jewellery - that every piece is different. I love that with the pieces I make, in 100 years' time someone will look at it and wonder what the story was behind it, or even who made it (and that it will be classified as an antique)!

I immensely love making these pieces, the techniques and bringing an idea that came from a dream or a thought or seeing something in nature and being able to convert that into a piece of metal, be it obvious or conceptual.

## How long have you been attending the Foreshore Market in Port Macquarie?

We moved here to Port from Sydney for a sea change in November last year.

My dad used to bring the family here on yearly holidays since I was 7-years-old 'til I was 16 (and outgrew the family holidays!) and I have seen this beautiful town grow and become even more amazing. My Mum and Dad moved here in 2004, and my sister's family and I would come to visit during the holiday period and throughout the year. After having a child, it seemed only natural for my new family to move here. It is the best decision that we ever made,

I have been doing the Foreshore markets since January and am so pleased to be a part of it.

## What makes the Foreshore Market different from the Sydney Markets?

What a great collection of artists and food producers it has! It's the perfect venue right by the water with the people of Port Macquarie and visitors. There is a sense of community and respect amongst stallholders and a respect for the handmade products and produce from the clientele.

It is the perfect combination and has that 'small town' feel and support of new artists. I am a new local to Port, but in my first week had so many stallholders come and say hi and say lovely words about my work, which was really encouraging.

**Thanks Natalie.**

**Ph: 0415 407 333.**

**Web: [www.nataliekube.com.au](http://www.nataliekube.com.au)**