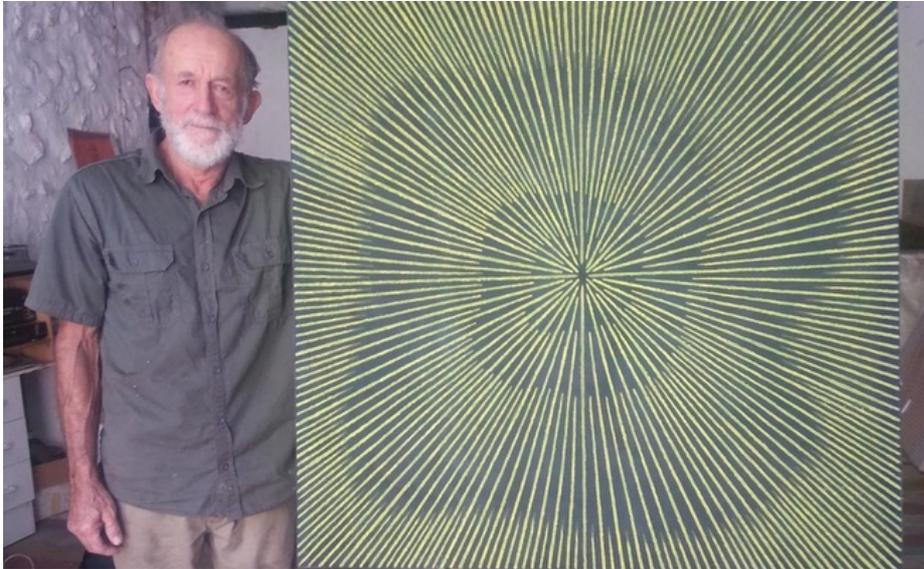


Rhythms of a life flow in works

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Galliano Fardin in his home studio at Lake Clifton, south of Perth with his artwork Stargazing 1.

Galliano Fardin says an invitation to exhibit at the Bankwest Art Gallery has resulted in the biggest painting spree he has ever undertaken. “It was like lightning in a clear blue sky for me,” he says. “I was going through a fairly flat period, so I’m really grateful this opportunity came my way.”

Fardin, who lives at Lake Clifton south of Mandurah, is the second WA artist to be featured in a series of exhibitions to highlight and further support artists represented in the Bankwest Art Collection.

Bankwest art curator Sandra Murray says Fardin is a highly-regarded, contemporary artist whose work is held in many prestigious collections, including the Art Gallery of WA, the Kerry Stokes Collection and the National Gallery of Australia.

“With a number of awards to his name, including being a finalist in the Bankwest Art Prize from 2002 to 2005, he is deserving of more recognition and this new body of work is a testament to his outstanding painting skills,” Murray says.

Born in Mogliano Veneto in 1948, a small town between Treviso and Venice in Italy, Fardin began his working life at 14 in a sweatshop. On what seemed like an ordinary day in 1972, a strike by railway workers forced him to take a bus to work.

“As I was struggling to hold my place against the human tide of passengers, a poster on a wall outside the window caught my attention. The bold letters on the poster said ‘Do you wish to come and work in Australia?’”

The fateful journey saw him in Melbourne sooner than imaginable and he immediately enrolled in full-time English classes. “I thought Australia was a beautiful place and I couldn’t believe my luck.”

Fardin joined the Melbourne Bushwalking Club and met Nancy, his future wife — also a new arrival in Australia from the US. “We eventually gave up our jobs and travelled across Australia in my old Holden station wagon. When we arrived in the South West of WA, we both fell in love with the bush and settled in Pemberton.”

In the 1980s, he realised a lifelong dream to study fine art. “In Italy as a child I was mesmerised by the art of Giotto and Titian. At Curtin University, I loved art history because I could reconnect with my childhood.”

Fardin's childhood is not far away in this exhibition either. Entitled *Flow*: by Galliano Fardin, it includes a number of his works based on stargazing.

"We used to sit outside after sunset and watch the heavens, in order to escape the heat of summer. Startled by the sight of glowing meteorites as they shot across the sky, we thought it was like a magic show. It's something I still do, particularly in summer, where we are at Lake Clifton — a sleepy, forgotten name on the map. I love the peace and quiet, and my work really is a response to being here."

Geometric patterns often appear in his work, communicating a sense of place with rhythmic harmony. "I have a fear of the blank canvas. I find it intimidating. I needed, right from the start, some structural elements on the canvas surface to turn chaos into some degree of order initially."

Over the years Fardin has retreated further and further away from the noise of civilisation, which threatens to encroach.

"As I grew up in a small provincial town I was never able to adjust to city life. My maternal grandfather was born to a family of shepherds who came down from the mountains in the 1800s. I think the need for solitude is genetic."

Flow: by Galliano Fardin is at the Bankwest Gallery, Bankwest Place, Perth, until October 13.