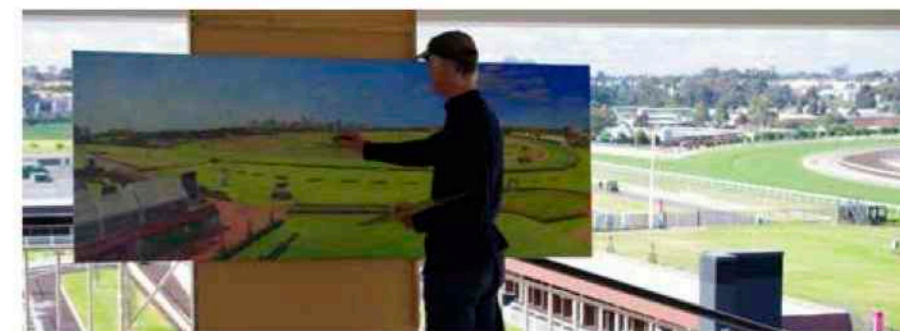


Clockwise from right: Shane Jones at work; *Trackwork at Flemington #2*, 2013; *Black Caviar*, 2012; *Night Racing*, 2014; *Flemington Racecourse*, 2012



A BRUSH WITH ONE OF OUR OWN

Thoroughbreds have long captured the attention of artists, and while each brings their own interpretations of the turf, Shane Jones does so with the enviable advantage of having ridden as an apprentice himself.

Shane Jones grew up in Mordialloc, near the Epsom racecourse, and from the age of 10 would spend many hours at the stables of Owen Lynch. A few years later, every weekend and school holidays were spent riding the ponies of his school friends John and Gerard Moloney and helping out at the Moloney stables. This eventually led to an apprenticeship at the age of 17 under Jim Moloney, trainer of famous sprinter, Vain. Jones also worked closely with Pat Hyland, the stable jockey at the time, learning the finer points of track riding.

When he realised he was never going to be as good as his boyhood hero Roy Higgins, Jones changed his career and started to pursue his interest in art.

Shane's twin brother, James, also caught

the racing bug and spent time in the USA as a track-rider, and also managed the second string for top trainers D. Wayne Lukas before returning to Australia where he took out his license and trained a small string.

Jones has painted portraits of the racecourses at Ballarat, Caulfield, Mildura and Flemington. All these paintings were done on site, and the large-scale version of Flemington (a complete view of the track from the old grandstand) took almost 40 visits.

Explaining his passion for painting thoroughbred scenes, Jones says, "The thoroughbred horse presents both power and elegance, and from my artist's perspective, it would be one of the most inspiring images the eye can behold... Horses like Black Caviar create a sense of magic and feelings of awe that truly uplift the human

spirit; when painting a great horse, their achievements and how they have affected the public are always at the back of one's mind."

Acknowledging that his background provides him with a unique perspective, Jones reveals: "Every time I paint a jockey on a horse, I know exactly what it's like to be the rider. I can feel the tension or the relaxation in the reins and the sensitivity and power beneath the saddle."

Nonetheless, Jones appreciates that the best painters of thoroughbreds don't necessarily need an affinity with the subject matter. He comments, "It's worth pointing out that two of the greatest painters of horses were Degas, who didn't ride at all, and Stubbs, who had a low opinion of horse racing. It hardly makes sense, does it?"

With a passion for painting racecourses,

Jones notes that, "Horse racing began in a rural setting, but now racecourses are like other worlds inside cities. I find this a fascinating contrast and think that visually it adds a certain tension to the image."

"I've always found that empty racecourses play on the imagination. When there is no one around, it's the history and aura of the track that's strong, and it also presents a space to imagine what might happen in the future. You could say that space relates to time."

Reminiscing back to his time in the irons, Jones confides: "I feel proud to remember I once rode down the Straight Six at Flemington!"

Charles Nodrum Gallery in Melbourne will showcase the artwork of Shane Jones from October 16 to November 8 inclusive.