



Julie Bell. Sia Art. Keighlev.

Background of business

Julie Bell had a good, full-time job as a market research manager with banking giant Halifax Bank of Scotland. However, her passion for more than 20 years had not been in financial services but in painting. Her preferred medium is acrylic, a water-based paint similar in texture to oils. Using a palette knife, Julie creates contemporary works in muted colours, based on floral images or abstract sky-scapes. She recalls: "It was scary to give my notice to the Halifax but I knew

it was something I had to do to achieve my dream. Now I am getting more commissions for my work I know I made the right decision."

Support journey

Julie, who lives in Keighley, was recommended to contact Bradford Kickstart by another client of the programme, Sarah Wilson-Fleming, who is now successfully running her new '1920s' themed tea shop Interlude, in Shipley. Subsequent meetings at Airedale Enterprise Services, the Keighley base of Phil Harrison, a Kickstart Business Counsellor, set Julie on the right path. "Phil was absolutely brilliant," says Julie, who chose to call her new business Sia Art. 'Sia' is the Italian word for 'is.' In addition to receiving sound business advice Julie also successfully applied to the Kickstart professional services programme, enabling her to select a local website development agency from a list of accredited Kickstart suppliers. Her Sia Art website has since been designed and uploaded free of charge.

Where they are now

With Kickstart support, Sia Art is becoming an established business. Julie created a studio within her home in Barhouse Lane, Utley, and is thoroughly enjoying the life of a professional artist. Appropriately, her first exhibition of work was displayed, early in 2008, in the gallery at Interlude, where Julie showed 12 of her contemporary paintings to an appreciative audience. She is receiving commissions from both individual and corporate clients and is growing a strong reputation as a Yorkshire artist with a highly individual approach to painting in acrylic.

Background Information

Client Name: Julie Bell

Ward in which trading or resident: Keighley

Business Name: Sia Art

Business Address: Barhouse Lane, Utley, Keighley

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