

PAINT IT OUT



When words are not enough, we turn to images and symbols to tell our stories. And in telling our stories through art, we find pathways to wellness, recovery and transformation.

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Log Line

Paint it Out is a observational documentary series in which artist, Mark Waller, leads six troubled teenagers on a transformational journey exploring the theory that engagement in art practice can reduce the possibility of future mental health issues.

Synopsis

One in four young Australians currently has a mental health condition. In this 6 x ½ hour observational documentary/ web series, artist Mark Waller presents a possible solution to this problem. He leads six troubled teenagers through a series of painting challenges as he tests his belief that stress resulting from the challenges faced by young people today can be reduced by engagement with the natural environment. Can learning a creative process, which involves developing a more focused way of seeing, change the outcomes for these teenagers?

The tone is lighthearted and playful, vibrant and stimulating. The teenage audience will relate to the characters on screen doing what they love to do, they will identify with their pleasure and pain; their feelings of insecurity and self-consciousness and the inherent comedy. The compelling journeys of the characters, depicted with a contemporary visual style and accompanied by original music, will convey the simple message that creating art can make you feel good.

Will Mark succeed in his mission to give these troubled teens an alternative to internalizing their troubles and provide them with the skills to PAINT IT OUT?

Format

The dramatic tension arises from whether the participants go along with or resist Mark's guidance. He encourages them to explore the environment, taking the time to look more closely. The recurring theme of observation of the natural elements will tie the episodes together. In one episode, exploring the element air, they choose to observe the wind in the trees or to go hang gliding; in another exploring water they go diving with a gopro or see for the first time the blue of the sky reflected on the back of a wave. Back in the studio they use these observations to create a painting.

One of the six participants is the focus of each episode, the real life jeopardy of how they react to Mark's process ensuring audience engagement. Their comments throughout the series, via video diary style direct address to camera, allow the audience to get to know them and to follow their journey. Mark is also on a journey – can he actually make a difference in these teenagers' lives?

Mark's methods are challenged by renowned psychologist Dr John Irvine, and in the web series by comedienne, e.g. Felicity Ward, forcing him to justify himself and the validity of his claims. These segments are interwoven with footage of the teenagers engaging in the creative process.

Over the course of this intensely transformative journey of creation and personal re-creation, our troubled teenagers may or may not change the way they see themselves and their future - but there will be drama.

Aimed at 13 to 16 year olds and families we are seeking interest from a producer to take this project to ABC 2 and iview and to apply for Screen Australia funding to develop and produce the series.

Characters

Six troubled teenagers from diverse backgrounds will be sourced through family support organisations or mental health support services Headspace and ReachOut.

Presenter: Mark Waller, inspirational artist and art teacher with an infectious passion for making the world a better place. <http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com>

Psychologist: Dr John Irvine <http://www.drjohnshappyfamilies.com.au>

Comedienne: Felicity Ward TBD

Platforms

Mark Waller's rapidly growing online presence, with over a million views on his youtube channel and 30,000 unique visitors per month to his website, shows that this series already has an audience.

The initial six episode web series will be followed up by a documentary series for television, re versioning the content for an older demographic.

The series will be easily translated for the international marketplace and will appeal to territories where the arts are traditionally supported.

Testimonials

From the Experts:

Mark's positive vitality, love of his craft and own deep sense of self leave us wanting to know more. He has a way of teaching art that is engaging and exciting. Mark's personality is refreshing and uplifting, so that all can access success and grow in confidence. It is not so much about motivating a learner: Mark's methods create in children (and adults) a compelling desire, grown by the simple understanding that everyone can paint, and be pleased with what they produce.

In a time when social media means we have more digital connections but less hands-on social engagements, Mark's work is more important than ever before. Mark gets kids to connect: connecting to their inner self and the world around them. They express their feelings in a non-threatening medium - painting to communicate. And in so doing they grow in their own awareness of self and others. This is the hallmark of building each learner's capacity in emotional intelligence.

At a time when mental illness and disengagement are the greatest threats to our youth, Paint It Out is a much-needed documentary that can offer hope and renew faith in the beauty of the world inside us and around us, too.

John Stewart

John Stewart was most recently the Head of School at Green School, Bali - recognised as the 'greenest school on Earth'. He has also been Headmaster of Tudor House, and featured widely on national television and radio, including The Politically Incorrect Parenting Show on Channel 9. As a co-author of Thriving At School, John worked with celebrated child psychologist Dr John Irvine, blending theory with practice. Awarded the National Excellence in Teaching Award in 2013 and the Golden Goody award for social good in 2014, John has many accolades. John has a Master of Education from Cambridge University, UK. and is a highly regarded speaker at social and international educational conferences.

I have had the privilege of reading the testimonials and gaining a grip on the project Mark has initiated. Certainly the notion of bringing children back in touch with the natural environment through art is a wonderful way for them to get back in touch with their own adolescent selves at a time of enormous volatility in their lives. I fully and unreservedly support the proposal on the understanding that professional psychological help would be on hand for any of the participants should they so need.

Dr John Irvine Child & Family Psychologist B.A. PhD, M.A.C.E., M.A.P.S.

Dr John Irvine is one of Australia's most heard, seen and read child psychologist. He is a consultant child psychologist at the READ clinic, has written several books, including "Who'd be a Parent", "A Handbook for Happy Families" and "Thriving at School".

In 2007 he produced four DVD's to compliment his "Handbook for Happy Families" (0-5yrs, 6-11 yrs, 12-16+ yrs and his famous and unique child management method called Reparations). He is a regular on many current affairs and news TV spots and has appeared weekly on Channel 10's program "9am with David and Kim. He is a much sought after speaker around the nation and is proud to be patron of Family Day Care, Home Start, NAPCAN, Kidsafe and ambassador for Playgroups.

In 2008, Dr John released a substantial rewrite of his "Thriving At School" book, which was co-written and revised with John Stewart.

From the teenagers:

Mark's art classes were educational and fun. He makes kids feel happy with their own work and comfortable to try new things. Mark explains things in a real easy way and makes you see the world differently.

Jess Mackellar

I am a 15-year-old girl from East Ballina. I went to a painting workshop run by Mark Waller last month. At first I was not sure I would be able to paint. Mark is humorous, and wiping his hands on his shirt was funny. Initially I felt disadvantaged because I was the youngest in the class, but Mark and his colleague's easygoing approach made me feel more comfortable.

I enjoyed learning new techniques, and I now have a funny little voice in my head every time I look at Pandanus trees, reminding me of those techniques, particularly the ones to do with the reflection and how the shadows form, patches of light and how it forms the movement in the leaves, and how a succession of curved lines in one direction or another can create the illusion that a branch is coming towards or moving away from you. I really hope I have the chance to do more workshops with Mark and I am taking time out when I can to use the skills he taught me.

Holly Nichols

My name is **Shannon Pool**, I am a 22 year old female and I attended Mark's pandanas workshop in September 2015. The workshop was a wonderful experience. I felt very welcome and I learnt a lot more than I anticipated. Mark is an extremely talented artist as well as an effective communicator. I left the workshop with new eyes for art, and can now safely say I notice every little nuance of a pandanas tree. Mark's passion for art permeated the session and I'm sure others like myself absorbed that. I am very excited to return to his classes and develop my artistic expression and skills some more.