

'Glenny Alumni Program' Spotlight – Danielle Weber

When your art not only tells a story, but also becomes your story!

Danielle Weber attended Glen Waverley Secondary College from 2005 until 2010, graduating as a VCE High Achiever on the VCE Honour Roll. As well as these outstanding results in her studies, Danielle excelled in various sporting arenas and thoroughly enjoyed the social side of life during her time at Glenny. She successfully combined these passions within the Vocational Education and Training (VET) program, studying 'Community Sport and Recreation', which convinced Danielle to pursue further 'hands on' practical learning opportunities in the future whilst also igniting her love for helping others. Danielle thrived in our GWSC 'Sports Captain' program, representing our college with great distinction in a variety of sports, all the time supporting and encouraging her fellow Glenny athletes both at training and during competitions. Apart from her VET studies, Danielle's favourite subjects at school were Studio Arts and Food Technology. Danielle would often be found alone in the Arts Centre after school, tirelessly working on projects and finetuning her folio, further developing the sublime skills that would stand her in good stead as an acclaimed artist later in life. Unfortunately for Danielle, the same could not be said for her talents in the Food Technology kitchen. Many of her culinary creations were memorable for all the wrong reasons, with Danielle having to resort to purchasing her favourite 'Hot & Spicy 2-Minute Noodles' from the senior canteen at lunch, on more than one occasion, to sufficiently satisfy her satiety at school.



Danielle was always drawn to artistic pursuits, even at a young age when she would sketch on her own for hours at a time. She also used to marvel at her mother, whilst she created intricate silk paintings at home, all the time encouraging Danielle to be expressive and creative in anything she did. Although Danielle thoroughly enjoyed art whilst at GWSC, she never actually thought it would be a viable career pathway. However, she felt that art provided her with an avenue for self-expression, whilst also serving as a sort of refuge for her during some troubled times as a teen. Danielle concedes that she did hang around with some people she probably shouldn't have during high school, but painting provided her with a better perspective of the big picture and assisted her to follow a more positive pathway. She also strongly believes that if she did not express herself through her art during these formative years, then she may not have attempted pursuing it as a career. Still, Danielle is adamant that she would not change a single thing about her time at high school, believing that everything she experienced whilst at GWSC played a pivotal role in shaping the person she is today.

After graduating from Glenny, Danielle decided to study a double degree at Deakin University by enrolling in a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Health Sciences. She also worked as a retail sales assistant and built up a small art business whilst studying, which did quite well, but Danielle was unsure if it was a sustainable venture. Following her successful completion of both tertiary degrees in 2015, Danielle thought she might

like to work in health sciences or as a food scientist within manufacturing facilities. But art was in her DNA, so she made the brave decision to go full-time freelance as a painter and also set-up an online store to sell her work. Danielle admits that even though it was quite scary to trade in a potentially stable career for something a little more unpredictable, she knew in her heart it was the right career move. With the support and encouragement of her family, Danielle's gamble soon paid off as the income from selling her art online quickly translated into a liveable wage. Her art dream was finally being realised through the 'Danielle's Artwork' online gallery and store, that she still owns and operates to this day. Danielle was also able to set-up her own creative studio whilst promoting and developing her burgeoning business, through a strong and rapidly growing social media presence, which captured the attention of some very high-profile clients. She then transitioned from canvas creations into photorealistic murals in 2014, where Danielle's style and expression evolved as she endeavoured to connect more deeply with her audience by incorporating elements of storytelling in her work.

In fact, it was during this time that Danielle realised the power of art, something she still experiences to this very day whilst getting lost in her incredible work. Art enables us to both find ourselves and lose ourselves, through the stroke of a paint brush against canvas or the moulding of clay into a sculpture. It not only nurtures our imagination, but puts it on full display for all to see and appreciate in their own unique way. The medium in which an artist chooses to develop their work can be as varied as the way in which they express their creativity within any particular piece, on any given day. Danielle's passion and love for her craft is now evident through her diverse range of styles and high quality of work. Many people attribute success to equal parts talent and hard work, but Danielle feels that those who reach their goals in life put in more hard work than those who do not. Danielle believes, *"I'd say it's 70 per cent hard work. You can be born with a gift, but you've really got to work on it to stand out above the rest, because there are a lot of other talented people out there. It sounds so straightforward, but really work hard on your craft with any time that you have to spare."*

Her expanding social media profile resulted in Danielle being commissioned to create original artworks for well-known Hollywood actors, inspiring Olympians, business leaders, philanthropists and a raft of famous sporting personalities. She has worked alongside luminaries including Arnold Schwarzenegger, Gal Gadot, LeBron James, Ice Cube and Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson who considers Danielle a close and personal friend. Danielle recently hand delivered and unveiled a painting to 'The Rock' at the global premiere of his latest feature film 'Black Adam' in New York City, which he was absolutely blown away by. As part of her work, Danielle has travelled to over forty countries across the world, developing her cultural understandings whilst also providing her with an enhanced breadth of vision, which has helped to enrich both the meaning and significance of her creations. She has collaborated with leading brands and organisations such as Nike, Disney, New York Yankees, Jordan, Telstra, Warner Music Label, KIA, Decjuba, Converse, Taubman's, Cotton On, Uncle Jack Watches and Do You Even Fitness-Gym-Activewear as part of their local and international advertising campaigns. Danielle's work has also been recognised and featured on The Today Show, ABC News, 7 News, 9 News, The Herald Sun, Broadsheet, News.com.au, in addition to many other radio stations and countless websites. Her extensive range of murals and versatile style grace the walls of numerous restaurants, cafes, shop fronts, gyms, dance studios and external spaces in a variety of urban developments right across the globe. She really enjoys working closely with her clients to create unique, vibrant and personal pieces of art for their homes, businesses, communities and loved ones. Danielle also prides herself on her strict work ethic and discipline, to ensure she maintains her ability to create artworks consistently that capture the true story and emotions of her subjects.

Danielle is very passionate about changing the narrative for creatives and inspiring more young artists to pursue their passion and find purpose in something they love. Her creative ventures extend to public speaking, with a focus on motivating young people through mentoring programs and school visits. Regular podcasts and interview appearances online also demonstrate Danielle's commitment to empowering

young people, especially girls and women, to forge a career in a creative field of their choosing. She is also proud to own a warehouse where she hosts the 'Artist Community – By Danielle's Artwork', which is a supportive group she established, funds and facilitates to mentor young artists from around the world and provide them with a safe space to express themselves freely. Danielle has further plans to work even more closely with both students and their parents/guardians in a way that cultivates their creative abilities, nurtures their love of art and also promotes professional pathways they can potentially pursue. She is also aligned with numerous charities and proudly donates many of her artworks and time in support of the Starlight Foundation, Red Kite, Beyond Blue, the Cancer Council and After School All Stars.

Glen Waverley Secondary College are incredibly proud to formally induct Danielle Weber into our 'Glenny Alumni Program'. Her ability to create amazing artworks that capture the true spirit and emotions of her subjects, whilst sharing their narrative visually, provides a perfect example of the old adage '*a picture being worth a thousand words*'. Danielle is a phenomenal story teller through her art, but more importantly her art has become an integral part of her phenomenal story. She very well may have created a new form of art, could this be the dawn of the *nar'art'ive* movement? Only time will tell.... GWSC is very honoured to have played a small part in Danielle's story and all members of our college community can't wait to see where the next chapter of life leads her.





