



the *heart* of the matter

words angela bueti | photography katja anton

CHLOE HART

WHAT'S A GIRL TO DO WHEN HER GRANDFATHER, PRO HART, AND FATHER, DAVID HART, ARE REVERED AS TWO OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST ICONIC AUSTRALIAN PAINTERS? PAINT, OF COURSE. AND SO CHLOE HART DOES, BUT THIS TALENTED 17-YEAR-OLD HAS MORE THAN PAINT FLOWING THROUGH HER VEINS, AS SHE DIVULGES TO ANGELA BUETI.

We all grew up with Pro Hart. Prints of his striking bush scenes either hung on our lounge room walls (perfectly complementing our orange vinyl sofas!) or we ate dinner off a tray with an imposing gum tree splashed across it. He could capture the heart of Australia with his vibrant blue, brown and green hues like no other.

And who could forget the television commercial for Dupont Stainmaster carpets where Mr Hart was chastised by the housekeeper for painting a huge dragonfly on the carpet with food and wine? "Oh Mista Hart. Watta mess!" It's still vivid in our memories 20 years on as one of those unforgettable commercials.

He was the quintessential Aussie bloke capturing our unique lifestyle with striking depictions of the outback and our wildlife. Hailing from Broken Hill, he had a knack for connecting with the Aussie psyche through his paintings. But to Chloe Hart, he was just "Pop".

"I was 11-years-old when Pop died. I was devastated. I remember him well," Chloe reflects fondly.

With Chloe's father, David, an esteemed artist in his own right and owner of David Hart Galleries of Mooloolaba and Noosa, it's little wonder this 17-year-old grew up with a paintbrush in her hand.

"I have been painting all my life. I sold my first painting when I was 11. It was a Noosa beach scene," she recalls.

Chloe shows me around the studio that forms part of the sprawling Tanawah property where she lives with her parents. It's a beautiful, light-filled space with plenty of elbow room for both Chloe and David to paint. Ceiling to floor shelving houses their latest pieces. She admits she mainly gets to paint during school holidays, but her father is in there most days.

The works of father and daughter hang side-by-side, but Chloe's paintings are far removed from her father's renowned style of lively impressions of dragonflies, grasshoppers, flowers, and beach scenes. She has forged a style all her own.

"My art has developed over the years. I've tried different things. I remember driving out to Broken Hill as a kid and pulling over to look at the stars. I thought: 'Now that is the most amazing thing ever'. It sparked a space theme in my paintings for a while."

Chloe's travels in New Zealand, England, France, Italy, Egypt and America all had an impact on her approach as an emerging artist.

Today Chloe's art is distinctly contemporary in style and production. Using acrylic and enamels with a resin coating, her paintings are colourful and bold. When pushed to define her style she says, "Dad describes my art as action abstract". I would have to agree, as the splashes jump off the canvas, almost taking on a 3D effect.

While the artwork appeals across the board, Chloe says it reaches a younger audience due to being smaller in size, easier to hang and more affordable than larger pieces. The smaller paintings fetch between \$750 and \$1,100, which indicates their commercial appeal.

I am compelled to ask Chloe if she feels the weight of expectation and pressure given she is a third generation Hart artist. After all, it's not every day that someone is gifted with such an awesome genetic talent.

Without batting an eyelid, she responds: "My parents are more focused on what makes me happy".

It must be an immense relief for someone so young with the world at her feet, especially given her desire to pursue a career outside of the art sphere.