

JACOB "SHAKEY" BUTLER
John XXIII College Visual Arts Exhibition 2018
Official Opening Speech

Hello everyone and thank you for coming here today to celebrate the amazing artwork created by the artists in this room.

My name is Jacob Butler, but I am more commonly known as Shakey Jakey, a name given to me by my work colleagues from my old job on the wharf due to my tremor.

My life as an artist all began about 5 years ago, when I came to a realisation that I was bored to death with my job at the time and wanted to make life more interesting, so I decided to pick up a texta and draw a picture on my work mate's safety helmet.

Up until that point, my purpose in life was the pursuit of money. My goal was to find the highest paying job that required the littlest amount of effort. Just like all previous attempts, I ended up getting the sack. I generally believed that money equalled happiness. But inside I was unhappy, as my life lacked any purpose.

I always loved art as a child, but it felt like every time I expressed an interest in being an artist, as a child and a teenager, I was convinced or swayed otherwise because it wasn't a real job, it was too hard and how could I be any good if I couldn't keep my hand still enough to draw a straight line.

At the age of 25 when I picked up the pencil again and began to draw, the whole world changed and opened up. I began drawing every day, and then tried my hand at painting using colour. After every painting I completed my confidence improved, my thirst for knowledge grew and I was making other people happy. I finally found a way to express myself as an artist and leave my mark on the world. I found my purpose.

I realised that the pursuit of money was a scam; really, the pursuit of being true to yourself, finding your passion and following your dreams is what really mattered.

I never worried about my future when I decided to pursue an art career, as long as I loved what I was doing every day. The more I followed my dream, the more I found myself surrounded by amazing new people and experiences. This is how I met my wife Ange, over a conversation about painting. I instantly fell in love with her, and I was even more inspired by her journey as someone who made a successful living in the creative field as a fulltime photographer.

The funny thing is that now as a fulltime artist, I earn far more money than I would have if I had continued my studies after school to become an Architect. I now get flown around the world to paint, but more importantly, to do what I love. In fact, tomorrow night I'll be boarding a plane to Sydney to paint at a wedding. Every week is a new adventure.

It's not the money that is the driver anymore, it's the ability and power that I now have to inspire others and express my individuality through my artwork. To wake up every day and be a better artist than yesterday. To create something original that has the potential to change the world.

I think being an artist is a grossly underrated profession; if it is your passion, it is absolutely something you should give your all. There are no limits to the change you can make in this world by creating something from within. And what better way to make the world a more beautiful place than through your own art.

I was lucky enough to go to an amazing school like JTC; Art was my favourite subject, but as I mentioned earlier, I was influenced by the naysayers and dropped out in year 10. I could only imagine how much better I would be as an artist right now had I committed to learning everything there was to know about art and more importantly, believing in myself at your age.

I thank you all for coming in support of the young artists here today; you can't imagine the positive effect a simple word of encouragement or show of support can have on a budding artist. From the look of things, the artists in here have nothing to worry about. I am absolutely gobsmacked by the artwork in this room. Just remember that as long as you have the self-belief to be the best artist you can be, then you will live a magical life, I promise you that.

I hereby officially declare the John XXIII College for Visual Arts open!

Thanks again,

Jacob