



The butterfly effect

Claire Heaney

A SCAN of Jo Lane's collection of business cards paints the picture of a varied and interesting life . . . so far.

There's one from when she worked with Steve Irwin's manager John Stainton at the Best Picture Show Company.

While there she directed television commercials for the Queensland Transport Accident Commission.

There's another for her production company, Vixen Films Pty, where she made documentaries.

Yet another is for her time working as a director for Fred Schepisi's The Film House where she made commercials for everything from DuPont to Sussan.

And in the mid-1990s she identified the burgeoning web industry, creating a web system and design business dedicated to the creative use of new medias.

"There was a guy who rented a small office in our studio and he seemed to spend all his time on the computer," she said.

"One day I said 'what's this' and he showed me and I said 'holy s . . . this is unbelievable'."

She said she went hell-for-leather learning everything she could about the emerging medium and even went into the business with the man.

At the peak of the dot.com boom Creative Access was bought out by Sausage Software.

Ms Lane has continued to wear

many hats and presently runs a web business called Bobus.com.au with her husband, Peter.

But in 2004 she indulged one of her true passions, pursuing her love of painting.

"I've always loved visual arts and I wanted to do more of it," she said.

She said her love of what she calls the "natural world" prompted her to enrol in a course at South Yarra's Botanical Art School.

"This stuff just started coming," she said of her work.

She thought about how she could "market the beautiful imagery".

Her series of cards, stationery, paperweights, and wrapping paper are inspired by Australian flora, flowers and butterflies.

A series of butterflies is based on a collection of butterflies given to her by an elderly gentleman friend.

"He stopped collecting in the 1970s because he couldn't stand to kill them anymore," she said.

She said the previous owner was delighted to see them "live again" in her Illustrata range.

Ms Lane said she liked to put her money where her mouth was, making the cards in Australia and only using non-chlorine bleached paper.

She said the cards were finding a market with galleries and gift shops embracing the quality and Australian flavour.

Last year she applied for and received an Austrade Export Market Development Grant to get the Illus-

trata range stocked in Britain.

She has appointed a London distributor, Natural Shadows, and she said the cards were embraced by museums and galleries.

She also picks the work of other artists and licences it for use in the Illustrata range.

Ms Lane said although people were hooked on electronic communication there was still a buoyant market for quality cards.

She said her daughter, Kit Podgornik, also caught the "creative bug".

Ms Podgornik is behind the Willow fashion label. Ms Lane even developed her website.

She said she was enjoying juggling Bobus and Illustrata.

Despite the arrival of a grandchild, Ms Lane said she was not winding down.

"I try to lead as many lives as possible," she said.

She also is planning to shift the growing businesses from home to an office in Richmond.

Among the Illustrata stockists are nurseries, florists, giftware shops, speciality stationery shops and the Royal Botanical Gardens Shop.

Net link: www.illustrata.com.au

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Greetings: Jo Lane with a selection of greeting cards in her Illustrata range. Picture: REBECCA MICHAEL