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A unique art studio that caters to people with disability and a love for abstract painting are the driving forces behind Sydneysider, Kerry Hennessy's first art exhibition.

Kerry, 41, lives with intellectual disability, is hard of hearing and is nonverbal.

His mother, Bronwyn, says a lifelong love for art has led to Kerry exhibiting a collection of paintings at Michelle Brown Arts Studio in Campbelltown, Sydney.

A National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participant since 2016, Kerry's life changed for the better when he met studio owner and artist, Michelle Brown.

"Painting has always been a favourite pastime for Kerry since he was a young boy," Bronwyn said.

One of Kerry's NDIS support workers noticed how much he was into painting and suggested he attend an art class.

"I noticed Michelle's studio had a focus on supporting people with disabilities, so we signed Kerry up to attend weekly classes," Bronwyn said. "They hit it off straight away.

"After a few weeks, Michelle came to me with the idea of Kerry holding an exhibition in the studio and entering a couple of works in the local city art awards."

The exposure gives Kerry the confidence to express his creative side, Bronwyn says.

"You could tell he was really pleased with the exhibition when he saw all these people coming in to see his works on the wall," she said.

Michelle, an NDIS participant who has multiple sclerosis (MS), turned to art after her disability cut short her career as a teacher.

"I love art, I love teaching, and I have a disability," Michelle, 42, said.

"There were a lot of art studios for people with disability, but they weren't disability-lead. So, it was my goal to have a fully disability-lead art studio."

Once Kerry began attending his weekly classes, Michelle knew she had a special talent on her hands.

"Kerry is nonverbal, hard of hearing, but we've found a way to communicate through his art," Michelle said.

“I was proud to see him enjoying the exhibition. You could see a sparkle in his eye.

“He got to showcase about 30 of his works and he sold over half of them. And that gives you a degree of satisfaction as well.

“I’d love to see him one day have his own home studio and to keep doing what he loves.

“It shows that other people out there like Kerry can have the same opportunities in life.”

Kerry’s dedication to art has made it an easy choice for Bronwyn when it comes to Christmas presents this year.

“He loves painting abstract art, so he will get lots of paints and canvasses for Christmas,” Bronwyn said.

“Kerry’s always had a love for painting but until we met Michelle, it wasn’t something that was always available in his life.

“It’s great to know he is getting the right supports to do the thing that brings him joy.

“Kerry’s long-term goal is to keep on creating and living a happy life.”

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