



# commercial, clever & crafty

Isabelle Galey's in.cube8r stores show how artists and crafters can sell their work but not their souls!

One of the biggest challenges facing professional crafters is finding viable retail outlets for their work. in.cube8r is a revolutionary business created to support all things craft, art and handmade inside Australia. Home to some of the country's top crafters and artists, these gallery stores showcase one-off unique items for purchase via an ingenious business model that is helping people earn cash for their creative output.

The business, founded in Melbourne in 2007 by Isabelle (Isy) Galey, is aimed at anyone who makes things by hand and for anyone who loves buying one-off unique items. There is no commission on items sold; when something is sold the artist receives 100 per cent of the retail price. Each gallery is divided up into glass cubicles, shelves, racks and partitions which artists can lease for a small cost, over a three month period.

"I wanted to create a space where artists didn't have to pay any commission on their work and that the price would be of their choosing," explains Isy. "When you take your work into a shop or gallery you usually don't get a say in how it is displayed or who you're placed next to. I wanted to give artists the power over those things."

Open to anyone Australia-wide who is interested in being represented, in.cube8r has purpose built software that allows each artist to log in and see their sales,

inventory, tax invoices and account details. Each in.cube8r gallery store (and there are now four) represents more than 90 artists and crafters. The range of styles and applications on the one gallery floor is extensive, ranging from glass to textiles, clay to two dimensional prints, metal and jewellery, even homemade skin care.

An artist herself, with entrepreneurial flair, Isy identified a niche market and a need for choice in the retail sector. "At the time, commission wholesale and consignment were all there was to choose from and lots of people can't do markets for many different reasons. in.cube8r is a fun, new and exciting interactive business model in the form of a gallery retail space where small time undiscovered artists can lease spaces to display their work to the public up to seven days per week without paying any commission on their sales and the sales price is of their choosing."

While based on handmade foundations, this business is no cottage enterprise. The Government, business people, consumers and fellow artists are all recognising its unique success. For four years in a row in.cube8r was named the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS) Business of the Year Award winner and also took out the City of Yarra and Leader Newspaper favourite arts and entertainment venue for 2010.



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- Isy



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The growing clientele for handmade items is so strong now that in.cube8r franchises are springing up. "In terms of sales, customers love the concept," says Isy. "They come back for every birthday, anniversary and wedding because they know that their gift can't be found elsewhere and that 100 per cent of what they buy gets paid back to the creator."

After receiving emails from "all over Australia and New Zealand" asking when in.cube8r stores would be opening in Perth and Sydney and so forth, Isy says franchising began looking like a viable option.

"I have my hands full but I can share the love by creating a franchise package," she explains. "We had refined the model down to such a fine art that it became easy to plug-in-and-go." With in.cube8r's purpose built software, some good organisational skills and an appreciation for the arts, Isy says in.cube8r can thrive under the right hands.

"We are looking for the 'right' people to represent us well and hope to have one or two stores in every State. My first franchisee, Vicki Sinclair, bought her franchise for Brisbane in April 2010, before they were even officially for sale! And Susanne Foale in Sydney opened her store in October 2010."

For Isy, the common theme of all four locations is that they are "non elitist spaces". "I wanted anyone who made anything to have the freedom to display their wares in a public space," she says. The artists are an active part of the gallery, popping in and out to change displays around, add new products or trial

new ideas. Isy's team is open to all kinds of ideas, even if that involves having a woman spend a weekend spinning wool on the gallery floor or workshops taking place on weekends.

Choosing the artists to be represented in each store is also based on a "totally non-elitist approach" with the main priority being that the product does not rely on straight out component assembly. "There has to be at least 50 per cent handmade input and we keep it varied; there are no two people working in the same way," she says. "Also we have a limit on how much jewellery we carry so sometimes people go onto the waiting list."

"The artists pay their rent monthly and we then pay the artist monthly for what has sold in the store. Insurance and everything is all included in the rental price, just GST is extra, plus a one-off enrolment fee. The onus is on the artist to fill and decorate their space. This principle supports my belief around self responsibility and creates a challenge for the artists to keep their space happy and varied." ●

### In touch with incube8r ...

- [www.incube8r.com.au](http://www.incube8r.com.au)
- [www.incube8r.com.au/blog](http://www.incube8r.com.au/blog)
- [www.facebook.com/incube8r](http://www.facebook.com/incube8r)
- 321 Smith Street, Fitzroy, VIC**
- Shop 7, 3-5 Myahgah Mews, Mosman, NSW**
- 368 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley, QLD**
- 127 Moorabool Street, Geelong, VIC**



Above: Owner Isabelle Galey indulging in her favourite craft, glass blowing.



## Christmas at in.cube8r

"We do many things at Christmas," says Isy. "Lots of the artists make their cubes Christmas themed, we hold meet-and-greets for people to network and we sometimes have guest speakers. We also have a blog and newsletter which is season specific."