



ANTIQUES & ART IN QUEENSLAND

Unique style for Unique France **Redefining and relocating**

After seven years' trading from their charming south of France building in Milton, Unique France, with its well-established reputation and credibility in the exclusive world of fine French antiques and arts in Australia, is relocating. The new gallery-style showroom is on Brunswick Street in Fortitude Valley in Brisbane.

Denis Geoffray and Gregoire d'Harcourt wanted to present their collection in a larger contemporary space. In addition, they called upon the *savoir faire* of some French artisans for the interior design of what is certain to become one of the most exquisite antique boutiques in Brisbane.

Julien Fantone, artisan

One of the artisans is Julien Fantone, director of creative ideas. This 28 year old is known for his creation of a variety of natural and organic wall finishes that will enhance the ancestral beauty of Unique France's antique collection. 'When I first met with Denis and Gregoire I knew in an instant that it would be a magical association, their showroom is likely to become a source of inspiration and culture in Brisbane.'

Julien Fantone has both the passion of youth and the mastery of decorative painting techniques of the great masters and recognised artisans of Lyon in France. In 2004 Julien moved to Australia and started his company. He shared his portfolio with several architects and interior decorators, offering his wide range of finishes, textures and colours that adapted to clients' tastes.

Julien is able to create the most complex and shaded colours, from natural lime, quartz, marble dust, silica, sand, calcium carbonate, mica and slate. He uses additives including Arabic gum, casein and latex. With his range of 12 pigments, Julien is able to create the most complex and shaded colours. 'Julien has the Midas touch. It is very impressive to watch him work a wall into the most sensual velvety texture that can only bring beauty, elegance and character to your interior,' said Grégoire.

Gallery wall treatments

Julien chose the aesthetic and technical aspects for our gallery showroom on Brunswick Street in Fortitude Valley, including the following methods.

Cast coatings are composite mixtures that have real brass, bronze, copper and nickel that give them a buff weathered patina finish just like true casting.

Sgraffito is a painting technique where the artist scratches into the top layer of the paint to reveal areas of the surface underneath. It has been in use in Germany since the 13th century and was common in Italy during the 16th century.

Marmorino, meaning little marble, is a fine plaster created with marble dust. A marmorino finish is difficult to achieve as it is both heavy to work and it is a laborious technique. It can be stencilled or glazed.

Traditional stucco has been used in architecture for thousands of years, a combination of cement, lime, sand and water that is hand-trowelled.

Fresco means 'fresh' in Italian, a technique in which colour must be applied directly to a coat of plaster while the plaster is still 'fresh' or wet.



“

It is very impressive to watch Julien work a wall into the most sensual velvety texture that can only bring beauty, elegance and character to your interior

”

Lime wash is called *tadelakt* in Morocco, one of the oldest plaster finishes in the world, treasured and passed from master to apprentice for around 4,000 years. Tadelakt artisans believe that to fully appreciate its allure it is necessary to caress it. The urge to touch the surface that appeared hard as stone and yet felt like silk was difficult to resist. The physicality of the work is obvious when watching Julien. Through his effort, craft and artistry Julien creates a randomness of patterns which at the same time is precise.

Julien imports his lime from Socli, one of the few quarries in France. 'A great lime finish is as much about the process as it is about the material used. The possibility to create with this material is limitless and gives a rendering of textures and finishes that offer unique identities to your walls,' says Julien. With its naturally high pH, a lime finish acts as an anti-bacterial surface, neutralising the development of organic substances such as mould and fungus so familiar to the Brisbane subtropical climate. This green touch goes well in our environmentally conscious city.

Julien has created modern magic with his ancestral techniques.

Unique France's elegant provincial furniture, fine marquetry pieces, 18th and 19th century classics and decorative art items now rest against their newly-designed walls, while ceiling crystal chandeliers cast their reflections in an illuminated historical dance ■

Isabelle Meslet-Dina
UNIQUE FRANCE
07 3369 2999
www.uniquefrance.com.au

