

# Shelley's Dreamworld

*Want to cheer up your children's rooms with magical murals? Here's an artist who can help*

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**S**HELLEY Haswell creates dream worlds where the imagination is set free and encouraged to roam. And when she talks about her work as a specialist in painting murals for children, it's clear that the 25-year-old artist loves what she does.

"I work long shifts in the day," she says. "Seven, eight hours, and I only feel like I've been there a couple...I'm totally absorbed in it."

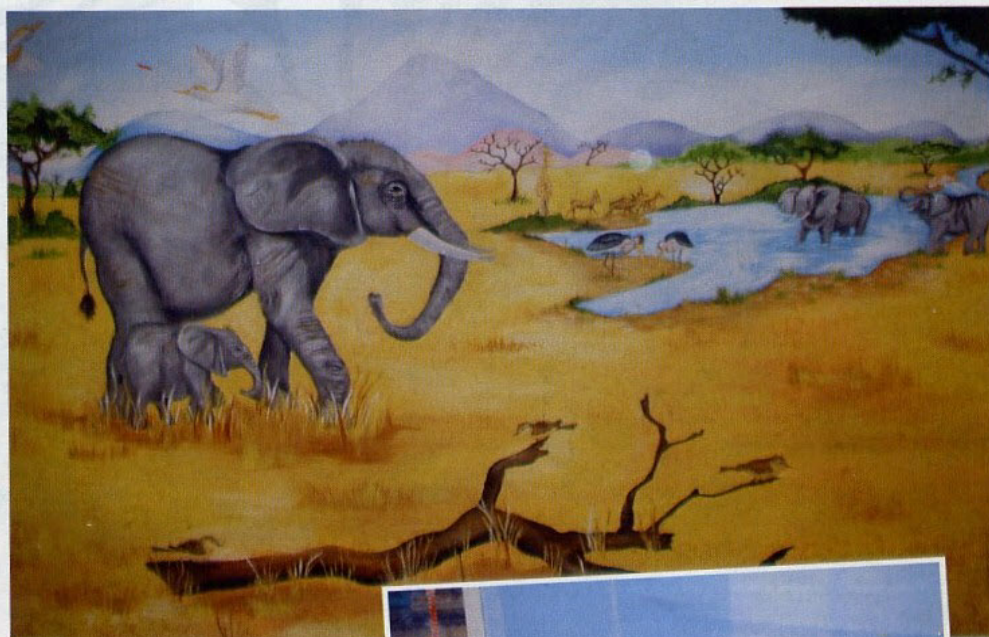
Both adults and children delight in her artistry and Shelley is thrilled that her endeavours bring so much pleasure to others.

But what drew her into such an unusual role? Both her mother and grandfather were artists, so genes may account for some of it. She recalls that as a child, she used to drive her parents mad: any blank piece of paper, card or wall, was an empty canvas that she couldn't resist.

"I'd paint or draw every day," she says. "It was the only school subject I ever felt I was really good at... the only thing I ever really felt I could relate to."

On leaving school, Shelley had thoughts of going to art college. That was until she took her portfolio along to an interview for a summer job at Red-I Construction and Design in Perth and ended up staying there for two years.

She talks fondly of her time with Red-I. It was there she learned to work on a large scale, being trained up to paint Christmas grottos and supersized murals in shopping centres. Her first independent project for the company was painting a child's



*From wild animals to modest young girls... Shelley's world is wide and colourful one*





*Commissions have included seascapes dotted with brightly coloured fish and treasure chests, and landscapes with comical scarecrows and farmyard animals*



*Some murals really make Shelley stretch...*

changing room. "I really enjoyed it," she recalls. "I'd come home and be so satisfied. It was a great time of life for me. I was only 18. It was a great opportunity."

A move to Edinburgh followed, and for a while Shelley worked in shops, unsure of what to do next. But she missed her art and it was only a matter of time before she and husband Richard decided to start their own company, setting up Dreamworld Creations in 2003.

The two are very much a partnership, but the skills each brings to the business couldn't be more different. Richard deals with the administration, marketing, surface preparation and any other routine tasks, leaving Shelley free to concentrate on the artistic elements of the job. That's not to say that Richard never wields a paintbrush, but if he does, he sets to on the basics, such as painting large areas of sky or grassland where, as he suggests, he can help out but do no damage!

Shelley has undertaken work for nurseries, schools and private clients,

creating unique designs that bring that special something to a room. Using emulsion, gloss, acrylic paints and varnish, and sometimes scaffolding, Shelley has painted murals that are twice as tall as she is. When you consider that these often stretch right round a room or play area, indoors or outside, it's easy to appreciate that she is up for a challenge.

With an eye for detail and a fondness for books since childhood, she is always looking for new ideas and keen to head to the library to do the necessary research. When faced with a blank wall, Shelley's intuition and instinct come into play and, with a leap of faith, she gets to work.

Commissions have included seascapes dotted about with brightly coloured fish and overflowing treasure chests, and landscapes, with comical scarecrows and friendly farmyard animals.

One private client asked for a safari theme that would cover the walls and ceiling of their child's bedroom. Pictures of the child's favourite toy African

animals were included in the design, as were other birds and beasts that Shelley had researched. The result: a stunning African landscape that invites viewers in, transporting them to another world where anything seems possible.

To date, business has taken Shelley and Richard across the central belt, from east coast to west, with most of their recent jobs coming to them by word of mouth.

The husband-and-wife team is happy to travel when appropriate commissions arise, and the current workload includes the painting of a cartoon mural for a private client in the west of Scotland.

While Shelley specialises in painting murals for children, she is also keen to expand her portfolio and happy to receive enquiries about similar projects for other client groups.

With your imagination and Shelley's talent and enthusiasm, who knows what she might be working on next? ❖

[www.dreamworldcreations.co.uk](http://www.dreamworldcreations.co.uk)

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