

Juan C. Santiago

“Artistic Vomit”

Artist Statement

The most important part of my creative process is when I listen to music as I work. There is no particular genre that I prefer, because in the end it all becomes background noise. It is a practice to help clear my mind and to block out any external distractions. I can also say that being a procrastinator is also part of my process. Putting projects off until the last moment makes it possible for me to get out of my own way. When I have plenty of time, I tend to overthink everything instead of just letting creativity flow.

I'm inspired by a challenge. A piece that may have a difficult color palette or one that has a crazy amount of detail is what calls to me. As in the image of Medussa, the difficulty here was in creating the snake scales. Having to increase and decrease the size of each scale to show movement, bends and curves for each snakes body proved tedious. The Aztec Priest was originally done on skin in grayscale. I set out to make the piece more vibrant. So I decided on metallic gold and white colored pencil on black paper. Trying to blend white into gold and black so that each individual part of this drawing would show depth and shape so that the image could appear to come off the paper was a challenge.

For me, art has always been a way to escape the curveballs life throws at you daily. Never more so than during this time of imprisonment. I put in my ear buds and half the day is gone in the blink of an eye, and my exodus is complete.

My grandmother was very influential on my artistic development. She would sit at the kitchen table and doodle in this little 4"x 6" note pad she had. She filled that note pad with Bible scriptures and these incredibly detailed doodles, which some were no bigger than a quarter. She encouraged me every step of the way.

Juan Santiago was born in Mexico, raised in Phoenix, Arizona, and currently calls North Carolina home. He says that living in western Carolina mountains is awe inspiring. "It is a thing of beauty to watch the smoke rise off the mountains in the early morning hours."

He was raised in an artistic family whose talents ranged from the finer arts to music. At an early age he showed an affinity towards drawing. He would sit for hours trying to draw his favorite cartoon characters. From grade school to High school he would learn about different types of art and the methods used to create such pieces. Later he would attend Al Collins Graphic Design School in Tempe, Arizona. Over the years he has developed as an artist, and continues to learn new techniques from different artists that he meets along the way.

He has done work in the form of airbrushed murals in the South Western Lowrider scene, has created pieces on consignment for private collectors, and his work has been shown on two different occasions as part of a collective body of art.

Juan is inspired by anything that may pose a challenge or images that are appealing to the eye. From colorful wild life to extremely detailed pieces he is currently working in graphite and colored pencil.

His desire is that anyone looking upon his artwork be moved by what they see. Hoping he inspires as he has been inspired by other artists.