





ART IN THE FIRST PERSON

# A Break-Free from the Norm

BLENDED, INTO A STUPENDOUS ART FORM | BY RAYHART



Rayhart

Photograph by Richard Choi

Above: "New York, New York," 16" x 12"

Opposite: "Faith Seekers," 12" x 16"  
Both are acrylic on canvas.

Through art, I wage war within myself, for the rewards of peace. I adore each painting like a mother's first glimpse at its newborn. In short, I paint to allow for creation.

*Today, I am a vessel for the art which is created through me. However, my pursuit of this passion was not always a pleasant one—it was sometimes marked by stumbles, pitfalls, failed relationships and disappointment.*

*Tangled-up  
In a web of methodical events  
Unsure  
Of how I should vent*

*Pardon me,  
Whilst I search for another excuse  
Suffer the abuse  
Oh, what's the use?*

*Up the creek  
We all shall, one day, travel  
Soon enough,  
The puzzled child shall unravel*

Yes, that was me, a combustion of suppressed emotions, jaded and disillusioned. However, the pressure from those emotions gifted me with an abundance of insight into a place I had never known before, the world of my truest 'self.'

Prior to my pursuit of art, it was simply me, alone and plagued with the proverbial question of who am I? And then, immediately, I'd change again. The common everyday battles, trials and tribulations consistently led me astray. And denial set the tone of what appeared to be a life-long dismal journey. I had been removed from my humble beginnings and subtly misled into lesser surroundings, realizing that

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—Rayhart

this cycle had become a vicious one. Heartache and pain encompassed my interior, forcing me to gravitate towards what was considered and accepted to be inferior. If possible, place your entire self into the mindset of this pain-stricken individual I've begun to describe—someone inherently unaware of his gradual demise.

Nonetheless, I trudged on, simply to suffer more abuse and alienation. Folks near and far would come, just to sit at this table of misgivings and offer their grandest support. Yet, with the slightest wind of doubt or mistrust, they were blown away. Often I was left to my own devices. Everyone had gone away, and the sullen blue jay, resting in my windowsill of pain, still sang as if it didn't know any better.

Within the stillness of the silence, I began to transcribe drawings and random thoughts on scrap paper that were tossed about my room. However, these pronouncements appeared to be poetic and almost rhythmic. During years of strained solitude, I had accumulated a vast array of these doodles and poetic ramblings. The ramblings, once read, came across as prayers or some sort of cry for a way out—a chance to one day discover my purpose.

*Dear god,  
I need a friend  
Please let me in  
Never again  
Shall I ever sin*

*An angel now,  
Covered in dust  
Just as my insides have begun to rust  
Please surrender the secret,  
And I'll keep it between us*

Throughout these daily rituals of deep contemplation, I began to realize there was an actual transformation taking place within me. I was no longer the one I thought I knew. I had surrendered the "ego" and allowed myself to become one with the universal spirit of giving—the light which would, eventually, lead me out of despair and into a place of peace and reward. No longer was I Ray Hart, I was becoming Rayhart—a poet, an artist.



So now, as I continued to write from this vacuum of solace, words would pour from my pen and onto the pages of my journal:

*I believe that I am first and foremost a poet who believes in the preservation of good people, good poetry and good paintings. This, in turn, will lead us toward a good place in our lives. My art will be poetry put to paint, as I am somewhat of a fallen angel, resurrected as a saint. Nothing short of the abandonment of reality, interpreted in the intensity of every brushstroke. In actuality, I will not paint these paintings, they will somehow paint me. Every emotion, which I may have suppressed in my past, will be evoked in my artwork.*

Above: *"The Bassist—Revisited,"* acrylic on canvas, 16" x 20"

Opposite: *"Girls' Night Out,"* 20" x 16"  
Both are acrylic on canvas.



*Thus, my constant focus will be on the underneath as it prepares to rise. And my aim is to capture and relay it in a poem visualized as a painting. Hence, painting will become my voice, and through it, I speak only in the language of love. Tempting the most hard-pressed nonbeliever to join in and celebrate the art of living.*

Art had become my vehicle, driving me toward freedom, an escape from what I once deemed as a normal course and toward my natural purpose in life. Thus, the search was over, as I had found my way. I had discovered a new journey. Inspiration enveloped me. I was alive and everything around me, within me, was in constant motion. Therefore, my artwork must be as well. I now realized that, when I am in my personal flow, I can effortlessly experience art creation, a skill which I had not formally been taught.

The evolution of my art is continual, and its unexpected conception was due in part to a simple gesture of kindness from a friend. Prior to stumbling upon my path of art creation, I had been lost and uninspired. In college, I had studied sociology and had no inclination that I would be creating art today.

This friend's gesture was a simple beginner's paint set, presented to me as a birthday gift. She, too, had noticed my inability to find peace and happiness within; yet she did not shun the opportunity to help. Again, I had no expectation for this gift, nor did I have any idea that I would take to it. The magnitude of appreciation for this gift was and still is enormous, as it served as the beginning of the art career which I pursue today. é

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