

## Beauty in the Everyday

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun  
Friday, 05 October 2018 14:30

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### Artist Irving Bahe paints the blessings in life

What we might call “dreary, rainy” or “too hot” days, Irving Bahe sees as beautiful inspirations for painting.

Originally from Twin Lakes, Bahe is a Diné artist who sees the extraordinary in the ordinary, whether good or bad. He’s painted everything he can get his hands on since he was a child, and he said, back then, he thought drawing came naturally to everyone. He soon realized this wasn’t the case.

“I thought everyone could draw, I didn’t know it was certain people that could draw,” he said, laughing. “After I realized that it wasn’t a natural thing for everyone, I soon realized it was a talent.”

People began to notice Bahe’s talent when he was young, and he received small awards even as a child in elementary school. That’s when his talent took off, he said.

Bahe credits his uncle, who he watched paint as a kid, for influencing him. Other influences in his artistic walk were Jim Abeita, Irving and Marvin Toddy, and Grants Hood, to name a few.

Bahe admired Hood’s paintings of Native American warriors. He said these helped shaped his own style, in which he incorporates color to emphasize the world’s beauty.

“Every day, you hear news of people getting shot and all the negativity that goes with it,” he said. “But there’s still some positive and beautiful things in this world — that’s why you’ll see a lot of rainbows in my paintings. I like to use a lot of bright colors and my subjects in those paintings are usually singing. With my spiritual background of being in church, we would sing and that ushers in the presence of God. That’s where the beauty, strength of the soul, of spirit comes in my paintings.”

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The elements of the earth, like lightning, the powers of nature and of animals, have also been inspirations for Bahe.

He described the power in animals in the form of colors. Bahe said he often visits the zoo and loses himself in the animals' colors — he said greatest artist is God because of how he painted them.

“There is beauty in these animals every time I see them,” he said. “I get inspired when I see all the beautiful colors of the animals and I think about how God made these beautiful animals. I just think that God is a big-time artist, how the Creator made these bright vivid colors, that’s what truly inspires me.”

Bahe’s participated in local art shows such as the recent Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial, and he also travels throughout New Mexico to showcase his work.

Currently, he’s working on projects in which he hopes to express more of the beauty he sees in this world.

Bahe said he never thought he would make money from his creations. Rather, he said, painting is simply something he loves to do.

“This is in me and when I’m not doing it for a brief period, I get that itch to get into it,” he said. “I just can’t get away from it, it’s something that I love.”

***For more information on Irving Bahe, email: [irvingbahe@gmail.com](mailto:irvingbahe@gmail.com)***

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