

From painting T-shirts to gallery walls

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Managing Editor
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Hiro Cash grew up drawing in notebooks, or anything he could get his hands on. In an interview with the *Sun*, he said he's always had a creative mindset and imagination. But it wasn't until high school that he began profiting off his art.

He started selling T-shirts with his art on them to his friends. At first, he was drawing the images on blank shirts, but then he turned to screen-printing. This sparked an interest in graphic design.

Besides drawing and creating t-shirts for his friends, Cash also spent his time going to art shows and studying the work of other artists.

For Cash, art is just a part of life. He incorporates another one of his passions – music – into his paintings on a regular basis.

"I'm a music fanatic, I'm really into rock music and high energy, so when I put that on in my studio, I incorporate that same sort of energy into my artwork," he said. "It's a high voltage of positive, beautiful, colorful energy that I try to portray in my paintings."

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Cash is finishing up his sophomore year at the Institute of American Indian Arts, where he is working on his Bachelor of Fine Arts in studio art. His first gallery show is currently being featured at the LOOM Indigenous Art Gallery at 209 W. Coal Ave. until April 30.

One of the pieces featured at the gallery incorporates the Red Hot Chili Peppers' logo. Cash said the '90s rock band is his "favorite band of all time" and that he tries to embody the energy from their music in his artwork.

Cash said his favorite part about being an artist is having the freedom to express himself.

"My favorite part about being an artist is having no limit to my creativeness. That's what I thrive on," he said. "When you have a canvas or any artistic medium, you can do whatever with it. When I have that mentality and think of that, it gets me motivated."

He keeps a sign up in his art studio to keep that motivation going. It says "No limit to art."

Like many artists before him, Cash wants to make creating art a full-time gig.

"I don't want to make this a hobby; I've got to make it a career. It's never been a hobby in the first place, but I want to make this a full-time career," he said.

But that goal comes with a lot of challenges. An independent artist has to find galleries that will show their work, and a lot of galleries want pieces that have a theme to them.

Cash said another obstacle is being his own boss.

"If you're going to make it a full-time job, you've got to have some sort of income. Also when you're your own boss you have to discipline yourself sometimes and tell yourself 'You've got to

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get to work, you've got to do this," he said.

Once he finishes his Bachelor of Fine Arts, Hiro said he plans to pursue his Master of Fine Arts at either The Art Institute of Chicago or in New York City.

But his ultimate goal is to help young kids who are interested in art seek higher education.

Cash has some advice for fellow artists who may just be starting out.

"Keep creating if you're an artist. Even if you're not [an artist], do you what you love. Life is too short to be in a box," he said.

A meet-and-greet event with Cash will be held at the LOOM Gallery on April 13 during ArtsCrawl from 7 pm to 9 pm.

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