

## Art in Prison- Chained But Free in Spirit

In harsh reality of confinement art is what nurtures your soul and keeps you sane. When you are cut off from the rest of the world it is like survival mechanism that keeps your soul connected to the world. Art has no answers of how and why, and in a way it helps you cope with unanswered personal questions- some things just happen for no specific reason nor have justifiable explanation. Life for the most part is unfair but does this mean we have to live in our own misery?

I have always been a creator and designer of my own life and when my freedom was taken away the fear of meaningless existence and helplessness took over. Art became a "safe heaven"- my own surreal world. The world to which the doors are always opened and I can go in and out freely not only when I'm awake but also in my dreams. It is where I am honest, where I don't have to speak or seek understanding. It is where I can dwell on my own creations, indulge in the vivid colors, feel the shapes, touch the objects and observe the dynamics. It is the world of complete piece and balance in the midst of complete chaos. That's how I feel in my "surreal world" and that's what I hope for the viewer to see: my world where imperfect can be beautiful, deformed can be functional, chaotic can be peaceful. It is where my burden is concealed and where I'm fulfilling my purpose of creation and discovery.

The whole purpose of life has been that a man should realize himself in the other essential form, the form of divinity and spirit. Art is the means to connect to your inner self, to your inner spiritual world. My spirit is free, undisturbed and colorful while my chained and suffocating flesh is confined within 4 plain white prison walls. The more the flesh suffers the more it is denied its essential needs, the more the spirit prospers.

The suffering is the means to an end: to ultimate beauty, inner piece, complete fulfillment, and the state of euphoria. Pain and pleasure are two sides of the the same coin. Through one you get to recognize the other. The only way you can cherish little every day blessings is when you were given nothing or when everything was taken away. Pain is not bad when you feel it. Its way worth when you

don't feel anything at all-when numbness penetrates your body and soul. It is when your life becomes simple existence in the very meaning of animal survival. That's when my dark side comes through and superficial drawings depicting mortal and suicidal scenes, ghosts, and hell come to life. But the hope never ceases to exist and there is always a symbolic meaning of light in the end of the tunnel.

Expressed in corresponding contrasting bright and heavenly colors there would be an angel overseeing the hell, shining star in the dark sky, sunrise in the background of a hanged man, life in the midst of the death, signs of survival in the midst of complete destruction.

Hope is nurtured by faith and faith alone. It is immortal and divine. My art speaks of my inner world: the fears of inevitable pain, unfulfilled desires for pleasure. Art is sinful without repercussions or punishment. Sin is defined as departure from accepted standards. There are no rules to obey, no order to follow, no laws to adhere to. The size of the paper is the only limit there is.

The meaning of art is up to the viewer's interpretation. Does the the viewer relate to the mood? Can he see the rhythm & dynamics? Can he find meaning and relevance of the details? Can he feel the space and freedom of the artwork. Does the art communicate its purpose? The viewer can only accept and appreciate art if his inner world relates to the artist's on a deeper level- it is a subconscious decision. How you feel about the artwork and the storm of emotions it creates can't be reasonably explained. If one decides to buy a house because of a cherry tree in the backyard, then he can appreciate a picture because of a small intricate detail that nobody else sees. A "cherry tree" can be a childhood memory; it could be a symbol of first love; it could be grandma's cherry pie; or it could be a dramatically painful experience. "What's in it for you?"- is a personal question every one of us will answer differently. Art is the means for the viewer to achieve desired state of mind whether it is pain or pleasure and only true art can fulfill that purpose.

-By [REDACTED]  
1.27.15