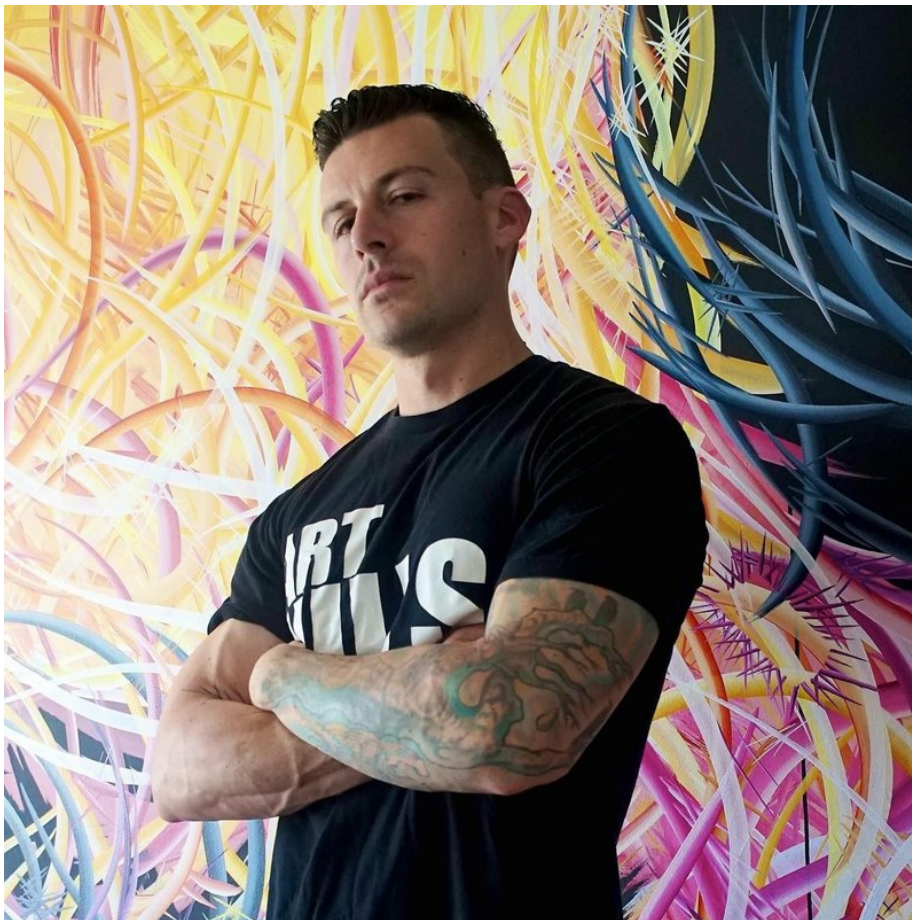


La Playa Art Gallery's October Show to feature 'Art Alchemist'

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Michael Carini

While La Jolla's new art exhibition is officially titled, "The Quest for Rhythm," San Diego native Michael Carini unofficially calls this show his "quest for balance," or "my rhythm of stability." Carini's artistic journey may not have been as smooth as his paintbrushes—suffering loss, addiction and assault and battery, but the triumphs have been works of art, literally. On Oct. 12, guests will have the chance to get to know Carini's avant-garde heart, as well as explore the rhythmic relationship between metal, paint and music.

"The Quest for Rhythm" will open at La Playa Gallery, located at 2226 Avenida De La Playa, on Friday, Oct. 12 with a wine and cheese reception from 5 to 8 p.m. where guests can connect with each artist, ask questions and even purchase some

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of the works. The exhibition will run through Nov. 23.

“Group shows are fun because they offer a wide variety in terms of how the artist might perceive the concept in a different way,” said Carini. “My work is very much about construction and deconstruction and, as an artist and individual, what I’m often trying to find in life is some sort of stability, some kind of balance.”

The idea for the exhibit sprouted when La Playa Art Gallery’s owner visited the Liberty Station showcase of Molly Larson Cook, a painter who draws her inspiration from jazz music. Originally, the exhibit was based around Larson Cook, but curator Erica Putis eventually found two more artists who were also compatible with the theme—metalworks sculptor Becky Guttin and acrylic painter Carini.

“I thought it was interesting to find that connection between the three artists,” said Putis. “Everybody has their own rhythm when it comes to how they make their art. I thought it would be interesting to connect all these different genres and personalities, underlying rhythm in everything anyone creates.”

Guttin’s rhythm stems from the family dynamic that’s at the core of each sculpture she creates. But for Carini, his paints pulse to the beat of a healing body, mind and spirit.

His first collection of work, *The Upside of Down*, was the result of Carini suffering an assault and battery in 2009 that put him in the hospital with multiple facial fractures, a concussion, and severe eye trauma. Years later, the assailant reached out to Carini to apologize and the artist even gave the man’s daughter one of the first-inspired paintings from his collection. The two still keep in touch and Carini says that this incident was a blessing in disguise, as it got him back into the studio.

“In a way, it’s sort of a happy-ever-after-type story,” said Carini.

With glowing colors, dripping backgrounds and geometric shapes that seem to float to the front of the viewer’s vision, there’s an evident tug-of-war between whimsical chaos and a desire for structure. This also explains the artist’s choice in title.

“I like to play with words the same way I play with imagery and visual elements,” said Carini. “I figure, as an artist and someone who creates, you can also create through the playfulness and utilization of reconstructing language.”

Carini’s collections—“*The Upside of Down*,” the more organic and free-flowing “*Boy in the Box*,” “*Regenaissance*” and “*Faces of the Parabox*”—all focus on the struggles and difficulties of life, using them as “sacrifices” to create something positive and beautiful. This is why Carini calls himself “*The Acrylic Alchemist*.”

“I cycle back and forth between projects, depending on the balance I feel I need,” said Carini. “It’s all part of that quest for rhythm. I may feel I’ve been a little ‘too’ free-flowing and need to get back to working with a little bit of structure again. I cycle back when I’m trying to rediscover my place.”

The last time Carini worked on “*The Upside of Down*” was in 2012, before he took a five-year absence to do a tribute project for his father, who had committed suicide. Carini even spent part of the project painting his father’s suicide note, which was never actually left.

But now, Carini has revisited “*The Upside of Down*,” and will showcase five new



works from the collection, including “King Nothing and the Discovery of the Lost Venus (For SAMO)” inspired by the graffiti artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, and “I Am Who Am I” tying in some of Carini’s Catholic upbringing.

“Sometimes going back to revisit a place of struggle helps you find yourself,” said Carini.

“I want to encourage people to be observant with an open mind at this show,” he adds. “You can look at my work from far away and have one perspective of it, but I hide a lot of little treasures in my pieces so that, if you get closer, there’s something more there that you didn’t catch at first glance.”

“My hope is that everyone can find something in the art that speaks to them,” said Putis. “That’s what every artist wants, to make a connection.”

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The first time I saw Michael's work in person, I knew I wasn't going home without a piece. I ended up with 2! Since then, I've acquired a few more pieces. He's an amazing artist!

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Michael Carini | September 22, 2018

Thank you so much for the support! Very much looking forward to this show :)

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