

Bobb: took own path to developing artistic talent

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"I'm not afraid whether or not a picture makes sense to anyone else but myself," Bobb said. "I have a real freedom in that regard."

In Bobb's opinion, "What is great pleasure are the freedom to make choices, do the projects that I want to do and the freedom to explore and take chances."

An important aspect of art is envisioning the object being drawn, he said.

In Bobb's opinion, "You almost have to be able to imagine what it will feel like and look like."

But that doesn't mean he always knows how a project will turn out.

Actually, he said, "I'm always surprised by how well a drawing comes out."

And it's a process that typically ends up inspiring Bobb to create even more artwork.

He explained, "The whole experience of doing a drawing winds up generating more ideas and more material."

Art is something that gives Bobb countless methods of creating, he said.

"I saw an opportunity for myself as an artist to accomplish so many of my creative ambitions," Bobb said. "Such as making people look like the way I saw them: beautiful, strong and funny—like the people I saw around the community in a different light and gave them more character."

"Having a vivid imagination gave me the opportunity to put a face on some old Indian legends such as the Tataliya—witch woman," Bobb said. "It also gave me the opportunity to illustrate some of my childhood nightmares. I guess, for me anyway, it's sort of like therapy."

Going through school, he said, fitting in never concerned him.

"I wasn't in the loop of social or cultural peer pressure to do what everyone else was doing," Bobb said. "I've never had the feeling to be wild."

Coupled with his quiet nature, that led Bobb to lead the life of an outsider during his youth.

"School is your first taste of categorization and social hierarchies," Bobb said. "You don't have to do much to be put in the weird category. I knew I wasn't a bad person and I didn't feel weird, yet that is how I was perceived."

"It was sad, and it made me feel like I was crazy," Bobb continued. "I can remember walking around thinking, 'What's wrong with me? They tell me I'm weird, so I guess I must be.' In retrospect, I can see it that it was the people who were ganged up on and treated like freaks—probably because people who don't have personal power like to torture those who have it."

During that time, he said, "It was easy to project myself into these characters."

Now Bobb can look at his experiences growing up in a different light.

In his opinion, "The more pain you endure when you're young, the richer your adult life will be."



Halloween drawings by Travis Bobb.



"I don't learn from the written word or stuffy classrooms, but from seeing and feeling, and expression in visual form."

Those experiences are what allowed him to express himself artistically.

When a person isn't very social, Bobb said, "You have time to think and to be quietly angry and emotional. And if you're lucky, you will develop a creative outlet to exercise those feelings."

Though he took art classes in school, Bobb said, "Art classes didn't turn out to be my all time favorite."

Plus, Bobb said, "I kind of

thought they were boring."

For instance, in classes students are taught to draw faces using a graph method, he said.

Bobb taught himself to draw faces by merely eyeing the distances and measurements.

Drew Struzan and Sebastian Kruger are two artists that especially interest Bobb.

An artist named H.R. Giger has also proved to be influential. According to Bobb, "He really showed me how to do biomechanical structure."

He likes to learn from other artists' work and try to copy their style, he explained.

However, he has never really tried to teach anyone else, and Bobb said that could be difficult since so much of what he does he learned on his own.

Though he once tried to teach his brother and his cousin, Bobb said, "It was mostly a hobby for them. It wasn't a



in my artwork," Bobb added.

Bobb also tries to use his artistic talents to give back to the community.

Each year he illustrates posters to advertise Pi-Ume-Sha.

"I like to draw them really dramatic, like old-fashioned movie posters," he said. "It just shows everything."

"It resembles the old epic movie art from the golden age of motion pictures that brought out the essence in a more dramatic way," he explained. "But it is a challenge to come up with a completely different feel for what is essentially an annual event."

But Bobb doesn't create artwork for financial gain.

"Money isn't really a motivation for me," he explained. "I just did it out of a hobby."

Bobb explained, "It's always been about the act of creating something out of nothing, but in the end, the things that sustain you, that make you proud, you can't buy with money."

"It was never a goal for me to seek fame or fortune," Bobb

said. "I've never had one goal I was obsessed with, and having known people who have, I can see it's just a way to set yourself up for failure."

In the future, Bobb plans to continue creating whatever strikes him.

The ideas are already beginning to form.

According to Bobb, "I've always wanted to do some sort of really definitive illustrations of average, ordinary Indians without all the beads and feathers but rather in a more humorous concept because I've never really seen anything like this done before."

For others, Bobb only advises them to stay true to themselves.

"Art is experience with comprehension, truth with purpose, feelings with heart and a door to the heart through the eyes," Bobb said. "Look at pictures with your heart if you need to know how they will affect people. Listen without ego as to how people feel about what you create."

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