

GOODWILL

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In 2000, when an angry co-worker outed Ben Workman (who later assumes an alter ego of “Jumper Maybach”), his work environment grew hostile. Workman changed departments, moving away from the crazy gossip. Then a supervisor in the new IT department saw a picture of Workman and his partner in 2010. Retaliation started.

“That’s the incident that broke the camel’s back,” Workman laments. “I could’ve quit, but I made up my mind that somebody has got to change the culture and the only way it’s going to change is to stand up for my rights.” And with that, he decided to sue his employer – the federal government – with the understanding that it could take years to get a settlement from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

In April 2011, at the end of his rope, he prayed. And God spoke to him.

“I heard God’s voice saying, ‘If a door opens, just go through it,’” the Houston resident recalls. “My spiritual awakening brought me out to be Jumper (the clown) and to paint.”

Now, as Jumper Maybach – a moniker he’d earned as a toddler from his grandfather, who had his own credentials in the world of clowning – he began frantically painting.

Maybach went from buying canvas frames at the local craft store to ultimately buying rolls of canvas, obsessed with the need to create art. “I just did it,” he explains, driven by the message to end bullying and hate. “All I care about is getting the message out there.” He furiously painted for months and by December his partner insisted the art get out into the world.

Maybach’s first gallery show in Houston, led to an invitation to show at Art Dubai, where the minister of arts and culture deemed him “the 21st-century Jackson Pollock with a lot of color.” A documentary film,

“The Jumper Maybach Story,” was produced. He proceeded to show his art in Venice, Italy and the Louvre in Paris among other venues.

“Jumper has shown me it doesn’t matter what people think about me as a gay man,” he remarks. “I paint to end the world of intolerance and bullying in the world.” He knows talking in third person seems strange to most but acknowledges that Jumper Maybach is the creator of art that Ben Workman never would have made.

“It’s been an amazing experience watching people get an understanding of the art and how I’ve progressed from the actual pain and suffering into a growth experience,” Maybach continues.

“There’s a lot of very bad things that are happening in the world at this time. If I can show the world that everybody should be counted as an individual, and not be attacked for who they are, the world would be a better place.”

Meanwhile back home, Maybach, 54, supports multiple LGBTQ organizations around the country with both financial and artistic contributions; his own program serves children with autism and encourages them to experience the joy of splatter painting in his studio. “Art can lead them to something positive. They can go through any door.”

Ultimately, Maybach has ambitions of creating a foundation that focuses on using art to embrace diversity. “When an opportunity comes up, I take it. I don’t let people’s thinking interfere with doing what I need to do. Call me crazy, I don’t care anymore. I’ve moved past that – art is changing the world in a positive way and if I can change one mind through art, I feel I’ve done my job. It’s making a difference.”

THERESA KEEGAN

The artist will exhibit his new collection PROUD in NYC Spring of 2018.

Artful Rebuttal