

“A painter should begin every canvas with a wash of black, because all things in nature are dark except where exposed by the light.”

—Leonardo da Vinci

“There is hope and a kind of beauty in there somewhere, if you look for it.”

—H.R. Giger

Gavin Eveland is a painter who shatters every notion of what the human form should look like on canvas. Slashed and cropped and pieced back together, along with animals and strange, beastly creatures, the body metamorphosis into dynamic, dream-like experimentations. Scenes emerge with compelling attraction that intermingles danger, intrigue, vulnerability, impulse, desire, passion, aggression, and a deep fascination with multiple facets of human nature.

Gavin was born and raised in Moscow, Idaho. He attended the University of Idaho briefly before attending and graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA) in Portland, Oregon. Gavin continues to reside in and show work throughout the city of Portland.

His childhood was fostered with surrounded creativity and appreciation of the arts from his family, who each have artistic talents. They often traveled and attended festivals, where his mother sold hand-crafted pottery and her friends acted in troupe performances. He is the middle child of three. His younger sister is a dance performer, instructor, and choreographer. His older brother has been a visual and performance artist and is now an overseas teacher and literary writer.

It was his brother who first introduced Gavin to painting as a young child, and it was he who was one of the first inspirations in Gavin’s life. There are many artists, forms of music, literature, and films that are motivating factors to Gavin’s outlook and art, but primary influences are Edvard Munch, H.R. Giger, and Vincent van Gogh.

An artist’s greatest challenge in life is to develop an understanding of their voice found through their own art and to develop an individualistic style. Gavin Eveland is one of the rare artists who has done that. While studying classical artists and various medium techniques at PNCA, Gavin first learned about the Grotesque. This is a style termed after paintings discovered within rooms and corridors of Nero’s buried palace, Domus Aurea. The Grotesque has influenced not only Roman art in the latter part of the 15th century, but works of a great many artists, architects, and writers thereafter. It remains the leading factor in what inspired Gavin to develop his style as well.

Many of Gavin’s early paintings are filled with representations of torment, anxiety, and intensity. Color is limited to pale flesh tones and cold blues. Figures appear as painfully stretched conglomerates. As his work has developed, a greater sense of knowing evolved as well, not only of himself but of the stories he has to tell. Confidence and growth resound in added warm, vivid colors, forests of foliage, animals, traces of symbolic representations, and elements of graceful figures. There is still pain and darkness, but there is also newfound gracefulness and fluid rhythm. Within the chaos of snarling monsters and the raw entanglement of androgynous human forms, I also see calculated design, greater definition, and self-awakening with the choice to anthropomorphize into something new, something perhaps worse or better. I see characteristics of nature and humanity—those that are tragic, antagonizing, sexual, beautiful, and wondrous. And in each canvas, I see worlds of stories with infinite possibilities.

It takes great brevity to stay true to one’s standards and even more courage to continue to pursue art in a world of very little appreciation and fear of creativity. Gavin Eveland is an artist unlike any other. He is quiet, thoughtful, and reflective with a great degree of misunderstood talent that he has beautified into an extremely personal language of variable insight through visual art.

—Sheree Corniel  
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