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BOB Omar TUNNOCH



Inspiration Anywhere, Anyplace, Anytime!

written by Allison Tunnoch



This Page, above, **Undercover, Amazon Horned Frog,** oil on canvas, 25" x 37" Previous Page, **Leave of Absence, State of the Arts,** oil on canvas, 36" x 36"

Bob 'Omar' Tunnoch, my dad, is a visual artist and musician, born in Ottawa, Ontario in 1953. He is represented by both Rodrigues Contemporary and the Colborne Art Gallery, and is a member of the Society of Canadian Artists (SCA), Ontario Society of Artists (OSA), the Colour and Form Society (CFS) and more.



This Page, above, Aggressive Carnivorous Plant Debate, Mediator Satanic Leaf-Tailed Gecko, oil on oxidized copper leaf on board, 24" $\times 30$ " Following Page, above, In Session, Carnivorous Plant Choir, oil on canvas, 30" $\times 40$ "

His paintings can be found in private and corporate collections across North America. He has also been a featured artist in the 'International Contemporary Artists' publication.

Ever since my dad was young, the natural world has been his inspiration and the force behind what fuels his passion – the creative world of visual arts and music. His use of vibrant colors and attention to detail never go unnoticed by the viewer, but it's the provocative subject matter that consistently leaves the viewer questioning his motives and wanting more. My dad likes to think of himself as a 'nature surrealist' – a Salvador Dali meets David Attenborough.

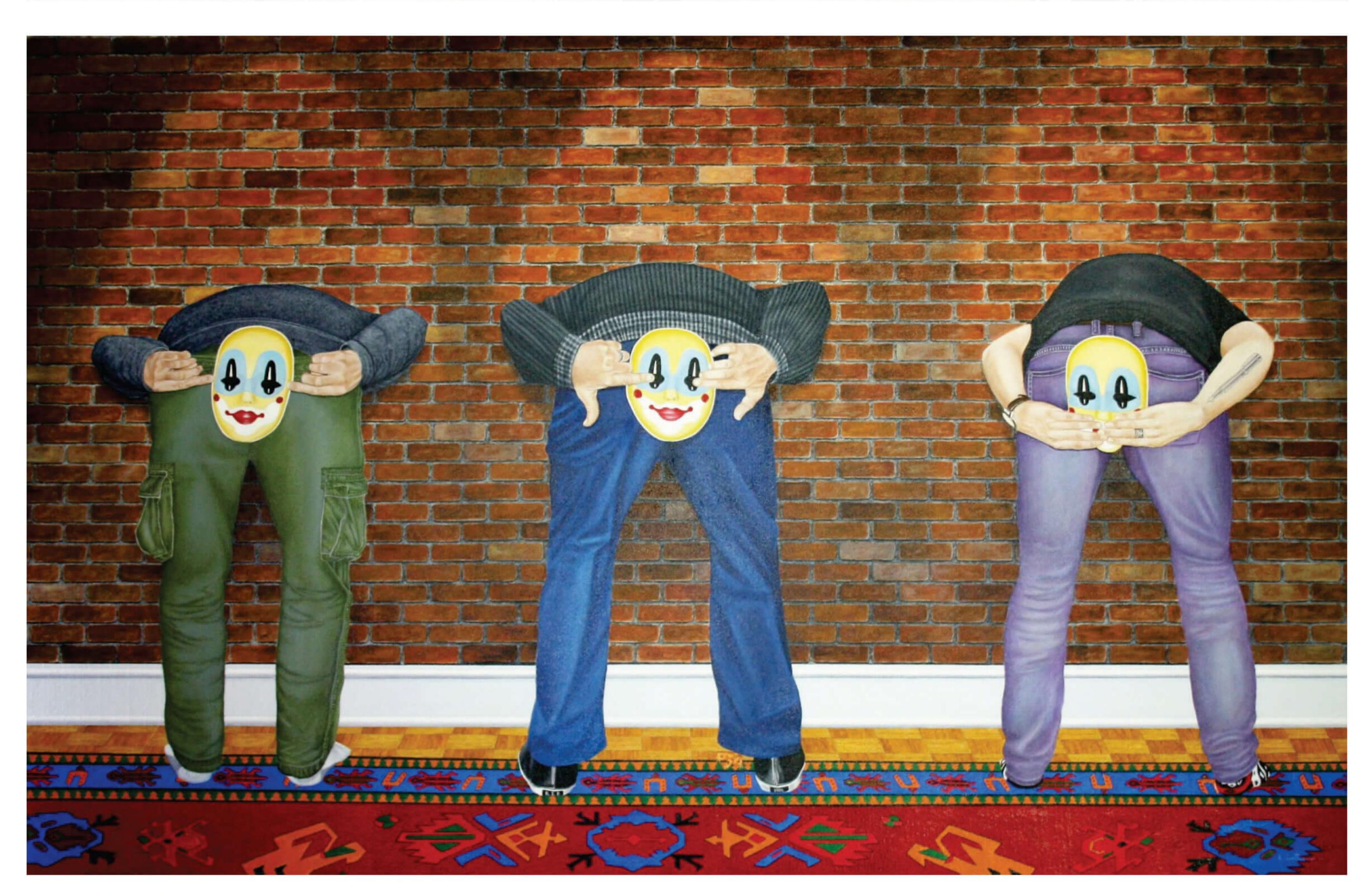
Throughout his art, my dad tends to focus on some of the most unusual and underrepresented life forms around us, as throughout his lifetime so far, the threatening impacts of climate change and human disruption have been increasing at a rapid pace.



In response, he has found solace in portraying ignored and overlooked life forms – those that are disappearing before our eyes or those that are unknown to most. An example of this can be seen through his double-sided painting, "Find the Golden Toad" which features the Golden Toad, an extinct species that was once abundant in the high-altitude regions of Costa Rica but disappeared in 1989, likely as a result of climate change. On the front side of this painting, three heads poke through a wall with cups on top of each. Frogs sit under two of the three cups, with the middle cup being empty – a space for the extinct Golden Toad. On the back side, the Golden Toad can be found next to the feet of the man in the middle, with 'RIP' written on one shoe and the year of extinction on the other.

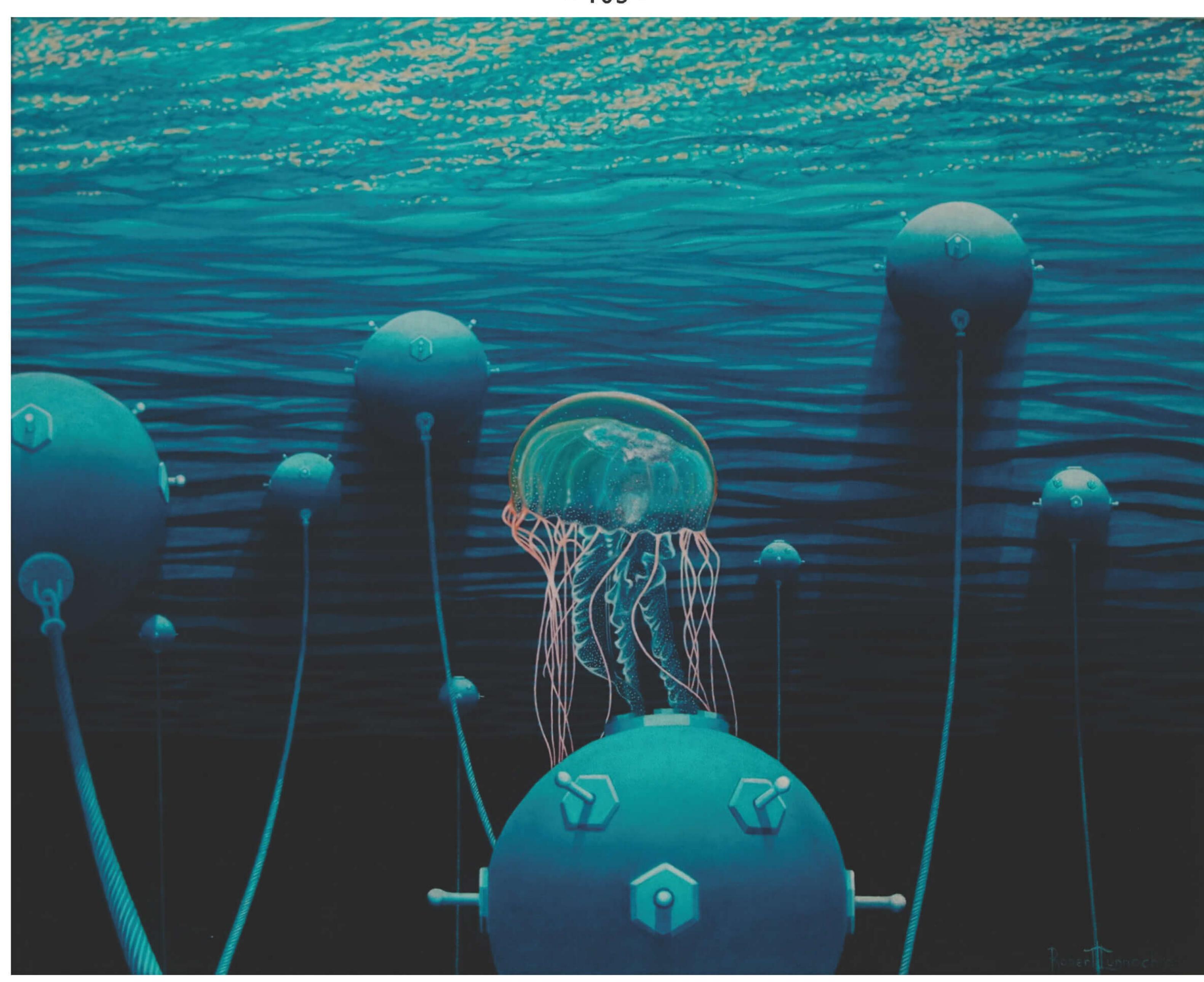
When asked about the purpose behind his thought-provoking art, my dad says, "I aim to educate by putting the plants, animals and other creatures that make up our natural world into unusual and thought-provoking situations, leaving the viewer questioning my motives and searching for answers. Art is a terrific way to educate and I hope that through my pieces, viewers will be made aware of the incredible yet harmful relationship we as humans have on planet earth.







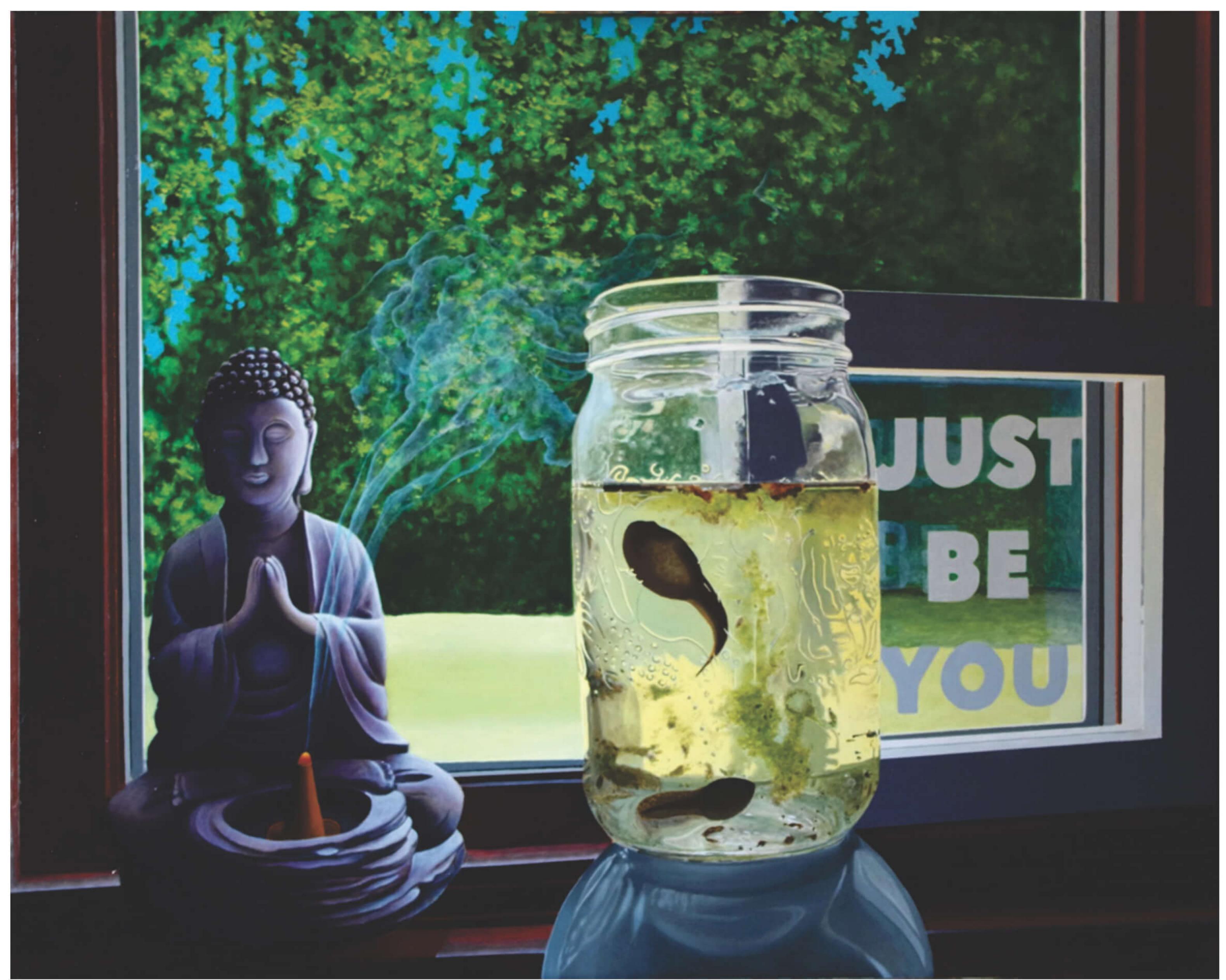
This Page, above, **Species at Risk,** oil on board, 24" x 30"
Previous Page, top, **Find the Golden Toad, Front,** oil on canvas, 48" x 72"
Previous Page, bottom, **Find the Golden Toad, Back,** oil on canvas, 48" x 72"
both paintings (front and back) are available as a single double-sided painting



This Page, above, Eco-Tourism, oil on canvas, 24" x 30"

At this rate, future generations will not be able to see some of the spectacular life forms that exist today, so I hope to create a new sense of awareness surrounding this, through my art. As we move towards a new reality ahead, I hope that my art inspires younger generations to think critically about the future of our planet, explore their artistic abilities, and not be afraid to be different."

Although going against the grain may be in his genes, it was certain experiences and people that influenced my dad to follow his dreams. As a kid, after moving between Ottawa, Winnipeg and Vancouver, my dad landed in Toronto, which, at the time, was a thriving metropolis for arts and culture. It was in Toronto that he finished high school and became extremely well integrated into the Toronto music scene, networking with other like-minded people and playing with a number of bands around the city.



This Page, above, Isolation, Zen Wellness Retreat for Tadpoles, oil on wood panel, 24" x 30"

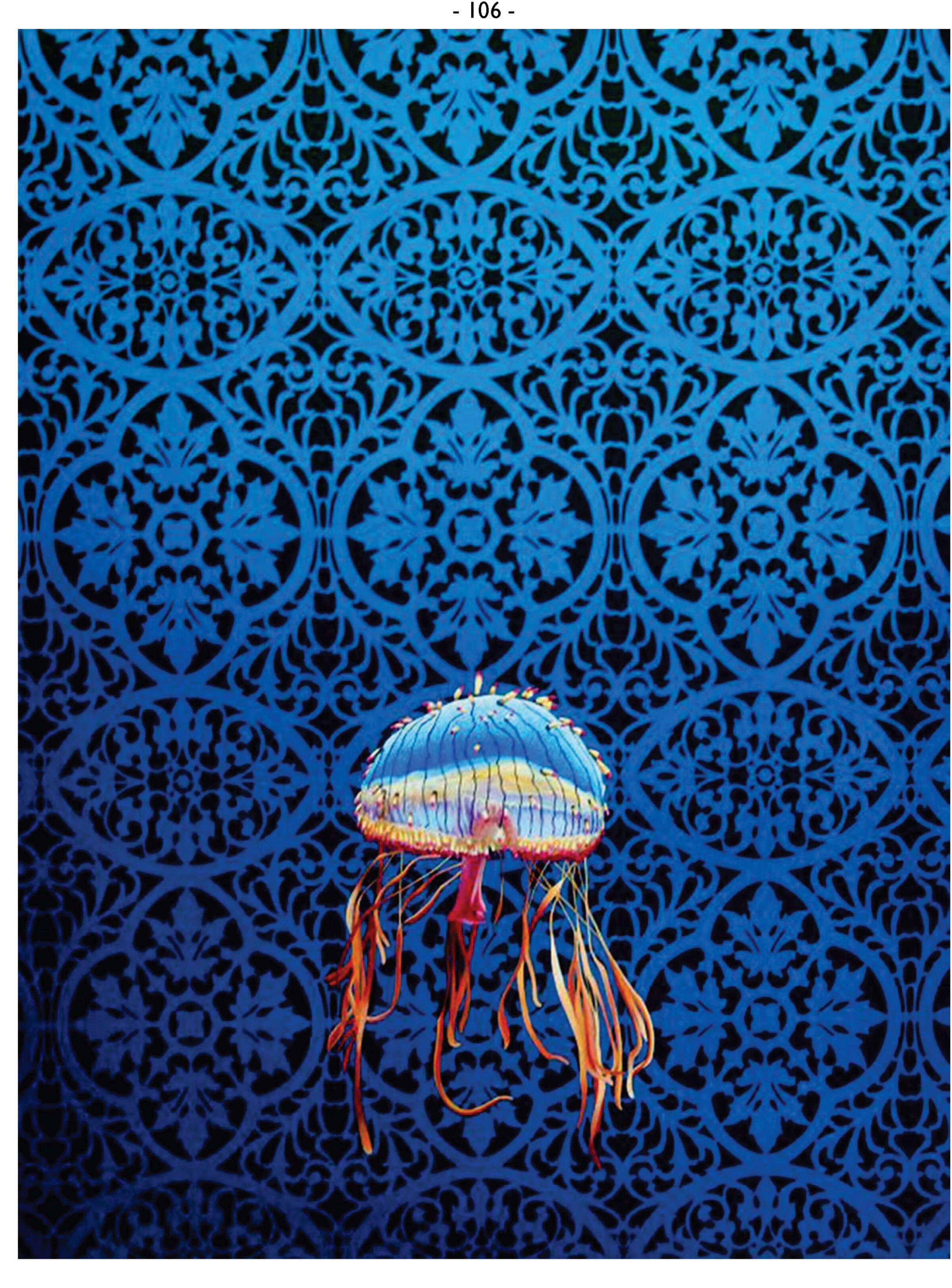
It was also where my dad met Mr. Daniels, a high school art teacher who encouraged him to pursue his dreams and gave him the confidence needed to pursue his passions of both art and music. For those of you wondering where the nickname "Omar" came from, it also came from high school. As a teen, he would wear denim overalls with suspenders that were far too big. His friends began calling him "Omar the tentmaker" and it has stuck ever since.

After high school, my dad began to hone in on his artistic passion by attending Humber College's Fine Arts program, eventually moving back to Vancouver where he attended the Vancouver School of Arts majoring in Painting. While on the West Coast, he worked at Lynn Canyon Ecology Centre and Richmond Nature Park. He then moved full circle back to Toronto where he began working at the Toronto Zoo.

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This Page, above, **Fetch**, oil on canvas, 32" x 28" Following Page, **Flowerhat Jellyfish, From the Depths of the Dining Room**, oil on board, 30" x 24"





This Page, above, Slime Mold and Poison Arrow Frogs on a Bed of Parsley, From the series 100% Organic Hors d'oeuvres, oil on board, 13.75" x 16.5"

It was at this point when his inspiration and passion collided, and his fascination with nature and the creatures we share this planet with came to fruition through various creative outlets. His drive to combine the two was only amplified after learning many important lessons from Tae Kwon Do masters Sam Park and Ken Cheung while achieving a second-degree black belt. It was through them that he learned the values of never giving up and staying true to yourself. These are certainly values that he has applied to his art and life each and every day. No matter what, he consistently stays true to himself by continuing to pursue his goals and passions, despite what may be popular at the time.

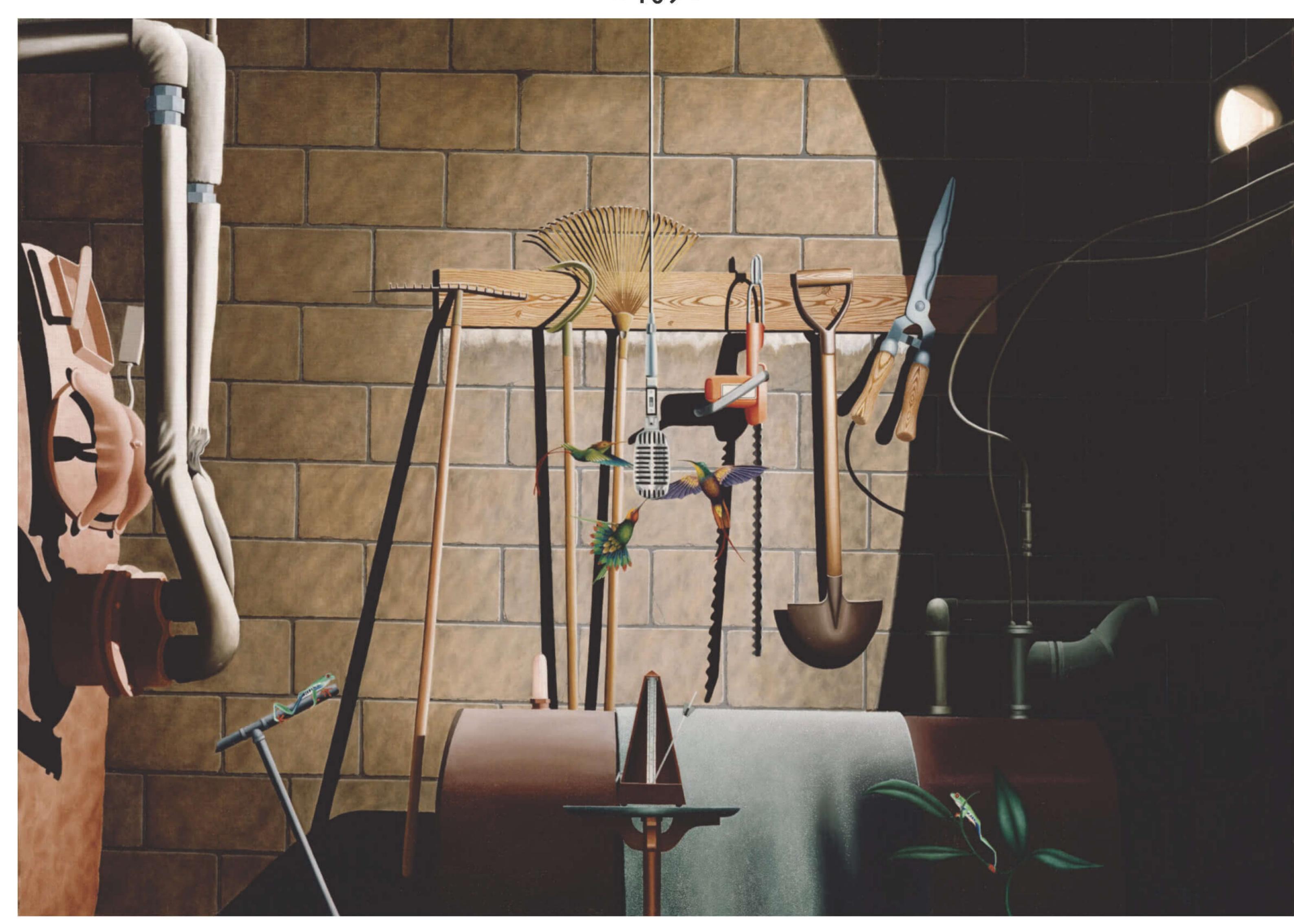
As an artist who has never had a real studio, per se, my dad paints wherever he can — in the living room, dining room, bedroom, you name it, he's done it. In the apartment I grew up in, he would often hang large paintings on our dining room wall and paint there.



This Page, above, Dim Sum with Venus Flytrap, Praying Mantis and Poison Arrow Frog, From the series 100% Organic Hors d'oeuvres, oil on board, 13.75" x 16.5"

For smaller paintings he would move his easel here and there to try to stay out of the way. It wasn't until my mom became the property manager for the building we lived in that he had his own space to paint – in the boiler room. Although an extremely unique environment to paint in, it became proof that inspiration can come at any time, out of nowhere, almost like being struck by lightning, as he likes to say.

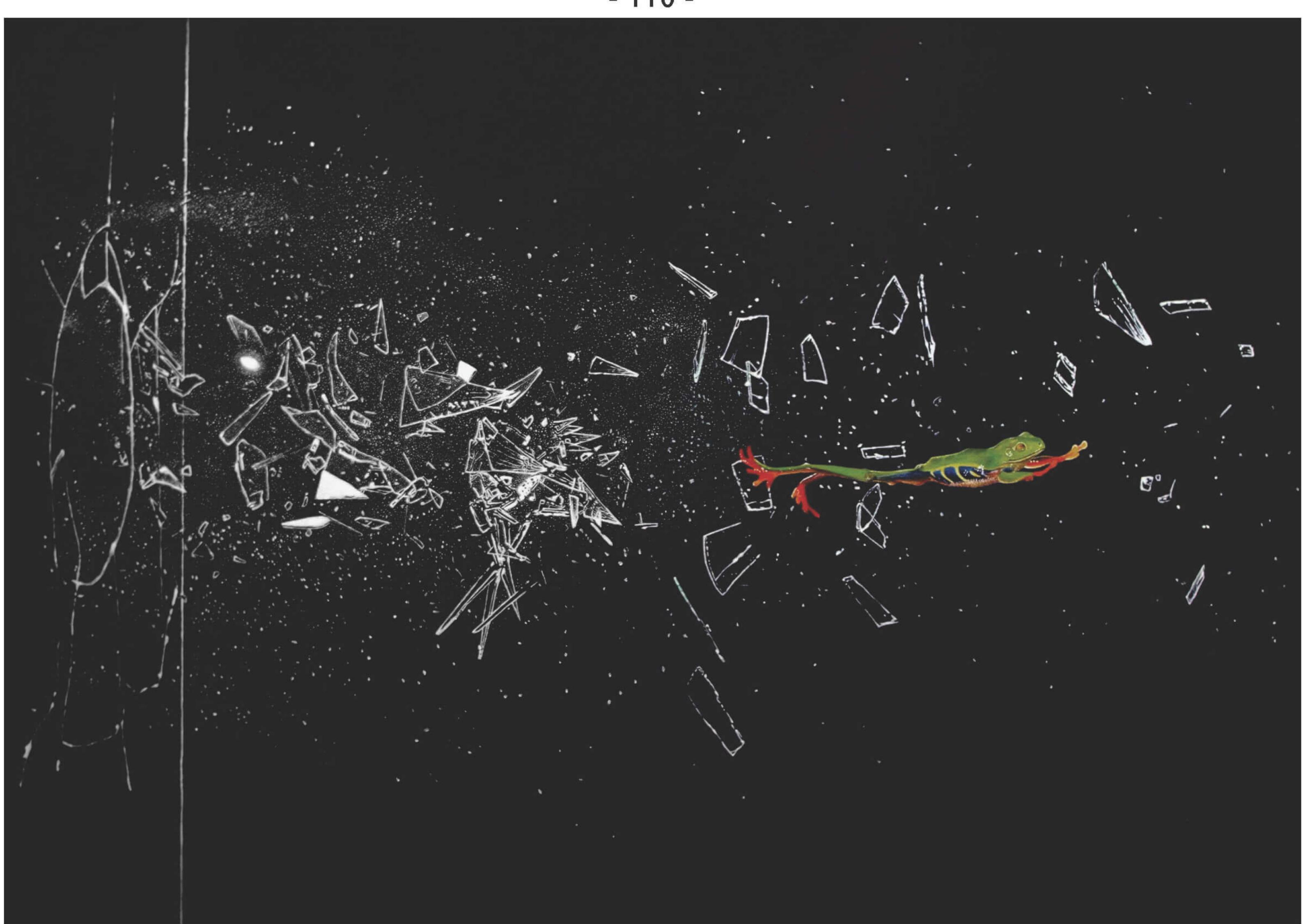
And it was in this space that lightning struck, resulting in "Hummingbirds in the Boiler Room," a piece set in that very boiler room where my dad once painted. Initially inspired by the room's dim lighting, and the somber and dreary surroundings, he chose to lighten the mood by painting three hummingbirds singing around a microphone in contrast to the sterile and dark setting. In this painting, two Red-eyed Tree Frogs can also be spotted. Lightning struck once again when, as a house painter and faux finisher by day, he was inspired by how a client's halogen lights cast an ellipse on the wall. In his eyes, this looked like the perfect space for something to be showcased.



This Page, above, Hummingbirds in the Boiler Room, Adagio, oil on canvas, 48" x 72"

This eventually morphed into the series "Life Under the Halogen," featuring various and unusual creatures under the ellipse of the light. Resulting from this came another complimentary series called "From the Depths of the Dining Room," which features sea creatures rising up from the depths in front of a wallpapered background.

People have always told him how lucky he is to have the ability to do what he does, but he has always thought of it as a blessed curse. Once that inspiration hits, there is no turning back. In a weird way, it's almost like he becomes possessed, with his next creative endeavour beginning shortly after. Aside from the instant strikes of inspiration, my dad is constantly trying to weed through all the ideas swirling through his head. To settle on an idea, he picks the one that would be the most visually striking to the viewer and one that will make the viewer ask the most questions. He then works out a process in his head and off he goes, though it almost never turns out as he originally envisioned it.



This Page, above, Ambition, oil on canvas, 24.5" x 37"

Currently, he is working on his latest piece, "The Ultimate Fishing Lure," which is a large mixed-media sculpture consisting of unusual creatures stuck to fly paper and a tree-like sculpture with schools of fish swimming out of it, all housed within a roofed display case. As you can imagine, it will be sure to get minds racing.

As for the advice he has for other artists? Stay true to yourself and what you believe in, specifically as a young creator. Don't be afraid to be different and definitely don't give up. Perseverance is the key. Also, explore and research your materials, and take the time to really look at the big picture. Art is a fantastic way to educate and inspire, so continue to go after your dreams and aspirations.

To end, I'll leave you with my dad's favourite quote from Chief Seattle: "Man does not weave this web of life. He is merely a strand of it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself. All things share the same breath — the beast, the tree, the man... the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. Take only memories, leave nothing but footprints".

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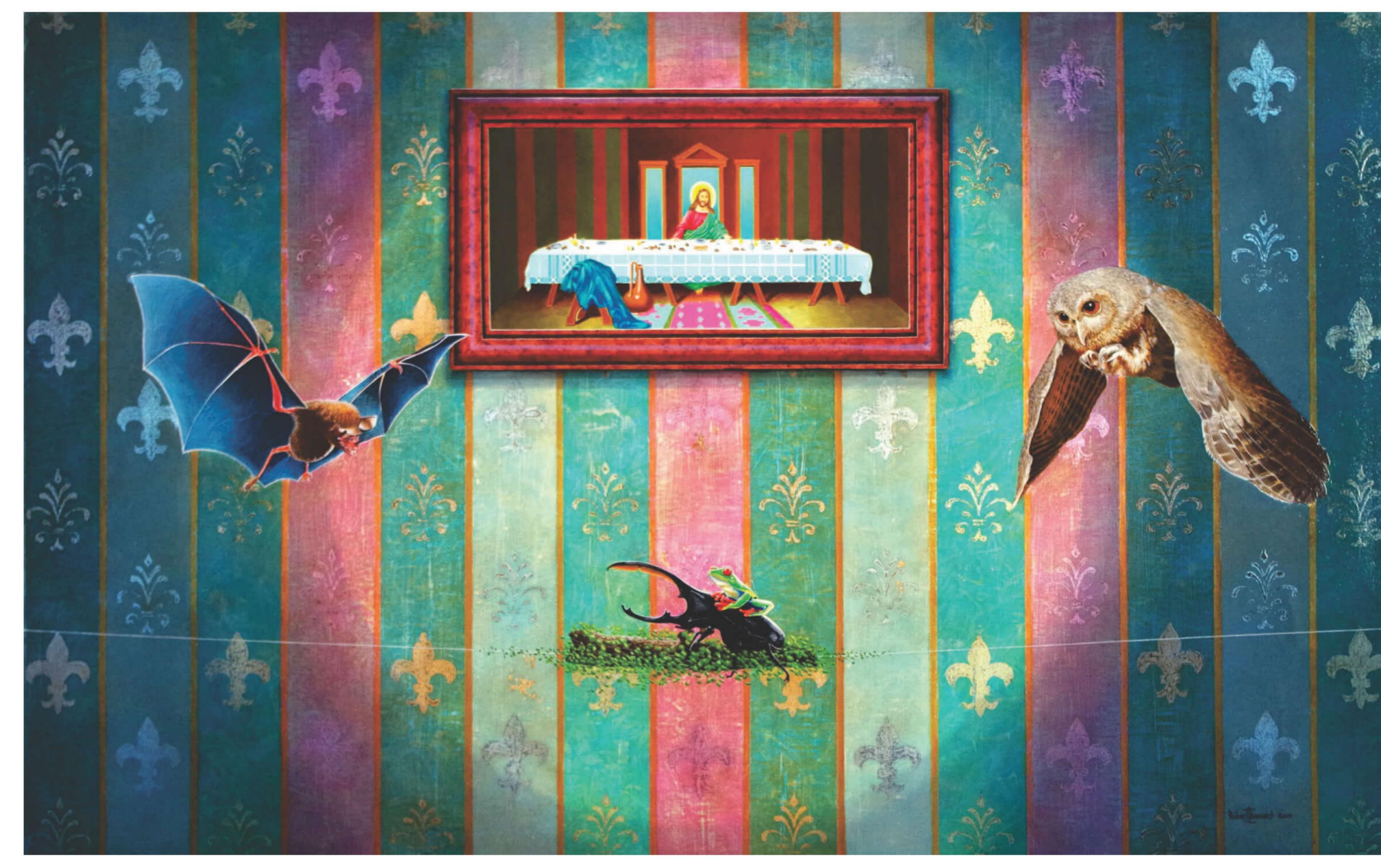


This Page, above, Tarsier, Life Under the Halogen, oil on board, 30" x 24"



This Page, above, Coquille Tuffed Hummingbird on Nest on Ostrich Egg on Antique Egg Cup, Life Under the Halogen, oil on board, 30" x 24"

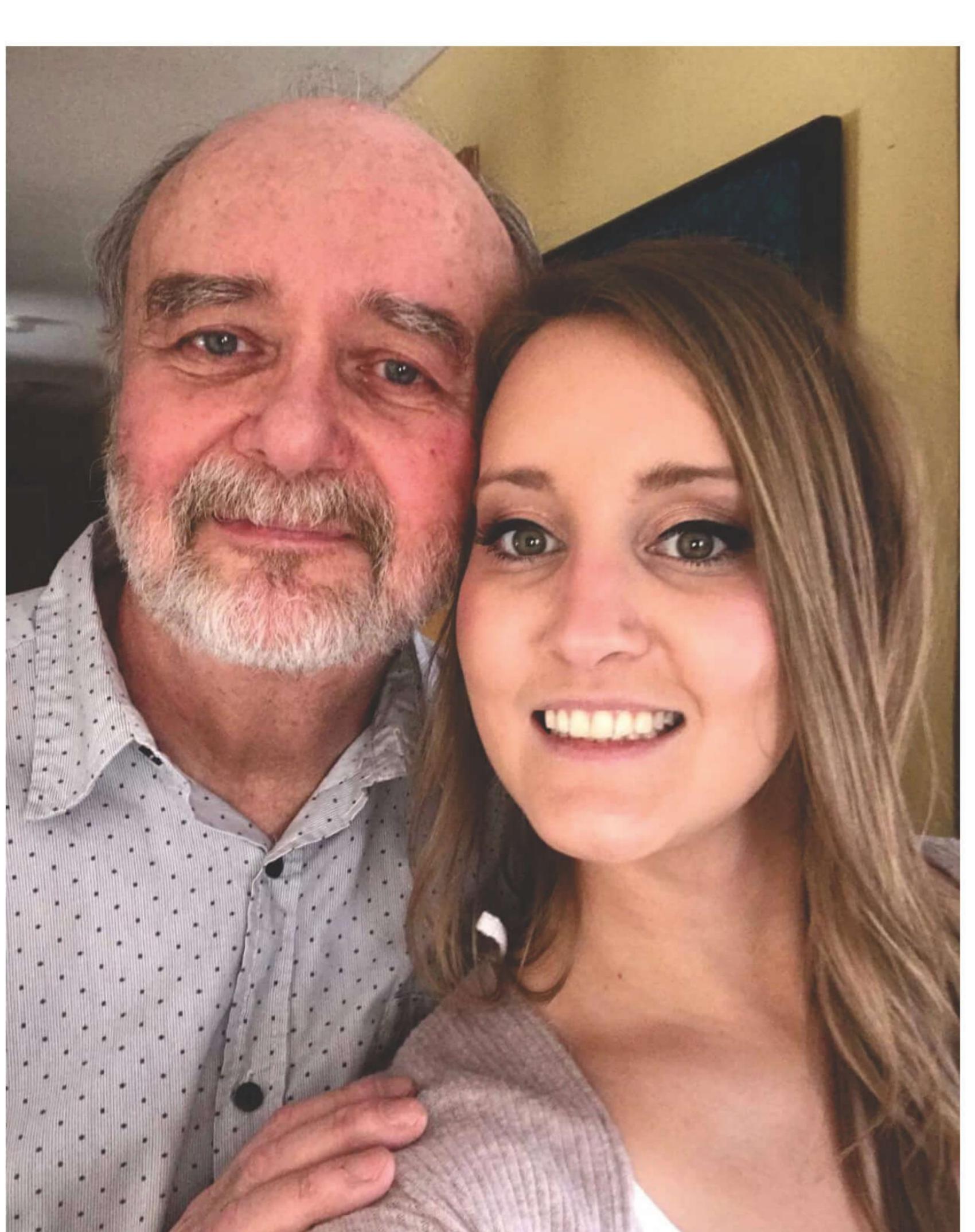


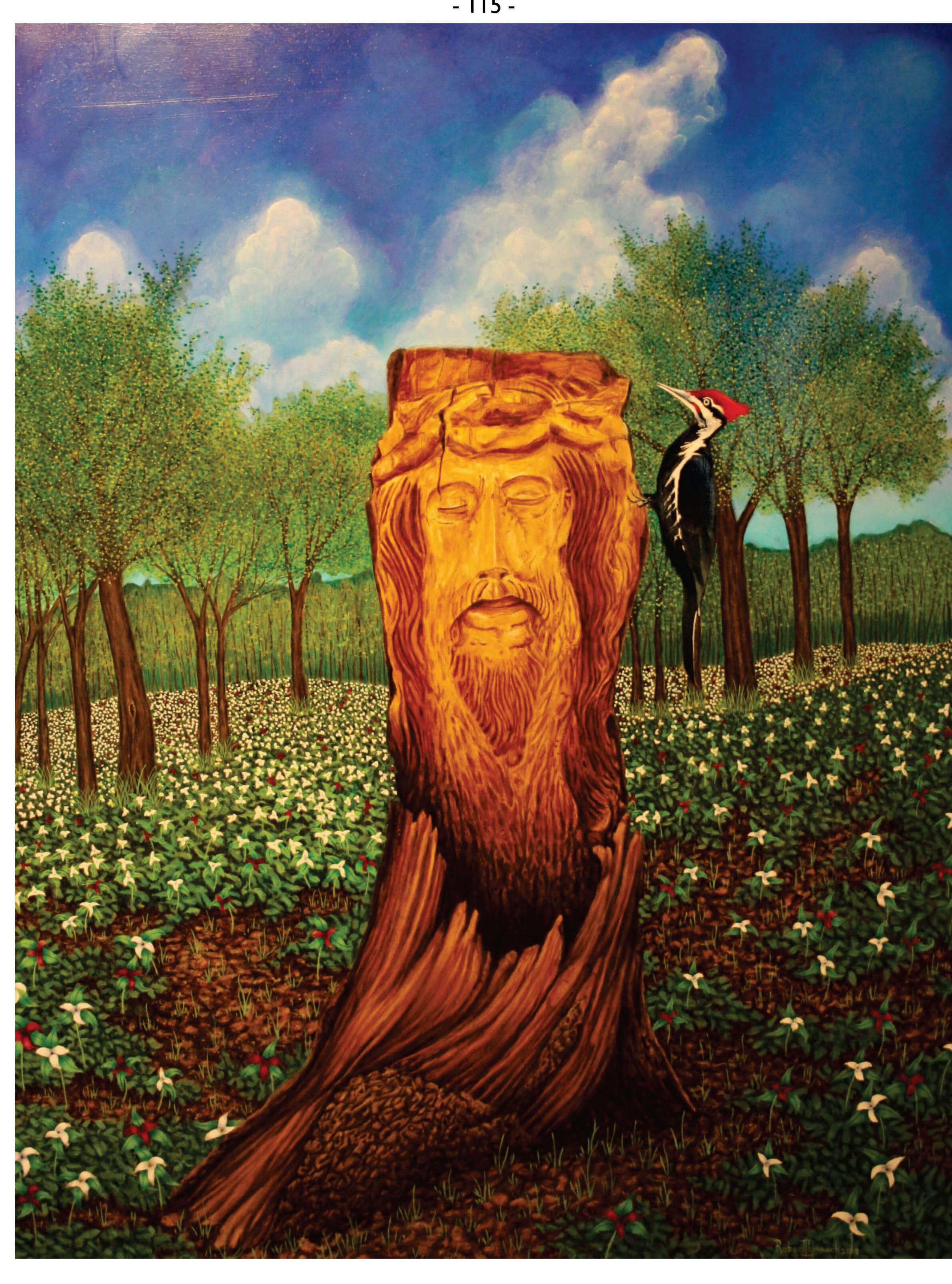




Previous Page, top, **What Climate Change**, oil on canvas, 20" x 30"
Previous Page, bottom, **The Makeover**, **Roswell Beauty Salon**,
oil on canvas, 36" x 60"

This Page, above, The Last Supper,
Conflict of Interest,
oil on board, 30" x 48"
This Page, below right,
Bob (Omar) Tunnoch and his
Daughter Allison Tunnoch







This Page, above, **Fishing by Levitation**, oil on canvas, 48" x 72" Previous Page, **Knocking on Heaven's Door**, oil on board, 24" x 30"

To learn more about the interesting and slightly unusual work of Bob (Omar) Tunnoch please visit, www.bobomartunnoch.com. Bob is represented by several galleries in Ontario.

A video chat with Omar: https://youtu.be/6nPvp6luTlk

Please visit this gallery to see some more works:

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