

ROBYN WARD

Interviewed by [Kyle Johnson](#)
Portrait courtesy of [Robyn Ward](#)



As a self-taught artist who hails from Belfast, Ireland, Robyn Ward's eye-catching creations are a contemporary mix of acrylic, oil and ink on canvas. With titles like *Summer Daze*, *Morals Check* and *Modern Marriage*, each painting explores the juxtaposing ideas of humor and tragedy found in the concepts of sexuality, drugs, money and politics depicting a lucid world against a backdrop of flawed imperfections and pressures. As his loose brush strokes flow over layered, textualized art, each of his pieces forms a lively tale told through beautifully dripping paint and graffiti style antics. They are sure to catch the eye of London's most prolific art buyers.

"That's all folks!" Porky Pig

“The streets of Belfast made for a perfect canvas and helped define my own unique style of art”

How did you get your start in the industry? How has growing up in Northern Ireland influence your work?

Growing up in Belfast wasn't easy to say the least due to the friction and grittiness of the city. The story of how I got into art started at school, where I was a bit rebellious. I first started developing an interest in visual arts around 13. After being expelled at 15, I became fascinated with the graffiti that covered a bridge where I used to spend my days smoking, and soon enough I became compelled to start experimenting with my own tags. The streets of Belfast made for a perfect canvas and helped define my own unique style of art. For me, the solidarity of these moments seemed so organic and beautiful. In hindsight, they probably gave me the escapism from the real world that I never knew I needed.

What attracted you to graffiti art as opposed to other art styles?

I wouldn't say my art is necessarily graffiti. It very much comprises of mixed media. The backdrops and characters are hand painted with acrylics, ink and water color and I bring elements of graffiti into play. I also sometimes incorporate oil depending on the piece. For me, it's about creating layers and texture; I find combining these mediums enable me to do this. I aim for my artwork to look like someone has cut a piece of wall out and put a frame around it. This is also why I use wallpaper as a medium to coarse gravel on the case layer of the canvas.

List three words to describe your creative style:

Mixed media, nostalgic, socio-political/economical.

Who are your idols/influences? Who or what do you turn to for inspiration?

In general, the landscape of the world and what happens on a daily basis is where I draw my inspiration from. Recent historical moments can also spark a painting or a creative idea. When it comes to other artists, I really pay attention at the more basic graffiti when I am travelling around the world. This all helps form the base and backdrop of my work. Additionally, I draw a lot of inspiration from other artists such as Conor Harrington, a fellow Irish artist. I personally think he is one of the most gifted painters today. Another artist that inspires me is Greg Craola Simkins - his art never ceases to mesmerize me, I can get lost in his work for hours.

Where is your favorite place in London to get your creative ideas?

I really couldn't pin this down to one specific place. I think London is the best city in the world - a true multicultural melting pot - and day-to-day existence here really keeps my head thinking and thinking. I get a lot of my back-drop ideas when travelling off the beaten track. I think there is a real charm in the basic graffiti found in little towns particularly as these are often quite raw.

If you were stranded on a deserted island, what three things would you like to have with you?

Surfboard, dog and crossbow.

How does the use of the mixed media style help to support or portray your vision as an artist as opposed to using just oils or acrylics or one type of medium?

My technique comprises of a lot of mixed media: graffiti, watercolor, acrylics, dripping techniques, dry brush and wet brush. It can get very messy. Even if I look at the backdrops, I will layer 4/5 different colors on the canvas to create a textural wall. This, combined with base mediums such as wall paper or coarse gravel, help bring a real depth to each piece. For my current series, it is my aim to create a piece that looks like a wall has been cut out and framed.

I want to give off the affect that a nicely painted piece has been put over some old basic graffiti to give it a sense of age.

In my art, I try to present more serious themes

in a light-hearted way where people can not only enjoy the art but also provoke thought. By using iconic 80's and 90's cartoon characters, they remind me of a simpler time in my youth that help to create the parody I aim to achieve. The more you scrape through the layers - money, drugs, sexuality, religion, politics and how we perceive the world - the more you realize there is a lot of mess behind it. I feel the use of different medias helps to portrait all of this.

What social causes do you support?

I am very into animal rights. I was vegan for nearly 2 years until recently.

What is your most important piece of art you've sold to date?

I don't think I have a most important piece, I am drawn to some more due to color patterns but again this is very subjective and depends on personal opinion. There is a part of me in all my pieces, so I feel strongly about them all. For this reason, if I am not 100% happy with a piece I won't put it out.

What can we expect to see from you in the future? Who would you like to work with?

I'm excited about the new series of paintings I'm working on for my upcoming show in September. While my attention span is not the strongest, I use that to my advantage and am constantly thinking about different ideas and mediums that I can use. I am also working on some really nice encaustic pieces and watercolor on lips which I want to show next year. So, my artwork won't purely be cartoon characters.

“I think London is the best city in the world”

“There is a part of me in all my pieces”



Oops - Image courtesy of the artist.



Relax - Image courtesy of the artist.



Eternal Youth - Image courtesy of the artist.



A Star Was Born - Image courtesy of the artist.