**The Masked Man with the Brush**

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Every time you walk into an exhibition, you waste no time to start relating your experiences and thoughts with whatever painting makes you stop and stare or sometimes admire. Now Xesturgy’s paintings don't fall short of giving you such an experience. The soft spoken **Xolani Mkweta,** owner and founder of what we now refer to as **Xesturgy,** which means “to polish” because “it's quite weird when people mistake a painter’s Facebook page like **X Arts** for a porno site.”

He dives into somewhat a trance as he explains how he wound up creating his latest 3 painting acrylic series titled, Project X. This highly symbolic and personal series is dedicated to Xolani's 12-year-old cousin, Busisiwe Mkweta, who he describes as an “intelligent angel” and because of how much she and the art means to him, he further says, he will not be selling any of the pieces from Project X.

Many of the elements in the paintings are set against his spiritual backdrop.

The ride begins with the first painting of the three, ***The Crowning*** which communicates Busisiwe Mkweta falling into herself from birth and throughout her growth. Xolani tells this story through the crown and the amethyst which he says represents enlightenment and clarity for Busi. This painting also happens to be his favorite in the series and X speaks of how he's close to his cousin: “When her mother went into labour, I helped her out and called everyone including the ambulance, I became attached to Busisiwe then. I just hope that she will decipher these paintings and the messages I'm sending to her”.

***3ther(Ether)*** follows suit, where X depicts Busi’s face with a moon on it- showing the concept of consciousness as a natural step that is central to falling into oneself. The numeric “3” in ***Ether*** represents “embodying the daughter, mother and grandmother” for her, which also happen to be dear to him since he was brought up in a family led by strong women. Xolani says: “As much as I want her to own her being, I want her to share whatever gift she possesses because if you are wise and you don't share that wisdom, it dies inside of you and the world is deprived of it”. He says he wants Busisiwe to learn how to always share her gift with everyone around her.

Most of the elements, X uses are reflective of his own personal character, like the idea of being One with the Self and serenity- and he hits the bull’s eye with his depiction of smoke leaving a pot on fire to give birth to jellyfishes, which too are symbolic of serenity.

The last part of the series is ***Purple Indica***- where X portrays the final stage of growing into self through substituting the brain with the moon to show how the brain functions as a satellite of your being and the outgrowths of the tree in the moon being the ultimate flourishing of female energy.

This is one of this surrealist’s central theme- embracing female energy through what he calls Feminism Revised. “I think women have the answer to creation, in both ways and we need to revise our take on feminism. It can't just be a one dimensional approach but it must be wholistic, feminism is more than just about landing women work, women aren't tools” Xolani tells us. He says his idea on the divinity of women comes from being raised in a family of strong-willed women and thinks visual art can be used as a tool to advance social justice. He also said: “Painting is an out of body experience and has always been used to build humanity, of course with the occasional thought that we just splatter paint around”. He also mentions how he is still learning to acknowledge art as medium for achieving a greater purpose and creating conversation around daily struggles and joys as well. But because he's a shy character, he has tapped into sculpting masks that he wears at exhibitions, he numbers them from 1 to 10, and 1(the Feminist) was debuted with Project X- “1 praises the paintings and educates people about them, I find that it makes it easier and more interesting for people to interact with the paintings in that way” X continues. He chooses particularly the count to 10 because like his name “X”- the letter for 10. It symbolizes a compounded number and Xolani is a strong believer in the power of quality, “just as the artists I feature, I always think that everything done by people working together is great, it drives balance and growth and I ultimately want to embody the best of both the material and spiritual world and want that to reflect in the work I do” X explains.

This Central University of Technology Fine Art student, embodies serenity and quite interesting complexities when it comes to his thought processes as an artist. They come gushing out when he explains his love for surrealism and how it fits his fall into his spirit and the trip of translating that onto a canvas. Xolani says nothing is more *fun* than being able to be experimental and exaggerated while painting something sentimental because that mirrors his interaction with the world and how it inspires him, he continues to say: “other artists like Da Vinci and Van Gogh, drive me, but it's in people, in everyday life that I am inspired”. Mkweta plans to follow sculpting and creating ceramics for selling, freelance and with almost an absent mind he adds: “finish school, travel and hide from the world” when we wrap up our chat with the masked man with the brush.