

Isabell Villacis

Artist Statement

I have a precise and intricate style that can be seen in both my acrylic and digital paintings. I have been creating art most of my life and am always happy to share my talents with others. When creating my compositions, I call upon my observations and experiences to create insightful pieces to help anyone navigate the travails they face in daily life. I tend to work quickly, in the moment, using whatever inspiration strikes me.

I want to communicate to people what I feel inside as an artist, but sometimes I can't find the words when I talk. Through my artwork, I create my own language. Sometimes this is communicated by the colors that I use. Red means power, yellow means happy, blue is sad, black is negativity, and white is clearing of the mind, to name a few. I try to infuse each painting with meaning. Each element symbolizes or speaks to something important to me or to the message I want to convey with the piece.

Art brings me joy, and I hope to bring that to others through my art. When people view my work, I want them to feel empowered to follow their dreams, no matter what happens or what challenges they come up against. I embedded positive messages and mantras into some of my paintings to serve as an extra reminder to preserve and be persistent, and remember where there is a will there is a way. I want my art to remind people that if you want something go for it, and little by little, one step at a time you will make your way to achieving it.

I created these paintings at the Arts Access Program at Matheny, a fine art program for people with disabilities. I feel very fortunate to be part of this wonderful program. The professional team I'm working with is wonderful. I work closely with the program's facilitators, who are professional artists trained to assist me and the other artists in the program with neutrality and without preconceptions. I do as much as I can by with my own hands to create my art and

then direct the facilitator for everything else. It's a process that demands a constant trust and respect between myself and the facilitator. They believe in me, and I believe in myself as an artist and as a person.

I think it is important to believe in yourself; first, second, and third, believe in your abilities. Follow your work as an artist, and value yourself as a human being. Because your work is worth a lot. But remember, the people around you can help to inspire you, ground you, and lift you up. In the life of an artist, it makes a difference when you appreciate your peers and your supporters. It makes you push forward even more and grow as an artist. When I create art, I can be myself, be the person I truly am.

Isabell Villacis

Bio

Born on October 3, 1979, weighing only one pound and with severe cerebral palsy, Isabell Villacis has not had an easy life. Thanks to her mother Ana Villacis who is also her caretaker, she has overcome many obstacles. With no use of her legs and minimal use of her hands, Isabell has been an inspiration and an encouragement to anyone who has the good fortune to meet her.

Since age 16, Isabell's interests were inclined to art. Through her art she has found freedom and the ability to express her feelings, emotions and thoughts. She graduated from Lakeview School in Edison, New Jersey at the age of 21. Since then she has been participating with a group of children and adults with similar challenges. The non-profit programs offer alternatives to people with severe physical challenges and a way they can express themselves through their artistic talents.

Isabell has excelled in many art forms particularly in acrylic painting. She also makes abstract music, sculptures, photos and some graphic design. She enjoys showing her art, and is always ready to display her work. She has participated in many art shows in the State of New Jersey at the Human Services Department office in Trenton, in the Princeton Museum, the Kessler Rehabilitations Institute, as well as in Paris, France. Besides her multiple talents, she also has a kind heart and is currently collaborating with a group of Hispanic artists in New Jersey.

Isabell has been a member of Foundation Manos A La Ayuda, Inc. (Hands Help Hands) since the organization was established in 2006. This organization sponsored art exhibits in 2006 and 2007, 2008 and 2009 for Isabell. In June 2009, in partnership with the Boiling Bank of Rutherford, Isabell's work was on display at the bank and at the office of Foundation Manos A La Ayuda.

She is also the inspiration for a scholarship fund called "The Picasso Dream" sponsored by Foundation Manos A La Ayuda, Inc. This fund provides scholarships each year to students graduating from high school with physical or learning disabilities who want, like Isabelle, to pursue their dreams in the field of art.

In 2007, Isabell was able to fulfill one of her dreams, a visit to the Eiffel Tower in Paris. The Eiffel Tower had been one of her most precious inspirations, and the foundation for many of her paintings.

Isabelle had been part of the Arts Access Program - Matheny's Arts Access since 2011 until now. Isabell dances, paints, and creates 3-D sculptures, and is working on a book about her life as an artist.