

SCHOONY

For Tristan "Schoony" Schoonraad, one particular father-son trip was even more special than usual. He joined his dad (a famed prosthetics and set artist) on the set of Star Wars' "Return Of the Jedi," saw the Forest Moon of Endor and met legendary actor Harrison Ford all in a day.

From the age of 15 and onward, he started a mission to bring his thoughts to life. Thirty years and counting, he's still on that mission of showcasing his love of art—with the world. He started his artistic career working in film as a special effects and makeup artist. But after a friend suggested that he show his work outside of a movie set, Schoony tested that theory.

Schoony's Artistic Resume

In Schoony's first-ever exhibit, he worked alongside artists Tracey Emin and Peter Blake in 2008. He shared his most pioneering street art exhibitions at Mutate Britain's "One Foot in the Groove" in London. Later on, Schoony also participated in a global exhibit in Maddox Gallery and quickly built up a fanbase.

Inspiration Behind Schoony's Art

Born in 1974 in Hertfordshire, England, Schoony has a knack for bringing life to simple pieces of material such as bronze, gold, fiberglass and liquid resin, ABS plastic, and silicone. He's also tested the water with 3D scanning and printing. His portfolio consists of life-like pieces such as "Bruiser," humor-meets-science pieces in "Magic Moons NFT," controversy (guns and middle fingers in "Magic Moons NFT"), purity in "Shield Rose," violence in "Where the War Things Are," current events in "Riot-Robot" and pieces that get onlookers talking like "Skull Mickey." He doesn't always work alone though. In a collaborative piece with fellow artist Nick Reynolds and rock star Pete Doherty, the life-size sculpture "For Pete's Sake" was made. In the piece, Doherty resembles Jesus on a cross, depicting challenges he faced in 2008 after spending 14 weeks in jail for breaching a probation order. "For Pete's Sake" hung in a 200-year-old central London church as part of the show "Stations of the Cross," a curation by Ben Moore. Additionally, he's worked for Woodbury House Contemporary Art for several years. While many of his pieces are special to him for a variety of reasons, "Boy Soldier" is one of the most personal. The boy holding a grenade and wearing a tin helmet is not just any child. The boy that the statue is modeled after was his then-7-year-old nephew (in 2009), the same age as child soldiers who fought in the War in Afghanistan and the War in Iraq. Bare-chested and ill-prepared for battle, Schoony chose this look on purpose, confirming, "It is a future I do not want for my nephew, and I think this piece is able to bring that to life."

Another piece that is close to his heart: "Butterfly Kiss." The sculpture, a life cast of him and his wife, was created to show "how fleeting and short-lived love can be and to appreciate the time you have."

When his daughter was born in 2015, Schoony started to ponder more on repression, fear and sexism. Similar to "Boy Soldier," the girl in the "Bruiser" piece looks ready to fight—with boxing gloves on instead of holding a grenade. But her fighting stance doesn't match her facial expressions. Both the boy and girl can fight, but do they want to? These are the pieces that get his supporters talking about the art and what's beyond the story.

What's Next for Schoony?

Schoony is anything but a one-dimensional artist. Whether it's special effects, facial and body makeup, sculptures, or paintings, the British artist is a fan of various types of self-expression. Another area of interest for him is fashion. He completed a three-way collaboration with the fashion brand Dark Circle. While paintings and statues stay put in museums and living rooms, he quips, "It's pretty cool seeing your work walking down the street."

