

VoyageLA

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## Meet Forrest Kirk

LOCAL STORIES



Today we'd like to introduce you to Forrest Kirk.

**Every artist has a unique story. Can you briefly walk us through yours?**

Since as early as I can remember, I've always drawn, colored, and painted. As a kid growing up in the inner city, I would draw and paint imaginary worlds and lose myself in my imagination. As a teen, I attended a graphic art high school and used my creativity in graffiti and silk screen printing. Then as a young adult, I moved to Paris, France and attend an atelier and painted on the streets of the Montmartre arts district.

After moving back to the states, I wanted some stability so I finished college and started working as a software engineer. After working for over 10 years in engineering, I had a near death experience on a drive home from work. At that

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point, I decided that life was too short, and I decided to pursue my artwork full time, instead of the weekend hobby it had become.

**Please tell us about your art.**

My art is my lexicon. It's the world as I see it using paint or other mediums to articulate it. I create paintings and sculptures that get beyond the distractions to capture a subject's essence. Some of my subjects are quite beautiful, others less so. My goal is to inspire those who see my work to look more carefully at the world around them.

I paint figurative and abstract together in a seamless way. My art is often described as moving or emotional, deep and thoughtful, inspirational and even important.

I work very quickly and intuitively reacting to each stroke as if the canvas is speaking to me directly. I paint layer after layer sometimes exposing what is underneath in order to create portals of light and mystery. I paint mostly with my brushes although I have an arsenal of tools at my disposal. As a black male, there has always been this stigma of us being primal or gorillas so, in each of my paintings, I use some amount of gorilla glue. It's my way of taking the negative gorilla connotation and making something beautiful out of it in each work.

**What do you think is the biggest challenge facing artists today?**

The biggest challenge for an artist today is being true to yourself while surviving in a commercial market. Finding financial security in your career without sacrificing your true voice.

**How or where can people see your work? How can people support your work?**

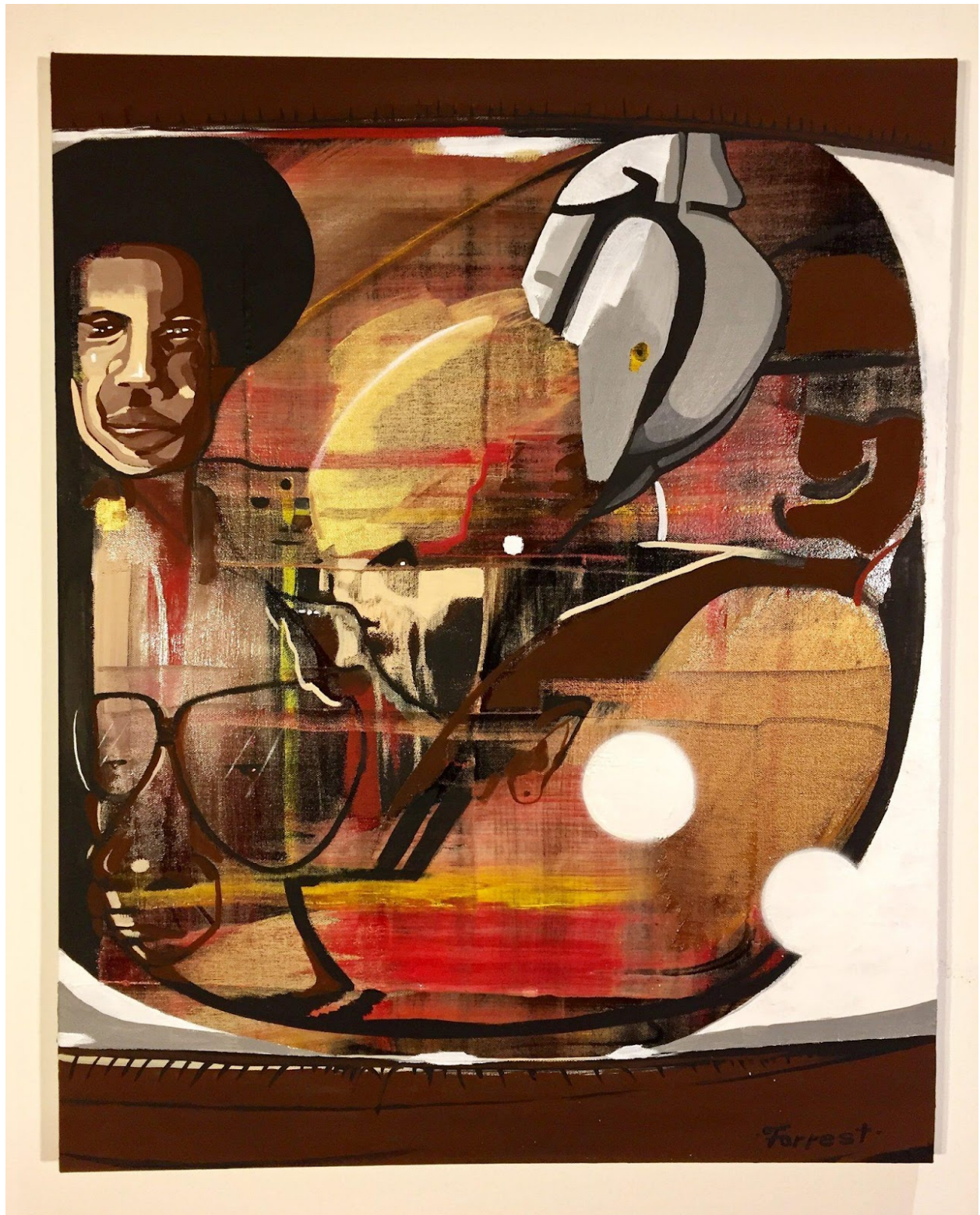
People can see my work at E.C. Lina Gallery here in LA. I'm also regularly in group shows around LA and other cities. I have group shows coming up at the Torrance Art Museum (Jan 19- March 9), Monte Vista Project and the MOCA Marin (in the bay area) to name a few. I usually keep my Instagram and website updated so follow me to see and support my work.

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**Image Credit:**

The personal photo was taken by Claudia Fuentes.

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