

# ARTIST FEATURE

## *Michael Summers*

"This world is but a canvas to our imagination." There are few artists who truly take Henry David Thoreau's statement to heart more so than the up-and-coming artist Michael Summers.

Known for his contemporary acrylic paintings, Michael Summers draws upon icons of popular culture and plays upon the viewers' expectations and conventions. His art is whimsical yet thought-provoking, nonsensical yet familiar. His imagination reminds us of the possibility that abounds through art, and the opportunity that it provides to convey a distinct message. He finds influence in various areas of popular culture. "I'm a giant fan of movies, old animated television, Japanese animation, comic books from the sixties, seventies, up to now; anything plastic and shiny," he laughs. Oftentimes, "I don't have a set idea in mind all of the time, but with that said, there are recurring themes throughout my work."

Lately, his thoughts have turned to ideas of faith and family as an underlying theme in his paintings. As he draws from many cultural influences, he begins to recognize how these cultures relate to each other, and are very much alike in many ways. "I was a theology minor in college. [...] I'm fascinated by every culture and how so many things just overlap. It's the same thing with the family structure." In an age where people have access to information on a global level, he loves to explore the similarities that connect us all.

Recently named the poster artist for the San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival, Michael Summers has been hard at work to create a painting that will embody the anticipation and excitement surrounding the annual festival. He says, "It has been such an honor. I love food and wine! My mother is Italian. I grew up with an Italian family. Everybody was in the kitchen." For Summers, the event marks a poignant moment in his career as an artist. The San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival allows him to commemorate a beloved event and pay tribute to San Diego. He loves being able to share what he does with other people, commenting, "If I have created an image



"Seeking Balance" Fine Art Limited Edition 18" x 12"

that speaks to somebody differently than to somebody else, then I can say that I have been successful."

In the development process, the poster's design fueled a host of ideas for further paintings, and has led the artist to paint his latest masterpiece, "Seeking Balance", available for the first time as a fine art limited edition. Michael Summers's paintings are shown at Exclusive Collections Galleries, where he makes frequent appearances to paint live and meet his collectors.