

# Jewels of the Lost Artist

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By, Jephthahlyn Rios-Rodriguez

After being addicted to drugs since the age of 11, Jose Rios is clean and premiering his art work this March in New York.

As a young man Jose dedicated his life to two passions, drugs and art. His artistic talents were recognized and awarded. However, his life as a heroin addict remained secret to all those around him.

As Jose grew older he let his passion to paint die, while drugs began to take over his life. Jose attempted to live a normal life with his girlfriend and daughter while he continued to keep his heroin addiction, hidden. Soon the drugs overpowered him, leaving him homeless and alone.

Jose lived on the streets for 10 years. My life was focused on being on a constant high, Jose explains. His only hope each night was that he would be allowed to live another day and get high all over again. After countless trips to jail and one failed attempt at getting off drugs, Jose finally found the strength he needed to get clean.

While incarcerated he contacted his family and revealed the secret he had held for so long. With the support and love of his family and friends, Jose left his life of drugs behind him and turned to his art to gain an inner strength. Although he was apprehensive to pick up a paintbrush, he was overcome by the need to express what he had held in for so long.

Jose was thrilled to discover that his talent had improved. I still had it, and it felt incredible, Jose found that his painting would be his new high. Jose smiles as he explains, I turn up the music and dance when I paint, and it makes me feel alive. Unlike the addictions of his past Jose can share and take pride in his new high. In fact, Jose has used his art to mend his relationship with his daughter.

After years of being apart from her father, José's daughter, Jephthahlyn Rios-Rodriguez, saw his art as a way to peek into her father's mind. I was able to know him, through the images he put on canvas. I asked questions and enter the world that had been kept from me. Since graduating from the State University of New York at New Paltz, Jephthahlyn has organized José's first solo show. On March 10th from 4pm-6pm at Gelabert Studio (255 West 86th Street, off Bway) Jose Rios will be holding a reception to open his first solo show.

The exhibition is titled Jewels of the lost Artist and features an anthology of José's life. Through his art, Jose explores his past, present, and future. He hopes that the show will allow him to invite others in to his world. Visitors can escape the security of their own lives, and find themselves overwhelmed by the chaos of José's past. Furthermore, they can take time to speak to the artist and explore the possibilities of his future.

