

Be true to your culture. Only you can find that path. Respect cultures, learn history, make an impact to change the future.

-Estria



ESTRIA

FAQ

When did you start painting?

We started in '84. My friends were breakers and we saw graffiti on things like the Jelly Bean album, and in the movies Breakin', Beatstreet, Wild Style, Style Wars. Our first piece was with an airbrush and a can of compressed air. We climbed into a canal and tried to airbrush the word 'fresh' on raw concrete. People stopped to watch, no one thinking it was illegal. We got to the 'R' when the air ran out. It got us juiced enough to get spray paint and try it again. That was the beginning of a life-long love affair.

Where are you from?

I'm originally from Hawaii and have been in the Bay Area for half my life.

How did you get your name?

Back then everyone was taking a word for their tag name, but I wanted a name. For a month I played with letters I liked until I came up with Estria. Years later a man told me estría, with the accent on the 'i', means stretch mark in Portuguese. He said the Latin root was 'stria' meaning to stretch. He said it was a good name, as in stretching your mind.

Who has inspired you?

Crayone TWS inspired me to believe that I could paint anything with spray paint. He and Risque TWS taught me how to outline my pieces very cleanly. Raevyn TWS taught me to explore anything and everything and to make them into letters. He taught me to have fun inventing new styles of lettering. Other than that there was no one to teach us back then. I learned a ton from Barron Storey on visual communicating, techniques, and being creative. Going to the YMCA as a teen taught me to envision a better world and how to work to make that happen.

How do you come up with ideas?

I pay attention to everything. Meditation and martial arts are great. Dreams do a lot for me. Painting with others is good for sharing ideas. Graffiti is very collaborative and you learn from others. Studying geniuses and masters in other fields and cultures is very good too. Having fun and being in a playful, stress-free state is good for the idea flow. Basically, I feel like a gate and the ideas flow through me, from the universe/higher being.

Why do you work with youth?

I was taught at an early age to give back to the community. Working with youth reshapes the world.

Why is it important to create murals for the community?

When you paint for the community you speak on issues that impact us. You can shift the social consciousness on these issues. You can empower and galvanize people. You literally can save lives. You can bring beauty and joy to an otherwise bleak wall and neighborhood. A friend of mine says you should always leave things better than when you found them, including relationships. Burners can build relationships and community pride.

Why do you live in the Bay?

It's gorgeous, it's the progressive capital of the US, and it's a good place to be if you're a conscious artist.

What do you want people to know about your work?

It's fun and it's always changing. As I grow, my pieces get better.

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