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BASIC Profile || Louis Carreon Finds Peace in Art After Prison

by **Morgan Mantilla**

After being incarcerated in federal prison for drug related crimes Los Angeles based artist Louis Carreon (<https://www.louiscarreon.com/>) found peace while illustrating his artistic road map through a cleansing of his soul and mind. That experience led to him overcoming addiction and immersing himself in art.

Recently commissioned to paint a private 12-seater jet (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkswSxahwdM>) in collaboration with Landmark Aviation for the famed Art Basel, Louis is continually reinforcing the essential power of art. His working studio in Los Angeles, The Drip Factory (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-drip-Factory/358347741043245>), is the quintessential landscape for Louis'

creations. With known celebrity collectors like Aaron Paul, Collin Farrell, and Paris Hilton.

BASIC had an online conversation with Louis, who shared with us his BASIC point of view.



(<http://basic-magazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/louis-carreon-basic-magazine-.jpg>)

BASIC: Tell me about the experience of finding peace through artistic expression.

With all the stress in the world when I'm painting that is my place that nobody can take from me. It doesn't matter who you are or what you have if you are poor or rich. **When I'm in my zone its pure freedom including from myself.**

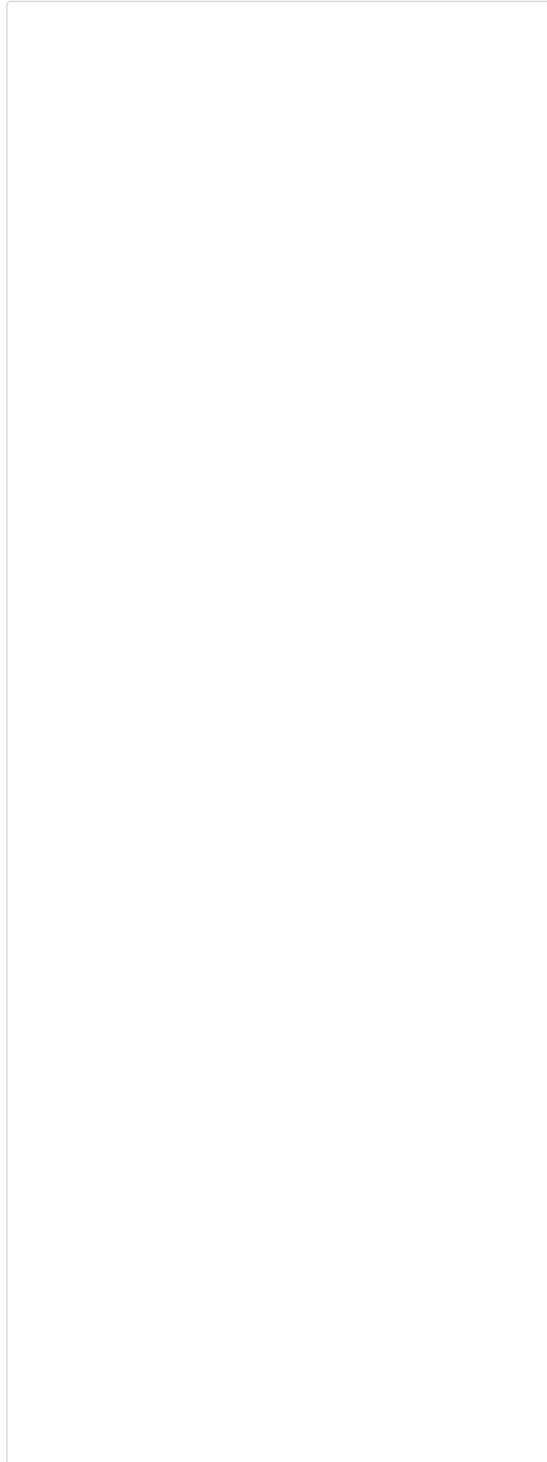
<https://www.instagram.com/p/BUDW7xkjl5/?taken-by=louiscarreon>

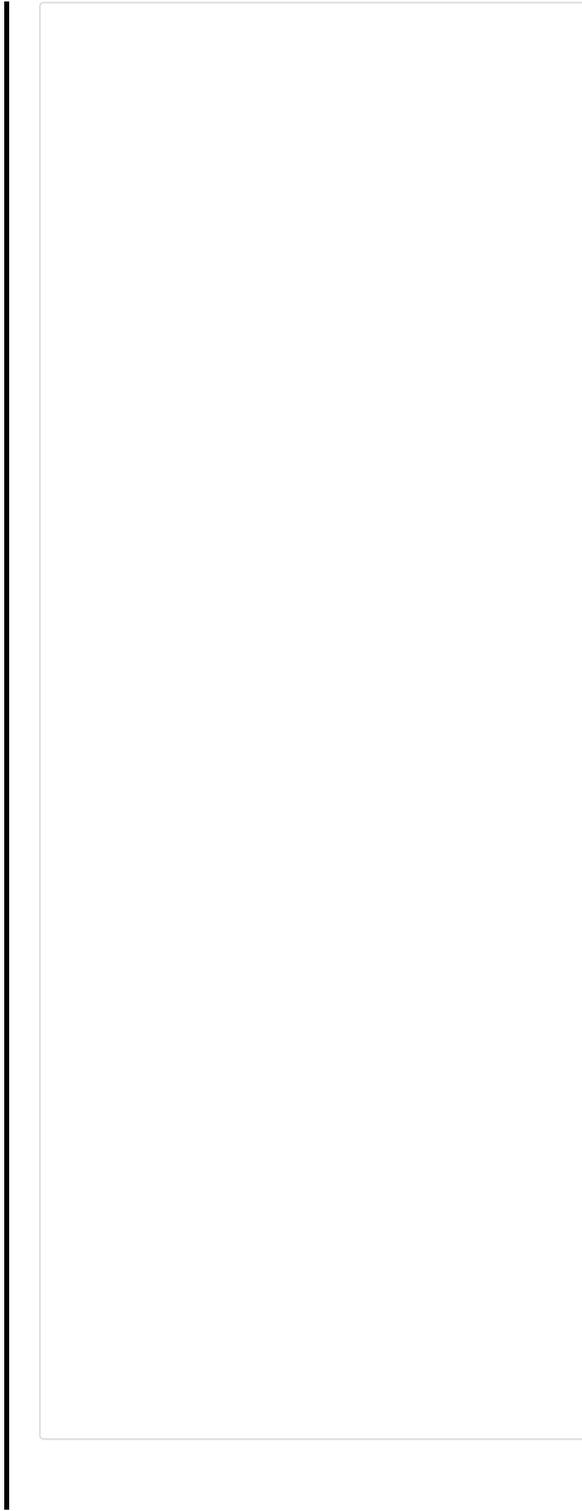
BASIC: How did the experience of being incarcerated influence you as an artist?

In prison, you don't get to use paints, so there's a lot of pen time. I was drawing in sketchbooks every day, learning different penmanship and fonts and reading about art. The whole time I was in prison, I was sketching, but on a different scale. I was plotting my road map as I watched artists gain a little bit of gravity at that time.

BASIC: How would you describe your creative process? Where does your inspiration come from?

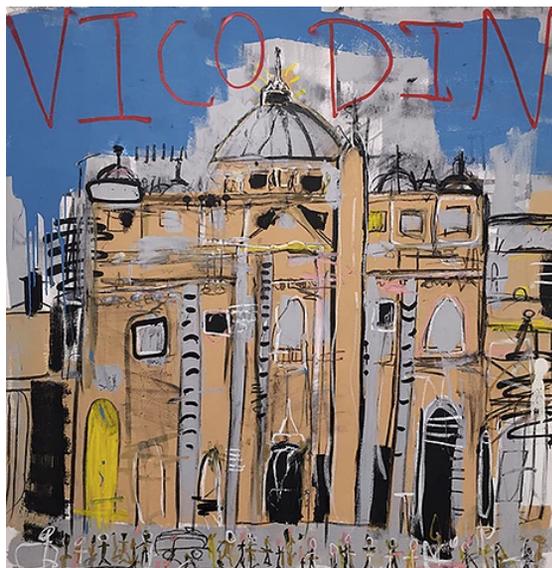
Painting was always an outlet for me, and I only painted when I was in a dark place—which was a lot, because I was a drug addict. Now, I have to say my life is pretty amazing and blessed and I'm very fortunate. Some days I don't want to paint; the sun is out and it's beautiful and I just don't want to. But it's a job now. The process is still reaching deep within and finding it. Some days it doesn't come, some days it does. I roll with those punches. I'm lucky to be able to do what I do.





BASIC: Prior to immersing yourself in your art, I understand you struggled with addiction. Is art an escape for you? A form of self-expression? How did it play a role in your rehabilitation?

Drugs were such a big part of my life for so long that naturally they had a effect on my way of life which in turn affected my work. While spiraling down the streets of addiction I would always tell myself I needed to be in a dark place to create work that had a certain feel. With that said, I am a true believer that **nothing affects your work more than life experience itself** so be aware of your decisions and how they affect your mental state.



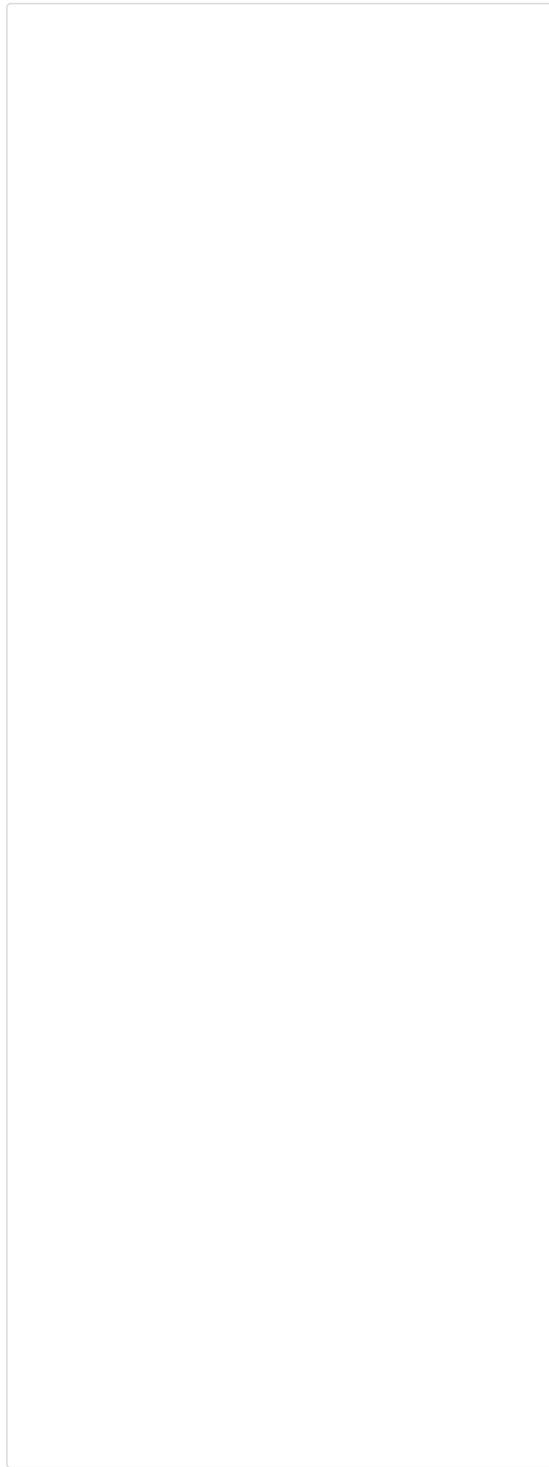
(<http://basic-magazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Screen-Shot-2017-04-26-at-10.27.14-AM.png>)

BASIC: How did you choose painting as your primary medium? Have you experimented with other mediums as well?

Whether it's been surfing or skating or graffiti or rap I have always been flowing. My medium has always been in a flow. Painting has always been my release and I have built an audience around it and it keep flowing.

BASIC: Is there anything you've been too afraid to explore in your art?

I don't see boundaries or limitations in art.



BASIC: Your paintings seem to be very diverse, taking inspiration from cubism, German expressionism, and street art. How have other artists influenced your own work?

Appropriation of inspiration in art or any other area of life is pervasive and expressed through everyone. Our perceptions are shaped by what influences us. The cross section where my freedom is influenced but not imprisoned is how I would describe other artists influence on my work.



(<http://basic-magazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/IMG-20170419-WA0002.jpeg>)

BASIC: Has being a part of an artistic community been important to your success?

As a human we all want to be accepted and feel part of our community, with that being said **I paint for freedom and I don't consider anything else.**

BASIC: Who are the local contemporary artists that you find most exciting? Why?

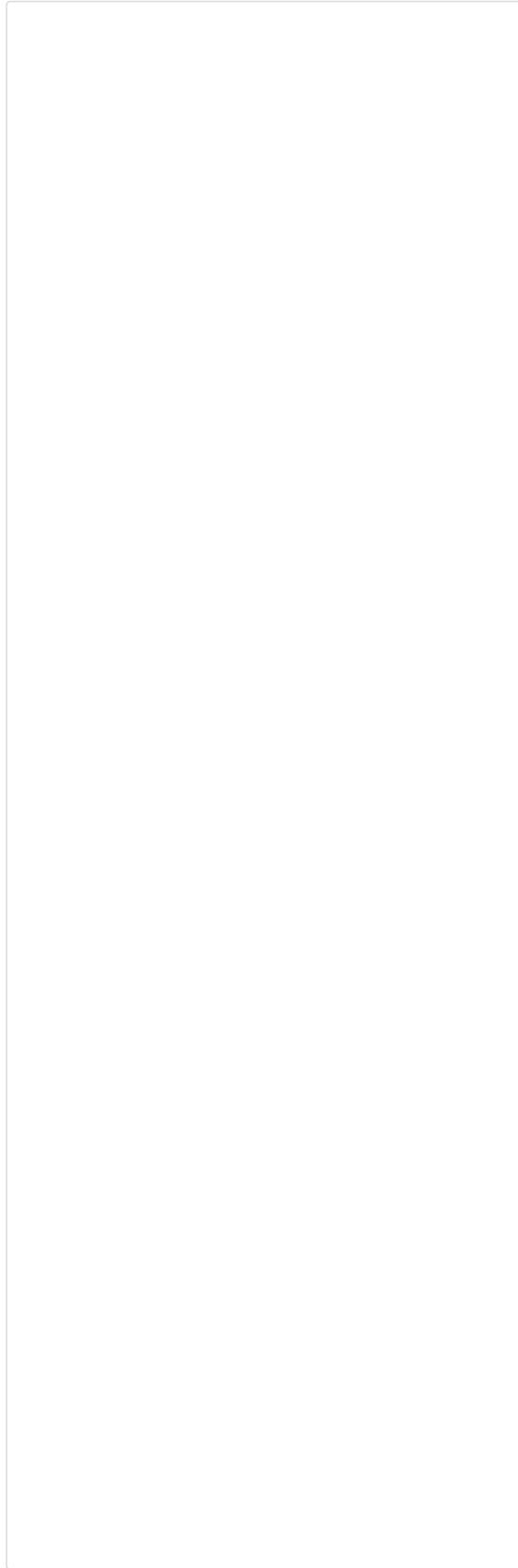
I'm not really into today's art, I paint for freedom.

BASIC: How would you describe Los Angeles to someone who has never been here before?

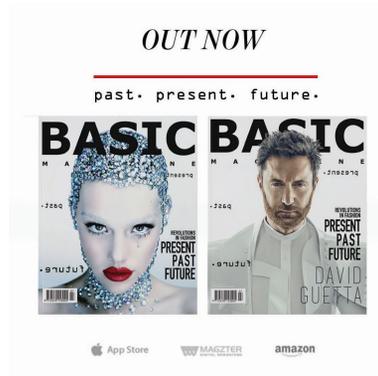
A place of fantasy, beauty, envy, a place with no limits and you can become a super hero. The city of angels, it's my home.

BASIC: What would you like people to take away from your art?

A sense of freedom, honesty and feeling alive. Life has no limitations.



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