

## The Urban art of Darvin Vida

Judith van Praag

Pull out your calendar and make sure you save October 23 for ARTSetc, the exciting fall party that will take place at Pier 69, home of the Port of Seattle, at 2711 Alaskan Way. Yes, it's on the waterfront and an imaginative space to begin with. Like a ship's bough, the structure juts out over the water. Quite something in itself and already filled with art, the building will house even more creativity on Saturday October 23. Expect bands, nosh, fun and an auction to benefit the International Examiner.

Among the local artists and crafts people, the Vida Bros. will showcase their work. A great opportunity to "meet the artists". I already did, catching them in action at Wing Luke Asian Museum as they were getting ready to paint the town, eh, no, a couple of walls.

The name of Darvin & Hoven Vida's tee-shirt business is "OVERSTAND".

"As opposed to understand," Darvin said, his wife Tracy nodding in agreement.

The modern meaning of this old word: to interpret too much. Example: "Don't overstand me; I only mean what I said."

You'll find the "OVERSTAND" tees at Urban Outfitters, 1513 5th Avenue and at "GOODS" a shoe store at 1112 Pike on Capitol Hill.

Wordplay is understandably part of Darvin & Hoven's life. They're members of the Seattle Hip Hop scene; urban artists, painting murals, not in the street, but inside buildings. Their parents were inventive with names as well, that -V- in Darvin's name is no typo and thanks to ancestral names Honesto and Benito they came up with Hoven.

Right now you can check out the brothers' work at the Wing Luke Asian Museum, 407 Seventh Avenue South. The museum's curators erected walls especially for the latest adventure in their "New Dialogues" program. Starting with Darvin & Hoven and

another crew member, break dancer Justin Fellores, the museum will be the home to three rotations of artists creating murals.

Until October 14, when the opening party takes place at the museum, you can admire the spray can compositions of these first three guys. After their work is taken down (or the boards painted white again) another team spray paints the wall, followed by a third group. The "New Dialogues" show will run into December.

Looking through Darwin's large black sketch books, filled with the exaggerated shapes of cartoon characters, I notice his clear understanding of anatomy, albeit often exaggerated; images of his wife make her blush. Early creations are pencil sketches traced by pen, the lead marks erased. Lately he's gone lazy, Darwin explained, drawing immediately in permanent ink.

If you ask me there's nothing lazy about this versatile guy. He holds an Interdisciplinary Visual Arts degree from UW and was responsible for lip syncing the French trailer version of "Rug Rats". Thinking of his affair with animation art, he chuckled, pursing his lips to mouth the French words he remembered from his college days.

Darvin's a perfectionist and likes clear black lines surrounding the color-fill of his images; if not satisfied, he'll mask sections to spray clearer lines. A style that could take too long for a graffiti artist working out in the street.

Darvin's tagging days are far behind him though (and besides he only tagged when he lived in California).

"I'm too old for that, that's for the younger guys."

Instead he spray paints murals on legal walls inside buildings and works in acrylics on canvas.

"I never had training in the fine art of painting," he said with an apologetic smile, "I paint the contours, then fill in the spaces with [acrylic] color, even when working on canvas."

At ARTSetc he may be showing those "smaller" works (he spread his arms wide to show their size) and the "OVERSTOOD" tees. And

who knows, perhaps the whole crew will show and you'll get to see and hear some Hip Hop.

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