

RAWVISION

O U T S I D E R A R T B R U T



RV102

SUMMER 2019

\$16.00 £8.00 €15.00



SULTON ROGERS • STROBL • AZMITIA • RAYMOND COINS • SAWADA • VAN GENK

BLAZING A TRAIL OF MEMORIES

Through his painting, Oscar Azmitia has found a way both to hold onto memories and to keep a version of his collected objects

PAMALA ROGERS



The Genealogy of the Messiah, 2013, acrylic on used embroidery hoop, 12 x 12 in. / 30.5 x 30.5 cm. All images courtesy: Pure Vision Arts

Oscar Azmitia had a difficult childhood. The youngest of three, he was born in Manhattan in 1978 and raised in Queens, New York. From the age of seven until he was 18, he was home-schooled by his mother after a very difficult time in the public school system. He found being in the company of other children very stressful, and he was teased and bullied for being different and

immature. He felt misunderstood and confused, and began to have terrifying nightmares which persisted for years.

Azmitia withdrew from the outside world and retreated into his imagination. Drawing became an important vehicle to help him cope with feelings of isolation, anxiety and depression. He sketched prolifically

GOODHAVEN HIGH

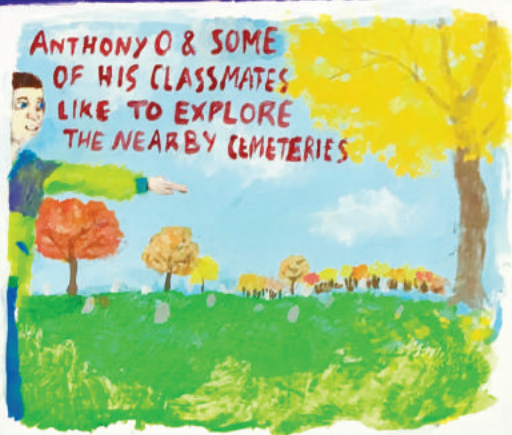
11TH GRADE
JUNIOR YEAR
A.D. 1994–1995

THE STORY CONTINUES HERE.

THIS IS THE BACK SIDE OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING WHERE STUDENTS PLAY BALL.



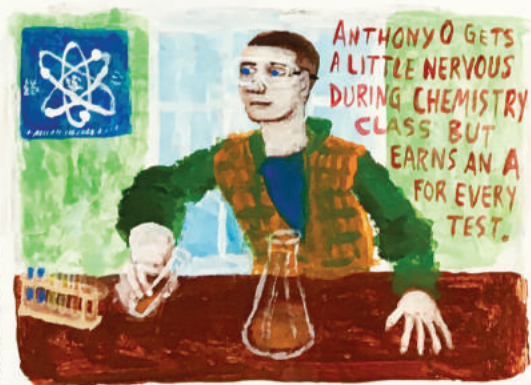
ANTHONY O & SOME OF HIS CLASSMATES LIKE TO EXPLORE THE NEARBY CEMETERIES.



FOR PHYS ED, ANTHONY O TRAINS AS A MALE GYMNAST.



ORLANDO OFFERS ANTHONY O AND OTHER CLASSMATES A CIGARETTE PUFF. ANTHONY O REFUSES.



ANTHONY O GETS A LITTLE NERVOUS DURING CHEMISTRY CLASS BUT EARNS AN A FOR EVERY TEST.



AFTER YEARS OF MISCHIEF AND BULLYING, BAD BARNEY AND EVIL ERIC GET IN TROUBLE WITH THE POLICE!

Azmitia *16

Good Haven High, 2016, acrylic on wood, 10 x 13 in. / 25 x 33 cm

and, influenced by comic books and GI Joe, often drew superheroes and cartoon characters. Eventually, he moved on to creating storyboards featuring his own original characters and texts. History was another favourite subject for Azmitia, and he enjoyed staging elaborate battle scenes using three-dimensional paper drawings. Religion would also become a key theme in

his work – his family members were devout, churchgoing Christians and, as part of his daily education, he was required to memorise biblical stories and scriptures from a Baptist home-schooling curriculum that his mother used. This had a lasting impact and, as he matured, he began to incorporate his faith and extensive knowledge of The Bible into his art.

JAMMIN' with JAMES



THIS IS BASED ON
THE BOOK OF
JAMES
THE HOLY BIBLE.
THIS JAMES IS
BELIEVED TO BE
JESUS' BROTHER.
(JACOB 1:19)



GREETINGS TO THE TWELVE
TRIBES OF THE DISPERSION.



AFTER 1:2-18



THE TESTING OF OUR FAITH



THE DANGERS OF
DOUBLE-MINDEDNESS

THE
CROWN
OF
LIFE



PROMISED TO
THOSE
WHO
ENDURE



ALL GO



1:27

PURE REL

VISITING ORPHA



AND NOT BEI
OF THIS WO

CHAPTER 2:14



Jammin with James,
2013, acrylic on wood,
20 x 16 in./ 51 x 41 cm

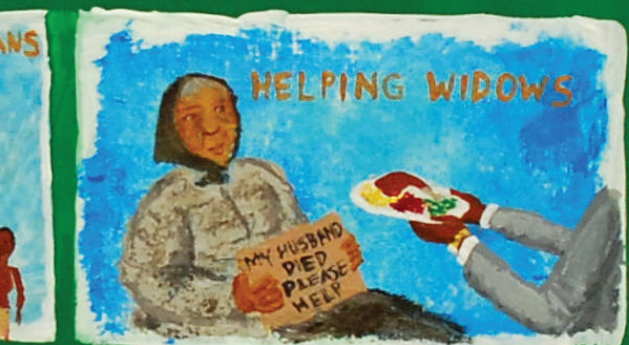
GOOD GIFTS ARE FROM GOD.



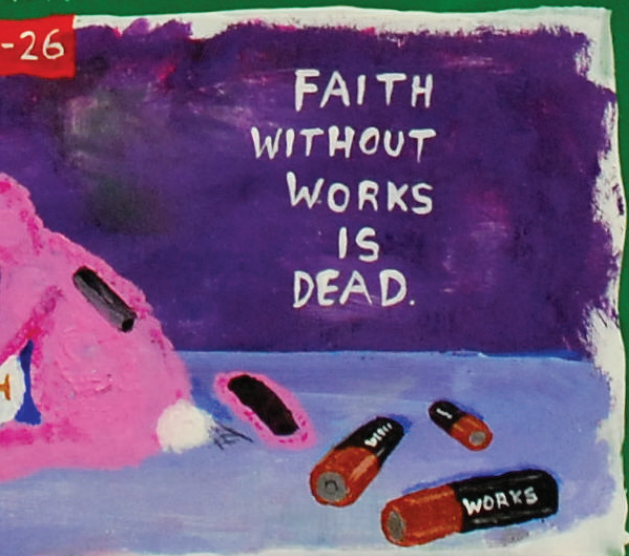
WHAT IS PURE RELIGION?



RELIGION IS....



STAINED BY THE CORRUPTION OF THE WORLD.



-26



TRUE FAITH DENOUNCES SIN & OBEYS GOD.



TRUE FAITH IN JESUS AS SAVIOR

REPENTANCE FROM SIN

OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WILL



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO VISIT A BIBLE-BELIEVING CHURCH WHERE THE HOLY SPIRIT IS AT WORK. MAY GOD BLESS YOU AS YOU SEEK TO FURTHER YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH.

- OSCAR A. (oscarant316@hotmail.com)



The Six Days of Creation, 2014,
enamel on record album,
12 x 12 in. / 30.5 x 30.5 cm

For many years, Azmitia had no explanation for his social difficulties. It was not only the challenge of interacting and fitting in with others but also of concentrating and staying focused. At one point, he was misdiagnosed with attention deficit disorder but, when he was 23, he was finally diagnosed with Asperger syndrome. Azmitia explains, "Because of my Asperger syndrome, it was hard for me to make friends so I developed a complex imaginary world, where I could illustrate my thoughts, feelings and memories. As an adult, my paintings are a way to express the loneliness, fear and sadness I have experienced. Humour is also important in my art and helps me get through the tough times in life. Through art, I can change the narrative of my past and become a victorious hero interested in reconciliation, instead of a person seeking revenge and being bitter. It is very important to me for my work to have a positive message and be inspirational to others." And, true to his word, he creates devotional objects, each one a meticulously created labour of love with an uplifting message of hope.

A turning point came for Azmitia in 2006, when – wanting to develop his artistic skills and interests – he

began attending Pure Vision Arts, a not-for-profit studio for artists with autism, based in New York. It gave him the opportunity to create a substantial body of work and to socialise with like-minded artists. He flourished at the studio and finally found a sense of belonging and community. The pieces he created there were intriguing, combining his knowledge of religion, biblical scriptures and elaborate texts, with his eye-catching, illustrative, comic-book style.

Azmitia subsequently created an extensive portfolio of diverse and expressive work known for its graphic quality, rich colour, attention to detail, and sense of humour. As well as reflecting his religious background, many of his paintings show his interest in nostalgia, popular culture and old New York buildings. Completely self-taught, he has a natural talent for painting and creating a sense of perspective and foreshortening.

In addition to being an artist, Azmitia is an avid collector of items such as coins, VHS tapes, record albums, scrap wood pieces, and old newspaper and magazine clippings. After being asked repeatedly by his parents to throw out some of his accumulated stash, he realised that by painting images of the items, he could



Star Wars Characters, 2016, enamel on gold dollar coins, 9 x 7 in. / 23 x 18 cm

“When life throws a lemon in your face, you grab it and make lemonade.”

preserve their memory. “When life throws a lemon in your face, you grab it, and you squeeze that lemon hard, until you make lemonade,” he says.

He also began to recycle items from his various collections and assimilate them into his work. In 2012, he first created his signature miniature paintings on objects such as coins. After some experimentation, Azmitia found that enamel paint worked best because it adhered well to metal and plastic surfaces and had a rich, glossy finish. He used very tiny brushes or toothpicks to paint minuscule details and text. Many of the materials he used were dug out from rubbish bins or discovered in secondhand shops; not only did this suit his creative and political ethos, but it also kept his expenses down.

Not long after this stage in his creative development, Azmitia’s work began to gain attention for its idiosyncratic use of materials and striking imagery. In 2013, he was awarded the Genius of Autism Award for artistic achievement by the McCarton Foundation in New York. His “Good Haven High” series was featured in the publication *The Best American Comics 2017*. The comic book-style series, painted on

cutting boards (a pun on the “board” of education), is loosely autobiographical and chronicles his personal challenges as a person on the autism spectrum in the New York public school system. Since 2014, his work has been included in group exhibitions in the Netherlands, Austria, Japan and the US, particularly in New York. He has also been a regular contributor to New York’s Outsider Art Fair for many years, most recently in 2019.

Oscar Azmitia is on a mission to turn trash into treasure and to save the planet by recycling scrap materials and giving them a second chance. By transforming records, pennies and other old, discarded objects into art, he is reducing his carbon footprint and spreading a positive message. As he does with the cast-off items, Azmitia is making something new and hopeful from his past. He has worked hard and persevered, despite the obstacles he has faced in his life. As he says: “I continue to blaze my own trail against all odds and look at me now. I am just getting started. Praise the Lord!”

Pamala Rogers is the director of Pure Vision Arts studio in New York.