

WELCOME TO A BRAND NEW COLUMN! EACH ISSUE, *AIRBRUSH ACTION* WILL PROFILE NOT ONE—BUT TWO—ARTISTS ON THE RISE.

ROBERT HOWELL, owner of Sungod Kustom Graphics in Austin, Texas, has been into painting since middle school. He recalls how his parents always encouraged creativity and got him started at an early age experimenting with traditional paints such as oils and water colors.

"The problem was," jokes Rob, "I was always too impatient to wait for the paint to dry and would work on two or three pieces at a time."



When he reached high school, he started to take painting seriously but still found the drying process stifling. Luckily for all of us, his art teacher noticed and suggested he pick up an airbrush. After that, he knew he had found his perfect creative outlet. But unlike today when you can find anything on the internet, Rob describes how "*Airbrush Action* was a lifeline" for helping him develop his new passion.

"Not living in New York or Los Angeles, I didn't have access to the latest paints and equipment and was mostly self-taught," he remembers. "Then I began attending the Airbrush Getaway Workshops and learned so much, but I never imagined that one day I would be teaching at them!"

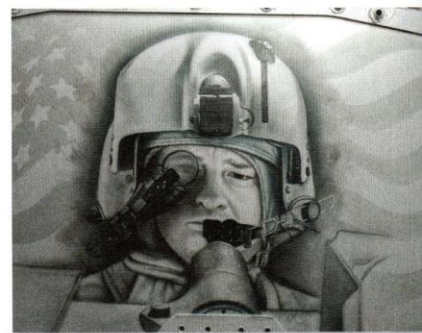
Rob has fully embraced that role and tailors his classes to help his students achieve their full creative potential. "I don't want my students to just copy what I do," he explains. "That's

why I run my class using 'elements' of what I want them to achieve. It's amazing to watch them having that creative battle with themselves, and sometimes the stuff they come up with not only surprises them, but leaves me thinking—"I wish I thought of that."

He goes on to say that it is that creativity that continues to drive the industry as much as the new advancements in paint consistency and application devices.

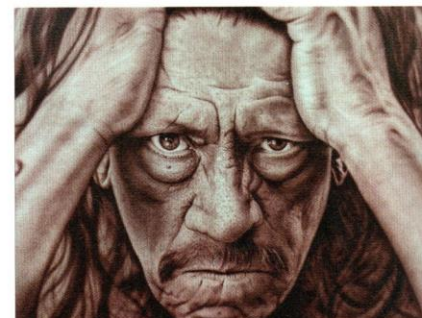
"When I started out 25 years ago, I was using guns with plastic heads that had to be replaced after each use," according to Rob. "When I think back, I don't even know how I used to paint with them."

Nowadays, Rob is able to use some of the most cutting-edge



products like solvent paints from Inspire and House of Color, as well as Iwata airbrushes and FBS tapes. But he says even with these innovative products, what hasn't changed is the importance of the artist's creativity.

"The fact is people always want what's new and different," he concludes. "The best artists provide that inspiration with their work and it trickles down to the goalie masks and motorcycle helmets the kids are wearing." ■



Is there a piece of art you've created that you are most proud of?

I've played hockey all my life and still do so I am very happy with of some of the goalie masks I've done over the years. But recently, I did a portrait of action movie star Danny Trejo that I'm proud of. Anyone who's seen Danny knows he has a very distinct and challenge face to paint.

What do you think you'd be doing if you didn't have a successful airbrush career?

Playing professional Hockey of course!

If you could have one, what would you pick as your Super Power?

Flying! Who doesn't want to fly? Just think how much easier and cheaper it would be to travel!

Rob Howell will be teaching at the Airbrush Getaway Workshops in Las Vegas, October 9-13, 2017. See page 44 for more info.