

A "Peekaso" for Album Cover Art

Contributed by Danielle Kwateng - Black College Wire
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Demont "Peekaso" Pinder works with crooner Raheem DeVaughn

The name Picasso invokes modern art, symmetrical lines and bright palettes, all trademarks of the famous art genius. Now, more than 30 years since Pablo Picasso's passing, a Washington-based painter with a similar name is gaining exposure.

Demont "Peekaso" Pinder's most popular work has been spotted on soul crooner Raheem

DeVaughn's elaborate album cover during his concerts. It has also been seen on team shirts on

VH1's "Celebrity Fit Club" and at the most recent BET awards show.

The Hilltop, the student newspaper at Howard University, sat down with Pinder to see what's next for him.

Q: Where are you from?

Demont "Peekaso" Pinder: Originally Queens. South Side Jamaica, Queens. Home of LL Cool J, Run DMC, 50, Ja'Rule.

Q. When did you start painting?

D.P.: After the twin towers dropped, I really got into the painting. [Before then] I would paint sketches. . . . I really liked drawing in pen. . . . I pretty much trained myself right out of high school.

Q. Where would you say is your base audience?

D.P.: I moved to P.G. County [suburban Prince George's County, Md.] in '89, so I've been here for a while. D.C., Virginia, Maryland.

Q. How did you hook up with Raheem?

D.P.: Me and Ra pretty much grew up together. We've known each other for 14 years. That's just another brother of mine. The way I started traveling was, he proposed the idea to me, I was working with FedEx at the time, and he was like "Yo, we need you traveling with me." To make a long story short, it was the perfect timing. It just helped my grind move a little faster. Since then, I've been traveling with him. [It] put me on a couple of tour buses, couple of planes, and I see the country. I "bring color to the stage," as he would say.

Q. Your paintings are so unique in imagery and style. Where does your inspiration come from?

D.P.: It's a combination of everything; just life in general. You never know how life might turn; you pretty much have to work accordingly.

Q. Is all your work on stage impromptu?

D.P.: Yeah, but it depends on the venue, and things going on, sometimes. I sketch it out a little, but it's impromptu.

Q. What are your projects and plans, besides traveling with Raheem?

D.P.: I worked on the BET awards during the James Brown tribute, so that was a little sign to tell everyone I'm here.

Q. Where do you see yourself in the next 10 years?

D.P.: For real, I see myself doing whatever God takes me. . . . I want to be healthy, wealthy and still doing what I do. I just want to be very established; my daughter will be 15 by then, so hopefully everyone will be secure. Maybe a gallery and a clothing line. It's no limit; sky's the limit. That's actually my daughter's name, Sky.

Danielle Kwateng, a student at Howard University, writes for the Hilltop.

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