

Rita Hisar, a contemporary look at art

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Courtesy of Rita Hisar

by Marisa Iacobucci

“My career path has definitely not been a straight line to art,” says contemporary artist Rita Hisar. Hisar, who is of Italian-Czech descent, grew up on a 50-acre farm in the rural town of Caistor Centre, Ontario until her family moved to Hamilton back in the '80s. When Hisar entered high school, she had a chance to develop her drawing technique with her art teacher, Ms. Camposilvan, and won the Art Graduate Award when she graduated. By the end of high school, she had an art portfolio and was on her way to

applying for art school when she changed her mind at the last minute. “My art teacher was so upset with me; she didn’t speak to me for two weeks,” she remembers.



Courtesy of Rita Hisar

Hisar was not abandoning art altogether—she just wanted to make a difference in the world, deciding to study political science at Brock University instead. “I chose refugee and immigration law because I saw how hard it was for my parents to come to a new country and make a new life,” she says.

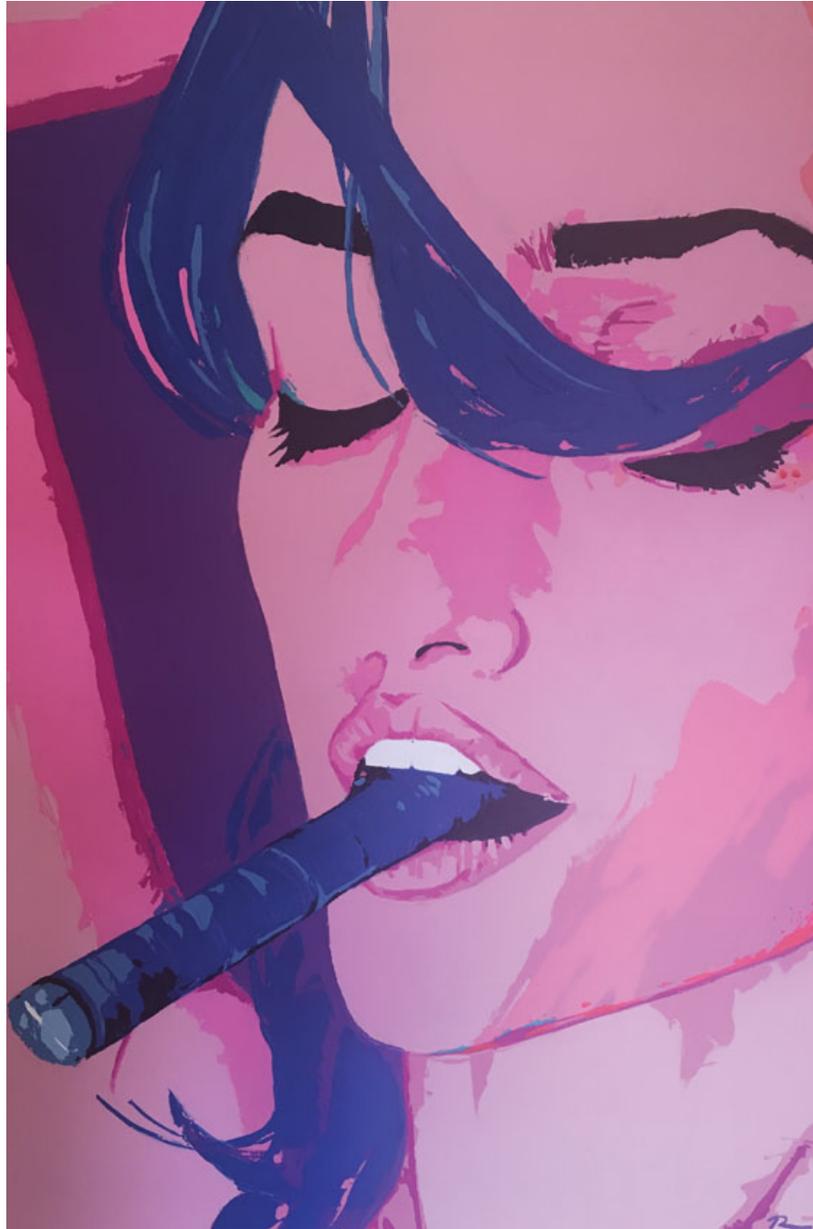
Hisar enjoyed working as a lawyer for approximately 10 years until 2010, but admits it was hard to maintain a work-life balance, especially since she had her own firm. “The work was gratifying, but very demanding, especially when you have two young boys. I decided to go back to school full time to become a teacher so I could share my love of learning with children and have time to pursue my art career.”



Courtesy of Rita Hisar

“I gave up the prestige, independence and freedom of being a self-employed lawyer, but I gained a balance my family life, the joy of sharing my love of learning with young people and I also finally found time to pursue art, my real passion,” she explains.

Today, Hisar works as a French teacher and has been working for the Toronto Catholic District School Board for seven years. She is finally able to devote more time to her art and is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts at OCAD, specializing in painting while also balancing work as a professional artist for the last two years.



Courtesy of Rita Hisar

Inspiration for her paintings comes from nature's beauty—especially in the Caribbean—as well as from pop culture, music, film, fashion, political and sports icons who have had an influence on our society. For her unique pop art and expressionist portraits, she creates an almost 3D effect by using a palette knife and acrylic paint to give them their bright, lively and textured appearance. “I don't know what a portrait is going to look like. It's a very intuitive process. I experiment, painting layers and layers of colour until it feels right,” she explains.

In addition to showcasing her work in various galleries in Toronto, Hisar's art has been around the world, including shows in London, Miami and more recently in New York City where she participated in April's ArtExpo. She also works with the Art Provo Gallery in Turks and Caicos, which represent her artwork.

Whether at an art show or via social media, Hisar loves connecting with her fans and hearing about how her paintings resonate with them. She recalls meeting former Toronto Raptor Danny Green at a Toronto Raptors Social back in February 2019. “I showed him the portrait I made of him on my phone at the party and he really liked it so of course I decided to give it to him. I was thrilled when he arranged for me to present it to him at the OVO Athletic Centre,” she says. Hisar has come full circle as an artist, finally following her heart and living her full artistic potential. “I think you know if you are an artist because it is who you are and the way you see the world. It starts when you are very young and is a lifelong process.”
