A Creative Journey from Music to Art

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Sri Lankan born, Grammy award winning musician Hussain Jiffry has stepped into another creative medium of expression using vibrant colors to create abstract art.
Words Udeshi Amarasinghe.

Featuring themes that vary from abstract shapes to musical instruments, Hussain Jiffry uses bright colors to evoke feelings of hope and happiness. Drawing inspiration from the beauty of nature, the four seasons, music, art, animals, friends, and family,

Hussain considers himself as an abstract artist.

However, Hussain’s creative journey started with music, where he became a world renowned bass player. From a very young age, Hussain was drawn to music and was surrounded by the rich traditional music from Sri Lanka, but he also listened constantly to Pop, Jazz and R & B that was on the radio. Born and raised in Colombo, as a child Hussain would always listen to his siblings playing the piano, which led to his mother buying him a piano accordion at the age of 12. Thus, Hussain’s musical journey began and by 17 years of age he was playing the electric bass.



In 1982 while performing with Galaxy in Sri Lanka, Hussain was offered to tour Europe with Fame, an R & B band, where he played keyboard for three years, and thereafter played bass for the band Grace for another three years. After Grace disbanded in 1987, Hussain decided to move to Los Angeles to study music at the Musicians Institute in Hollywood where he graduated in March 1989, receiving the school’s highest award, the Vocational Honors Diploma.

Following his graduation, Hussain decided to live in Los Angeles to try his luck at being a session and touring musician. He gradually became popular as his reputation grew as a musician, enabling him to travel the world many times playing with some of the most renowned artistes such as Sergio Mendes (1996-2014); Al McKay (1997-2007); Yanni (2004-2005); Dave Weckl Band (2003-2004); and Herb

Alpert (2007-Present).

Working with Herb Alpert, Hussain eventually became the sound engineer at Herb's "Vibrato Grill Jazz" Jazz club and eventually became the club's Artistic Director. Having recorded many albums with Herb, they won the Grammy in 2014 for the album "Steppin' Out". Hussain played bass and engineered the Album and he received the Grammy award for engineering the album as well.

It was by being a member of Herb Alpert's quintet, that Hussain was exposed to a variety of art. Herb himself is an amazing artist and sculptor and Hussain would see him at work in his studio. It was Herb who encouraged Hussain to paint and was a great inspiration to him.

One day while shopping in an Arts and Crafts store, Hussain bought some framed canvas, brushes and acrylic paint and started painting. Thus, a new journey in another creative medium began. Hussain's paintings are colorful and inspires happiness in the beholder.

Hussain explaining the manner in which art and music have come together in his life explains, "I believe that all art is connected, whether it is dance, poetry, music, sculpture or painting. I find that abstract art is a very free-form of art and it gives me so much freedom to create. I am not tied down by rules or technique, it is just me and a blank canvas! I may have an idea on the starting point and from there on it's pure improvisation.









