

# **ROBERT HARRELL, JR.**

## **(A REVOLUTIONARY ON CANVAS)**

Robert Harrell, Jr. became interested in art at the young age of five (5) years old. He was taught by his mother, Constance Harrell, when she noticed his talent drawing action figures and toy soldiers. He was also influenced by his “Aunt Babe”, who would draw hours upon end with the greatest of ease. Robert continued to draw and paint throughout his adolescence and in the late 70’s to early 80’s; two different forms of art took over his interest, “Break dancing” and “Graffiti”.

Graffiti Art and Cartooning had been his major strengths for several years but when Robert attended the Montclair School of Arts Summer Program in the mid 80’s, he was introduced to Acrylic Painting and experienced a new found love. Acrylic painting allowed for abstract art and “against the grain” images which were more intense and expressive. In 1988, Robert was accepted into the Mason Gross School of Arts at Rutgers University and continued to thrive as an rebelling artist, going on to win several art contests and awards. During his years at MSGA, Robert studied several mediums such as oil paints, design markers, charcoal, spray paint, video and photography. He received praise and criticism for work which, at times, was outside of the box, imbues with revolutionary messages.

In August 2000, Robert became a victim of violent crime, when he was shot in the abdomen during an attempted robbery and almost died...twice! After beating death, he watched random acts of gun violence and murder. Years passed as he witnessed the death of family members, friends and former students. “Homicide is Suicide” and A.V.A.G (Anti-Violence Artist Group), founded by Robert Harrell, Jr. is a movement that will promote awareness to our inner-city youth through art. “Similar to my art, we have to think outside of the box to stimulate and educate our youth. If we don’t act now, our future leaders will have no future.”

Two Years later after starting the A.V.A.G. Revolution, he started the Kidz Peace Team. This was a proactive approach to stopping violence. Robert said " Why wait until people are so far gone , why not plant a positive seed at a young age. If we invest in the kidz now, we will have a brighter future." The Kidz Peace Team is a grassroots organization that employs children to raise money for concerts , art shows, videos , books , plays , songs etc. All the art work , public speaking , DJing, rapping , fund raising etc. is all done by the kidz. The organization is all about empowering our youth in a positive manor.This grassroots organization is strictly funded by the people.

Between 2013 - 2014 , Robert Harrell Jr. won the Passaic County CDC Martin Luther King award and the N.A.N. Man of Vision Award. After winning these awards Robert decided to work harder and branch out to other communities to spread Peace. He is now doing artshows in Newark, Hackensack, Englewood, and Brooklyn in addition to his work in Paterson NJ.