

Interview with Celebrity Food and Junk Artist, Jason Mecier

Celebrity Art Made from Beans, Macaroni, Red Vines, Noodles and Junk Food

By Shamontiel L. Vaughn

No ceramics class or regular oil paint for this guy. Jason Mecier (pronounced Messy-ay) would rather use your junk to create art. His 3-D mosaic portraits made from celebrity junk re-create the popular folks like [Mo'Nique](#), [Taylor Lautner](#), Paula Abdul, Tori Spelling, Margaret Cho, Prince, Condoleezza Rice, [Salt n' Pepa](#), Kevin Bacon, [Kathy Griffin](#), Ricki Lake, Paris Hilton, Pamela Anderson, Farrah Fawcett, Florence Henderson, [Lady Gaga](#), Nicholas Cage and more.

The Los Angeles native now residing in San Francisco got his start by watching his grandmother, Anita Tollefson, who was a painter. According to Mecier, "She would rather paint on the back of her cigarette cartons than buy a canvas." He learned how to create art without spending a fortune on supplies, but he does load up on Elmer's glue for food art and E-6000 for football helmets and steering wheels. His art is made of everything from beans, noodles, candy, dog food, junk food (i.e., pretzels, chips, cookies, crackers), rocks and bamboo sticks. Worried about ants and flies? Don't. Mecier uses an acrylic sealant to help preserve the lifespan of his mosaics, but he's still working on how to preserve fresh food. That type of art is usually photographed and then discarded.

Some art is made from the artists' names or reputation. Salt n' Pepa's art was made from salt and pepper. Condoleezza Rice's art was made from rice. Kevin Bacon's art was made from real bacon. The Bounty Hunter's art was made from dog food. Of course Snoop Dogg's art was made out of [marijuana](#).

Sometimes celebrities will send their own junk to him just to see what he can make of it, including the displayed art on [his website](#). His work has also been featured in news outlets like the [New York Times](#). He'll be at Fabric8 at 3318 22nd Street in San Francisco, CA for an art show from Oct. 8 to Nov. 1. But before his art show began, he took time to speak with [Shamontiel, AC's Arts & Entertainment Contributor](#) about his projects.

Shamontiel: What was the best reaction you got from a celebrity who saw your work?

Jason Mecier: I would say one of the best things was Rosie O'Donnell bought several of my art pieces. I remember Pink, she bought her art pieces. She got down on the ground and kissed my feet. I had a couple good interactions.

S: You have a lot of favorite artists. Who has been your favorite artist to re-create so far?

JM: That's really tough. I kind of like all my pieces when I'm working on them. It's hard to say a favorite.

S: Okay, on another note, who's been the most challenging to re-create?

JM: What's most challenging is more the medium, to make stuff out of food where you can't glue it down and it has to look fresh. It's more the technique that's challenging rather than what the subject is.

S: The food is the most challenging, correct?

JM: Yeah, because fried chicken or macaroni and cheese or lettuce, it could wilt. To have something look fresh is a real challenge. I actually do more with things that I can actually glue down. I've done a lot of live food ones, but those are the hardest, I think.

S: You have a background of art with your grandmother, but what made you pick food? You saw her painting mosaics, collages and stained glass, but you picked food.

JM: At first I wanted to take that macaroni art, like the kids do, to a newer level. That's how I sort of got started. I picked cheesy, '70s TV stars, but I sort of go all over the place. I've done candy or food. Now I like doing (art) with the junk where anything goes and getting celebrities to send me their junk.

S: How many pieces have you sold?

JM: Almost everything on my website sold. Basically everything I've made, I sell it afterwards.

S: A guesstimate of that, how many is that?

JM: Like 500.

S: You do more than celebrity portraits, correct?

JM: I do. (Celebrity portraits) is my favorite thing to do, but also I do just whatever people want to hire me to do. I've done a lot of advertising, commercials, where it's like a [Wrigley's Doublemint Gum ad](#) or Quaker Oat bars.

S: How did your grandmother react to seeing your first piece? Who was your first piece?

JM: My grandmother hasn't been around lately so she hasn't seen all my newer work, but she was always encouraging me to do whatever (I) want. The first one out of the beans and noodles was Paula Abdul back when she had her songs out. It was about 15 years ago. I've been trying to keep more current, like the [Red Vines](#). It's not actually Twizzlers but the Red Vines licorice. Those are the newer ones of Taylor Lautner and those licorice ones you saw.

S: Will there be one for Robert Pattinson for the Team Edward fans?

JM: I'm going to see if popular demand requires me to do that.

S: Your Taylor Lautner one, is that one up for sale now?

JM: It's at my house now. I do have it for sale. I was thinking I'm going to put it [up on Ebay](#) and see what happens. I got an e-mail from (Lautner's) people, and they wanted me to give it to them for free and he would give me an autograph. I didn't really want to do that. I should get a little more than an autograph.

Resources:

[Jason Mecier's website](#)

More resources

- <http://www.fabric8.com/shows/2010-10-INFO-flavor.html#mecier>
- http://blogs.sfweekly.com/foodie/2010/10/local_flavor_fabric8_art_show.php
- <http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=110594706841&ssPageName=ADME:L:LCA:US:1123>

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