

Dreaming In Cosmic COLOR

BY JENNIFER FAUCI

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It takes an open mind and a knack for creativity for one to truly embrace the arts. For the last 35 or so years, California native and artist Kenny Scharf has done just that. Born in Los Angeles, CA, Scharf received his BFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York. The American painter and sculptor considers every project he creates to be based on his past experiences. And judging from the work he turns out, they are bound to make you curious and leave you in awe.

"It is a personal challenge to produce the best work possible every time. One very important and guiding principle to my work is to reach out beyond the elitist boundaries of fine art and connect to popular culture through my art. My personal ambition has always been to live the example," said Scharf on his website.

Scharf was always interested in art and sculpture ever since he was a little kid. As for a love of graffiti, he said he was inspired by New York in the 1970s.

"I moved to New York in the late '70s and it was everywhere: the trains, buildings, it was very visually stimulating," said Scharf. "A lot of the art

movement at the time in the galleries was more minimal, and that to me was boring. I felt the excitement as a young person wanting to express myself and get noticed. They weren't opening their doors at the galleries so if you want to do something, it's out in the street."

To Scharf, art is his life.

"Art is such a broad topic but it's my life and my religion...my joy. It's everything to me," he said.

As an artist, Scharf loves working with color.

"I love color because it is very exciting to me," he said. "As an artist, I am all over the place because I don't want to limit myself. I don't want to label myself as one thing or another because I like to do lots of kinds of art as well."

Much of Scharf's art is considered very playful by a lot of people.

"Play connotes fun and excitement and joy. I want to inspire people and show people that they can be uplifted," he said.

As for artists who inspire him, Scharf cited Andy Warhol, who he came to befriend, and Hieronymus Bosch, the early Dutch painter known for his fantastic imagery and landscapes.

From March 19 through July 10, Scharf will have his own gallery at the Nassau County Museum of



Art. Visitors will see highlights from the exhibition taken directly from Scharf's former Brooklyn studio.

To learn more about Kenny Scharf, visit www.kennyscharf.com. For more information, visit www.nassauxmuseum.org. The Nassau County Museum of Art is located at 1 Museum Dr., Roslyn.

