



MY ART STORY by SAULO CASTILLO

Providence, Rhode Island

I like the arts. No, I love the arts.

Making art, whether the medium is painting or dancing, is where I regain my sanity. I grew up in a very underprivileged neighborhood in the lower south side of Providence, Rhode Island. I was surrounded by drug abuse, poverty, homelessness, etc. My surroundings led me astray and took me down a path I rarely speak of, and the arts are what saved my life. If it wasn't for institutions like New Urban Arts, a nationally recognized community arts studio for high school students and emerging artists in Providence, and Project 401, a collective of hip-hop artists based in Rhode Island who use hip-hop culture to engage with communities and relay positive social messages to youth, I probably wouldn't be sitting here writing this right now.

I have an ongoing battle with anxiety in my head all the time. I don't talk about it much or share, because where I come from people think anxiety is just "in your head." When you share about it, you get ridiculed or called weak.

My mind has always worked differently than most, and the only way I can deal with what is going on in my head sometimes is to make art out of it. Whether that is spinning on my head or drawing a portrait, I understand that if I don't get it out I will go absolutely crazy.

Some people look at the arts like some thing they just do when they have nothing better. I look at the arts like there's nothing I want to do other than create, ever.

When I'm mad, I dance. When I'm sad, I dance. When I am happy, I dance even more.

To me art is sanity, because without it... I don't know what I would do.