

## Gil Sanchez

I am a self-taught artist. Born in El Salvador, I came to the California in 1990, where I worked and learned the English language. I moved to Naples in 1993, where I have been living ever since.

I have always liked to draw and paint, skills that came naturally to me, drawing and painting takes me to another place where I let lose my imagination. But I only took it as a hobby because I was afraid of criticism from people other than family and friends.

I have worked as a carpenter and a handyman, both jobs used the material Bondo, mainly known for its use in auto body and wood repairs. I became quite skilled at using this material and soon I started to make small figures just for fun, but once again I did not take it seriously.

On March 21, 2016. I was working on a construction site as a superintendent. That day I was performing a roof inspection with the city inspector and a few other coworkers. Somehow, I fell from a roof, four stories down an unfinished section of the roof. After almost 4 months in the hospital. I am blessed and grateful to be alive. I am now physically limited in what I can do. I have pain but have learned to live with it. I have been given a second chance at life. No longer able to work construction, as soon as I felt strong enough, I started to paint. I have painted many pieces and most of them, I gave away. By chance I took on a few sculptures in need of restoration; A life-sized sea turtle, a jaguar and a blue heron. In the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, I decided to try to make my own life-sized sculpture from scratch. I sculpted a tortoise and an elf for my daughter, expanding to a great horned owl, which when finished, was exactly as I had pictured it in my mind. I was now ready to show my work to strangers and so I did. I did not get the criticism I was so afraid of ether. Now I work on my art every day, pushing the limits of my body and my imagination. There is never enough sunlight in a day, I have pain, it is always there. but in working on my art it is easier to ignore. I am a father and my kids are my reason for living and to continue pushing myself until I can do it no more.