

James Gilliland – Artist’s Statement

I’ve always cherished a lovely quote I came across, written on the door of a preschool classroom:

“Attitude is the paintbrush of the mind, it colors everything.”

Reflecting on the past, it started as a beautiful sentiment, but over time, it has blossomed into a personal mantra for me. It wonderfully reminds me that how we choose to see the world and ourselves holds just as much importance in our creative journey as any medium or technique.

As an artist, I’ve often found myself reflecting on my journey ahead. At times, the path felt clear and inviting, but more often, it seemed like I was navigating through darkness, reaching out for ideas, experimenting with different materials, honing my skills, and experiencing the emotional highs and lows that accompany both creativity and life. Depression, anxiety, success, and failure have all had their moments at the helm. Yet here I am, continuing to move forward, creating, and exploring with joy and determination.

Looking back on my journey, it feels less like a plan and more like a beautiful pilgrimage. Rather than chasing a specific goal, I let my curiosity lead the way. With each step, I built a wonderful foundation. Even when I didn’t quite realize it, I was gradually moving toward something that felt genuinely true to me.

For me, the artist’s perspective shines brighter when it’s about discovering a unique voice rather than striving for perfection. It is deeply shaped by everything we carry from our life journeys—our feelings, our passions, and even our frustrations. It reflects how we see the world, how we interpret it, and how we choose to express those interpretations.

In my journey, I find that reflection leads me to **kinetic art**, a delightful fusion of motion, design, and technology that beautifully reflects the changes and growth I’ve experienced within. What once felt a tad scattered—my love for machines, my fascination with movement, my eagerness to create, and my curiosity about how things *feel* when they move—has blossomed into a clear and meaningful expression.

Kinetic art truly lights up my heart; it’s not just a fascinating medium, but also a lovely metaphor for growth and transformation.

I’m excited to dive into clay as a medium, crafting pieces that beautifully embody this convergence, blending years of exploration and uncertainty into creations that not only exist in the physical world but also spark emotions and ideas. This art isn’t just something that stands still waiting for you to look at; it warmly invites you to participate, react, and even play. It’s alive with energy! And in this creative journey, I feel very much alive, too.

I used to think I was on a quest to find my passion, but now I see that I've been embracing it all along!

Finding your artistic voice is rarely about the big celebrations. Rather, it unfolds softly, emerging after countless hours of quiet dedication, like a gentle whisper threading through the eye of a needle. When it finally clicks for you, it's such a lovely realization: everything truly mattered. Every twist, every stumble, and every breakthrough plays an important role in your journey.

This journey has been so beautiful, taking me from a small, dark cygnet to a lovely, graceful swan! I'm always moving forward with hope and positivity.