

Alameda Post

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Painter Michael Robinson's First Alameda Exhibit June 8-9

Oakland-based painter Michael Robinson, a rising star of California's contemporary art scene, will have his first Alameda exhibit on June 8-9, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., at Frank Bette Center for the Arts, 1601 Paru Street. A former journalist and touring musician, Robinson's show is part of East Bay Open Studios.

The Frank Bette exhibit follows an April show at Lamorinda Arts Council's Art Embraces Poetry event in Lafayette, and a



Painter Michael Robinson with his painting, "Another State of Grace." Photo courtesy of Michael Robinson.

two-month residency at the Lafayette Public Library titled “The Spirits of Babylon.”

A former songwriter known for his witty and inventive lyrics, Robinson, 67, is gaining a reputation as a poetic painter.

“Lyrics are basically poems set to music, and I actually was a published poet before I became a lyricist,” Robinson says. “That background came in handy for me as a songwriter and as a painter.

“More to the point, I often use song lyrics as inscriptions I put on the paintings or in the titles of the works themselves. And many of my ideas actually come from song lyrics that really resonate with me.”

His painting, “The Unforgettable Fire,” is an example of art embracing poetry. The title comes from an old U2 album. He painted “I put a million miles upon these bones, and I still burn” on the canvas, a reference to a song by the contemporary hard rock band Fozzy.

It’s a similar story regarding his original work, “Another State of Grace.” The title comes from a song by the band Black Star Riders. On the canvas he added the words “every broken enemy will know, I am indestructible,” a reference to a song by the rock band Disturbed.

And the artist’s painting, “Saved By Zero,” shows an angel rising above a shark. The writing says, “no matter what, always face everything and rise, rise, rise.” The title comes from a song by the Fixx, and the writing refers to lyrics by the California band Papa Roach.

A resident of Montclair, Robinson is a former touring musician who played extensively in the Bay Area. He also is a Pulitzer Prize-nominated former reporter who worked at the San Francisco Examiner and the Oakland Tribune.