



Flyer in hand, I approach the loud smoke filled club where I would come face to face with a sensational underground frenzy known as "the Animation State". Waiting in line at the packed event, I glanced down at the flyer's Nubian goddess donning a hot pink afro and pierced tongue and wondered about her creator, Paul DEO, and what he might have in store for me. Words could not describe the funky animated cosmic trip that lay ahead... I knew then that I must meet this New York native turned New Orleans artist.

Much like the characters in his films and paintings, Paul DEO is larger than life. He's got a million dollar smile and the charisma of a young Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Upon meeting him, it strikes me as he talks of his life, family, and work, that despite creative influences such as Malcolm X, Jimi Hendrix and Walt Disney, most of the inspiration for Paul's work comes from a source within that only few artistic visionaries of our time could only hope to tap into, much less express in works of multidimensional color infusion. To experience a DEO is to experience the man.

Paul DEO is a man with a message ... many messages. Upon speaking he is almost as animated as one of his characters and displays immense passion, integrity and conviction. Growing up on the streets of New York, and being homeless for periods of time, DEO is no stranger to social inequity. DEO, however, transcends the negativity experienced in his life and

intends to show a higher vision of hope through his art and film. And that he has. His film career started in the art department of Spike Lee's Malcolm X and has since worked on over 50 films, music videos and commercials.

Despite modest accommodations (borrowed cameras, duct taped computer) DEO persevered and has written produced directed and animated a groundbreaking independent film. This film auteur's style is a bit unorthodox, but extremely effective. His filmmaking style has been described as that of an athletic coach. He uses empowerment techniques to inspire his cast and crew to believe in themselves and transcend their expectations. This has resulted in genuine performances and powerful imagery. Influenced by his aunt and artist, Auressa Moore, DEO began painting at the age of 6 to escape the cruelty of the world around him. His paintings are consistent in the theme of empow-

erment and are deeply rooted in his belief that one can overcome anything.



PAUL DEO
"Baby Sis"
1995
oil on canvas
16"x20"
Private collection of
Whitney Houston

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