

Conrad's Love of Art

Conrad loves art. He loves looking at art, painting, drawing and coloring. He is very good, too. His hands are always stained red and blue from his constant use of markers.

No one could figure out where Conrad's talent came from. His mother was not very artistic. All of her people came out looking stick figure. His father tried to paint landscapes but his trees looked like broccoli and his mountains like piles of rocks.

Conrad looked to everyone in his family to find where his talent came from. One day he asked his mother about it. She said that her father, who Conrad never met, was a great cartoonist and she could see his cartoons in Conrad's art. Conrad wondered why he hadn't asked her before.

Conrad can't remember when he first drew and knew in his mind that this was the right thing for him. There are many photos in the family album of baby Conrad on his first birthday, scribbling with a dulled crayon and smiling wide.

At preschool Conrad learned how to finger- paint. Oh, how much he loved the messy style of his fingers, but he learned how to paint things in a style that made them look real. He especially loved the leaf-paintings he made with this new technique.

When Conrad got into the habit of using crayons on the wall, his parents were always busy scolding him. But one day, the house was about to be painted. Conrad's mother came to him and brought a box of crayons and chalk with her. She told him to be free with

them and he ran wild. More ninjas and ghosts appeared with every happy step.

When Conrad's older sister was in the play-school phase, she made Conrad play. Before his sister could announce her role, Conrad would declare himself the art teacher. He taught her the wonders of finger painting he had discovered in real school. He discovered that art depended on the artist, and it wasn't for him to tell his sister how to hold a pencil.

Conrad tested different materials. Crayons seemed too stereotypical, chalk disappeared too soon and pencils couldn't capture his imagination. Soon, macaroni were strung on necklaces and given to every female in his family. They wore them with pride and every male with a laugh.

In the schoolyard of kindergarten, Conrad came about a piece of chalk. It was a queer device to Conrad, but he loved the free sense it gave him, and he ran wild with it. He drew magical dragons and karate-chop kings on the ground and walls of the playground. He loved it!

Conrad was given coloring books and tracing paper, but he turned up his nose at the common papers. His mother realized that he was a different child, and instead of stuffing the tool belt he got for his sixth birthday with plastic tools, she stuffed it with paint brushes and colored pencils of the rainbow.

By the time Conrad was seven, his grandfather's cartooning talent was evident in Conrad's art. He watched the old Sony and studied the cartoon character's every detail. Before long, he could draw the fine lines of Batman's cape and the angles and shadows of the dark cave in which he hid. Scraps of discarded paper littered his ~~before~~ floor as he tried and tried again to perfect his cartoons. When one eye-welcome picture was drawn, he'd run to one of his parents and they'd be so proud. Before long, he invented a character of his own. He was a cowboy who wore a long, leather coat and the typical cowboy hat and had all sorts of heroic fights with bad guys.

As he got older and tried different styles, he learned about the softness of the paintbrushes and the smoothness of the pastels. He learned to appreciate the simple things like pencils and got to know and use the information of how they work. He found a love for art he had not known before.

Today, Conrad enjoys art more than anything. He draws while he should be doing his homework. He draws when he should be sleeping. He draws while he eats. He's no Picasso. He's no Da Vinci. He's no Red Grooms. Not yet, anyway!!