

★ feature



Chris stands inside Bella Bar & Restaurant in Dallas where his painting, "The Effect," decorates the wall.

# the light & dark of things

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"Bella" means beautiful in Italian—a fitting name for a down-to-earth spot in Uptown Dallas where we met Longview native artist Chris Judy. Chris, perched at a tall bistro table under the outside awning of Bella Bar and Restaurant, is the vision of a true artist, one driven by emotion, eccentricity and a whole lot of creative vibes. As he runs his hand through his tousled locks, he rocks back in his seat, kicks one leg over another and exposes his flip-flop covered feet. Glancing down at his toes,



we notice that Chris' nails are painted: on his right foot, black nail polish; on his left foot, au naturel. "Light and dark are recurring themes in my work," Chris said. "I dabble in the yin and yang of things, the darks versus lights, the brights versus grays. Life's not just black and white: It's every color in-between, which I explore, too. I not only 'paint' my pieces. I live them."

**An artist's itch** Chris has come a long way since he placed his first piece of professional work inside a restaurant. Five years and more than 100 original pieces later, this Longview native has come into his own. "I've always been creative," he said. "It didn't matter where I was or what I was doing, I always wanted to create and cook things up." After graduating from Longview High School in 1993, Chris made his way to UT-Austin where he earned his degree in advertising. From there, the big city beckoned him, and he spent years in the Dallas corporate

and haven't looked back." His uninhibited, abstract art can be seen all over Dallas in homes, restaurants and businesses. Each piece is unique, with the same underlying theme: light and dark. "I get inspired by stories of good versus evil and watching those around me interact," Chris said. "I'm a very emotional person, and I allow whatever emotion I'm feeling to just let itself out in my works. God blessed me with an incredible ability to not only see things but also translate them through acrylic, oil, wax, you name it. I'm also inspired by my spirituality and

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world as a stockbroker. "That was a great experience for me because I rubbed elbows with so many movers and shakers in the Dallas scene, but I was still feeling a void," he said. "I needed creativity back in my life." And with that, Chris became a broker by day, an artist by night.

**More than a hobby** The first piece of work he chose to hang at a downtown restaurant was a small one. "Eyes of the Storm" was a 2-foot by 3-foot abstract of the clash of good and evil. It sold quickly. "That's when I thought, 'I really have a shot at this.' I sold one after another just by hanging them in restaurants and waiting for a bite," Chris said. "Then, art collectors and friends started to commission me to do paintings for them. Five years ago I left the corporate scene

the strength of my family members, namely my mother, who is a breast cancer survivor. What an inspiration she is." **She Knows** A self-proclaimed renegade with a kind heart, Chris and two business partners have put their heads together and started a company, She Knows, designed around a woman's intuition and her fashion-friendly form. "I'm constantly looking for new ways to work my craft through new mediums and new canvases," he said. "The woman's form is so inspirational, so we've decided to create a women's apparel line centered around my art."



Chris is inspired by his spirituality and the strength of his family members, namely his mother—Carole Judy of Longview.



Chris expresses himself through all mediums—even fingernail polish—which highlights the light-and-dark theme of his work.

Although the apparel line isn't slated to be released until fall 2010, Chris and partners are already busy working on designs for the clothing.

They're even hoping to set up an art scholarship so that some proceeds of the sales can allow them to give back to the arts. "Art is the most raw form of expression," Chris said. "Everyone has something to offer, and everyone has a gift. Arts should be uplifted and appreciated—it's the real deal." He has also been approached in the past by many potential collectors about collecting prints of his work. With that in mind, She Knows has begun producing extremely high-quality giclée prints of his work for sale at a fraction of the original price. They can be purchased by contacting Chris directly by phone or through his Web site. **For more information on Chris Judy,** visit [www.chrisjudyart.com](http://www.chrisjudyart.com) or contact him directly at 214-676-4701.