

# Avenues

## THE PATH LESS TRAVELED

### Path Chosen Art and Design

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South Asians are contributing in a very visual and positive manner. We have grown to become viable members of the Canadian social fabric. We are Lawyers, Politicians, Doctors, and Entrepreneurs. This country has endless options for growth and career choices. It is important that the next generation be bold and daring and explore new avenues, our parents were daring and bold enough to migrate to this country. We too should be bold and daring in our endeavours. Don't be afraid to try new things or professions which are not typically associated with our culture. Just think of the first group of South Asians migrating to Canada. A few dared and the rest followed. So dare to explore new avenues in life.

Editor: Dr. Dhaliwal

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 ”



# Award WINNING Artist

**Tell me when you first noticed you liked art**

I was young, probably five or six. I don't remember much from that time, but my mom tells me that I started early. I was probably nine or ten when became consciously aware of my own interest in art.

**After that did you continue doing more creative things?**

Yes, definitely. I have a Master's degree in Fine Arts, and have been a college art instructor for the past five years. I am an artist at heart and proud to say I am an artist by profession. That was definitely the start of it all.

**How would you grade your own artwork in elementary school?**

If I must, I would say that I probably would've given myself a higher mark for my work back then. However, being someone who teaches art, I know that I wouldn't have been too easy on myself either.

**When was the first time someone else noticed you had talent?**

My mother was the first to notice that I was able to draw, but my classmates and friends started to take notice when I was about ten.

**Are there any other artists in the family?**

Yes, my family is somewhat unique in that way. My mother's side of the family is quite creative. My grandfather was a filmmaker in India, my grandmother was a painter, my uncle was a painter and an architect, my cousin, a graphic designer....

**Did your family support your talent?**

Yes they did. When they realized I was serious about it, they supported me 100%.

**How did they encourage you?**

Well, they put me through school for starters, and they always made me feel as though the world was my oyster, and anything was possible for me.

**During your schooling did you compete with other creative people?**

Yes, I competed for spots in juried exhibitions and competitions such as the New York Society of Illustrators Scholarship Competition, which I was fortunate to have been granted awards for two years in a row. On a day-to-day basis, grad school was extremely competitive as well. I was surrounded by highly competitive, and extraordinarily talented individuals - anyone who has been through it, or knows what it is like will tell you that the competition at some art schools can be as rigorous as at med school. I would see students having nervous breakdowns, losing sleep, not eating...

**Tell me about your educational background.**

I have both a Bachelors degree and a Masters degree in Fine Arts. I started out at UofC with an undergrad degree, and went on to study my Masters in Illustration in San Francisco at the Academy of Art University.

**Was it a hard choice to pursue art full time.**

Yes and no. Yes, because I was not certain what sort of market I was dealing with in Calgary, and I wasn't sure whether the market would

take to my art, and support it. No, because I had been teaching for the previous four years and I was looking forward to creating art exclusively.

**When did you sell your first piece of art?**

When I was in my second year of study at Uof C.

**What was it?**

It was one of my first oil paintings -- it was of two elephants feeding each other in tall grass.

**When was the first time you had your art hanging in a gallery?**

That was also in my second year of university. It was a great feeling to finally have my work on display, like so many of the artists I'd admired and looked up to.

**So now that you have your own gallery how does it feel?**

It's great. It's nice to have my own space. But in some ways it is just starting point. I hope to expand from here, sometime down the road.

**What do you like most about having your own place?**

I like the freedom and the control I have to show what I'd like and create what I'm happy creating. I like that my studio is in Art Central and that is becoming well known, and established. I work in a lively and inspiring environment, something I really appreciate.

**Where else can we see your work?**

Aside from my Art Central studio, you can see my artwork on my website [www.mayagohill.com](http://www.mayagohill.com)

**How do you describe your style of art?**

Based in realism, very figurative, with elements of magical realism.

**So what kind of things can we see in your paintings?**

People, influences that are classical, influences that are Indian, the randomness of life and love, spirituality, imaginative musings, etc.

**Who inspired you the most?**

I had a very encouraging friend in grad school who had an enormous impact on me and taught me a lot of what I know today. I also had two instructors, Randy Chavez and William Maughan who I credit for much of my growth as an artist.

**Do people ask you to make custom pieces for them?**

Yes quite often. My website includes several images of custom pieces I have created for individual clients.

**What do people like most about your wedding portraits?**

They enjoy the fact that it is something very unique, and not something that most people will have. It's a very special way to remember a very special day, beyond the traditional photo album.

## Awards?

Yes, two from the New York Society of Illustrators in 2001 and 2002. Another one from the Los Angeles County for a mural that currently hangs in the Michael D Antonovich Courthouse, and a couple from my previous employer Antelope Valley College, for dedicated service and employee recognition.



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// Awards from  
the New York Society  
of Illustrators //



*Maya  
Gohill*

*was born and raised in Calgary, Alberta*

