

# Mural #9: Beatnik Alley- Celebrating Hermosa's Counterculture of the 50's & 60's

*Location: Pier Plaza and Beach Drive- West Facing Wall*



## **ABOUT THE ARTIST:**

Timothy Robert Smith

Smith is an LA-born oil painter and muralist, using observation techniques in a new style he calls "Multi-Dimensionalism." His work investigates the nature of reality, with multiple perspectives fused together into one cinematic frame. Time and probability are other variables, with trails connecting past, present and future events; and alternate versions of the present moment repeating infinitely.

His work has been featured in various media outlets, including Juxtapoz magazine and NBC news, and his paintings have shown in solo exhibitions at TEDx Conferences and Copro Gallery in Bergamot Station. He also teaches at Laguna College of Art and Design, CSU Long Beach, CSU Los Angeles and Saddleback College.

## **WHAT IS THE BEAT GENERATION?**

The period leading up to the 1950s was considered as the Era of Conformity. At this time the majority of Americans were living in suburban areas called Levittowns, felt threatened by Communism and were driven with conspicuous consumption. Men would go to work all dressing up in a gray or blue flannel suit while women stayed home to cook, clean, and tend

the children. For Americans at that time eating a family dinner and watching TV every night was considered a conservative tradition. However this all soon changed during post WWII. People were tired of the routine and they felt "beaten" down by the traditional life style.

It was in 1948 that Jack Kerouac and John Clellon Holmes stated that the period after the Second World War should be called the Beat Generation. Those who were a part of the Beat Generation did not believe in straight jobs and they lived in dirty apartments selling drugs and committing crimes. Some of the Beat Generation beliefs include the rejection of mainstream American values, exploring alternate forms of sexuality, and experimentation with drugs. The beat generation was meant to echo the Lost Generation in the 1920s but it made a bigger impact than its historical counterpart.

The Beat Generation was composed of poets and writers. The originally three that started the Beat Generation were Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs who met each other at Columbia university 1948. In the Mid 1950's the Beat Generation expanded when the original three began to be associated with other writers in the San Francisco Renaissance. The majority of the Beat Generation's fame come from the development of Ginsberg's book "Howl", Burrough's "Naked Lunch", and Kerouac's "On the Road" and it was because of those books did people start to pay attention to beat literature.

For a while, those associated with the Beat Generation were viewed as rebels. Those who identified as Beatniks were willing to print or publish anything that society did not view appropriate. Of course those topics included sex, drugs, homosexuality, and zen Buddhism. In 1958, Journalist Herb Caen from the San Francisco Chronicle coined the term "Beatniks" as a reference to the Russian "Sputniks" because the Beat Generation was considered a threat to American Society. When Kerouac hosted a talk show, he enlightened middle America by explaining the Beat Generation. It was on that show where he read "On the Road" for the millions of Americans watching and became a household name.

The Beat Generation had a significant impact on changing what was considered the norm. It was because of the Beat Generation that people began to question the society they lived in and began questioning the status quo. The Beat Generation also set the stage for the next generation of hippies and anti-war movement. They influenced musicians such as Bob Dylan, Beatles, and Elvis Presley. They helped bring awareness to racism in American. Jazz greats Dizzie Gillespie and Charlie Parker were inspired by the movement to play Jazz music without the worries of racial barriers.