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Summer Bayan Surf Club

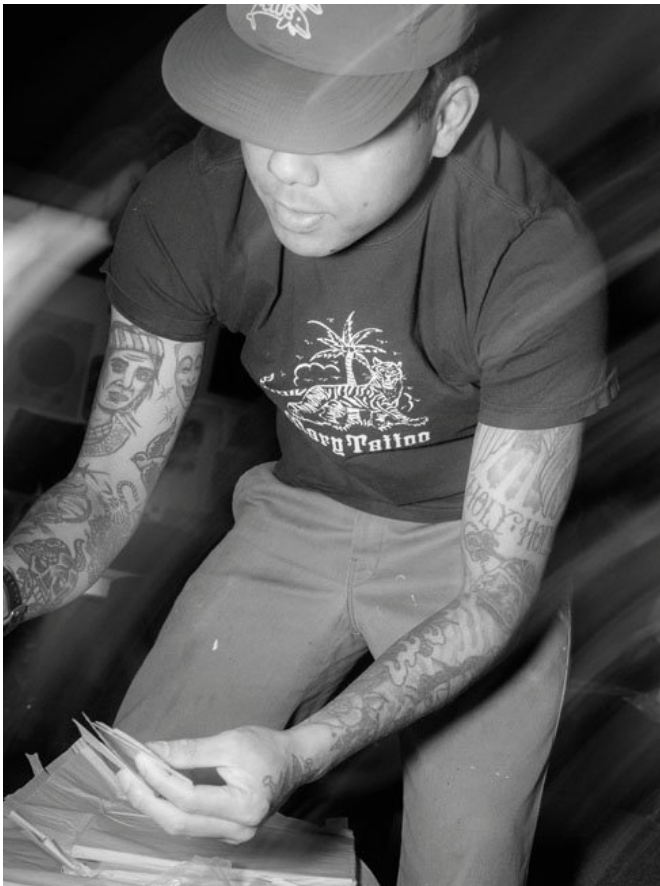
Step Inside DJ Javier's World Where Graphic Designer Meets Artist Meets Surfer



Written by John Connelly

Photographs by Will Adler

The graphic designer, artist, and muralist DJ Javier is a true hometown success story, a Santa Barbara phenomenon whose work combines the immediacy of street art with a colorful beach-centric surf vibe that has its own bold language, palette, and character. His infectious collection of cartoonish figures, bright colors, and catchy phrasing project a vibrant realness that also communicates an unapologetic embrace of his Filipino legacy and first-generation status. This winning combination of Southern California coastal cool and earnest, raw energy has led to major brand collaborations with big-name brands like Adobe, Shake Shack, Netflix, and the Los Angeles Rams. His colorful Funk Zone studio is a few blocks from the beach and filled with posters, art books, and product collaborations, such as a *Star Wars* line of socks with the apparel company Stance and custom sneakers by Vans. Bayan Surf Club is the name of this multidisciplinary studio, which intentionally blurs the lines of art and design. For Javier, it's where “graphic designer meets semipro doodler, meets art director, meets surf rat.”



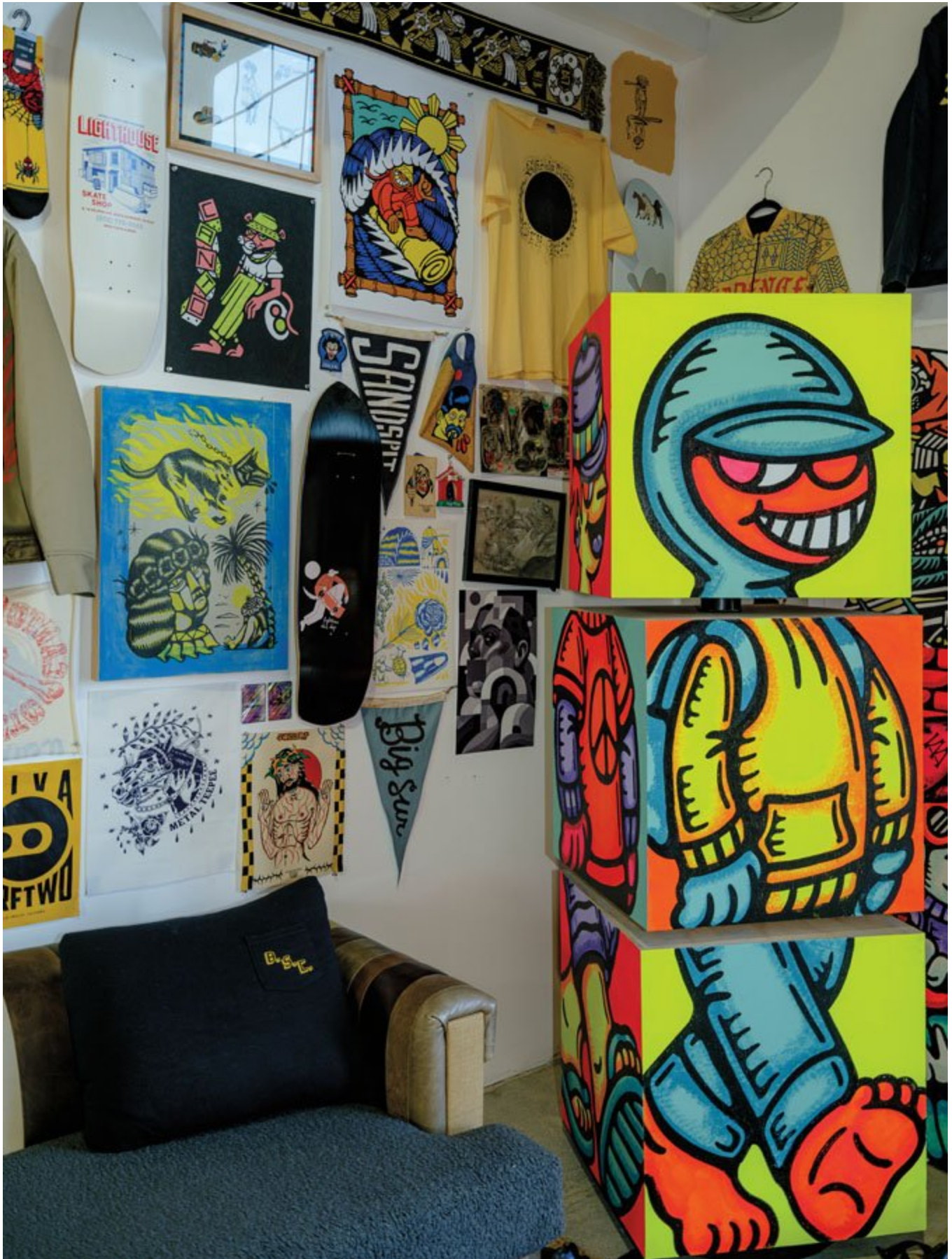
Bayan Surf Club, a multidisciplinary studio near East Beach, is filled with posters, art books, apparel, and products. The studio has worked on major collaborations with big names like Adobe, Stance, Shake Shack, Vans, Netflix, and the Los Angeles Rams.

You can find Javier's artwork and murals scattered throughout Santa Barbara at businesses like Lighthouse Skate Shop, Your Choice Thai Restaurant, Dune Coffee Roasters, and Haven Barber & Shop. He attributes his success to growing up in this city and to adopting his father's work ethic.

"My father's story leads to my story," Javier says. It was his dad, Oliver, who brought the family to Santa Barbara after a seven-year stint working in construction in Saudi Arabia, where he would see his family only once a year. A subsequent job offer

in the United States led to a brief stop in Florida and then a transfer to Santa Barbara, where he started his own construction business and never looked back. Javier says he and his father are very stubborn. Oliver had a persistent drive to succeed with his family in the U.S., noting, "Nothing will be given to you; you will have to earn it." Javier had no Plan B when he decided to forge ahead with his career as a designer and artist. He had tried drafting as a student at Dos Pueblos High School, but his lack of passion for the subject led to his embrace of design and a degree in the subject from Azusa Pacific University in 2015.

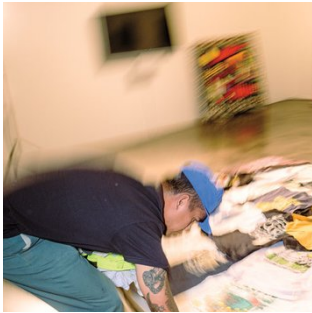
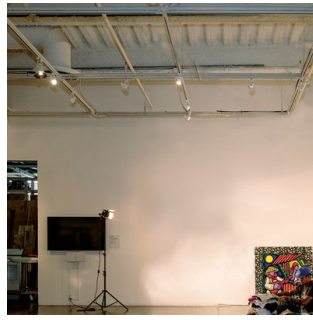
"In his short career, Javier has fought against the lack of diversity, affordability, and accessibility in surf and ocean culture."



Ten years later, with numerous projects, exhibitions, and collaborations under his belt, Javier has planned his most ambitious exhibition to date, a solo show at the Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara (MCASB). The title, *San Milano Drive*, refers to the El Encanto Heights family home in Goleta, where Javier grew up with his three sisters, and which embodies his Filipino American success story. The place represents a convergence of cultural perspectives and the intersection of traditional Filipino cultural practices and core values of camaraderie, hospitality, and faith with a strong emphasis on family bonds and community (known as *bayanihan* in the Philippines).



Javier is a self-described rap music aficionado, and *San Milano Drive* is also where he first heard 50 Cent, Snoop Dogg, and Dr. Dre, whose music influenced his personal and creative style. Javier also cites Saturday morning cartoons and skate and surf culture as inspirations, as well as artists David Flores, Cody Hudson, and Barry McGee. It was McGee's 2018 solo exhibition at MCASB that spurred the young artist to move beyond thinking such an opportunity might never be within his reach.



At MCASB, Javier will be unveiling numerous large-scale sculptural works, a survey of current and new paintings, interactive elements, and a retrospective of T-shirts he has designed for both himself and clients. One of the focal points of the show will be a custom “Nipa Hut”—a communal gathering space for family and friends found in most homes in the Philippines—that references the *bayanihan* custom of helping neighbors relocate, and “The San Milano Sari Sari,” Javier’s take on the ubiquitous tiny Filipino neighborhood market. It will feature local artists and creative friends in his network, along with his personal brands and special MCASB collaborative merchandise. Other exhibition highlights will be a tricked-out customized tricycle (a popular form of public transportation in the Philippines), designed and fabricated by Alex Guerena of the Boom Boom Bike Room, and the “Videoke Machine,” a reimagined

“My goal is to create work and embody the person/artist/surfer that I wanted to see growing up, hopefully inspiring the young version of me out there to get in the water and do the same.”

— DJ Javier

karaoke machine funded by the David Bermant Foundation. A series of new, dynamic murals will tie everything together.

In his short career, Javier has fought against the lack of diversity, affordability, and accessibility in surf and ocean culture, and has supported local nonprofits like the Sea League, which encourages youth from all backgrounds to engage in ocean stewardship. He came to surfing relatively late, learning to swim at 17 and to surf at 18. “I never had interest in surfing growing up,” he says, “because I didn’t see many people who looked like me or had the same interests or style as me in the lineup.” But the sport’s influence on him and his work is indelible.



While Javier now works with major national brands and has public projects across the country, his local connections provide special satisfactions. He truly believes in empowering his community: “My goal is to create work and embody the person/artist/surfer that I wanted to see growing up, hopefully inspiring the young version of me out there to get in the water and do the same.” bayansurf.club

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