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Main article content: Lee "Scratch" Perry - Musician, Upsetter and Now Visual Artist. Includes share/like/retweet buttons, byline, and main text paragraphs.



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He's a postmodern mystic and he uses himself as a canvas, too: charm bracelets, a gilded and bejeweled baseball cap, a cheetah-print suitcase full of supernatural objects. Perry surrounds himself with both the magical elements of nature and modern effects that have been — according to his curator, [Sebastian Demian](#) — "customized to the point of being artworks" themselves.

Perry's aesthetic fits within a contemporary canon that includes [Jean-Michel Basquiat](#), but his story and his perspective make up an unforgettable personality.

L.A. WEEKLY: *When did you start making art?*

LEE "SCRATCH" PERRY: Very early — when I started to do the music. Most of the things that I painted, I painted about righteousness and deadliness and about what goes on in the future. From those paintings we started to gather knowledge about creation itself. That creation is an art.

You could see painting like most of the Babylonian painting — Christ and angels and things like that. For me, painting is about how you see God and how you see the angel, what color you see God in and what color you see the angel in. So you make a demonstration of your being — of your mind — about God.

Your painting process is quite a ritual. With which objects must you surround yourself while you work? What powers do they hold?

I am a man of nature. First I'll look at the earth, and I discover that the earth is the greatest magician. The earth is a life-giver. I will have some earth with me, have some water with me, have some rocks with me, have all the elements of nature with me.

While I'm painting, I get strength from these elements. Strength come out of the earth and tell you what to paint. Strength come out of the water that quench thirst and make blood and tell you what to paint. I'm addicted to the water! Addicted to earth and addicted to stone! I'm addicted to flowers! I'm addicted to plants! I'm addicted to roses!

I look and see the elements — God made them all those things, then God made the animals and made man after. You look at what the first subject of what God created and try to follow that example. Everything was here before man, and he give it to man to take care of. But man get greedy and man get jealous and man start to fight the animals and start to eat them. That's murder. So if you are a vegetarian, you are better chance. I really, really loved meat, but then I discovered that I was creating a different life than what God wants because God is a vegetarian.

Do you communicate the same messages in your visual art as your music?

Same thing — me look into the world. I can become perfect! What is not perfect, I can't sing. I'm looking for perfection. If you think you cannot be perfect, you will not be perfect. If you think you can be perfect, then you will be perfect. It can take time. You forgive yourself for all the things that you know you should not do them. You have to wake up and realize! I ask me and myself — God is in me! God is in you! God is your conscience. You can be perfect if you want to be perfect. You can wish to be positive.

Do you think that your work — each song and painting — is a stepping stone —

— toward perfection. My music itself is a healer! My music is a great magician! He make you

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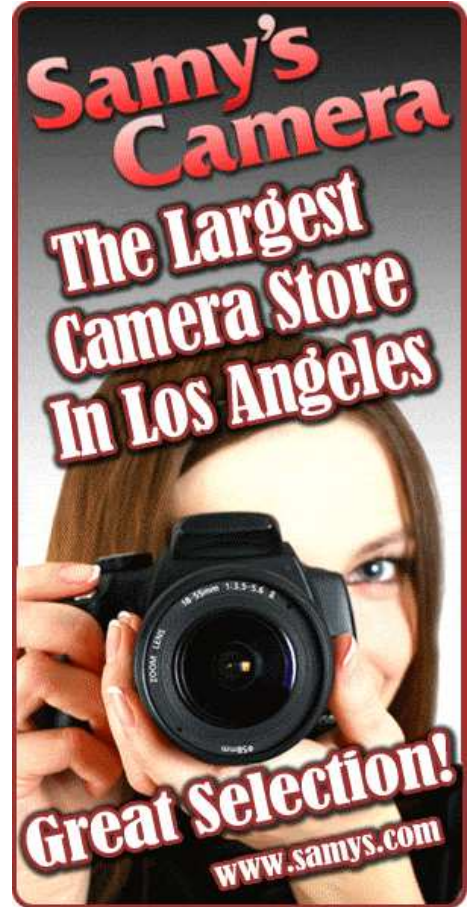


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