An avid horror fan since childhood, 30-year-old, Kentucky-born, self-taught artist Ryan Case is rapidly gaining recognition for his paintings of the enduring icons of fright cinema. Drawing favorable comparisons to the likes of Basil Gogos, his work—usually exhibiting an experimental mixture of media including acrylic, watercolors and spray paints—incorporates vivid colors, striking compositions and a punkish, graffiti-like aesthetic. Fango recently caught up with Case to discuss the up-and-coming artist's work, the popping of his horror-convention cherry and the abiding appeal of Universal's classic monsters.

FANGORIA: When did you realize that you wanted to pursue painting as a career?

RYAN CASE: I have always loved creating artwork, but I never really took it very seriously. I wanted to go into special effects makeup in high school, but never pursued it after that. I started painting during my down time at work—I am a body-piercer and tattoo-shop manager at Doll Star Tattoo in Maysville, KY.

FANG: You're obviously a fan of horror films; are there any particular movies that have inspired you on a visual level?

CASE: The Karloff Frankenstein Monster is my favorite subject to paint. I don't know how many paintings I have done of him. And many other paintings I have done have a Karloff underneath that I painted over because I needed the canvas [*laughs*]! His face in that film is so awesome. The expressions of such love and hate without the knowledge of what these emotions are is priceless. The classic Universal monsters are my favorite, but I think I get my love of colors from the Hammer horror-movie posters.

FANG: You have a very distinct style indeed—how has it developed throughout your career?

CASE: I started out with just watercolors and spray paint. My early paintings are very Banksy/Shepard Fairey-influenced, using mostly hand-cut and -drawn stencils over backgrounds on canvas. Over time, I started to add acrylics to the stencils and to build more layers. For many of my paintings, I still start out with a stencil, and just build layer after layer of colors with acrylics.

FANG: What's integral to your work as an artist?

CASE: My wife is my muse. She is the one who has pushed me to create further. When I feel like I'm finished with something, she urges me to go further. My kids give me the energy to attack the canvas. They also give some of the greatest and most honest feedback ever. Music is a big part too. I cannot paint without music or audiobooks. That really puts me in the right mindset. Tom Waits is one of my all-time favorite musicians, and I can paint to him for hours.

FANG: What other artists inspire you and inform your work?

CASE: So many. I am a huge fan of Basil Gogos, Boris Vallejo, Salvador Dali, the classic masters, and not just painters; Rick Baker is a big influence on me as well. And the writings of H.P. Lovecraft—I love to paint and listen to Lovecraft audiobooks.

FANG: What types of artwork do you most indentify with?

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