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ART TEACHERS IN ANGUILLA

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At 25, Tim Jahn fell in love with teaching art at his alma mater, duCret School of Art in New Jersey. When offered the chance by Tim Reynolds, owner of Ani Villas and benefactor of the Ani Art Academies, to spearhead the expansion of the Academies outside the United States, he jumped at the opportunity.

The school, opened in 2012, follows a curriculum developed by the renowned Trompe L'Oeil artist Anthony Walchulis. It welcomes Anguillian residents free of charge, currently training 23 students (with space for two more). Many studied art at the local high school or with private instructors before enrolling.

"It's a bit easier to teach people who have reached a level of maturity," Tim explains. "They're more excited about where the information can take them and what they can achieve."

Most fields encourage—or require—formal training, but the same rigor is rare in art. For Tim, that's a serious mistake.

"The biggest misconception is that traditional training will stifle an artist's creativity," he says. "God-given talent will only take somebody so far. In the history of artists, there was always a teacher or a coach, [taking] talented people and bringing out the best of them."

With a lack of focus on formal training, art education has long been synonymous with free-spirited experimentation. The Ani Academy takes a structured, methodical approach; students progress through the curriculum sequentially, and each new skill builds on the one preceding. Skipping steps is not allowed. Tim, a former Walchulis apprentice, lauds this approach.

"Our curriculum is structured and focused on certain key skills," he explains. "Those key skills allow an apprentice to push the limits of his or her capabilities. They're no longer limited by what they can't do; they're empowered by what they can."

In the long run, Tim sees art, as well as the art school, as a source of inspiration and problem solving for the wider community.

"I think it's our obligation [as artists] to show people what they can't see, whether in song, or dance, or theatre," he reflects. "If I teach you how to use a pencil or paintbrush... it's not just about making pictures. It unlocks parts of your brain, allowing you to think creatively." He continues, "Once your brain opens up, it attacks [problems] in a different way: that's your creativity. That can extend itself into every aspect of life on this island." **da**

TIMOTHY JAHN
Instructor at Ani Art Academies, Anguilla