

Symbolism abounds in this mixed media piece by Kris Gebhardt to be shown during Miami's Art Basel Week, December 2-6. Artist, writer, fitness expert, and partner in the Spas at French Lick Resort, Gebhardt is not as much painter as messenger. He delivers a multifaceted masterpiece that is eye candy and a touching tribute to a father and son present at the starting block of Gebhardt's career.

Is it Gebhardt's presence in the youth-inspired and beauty-filled spa world that made him nostalgic for his late teens and early twenties; or perhaps the reality that everyone gets older? Whatever caused his reflection is responsible for Allegiance. As homage to a Marine, two-time Washtenaw County (Michigan) Sheriff, patriot, and entrepreneur, Tom Minick, and Minick's son Colonel James Minick USMC, this painting quietly decorates a space and unabashedly tells the story of men dedicated to community, country and family.

At first blush, a simplistic human form emerges from the painting's gritty background. In an unassuming manner, the work overcomes its audience gradually, until nearly pulling the viewer into the image – changing them forever. As clarity creeps over dazed-consciousness, subtle details become pronounced. The figure's hand over his heart, missing lower extremity and splotches of bright red color signal allegiance, struggle, anguish and the lesson that life isn't always easy but it is always worth giving it your all.

This layered piece brought to life by its rough texture and mix of media that textbooks say should never appear on the canvas together immortalizes men who were a great influence on the man the artist has become. Charcoal, oil, acrylic, latex and chalk along with "scrap" color mingle on reclaimed materials – much like how experiences with the Minicks linger on the soul of Gebhardt. Start adding and it is clear – the sum of these parts is far greater than the whole. **ALLEGIANCE Mixed Media 59" by 36"**