

# NIGHT GALLERY

2276 E. 16th Street, Los Angeles, California 90021 [nightgallery.ca](http://nightgallery.ca)

Joseph S. Pete, "Brooklyn-based 'rising star' in arts world to return to Region to give talk at IUN," *The Times of Northwest Indiana*, October 15, 2019.



## Brooklyn-based 'rising star' in arts world to return to Region to give talk at IUN

Joseph S. Pete, Oct 19, 2019



Brooklyn-based artist Robert Nava, who has been named a rising star by GQ Style, is returning to Northwest Indiana to give a talk at Indiana University Northwest in Gary.

Nava grew up in East Chicago, studied at Indiana University Northwest and went on to become an international artist who is now exhibiting at the Night Gallery in Los Angeles, V1 Gallery in Copenhagen and Sorry We're Closed in Brussels.

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Supermodel Gigi Hadid also wore a suit emblazoned with one of his paintings at Paris Fashion Week earlier this year.

"I am very blessed, very privileged to be able to do this, and it can all go away at any time," Nava said. "It's very scary, but you just have to go in the studio and have fun. You have to remember where you come from, but always keeping a future vision is important. Stay humble and hungry."

He will give a lecture at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday in the Arts & Sciences Building, Room 1041.

Known for his paintings of "primordial monsters and myths," Nava will talk about his journey from being an IUN graduate a decade ago to becoming a successful artist, who supports himself exclusively through his art in New York City, one of the most expensive cities in the world. He worked at a gym, drove an ice truck, worked security at a bar and moved copy machines up and down stairs after graduating from IUN in 2008 when he took a painting class for another semester so he could continue to paint in the IUN studios and build a portfolio so he could apply to grad school.

He ended up getting accepted into Yale University, where he earned a Master of Fine Art degree.

"In undergrad, you grow and blossom," he said. "By grad school, you should be ready to defend your ideas. I had many studio visits and heard from many voices. The critiques were like going into battle. It toughens you up."

He moved to New York and sold a few pieces, but initially had to drive a moving truck to make ends meet.

"That was my rent. That was survival mode," he said. "There weren't very many shows for the first couple of years out of school, and they were little shows, like out of garage spaces. Early on you kind of have to say yes to everything."

Moving trucks ended up inspiring some of his artwork.

"I have been playing with forms heavily influenced from the backs of trucks," he said. "I cannot remember if the inspiration came from sitting in traffic or not, but seeing the backs open originally gave off this feeling of a portal. From there, other things became more visually apparent like faces, masks, words and signage, graffiti, colors, dirt, rust. The trucks are often abstracted or personified until they become something else. They are more like trucks as gods."

Nava said he is fortunate to be living his dream and working toward his goals.

"Museums would be really nice," he dreams. "I also have a dream studio and future shows in my mind. They just aren't painted yet."