



Grahame beside his work, *Janus - Man I Am: Anomaly I Be*. **BELOW** *Life's A Voyage That's Homeward Bound*.

# SECRET IDENTITY

IN HIS SPARE TIME, ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE CEO GRAHAME MARSHALL CREATES PAINTINGS OF MISUNDERSTOOD SUPERHEROES AND THEIR STRUGGLES WITH SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS.

WORDS Lily Yeang PHOTOGRAPHY Jody D'Arcy

Although cloaked by a mask and cape, Batman's true identity is exposed to the bone, in a black-and-white world of never-ending corporate ladders.

The words 'I used to rule the world' are written below him, a reminder of the constant pressures many face to be on top of their own personal ladders. The Corvus raven of Greek folklore flies around his head, symbolising the increasingly unachievable desire to be bigger, better, faster and stronger.

*Janus - Man I Am: Anomaly I Be* is just one of the latest in a series of works by artist Grahame Marshall, who uses superheroes and Greek mythology to

depict the way men think they are perceived in today's society.

"About six months ago, I embarked on what people are calling the *Batman* series, which I'm calling my *Phallocentric* series," Grahame says. "It started out very much around superheroes being metaphors for males. Spider-man was probably the first one, and then there have been others that I have tried, but they didn't quite speak to me as much as Batman did."

Grahame, whose first-ever tattoo just happens to be of a bat, says the Dark Knight resembles the lives of many a man, and how they perceive themselves through society's lens.



**BELOW** *Reflecting The Inside Out*.

"Batman acts as a metaphor for men and the expectations that we place on ourselves about our physicality and power, which is often driven from our status or our income," he says. "He is Bruce Wayne in real life and Batman in another life, but people don't see the two sides of the same coin."

"They don't even know that there is a normal, mortal man behind that. Other superheros aren't quite as overt in that message, so that's probably why Batman is the centrepiece."

Grahame also leads two different lives: one as the Royal Flying Doctor Service

Grahame uses his artwork as a mirror, reflecting his emotional state during pivotal periods.

"Each painting I do is triggered by something I want to try and express, and that's either an experience or an emotion at a certain place in time," he says. "I'm not necessarily the most confident person in terms of things that mean a lot to me, so I express a lot of that through paintings."

the person viewing it or whether they like it or not, and I want to keep hold of that because I paint for me."

However, Grahame says he finds it really interesting that people like, and relate to, his art.

"A lot of people who have talked to me about my paintings do absolutely get it," he says. "I'm sure there's many more who just like the look of the painting or don't like the look of the painting, and that's fine. Art for me should be about visual appreciation - if you just like how it looks, that's great." ■

"There will be times when I don't feel the need to paint, other times it's like a tsunami - the floodgates open and I just paint furiously for weeks..."

CEO, the other as an amateur abstract expressionist artist.

"It is challenging at times, balancing a corporate career and something you're really passionate about, so I tend to go through phases," Grahame says. "There will be times when I don't feel the need to paint, other times it's like a tsunami - the floodgates open and I just paint furiously for weeks, during weekends and at night."

I'm sure others manage it and express it in a different way."

His works are quite personal, so it's no wonder he's only had two formal exhibitions in the space of 15 years.

"With my art, I'm putting a piece of me out there for public display and critique, so when you throw it out there for an audience to look at, it can be daunting," he says. "I have always painted for myself, and not the viewer. I never think about

