

JASON MCCOY GALLERY

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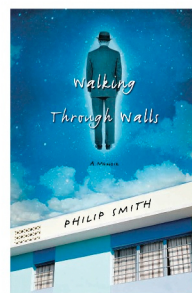


WORDS OF WISDOM

Philip Smith: My Favorite Passage

"The summer mangoes had dropped from the trees and were lying rotting on the ground, ripped open by feasting bugs and birds. Their intoxicating sweet smell mixed with the heaviness of the night-blooming jasmine. In Miami, nature is often a mix of colorful abundance and dark decay. It was long after 11. As I approached my father's house, I realized that I had forgotten my keys. Not wanting to startle him, I knocked somewhat timidly. Then, ever so slowly, like in some black-and-white horror movie, the door began to creak open. From the shadows emerged a tall man with grayish skin. Without any introduction, he looked at me with a cool stare and said in a flat robot-like voice, 'Why did you even bother to knock? After all, you are your father's son. Haven't you learned to walk through walls yet?'"

From *Walking Through Walls*, reprinted with permission from Atria Books/Simon & Schuster



SURREAL SUBSTANCE

MIAMIAN PHILIP SMITH'S ARTWORK AND WRITING ARE INFORMED BY A LIFE LESS ORDINARY.

By Christina Lawrence | Portrait by John Messinger

Ask artist Philip Smith what inspires him, and you won't hear anything simple come out of his mouth. The Miami native and part-time New Yorker has led a truly unique life, having grown up with a father who was a renowned interior designer-turned-faith healer during an era when such characters weren't signed to reality shows, but were eyed askance. "My dad was into the Far East and mysticism," he recalls. "He was practicing yoga long before the days of Lululemon. It was a hidden culture. People didn't talk about it because it made them nervous."

Growing up in a home where eccentricity was part of daily life wasn't easy for Smith as a teenager. "It was only later that I began to appreciate how brave he was," he adds. "It was not easy on him. He considered this a precious gift and felt obligated to go forward and help people. He didn't have a choice."

Smith's father passed away in 1981, but the profound effect he had on his son remains powerful 32 years later. In fact, Smith, whose work hangs in the public collections of the Whitney, the New York Public Library, the Dallas Museum of Art and the former MAM (soon to be PAMM) in Miami, to name but a few, took 10 years off from painting to pore over his father's writings and recordings and pen the memoir *Walking Through Walls* (\$15, Atria Books), which has recently been optioned for a series by Showtime. "Interestingly, while I wrote the book, I couldn't paint, because I realized that I was telling the story of my father and my family, which is what I do in my paintings," he says. "I didn't want to be redundant, so now that the book is done, I can go back and paint."

His return to the art scene is being marked by a November exhibit at the Jason McCoy Gallery in New York, where he has been showing his work for more than 20 years. He will also be one of 20 artists featured in an exhibition titled *Drawing on Habit* during Art Based in December at the Carlton Hotel in Miami Beach, the artist's hometown and favorite place to be. "I just love Miami," he says. "I know the names of practically every tree. The light is remarkable to me. I just feel at home when I'm here."