



# **"Long Nights, Heavy Mornings": Local artist celebrating gallery in Edwardsville**

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EDWARDSVILLE - Bethalto-based artist Spencer Hughes said he has carried a sketchbook with him since childhood.



Through the years, Hughes has developed his craft through several mediums. From his sketchbook to sculpture in high school. Hughes also began working with digital image manipulation in high school - a hobby, which would eventually lead Hughes to paint and drawing. He has experimented with various techniques and methods, only recently becoming acquainted with acrylic paint.

For his gallery, "Long Nights, Heavy Mornings," which debuts at Sacred Grounds Cafe in Edwardsville at 7 p.m. Friday evening, has a recurring theme of portraits. When asked how Hughes chooses his subjects, he said he does not. Instead, he focuses on colors and lets the subjects emerge on their own.

"When I was painting a lot of nudes, there were a lot of reds and pinks for their provocative aspects," he said. "With these portraits, there is a lot of black and white with some reds and purples. Sometimes I add some blue to show sadness, guilt or fear. I move through a series of subjects and colors."

A lot of that movement is done through the late hours of the night, during which Hughes said he reaches a creative zenith among a miasma of otherwise competitive emotions. Hughes said the title of his gallery is based on emotional insomnia accompanying his creative bursts.



"The concept is of being awake - like with insomnia - and being focused on what's coming," he said. "But you're up, and you have some creativity, but there's this weight of future significance. You create to postpone. In the morning, your body is heavy from not enough sleep, because you stayed up all night painting."

Hughes's art will be on display through March, thanks to Gogh Getters, an art group which helps fresh-on-the-scene artists establish galleries. Hughes said he has been posting his art in several Facebook groups and has attempted to network whenever he can.

All art on display in that gallery will be available for purchase, Hughes said. He is hosting a reception at the cafe from 7-9 p.m. Friday night with free wine and beer.