Color An Amazing Life

How Gustavo Caal's Creativity and Faith Shape the Way He Builds

By: Carla Caal

On a quiet Pasadena morning, Gustavo Caal walks from his house to his print shop just down the street, three dogs padding alongside him. The air is cool, and the neighborhood is still waking up. Inside the shop, screens wait to be burned, ink to be mixed, and designs to be brought into focus. The rhythm is familiar, repetitive, patient, and deliberate. For Caal, creativity is not loud or rushed. It unfolds steadily, one process at a time.

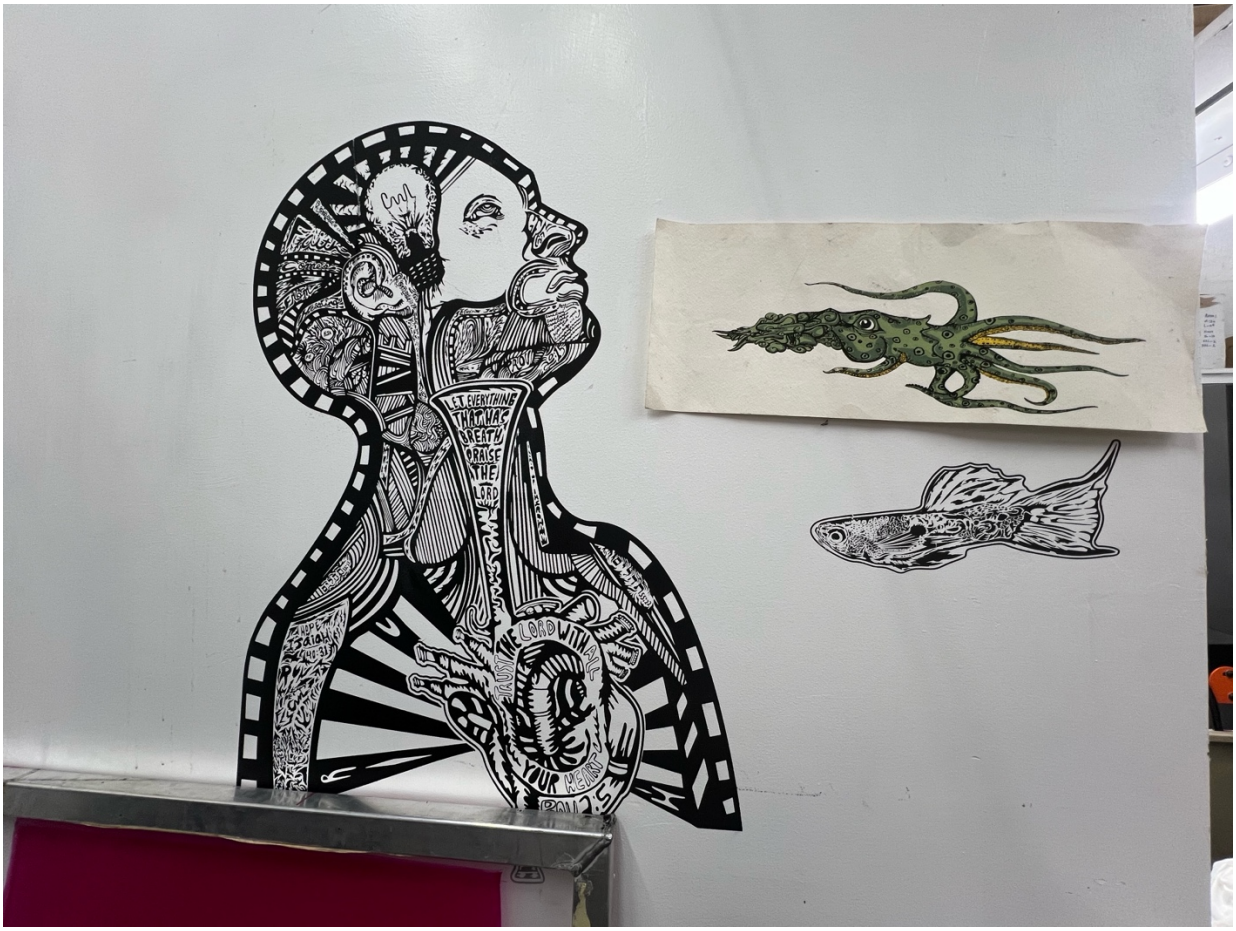


Gustavo Caal pulls ink across a screen at Inspiration Print, carefully aligning each pass as part of the screen-printing process that turns a stencil into finished pieces.

Photo taken by Carla Caal

Caal describes his creative style as "natural and biomechanical," a blend that reflects both organic forms and structured systems. Creativity, he said, began as an escape when he was young

and gradually evolved into something more tangible. What once served as a private outlet became a set of skills he could apply to real products- merchandise, laser-engraved items, even three-dimensional printed toys. Over time, creativity shifted from a refuge into a livelihood.



A biomechanical-inspired illustration created by Gustavo Caal is printed on the walls of Inspiration Print, reflecting his interest in blending organic forms with structured systems.

Photo taken by Carla Caal

"I've been creating since I was a little kid," Caal said. "At first, it was a way to escape. As I grew older, that creativity evolved into something more tangible. I learned how to use tools and turn ideas into real products."

That instinct showed itself early. In first grade, while classmates worked on flat construction-paper drawings, Caal built a three-dimensional pair of night vision binoculars out of paper. The project stood out enough that the principal was called into the classroom, followed by a call to his parents.

“I decided to think outside the box,” Caal said. “Everyone else made flat images. I wanted to build something you could hold.”

As a child, Caal was often described as a daydreamer, comfortable being alone and absorbed in his own imagination. He remembers inventing adventures in his head and imagining animals in distant rainforests. That curiosity extended beyond imagination into experimentation. He explored fire reactions, classified insects, and learned about habitats and species at an early age.

“Curiosity” Caal said, “taught me not to fear mistakes. Failure was always part of the experiment, and eventually, mistakes turn into understanding.”

That mindset carried over into his work ethic, shaped in part by his early experiences working alongside his father. Caal’s father worked as a gardener, and Caal joined him on jobs as early as six or seven years old, mowing lawns or assembling sprinkler systems with pieces of pipe handed to him like building blocks.

“It taught me practical skills I still use today,” Caal said. “Fixing things, solving problems-those lessons stayed with me.”

Gustavo Caal Sr., his father, recalls watching his son gravitate towards hands-on problem-solving from an early age, often asking questions about work, responsibility, and how businesses function.

“From a young age, Gustavo was always curious about how things worked. He liked using his hands and figuring things out on his own, and he wasn’t afraid to ask questions about work or responsibility”. Gustavo Caal Sr. said in a phone call.

Faith became another steady influence in Caal’s life, shaping not only his personal values but also his approach to work and business. He credits his upbringing with teaching him to give credit to God and to approach each day with gratitude.

“Every day is a gift,” Caal said. “I thank God for my health and for the ability to work. Life is not promised, so appreciation must be daily.”

That faith extends into how he treats customers and collaborators.

“Faith keeps me grounded in how I treat people,” he said. “It reminds me to approach customers with patience, respect, and honesty.”

Caal sees creativity and faith as deeply connected. Some of his larger pieces incorporate Bible scripture or personal experiences interpreted through a spiritual lens. One of the clearest examples occurred during a period of prayer, when he sought growth and direction for his business.

"I asked God for clarity," he said. "The name 'Inspiration Print' came to me, along with a clear vision for the logo. I created it immediately, and we were able to secure the name. That moment stayed with me."

His mother, Berta Caal, remembers her son as imaginative, gentle, and deeply reflective, often content exploring ideas on his own.

"He was always a dreamer," Berta Caal said over an in-person interview. "He could spend hours by himself imagining things, but he was also very humble, loving, and deeply connected to God. As a mother, you can feel that conviction."

Today, Caal's workdays are built around repetition and focus- checking artwork, printing films, burning screens, setting up presses, washing screens. The process is methodical, and he finds grounding in its simplicity. When projects stall or mistakes happen, he steps away before returning with clarity.

Screen printing, a widely used method of transferring ink through a mesh stencil onto fabric or other materials, involves multiple detailed steps from emulsion coating to ink application, according to ScreenPrinting.com.

"I enjoy processes that are challenging but steady," he said.

Elizabeth Serna and Alberto Serna, his mother and father-in-law, have watched Caal's creativity take shape through discipline and consistency, observing how his values carry into both work and family life.

"Gustavo is extremely creative, "Elizabeth Serna said over a call. "He has the ability to take nothing and turn it into something meaningful. His creativity comes from patience and intention, not rushing the process."

"What stands out the most is his discipline," Alberto Serna said over a call. "He stays consistent, works hard, and carries his values into everything he does, whether it is his work or his family."

Despite the uncertainty that comes with running a small business, Caal remains steady, guided by faith and process rather than prediction. He believes creative work is often misunderstood as effortless, when in reality it requires patience, repetition, and care.

'People think creative works are easy," he said. "It isn't. It takes time, patience, and energy."

For Caal, "Color an Amazing Life" is more than a phrase- it's a way of seeing. He finds beauty in ordinary materials, transforming overlooked objects into something meaningful. Whether on fabric, canvas, or wood, the goal remains the same: to inspire through his work.

"Life is already beautiful," he said. "We just add color and intention."

Citation:

What is screen printing?. ScreenPrinting.com. (n.d.). https://www.screenprinting.com/pages/what-is-screen-printing-sp230084?utm

ENHANCEMENTS

➢ **Sidebar/hyperlink –** A sidebar story could accompany the main article, focusing on the screen printing process itself. Breaking down the steps from artwork preparation to final print. This related piece would allow the reader to better understand the labor, repetition, and technical skill involved in screen printing without overwhelming the main narrative. The sidebar could be linked digitally for readers interested in the craft behind Gustavo Caal's work.

I would also include a hyperlink to Gustavo's portfolio, so the readers can check out his work.

https://www.inspirationprint.com/portfolio

➢ **Info box –** It would list key facts about Gustavo Caal's creative practice, such as the types of printing techniques he uses (screen-printing, laser, engraving, 3-D Printing), the materials he works with (fabric, wood, canvas). This information would be useful to readers but would disrupt the flow of the feature if included in the main story.

➢ **Graphic:** A simple graphic or diagram could illustrate the screen-printing process step by step, showing how artwork moves, helping readers unfamiliar with printmaking understand the repetitive and methodical nature of the work described in the story. If space were limited, the story could still stand without a graphic because the narrative already provides a sensory detail, but a visual would enhance comprehension.

➢ **Streaming video –** A short streaming video could follow Gustavo Caal through a typical workday, capturing the sounds and movements of screen-printing, from mixing ink to pulling prints. Video would take readers directly into the shop environment, allowing them to experience the process and techniques that define his creative routine.

➢ **Photograph –** I embed the photo in the story.

➢ **Photo Caption:** I added a descriptive caption

➢ **State one publication (newspaper or magazine) and one website to which you would pitch the story, and explain why you believe these would be your best choice.**

Publication: This story would be well-suited for Pasadena Now because it highlights a local creative professional whose work and values are deeply rooted in the Pasadena Community. The publication frequently features profiles of residents, artists, and small business owners, making it an ideal platform for a personality-driven feature that explores creativity.

Website: The story could also be pitched to LAist, as the site regularly publishes feature stories highlighting creative professionals, small business owners, and cultural contributors throughout Southern California. A profile focused on craftsmanship, faith, and local entrepreneurship aligns with LAist's emphasis on human-centered storytelling rooted in place.

Source List

Name	**Phone**	**Email:**	**Relationship and Justification**
Gustavo Caal	[redacted]	[redacted]	Main subject. I interviewed him .
Gustavo Caal Sr	[redacted]	[redacted]	Father of Gustavo Caal. He provides a first-hand insight into Gustavo's childhood, early work this, curiosity, and exposure to hands on labor.
Berta Caal	[redacted]	[redacted]	Mother. She offers a personal observation of Gustavo's personality, including his imagination, independence, humility, and faith.
Elizabeth Serna	[redacted]	[redacted]	Mother-in-Law. She provides an external family perspective on Gustavo's creativity.
Alberto Serna	[redacted]	[redacted]	Father-in-Law. He contributes insight into Gustavo's consistency that he has observed through both family life and professional life.