

Hi. I'm Sean Starr.



That's me being interviewed for the film "Sign Painters"

I have been involved in sign painting since I was 14 when I first started working with my Dad and his company Starr Custom Paint in the 1980s. I say "company" loosely, it was in reality my Dad and I driving around South Texas in his 1972 Chevy station wagon, complete with woodgrain panels and a bumper covered in splattered paint drips. It wasn't glamorous or romantic, it was hot and sweaty and we worked to cover the basics like food, gas and rent and the people that we did work for, in general, treated us like crap.

My Dad died of cancer in 1994 at the age of 53, and I took a job offer at a sign shop in Seattle. I worked in one lame sign shop after another, run by guys whose only requirement for getting in the business was they had the money to buy a computer and vinyl cutter. I was told sign painting was hack, white trash work and "real" signs were made from vinyl now. I learned how to work a computer and lay vinyl to pay the bills and hated every single minute of it. I went into a tailspin of depression, hospitalizations, a failed marriage and a general apathy that took over my life.

In 2005, I accepted my brother's offer to move into a 400 square foot mother-in-law apartment in his garage in the Mission District of San Francisco to start my life over. I sat around for a few months with no clue what I was doing and decided to launch [Starr Studios](#) with a firm resolve to only do hand painted signs, the old way like I did when I worked with my Dad. The whole scheme slowly started to work and grew into a wild ride that's lasted ten years so far.

I've been able to work on amazing projects for amazing people and have made a lot of friends along the way. When I first started playing with the idea of launching a podcast in 2013 the thought came and went and I put it on the shelf. Then in 2014 I moved the studio to Denison, Texas, a small town on the Texas-Oklahoma border where my wife and I live simply in our Airstream, and I decided to revisit the idea of doing a podcast about sign painting.

After a call from sign painter [Gary Martin](#) in Austin I realized that my favorite thing about working as a sign painter is the conversations I have with other painters, some of the intriguing customers I work for and that occasional oddball character who comes into my life periodically. To me, that's the good stuff in my day that's most worth talking about.

My work has been featured in dozens of magazines, newspapers and blogs and I was in the book and movie "[Sign Painters](#)" and a few documentary shorts. In the last 10 years I have worked for everyone from Lindsey Buckingham of Fleetwood Mac to hole-in-the wall mom-and-pop restaurants, co authored the book "[You, Me and Morrissey](#)" which was an Official Entrant for the 2008 Pulitzer Prize, given lectures at Universities and in general had a great time.

Thanks for being interested,
Sean

p.s. The awesome portrait of me in the cheesy "artist" beret was done by the mega talented Jordon Domont. You can check out more of his work here: <http://www.jordan-domont.com/>

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