

Recovered painting more than wall art; it's a mystery

BY TODD ELLIOTT
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Bill Tyree digs art.

Tyree, co-owner of Happy Hippie Pizza in downtown Lake Charles, said he dug out a little treasure as he rummaged through a trash bin at his business.

Tyree discovered an oil-on-canvas painting of a shirtless man in the pizza shop's bin. The painting had no artist's signature or frame.

Tyree put up the artwork on a wall of his new establishment. The painting, nearly 4 feet by 4 feet, is displayed without a frame and tattered canvas edges, just as Tyree found it.

"I thought it was a great picture to put in the corner, above where we may want to put in video poker machines," Tyree said. "I thought the guy in the picture looks as if he lost his shirt gambling. I thought that if someone might be having bad luck, they could look up at him and not feel so

bad. But I didn't know who it was."

The painting is based on a photo made popular by Mick Rock that can be seen in Rock's book, "Blood and Glitter." Rock, rock photographer from England, made a name for himself shooting some of the iconic 1970s rock stars like Queen, David Bowie and The Sex Pistols.

The subject in the painting and photograph is Syd Barrett, a British singer-songwriter and founding member of the rock group Pink Floyd.

Barrett left Pink Floyd before the release of their second album. He told author Julian Palacios, who chronicled Barrett in the book "Lost in the Woods," that had said he embarked on a brief solo career that chronicled his subsequent mental collapse.

Members of Pink Floyd have said the band used Barrett as a muse for songs like "Wish You Were Here" and "Shine On You Crazy Diamond," as well as albums



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The subject of this painting is known, but its creator is not. The art hangs in a downtown restaurant, the owners of which would like to know who the artist is.

like "The Wall," according to the book "Saucerful of Secrets: The Pink Floyd Odyssey."

Barrett died in 2006.

Who painted this picture of Barrett?

Could the artist's signature be hidden with the brush strokes unseen to the trained eye?

Jennifer Dwyer, co-owner of Happy Hippie, said the painting has generated some local interest. She said a fan of Barrett's music left a devotional candle under the painting, while others have offered to buy it. She said the identity of the artist is a mystery and she hopes that the person will come forward.