

Abhay Sarin

(AKA "Dumbo")

1948-

Abhay Sarin was born in April of 1948, in the small Indian town of Bilimoria, Gujarat. It was a very unlucky place to be born. His mother named him Abhay because it means "no fear", and she strongly believed her son must possess this trait in order to survive. When Abhay turned five his mother decided that he was to join the Gemini Circus, because they needed all the money they could get our hands on. The Gemini Circus was a travelling act that performed around neighboring cities and most of India. He was left at the Gemini campgrounds in June of 1953, and it was the last time he ever saw his mother. Immediately Abhay realized the Gemini Circus had no intention of letting him leave while he could still be of use. They abducted children, and forced them to train and live under torturous conditions. Soon after he had arrived, Abhay met Bhaskara: a baby Asian Elephant who was adopted by the Gemini Circus around the same time he was. Many years after that Abhay found out Bhaskara means "shining light", which was perfect because that elephant truly gave direction to his life. The two endured the dreadful and

and abusive conditions together, and could only find solace in eachother's company. There were times Abhay felt he could not go on, but he found strength in the perseverance of his friend. Bhaskara was his only friend when he felt the world was against him. In the winter of 1967, however, Abhay's world was flipped upside



down. Bhaskara was shot after suffering a fall and losing his ability to tightrope walk. In a whirlwind of depression and anger, Abhay escaped once and for all from the Gemini Circus. He fled to New York the summer of 1968. Abhay quickly got a job taking out trash and washing dishes at a local restaurant, but was left thinking of Bhaskara, and what that elephant meant

meant to him. Bhaskara's picture in Abhay's mind gave Abhay hope, and he wanted to do something important with that feeling. Abhay came up with a project. He began making paper cutouts of Bhaskara and placing them around the city on any wire he could find to walk across. Using paper, two sticks and a rock, Abhay was able to make his friend alive again. He became known in the local art scene as "Dumbo", which Abhay eventually came to find out was a popular elephant in American culture. Abhay was not concerned with what people referred to him as, only if it made them happy like it did to him. That was, and still is his only motivation. Abhay was never interested in being compensated for his efforts, or even in making a name for himself, he just wants to honor his lifelong friend. His methods and image repetition did in fact have a huge impact on street art and how we know it today. It is said that Abhay even inspired well know street artist "Banksy" to start making stencils. Abhay's location is currently unknown, but his elephants can still be seen around the world, acting as a universal symbol for hope.

