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### Blind Artist Paints On

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Imagine being a successful Atlanta artist with paintings being recognized and literally selling for thousands.

Then imagine contracting meningitis and going blind.

Allan Eddy lived that story, but what happened next is what is even more fascinating.

After being recognized for his work and selling paintings to Atlanta's elite, Eddy came down with meningitis in May 2000. Within days, Eddy lost his eyesight, and he was told by five top Emory specialists that he would never see again.

Slowly, small pinholes of light came back to Eddy's vision. Doctors told him that he would not see any more than that. That he would never see color.

Months later, some colors did come back. An examining doctor said he didn't believe it.

"And I said, well, you know, I can tell that you're wearing a green striped shirt," Eddy said. "And he said, you're right. I mean I couldn't see much else, but there was this little window that I could see and I could see the stripes."

Some might call it a miracle. Eddy is almost totally blind in one eye and can only see through pinholes in the other.

Reds and greens are still shades of gray to him. But blues and yellows almost burn holes on his canvases.

Eddy probably won't get any better, because most of his optic nerve is dead. He doesn't have depth perception any more, so he gave up the paintbrush, since he couldn't tell when it would touch the canvas.

"Like right now, I can't see my hand, and I have to look down a little bit and get it in my peripheral vision," said Eddy.

He uses his fingers, and prefers to paint on canvasses that are not smooth.

Some great painters had vision problems. Monet was nearly blind when he painted his water lilies. Matisse lost his vision. They adjusted and moved on, and so did Eddy.

"There's a way of working if you have something, so I just never got depressed," Eddy said.

If he couldn't see at all, he was determined to do sculptures. He has taught visually impaired children to paint and sculpt.

He doesn't take the pinholes of light he sees now for granted. He works fast and furious, just in case it is taken away again.

Eddy says if it does happen, he will adapt and move on.

Eddy has a one-man show at the Mason Murer Gallery November 18 through the end of 2005. His work is also scheduled to be shown in New York and Los Angeles.

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