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Painter Richard T. Slone's take on Mayweather vs. McGregor. All images courtesy Richard T. Slone.

# Counterpunch: A Few Rounds With Painter Richard T. Slone

Meet the British boxer who traded the ring for the easel and continues to draw inspiration from the noble art he once participated in

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Interview by DAVID GOLLER

SPORTS & GAMING

*Richard T. Slone was a talented boxer who trained under Joe Frazier. But he swapped his gloves for brushes and canvas, becoming master of another discipline. Playboy spoke with the fighter turned artist.*

**PLAYBOY: Before you started painting, you were a boxer. Joe Frazier was your mentor. How did that happen?**

RICHARD T. SLONE: When I was 16, I was offered the opportunity to train with former world boxing champion Joe Frazier and moved from England to Philadelphia. I lived with Joe above his boxing.gym. During the day, I was trained by him; the nights I spent painting and drawing.

**PLAYBOY: In the end, you decided not to pursue a boxing career and became an artist instead. How did you make that decision?**

SLONE: Everybody was impressed by my paintings; I was receiving offers from galleries and collectors. In 1994, when I was just 20, I published my first large limited edition to celebrate Joe Frazier's 50th birthday. It was a huge event in Donald Trump's Taj Mahal Casino in Atlantic City. You can imagine how many celebrities were there. My art received a lot of attention and admiration.

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Richard T. Stone ©1976

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Not all of Slone's subject matter is boxing-related—take, for example, his artworks of Frank Sinatra and Pamela Anderson.

**PLAYBOY: It was your start as an artist. In terms of content, however, you have remained true to boxing and paint mainly boxers and fighters. Why?**

SLONE: I think we are all fighters. Everyone is fighting for something, for better health, for more success, for better relations. My experience in the ring and from my life helps me to create art that expresses this struggle. My paintings are meant to evoke emotions in the viewer, who is fighting his or her own battle.

**PLAYBOY: So you see similarities between boxing and painting?**

SLONE: Exactly, art is a reflection of life; and sometimes life is also an art. But if I could put it better in words, I wouldn't have to paint. The ring is about emotions, fears and technique. Art is very similar. Sometimes I notice that a work of art is not developing in the right direction. Then I have to change that and overcome the obstacle. There is an emotional connection to every painting; each one is a struggle. A painting is finished for me when I feel I have won.



**PLAYBOY: Is there a boxer you like to paint best?**

SLONE: I have so much respect for anyone who gets in the ring. Of course, Joe Frazier means a lot to me personally. I want my work to inspire people. For 24 years I have been painting the greatest boxers for the International Boxing Hall of Fame. For almost every major fight, I am asked to paint the official covers of the programs. I was also the official artist of the South African national football team for the 2010 World Cup.

**PLAYBOY: You also drew Muhammad Ali. What was it like for you to meet this legend?**

SLONE: I was about 18 when I met him the first time and presented him with some drawings I'd made of him. He kept half. The other half he signed, gave back to me and said: "You are the greatest artist of all time!" He said this in his typical way and winked at me. Ali had a lot of class and was a true champion, loved by all. I met him many more times.

**PLAYBOY: You have had prominent followers; Donald Trump, Nelson Mandela, Hugh Hefner and Pamela Anderson reportedly are or were among your collectors.**

SLONE: Many would like to remain anonymous. But Bruno Mars, for example, recently added some of my work to his collection. I am pleased by everyone who appreciates my art. When my art touches people, I've done my job. Of course, we all look up to celebrities. But everyone is important. As someone once said, "Art should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable." I feel my art does that.





Artist Richard T. Slone at work.

**PLAYBOY: How did you first come into contact with Playboy?**

SLONE: It was 1993 at a Playboy party in New York City. I had made an ink drawing of Hugh Hefner for the event. It was beautifully framed and presented as the center of this celebrity-filled event. I got great feedback. Later someone from Playboy came up to me and asked me to draw a picture of Pamela Anderson. She was so glamorous, beautiful and the most famous Playmate ever.

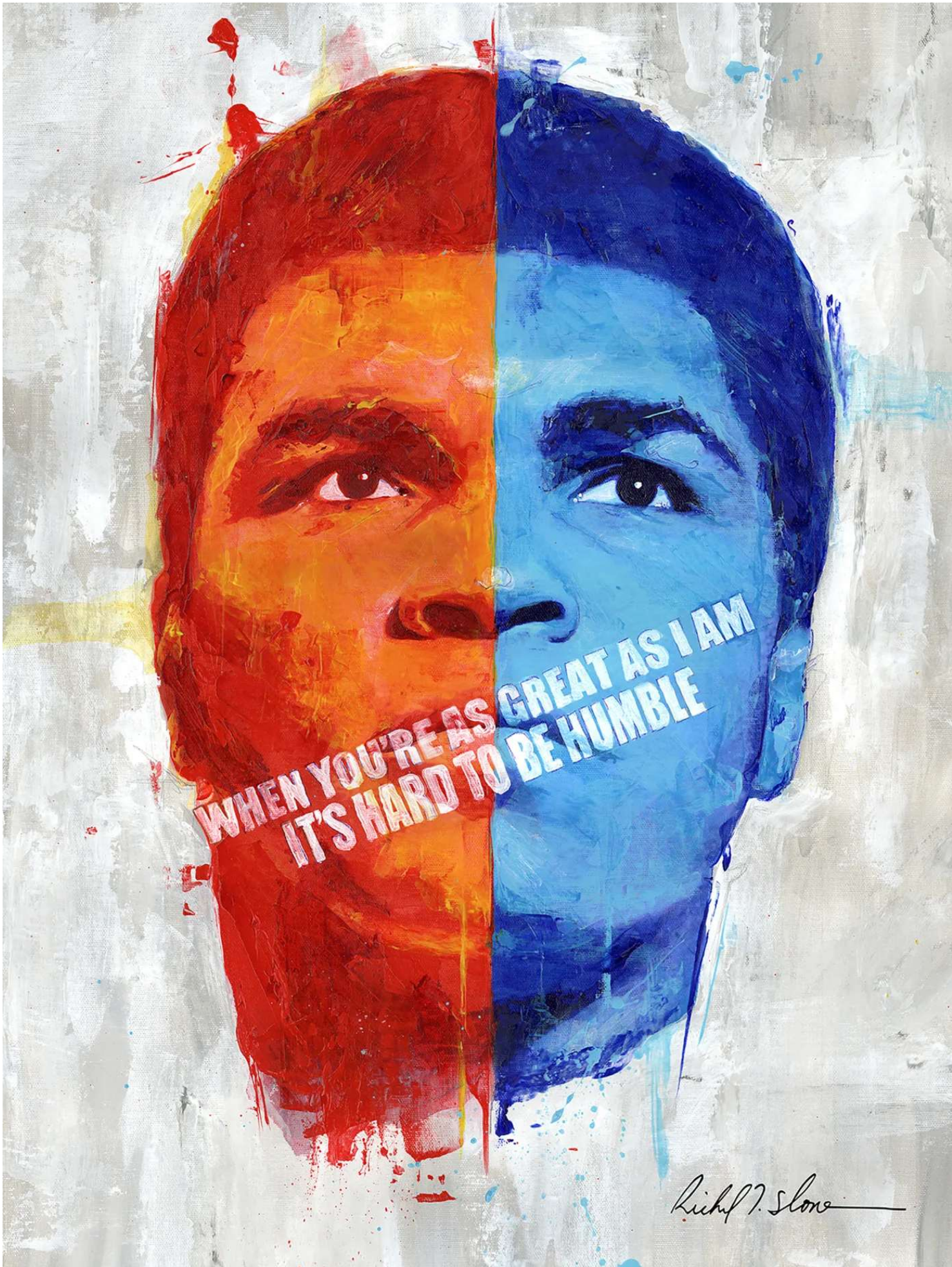
**PLAYBOY: What is your most recent work?**

SLONE: I painted a picture of a fantasy fight between Mike Tyson and the current champion Tyson Fury for the cover of a major U.S. sports magazine. At the moment I am working on a big charity project.

**PLAYBOY: One of your collectors is the lawyer Ingo Wegerich, who is planning an exhibition of your work in Germany.**

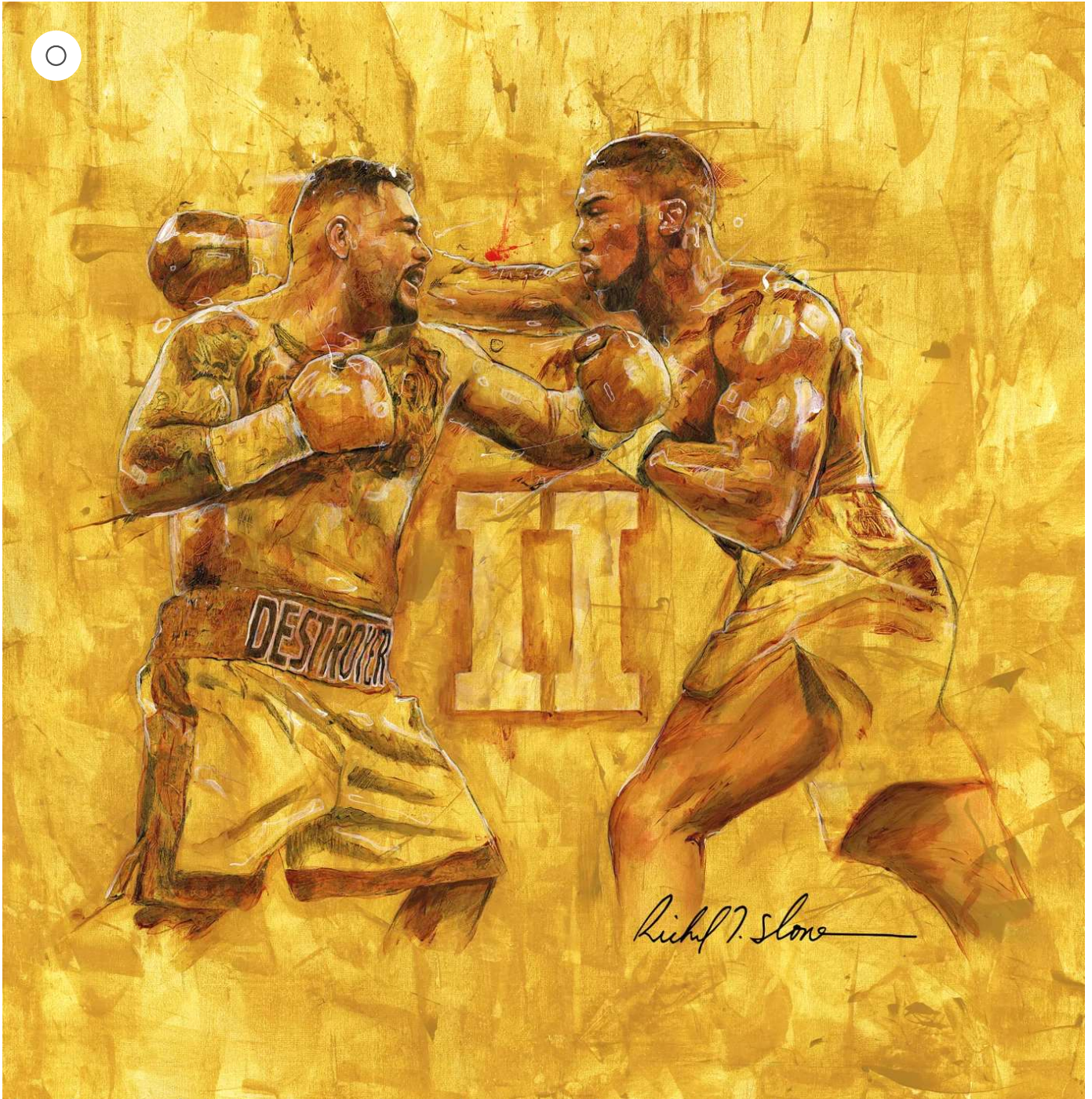
SLONE: I am very pleased that he is one of my collectors! We met at a boxing event and have become good friends. Ingo is a respected collector and businessman with a brilliant mind. He understands my art well. We are working on exhibiting my paintings in Germany and Great Britain. We're just waiting for the right moment.





WHEN YOU'RE AS GREAT AS I AM  
IT'S HARD TO BE HUMBLE

*Rick J. Stone*



Slone is best-known for his boxing paintings. Above: Andy Ruiz Jr. vs. Anthony Joshua.



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