

The Erotic Cocktail

By Regan Rosburg

To me, the main difference between eroticism and pornography is its intensity of delivery. While Pornography is blatant, intense, and revealing, Eroticism is subtle, foggy, and concealed. I would go so far as to say that the "pornographic" leads the mind to a set conclusion, and quickly...while the "erotic" allows the mind to wonder, create, imagine...and pause.

In the smaller paintings, the hands personify the erotic explorations of bodies. Some appear to invite, to coax, to pin down, stretch apart, and persuade...while some submit, support, entangle, and spoon. Some act together, others act alone. I have chosen to use hands because I feel they are the first encounter with the erotic, the first encounter with one's lover, and the seat of our first erotic longing. They are where sex begins, long before it begins. Hands are the vehicle intimacy, of exploration of the new lover, whether it is a deliberate, tender act, or a frenzied, passionate act.

Think about the first charge of electricity you felt when a lover touched you on your shoulder, or handed you something...there was a sudden, mutual acknowledgement that existed within that pause of your hands touching. Think of the eroticism the first time you and your beloved's hands found each other... and didn't let go. Think of the eroticism of a lover holding your head in their hands before that long awaited kiss.

The other side of eroticism is its impetuous, wildly hopeful, younger sister, Love. With her comes a powder-keg of emotion...all based on hope and promise, all colored with past experience and ghosts of affairs gone right or wrong. The three other paintings in this series illustrate this aspect. Again, the interaction of the subject matter in these pieces is only accomplished from the use of one's hands...a sewing needle, a hypodermic needle, and a couple 9 mm Smith & Wesson pistols. Yet, the hands are only implied. They are a missing, a background character, subtly demanding a decision whether or not to "use" these objects, in every sense of the word. Aside from the straddling of the two feminine extremes (a sweet, sewing grandmother vs. the toughness of Annie Oakley), I wanted to also show how intertwined eroticism is with love, love with intimacy, intimacy with boundaries, and boundaries with obsessive, addictive love.

These highly charged symbols (guns, needles, bullets) seem to fit more comfortably in the world of pornography, where sex and violence are incestuous, and where the relentless pursuit of orgasm is an acceptable addiction to have. What I am interested in is using these very powerful symbols within the subtle boundaries of eroticism and love. Far from the sappy lines of country western songs, or the cheesy lyrical symbolism of 80's rock/hair bands, these symbols nonetheless exist for people before, during and after love affairs. Love sometimes does feel exactly like a drug, and protecting one's heart from potential heartbreak sometimes does feel exactly like protecting a bird's nest with a couple semi-automatic weapons. The human condition levels all of us on the same playing field when it comes to love. It reveals our vulnerability, our persistence, our courage, our strengths and weaknesses.