



Dr. Jeffrey Rosenthal – A Talent Where Art Meets Science

By Jennifer Schonbrunn-Hinkle, May 15, 2007

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Self-taught artist, Jeffrey Rosenthal, works in many mediums including acrylic paste, clay, copper, wood and ...the human body. When he is not creating artwork in his home studios, he serves as Chief of Plastic Surgery at Bridgeport Hospital. What makes Rosenthal unique is how he combines his profession and his passion to benefit the lives of others.



As a result of a relative's struggle with breast cancer, Rosenthal became acquainted with the Norma F. Pfriem Breast Care Center in Fairfield. The center, affiliated with Bridgeport Hospital, offers comprehensive services for breast care including mammography, counseling, and breast cancer treatment. His positive experience with the facility led him to hold an art show at Fairfield University in 2002 to benefit the center, featuring paintings, photographs, clothing, jewelry, furniture, poetry, and children's fiction. Since then, Rosenthal has made numerous contributions to the organization, from generous monetary gifts to pieces of

his artwork to skincare products for fundraising events. Donna Twist, Executive Director and Vice President of the Norma F. Pfriem Breast Care Center speaks highly of Dr. Rosenthal. "He is a great human being! He provides literature about our center in his office and directs patients to us for support. He always goes out of his way to help us."



To fund a special guest speaker program at the center regarding the emotional well-being of women after cancer treatment, Rosenthal put together an art exhibit in October, 2005 at the Discovery Museum in Bridgeport. The opening night event was a combined fundraiser for the museum and the Norma F. Pfriem Breast Care Center. Linda Malkin, Executive Director of The Discovery Museum recalls, "When Dr. Rosenthal first came to us with the idea of a joint benefit, we discussed a 20 piece show in our balcony gallery. Before long, the show expanded to over 100 works of art, filling our lobby! He is such an interesting and generous man. While we put our profits from the event towards museum programs for the Bridgeport schools, Dr. Rosenthal donated the other half to the Breast Care Center. It was a great collaboration and perhaps the beginning of future such projects for us." Barbara Mandel, who helped organize the event's fundraising efforts, praised Rosenthal's work for its use of color. "The event was held on a rainy evening and when people walked into the museum they were treated to an explosion of color, from the beautiful art to the lovely floral arrangements and balloons. Dr. Rosenthal is meticulous when it comes to details – his energy is endless."



In 2004, Rosenthal partnered with French artist, Mogart on two events. The first was an art show at Je Reviens, a Westport gallery, followed by a second exhibit in the town of Fanjeaux in Southwest France, at the invitation of Mogart. While Rosenthal donated his proceeds from both shows to the Norma F. Pfriem Breast Care Center, the artists' collaboration addressed even larger issues. "Art goes above personal conflicts and our show promoted the positive relationship between our two countries, despite political tensions," Rosenthal explained. While Rosenthal's philanthropic efforts are substantial, his desire to spread joy through his art is equally impressive. This past winter, Rosenthal's work appeared on the walls of the Sterling Glen Assisted Living residence in Stamford. Both the residents and their surroundings beamed with color as they viewed the bright, thought-provoking paintings and photographs. Rosenthal was equally delighted by people's compliments and criticisms. He notes, "My goal is for people to feel a range of emotions when they look at my work. I'd much rather hear a negative yet honest review than insincere praise."



According to Rosenthal, being a self-taught artist has its advantages. "The normal constraints that shackle and bind the imagination are absent. Artistic freedom is experienced from start to finish." Although Rosenthal creates art based on these emotional impulses, his works reflect an admiration for some of the world's finest artists. His paintings are often likened to those of Chagall, for their bold use of color and strong shapes. Others see the influence of Gauguin, Cezanne and the early works of Pablo Picasso for his use of texture and dimension. Upon viewing Rosenthal's crisp, abstract paintings made from imprints of leaves and branches, Miro and Calder come to mind. When asked about his favorite artists, Rosenthal praises the use of light in the works of Renoir, Matisse, Van Gogh and Rembrandt. "That to me is true art."



There is a fine line between Rosenthal's medical procedures and the works of art adorning his home and office. In his opinion, "There can be no higher form of art than to work on the human body. One must harness similar powers of thought, conceptualization and execution be it when sculpting a face on a beautiful living soul or when crafting a facsimile of life from clay, stone or wood." Rosenthal likens the moment of removing a bandage after plastic surgery to unwrapping a birthday present. Bruises and all, he finds the process awe-inspiring.



Photography continues to be a source of joy for Rosenthal, who has traveled the globe with camera in hand. No subject is overlooked – charismatic faces, ancient architectural details, stunning roses grown in his own garden. Vivid color links Rosenthal's photographs, along with meticulous cropping, done by the artist himself. He believes the cropping is even more important to a photograph than the camera itself. He explains, "Just as in surgery, one millimeter seems like a mile of difference in my eyes."



In order to reproduce his work, Rosenthal learned the art of giclée, a high resolution photographic procedure in which there are one million dots per square inch. Archival ink printed on watercolor paper or canvas results in a stunning facsimile of the original. Giclée is known for its ability to duplicate colors with impressive accuracy. Even Rosenthal himself admits he finds it difficult to tell the difference between the original and the copy.

Whether he is in the operating room or at an easel, Dr. Jeffrey Rosenthal is committed to translating nature's beauty and potential into helping others. His art is merely an alternate form of plastic surgery, refining and embellishing to provide those around him with color and joy.

To learn more about Dr. Rosenthal visit artofplasticsurgery.com or call him at 335-3223, and to learn more about the Breast Care Center, visit <http://www.bridgeporthospital.com/BreastCareCenter/>.



