

A Brief Essay

## The Expertise of Rudy Rotter from Early to Late Period

by Randy Rotter

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**Premise:** Rudy Rotter's artwork, over 45 years, remained thematically consistent, highly skilled, and artistically sophisticated despite a radical change in materials and style over time.

**Rudy's Late Period (1990-2001):** Below is a late period unsigned work (c. 1998 - 6.5 x 16 in.) drawn with magic markers on wallpaper sample, mounted on cardboard. Further below is a teak bas relief from Rudy's early period. The purpose of comparing these two works is to show the consistency of theme, design, expression and artistic expertise.



Reclining Couple – c. 1998

### What makes this drawing a sophisticated work?

This piece is composed of a very limited number of line strokes. The faces and figures expertly express a beatific serenity. The man's head rests softly on his arm. The woman's breast falls naturally, while her slightly bent hand gently touches the exact center of the "bed". Her toes contact her lover's face as the two figures blend into one entity. The dynamic positioning of the figures within the frame provides the viewer with a honed focus.

The execution of this work speaks to the expertise and vision of the artist.

The piece was created in two stages. First, the wallpaper sample was prepped with a curved stroke, and then a heavy black border was added. Next the artist stepped back, looked at his "canvas", saw the image within the drawn framework, and proceeded to quickly and confidently complete the piece with an expert efficiency of line. work was created in two stages. First, the wallpaper sample was prepped with a curved stroke, and then a heavy black border was added. Next the artist stepped back to look at his "canvas", saw the image within the drawn framework, and proceeded to quickly and confidently complete the piece with an expert efficiency of line.

**Rudy's Early Period (1960 – late 1980):** For the sake of brevity, this teak bas relief (c. 1985 – 8 x 18 in.) is from the period when Rudy had hit his stride within the medium. Both the crafted expertise and the sophisticated composition evidence the highly developed skill of this artist. However, it is the beauty, uniqueness, and emotional depth of the artwork, plus the attributable signature style of the artist, that makes this piece an excellent work of art.



Embracing Couple – c. 1985

Viewing these two artworks, one traditional in style and the other on a contemporary edge, shows the consistency of Rudy's artwork over decades of production.

**Outsider Art as Traditional Art:** This self-taught outsider art also should be seen within a broader context as part of the historical pictorial use of reclining figures in Western art.

To be a bit presumptuous -- but also I believe accurate -- the intent and effect (albeit without the nature metaphor) shared by Giorgione's painting (created 1510) and Rudy Rotter's reclining figures are very much the same.



Giorgione – Sleeping Venus

The sense of tranquility, humanity, and beauty is clear in both. Giorgione's nude work interestingly was a radical depiction during his time, while the style of Rudy's art reflects the freedom brought forth in the recent modernist period.

**Conclusion:** While so much more can be said about Rotter's art, hopefully this brief introduction motivates the reader to look closely at the art of Rudy Rotter and partake in its wonderment.

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