

HUMANIMALS

Rodney Wood ~ Artist Statement

People often ask me where I get my ideas. That is usually a difficult process to accurately describe but for this series, the answer is relatively simple. All of the “Humanimals” were inspired by some of my extraordinary friends.

People refer to having a “spirit animal.” I’ve pondered what mine might be as well as some of my friends’ possible critter connections. At times, I’ve been with friends in some sort of casual circumstance and I’ll get a flash that they remind me of a particular animal. It can be the way they move, something they say, an attitude or just a mysterious sense. The adverse angle is also true in that while viewing living animals, they would remind me of a particular human acquaintance. These curious visions were all part my thought process for the “Humanimals” series. Over the years, I slowly accumulated a collection of these ideas.

The first painting came about as the result of a visit to Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in Colorado Springs. I especially enjoy taking photos of critters from unique angles or a rarely seen pose. On this day I was fortunate to find myself looking at a young giraffe that was sitting down and seemingly staring at it’s own reflection in the glass of a nearby viewing area window. She, an assumption, seemed quite smitten and was fixated upon her own loveliness..... Then it hit me that this remarkable creature reminded me of my friend, Trisha. You see, she is a bit vain. That said, she has to do very little to enhance her natural beauty. That is, in part, why this giraffe brought her to mind. Later, as I was looking at the photographs, I decided this would be a fun painting. With no intention for a series, I simply felt compelled to make this inspiration a reality.

It seemed the best approach was to create some sort of anthropomorphic scene to capture the story. “Aesthete” was completed over a month or so. Eventually, Trisha stopped by my studio and as she was looking at my newest painting, I revealed that she was a significant part of the inspiration. As if prompted, Trisha said (and I quote): “You know, if you had turned the mirror a bit more, everyone could see even more of me.” Yep, that did it, as they say, the rest is history. I was off and running seeking more subjects for a series of paintings to be called “Humanimals.”

While pondering friends and reviewing my animal photographs, the possibilities evolved quickly. I also chose to make more trips to zoos for more visual character studies. Keep in mind that both the animals and humans served as inspiration. A friend’s physical similarity to an animal was but one small part of the equation. More significant were shared attributes such as attitude, movement, facial expressions, demeanor, and/or areas of interest.

Hope you enjoy viewing and getting to know my curious menagerie of friends.

This exhibition of Rodney Wood’s “Humanimals” series features reproductions of his original oil on panel paintings. *Nomad*, the painting to the left, is the only original work that remains in his personal collection, with the rest now held by collectors in the United States and Europe.

The reproductions available for purchase
\$250 ~ professional photo mount on wood
(Asthete 18x18” – Paramour 18x20” – all others 16x22”)
\$125 ~ print on photo paper (same size as mounted)