

Ricco diStefano

Northwest Contemporary Painter



Artist Statement

My work breaks free from everyday reality, pulling you into dreamy worlds of imagination and quiet reflection. My paintings whisk you away to different places and times, capturing deep emotions and vivid memories from my own life. Inspired by my love for travel through the western states, my pieces aren't just straight-up landscapes—they're like cozy windows into specific feelings. I even think about the ambient sounds that make a moment special, blending them with the visuals, so when you look at my work, it might spark memories of your own cherished times. My art is all about the human side of things—it's like a heartfelt chat through colors and shapes that stir up emotions we all share. I'd like each piece to feel like a doorway where your thoughts mix with feelings, and the invisible stuff comes to life. I play with bold, lively colors to bring my canvases alive, from peaceful cool blues that calm you down to fiery reds that get your heart racing. Texture is a big deal too; I love how acrylics let me create varied surfaces that add real depth. It's like inviting you to touch and explore the layers, turning a simple look into a full-on sensory adventure. By stepping outside the usual, I want to spark conversation, tug at your heartstrings, and light up that endless spark in all of us.

Biography

I was born in Spokane, Washington, and got my creative spark early on from my grandfather, Luther Essick—a real jack-of-all-trades who practiced in visual art, acting, music, photography, filmmaking and interior design. Following in those footsteps, I dove into all sorts of artistic pursuits. I studied fine art at the Rocky Mountain School of Art in Denver, Colorado (now known as Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design). After graduation, I headed to Seattle and spent about 20 years as a graphic designer and illustrator, eventually climbing up to art director and designer. But even with that success, it didn't quite feed my soul—I always knew I had to get back to my true passion for fine art. Two decades ago, I committed to figuring out my style as a painter, tapping into what I call the "creative conduit" for inspiration. At the same time, I felt drawn to performing arts, honoring my grandfather's legacy. I decided to chase both paths at once. So far, I've been in over 70 solo and group shows across the western states and the East Coast. I've also popped up in various TV commercials and movies, and I'm still at it. These days, I live on a cozy little farm in Hobart, Washington, with my wife and two children.

My paintings have shown in galleries in Laguna Beach and Palm Desert CA, Boston, Seattle, Bellevue, La Conner and Spokane WA, Sun Valley, Coeur d'Alene and McCall ID, Alaska, Lancaster Wisconsin, Cannon Beach OR and Gainesville FL, including several shows at The Northwest Museum of Contemporary Arts & Culture in Spokane WA. With more than a thousand paintings in many private and public collections worldwide.

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