



The Diver

*A Wellfleet  
realist painter  
turns the  
usual into  
extraordinary  
works of art*

**W**hile we may attempt to interpret our dreams after we've awoken, painter Vincent Amicosante makes them larger than life on canvas. Before he even begins to think of making his first brushstroke, the painter does extensive research on a topic. More complex than capturing a setting, the paintings the Wellfleet resident creates are based on concepts that translate on canvas into staged metaphors. In his "erotic fruit" series, for example, figures and fruit are combined for their sexuality and the "over the couch" series depicts sofas and chairs in unexpected locations.

BY JACI CONRY



Mango Harvest

"My paintings are an enormously involved process. I use models, photos, and objects and I combine it all into a collage," says the artist. "Then I do a drawing to the scale of the painting, which I finally transfer to a canvas."

The Wellfleet artist has been painting since he was nine-years-old. "Since then I haven't really done much else in my life," says Amicosante with a smile. "Everything I've done has been to support this crazy habit I have." He attended the School of Visual Arts in New York City where he became versed on the basic foundations of painting and illustration. "After several years of editorial freelance work in New York it became clear to me that I wasn't going to be a famous illustrator, so I focused more on creating my own work," recalls the artist.

Soon after, he moved to Cape Cod in 1981 where his creative energy soared. He gradually stopped working as an illustrator and by 1986 he was devoting all of his attention to his fine art. "I've always liked all kinds of paintings but figurative paintings—the Romantic period, and the Pre-Raphaelites such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward Burne-Jones and John Everett Millais have inspired me the most," says Amicosante.

He was also heavily influenced by the Italian artist Giorgio de Chirico, which led him to magic realism and metaphysical painting. "I don't distort things, I use them as symbolic objects. I paint them as you see them in real life, but I change the perspective and proportions," says the artist.

Amicosante creates a series of paintings around a subject and fully explores the topic before he begins. "One painting may take six weeks to two months, which is a long time so if you aren't really interested in the idea it's hard to spend that much time on the painting," says the artist. He paints in oil, a medium that enables him to create large works that are both beautiful and tactile.

Like so many other artists, Amicosante, who works as the director for Wellfleet's Harmon Gallery, was initially drawn to the Cape's majestic setting and enchanting light. But the landscape has little impact on his works now.

Amicosante's paintings do often reflect the setting of another locale, Italy. "In a way Italy is similar to Cape Cod, it has a crazy, magical light. The skies are just amazing," says the painter. The artist has been visiting Italy since 1998, when he began taking trips to the country as a tribute to his late grandfather who grew up in the mountains of Abruzzo. "My grandfather was my greatest male bonding figure, he was my greatest influence. I always wanted to travel to Italy with him, but I wasn't able to get there until after his death," says Amicosante. "I went and found everything about him that I loved there."

Now, the artist visits the country frequently to paint. "The paintings that I do in Italy are seriously influenced by the landscape. I roam around the hillside and take a watercolor



In Lieu of a Muse

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## artist profile

pad to work on site.” He’s also inspired by the country’s storied heritage.

Amicosante’s “Transit of Love,” a 9-by-10 foot triptych akin to Italian Renaissance masterpieces, was exhibited at the Art Biennale in Florence, Italy last year. An homage to the city, the painting’s first panel depicts a pregnant woman in a field of seven giant passion flowers, the middle panel depicts the three Graces—Joy, Charm, and Beauty—set amid a backdrop of the famous cupola of Florence’s Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore. The last panel features a winged Renaissance statue representing the Angel of Death, while a tuxedo-clad figure looks down on the Graces and plays accordion.



The artist is well aware that his paintings stand far apart from much of the artwork found on the Cape. “I didn’t want to just paint Cape Cod settings and be a Cape artist. I stepped back and took a chance,” says Amicosante. “I was lucky to find my own direction.”



Tiger Paws

To see more of the artist’s work, visit the Harmon Gallery, 95 Commercial St., Wellfleet, [www.harmongallery.com](http://www.harmongallery.com). Amicosante will be showing his paintings at the Cahoon Museum in Cotuit from November 2 to December 31.