

# Art Seen: Paintings by Colette Aimee



## Artist Aimee is bending the norm with elastic, colorful surrealism

I get around a bit and with a lifetime of exhibitions under my belt, I like to catch non-gallery shows almost anywhere. It helps keep me sane and it's often the place with the freshest stuff — regardless of style or origin. It gives folks who are not mainstream a shot at some eyeballs to feast upon what they do. As a painter and lover of art, I always have my whiskers sensitive to art I may find interesting or unusual or, what the hell — weird (I hate that word when it's applied to art). Such is the case with the work I recently viewed on the walls of Julians on Broadway in historic Providence.

Artist Colette Aimee is originally from Kent, New York, and studied art at SUNY New Paltz in New York. She has a BFA in painting and is represented by several galleries on the East Coast. She also is recipient of the Visual Artist of the Year Award for RAW BOSTON — all pretty cool.

“My artwork comes from a dream world that conveys lifelike situations ... as well as a private universe in which my surreal characters come to life through extremely elastic ...colorful views,” says the 29-year-old Providence resident, Aimee.

“Colorful” here is poetic license, as this woman goes at color with an animal rawness, holds back nothing and basically breaks most of the sacred rules. Surrealist and modern painters often learn to defend themselves with explanation in this less-than-kind art climate of over intellectualism.



Stylized and anthropomorphic might actually apply here where the figures in Aimee's paintings are human, but they are not quite. But perhaps they are trying to be or they are coming from once having been human or trying hard to reform. Voila: *Quasi Moto*, or almost human. This might make the work fascinating, but it's not the reason I like them. I think the primitive nature of them gives a great deal of breathing room to the art. The fact that it's pretty crazy- looking demands your attention and then draws you into the carnival — is probably what I enjoyed. I never stopped studying them while enjoying my lunch.

Usually when I write about work, I've met the artist. Sometimes it's dangerous to know the work separate from the person, but in this case I'll trust my instincts that the artist and the work are attached at the hip — as in being hip not the body part. The flamboyant and circus qualities of the work are very entertaining and I would be deflated to find the artist to be any less entertaining, especially after enjoying the images of herself that she supplied (upon request). That consistency says volumes to me.

Art is like a mirror through which we view other worlds. Sometimes we see what we need, or want to see. Sometimes we learn something and often we are catapulted far away into another universe. Such is the case here. If you have a chance to view her work, please do so. It's stimulating and fun; a private Mardi Gras.

That's much more than I can honestly say about what I often review.