

## The Modern Primitive Art Series

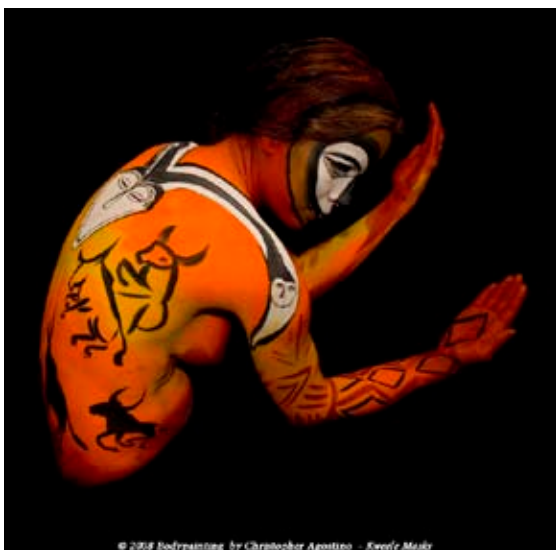
I am currently engaged in painting a series of bodies to be shown in life-sized photographs at a gallery exhibition, as if they were paintings on canvas. The original inspiration came from my experience of turning a model into a Picasso painting at the FABAIC Convention in 2007. That led me to explore the relationship between this ancient art and modern art—and that exploration bore profound fruit. The “Cubist Parrot” painting here is from the portion of this series in which I create original designs by applying styles and techniques of modern art to some of the same animal imagery we regularly paint at events. Other designs involve translating the work of specific famous paintings onto bodies, or combining modern art masterpieces with the imagery from the traditional and tribal cultures that inspired them.



In the writings from and about the early 20th century—when European Art re-invented itself as Modern Art—we learn that the influence of “primitive” art ran deeper than the identifiable visual elements from cultural sources such as African and tribal art in the works of many influential artists. The role of art as an integral component within the social and spiritual life of traditional communities was an inspiration for these artists in their effort to reinvigorate within European society the transformative power of art. Picasso, amongst others, discussed a desire to make a new powerful type of art that would effect the viewer and society, an art that could no longer be experienced solely as an aesthetic act but which provoked a visceral response in the viewer.

Bodyart is a fundamental human art in all cultures—and quite probably the original act of art itself—and as such it is the initiating source of many visual art concepts. By combining the images of modern 20th century artists such as Picasso, Matisse and Klee with the traditional body designs of cultures that may have influenced them I am returning this art to its source. By painting these works of art on a living human form I am expressing the fundamental ability of art to reveal and transform the human spirit.

As I bring the images and concepts of modern artists back onto the body within the context of traditional bodyart designs I am experiencing a personal re-creation of this seminal moment in art history through my own art tradition. In the actual painting process I feel I am struggling to discover, understand and achieve a new way to paint on my chosen canvas just as I imagine that the modern masters felt.



How will the viewer respond to these works? Will they see these works as “paintings” or as “body paintings”? Is this within the tradition of the modern artist—the tradition I am part of by birth and culture—or is this confined by the medium to be an imitation of cultural folk art? Is this fine art?