

**Presenting Joseph Modica classical
contemporary drawings and photographs**

This exhibit touches upon the passion that Joseph Modica has put into a life time devoted to the pure art form of figure drawing, an art form that has often been the subject for his photo art as well.

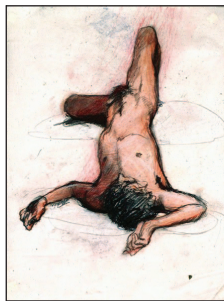
As a young man Joseph was inspired by the great masters, Michelangelo, Rubens, Degas, and Caravaggio. The masters used their drawings as drafts for their master pieces. Their drawings interpreted the infancy of an idea born unto the surface which defined the master piece in its purest form.

Joseph's artist statement is a short story which exposes him in the most uninhibited way, yet with a wit and humor that will keep you engaged. After reading it, it makes perfect sense that his inspiration is deeply rooted in classical figure drawing.

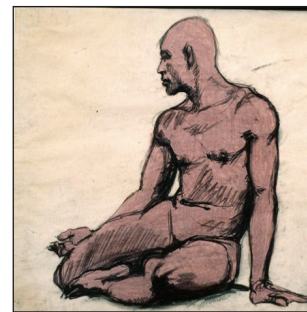
As I stated earlier, drawing, the sketch, the laying down without pretence is fundamental to developing any creation. Joseph exposed this about himself in his statement, and now we can see Joseph's work as opposed to just looking at it.



Edwin



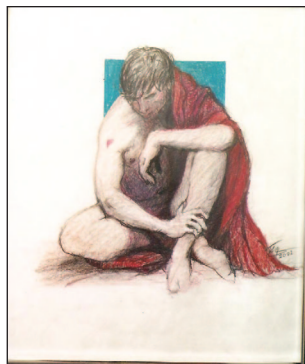
Slain



Arthur



Boy with column



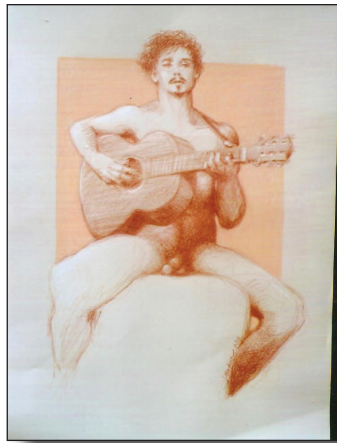
Gladiator



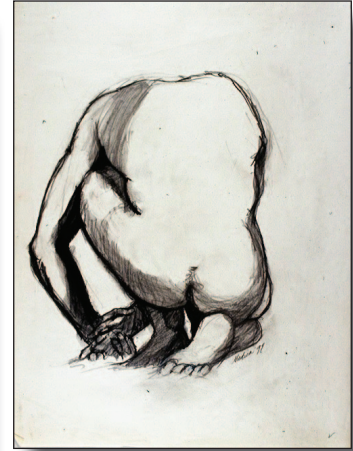
Ingrid



Lady with parasole



Guitarist



Back

And the artist said:

Picture this...

A second generation Italian/American boy from a working-class family is artistic.

When I was 5 or so I was recognized in my super-Italian immigrant neighborhood as something of a wonder boy because I could draw!

So my identity as an artist was sealed at a very early age.

Our next door neighbor who worked in a print shop would even bring me pads & #2 pencils from his work.

My parents were very supportive of my talent as well; little did they know that their little aspiring Michelangelo would love men. Well it should have been quite obvious but the denial was deep. (Lord, one of my favorite photos from that period is of me with my sweet uncle in the backyard, we are holding hands and I'm sniffing a little bouquet of flowers! Not TOO GAY!)

As a child my subject matter was purely shaped by pop-culture... always people, generally buxom babes, Marilyn Monroe and Liz Taylor types, which I drew on those little note pads.

When I was older it was more about haute couture: Katee Keene comics. Unfortunately it was the 50's, and at a young age I realized that fashion design was stigmatized as a homosexual profession and I certainly did not want to blow my cover. I was not actively gay but the fascination was strong. A typical scenario for a child of that period struggling to suppress his attraction to males, feeling isolated and basically the only pervert of my kind. There were lots of self-loathing & sometimes desperate thoughts of suicide. None of this is surprising considering that as recently as my teen years, I read an article in the Sunday New York Times magazine section (the newspaper of record) extolling the successes in aversion therapy in curing homosexuality! That gave me HOPE.

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One of my grade school teachers recognized my creative ability and encouraged me to apply to Music and Art High School, and I was accepted.

Going there was truly a life altering experience for this shy 13 year old boy born on Staten Island (then farmland) traveling to Harlem daily, truly a little misfit on the Bohemian landscape...the commute was hellacious and left little time for socializing. Some of the coolest things about going there were that there was no prom, no sports to speak of (at my local high on S.I. the boys swam NUDE-I was scared of that!) none of those usual teen pressures...except to get good grades. I only got those in art classes & believe or not, dear reader, English! The instruction was great & my horizons were broadened. We even took trips to museums to sketch the art & sculpture. I guess at that time my influences were Greco-Roman art, the Old Masters, and ancient Egypt. I once was locked in the Whitney while spacing-out in a stairwell looking out that one little square window, little did I know it had closed. The director almost had a coronary when a security guard brought me to his office. The poor dapper white-haired gentleman stood up in his chair & gasped. (The Mona Lisa had been slashed shortly before that.)

We all survived.



Steven K #1



Steven K #2



Steven K #3



Rob Sandor

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I went on to the School of Visual Arts which was in its puberty.

I studied with some pretty great instructors, Marshall Arisman & Robert Weaver, among them, their work, esthetic & support had a profound influence on me.

That's when I got very into photography & the darkroom. I think in retrospect that, beyond the excitement of creating images I was comfortable with the space it allowed me to be an observer, recording the world around me while keeping my safe distance.

There, at SVA, I met a wonderful women, my one & only girlfriend. We hung out endlessly, finally dated and eventually lived together for years, were very much in love, yes, including hot sex. We were a couple who grew up in the late 60's: awakening to sex, drugs, rock & roll, and politics. Woodstock, The Filmore East, The Living Theater, Hair, anti-war demonstrations, be-ins in the park, what an incredible time to be alive together!

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After graduating from SVA I was compelled to go to a community college for 4 years rather than Viet Nam. I could not even consider "pretending" to be gay at that place & time...much too close to home. My one female partner and I had a pretty ideal life together. We decided, like any self-respecting hippie couple would, to leave En-Why-See?(thanks to our friend J.Edgar) driving cross country in a jalopy Chevy, camping out in Colorado, for example, until it snowed! We were on a mission to have a new life.

All along I photographed the scene & my beautiful mate, these were such heady times, pun intended.)

As fate had it we wound up in Malibu B.M.(before Manson). Life was beautiful but we and our other hippie couple friends were domestics to the stars: gardening, housekeeping, baby sitting, horse sitting, house-sitting. For two New Yorkers like us this situation was less than perfect.

During this time my repressed homosexuality really started to weigh on me.

My love understood and supported me in trying to cope with it.

Well, I answered an ad in The L.A Free press: GAY COUPLE LOOKING FOR A THIRD PERSON, God it even had a peace sign on it!

Drove to Seal Beach had vanilla sex with them in their very discrete suburban home,

this included a sex room complete with waterbed, psychedelic lights, music pumping,

all totally positive, there was no shame.

After this experience the damn burst! Sex with other men had a whole new dimension and depth. It basically was the end of my heterosexual life, just like that..."so this is what it's supposed to be".

We moved back to New York and broke-up. It was such a painful time.

Then my focus, obsession if you will, was on male beauty & sensuality.

There followed a ten year tangent living in the country on a gay "com-

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mune". (we all knew each other from NYC.) We were playing out our fantasies of getting back to the Earth but for all the idealism and idyllic surroundings it became just another dysfunctional family. In retrospect it seems that one of my roles was documenting our alternative scene in photographs and art, which I gladly did.

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Ten years later or so I moved back to NYC. I did many graphic design projects and a great deal of photography as well. Much of this included photo-editing several books on male sexuality and erotica, often including my own work.

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There were also many male nude photo shoots, which some would call, "soft porn".

I consider this a form of flattery, since considering myself an artist I've always felt that

by definition, whatever I did creatively was...ART. ("some say garbage, some say art")

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During this time I also did a great deal of journalistic photography, much on the club scene of the 1980's.

This included male nudes, strippers and club celebrities.

Much of my photography appeared in gay publications, some long gone, including

The New York Native newspaper, and magazines: Christopher Street, Mandate, Honcho, Playguy and In Touch.

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At this juncture I am working on a book that focuses on the underside of the NYC club scene of the 80's, not Studio 54 as they never let me in, that is until it closed & reopened as a gay club, then I had a press pass.

Hopefully this book will reflect the wild & wonderful scene and stir up some great memories.

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I became HIV+about 8 years ago. It was good old fashioned date rape. No saint here but after living through the AIDS WAR unprotected sex was not in my playbook...one of life's little ironies. You lay down with dogs, etc.

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I continue to do figure studies. People encourage me to paint but as an artist living in NYC I lack the studio space. For me drawing and photography remains the purest form of expression.

The artist may be contacted at sketcherxx@yahoo.com.