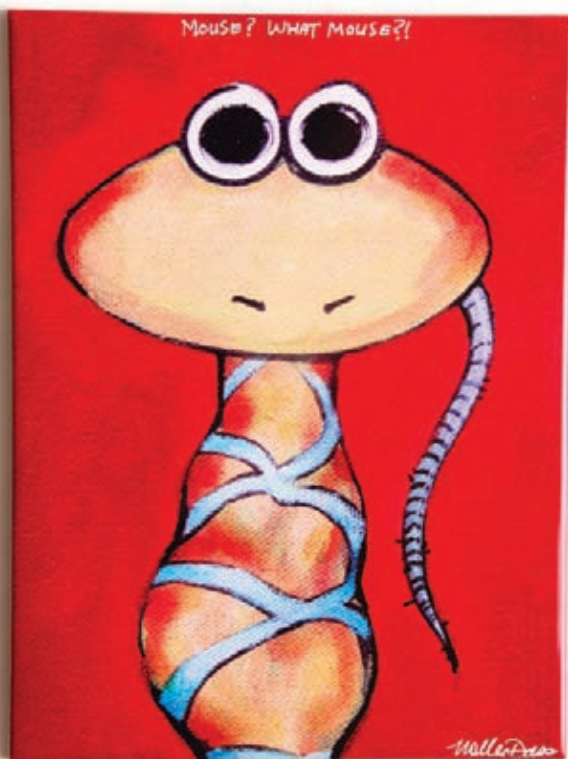




Dass says she really doesn't know why people respond so positively to her art. "I feel really lucky," she says. "A lot of my paintings make people laugh. People tell me the most wonderful things. I think, 'Wow, that's amazing to me.' It's a strange way of being connected to people but also very isolated."

Despite this occasional sense of isolation, Dass says she resists the stereotype of the suffering artist. She doesn't have any romantic addictions or bad habits, and says she likes being around people and having fun. Perhaps it is this sense of engagement that gives her work its inimitable sense of brightness and joy. "I just have fun doing the silly stuff," she says, noting that for one of her first art projects when she was 17 she simply drew a circle – a harbinger of things to come. "What's amazing is that my style was inside of me before I even knew it."

There have also been those folks who have told Dass, "I like your art against my better judgment," as though her artimals are somehow inferior because they lack the severity and integrity of, say, a Caravaggio. This doesn't bother her. "I think it would be extremely narcissistic to think that everyone would like my artwork," she says. "My art isn't for everyone, and I'm okay with that. I see so many smiles that I don't mind if people have their different opinions of what I do."

As an earning, full-time artist, Dass tries to give back as much as she can to the community that fostered and supports her. She donates many of her paintings to auction, and part of the proceeds from all sales support such organizations as FOOD for Lane County, Pasado's Safe Haven and Greenhill Human Society, to name just a few.

As for future projects, Dass says she's been considering writing a kid's book. "I'm always looking for something new to try," she says. "You just have to stick with it and be passionate and not give up." **GG**

Artwork by Noelle Dass, including prints, paintings, tiles and T-shirts (kids & adults) are available at the Holiday Market at the Lane County Fairgrounds, or online at noelledass.com

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