

Edna Hibel



Beatrice and Baby
Oil and Charcoal on Silk
30" x 23½"

Edna Sibel

An Artist's Story of Love and Compassion

MILLIE CLARKSON WITH EDNA SIBEL AND THEODORE PLOTKIN



PELICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY
GRETNA 2006

COPYRIGHT © 2006
BY MILLIE CLARKSON

ART COPYRIGHT © 2006
BY HIBEL STUDIO, INC.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

*THE WORD "PELICAN" AND THE DEPICTION OF A PELICAN
ARE TRADEMARKS OF PELICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC.,
AND ARE REGISTERED IN THE U.S. PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE.*

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Clarkson, Millie, 1939-

Edna Hibel : an artist's story of love and compassion / by Millie Clarkson
with Edna Hibel and Theodore Plotkin.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-58980-427-2 (hardcover : alk. paper)

1. Hibel, Edna. 2. Artists—United States—Biography. I. Hibel, Edna. II.
Plotkin, Theodore. III. Title.

N6537.H48C63 2006

709.2—dc22

[B]

2006015104

*"Growing up with Edna Hibel, as Told by Andy Plotkin," copyright © 2006 by
Andy Plotkin, used by permission.*



Printed in Singapore

Published by Pelican Publishing Company, Inc.
1000 Burmaster Street, Gretna, Louisiana 70053

Contents

Preface	7
Chapter 1: Our Mothers Before Us	11
Hibel's Ancestors	13
Chapter 2: Hibel's Formative Years	19
Chapter 3: Vibrant Palette: Mixing Paint, Family Life, and Strife	45
Growing up with Edna Hibel, as Told by Andy Plotkin	55
The Birth of the Mother and Child Theme	61
Chapter 4: The Founding of the Edna Hibel Galleries	63
Edna through Tod's Eyes	69
Chapter 5: Global Sketch	79
Europe in Color	79
An Artist in Asia	85
The Russian Palette	95
Chapter 6: Hibel Recaptures the Renaissance	99
Lithographs	103
Serigraphy	113
Porcelains and Plates	113
Limited Editions and Dolls	121
Multimedia	121
Chapter 7: Hibel Museum of Art	123
Edna Tours Museums	129
Edna Hibel Society	131
Chapter 8: Worldwide Acclaim for a Humble Humanitarian	135
A Brush with Genius: The Leonardo da Vinci Award	137
Special Commissions	141
The Love Letter	147
Acknowledgments	151
Chronology	153
Works in Permanent Public Collections	163
Index	165



Preface

Why am I writing this book? That's what my family, friends, clients, and fellow workers keep asking me. I've heard advice, criticism, encouragement, ridicule, compliments, sarcasm, and from my husband, Jim, "You're spending too much money and time away from *me*."

I saw my first Hibel, *Mother and Child*, when I was twenty years old, pregnant with my third child, having just realized that my first husband, whom I married at seventeen, had a serious mental disorder. That first piece of art was in a box of Hibel notecards. We couldn't afford nice paintings, so I bought the notecards and taped one in each room of our dingy apartment. Looking at those cards got me through incredibly hard times.

I met Edna Hibel in person forty years later at the Gift Tree, a prestigious gift shop in Naples, Florida. She had been appearing at the store, one of her favorite art dealerships, for the previous ten years. I had often seen the notices, but this time, on the day before her scheduled appearance, I went to view her art.

Her presence, as projected through the numerous works of art displayed, captivated me. I decided then and there to invest some of my hard-earned money on several of the most precious things I could leave as an inheritance for my children, Hibel artwork. I spent about two hours in the gift shop, mesmerized as Paul Stanford, the owner, displayed the portfolio of Hibel's genius. He shared all kinds of stories, ranging from her being awarded the Leonardo da Vinci

World Award of Arts, the highest achievement that can be bestowed on an artist, to examples of her sweet personality and sense of humor.

I was standing next to a framed picture from Theodore Plotkin's *The Sun Dial Ticking*, a beautiful volume of Hibel sketches and Plotkin's haiku poems. Theodore Plotkin and Edna have been happily married for more than sixty-five years. This picture was entitled *Grandmother and Child*. I felt as if that image were calling to me, haunting me, and I thought the central figure looked just like me with one of my fifteen grandchildren. Of course I had to buy it, along with several other pieces.

The next afternoon, I literally dragged my husband to the gift shop, camera in hand, to meet and be photographed with Edna Hibel as she personally signed her artwork for me. I knelt beside her and said, "Oh, Edna, I love your work." She put her arm around me and gave me a hug and said, "Well, I love you." There was an aura around her that brought to mind what it would be like to be in the presence of Mother Teresa. To put it simply, I fell in love with this woman!

I was hooked; I had to know more about this amazing person and ultimately write her story. I wanted to share with others my discovery of Edna Hibel, who is truly a humble, humanitarian genius full of love and compassion, and now she is one of my best friends.

MILLIE CLARKSON

Opposite:
Grandmother and Child
Conté Crayon on Paper
14" x 9"

Edna Hibel