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REVIEW: Hi-Fi (highlights of fine arts)

By Marty Fugate , Herald-Tribune / Monday, October 15, 2012

Much can happen in 50 years. In 1962, Sarasota still had a reputation as an "artists colony." Visual artists gravitated here because the weather was great and rents were cheap. In 2012, the weather's still fine, though rents aren't so cheap. Artists are still hanging on. Where they'll be in 2062 is anyone's guess -- but the future can take care of itself. The current survey exhibit at [State of the Arts Gallery](#) looks back on the last 50 years. It's a look back at the legacy of Sarasota's working artists, men and women who made art their career -- and made their careers in our city, sometimes against the odds. Obviously, this is just a sample of their track record -- highlights, as it says in the title implies. Here are some highlights of the highlights.

1960s

Syd Solomon's "Whip Way" (1964) packs a lot of punch. It's a swirling mass of color, dark blue in the bottom right, in a dramatic contrast to the lighter, pastel pinks and calligraphic smears around it. The masses of color flow like an ocean current, a hypnotic cycle that captures your eye. It's an energetic, wonderful work. A pretty image on this blog; to feel its power, you really have to see it in person.



Syd Solomon's "Whip Way"



Itallo Botti's "Waterfront"

1970s

Italo Botti's "Waterfront" is an energetic glimpse of an Italian seaside village. Rows of yellowish houses crowd the waterfront, which has its own crowd of sailboats. Botti flattens everything into a single plane, in an effect resembling the depth-of-field distortions of a telephoto lens. The chaos of the composition hovers at the edge of recognition. You can see the houses are houses and the boats are boats -- but just barely. They keep turning into triangles and rectangles of color. It's a playful approach with some affinity to the jittery, fragmented color fields of LeRoy

Neiman's sports paintings.) At the same time, Botti remains grounded in observation. The blue hills in the background are muted with the effect of atmospheric distance. This isn't simply a world he's creating; it's a world he sees.



Frank Colson's "Han Horses"

1990s

Back in the 1990s, Chinese archaeologists were digging around. They found something--stylized sculpture depicting horses from the Han dynasty. The discovery prompted Sarasota ceramic artist Frank Colson to create his own stable of horses in the same artistic vocabulary. His slip-cast figures here are mostly grey in tone with a subtle sheen of green. They stand about 20" tall -- and seem ready to gallop away at any moment.

2000s

Andrea Dascha Reich's "Complex Red" is a bubbly explosion of color. As the title implies, red is the dominant color -- but it's not the only color. Reich works with a painstaking, multilayered resin technique. In this work, there's no single flat picture plane; her painting greets the eye with layer upon translucent layer. Each is packed with squiggly fumaroles of green, orange, white. It's a work you can get lost in. It's complex indeed.



Andrea Dasha Reich's "Complex Red"

EXHIBIT REVIEW:
Hi-Fi (highlights of fine arts): runs through Dec. 31 at State of the Arts Gallery, 1525 State St., Sarasota; 955-2787.



MARTY FUGATE

Marty Fugate is an area-based critic, screenwriter, science fiction writer, humorist and cartoonist. He was the co-editor / co-publisher of "The Sarasota Arts Review" from 1989 to 2000 and the A&E editor and theater and visual art critic and staff cartoonist for the Observer Group newspapers from 2001 to 2007. He now writes about theater, visual art and architecture for the Sarasota Herald-Tribune. For links to his fiction writing, go to: [Marty Fugate](#). He can be reached by [email](#) Make sure to "Like" Arts Sarasota on Facebook for news and reviews of the arts.

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