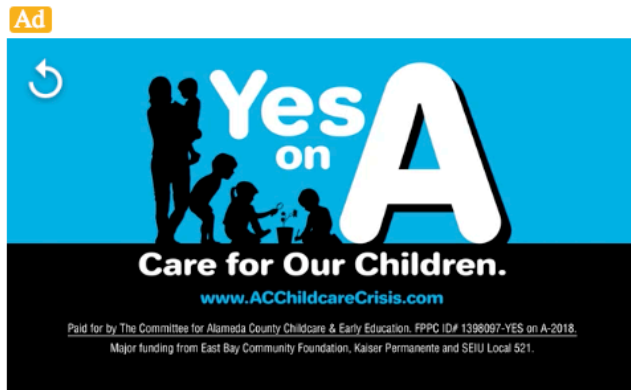


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Vessel Gallery showcases a survey of Tim Rice's paintings

By **Kenneth Baker** Published 2:26 pm, Wednesday, February 26, 2014



Bay Area art followers may have seen the work of Berkeley abstract painter **Tim Rice** without realizing it, so irregularly does he show, relative to how often his work changes complexion. Oakland's Vessel Gallery opens a small survey of it Friday.

On his website, Rice aptly quotes the late **Donald Richie** on Japanese aesthetic thinking: "Many Japanese writers prize a quality of indecision. ... It is ... not the assumptions of the writer's controlling mind that are followed but, as the Japanese phrase it, the brush itself."

Rice, 63, and I spoke by phone about his show.

Q: As an abstract painter, do you feel isolated here?

A: I've always felt kind of alienated, but there are a few of us, some other painters I respect, who've kept at for a long time. It's not easy - with the proliferation of digital imagery, it's hard to get people's attention. But ... there's a kind of pluralism going on that lets a lot happen. The bad thing is there's just so *much*.

Q: You sometimes make dramatic changes from painting to painting. What drives them?

A: I've been accused of being schizophrenic ... but what's really at the base of it is curiosity about materials. I set different goals for each piece, and each one is a kind of adventure.

Q: Do you use tools other than brushes?

A: In the calligraphic work, it's setting down a base color and moving other colors around on it. At first I was using a palette knife, then I found something - I think it's for ceramics - that's basically a stylus with a rubber tip. It tends to build up at its edges the color you're working with, and that introduces shadow.

Q: What, besides other art, feeds your work?

A: I'm really interested in being aware of my surroundings continually. ... Also, working improvisationally, all this stuff comes up in an accidental way and I work with it as it does. It's about translating a visual experience in a particular way, but not a descriptive way.

Q: Did you or **Lonnie Lee, Vessel's curator, select the work?**

A: I let her choose. ... But I wanted to discourage her from having too much bright color because I'm trying to move away from that.

If you go

Tim Rice: Paintings: Opens Friday; reception March 7. Through April 12. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, 3-9 p.m. first Friday. Vessel Gallery, 471 25th St., Oakland. (510) 893-8800. www.vessel-gallery.com.