



PROVIDENCE RI November 2016

PRESS RELEASE – for additional information and images, please contact Paula Martiesian at 401-521-7634 or at roxie.rose@verizon.net.

The BankRI Galleries present:

BankRI Pitman Street Gallery presents: “Pastels by John Riedel,” December 1, 2016 through January 4, 2017. The branch is located at 137 Pitman Street in Providence. Hours are Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, contact www.bankri.com or call 401 574-1330.

MEET THE ARTIST - JOHN RIEDEL

It's not easy gaining access to the studio of Providence painter John Riedel. It's not that Riedel isn't friendly; the shy, soft-spoken painter is clearly an approachable kind of guy. It's just that the first floor of the corner house he shares with his wife, painter Ida Schmulowitz, in the Fox Point section of Providence is jammed packed with forty years' worth of paintings, pastels and watercolors - literally several hundred works of art.

A narrow path barely big enough for one of the couple's three cats provides the only access to Riedel's studio. Plants, tubes of paint and art books vie for air and floor space. Clearly, there is one abiding passion in this house and that passion is painting.

Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Riedel's dad worked for the U.S. Army and as a consequence, the family moved around quite a bit. Riedel lived in seven different states from the time of his birth until he graduated high school. His interest in painting came late in his teenage years. One day the fifteen-year-old Riedel found a box of paints in his mother's closet. He set up a still life and started painting. No art classes or inspirational teacher for Riedel. He “did it on his own.” With some encouragement from his mother, he applied to the Rhode Island School of Design and was accepted. From then on in, Riedel hasn't left Providence and hasn't stopped painting.

Riedel's paintings and pastels are bright, vibrant still lifes and landscapes. He is a throw back to the old-fashioned painter who works from life under natural light. Yet his works are not realistic; they are instead a distinct departure from what is in front of him. He manipulates space and color to create in his oil paintings an atmosphere every bit as deep and dense as a tropical jungle. His pastels are airier, brighter scenes of garden and urban green, based in reality, but bordering on abstraction. Planes of color intersect with strong line. A tree could be a squiggle of lavender or a scrubbing of green, but there's no doubt that it is a tree. Riedel is dedicated to making art that combines reality with abstract color fields. His deft use of color makes it worth a trip to negotiate the path to his studio.

The BankRI Galleries are curated by Paula Martiesian, a Providence-based artist and arts advocate.

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