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FLORIDA



ROBERT FLEISHER AT 101 / EXHIBIT

Robert Fleisher can paint. His ability and dexterity are on display in his exhibition at 101/exhibit in Miami's Design District. The show, which continues the gallery's tradition of outsider art programming, consists of both watercolors and oil paintings.

The watercolors are particularly skillful. Painting with watercolors is notoriously troublesome: the paint is finicky and the marks are irreversible. The amount of intricacy and detail Fleisher puts into his paintings is admirable. Heavily textured, gestured and sharp, the works do not shy away from troublesome drapery or complex minutia.

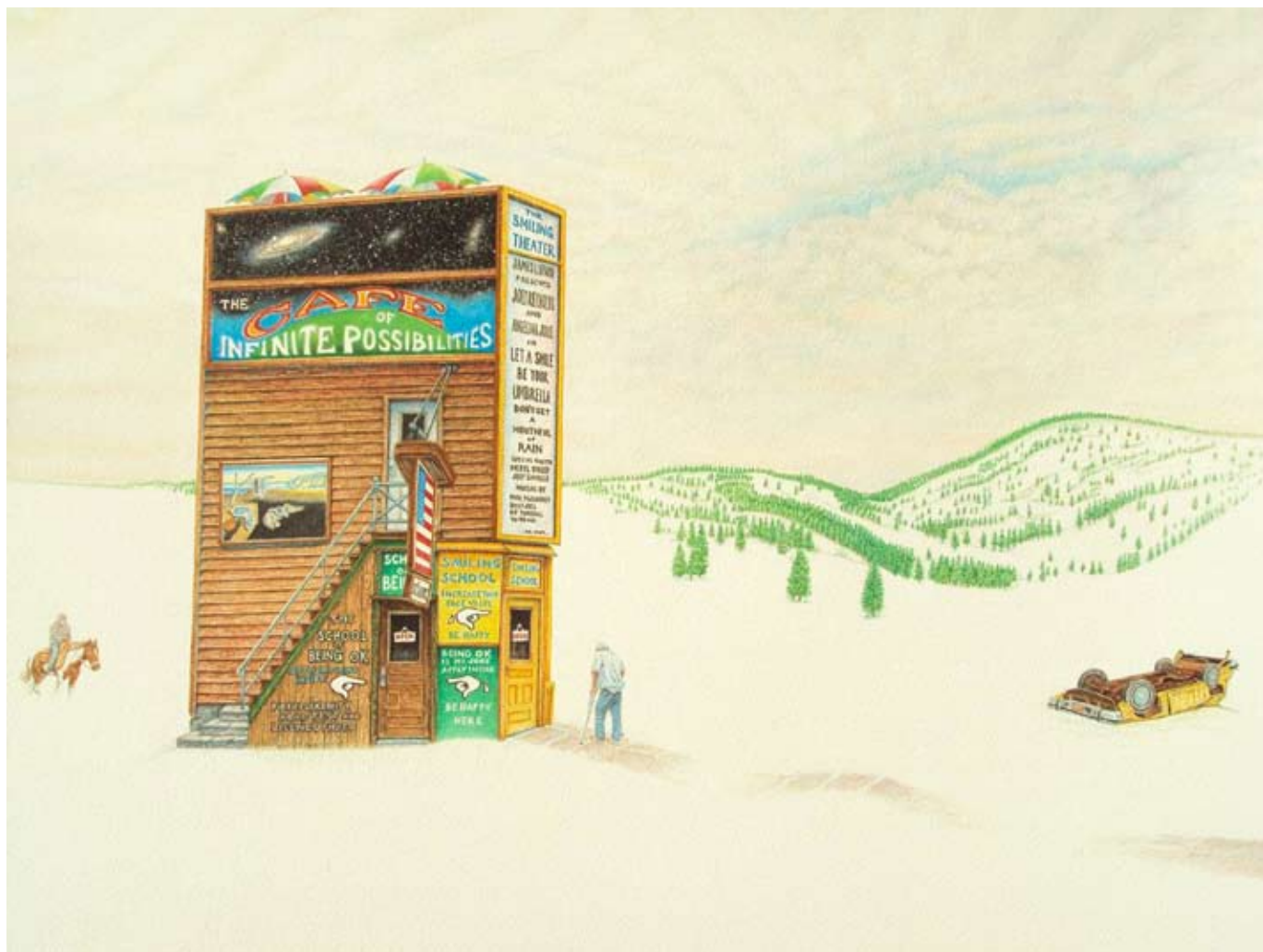
Robert Fleisher was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1952 and currently works out of Miami Beach. He is a self-taught artist. The reason this is interesting is not only because of the rendering, but also the conceptual focus of his pieces.

These works do not seem to be aware of, nor are they inter-

ested in, looking like or referencing contemporary art. Rather, they aim to intimate an authentic sort of psychedelia that does not feel disingenuous or derivative.

Further, full of pop culture references and folksy moments, these images could easily replace a Norman Rockwell illustration on the cover of a contemporary *Saturday Evening Post* were it not for one thing: their existential loneliness. This isolation is not only depicted on straight faces and turned backs, but also in the breakdown of spatial realities. A background may be blank; a park bench may have no legs.

Some of Fleisher's oil paintings depict this loneliness in the dwarfing of human bodies in such intensely urban settings as Times Square or Grand Central Station. With great aplomb, Fleisher not only presents the actual visual onslaught of overbearing architecture, bright colors and pushy text, but also the effect of these forces on humanity.



All images are courtesy of the artist and 101/exhibit. **Robert Fleisher, Smiling Theater, 2009**, watercolor/paper, 22" x 30".



Benches with Umbrella, 2009, watercolor/paper, 22" x 30".



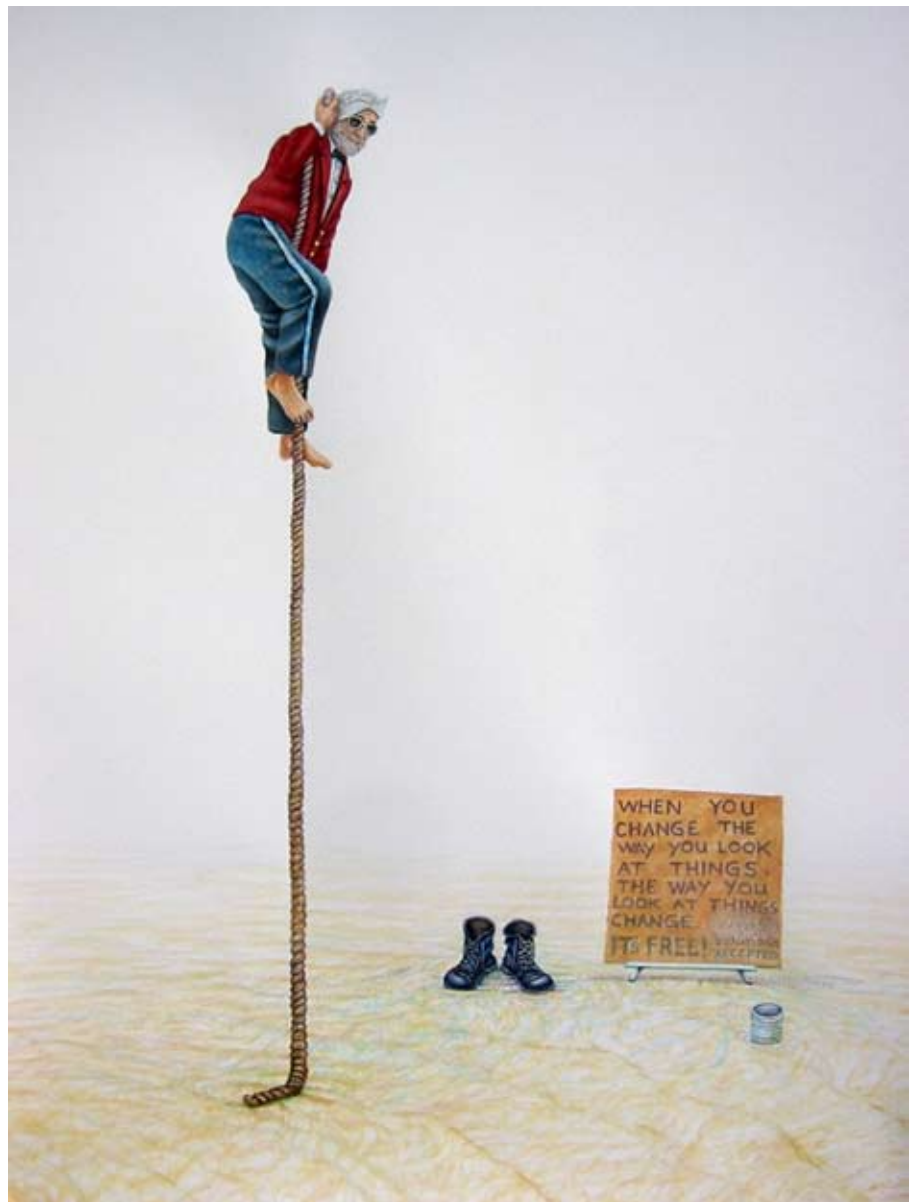
Free Will or Fate Café, 2009, watercolor/paper, 22" x 30".

The work is by no means just doom and gloom. Some of the watercolors feature odd buildings ("The Café of Infinite Possibilities", "The Smiling Theater") covered with a text of their own. While the text may actually be advertisements, it does not attempt to pound information and slogans into the subconscious; instead, it questions and investigates how to move into an uncertain future.

Lastly, a group of different sorts of images attempts to portray some answers. Each of the pieces addresses the possibilities and serious power of the cultural communication of creativity: music, art, general questioning. An answer might readily be found in one of the most simple, straightforward images in the exhibition. A girl bends down to acknowledge and reach out to some pigeons. Adult pant legs seem to rush past behind her, but the girl's compassion for this unseemly urban bird might offer the simplest and most profound solution: Be kind and slow down. ■

Robert Fleisher's exhibition is on view through April 10, 2010.
101 / exhibit.101 NE 40th Street. Miami, FL, 33137. Phone: 305 573 2101.
www.101exhibit.com

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Rope Trick no.2, 2008, watercolor / paper 24" x 30".