

# The Boston Globe

## ARTS/GALLERIES

### Contrasting styles

By Cate McQuaid GLOBE CORRESPONDENT JANUARY 12, 2016

Gallery NAGA has mounted shows of two longtime Boston painters whose work couldn't be more different. Louis Risoli's dizzying abstractions – thick with paint and razzle-dazzle – wink, joke, and dance off the walls. Robert Ferrandini's moody, glimmering watercolors pull you in and under like a narcotic.

Risoli glories in the possibilities of painting. He plays with surface, color, pattern, material, and perception. "Quantum Communication," a large-scale piece, looks like two completely different paintings splintering together in a serpentine vortex.

One is vaporous orange and turquoise, seeping and dripping across the canvas. The other, with dense, slick paint, features spirals and loops in yellow, red, and touches of black. For fun, Risoli throws in more motifs: checkerboards in party tones, a flourish of royal blue. It's a thrill-ride for the eyes.

Ferrandini suffered a stroke in 2001, losing use of his painting hand. He taught himself to paint with his left hand, and abandoned the more



Louis Risoli's "Quantum Communication"

complicated studio tasks oil painting presents, switching to watercolors.

He has continued to paint his signature imaginary landscapes, mossy and dense – quite a feat in watercolor, which is so much less discrete than oil paint (touches of gouache help). And although they



Robert Ferrandini's "untitled (12.18.14)"

are layered — in real life, you might need a machete to hike through these landscapes — the watercolors feel airier and dreamier than the oils did, perhaps populated by ghosts or wood sprites.

Ferrandini's "untitled (12.18.14)" features a crawling network of branches and green leaves on one side, while the other side is almost pearlescent, with a sturdy, spiny bush rising from a rosy little hill

bush rising from a rosy little hill like a genie from a bottle. In "untitled (7.5.15)," a lipstick-kiss of a blossom hangs from a delicate spray of leaves, and a passage of sky blue glows between dense blankets of mauve and gold. These landscapes open in unexpected places, and gentle light shines through.