

Sumptuous cosmos

Some of these paintings by
Louis Risoli look good enough to eat

by Tom Grabosky

'Paintings' by Louis Risoli,
and 'Four Photographers,'
at Gallery NAGA, through Jan. 30.

Louis Risoli has become one of Boston's most consistently first-rate abstract painters. Over the past 10 years he has refined and developed his own particular brand of abstract expressionism, and one can see in new work currently on view at Gallery NAGA (at 67 Newbury St.) recent examples of that progressive evolution. Risoli is an enticing colorist, and in these new canvases he explores various color schemes, producing lush and vibrant results. Utilizing a palette which favors bright, high energy reds, yellows and greens, the artist adorns his bulky (often 6-8 inch deep) oblong and rectangular canvases with shapes and patterns that suggest designs for some neo-primitive cosmology. Expressively rendered spirals and fragmented organic forms seem to swirl and float against gently modulated backgrounds of solid color.

There is a distinctly uplifting quality to Risoli's work. It's not merely the color, although that's certainly an important aspect, but rather the straightforward, unself-conscious handling of the paint which keeps the work immediate without its ever seeming hurried or unsure. These are intuitive paintings, although that intuition is tempered with skill and informed by experience.

In "Navigating by Starlight" Risoli uses fleshy pinks, pale greens and accents of black which are generously applied, making for an underlying sensuality that has long been an important element in his work. "Sign" is a particularly sensual piece—and it incorporates orange/yellows and yellow/greens glossed over with a juicy "wet"



LOUIS RISOLI's 'Parallel Heaven.'

Photo: Dan A. Soper

surface that looks almost good enough to eat.

One would be hard pressed to find a single weak or negative element in Risoli's work. He paints unabashed delightful pictures which celebrate life and radiate bliss. In a time when so much contemporary art is over-politicized and visually flat, one savors the uncomplicated pleasure of experiencing these lovely pictures.

Kocol a standout

Also on view this month at NAGA is a selection of work by four area photographers. Organized by gallery e