

## Review in *Huffington Post*, June 12, 2013

### [Haiku Reviews: From Atmospheric Abstractions To Semi-Operas](#)

Phillis Ideal paints expansively, regardless of the size of her visual field, laying out her abstractions with broadly described areas of color. The breadth of that description incorporates both painterly gesture and sharply defined contour, a combination of texture – abetted by a restrained but still succulent palette – that opens up visual possibility. The overlays of gesture, including scratch and scribble, and geometrically defined edge continue around and atop the major forms, providing that much more intricate and engaging a composition. In their confluence of the hard edge and the painterly, Ideal’s paintings evince a sophisticated grasp of American postwar painting – sophisticated enough to add to, even renew, it while remaining distinctive and up-to-date. Similarly, Tom Martinelli’s paintings and works on paper build on a prior conception of visual stimulus; but in his case, he troubles as much as personalizes the given aesthetic, his gridworks of dots – evocative of American minimalism and European “optical” art – destabilizing rather than anchoring normal vision. By painting each black orb on top of a “stack” of different-colored dots – each dot peeking out from behind the next – Martinelli sets up a woozy visual misregistration reminiscent of cheap poster printing. These paintings date from the mid-1990s, so they answer not just to ‘60s pop-op and ‘70s pattern painting but to ‘80s neo-geo, looking at what happens when the hand – and then the eye – makes the same slight mistake over and over again. **Grid-dotting occurs in Carol Brown Goldberg’s paintings as well, but as part of a far denser conception of visual field – more akin to Ideal’s inclusive formal language than to Martinelli’s dogged reductivism. Indeed, Goldberg’s recent canvases are veritable stews of disparate shapes and colors, grids of various types jostling and overlaying one another, spiced with seemingly random strands of color, flavored with mists of color, and conforming to symmetric, almost heraldic superstructures. They infer both the regimentation of electronic wiring and the seeming chaos of the myriad data such wiring transmits. Goldberg’s tidy cacophonies drop us into the dark heart of our digital universe, where all the information we rely on has become abstracted into pulses.** (David Richard, 544 S. Guadalupe St., Santa Fe; closed. [www.davidrichardgallery.com](http://www.davidrichardgallery.com)) – Peter Frank

*HuffPost Arts&Culture's Haiku Reviews is a monthly feature where invited critics review exhibitions and performances in short form. Some will be in the traditional haiku form of 5x7x5 syllables, others might be a sonnet and others might be more free-form. This month, George Heymont, Laurence Vittes and Peter Frank give their quick takes on performing and visual arts.*