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**VISUAL ART**

**Interview with Andrea Dasha Reich**  
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# Interview with Andrea Dasha Reich by Pamela Beck

*by Sarasota Visual Art's ARTdart  
Columnist, Pamela Beck*

There are as many ways to think about art as there are to create it. Join Pamela Beck in her column, ARTdart, as she explores and considers the different perspectives that define the art world.

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## **Andrea Dasha Reich Artist Statement:**

"I'm as affected by the frog I saw yesterday, sitting on the lit globe of my outside light as I am by the distant memories of a gray hut I once saw in China or a blue mosaic tile I saw 30 years ago when I lived in Israel. My biggest influences come from the many cultures I've deeply experienced, from nature and from the legacy of art and invention passed through the DNA in the women of my family to me. These join together and feel like an invisible hand guiding me in my work, where it's as if colors take over my whole being." – Andrea Dasha Reich

## **Bio:**

Reich was born in the Czech Republic in 1946 to a progressive and creative family. Intellectually at odds with prevailing Communist ideologies, the family emigrated to Israel in 1960 where Reich studied at the Bezalel Academy in Jerusalem before moving to NYC in 1966. Her early success and travels as a corporate executive and designer in the fashion/textile business, exposed Reich to unusual hand crafts, exotic objects and a variety of colors and textures that later appeared in her art work.

Reich has shown in solo exhibitions in Miami, Aspen, New York City, Boston and Denver and many group shows including MASS MoCa, North Adams, MA; Zimmer Museum, Los Angeles; and State of the Arts Gallery in Sarasota that represents Reich locally. Reich is represented by Etra Gallery in Miami and Pismo Gallery in Aspen and Denver. Studio Director, Anastasia Maracle, runs Reich's large Sarasota studio, allowing Reich to concentrate on her creating her art. Reich will be showing at Artexpo & Solo in Miami, Dec. 5-9, 2012.



**Your work is many layered and looks 3D. Please explain how you create this effect:**

*"Tess's Paradise" 2012 – 4' x 10' (with the artist)*

It's impossible to see the layers of my work in a photograph because it's multi dimensional. If you think of a BLT sandwich, it's a similar idea- one thing placed on top of another. I have the image of the final work in my mind before I begin. It can be up to 5 layers of epoxy resin that I work on one layer at a time. I start with the first layer of epoxy resin into which I put shapes, acrylic textures, metals, painting with inks and dyes and clays. Then I do another layer on top of the last. Between each layer are many materials. I continue this layering and filling in between the layers until I think the work is done. The result is an artwork that resembles glass both visually and tactically, but unlike glass, it's virtually indestructible.

**Both your personal style and your art are bright, colorful, bold and whimsical- are these traits that you think describe you?**

Although I can be quite serious, I prefer to laugh about life and enjoy humor in others. When I work, it's truly a pleasure for me to be in my studio. I love working. I know other artists who find it painful to make their art. But why would I want to do something that hurts me? I'm not a masochist.



*"Miami Red" 2011 – 70" x 50"*

**Why do you think people are often afraid to live with bright colors?**

Color affects a person emotionally. It's easier to live in a white or cream-colored room. Colors cause bold reactions and it might be difficult for some people to have such strong feelings. It can scare them. I think certain colors can connect you with emotions you didn't know you had. Many people don't know what to do with those emotions once they surface.

## **What does the process of working on one of your pieces feel like to you?**

I converse with my paintings all the time. I feel like a conductor. I have to keep those colors in line or encourage them: this one may be too strong, that one too shy. It's difficult to work with color. I have to keep them all in constant balance.

## **You lived in NYC for 33 years, mainly in TriBeCa. What's the difference working there versus Sarasota?**

There's a big difference. It's obviously brighter here. This led me to choosing brighter colors. Also, I incorporated nature more fully into my work and exchanged house images for flowers.

## **You often work on commission. People ask you for a particular size, feeling or color palette. Please explain how this worked in your most recent commission:**

My last commission was the largest I've ever done: 10 feet x 4 feet. That's the size the client asked me to do. She saw my work in a Miami exhibition and fell in love with two of the pieces. She asked if I could combine the colors of one with the images of the other. Of course, it's not a science, but I tried to respect the essence of what she wanted and render that in this last piece. She just received the work and is very happy, which makes me feel the same as well. It's very satisfying for me to make someone else happy. If I can do that with my art, that's the best.

## **What would be your fantasy commission?**

I would like to design a piece for a huge airport lobby. People have so much time while they're waiting there. I would enjoy knowing that people were looking at my work without rushing. Because my work is so complex and intricate, it takes many viewings to see all that is going on. People always tell me that they see things they've never seen before each time they look at the same work.

## **What do you see as the role of the artist today in society?**

I can't generalize as every artist does what he or she wants. Some like to express anger, ugliness or other social inadequacies that ail us. I paint for beauty in the world and for myself most of all. I like people to be happy and touched by my art- for it to evoke emotions they may not even understand. People see different things in my work, like religious letters or special messages. I always agree, as it's great that they see something they find important. If I would attach a specific meaning to my work, I would be taking away their imagination.



## **What is one thing that disturbs you about the art world?**

I don't doubt the importance of museums, curators, critics, artists and dealers challenging people's minds to understand art. What I don't like and am impatient about is the change in art criticism. Historically, the "value" of art was the gold standard in art. Today the question of "value" has been replaced by "what does it mean?". This opens a Pandora's Box of endless chatter by those who have no way of knowing what an artist is thinking. (Often even the artist him/herself doesn't know.)

## **Who are people you would enjoy spending time with and why?**

Georges Sand, because she was an independent, creative woman and lived her life as she wished. Yoko Ono and Antonia Fraser for the same reasons. And Woody Allen because he shows us how to laugh at ourselves.

*Andrea Dasha Reich website: [www.andreadashareich.com](http://www.andreadashareich.com)*

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*"Gray Tess" 2012 -36" x 54"*