

## Review: Art Season Off to a Strong Start at Goodwin and Walker

By: Michael Paglia

September marks the beginning of the new art season, with the long-running shows of summer finally closing and the first of the fall shows opening. [Goodwin Fine Art](#) is coming out strong with a pair of heavy-duty solos: *Rebecca Cuming: XXI Century Field* and *David Hicks: Stone Flora & Blue Cuttings*. Gallery owner Tina Goodwin's pairing of the Cuming paintings and the Hicks ceramics is inspired. Though the works are very different visually, they share a conceptual underpinning: What start as depictions of plants wind up as abstracts.



"Kandahar," by Rebecca Cuming, mixed media on canvas.

Wes Magyar

The magisterial and sometimes monumental Cuming paintings, which are in the front, operate on two distinct levels. They're lyrical floral abstractions, but they also make political statements. A good example of this is "Kandahar," a huge horizontal panel depicting a field of red flowers that's organized according to one-point perspective, with the guiding lines visible in the composition. In the extreme foreground are rough approximations of the blossoms, which recede into tiny splashes as they march toward the horizon line at the top. Cuming's methods here border on action painting, with the pigments appearing to have been applied quickly,

# Westword

with splashes and smears. The resulting surface is highly three-dimensional, covered with lumps and hollows of paint. The political content of the piece is more subtle. The flowers Cuming has rendered are poppies, and Kandahar is a province in Afghanistan; thus, the real subject of the work is the opium trade. Even more explicit is "Dixie," its sunny palette of buff, sienna and cream contrasting with slave shackles that are nearly hidden by the cotton plants in the foreground.



Installation view: Paintings by Rebecca Cuming, ceramic sculpture by David Hicks.

Wes Magyar

A few of Hicks's ceramic sculptures are displayed among the Cuming paintings, but the bulk are in the back. Most of them relate to flowers, but some also refer to fruit, plants and even cut stems. Like Cuming's paintings, the sculptures have an ideological subtext, but the content here is more personal. The pieces reflect Hicks's disconnect from nature, as he views the farm fields near his home through the windshield of his car as he zooms past them. Probably the clearest expression of this separation are the sculptures made up of elaborate supporting frameworks of welded metal rods, onto which Hicks has mounted ceramic elements. For

# Westword

“Construction Rose,” he built a complex spider web of rods that were bent into loops to fit a variety of botanically derived ceramic shapes. The juxtaposition of the rods’ textural character and that of the shapes conveys the disconnection. Also bifurcated visually is “Char,” in which scores of individual black pendulum shapes are hung by individual cords from a bracket on the wall. More formally unified are several smaller ceramic sculptures from the artist’s “Clipping” series, which typically include a cylindrical, vessel-like shape surmounted by a twig or flower.



Installation view, ceramic sculpture by David Hicks.

Wes Magyar

**Rebecca Cuming and David Hicks, through October 28 at Tina Goodwin Fine Art, 1255 Delaware Street, 303-573-1255, [goodwinfineart.com](http://goodwinfineart.com).**

For Complete Review:

<http://www.westword.com/arts/denver-art-season-off-to-strong-start-at-walker-fine-art-goodwin-fine-art-9525932>