

# A no-strings style

## Violinist likes her freedom as a painter



RANDY BAZEMORE / Miami Herald Staff

Reva Freedman credits a poolside art class with inspiring her as a painter 25 years ago. 'I felt like this was the most exciting thing and I was hooked,' she says.

By IRENE LACHER

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There are two artistic sides to Reva Freedman, but one of them says it all. That's her late-blooming, visual artist side, which comes out in great splotches of color and glitter and melaleuca bark.

"I'm also a professional violinist," says the North Miami Beach resident. "I'd go to paint after a concert, and when you play the violin, everything has to be exact. So this is a reaction to the discipline you need to play the violin."

Freedman's exuberant paintings and collages are on display at Artifacts Art Salon, 1623 Michigan Ave., through May 10. There Freedman, who's in her 60s, is by far the most grown-up grownup in what has generally been a showcase for young artists.

Freedman likes it that way.

"I guess I'm the token old lady with all the young kids," she said.

"It's the same thing at Miami-Dade Community College," said her husband Morris, 72. "They ask her what she takes for a high."

Just for the record, she manages without. "Not just her work has a youthfulness, but she does," said Artifacts curator Howard Davis. "She's very energetic and eager to work with us, so we're happy to have her input." Freedman's first career was playing the violin professionally, a path she forged in her Canadian home, first at the Toronto Conservatory of Music and later at the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

She still plays violin with the Carevala Trio. Daughter Carol, 35, who studied at Juilliard, is the group's cellist. The trio has performed chamber music at such venues as the Hollywood Art and Culture Center, although these days, the curtain mostly goes up in Freedman's apartment in private performances for friends and fellow musicians.

Freedman likes it that way.

"Amateur is the best thing there is," she says. "When you're a professional, they give you money and push you around and everyone talks. But amateur is for love."

"I don't want everyone to tell me what I should or shouldn't do. I guess I'm a free spirit."

Freedman's art career took off 25 years ago almost as a fluke. She was taking a poolside art class at a Miami Beach hotel, on vacation from her New York home, when something clicked.

"I had a wonderful time," she says. "We were supposed to paint a photograph of a barn. I kept changing it. I made the barn disappear and turned it into a mountain. I felt like this was the most exciting thing and I was hooked."

"I'd had a misconception of what art was. I thought you had to have a natural ability for drawing when you were young. I didn't have that."

What she did have, she honed in classes at the Brooklyn Museum and the Art Students League of New York, where she still makes several pilgrimages a year. She has studied with Larry Rivers and Richard Pousette-Dart.

But when Freedman talks about her work, which has a folksy, naive feel, she talks about not getting bogged down in anything too cerebral.

"My style is to try to be fast and trust your instincts and don't fuss over every little thing. You can get so immersed in nothing that you lose a picture for its individual parts."

Freedman has also tried her hand at painting T-shirts, which she has sold through New York art galleries and Coconut Grove boutiques.

Not that she has found her resting point.

Says Freedman: "I haven't found my true vocation yet. I could do sculpture. I just don't want to do the same thing I did yesterday."

"Sometimes I think I'd love to be an art teacher, because you know what I'd teach? Nothing. I'd say, 'Take a chance.'"