

ARTSPEAK by Marty Fugate | Art Critic

A summer vacation for the mind

June, as they keep reminding us, is the start of hurricane season. Here's the good news: It's also art season — like every month in Sarasota. Two challenging exhibits at two courageous galleries will surely take your mind off the scary prophecies on the Weather Channel. Enjoy.

'It's Outside'

This exhibit at Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art takes a look at the natural world. (Fortunately, there are no hurricane paintings.) The visions range from objective to idiosyncratic. All will change your point of view. Here's a sample:

Grace Mitchell's "Tributary" is a night scene of an imposing cliff with a river running below it in the shadows and clouds boiling above it in the darkening sky. It's a subtle painting, layered with visual echoes. The raggedy tree line mirrors the feathery edges of the clouds; the river flows with the same crackling energy of the sky. Nature is a complicated system: the simplest scene only seems simple. Like all true artists, Mitchell teaches us to see.

Tom Judd's oil painting, "Diver" fuses two images together, like mismatched pieces from different puzzles. On the left: silhouettes of palm trees against a burning orange sky. On the right: a diver doing a backwards dive against a sky of cool blue. It's an excellent study in contrast.

Sophie Liu's oil painting, "Moment in Time," reveals an evanescent flash of the sun through a hole in the clouds — a scene across a space of empty ocean. At the bottom of the painting, there's a crawl of nautical data — longitude, latitude, wind direction, etc. It's a wry comment on the need of the human mind to nail the floating world down.

Zaria's untitled acrylic painting is another seascape. It's a scene of flat sea and convoluted clouds, reflected in the waters. Both sea and sky are the color of Mercury — the kind that spills out of a broken thermometer, not the planet. Nothing is nailed down. Everything is beautiful.



Sophie Liu's "Moment in Time III" at Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art

catalogue

'IT'S OUTSIDE'

Where and when?

Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art, 556
S. Pineapple Ave. Sarasota • through
July 26

For more information call 366-
2093.