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AROUND THE GALLERIES

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Rosamund Felsen Gallery

By DAVID PAGEL

Fishy installation induces smiles

Silliness and sophistication often seem to be incom-

TIM EBNER'S installation, consisting of more than 100 fish sculptures of varying materials, gives off the sensation of stepping into a 3-D painting.

patible — the former all about unself-conscious fun and the latter focused on serious refinement.

At Rosamund Felsen Gallery, the two fuse beautifully in Tim Ebner's smile-inducing installation of more than 100 fish sculptures the artists has made from elaborately patterned fabrics, sofa stuffing, ceramic eyeballs and welded chunks of rusted metal.

Most of Ebner's fish are about 2 feet long and held overhead by wavy lengths of rebar. Larger ones, wedged into bases that resemble industrial-strength napkin holders, swim close to the floor but are still taller than most adults.

Still others are hung on the walls, like oddly shaped paintings, along with similarly stuffed starfish, a couple of manta rays and a

handful of drawings.

Happiness happens when you walk through Ebner's installation. Childhood playtime comes to mind, as do cartoon movies and the experience of diving deep beneath the ocean's surface and looking up to see schools of brilliantly colored fish swimming gracefully.

But what sustains the pleasure of your visit to Ebner's imaginary aquarium is the sense that you have stepped into a 3-D painting. All of that medium's visual elements have been attended to by Ebner, whose installation is as formally rigorous as the most self-conscious abstraction.

The lines that he draws in space with twisted lengths of rebar are sinuous and energized. The same goes for the contours of his preposterously pretty fish, whose

silhouettes run the gamut from goofy to naturalistic. But color, pattern and texture are Ebner's true loves, and he brings them to the forefront with the casual aplomb of a master at the top of his game.

Rosamund Felsen Gallery, 2525 Michigan Ave., Bergamot Station, Santa Monica, (310) 828-8488, through May 24. Closed Sundays and Mondays. www.rosamundfelsen.com