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Review of *Rosie Sandifer: Language of Art*. By Rosie Sandifer.

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Rosie Sandifer: Language of Art. By Rosie Sandifer. Introduction by Robin Salmon. Foreword by Tuck Langland. Albuquerque, NM: Fresco Fine Art Publications, 2007. 183 pp. Illustrations, catalog of selected work, index. \$75.00.

Painter and sculptor Rosie Sandifer, native of Lubbock, Texas, past resident of Colorado, and present resident of New Mexico, penned her own memoir, "Language of Art," the principal text of this book. Her modest eight-page autobiography skips from chronological outline to assessment of favored artists, teachers, and museums, to appreciation for parental lessons which, in the author's words, inspired her "discipline, drive, and direction." Two shorter opening essays by Tuck Langland, a sculptor, and Robin Salmon, curator of sculpture at Brookgreen Gardens in South Carolina, carefully guide Sandifer into her artistic niche as a figurative sculptor. There is no independent voice for her painting.

Sandifer's biography recreates in part the century-old relationship between artistic centers in Colorado and New Mexico and artists from the Great Plains. But her development unfolded in other regions as well, and her art work bears this diversity. Other than a few coincidences of subject matter, Sandifer's works only tangentially exhibit a sense of Great Plains or Rocky Mountain regionalism.

The book is about images, not words. Though exhaustively illustrated with more than 230 color reproductions of paintings, sculptures, drawings, and photographs, the volume suffers from a poorly organized pictorial overview of the artist's development from hobbyist to professional. Many important years are neglected. In the "Beginnings: 1966-1989" chapter, for example, the first eight years in the Southern Plains are not represented by a single image. The "Selected Catalog" rambles through reproductions of art works from 1974-2006 in an organizational mystery. The frustrating struggle to gain a sense of maturation or change in Sandifer's art diminishes a desire to search.

There are other structural problems. The chapter headings in the table of contents differ from the chapter headings in the body, and the "index" is actually a guide by title to works of art reproduced. There is no bibliography, and the chronology—moving from the present back—even neglects the artist's birth date and place. Also missing, for example, are the name of her first husband, the date of their marriage, and the date of their divorce—matters, according to Sandifer's autobiographical recollections, critical to her artistic decisions. The recurrent tempo of organizational and editorial problems undermines confidence in the book as a serious endeavor.

But books like this are published to sell art and endear loyal fans, not to advance scholarship. While there is no proscription against vanity publications as substantial contributions to knowledge, they too rarely aspire toward it. Looking forward, one imagines this volume's redeeming value may be as a source of reasonable reproductions for future research in art, sentiment, popular taste, and cultural

markets in the Plains in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

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