

ARTS

Color wheels

■ Rebecca Hoyer paints "Wichita and Beyond" in new show at Trish Higgins Fine Art.

BY CHRIS SHULL
The Wichita Eagle

While preparing her latest paintings, Rebecca Hoyer discovered one big difference between Wichita and Tuscany in Italy — Wichita is square, Tuscany is round.

So much of that is evident in "Wichita and Beyond," an exhibit of Hoyer's new paintings opening today at Trish Higgins Fine

Art. Also on view at the gallery is "The Holiday Show" featuring works by regional artists, many priced for holiday gift-giving.

"Wichita and Beyond" includes about 35 paintings. Half depict Wichita houses, a continuation of the theme Hoyer, 43, has explored for a couple of years. The rest show landscapes around Montepulciano, Italy, a town between



Chris Shull lives with a round cat in a rectangle house.

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Florence and Rome. Hoyer and her husband visited there in October, 2001.

At first, Hoyer struggled to capture those foreign scenes.

"I started putting a lot of straight lines in



Jill Jarsulic/The Wichita Eagle

Rebecca Hoyer hangs one of her new paintings at Trish Higgins Fine Art.

IF YOU GO

Who: Rebecca Hoyer
What: "Wichita and Beyond," an exhibit of new paintings
When: Through Jan. 24.
Where: Trish Higgins Fine Art, 1425 E. Douglas.
Gallery hours: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday-Friday; 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday
How much: Admission is free. For more information, call 264-8020.
Special showings: Opening reception, 7-10 p.m. today. Holiday open house, 1-4 p.m. Sunday.

and it didn't feel like Tuscany," Hoyer said. "It started to look like Kansas.

"So I had to ask, 'Well, why isn't it Italy?' I made a few failures before I could figure it out."

Hoyer began using circles as a dominant motif in her paintings instead of squares — and suddenly the Tuscany she remembered came alive.

"Even though I paint the same, the forms

were different," Hoyer explained. "Italy was more rounded; you are always looking down into a valley and up into another hill.

"Kansas seems more bounded by lines to me. It is much squarer, whereas Italy was much more rolling."

The paintings in "Wichita and Beyond" reflect Hoyer's discovery. The Wichita paintings feature rectangular houses with triangular roofs whose hard edges are softened by puffy foliage or lollipop trees.

The Italian scenes are faraway views of roller coaster hills. Fields fan out and converge in swoops; tiny block houses sit near undulating tree lines.

Each of Hoyer's paintings are almost abstract. It is always obvious what she is painting — a house, windows, a tree, clouds — but her images are never exact replications.

Whether using squares or circles, it is the emotion of a scene that inspires Hoyer.

"It is trying to get the very essence out of it," Hoyer said. "You are saying very loudly, 'This is what is very important about this, let me show you what I saw.'"

"If you are just reproducing what a camera sees, I don't get those feelings."