

New book featuring artist and Kansas City native Rita Blitt's legacy collection

By Meryl Feld
Editor

Kansas City native and internationally acclaimed contemporary artist, Rita Blitt, is set to publish a new book mid-August, making parts of her legacy collection accessible to more people than ever before.

"Rita Blitt: Around and Round" celebrates more than 60 years of her work — sculptures, paintings, drawings and video.

Over 100 pieces of creativity, straight from Blitt's heart, jump off the book's pages. It's the kind of book you make sure is on the coffee table when guests come over — the use of textured and transparent paper; the natural flow from photo to photo and page to page; the thoughtful and thought-provoking essays by scholars guiding you through the book and Blitt's career.

Why does the book title invoke the image of spinning in circles? "The circle is the most important shape there is. It's a sign of peace and completeness," Blitt told *The Chronicle*, "They're a very important shape that I love."

While painting what later became the cover of the book, Blitt was thinking of the Aspen mountains, while letting the lines flow from her subconscious. "I really wanted to be conscious and unconscious at the same time," she said. Blitt has only worked in this fashion on a few pieces.

The painting on the book cover is called "Celebrating Fall in Aspen II." It was the second painting she created on Rosh Hashanah 5764 — in 2003. "That was my way of celebrating the holiday," she said. The original is over nine feet long.

Her work has been showcased in over 70 exhibitions across the world. Her sculptures reach for the clouds in Japan, Australia and Singapore, as well as across the United States.

Blitt's work focuses on her love of nature, dance



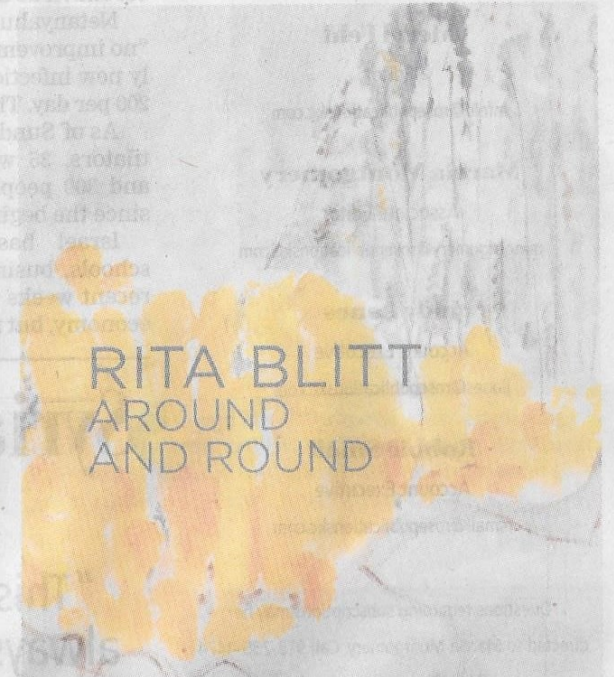
Rita Blitt looking through her sculpture "Spirit's Delight," with another one of her sculptures "Kindness is Contagious. Catch it!" in the foreground. Both were fabricated in 1998 for the Hilton Tokyo Bay Hotel in Shiba, Japan. (James Maidhof)

and music. Her work is known for depicting the energy of movement and sound, as well as for exuding joy and happiness. "I feel so lucky. Oh my gosh — that's an honor you know, to bring joy to others."

BLITT'S LEGACY COLLECTION

"Rita Blitt: Around and Round" was produced by the Mulvane Art Museum at Washburn University in Topeka, celebrating the establishment of the Rita Blitt Gallery and Sculpture Garden, comprised of Blitt's donation of her legacy collection.

"Rita Blitt has rendered an extensive body of work that ranges from monumental sculptures that anchor communities around the world, acrylic forms



The cover of Blitt's new book. (Tra Publishing, August 2020)

that are suspended and spin gently with air currents, and thousands of drawings and paintings that serve as a stage for the dance and music that flow from her hands," said Connie Gibbons, editor of "Rita Blitt: Around and Round," director of the Mulvane Art Museum and chief curator of the Rita Blitt Legacy Collection and Archive.

Blitt shared her ideas, but Gibbons mainly put the book together. "She really understands my work and it's quite beautiful," Blitt said.

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