

Raw

July 26-Dec. 4, 2013
Youth Library Gallery

“Raw,” an exhibition reflecting organic choices and how they impact artwork will be on display.

Many types of art supplies, such as paints, glazes and inks, can be highly toxic. In response to growing health and environmental concerns, some artists are choosing to move away from the use of harsh chemicals and synthetic materials. Some favor using raw, recycled or organic materials instead.

The Artists

Joe Willie Smith is a multi-media artist and musician. He primarily works with found objects and repurposed materials to make instruments and “Sonic Sculptures.” Smith has a background in advertising and served as Art Director of the Arizona Republic for many years. In the past decade, he has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions throughout the valley, including eye lounge, Bentley Projects and the ASU Nelson Art Museum. His work is a part of the collections of the Butler Museum of Contemporary Art and the Phoenix Art Museum. He currently teaches multi-media at Phoenix College.

“The inspiration for the ‘Crushed’ work started when I noticed flattened aerosol cans and how each one I found seemed to take on a similar shape. I started collecting the cans and also began to notice other objects that took on the same shape each time they were crushed. These objects helped me understand that there are a set of physical restraints that exist within a shape that determine how energy is directed within a form. I’ve studied crushed objects for several years and now collect large metal forms that have been reshaped by excessive force. I’ve also started producing crushed metal forms by applying forces sometimes exceeding 20 tons.”

Aimee Leon grew up in San Diego, California. In 2006 she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Land Use and Water Resources from Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash. She served with the Navy, Air Force and Air National Guard and has been practicing photography and digital art for more than 20 years. While working as a state land use planner, she completed graduate work in several programs including sustainable resources, soil science, nutrition and curatorial studies. She finally settled on pursuing a Master of Fine Arts degree in Intermedia at Arizona State University where she is also pursuing a concurrent Master of Arts degree in American Studies and a Graduate Certificate in Gender Studies. She is a certified sheep shearer and uses the natural raw wool in her work along with recycled industrial materials.

“I explore alternative commodity structures through performance and the creation of functional objects imparting historic techniques and materials – primarily wool. I learned to shear sheep to collect wool for object making with a

secondary purpose of supporting local farms and avoiding the footprint created via import systems. This turned out to be easier than anticipated, as the more farms I visited the more I witnessed hundreds of pounds of locally produced, high quality wool - from the prized Merino crossbreeds to the historically important Churro wool – rotting in trash piles. Most small farms can’t afford to send it to China where 80 percent of United States’ grown wool is now processed. I began salvaging as much wool as I could. Now, most of my work is created with wool that comes from what I consider to be this ‘repurposed’ fiber. The fiber in this collection of items is either bought locally or grown and sheared locally.” www.aimeeleon.com

Monica Aissa Martinez was born and raised in El Paso, Texas. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the University of Texas where she studied metals and ceramics and earned a Master of Fine Arts degree at New Mexico State University with an emphasis on drawing and printmaking. She continues to be a student of the world and enjoys researching a variety of topics and disciplines including human anatomy, art history, Yogic philosophy (Chakra), Catholicism, folk art and Mexican symbolism. The pieces in the show are made using casein and egg tempera, natural, eco-friendly alternatives to oil and acrylic paint, made using milk protein and egg yolk.



Monica Martinez
Vital Commotion#4

“The works concern themselves with body, mind and intricate spirit. [Technology] makes our contemporary life unusual. We connect and communicate over the Internet in cyberspace. How connected are we really? How disconnected are we from one self - from the other? Are we as an individual, as human, as great a network as the Internet? Is our internal (inner) structure as incredible and fulfilling as machine? Are there ways that we communicate directly, via the body? Mind? And spirit? Considering these things, I paint these images. We won’t stop technology; it is valuable. But we should question the fulfillment of it. Is there wonder filled knowing we are missing because we are not paying attention?”

“These works are medium size, intimate paintings completed in casein and egg tempera. They are made in a slow steady and meditative process. I make my own egg tempera. Ritual is crucial. I study, think and paint. I always want to slow the viewer down, so some awareness can creep in - of the wonder of all that we are.”

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