

Alter Egos

Dec. 13 - April 16
Connections Café

In 2014 Tempe Galleries focuses on themes of popular culture such as comic books, science fiction and Pop Art. *Alter Egos* is among the first exhibition offerings with this theme and brings together two friends who were inspired by the comic books and heroes of their youth. Both artists have a graphic artistic style that includes bold colors and strong outlines similar to those of comic book and animation artists of the past and present.



Rick Forgus, *Black Canary*

THE ARTISTS

When **Rick Forgus**, of Scottsdale, was a tot growing up in Big Spring, Texas, he begged his mother to buy him his first comic book. Even though he was too young to read, the images introduced him to worlds that have influenced him throughout his life. The stories, characters and illustrations inspired him to become an artist.

Today, Forgus is an illustrator, graphic designer and comic book writer. He is also an avid reader and continues to love popular culture. He and his wife run Atomic Werewolf Studio, creating logos, characters and packaging for large and small scale businesses.

For his artwork, Forgus is especially drawn to the Silver and Golden Age eras of comic books and the nostalgia associated with the innocence and history he feels that period represented.



Joe Ray, *Tres Mascaras*

Joe Ray, of Scottsdale, is a local painter, printmaker, writer and marketing specialist. He has been an active member of the local Hispanic arts community since the early 1980s.

He was born in Sonora, Mexico, and has lived in Arizona since the age of three. He grew up on the Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation near Parker and resided there prior to moving to attend Arizona State University where he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in graphic design. He has remained in the Valley where he is a principal and creative director with Estudio Ray, a strategic design and branding firm.

Ray often uses recognizable imagery such as roosters, angels, mermaids, Mexican wrestlers and hearts mixed with spontaneous splashes of bright colors to tell stories about love, life and art.

“The heroes of my childhood wore masks,” he said, noting that as a child, Lucha Libre wrestling and comic books influenced him as a child and formative artist. Today, Ray sees himself as a storyteller through written and spoken word and the images in his art.