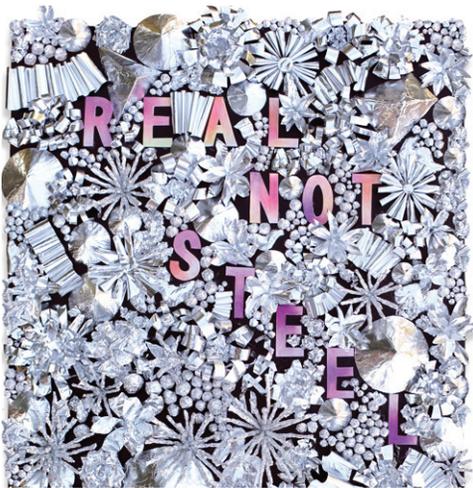


# Café Confessions

April 18-Aug. 6, 2014

Connections Café



*Real Steel* by Michael Afsa

This exhibition brings together artists David Miller and Michael Afsa. These two artists work in distinctly different styles and media, but nevertheless, they both share common interests in pop culture, graphic design and the use of mixed media. For both artists, art making is an outlet for personal commentary about style, storytelling and imagery (whether real or abstract). The title “Café Confessions” relates to the “compare and contrast” conversation between these two new friends, who had not met before being paired for the exhibition.

## About the Artists

**Michael Afsa** was born and raised in Los Angeles. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in graphic design in 2008 from the California Institute of the Arts (Los Angeles) and became fascinated with typography. While pursuing a minor in social science, he started

an interest in psychology. During the past few years, Afsa has worked as a graphic designer and commercial artist for corporations, including Quiksilver, Scion and Apple. He more recently started pursuing his work in fine arts.

“For this exhibition, I address the theme ‘pop culture’ by attempting to explain pop culture as a construct, an illusion apart from reality...of what is and what is not desirable and creates a baseline for cultural behavior - how one looks, thinks, acts, speaks and feels,” Afsa said.

“My work is similar to David Miller’s in that it often appropriates visual languages from pop culture.” Afsa said. “We both mix media, such as collage and found materials. There is also a playful yet somewhat irreverent attitude present in both of our work. The actual images, however, are very different. Miller’s work is primarily photographic, while mine is typographic. His work is often sensual, while mine is more placid. My work is more restrained and contemplative while Miller’s work exudes a sense of drama.”

**David Miller** was born in Omaha, Neb., and received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in photography from Arizona State University in 2006. He has taught photography and art for Gilbert Public Schools, city of Chandler Recreation and Mesa Arts Center. Today, Miller is a freelance fashion and fine art photographer and creates ceramic masks and electronic music in his spare time.



*Rivi + Sophie* by David Miller

“The work I’m presenting uses unreal elements of art - altered colors, repeated patterns, jarring shapes, mismatched textures, embroidered lines - to mix straight fashion photography with practical effects,” Miller said. “My biggest inspirations are from imaginative films and music that all have some similar blend of real and unreal - pop culture staples such as the Muppets or the Beatles. I also like the graphic design qualities of photography of Man Ray, Richard Avedon and Ralph Eugene Meatyard.”

“The tone of our work is equally direct yet surreal,” Miller said of the comparison to Afsa’s work. “...we both utilize a lot of graphic design elements. Michael’s work portrays a mix of real and unreal elements, and in the particular piece *Real Not Steel*, it makes a direct reference to the textured metal within the piece. I do a similar mix of real and unreal in my piece *Rivi + Sophie*. I mixed embroidery within the print to give cybernetic models a decidedly non-metallic wiring.”