

# Preserve, Sustain and Innovate

June 4-Oct. 12, 2010  
Second Floor Gallery

The built and natural environment locally, nationally and internationally is in a constant state of change. This exhibition celebrates the undeniably persistent and creative spirit of artists and visual art to reflect preservation, sustainability and innovation in nature, technology and culture.

Each of these words: preserve, sustain and innovate have a variety of meanings and connotations for different people and in different circumstances. Put together, the connections between these words reveal a respect for tradition, a need to maintain what has been gained and the flexibility to learn more.

Preserve: pre•serve; \ pri-'zərv\; verb  
1) to keep safe from injury, harm, or destruction (protect); 2) to keep alive, intact, or free from decay (maintain); 3) to keep or save from decomposition; 4) to can, pickle, or similarly prepare for future use; 5) to keep up and reserve for personal or special use.

Sustain: sus•tain; sə-'stān\; verb  
1) to give support or relief to; 2) to supply with sustenance (nourish);  
3) to keep up or prolong; 4) to support the weight or withstand a weight or pressure; 5) to bear, suffer or undergo loss; 6) to support as true, legal, or just; 7) to allow or admit as valid; 8) to support by adequate proof.

Innovate: in•no•vate; \i-nə-'vāt\; verb  
1) to introduce as or as if new; 2) to effect a change in;  
3) to make changes, do something in a new way.

This exhibition coincides with the recent renovations at the Tempe Public Library. For much of the community, the library represents a connection with the past, present and future – a place to “preserve, sustain and innovate.”

## Artists

Robert Bauer, Phoenix  
Mary Bruns, Cave Creek  
D. Bryon Darby, Tempe  
Catherine Eyde, Tucson  
Chris Gerlings, Tempe

Stephen Gittens, Tempe  
Mark Klett, Tempe  
Hallie Mueller, Cave Creek  
Douglas Towne, Phoenix  
Kim Walker, Glendale  
Michael Wolff, Chino Valley

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Kim Walker. Engaging Enigma



Chris Gerlings. Nebulaphobia

**Robert Bauer**, of Phoenix, is a native Midwesterner and was born in Decatur, Ill. He moved to Arizona where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in art education from Arizona State University, a Master of Arts degree in painting from Northern Arizona University and a Master of Fine Arts degree in painting from Arizona State University. Bauer's early work focused on imagery relating to humanity, tragedy and the unpleasant aspects of life. But he shifted his focus in 2002 to images that celebrate life. A visit to the Sonoran Living Desert Museum outside of Tucson inspired him to paint the indigenous plant and animal life. [www.robertbauerpaintings.com](http://www.robertbauerpaintings.com)



**Mary Bruns**, of Cave Creek, received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with an emphasis in art and art education from the University of Nebraska and a Master of Fine Arts degree in printmaking and painting from California State University. Bruns' passion to create works in a realist manner comes from her enjoyment of painting from still life with objects and photos to look exactly like the original piece. She also uses multiple layers of oil glaze to give them an antique patina quality. [www.marybrunsart.com](http://www.marybrunsart.com)



**D. Bryon Darby**, of Tempe, was born in Northern Utah, where he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in graphic design from Utah State University. He recently moved to the Valley to pursue a Master of Fine Arts degree in photography at Arizona State University.

His photography focuses on the ever-changing images of the western landscape, specifically the palm trees. These trees are traditionally seen as symbols of a tropical paradise, but Darby uncovers another layer of symbolism about the vulnerability of life: "To me these palms not only reflect the precarious perch of desert life, but also speak directly about the vulnerability of humanity and our intrinsic dependence on what the planet offers us." [www.bryondarby.com](http://www.bryondarby.com)



**Catherine Eyde**, of Tucson, was born in Michigan and received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Western Michigan University. In 1996, she moved to Arizona and has participated in exhibitions in Arizona, New Mexico, New York, Michigan, California and Germany. Her work is often about "place" and personal experience. Eyde says: "Taking on a life of its own, my work continually changes with the development of each new series. They are dense with

symbolism - often personal, political, escapist and 'sweet' with dark undertones of emotion and mood...this series of mixed media paintings are curious, wacky and wise. They were influenced by my daughter, childhood memories and the changes life offers." [www.catherineeyde.com](http://www.catherineeyde.com)

**Chris Gerlings**, of Tempe, is a native of Arizona and grew up in Scottsdale. He is pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in drawing and painting at Arizona State University. His expressionistic paintings reflect his concerns about pollution and urbanization and the importance of sustainability: "As a contemporary artist working primarily in traditional mediums, I am interested in new and innovative approaches to conventional fine art. Eco-friendly material innovation is paramount in my process. The paintings are each made with re-used canvas and supports. This 'upcycling' procedure is a reinvestment in our environment and transforms the disposable into something sublime." [www.chrisgerlings.com](http://www.chrisgerlings.com)



**Steve Gittins**, of Tempe, was born in Newport, South Wales. While in the United Kingdom, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in documentary photography at the University of Wales in Newport. In 2008, he moved to Arizona to study at Arizona State University where he is currently pursuing a Master of Fine Arts degree in photography. In describing his current work "one day at a time," he quotes from Alcoholics Anonymous by W. Bill, 1976, New York: "We are average Americans. All sections of this country and many of its occupations are represented, as well as many political, economic, social and religious backgrounds. We are people who normally would not mix. But there exists among us a fellowship, a friendliness and an understanding which is indescribably wonderful. We are like the passengers of a great liner the moment after rescue from shipwreck when camaraderie, joyousness and democracy pervade the vessel from steerage to Captain's table. Unlike the feelings of the ship's passengers, however, our joy in escape from disaster does not subside as we go our individual ways. The feeling of having shared in a common peril is one element in the powerful cement which binds us. But that in itself would never have held us together as we are now joined." [www.stevegittins.com](http://www.stevegittins.com)



**Mark Klett**, of Tempe, describes his photographs as an "intersection of cultures, landscapes and time." He was a geologist before he became a photographer which probably explains his fascination with the natural and man-made evolution of the landscape. He is an artist of many hats: a historian, surveyor and sociologist of sorts, studying, documenting and re-photographing places from the past. For the past 25 years, Klett has been living and working in Arizona.

He has received numerous fellowships including one from the National Endowment for the Arts. His work has been exhibited both nationally and internationally at prestigious venues such as the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American Art, Chicago Art Institute, the Whitney Museum and Victoria Albert Museum in London. He is the author of 12 books including *Third Views*, *Second Sights*. Klett was honored in 2001 for his teaching accomplishments at Arizona State University's School of Art by being selected as Regent's Professor. Two of the other photographers in the exhibition (D. Byron Darby and Steve Gittens) are currently students of Klett's, and the three are involved in a research project at ASU called the Phoenix Transect.

The Phoenix Transect is a research project undertaken by graduate students and faculty of the School of Art, in the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts at Arizona State University. The project is interdisciplinary and participants are visual artists who work alongside natural and social scientists. The group explores growth and changes to the larger Phoenix Metropolitan area, its urban and outlying spaces, its people, natural environments and resources. The project's work is the product of a field class in photography. The goal is to explore the nature of photographic processes with the intent of probing the traditional boundaries of documentary and expressive practices, examine new media for visualization, and promote interdisciplinary collaborations. [www.phoenixtransect.org](http://www.phoenixtransect.org)

**Hallie Mueller**, of Cave Creek, received a bachelor of fine arts degree from Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, in 2006 and studied painting abroad at the Burren College of Art in Ballyvaughan, Ireland. She also teaches



art and says that her work is inspired by children, whose contagious energy and wide range of interests remind her "that there are an infinite number of ways to enjoy life." Her current work is about motion. While in Ireland she began to observe the complexities of unselfconscious human behavior. She says they are most "blatantly apparent in the antsy middle school students" she now teaches. Though some of the brushwork appears hasty, the methodology and outcomes are formulaic in nature.



hydrologist for the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. His training in science has helped hone his talent

**Douglas Towne**, of Phoenix, received a Bachelor of Arts degree in environmental science from the University of Denver and a Master of Arts degree in geography and regional development from the University of Arizona. Today he works as a

for recognizing patterns. He says of his work: "This series of floating montages is a visual manifestation of the 'shop local independents' and the 'small is beautiful' movements that strive to preserve historic establishments and further the sustainability of their communities. Today we can travel the United States and even the world and find the same standardized food, lodging, shopping and entertainment choices along the entire route. To visually highlight this commercial homogenization that has changed the face of our communities, I alternate corporate symbols with vintage advertisements, photographs and quotes to create humorous, thought-provoking compositions which reflect the changes along the roadside, society and ultimately, us. [www.neonmotel.com](http://www.neonmotel.com)

**Kim Walker's** formal art instruction began more than 16 years ago while accompanying her then nine-year-old son to classes at Glendale Community College and Arizona State University. Walker, of Glendale, went on to receive a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting from Arizona State University and has continued her explorations in a variety of art media and nature-themed subject matter. Much of her works holds sentimental value to Walker: "A fantastic transition happens when we go from our busy daily lives to being embraced by the loving arms of 'Mother Earth.' Even if your day allows only brief moments to take in the wonder of the intricate beauty of a flower petal or a leaf or to experience a view into nature from your window; it all has the potential to touch our lives in a profoundly spiritual and positive way. It is my intention to not only preserve and sustain their [beauty] but also to present them in an innovative and unexpected realm." [www.kimwalkerart.com](http://www.kimwalkerart.com)



**Michael Wolff**, of Chino Valley, is a self-taught artist who has been concentrating more and more on his art over the last couple of years. Although his career in real estate takes up much of his time, he makes time to work on his artwork



and has become active in the art scene in Prescott. Wolff's works are an eclectic mix of styles and materials, including paint, wood, plastic, metal and recycled objects. He says of his work: "My works fulfill a creative impulse that comes from an unknown source. I derive great satisfaction by taking an odd mix of things and from them creating something that did not exist before. I find that the works that I think are the best are the ones in which I have let the creative spirit flow freely, rather than those that have been planned out."