

Repurposed

April 19 - Aug. 21, 2013

Connections Café



Desert Found Objects
by Jose Benavides

Artists Marco Albarran and Jose Benavides are not only peers in the Phoenix art community, but have also been friends for more than 17 years. Both artists find inspiration in objects that have been left behind or discarded, repurposing them as part of artworks. Each plays an active role in the art and Latino community in the Valley, endorsing “green” causes and promoting education and cultural understanding.

About the Artists

Marco Albarran Marco Albarran was born in San Luis R.C. Sonora, Mexico. In 1976 he moved with his family to Yuma and seven years later he relocated to Phoenix where he has lived ever since. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Arts and Political Science with an emphasis in Latin American Studies from Arizona State University. Albarran has been active in the community in a variety of areas including education, health, science and the arts. His principal interest lies in the transformative cultural experiences of family, the natural environment, the communities in which he has lived and the people who surround him. He is an executive director and founder of ACLAA/ Calaca Cultural Center in Phoenix, an organization that promotes Latino art, artists and culture. He also is the owner of El Quinto Sol, a company that promotes ethnic cultural and environmental competencies for businesses, educational institutions, government agencies and individuals. In the past, he has worked for such diverse companies as the American Cancer Society, the Hispanic Research Center at ASU, Arizona Historical Society and the Tempe Center for the Arts. Currently, he works as the preparator at Mesa Arts Center

and was recently nominated for a Governor’s Arts Award in 2013 for his outreach efforts. www.marcoalbarran.com

“Each art piece I create reflects an amalgamation of culture and history, but the raw structure of each particular piece was gathered from years of searching... . My continual desire to transform and convert found materials into ancient/modern art pieces is as strong as it is calming. For me, each raw element has an inner transformative base. The artist can transform the object into a piece for discussion or bring a moment of happiness or a smile.”

Jose A. Benavides an artist and engineer who was born in Edinburg, Texas, and grew up the oldest son of farm workers in the grape fields of California. He knew in second grade that he would become an artist when he would sketch fellow workers harvesting crops. Years later he earned bachelor’s degrees in art and mechanical engineering at Sacramento State University and received a Master of Fine Arts degree from Arizona State University.

Benavides has worked as an artist for more than 30 years and describes his art and ideas as an evolution of change. But the ongoing theme in his work is the need to champion a cause such as “green” art. His current work revolves around the recycling of existing objects with their time-cured patinas. This conceptually allows his sculptures to retain the vibrations, fingerprints and emotions of the original owners. His *Madonna Car*, a fully-functioning car made of found objects, auto parts and license plates, has become a popular art icon around the local arts community. He also has had a positive impact on the community through his commissioned art installations, artist residencies in schools and participation in outreach and educational projects throughout Arizona and parts of Southern California.

“New value for non-valuable materials. This is the latest installment. A 20-year journey, green before it was cool.”