

RETRO

Reaction II



The word “retro” describes things like clothes, cars and music that reflect styles and design elements from the past. Artists are often asked, where do you get your ideas? While the creative spark is different for every individual, this exhibition in partnership with Retro Reaction exhibition at the Gallery at Tempe Center for the Arts explores the inspirations and art making processes of ten Arizona-based artists. Through personal retrospection, these individual artists give us a glimpse into how each of them absorbs, filters and reacts to ideas from the past

Lex Gjurasic

Gjurasic grew up in the Pacific Northwest and now lives in Tucson. She studied fine art at Cornish College of Art in Seattle and has exhibited her work at places such as the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, the Tucson Museum of Art and the Pensacola Museum of Art in Florida. In 2017, a video she created was accepted into artist Miranda July’s archive within the permanent collection at the Getty Institute. Gjurasic’s works are playful but they also respond to the world around us. She breaks down essential elements like shapes, colors and materials to make new interpretations of what she sees. She also works in a variety of art media including painting, sculpture, video and writing. When asked about her artistic influences she mentioned other artists such as Sally Michel’s landscape paintings, Lynda Benglis’ use of materials and Louise Bourgeois’s forms in her plaster sculpture piece called Liar. In addition to these influences, Gjurasic is inspired by the Arizona desert landscape, astronomy and the tradition of stacked “cairns” left by hikers and different people across the world. She likes the idea of signals that reference anything from sacred locations to a great a view. She says “as humans, by simply moving a stone or collecting a rock, we become sculptors of the environment.”

lexgjurasic.com

Adam E. Mendelsohn

Mendelsohn says “I think there’s a strong case to be made for the notion that ideas themselves are things that are crafted and have a style or ‘voice’ in the same way that a painter can have a style or a recognizable ‘voice.’” Mendelsohn earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in fine arts from Dartington College of Art in the United Kingdom. He went on to work as a free-lance writer and art critic in New York City where he wrote for publications such as Spike Art Quarterly and FlashArt. In 2012, Mendelsohn expanded his skill set by earning a welding degree from Central Arizona College in Coolidge. Today he works as a professional artist as well as a welder/fabricator for a commercial architectural metal company in Phoenix. He has shown his work both nationally and internationally in places such as Poland, Germany, England, New York City and Tucson. When asked about his inspirations, Mendelsohn says his ideas come from doing research and keeping a sketchbook of observations about life and the universe. The work on display, Meta (2018) is a finished sculpture but also serves as a working model for a larger scale sculpture that he plans to fabricate someday. He had the idea of making a square globe as a response to the increasing prevalence of people interfacing with “the world” through screens (frames, squares/rectangles) in one way or another. Over the past fifteen years, he has made several prototypes of Meta including a paper and cardboard version exhibited in 2007 before learning the skills and gaining the experience to fabricate this metal version on display today. Mendelsohn says he finds it interesting that his original idea for this piece is still relevant today.

Kristin Bauer

Bauer was born in Minneapolis and currently works as a multimedia artist in Tempe. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting from Arizona State University before earning a Master of Arts in psychology at CAGS Expressive Arts at Ottawa University. She has exhibited her work nationally and internationally, including New York, Los Angeles, Chile, Mexico and Australia, as well as locally at the Tucson Museum of Art, Phoenix Art Museum and Mesa Arts Contemporary Arts Museum. Bauer is also a recipient of an Artist Grant from Phoenix Art Museum’s Contemporary Forum. The academic side of Bauer’s research includes interests in a variety of fields including writing, poetry, film, cognitive studies, linguistics, meditation and physics. Today, Bauer utilizes those experiences in her full-time studio practice which currently focuses on largely text-based visual art. Some of the things that have influenced her include text-based art by Jenny Holzer, an installation called Shadows by Andy Warhol at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art and non-art influences such as early Soviet film propaganda, Patti Smith’s album Radio Ethiopia and Carl Jung’s thoughts on the symbolism of ouroboros (serpents eating their tails) and alchemy (an ancient branch of natural philosophy and chemistry). Bauer says “I frequently employ corporate signage and marketing methods, materials and manufacturing techniques in the creation of my work, in order to bring the content into a familiar realm as an object, situated in an abstracted dialogue within the field of ‘Manufactured Consent.’”

kristinbauerart.com

George Peñaloza

Peñaloza was born in Los Angeles and grew up in Tucson with his aunt who encouraged his early interest in art. He went on to study at Pima Community College and Tucson Art Center. He originally began college as a digital art major but felt limited by two-dimensional work. While taking a variety of classes, he eventually discovered that he could best express his imagination in a three-dimensional form. He found that clay was the perfect medium for him to bring his intricate and whimsical designs to life. Peñaloza’s work examines significant figures in American popular culture. Over the years he has created pieces that featured American presidents like Jefferson and Washington, historical events like the sinking of the Titanic and Hollywood icons like Lucille Ball. Of his own work Peñaloza says “Throughout my life I have been inspired by my surroundings. Animated television cartoons had great meaning for me and were very influential. Over the years I have been encouraged to look closely at global concerns and the challenges we all face in the modern world. My art making process is spontaneous and passionate response to the things that I discover. The clay sculptures that I create are detailed illustrations of what is on his mind and heart.”