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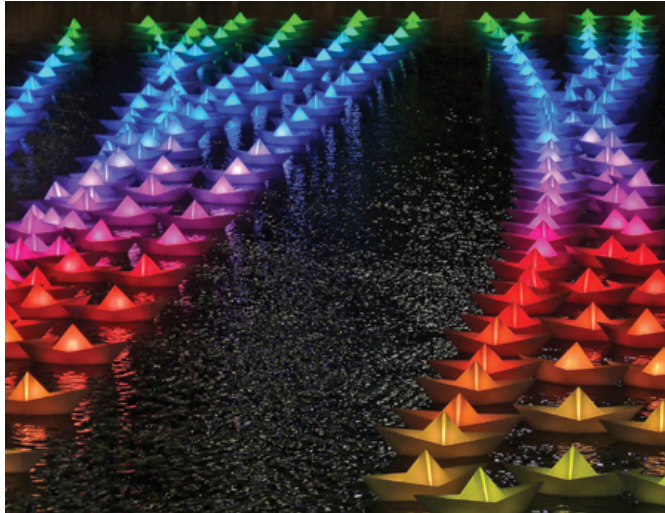
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## Spotlight: Scottsdale

by deborah ross

Nov 2013



Canal Convergence | Water + Art + Light featuring Voyage by Aether & Hemera  
Photo: Philip Vile

A bustling Phoenix suburb of 220,000, Scottsdale thrives on being a destination for fall, winter and spring sun-seekers, and it has long listed the visual art scene on its calling card. Balmy Thursday evening art walks, not surprisingly, draw tourists and locals alike. Sidewalk decals point the way through downtown Scottsdale's Marshall Way and Main Street, where dozens of galleries of all stripes colorfully mix with restaurants, bars and boutiques. The Scottsdale ArtWalk, said to be one of the longest running in the country, recently celebrated its 39th anniversary. Over the years, it has expanded to include live music, artist demonstrations, trolley rides and food trucks.

Lately, Scottsdale's art reputation seems even more energized, with contemporary galleries and the leading edge-minded Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art offering exhibitions of internationally renowned artists while giving ample recognition to local and emerging artists. Not only that, the artworks have begun to spill out onto the Arizona Canal--which runs diagonally through the arts district--with outdoor fairs and water installations.

About once a month, the ArtWalk takes on a theme as chosen by the Scottsdale Gallery Association, and the next one, "Fall for the Arts," November 7-10, signals a lively four-day mixture of visual and performing arts events. If the inaugural year of Fall for the Arts in 2012 is any indication, one of the most popular events will be the "Paint Out Auction" on Saturday, November 9, in which artists will quickly create pieces, only to see their works auctioned off on the spot. Nearby, a public art project called Canal Convergence will likely draw oohs and aahs again, this time featuring "Voyage," consisting of 300 lighted paper boats floating on the canal. The piece by the UK-based Aether & Hemera was previously on view at the Canary Wharf in London.

SGA's president, Veronica Graffius of Calvin Charles Gallery, is pleased that Fall for the Arts is receiving partial funding from the city of Scottsdale, saying that it helps boost both the event and the gallery district as a whole. "We need that signature event that people from out-of-state can talk about and say, 'The weather is beautiful. Let's go down to Scottsdale, and while we're there, let's take advantage of this four-day event,'" Graffius says. Expect street entertainment, exhibition openings, artist talks and children's activities as part of the festivities.

## CURRENT ISSUE



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## VISUAL ART SOURCE CALENDAR

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|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Su            | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa |
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*How Deep Is Your*  
2012

**Julianne Swartz**

Plastic tubing, plexiglass tubing, PVC tubing, CD player, funnel,  
mirror, LED lights, and 2-channel soundtrack, Site-specific

Copyright: Julianne Swartz

Photo: Harrison Hurwitz

Complementing the gallery district and at the forefront of new art movements is the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (SMoCA), where viewers are treated to a range of ambitious, cutting-edge exhibitions that inform, intellectually challenge and entertain them, perhaps all at the same time. SMoCA is less than a half-mile walk from Main Street, by way of the sculpture-filled Civic Center Mall. The steel-clad and pod-like building itself is a wonder, designed by Will Bruder in the late 1990s from the skeleton of an old cineplex. Subtly leading off from the lobby is the James Turrell skyspace "Knight Rise."

Last season's roster of shows included: the second of three sprawling exhibitions paying tribute to internationally renowned Arizona architect Paolo Soleri; a retrospective of video artist Peter Sarkisian; and a stunning installation by Latin American artist Hector Zamora, consisting of a travel trailer filled with 30 tons of sand. For fall 2013, SMoCA's shows come under the loose theme of "internal journeys," says director Tim Rodgers. "Narrow Road to the Interior: Contemporary Japanese Artists" introduces viewers to the spirituality, humility, subtlety and precision of seven artists working in various media and enjoying international renown. It runs through January 12, 2014.

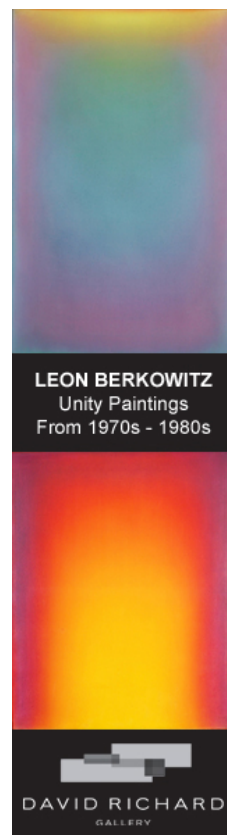
Meanwhile, running through January 26, "Julianne Swartz: How Deep is Your" beckons viewers to complete the thought suggested in the title by interacting with her multisensory installations, which employ everything from mirrors to sound systems to PVC tubing. Alternately witty, delicate and disorienting, her work provokes viewer participation, exploration, and engagement. The artist's previous shows include participation in the 2004 Whitney Biennial, a site-specific commission for the New Museum in New York, and solo shows at the Jewish Museum and Indianapolis Museum of Art.

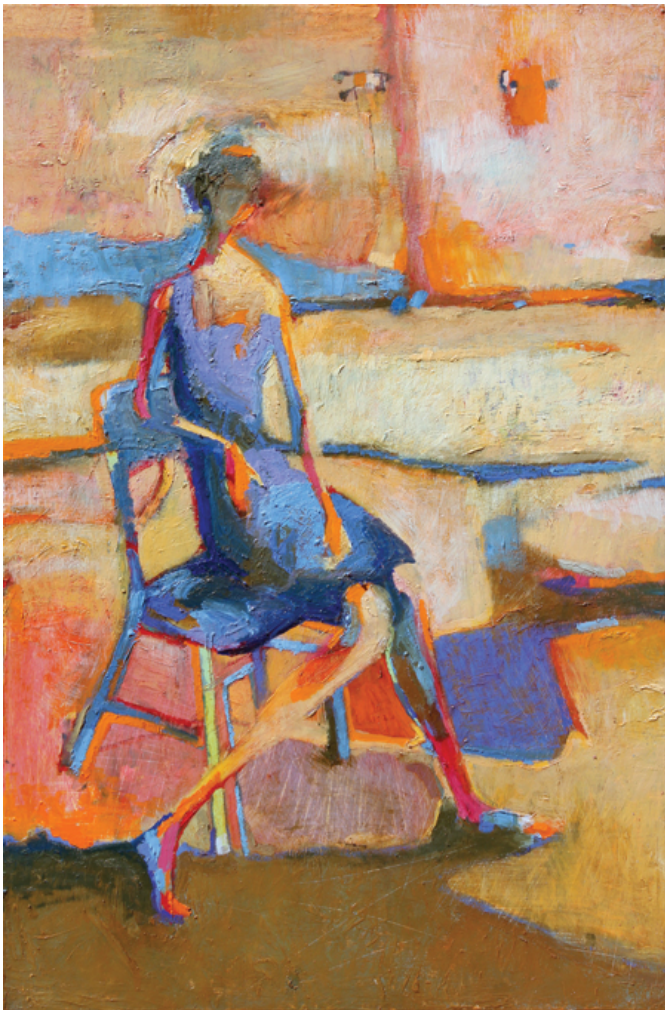
"The curators thought about how these two exhibitions would exist side by side--with characteristics like introspection, participation, involvement, patience, subtlety," Rodgers says. With either show, "the work doesn't announce itself to you as a whole. You have to go through a journey, a labyrinth, to discover and see it all."

Educational programs and outreach are inherent in SMoCA's mission. In that regard, enter Lit Lounge, a typically monthly event, usually on a Friday evening, consisting of readings and music and exuding a hip, pan-arts vibe in a 100-seat space decked out entirely in red. Each performance sells out, and Rodgers credits actor/artist/ringleader Tania Katan for boosting its popularity.

As SMoCA grows, Rodgers is happy about the continued presence of Scottsdale's "first-tier" galleries, adding that many of them excel through their museum-like ambience. He adds that, for a city its size, Scottsdale has an enviable number of art galleries.

One of the largest spaces is the Calvin Charles Gallery on Marshall Way, with a commanding high ceiling and all-glass front wall. Managing partner Veronica Graffius says a growing sophistication in the Scottsdale art market has enabled the gallery to branch out from traditional Asian art to up-and-coming global artists who are venturing into abstraction and experimenting with materials and color. Two mainstays of the gallery are Jennyfer Stratman, an Arizonan now living in Australia, known for her wraith-like bronze figures, and the French artist Pascal, whose interlocking-wood wall pieces are distinctively precise and polished.





*the blue purse*

2013

**Max Hammond**

Oil on canvas

72" x 60"

Photo: courtesy Bonner David

Bonner David Galleries on Main Street is unusual in that it offers two adjacent galleries, with one door leading to traditional art and the other to contemporary art. The idea is to honor the concept that contemporary art springs from the traditional, says gallery director Christi Bonner Manuelito. "We try to show people how they can hang two types of art next to each other and how to be brave, so to speak, as collectors." Bonner David is getting in on the Fall for the Arts action with "Conversation with the Artist," on Saturday, November 9, featuring Phoenix painter Max Hammond. "He is putting together a spectacular show that helps educate collectors and others on how to see things abstractly," Manuelito says. To that end, Hammond will display his abstract and figurative pieces side by side and ask viewers to compare, contrast and glean new meaning from both genres. Manuelito explains that viewers often see abstract works as "paintings of nothing," but Hammond's accessible presentation will prove all works to be "paintings of something," she says.

Native American art continues to be a hallmark of the Scottsdale art scene, and perhaps the best viewing of high-end pieces in sculpture, glass, ceramics and other media is at Blue Rain Gallery, which recently moved from Marshall Way to Main Street. The gallery's stable of artists reads like a who's-who in Southwestern art and includes Preston Singletary, Jody Naranjo and Hyrum Joe. Gallery director Denise Phetteplace points out, though, that almost half of the gallery is dedicated to non-tribal contemporary art, with a large selection of paintings.

On Marshall Way, the Lisa Sette Gallery, a stronghold of contemporary art since the 1980s, is small and serene, yet always provocative. Just ending on November 2 is a contemplative exhibition of small black-and-white photographs by Masao Yamamoto, which was timed to coincide with the inclusion of his work in "Narrow Road to the Interior" at SMoCA. The season's other highlights include a retrospective of the work of acclaimed Arizona photographer Mark Klett, who distorts time and place in his landscape photos through the insertion of archival images. In January 2014, Sette will pair multimedia artist Julianne Swartz (also showing at SMoCA) with regional artist Angela Ellsworth, known for her pungent mixed media works springing from her Mormon upbringing.

Another steady presence in offering contemporary art has been Larsen Gallery, which has recently begun art auctions as a way to bring attention to its impressive roster of local and international artists. Fall exhibitions include two group shows, one focusing on abstract paintings, graphics and sculpture, and the other spotlighting paintings, graphics and

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photography that fall under the theme "Botanicals."

One of the newest galleries in the district—and exuding fresh sophistication—is LewAllen Galleries, a sister to the longtime Santa Fe, New Mexico, location of the same name. Local director Lisa Paulick says, "We bring historically relevant shows interspersed with mid-career artists that reflect exceptional work and remarkable value." To that end, the fall season includes the Op Art pioneer Ed Mieczkowski (closing November 6), Sammy Peters, whose abstract paintings "play" with various media, and glass artists John Kiley and Hiroshi Yamano.

Also fairly new to the scene is Tilt, run by twin sisters Melanie and Michelle Craven, who left their intimate Phoenix space a year ago, hoping that their roster of art photographers might appeal to the Scottsdale market. Tilt's point of view is contemporary photographers using historic processes, but the gallery shows paintings and mixed media works as well. So far, the reception has been excellent, Melanie Craven said, noting the excitement surrounding this fall's David Oklahoma show. The artist combines printmaking and painting to create highly visceral and textured large wood panels.

Exposing new artists is also the goal at the Paul Scott Gallery, which has been on Main Street for almost five years. The gallery seeks out classically trained artists working in diverse styles and mediums, and the roster includes artists from 10 nations. Paul Scott is part of a family operation that includes the nearby Gallery Russia, a fixture in the art district since the 1990s, with a format dedicated to contemporary Russian painters.

Gebert Contemporary is a can't-miss spot on Main Street, thanks to a massive bronze head by Jun Kaneko outside the entrance. Director William Lykins summarized the gallery's fall season as an eclectic mix of emerging and established artists. A highlight, he says, will be the December solo exhibition by John Randall Nelson, a Phoenix favorite known for towering wood figures.

Promotional materials for Scottsdale put the number of galleries at close to 100. Graffius, of SGA, says applications for membership in the association are up, and at least 55 galleries are current SGA members. "I've seen so many changes, but I have seen most of the galleries come together," she says. "So we're working together, we're a stronger force and it feels right."

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