

The Best Art of 2016

Written by Nicole Royse



2016 brought tremendous growth and change throughout the art scene here in Arizona! Here is a brief look at some of the Best Art of 2016!

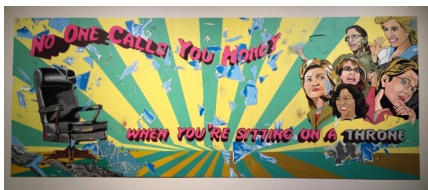
Museums, galleries and artists presented fascinating exhibitions and provocative artwork in all mediums that stimulated conversation and garnered attention for the local arts. The Phoenix Art Museum brought us “Kehinde Wiley New Republic” a massive exhibition of sixty paintings and sculptures created over the last 14 years of the artist’s career. His work centers around important ideas of race, gender and politics while focusing on the grand tradition of portraiture of contemporary African American men and women.



Kay Walking Stick: An American Artist at the Heard Museum is a brilliant retrospective of an impressive 4 decade long career, highlighting her strong voice, her diversity and skill as an artist, as well as her engaging subject matter. This exhibition features 39 works that spotlight her artistic journey and the important issues presented in her work such as race, identity, and national history.



SMoCA Museum group exhibition of 19 artists entitled *Push Comes to Shove: Women and Power*, encompassing two galleries dynamic selections of artwork including sculpture, paintings, fabric, video etc. highlighting “works that deal with the themes and issues of how women exercise and think about power” focusing on women’s experiences who have held leadership positions in Arizona including Kyrsten Sinema, Rebecca White Berch, Barbara Barrett, Diane Enos, and Gloria Feldt.



“Tikkun Olam: Repairing the World Beth Ames Swartz” at the Cutler-Plotkin Jewish Heritage Center. Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World) features works from several seminal series that span over 50 years, many from the artist’s own collection and selected by guest curator, Robert Pela. Each series underscores the philosophical, human and environmental concerns of the artist rather than a specific visual style.



“Delineation” the solo exhibition of Angel Cabrales at the monOrchid showcased a large-scale sculptural installation titled *Juegos Fronteras*, of

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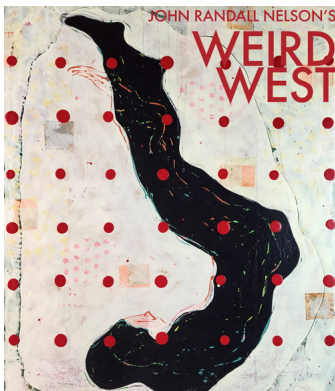
a playground that aims to show the metaphorical restrictions placed upon our future and youth by the placement of borders in an area dependent on the free flow of Cultures. His artwork utilizes industrial design and commercialism approaching tough topics through a satirical lens. The show presented captivating work that was relevant and important due to the sensitive nature of the subjects and the current political and social climate of today.



“Ceramic Survey: A Humble Ode to My Desert” the solo exhibition Irma Sanchez at the Hive Gallery. The artist presented new works created over the course of the last year, artistically pushing her boundaries resulting in work that was fresh and challenging in true Sanchez fashion. This exhibition showcased twenty ceramic slabs inspired by the Sonoran Desert environment, which utilizes brilliant colors, interesting textures and patterns while sharing poignant messages with her viewers.



John Randall Nelson’s *Weird West* at Eye Lounge centers on the iconic theme of the west, but in true Nelson fashion creating a world all his own. His latest work offers his viewers familiar subject matter, a bold and vibrant color palette blended with his painterly style revealing Nelson’s whimsical and unusual version of the west. Be sure to keep Nelson and his wonderful artwork on your radar, his work can be found at Gebert Contemporary Gallery who represents Nelson.



“Resilient Bodies” the solo exhibition of Bill Dambrova at Chartreuse Gallery featured recent mixed media works that explore and contradict the idea of balance of the biological systems of humans, animals, and plants. Artistically pushing his medium’s while creating visually appealing work that blended shapes, lines and bold colors resulting in Dambrova’s imagination come to life.



We can't wait to see what 2017 will bring for the Arts! Where will the next hot art spot, break artist, or smash exhibition?! Get ready for an

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incredible new year of art, showcased right here on AZFoothills Magazine! *All Images are courtesy and copyright of artists and museums referenced in article.