



Work by Albena Baeva previously exhibited at ASU's Combine Studios in Roosevelt Row.

Albena Baeva/Photo by Lynn Trimble

Here's the Best Art We Saw in Metro Phoenix During November 2016

LYNN TRIMBLE | DECEMBER 5, 2016 | 9:00AM

f 90 The “never a dull moment” maxim certainly applied to the metro Phoenix arts scene in November.

t The **artist collective Postcommodity** was selected to participate in the 2017 Whitney Biennial. Artists represented by Lisa Sette Gallery and several artists working with Laura Dragon of {9} The Gallery headed to **art fairs during Miami Art Week**. Nancy Hill announced that her **Chartreuse galley won't be closing** after all. And **Fine Art Complex 1101 in Tempe was vandalized** while showing works addressing politics and propaganda.

AA

RELATED STORIES

- **Laura Spalding Best's “Inferior Mirage” Challenges Phoenix's Relationship to Water**
- **Here's the Best Art We Saw in Metro Phoenix During October 2016**
- **Annie Lopez on Her New Work and Exhibition at Walter Art Gallery in Scottsdale**

There was plenty of interesting art worth seeing, but there were 10 works that stood out from the rest. Here's a look back at some of the best art from November 2016 in the Valley.

Landscapes and Nudes

Albena Baeva

Bulgarian artist Albena Baeva set images of sculptures in iconic locations around the Roosevelt Row arts district as part of her “Landscapes and Nudes” exhibition at the **Project Space at ASU's Combine Studios**. It's one of many ways she's worked to “explore processes of myth-making and social narration in an urban context.”



RECOMMENDED FOR YOU

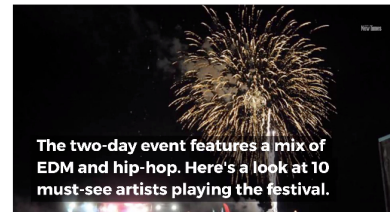
- **Here's Why a Frank Lloyd Wright-Designed Home Is for Sale in Phoenix**
- **Catch a Screening of Sorry to Bother You With Director Boots Riley**

KEEP SCROLLING OR CLICK TO READ:

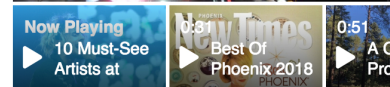
Here's the Best Art We Saw in Metro Phoenix During November 2016

Phoenix, Ink: Tattoos Not Just for 'Whores and Sailors' Anymore; What Happened?

How a Murder in the Grand Canyon Led an Arizona Writer All the Way to Japan



The two-day event features a mix of EDM and hip-hop. Here's a look at 10 must-see artists playing the festival.



Powered by **WIBBITZ**



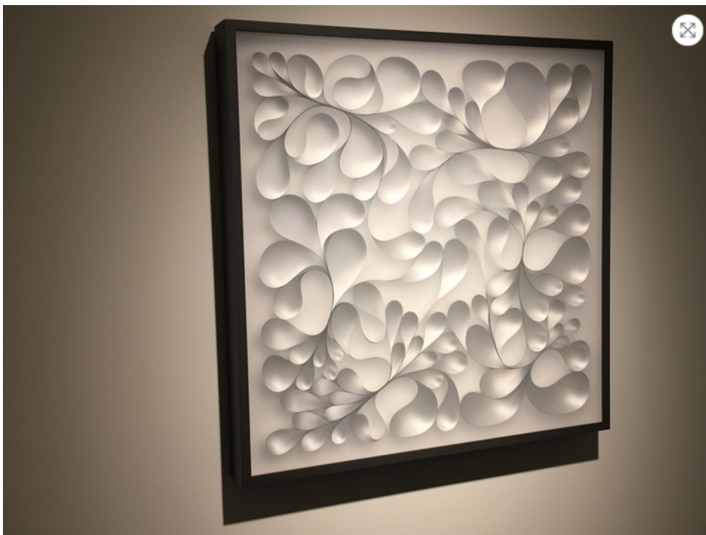
Work by Kristin Bauer recently featured in the "Bread & Butter" exhibition.

Kristin Bauer/Photo by Lynn Trimble

Silence

Kristin Bauer

Tempe artist Kristin Bauer showed this piece in "Bread & Butter," a pop-up exhibition she curated for an experimental curatorial project called Capsule in the studio space she shares with fellow artist and husband Emmett Potter. The show, which opened November 19, included several works of contemporary art created by various Los Angeles artists.



Work by Hunt Rettig exhibited at Lisa Sette Gallery.

Hunt Rettig/Photo by Lynn Trimble

Untitled (252)

Hunt Rettig

Rettig's piece, which will be on view in the atrium at [Lisa Sette Gallery](#) through January 7, 2017, was created with polyester film, synthetic rubber, and acrylics. His body of work comprises mixed media assemblages that reflect biomorphic forms and "the sensual shapes of our natural world."



Cerrado

Annie Lopez

One of several new works recently featured in the “True Blue: Annie Lopez” exhibition presented by R. Pela Contemporary Art at **Walter Art Gallery**, this small-scale dress form was created using cyanotype photography and tamale wrapping paper. It’s part of a larger body of work exploring personal identity, family history, and social commentary.



Work by Melanie Walker recently exhibited at Art Intersection.

Melanie Walker/Photo by Lynn Trimble

The City Life

Melanie Walker

Using house images and the idea of home as metaphor, Walker explores “the notions of memory, family, dreams, and fiction.” Several of her works were featured in the recent “(Re)View: Abstract, Land, and the Narrative” exhibition at **Art Intersection**, which included works by three artists who use traditional or historical photographic processes.



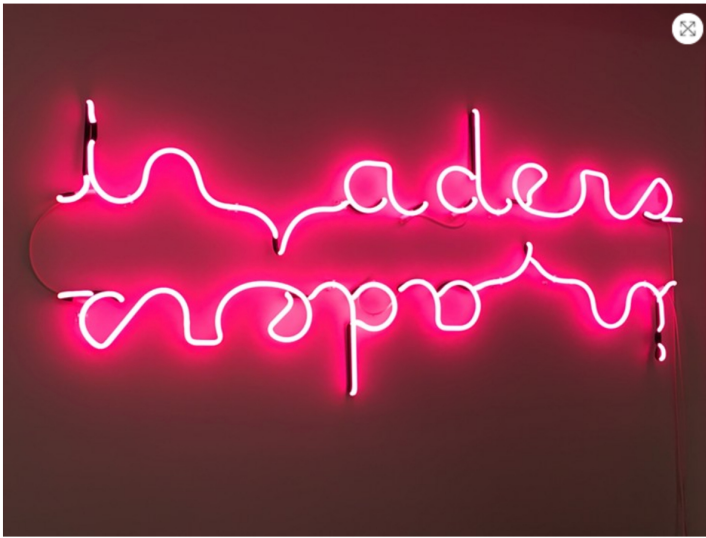
Work by Takashi Iwasaki previously exhibited at ASU's Harry Wood Gallery.

Takashi Iwasaki/Photo by Lynn Trimble

MacDC26

Takashi Iwasaki

This Canadian artist's work was part of a recent exhibition titled “It Took a While,” which was juried by Molly Koehn and Erika Lynne Hanson for the Fiber Arts Network, and shown at ASU's **Harry Wood Gallery**. This 2013 piece is one of many hand-embroidery on canvas works in Iwasaki's extensive body of work.



Work by Julio Cesar Morales exhibited at Fine Art Complex 1101.

Julio Cesar Morales/Photo by Lynn Trimble

Invaders

Julio Cesar Morales

Works by Morales, curator for the [ASU Art Museum](#), were shown in November at both Palabra and [Fine Art Complex 1101](#), where this piece was part of an exhibition titled “This Machine Kills _____.” Morales uses various media including neon, watercolors, and turntables to create “social-based abstracted artwork” exploring issues such as human trafficking and underground economies.



Work by Laura Spalding Best previously exhibited at Chartreuse gallery.

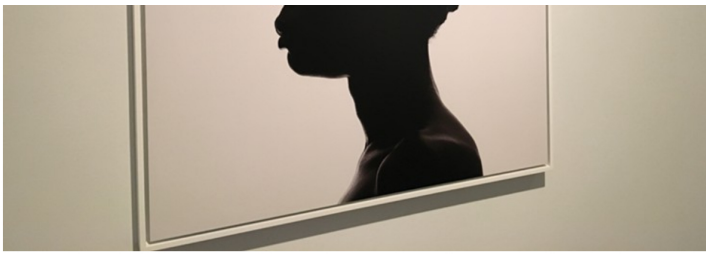
Laura Spalding Best/Photo by Lynn Trimble

Known Waterfalls of Greater Phoenix!

Laura Spalding Best

During her recent “Inferior Mirage” exhibition at [Chartreuse](#) gallery, Best showed this piece created using mostly vintage trays painted with faux-waterfalls spotted throughout metropolitan Phoenix. It’s part of her larger body of work exploring the intersection of built and natural environments.





Work by Erica Deeman featured in the "Get Face" exhibition at Phoenix Art Museum.

Erica Deeman/Photo by Lynn Trimble

Untitled 9

Erica Deeman

This photograph, which is one of five Deeman works featured in the "Get Face (To Gain Respect: To Increase One's Status)" exhibition continuing through January 8, 2017, at [Phoenix Art Museum](#), is part of a series called "Silhouettes," which features portraits of women from the African diaspora.

**IF YOU LIKE THIS STORY,
CONSIDER SIGNING UP FOR
OUR EMAIL NEWSLETTERS.**

[SHOW ME HOW](#)



Work by Kate Daudy exhibited at Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum.

Kate Daudy/Photo by Lynn Trimble

Wedding Dress

Kate Daudy

This work is featured in the "Off the Page: Contemporary Art Influenced by Literature" exhibition that continues through January 22, 2017, at [Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum](#). Daudy, an artist and linguist who speaks seven languages, is influenced by "writers and thinkers of diverse cultures and historical periods."

Correction: This post has been updated to reflect the correct title of Laura Spalding Best's work.



Lynn Trimble is an award-winning freelance writer and photographer specializing in arts and culture, including visual and performing arts

CONTACT: [Lynn Trimble](#)

FOLLOW: Facebook: [Lynn Trimble](#) Twitter: [@ArtMuser](#)



RECOMMENDED FOR YOU

Powered by [SailThru](#)

- Phoenix, Ink: Tattoos Not Just for 'Whores and Sailors' Anymore; What...

UPCOMING EVENTS

Small Town Murder Presents: ...
Mon., Nov. 5, 8:00pm

The Magic and Illusions of Eri...
Sat., Nov. 10, 7:00pm

- How a Murder in the Grand Canyon Led an Arizona Writer All the Way to...
- The Best Things to Do in Metro Phoenix This Weekend
- Here's the Lineup for 'Chaos Theory 19' in Downtown Phoenix

On Your Feet (Touring)

Tue., Nov. 6, 7:30pm

Lea DeLaria

Fri., Nov. 9, 7:30pm

"The Kitchen Witches"

Fri., Oct. 19, 7:00pm

POWERED BY goldstar

PLATINUM COMEDY TOUR

Fri., Nov. 16, 8:00pm

Helizapoppin Sideshow Revue

Fri., Nov. 23, 6:15pm

The Nutcracker - Presented by...

Fri., Nov. 23, 7:00pm

See More >>



The full view inside Immaculate Tattoo.

Jim Louvau

Phoenix, Ink: Tattoos Not Just for 'Whores and Sailors' Anymore; What Happened?

ROBERT L. PELA | SEPTEMBER 29, 2016 | 3:01PM

f 63 Amber Butterfly McPherson can't decide if she wants the skeleton holding a dozen roses or the Star of David.

t "It's my first tattoo, so it's, like, really important I get this right," she explains. "I like just found out my grandfather was supposedly Jewish. So, like, I want him on my stomach. The guy holding the flowers could be him, because he, like, owned a flower shop. Or my mom said just get the Jewish star, because that could be like him and me both."

AA

RELATED STORIES

- The People of the 2018 Body Art Expo**
- Showing Some Skin at the Grand Canyon Tattoo Convention**
- Hot Tattoos and Hottier Performers at the Hell City Tattoo Festival**

Amber Butterfly ("I go by both names," she insists, "and that's really important") is flipping through a book of tattoo designs at day one of the Hell City Tattoo Festival. For the 11th straight year, Hell City has taken over the Arizona Biltmore Resort for three days of late-August tattooing and ink-related merriment.

"I mean, it's like I'm going to have it like forever, right?" Amber Butterfly is telling a heavily tattooed man standing over the book of tattoo art.

"Totally!" he barks each time Amber Butterfly pauses.

"Because I'm like not like a girl who's going to get her tattoos removed. Like, ever. Also, this is like my first one, so that's special, right?" she asks, then sticks her lower lip out in a pout.

"Totally!" her new friend bellows. His earlobes, stretched with turquoise-encrusted metal washers, dangle close to the collar of his Harley-Davidson tank top. His impressive jawline is inked with what look like little apostrophes.

Amber Butterfly, a 23-year-old massage therapist who traveled here from Indio, California, bats her long, blue eyelashes at Apostrophe Beard. "Can you help me decide?"

"I don't work here," he grunts. "I'm getting a lower back piece done." He jabs his thumb over his shoulder at a skinny guy who's bent over the moist midriff of a young woman in a sports bra and a shiny red miniskirt. "I'm up next," he says.

A shirtless man in a devil mask wanders up and starts flipping through the tattoo book. "You having a good time, angel?" he asks Amber Butterfly, who begins tracing her forefinger over the birds of paradise that trail up and over this stranger's colossal shoulders. It's the kind of interaction one sees a lot at Hell City.

Launched in Columbus, Ohio, by tattoo artist Durb Morrison, Hell City's been around since 2002. Five years later, Morrison brought the annual convention to Phoenix and the Biltmore, where more than 200 on-site tattoo artists stain the skin of nearly 6,000 people over a long weekend. Adding Phoenix was a no-brainer, Morrison says.



There was no ink shortage at the Hell City festival last year.

Michelle Sasonov

"Tattooing is so huge in Phoenix," he says. "It's a mecca, really one of the tattooing capitals of the country. You have so many body-art pioneers here. People come here from Vegas and Cali and all over."

At Hell City, they come for tattooing seminars and art exhibits, to add to and compare body art and listen to bands with names like Venomous Pinks and Fairy Bones, and to watch an aerial exhibition and a freak show called The Pain Proof Punks and the Dipshit Sideshow.

They're joined by the hottest celebrity tattoo artists from the glut of reality TV shows dedicated to inking bodies: This year, Josh Payne from Paramount's *Ink Master*, Big Gus from Spike TV's *Tattoo Nightmares*, and Kelly Doty from *Ink Master: Angels* are in residence, signing autographs and judging a vaguely misogynistic beauty pageant called The Hell City Hotties, in which women in tiny scraps of cloth walk a runway, showing off their ink and various other body modifications. Finalists get to hand out trophies to winners of the weekend's tattoo design competition, which is the big ticket event of the convention.

Hell City is noisy, anarchistic proof that tattooing is more than just a naughty trend these days. It's big business; an art form; a community. A recent article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* claims the percentage of tattooed adult Americans rose from 14 to 21 percent between 2008 and 2012. According to Statistic Brain Research Institute, 36 percent of Americans between the ages of 18 and 29 have at least one tattoo, and 21 percent of all Americans have one or more – that's about 45 million people.

Of those who have tattoos, 70 percent have more than one and 20 percent have more than five. Americans spend an estimated \$1.65

billion a year getting inked. (A paltry 17 percent of all tattooed people regret their body art, usually when the design is linked to someone who's dumped them. Remember Johnny Depp's ill-conceived "Winona Forever" tattoo?)

And, as Morrison says, tattooing is especially popular in Arizona. That may be because our regulating of body modification businesses is more relaxed. None of the 245 tattoo shops listed in the local Yellow Pages is held to the same health-code standards of those in most other states.



"The shock value of a heavily tattooed person is gone," says Immaculate Tattoo's Aaron Coleman.

Jim Louvau

Back when tattooing was used in place of clothing to conceal nakedness, there was no need for regulation. From all reports, tattoos – the word is derived from the Tahitian "tatu," meaning "to mark" – have been coloring mankind since Neolithic times. Ancient art, cave drawings, and mummified skin all point to long-ago practices that brought drawings to arms and legs and torsos.

Much later, 17th-century British pilgrims used them to memorialize trips to various holy lands. In some cultures, inked symbols indicated a person's particular skill: a blacksmith might have a tattoo of an anvil on his arm, a weaver a drawing of a basket. Primitives inked wrists and fingers to ward off illness; in more recent centuries, tattoos indicated clan membership. In Greece, tattooing was used as shorthand among spies; Romans used it to mark criminals and slaves, while western Asians marked their social status in intricate skin designs. For a time in Japan, tattooing was a religious ceremonial rite.

Modern tattooing among westerners is usually attributed to William Dampier, a sailor and explorer. Prince Giolo was heavily tattooed. Dampier was in London in the

CONTINUE READING



Robrt L. Pela has been a weekly contributor to *Phoenix New Times* since 1991, primarily as a cultural critic. His radio essays air on National Public Radio affiliate KJZZ's *Morning Edition*.

CONTACT: [Robrt L. Pela](#)



AA

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU

Powered by SailThru

- Phoenix, Ink: Tattoos Not Just for 'Whores and Sailors' Anymore; What...
- How a Murder in the Grand Canyon Led an Arizona Writer All the Way to...
- The Best Things to Do in Metro Phoenix This Weekend