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ENTERTAINMENT

Art gallery at MCC reopens, explores new possibilities for creators



The Mesa Community College Art Gallery grand opening exhibition, dedication and reception were held Feb. 24, 2016, at 1833 W. Southern Ave. near MCC Theatre. (Richard H. Dyer, Independent Newsmedia)

RICHARD H. DYER

Posted Friday, February 18, 2022 1:24 pm

“Redefining the Creator Economy: A Survey of the Digital Arts” runs through March 4 at the Mesa Community College Art Gallery.

The exhibition explores the evolution of several different genres of contemporary art practice including Internet art, digital art, augmented realities, glitch art, post-digital art and the role that artificial intelligence plays in creativity, according to a release.

Visitors to the gallery on the MCC campus, 1833 W. Southern Ave., can view the artwork of students, faculty and guest artists. During the opening reception, Art Gallery Curator Grant Vetter moderated a discussion with established digital artists Lindsay Scoggins, Chris Trueman and Rembrandt Quiballo, who explored the recent surge in popularity of NFTs, non-fungible tokens.

The panelists defined NFTs as unique cryptographic tokens that can't be replicated. For example, a bitcoin is fungible — trade one for another bitcoin, and you'll have the same thing. But an NFT gives you something that can't be copied: ownership of the work. As with physical art collecting, anyone can buy a Monet print, but only one person can own the original.

What about copyright? Vetter said the artist can still retain the copyright and reproduction rights, just like with physical artwork. The trend opens up new opportunities and earning potential for artists today.

Panelist Lindsay Scoggins said one positive aspect of an NFT is the community it creates.

“Previously, it was hard to find other artists doing the same thing, hard to find like-minded people,” said Scoggins, whose work has been exhibited internationally in museums, concert tours, and architectural installations, including the Guggenheim Museum. “Creating a community is such a positive aspect of this.”

As for pitfalls, panelist Chris Trueman spoke about the environmental concerns, as every digital process consumes energy.

“But lots of platforms are environmentally friendly,” said Truman, whose work has been exhibited in national and international exhibitions. “The more it develops, the more accessible it will be to the general public.”

Vetter said discussions such as this allow the Art Gallery to play an important role in introducing students to new ideas and opportunities in the art market today as well as potential pitfalls and drawbacks.

“I think the new team of curators here at MCC is broadening the conversation about all kinds of art practices as well as who we show,” said Vetter, who was hired as curator in October 2021. “We had an open call for work where everyone who submitted was accepted. We've taken this inclusive approach so that more artists in the Valley will have more opportunities while also inviting a number of artists from Arizona and around the world to be in the show who have been working at the intersection of the digital and the analogue arts for many decades.”

In addition to hosting exhibitions, The Gallery at MCC invites current and aspiring artists and creators to gather to learn, explore and share. Upcoming gallery free events include:

- Exhibit: Redefining the Creator Economy: A Survey of the Digital Arts (through March 4)
- Artist Workshop: Exploring the Digital Arts with James Angel, Samantha Lyn Aasen and Rembrandt Quiballo (10:15 a.m.-3 p.m and 3:15-7 p.m. Feb. 21 and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. March 4, RSVP requested)
- Exhibit: Conversations with Myself by Shachi Kale & Encountering the Self by Swapna Das (March 21-April 21)
- 2022 Annual Art Student Show (May)

Gallery events and exhibits are free and open to the public 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. Monday-Thursday.

Go to mesacc.edu/arts for show and workshop details.

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Arizona Strong Beer Festival Saturday at Bell Bank Park in Mesa (/mesa-independent/stories/arizona-strong-beer-festival-saturday-at-bell-bank-park-in-mesa,286596)

Native American Arts Festival this weekend at Superstition Mountain Museum (/mesa-independent/stories/native-american-arts-festival-this-weekend,286597)

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'Emotions in Art' March-April at OneOhOne Gallery in Mesa (/mesa-independent/stories/emotions-in-art-march-april-at-oneohone-gallery-in-mesa,284718)

Apache Junction NJROTC benefit vehicle show Saturday (/mesa-independent/stories/apache-junction-njrotc-benefit-vehicle-show-saturday,284540)

Jay Cravath speaks on brothels, mining camps Feb. 10 (/mesa-independent/stories/kurt-cavano-speaks-on-arizonas-four-peaks-amethyst-mine-thursday,284539)

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