

Galleries unveil new work for Holiday Art Walk

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More often than not, material culture takes over the holidays in a mad craze focused on the perfect gift, wrapping paper and acknowledgment.

But artistic culture can ease the symptoms of “holidayze,” and Jackson Hole’s gallery community offers a slew of new work for the season — and an opportunity to get out for an evening stroll with the revival of the Holiday Art Walk this weekend.

Ashley Quinn, gallery director for Ringholz Studios, wears an additional hat these days: Since August she is the new president of the Jackson Hole Gallery Association, the sponsoring organization of the Holiday Art Walk.

Quinn said art walks have always been a fun way to get way people to come downtown to appreciate all that the galleries have to offer.

“We are focusing on local patrons,” she said, “but it’s for everyone to enjoy the holiday season and enjoy the Christmas lights.”

The weekend revival also coincides with the final Small Business Saturday hosted by the Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce, so be on the lookout for Santa and carolers crisscrossing downtown through the evening.

“As far as I know, most of the galleries will be open 5 to 8 p.m. that night for the art walk,” she said. “Ringholz Studios will be serving hot chocolate that evening, because after the sun goes down it gets a little chilly in Jackson Hole.

“Everyone should be out and about,” Quinn said. “It will be good to see each other.”

And it will be good to see art, much of it is new art.

Dennis Zieminski, David Grossman, Ben Steele, Jared Sanders, Jivan Lee and Mary Roberson all have new work at Altamira Fine Art, and the gallery is hosting a reception for the return of the art walk.

Chad Repinski, fine art consultant at Altamira, said its holiday show is a little different in that it not only has new work from the artists, but the sizes of the work are smaller.

“This show is very accessible,” he said. “Everything hanging is in the 20-by-24 range. There are winter scenes, homages to early 20th-century images from Zieminski, and of course the Tetons.

“One of our most successful artists of late, [Steele’s] compositions combine the playful with serious reference to art history,” Repinski said. For example, his “Ballet Boot” refers to Edgar Degas’ affinity for ballerinas but framed in a contemporary Western boot. “He’s sometimes surreal, sometimes abstract, but always colorful and aware of how art and the West have collided to develop new perspectives.”

In Diehl Gallery’s annual holiday group exhibition “Bright and Beautiful V,” the work ranges widely in styles and subject matter, and would be a great stop for a diverse household that’s home for the holidays and with a range of tastes.

Among the art featured is Jason Rohlf’s series “Field Guides.” In his artist statement Rohlf calls it his “ongoing effort as an artist ... to collect and preserve my visual sensibilities. With each piece being the forum for continued exploration as countless layers of collage, medium and acrylic paint coalesce to become a finished painting.”

The result is retro collages that, though based mostly on geometric shapes, are pierced by biologic and natural forms, with bright colors imparting a feeling of optimism.

Also amid the group of 16 artists in the show are steampunk sculptures by Ted Gall and encaustic work by Chris Reily.

To take advantage of the art-loving traffic expected, Shari Brownfield Fine Art moved up the time and date of its opening show for Lyndsay McCandless Rowan’s “Ceremony” exhibitions to coincide with the art walk.

It is believed that humans began to decorate animal skulls as early as 7200 BCE in the Middle East. The tradition continued and evolved among North and Central American Indigenous communities for centuries, before becoming a major influence for American modernist artists starting in the 1920s.

Rowan is bringing her own delicate and inspired skull-based artwork into a new “sacred space to experience nature’s powers.”

Inspired by the memento mori idiom, the celebration of life through the acknowledgment of our mortality, Rowan explores a different narrative for the role of the skull that should be experienced in person.

“Experiencing art in person always elevates it to the next level,” she said, “so now is a great time to get out and get rejuvenated with some art. It’s about connecting with the art itself more directly and deeply, as well as being with the community. Other people enhance the conversation and raise the energy.”

Which is what Rowan’s art is all about, and maybe too what it’s about for everyone participating in the art walk or hanging new shows: Raising the energy of a community comes from the community — made possible by the unscheduled conversations, unexpected colors and unveilings of new work art walks are known for.

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Rowan artist