

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION?

Aug. 11-Dec. 6

Nick Rascona and Heather Freitas are both local mixed media artists. Both were selected during a “call for artists” application process last fall. The Connections Café gallery wall at the Tempe Public Library provides local artists with an opportunity to express themselves, experiment with new media and themes and realize the similarities and differences between their work and the work of other artists. The individuals in the Connections’ exhibitions seem to be at a different crossroads in their artistic careers and fields of interest; yet, both share some unique bond that ties them together.

Both artists are passionate about making environmentally conscious works that address current issues faced by our local and global environments. As Freitas puts it, *“All around us there are hidden toxins that are damaging not only our environment and everything in it, but us as well. The worst part? We are the ones creating most of these toxins.”* Rascona offers, *“The hope is to inspire deep thought, and reflection about the complex relationships we share with our environment, and to see more clearly the issues which many might walk by.”* The artists agree that they draw from much of the same subject matter, although their styles and art media differ.



Heather Freitas, Mesa

Local artist Heather Freitas graduated from Arizona State University with a Bachelor’s degree in art. In her studies, she found herself particularly interested in using discarded materials in an effort to educate audiences about recycling. She is passionate about creating art that reflects the consequences associated with waste and hopes to invite and excite others to take action.

Freitas says: *“I have always drifted my glance at things many people look past. The delicate beauty of things others call trash. Realizing I could create work out of these materials that are slowly decomposing the world around us was a life changer for me.... Art has created movements and helped implement change through history, why not now? Why not me?”*

Visit Freitas on Facebook at [recycledheartfineart](#).



Nick Rascona, Tempe

Rascona is a Tempe native and started painting while attending McClintock High School. He later received dual degrees at Arizona State University in psychology and fine arts. Today he works as curator at New City Studio art gallery in Phoenix, teaches art workshops at Phoenix Art Museum and is a collaborative member of Lagomm, a collaborative artist studio in Tempe.

The series *Subject to Scaffolding* was inspired by an arts and biology themed artist residency program he completed in New York City last summer. Rascona calls the work *“An installation on the nature of our planet, and ourselves.”* He says, *“Compare the vastness of an open body of water, to the life that can exist inside a single drop.... Embrace the feeling of standing under a tree, marveling at its size, and the beauty of a single leaf. I’m offering the comfort one might feel from the natural world. I’m contrasting it all with our footprints.”*

Visit Rascona on Facebook at [rasconaart](#).