

# WATER

Water is on a lot of peoples' minds these days, from concerns about conservation to plans for summer recreation. This summer, the Gallery at Tempe Center for the Arts is hosting two exhibitions, one at the Post Office on Mill Avenue and one at the TCA, that explore water as seen and interpreted through the eyes of artists. The artworks in each of the exhibitions reflect a wide range of water-themed topics including sustainability, mythology, history, science and beauty.

To learn more about the WATER exhibitions, workshops and outreach programs go to: [tempecenterforthearts.com/TCAgallery](https://tempecenterforthearts.com/TCAgallery)

## Jerry Jacobson, Tempe

Jacobson has been making art in his Tempe studio-residence for more than 23 years. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with a focus in painting and printmaking from North Texas State University (now UNT). Jacobson may have one of the most unusual backyard gardens in the Valley, he's raising "rust." Since the mid 1990's, Jacobson has been collecting the odd metal objects he finds and placing them in glass jars filled with salt and water. His "Rust Farms" breed rust which he uses as a pigment for the works on paper he creates. He combines ink, rust, natural chemical processes and the element of chance "mark making." He says, *"Over time, as the 'rust farms' quietly performed the work of contained corrosive decay, I recognized the potential of the vessels themselves as objects of further interest and purpose."*

Jacobson "Rust Farms" seen here are important visual aids to provide a backstory for his paintings and drawings, which can be seen at the Gallery at Tempe Center for the Arts' WATER exhibition, where Jacobson is also an Artist-in-Residence. Water serves an important role in Jacobson's work because of its transformative properties, acting as both a solvent and a vehicle for the rust pigment. As drawings and other works are created from the contents of his Rust Farms, the artist re-uses the jars and rusted materials to tell new stories down the road.

Jacobson says, *"The ongoing Rust Farm project reflects my continued interest in subjects as diverse as abstraction, the reuse and re-imagining of materials, automatic drawing, alchemy, science, and natural and unnatural processes."*



Example of prints made by  
Jerry Jacobson using "rust jars"  
*Untitled 8-4-18, Rust ink on paper*

## Nicolas Rascona, Tempe

Rascona is a Tempe native and works in a variety of media such as painting, sculpture and mural work. He earned two Bachelor's degrees from Arizona State University, one in psychology and one in fine arts. Rascona has worked as curator at New City Studio gallery in Phoenix and taught art workshops at Phoenix Art Museum, the Edna Vihel Arts Center in Tempe and in the art studio at the Children's Museum in Phoenix.

Rascona's work is inspired by human nature and the complex relationships we share with our environment. Through his artwork he hopes to create a space for conversations about our historical connection to the natural world and the role we play in navigating the use of natural resources. As an Arizona native that is deeply interested in these relationships Rascona is particularly drawn to water. 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... Looking deep into the implications of human-impact on our environment and climate change around the world I sort my way through the thick of it, and create work to create conversations."*

[www.nicolasrascona.com](http://www.nicolasrascona.com)

## Emily E. Ritter, Mesa

Ritter is an environmental artist from Wichita, KS. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in printmaking from Wichita State University in 2012 and went on to receive a Master of Fine Arts degree in studio art from Arizona State University in 2018. One of the areas she explores is the consequences irresponsible human actions and habits have on the environment. Not surprisingly, she spends a lot of time thinking about the relationship between water and life on earth, knowing that without clean water, life as we know it cannot exist.

The sculpture series Ritter is displaying in both WATER exhibitions incorporate soft plastics, from packing materials, that would otherwise be thrown away. These discarded plastics often find their way into waterways such as streams, rivers, canals and oceans. Ritter's synthetic landscapes reimagine a surrealistic world where the waterways have been polluted to such an extent that plants have evolved to not just incorporate plastic but completely turn into plastics.

*Ritter says, "As a person that is conscience of how consumption affects our planet, I recognize that I still produce waste. My goal is to initiate a conversation about the ecological issues that plague our planet and encourage the viewer to think about their actions and role."*

[www.emilyeritter.com](http://www.emilyeritter.com)

## Thomas Strich, Tempe

Strich is a mixed-media artist who has a special interest in the connection between art and science. Growing up he took up birdwatching and stargazing, along with making whimsical drawings of invented animals and imaginary technology. In the late 80's Strich earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in both art and art theory from University of California, Santa Cruz. He went on to earn a Master of Fine Arts degree in sculpture from Arizona State University in 1993. Over the last 20 years, Strich has worked in the public art realm for cities like Phoenix and Tempe and exhibited his works in museums and galleries across the United States. Much of his studio work focuses on mixed media work that uses photography, metal, wood, concrete and found objects to create discussions about the environment.

*Strich says "Homage to Glen Canyon' takes an ironic look at one of the great engineering icons of the West. Sculptures in the landscape function as reference tools heralding the landmark with ordinary bathroom items. The piece makes a direct link between the mundane consumption of water and power within our homes and the large-scale manipulations of the environment undertaken to sustain our standard of living."*

thomas-strich.com