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Five new exhibitions opening in Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum

Mesa, AZ, (August 3, 2017) – Mesa Arts Center will celebrate the start of its 2017-18 season with a free, family-friendly festival titled *The Good, The Bad and The Weird* on Friday, September 8, 2017, 6-10 p.m. The event is inspired by surrealism and themes of exhibitions opening in Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum that same evening. Festival goers will see live performances, hear nonstop live music, see artist demonstrations and enjoy delicious foods from local vendors such as Paleta's Betty, Waffle Luv food truck, and Pura Vida Grinds coffee cart.

Features of the festival include:

- Opening of five contemporary art exhibitions in Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum.
- Performances by El Vez, "The Mexican Elvis," and rock 'n' roll trio, Come Back Buddy.
- Custom cars on display by Zane's Rod and Customs.
- Hands-on activities for all ages offered by Creative Catalysts. Guests will be invited to make a hat in the style of a fascinator or a lapel pin inspired by surrealism.
- Atmospheric performances by Vessel Project, inspired by the paintings of Julie Heffernan.
- Free up-do hairstyling by stylists from Dolce Salon.
- Film screening by Surreal Short Films, No Festival Required.
- Pop-up dance performances by Cazo Dance.
- Shopping in The Store, an artist's cooperative gallery, featuring items by Arizona artists.

Following a hiatus for the later weeks of August, Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum will reopen on September 8 with five new exhibitions. Descriptions and details of each exhibition are listed below.

Slang Aesthetics**Robert Williams****September 8, 2017 – January 21, 2018**

A self-described Conceptual Realist, Los Angeles artist Robert Williams is credited as patriarch of some of the most significant and influential contemporary art movements. His prolific career expands six decades, and he became known as revolutionary for embracing marginalized styles and underground cultures, like alternative comics, hot rods, pinups, graffiti and tattoo art. Williams is unabashed in his social commentary, and his paintings are rich in color, content and technique.

AltRealities**The Fantastical Worlds & Creatures of Contemporary Artists****September 8 – November 26, 2017**

A popular theme with artists today is the exploration of alternate universes outside our perception of reality. Like Alice's journey to Wonderland, these surreal landscapes and the creatures that inhabit them serve as windows into realms that feel familiar but are twisted to reveal new perspectives. *AltRealities* brings together artists whose work alludes to the possibility of other worlds that exist beyond our own, even if they are only imaginary.

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After Party

Julie Heffernan

September 8, 2017 – January 14, 2018

Renowned for her lavish, imaginative paintings, New York-based artist Julie Heffernan creates opulent worlds that are undergoing a slow degradation. She draws inspiration from a variety of sources - her Catholic upbringing, feminist leanings and global affairs, among others. Her transcendent narratives function as social metaphors that are often derived from dreams and her subconscious. Heffernan considers much of her work as a kind of interior self-portrait, and titles them as such.

The Dusk Parade

Joe Sorren

September 8, 2017 – January 7, 2018

Joe Sorren, who grew up in Arizona, is known for his evocative characters in dreamlike settings. Working in a luminous palette inspired by desert colors, Sorren creates narratives that have a mysterious quality. His seemingly simple subjects allude to more complex storylines, allowing for multiple interpretations to co-exist.

On Thursday, September 7, Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum will also offer a screening of *Mr. Bitchin'*, an acclaimed documentary about artist Robert Williams. The film delivers insight into multiple American counter-cultures. The screening is \$5 and tickets go on sale August 18. Those who attend the screening will also enjoy a gallery talk and sneak preview of Robert's Exhibitions, *Slang Aesthetics*.

Mesa Arts Center is located at One East Main Street in downtown Mesa. There is no charge to attend the Season Kickoff Festival or the Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum's opening, and parking is free. More information can be found at MesaArtsCenter.com or by calling 480-644-6500.

Editor's Note: High res images of art and to represent the festival are available immediately upon request.

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About Mesa Arts Center

Mesa Arts Center, owned and operated by the City of Mesa, is a unique, architecturally stunning facility located in the heart of downtown Mesa. Arizona's largest arts center is home to four theaters, five art galleries, and 14 art studios. Guests, patrons, and students come to Mesa Arts Center to enjoy the finest live entertainment and performances, world-class visual art exhibitions, and outstanding arts education classes. The Mesa Arts Center mission is to inspire people through engaging arts experiences that are diverse, accessible, and relevant. For more information, visit mesaartscenter.com.