

Staff artists go two-by-two in 'Pairs' at Anderson Ranch Arts Center

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Digital Fabrication Lab Technician Leah Aegerter helps hang a coworker's ceramic pieces for the Pairs gallery at Anderson Ranch on Thursday, October 31, 2019. (Kelsey Brunner/The Aspen Times)

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Leah Aegerter, left, takes a picture of Zakriya Rabani, piece for the Pairs gallery at Anderson Ranch on Thursday, October 31, 2019. (Kelsey Brunner/The Aspen Times)

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What: 'Pairs'

Where: Patton-Malott Gallery, Anderson Ranch Arts Center

When: Opening reception Tuesday Nov. 5, 5-6 p.m.; on view through Dec. 6

More info: The exhibition features works by Ranch studio coordinators Leah Aegerter, Louise Deroualle, Esther Nooner, Lauren Peterson, Zakriya Rabani and Mark Tan; andersonranch.org

A staff show at Anderson Ranch Arts Center allows the public to put its finger on the creative pulse of the Snowmass Village campus.

The latest group show by the Ranch's studio coordinators, opening Tuesday, is titled "Pairs" and is curated around matched and complementary artworks (and some puns). Each artist has two pieces in the show, and they showcase a creative team working across media on artistic ideas from the profound to the playful and the playfully profound.

Louise Deroualle is studio coordinator for ceramics. Her relationship with the Ranch goes back to 2010, when she interned under Anderson Ranch mainstay Doug Casebeer. Over the past two years, she's been making uncanny pear-like seedpod sculptures.

Hanging on the gallery wall, her white pods appear to be bursting open, their blue innards pushing through cracks in the pearl white surface. She coats them first in blue, then lays a white glaze on them. When she fires them in the kiln, the blue below the surface bursts out unpredictable and the cracks solidify. As she's refined the process, the pieces have taken on both a personal and universal meaning.

"When I do the firing, it cracks the surface and comes through," she explained. "So it was a way for me to talk about my emotions and identity, who we are, and how it always comes through without us realizing it."

Leah Aegerter runs the digital fabrication lab at the Ranch, the workshop where artists create with bleeding edge digital and 3-D printing technology. For this show, she wanted to see how her hands' skills matched up against her technologically assisted projects.

She's making two sculptures, mirror images of each other, including an intricate webbing fashioned in bronze.

"I'm thinking about digital fabrication and how what was invented as a way of industrializing and computerizing traditional craft techniques, then I'm reversing that thinking," she said. "This is a conceptual shift in my work that I'm really excited about."

Sculpture studio coordinator Zakriya Rabani's workspace includes piles of dozens of skateboard decks along with massive functional skateboards that can carry as many as four people (those will be in action during Rabani's [participatory happening at the Aspen Art Museum](#) on Dec. 4). But for the "Pairs" show, he looked to a different juvenile pastime: sticking gum under your school desk.

His sculpture piles some 400 pieces of chewed gum on top of one another on the desk's undersurface, pulling it off of its four legs and resting on this stalactite of gum.

"I dreamed about this work," he said. "So I was thinking, 'What if there is so much gum on the desk that its ass is up?'"

He's paired it with a compilation of his youthful videos of skateboarding and teen hijinks.

Woodworking studio coordinator Mark Tan also is working with furniture. He's conceived a functional dual chair, with the pair merged together.

"I've never made anything like this before," he said. "It's kind of goofy. I like it."

In that playful vein, painting and printmaking coordinator Lauren Peterson has been working on humorous performance pieces and impermanent installations.

During a recent residency in Vermont, she made found-object sculptures she would hide inside and toss balloons and confetti out of — in toddler birthday party fashion, she also stuffed as many party blowers into her mouth as she could fit and attempted to make music.

"I've been thinking about this idea of, 'It's my party, and I'll cry if I want to' — like, a sad party," she explained.

For "Pairs," she's working on an installation involving cake and aggressive action, working on concepts like throwing it or melting candles on it, leaving the viewer with the mess.

"It's not quite grotesque," she said. "It's meant to be humorous."

Of particular interest to mountainfolk is photographer Esther Noone's witty treatment of nature photography.

She's taken two landscape photos and plastered them on pedestals — one wrapped in some 20 images of the same place, another using a single image.

"It's kind of a reference to elevating nature to art and literally putting it on a pedestal," she said. "I've been wanting to make this piece for a long time."

Noone, who came to the Ranch in May to oversee the studios for photography and new media, works with landscapes — she's recently been shooting Moab and the Maroon Bells — that she subtly manipulates to create a slightly off-kilter mood where the skies are just a little more purple and the slickrock a little more orange.

"I like toying with foreground, background," she said of her treated images, "separating those elements and treating the photograph like a window or a mirror."

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