

## 516 shows spotlight transplanted viewpoints



"New Development" by Paula Wilson (left) "Sun Son" by Mira Burack

by Kathaleen Roberts

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Two New Mexico artists thread inspiration from the state's high desert terrain through seemingly opposite styles.

Paula Wilson's print world entangles silhouetted figures with fantasy landscapes.

Mira Burack's collages evoke roiling suns and water droplets created from textiles.

516 ARTS is hosting both women in solo shows opening on Saturday, June 22. The art will hang through Aug. 31.

Wilson grew up in Chicago and earned her master's degree at New York's Columbia University. In 2008, she traded the city's high rents and high rises for Carrizozo's high desert in south central New Mexico. Her work collapses the distance between art and life through a multiplicity of viewpoints.

Today Wilson works from a 5,000-square-foot former Ford garage-turned studio.

“I was abducted by aliens or something and ended up in Carrizozo,” she said with a laugh, adding, “It’s an incredible place to make art.”

Wilson discovered printmaking in a middle school art camp.

“I’m dyslexic and there’s something about the reverse process that completely made sense to me,” she said.

“Remodeled” evolved from a jigsaw puzzle of nearly every printing process – relief woodcut, offset lithography and silkscreen with collage and hand coloring. A figure, birds and vegetation swirl across a vessel with a pair of dinosaurs looming in the background. Wilson says she resurrected the imagery from an overworked painting.

“I had worked and worked this painting to death,” she said. “This print is in many ways in memory of that piece that ceased to exist.”

“Seed” is a 24-foot-high faux kimono comprised of screen print, monotype, woodblock print, acrylic and oil on muslin. It’s one of three works inspired by the mutually beneficial relationship between the yucca plant and its namesake moth.

“It’s the sole pollinator” of the plant, Wilson explained. “They have a mutualistic relationship, so they benefit each other. This is one of the first examples that proved evolutionary theory.”

Burack’s work speaks to the physical and psychological qualities of textiles through collage. Wreaths ring with the rumpled textures of bedding; droplets speak of both the essence of water and the fluidity of sleep.

Burack moved to Cerrillos from Detroit, where she taught a soft sculpture class. She moved to New Mexico in part to be closer to her mother, who moved here from Maine.

Born in Boston and raised in Maine, Burack double majored in art and psychology.

“What is our first textile?” she asked. “That’s when I landed on the bed. That’s where we spend the most time. It brings art and psychology together.”

“Sun (son)” consists of thousands of photographs of her son’s hand-knitted baby blanket.

In New Mexico, Burack’s practice expanded to native plants. “Moon (mother)” is a nearly 7-foot-tall golden orb ringed by broom snakeweed plants. The artist’s mother moved to Cerrillos from Maine hoping the dryness would soothe her arthritis. Broom snakeweed is a traditional Native treatment for the disease.

“It is almost completely healed,” Burack said. “I’ve been using (broom snakeweed) in a lot of my work. It makes a beautiful yellow dye.”

When displayed, the piece turned into a kind of portal.

“It became a magnet for selfies,” Burack said. “People felt compelled to stand in front of it.”