



## SEAN DECKERT AND MELISSA MARTINEZ AT EYE LOUNGE

By Amy L. Young

Sean Deckert is an artist. He is also an urban explorer. The California native examines both himself and society by immersing himself in the cultures and communities of wherever he happens to be residing at the time. His prolific art exhibits exemplify a desire to not just raise social awareness regarding matters that concern him, but to intricately understand the complex make-up of the physical regions he explores, including, and often especially, the people that these arenas comprise. During his time in Phoenix, he has photographically examined integral facets of both the new light rail system and public SB1070 demonstrations, as well as created sculptural work that observes sustainability in an ever-gentrifying downtown.

Sean's new body of work, *Smoke and Mirrors*, is a mixed media installation that uses lenticular prints, sound and ephemera to address the concept of an urban heat island—an urban region that becomes warmer in temperature than its rural surroundings as it develops via new structures like buildings and roads. For those not hip to the lenticular process, a lenticular lens (an array of magnifying lenses) is used when capturing the image and the printing process

allows for the images to have the ability to change as it is viewed from different angles. While no doubt a neat trick, Deckert uses it for exceptional results. His mastery of the process allows us to take mini motion-filled tours of our landscape. One image allows us to step through barren landscape as it becomes filled in with buildings, while another showcases a pristine downtown corridor as it changes by way of the recent frantic dust storm that cemented the word “haboob” into the Arizona vernacular. His photography skills are refined and showcase an eye for detail—it's a precision that merges with emotion and an innate exploratory nature to give us this exhibit that makes us step on our timeline as it follows our history, emphasizes our present and makes us wonder about the future and where our motions will take us.

Walking from Deckert's installation into Melissa Martinez's *Sublime* is like turning the radio station from the Stooges to Nick Drake, in the best way possible. The juxtaposition is priceless. The accelerated heartbeat from *Smoke and Mirrors* slows down as you walk into what feels like a secret. The show examines the beauty of bringing a new life into the world. The infinite emotion that parallels that act

is portrayed by numerous paper butterflies hanging strategically from the ceiling, from the front to the back of the gallery. The positioning of the butterflies highlights the artist's understanding of both nature and place. You almost hear wings fluttering as you make your way past the fragile congregation to the back of the gallery, where the walls are adorned with framed butterfly creations. The delicate *Sublime* shows us how the nuances and magic found in our own personal worlds might shape our external encounters.

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***Smoke and Mirrors* by Sean Deckert**  
***Sublime* by Melissa Martinez**  
Through January 15  
Eye Lounge  
419 E. Roosevelt St., Phoenix  
[eyelounge.com](http://eyelounge.com)

Sean Deckert, *Smoke and Mirrors* mixed media installation

Melissa Martinez, *Sublime* mixed media installation