

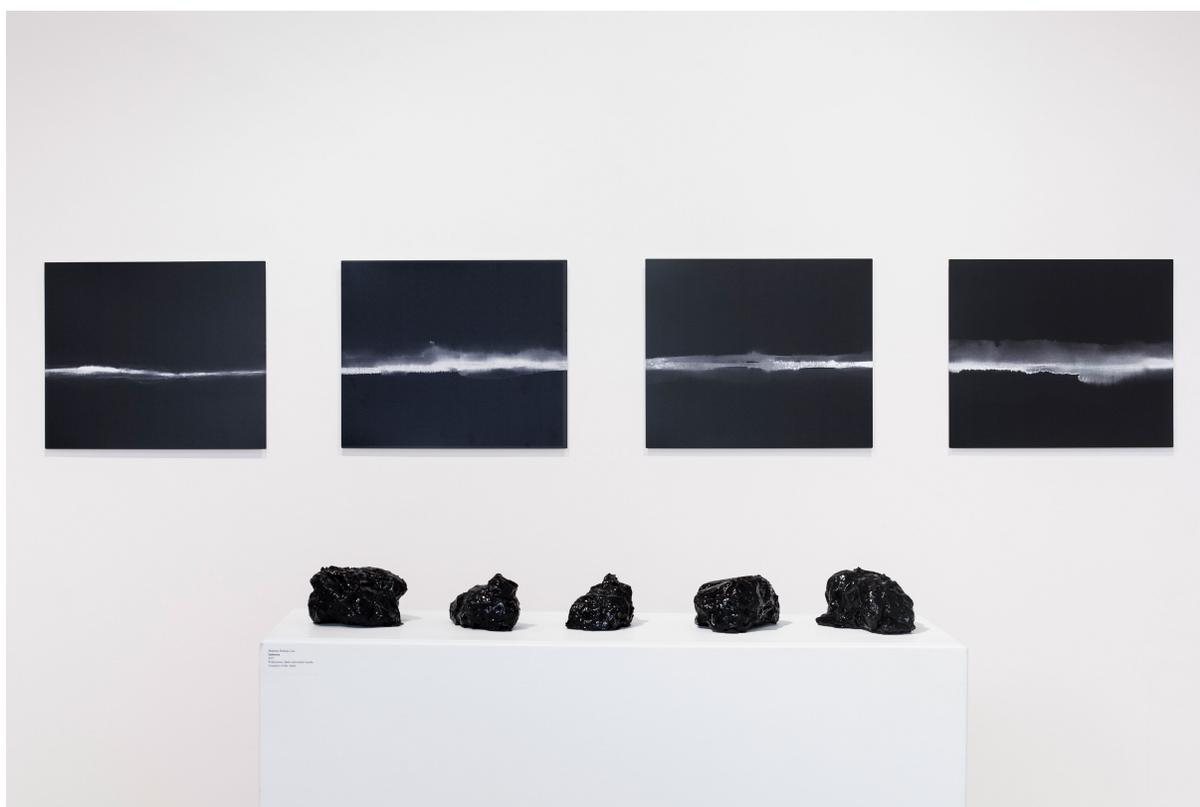


# TAOS NEWS

FINE ART

## Illuminated paths

Two exhibits bring works by four artists into view at the Harwood Museum



Artwork: Marietta Patricia Lies

COURTESY IMAGE



Posted Friday, August 3, 2018 11:05 am

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At the height of our busy summer season, the Harwood Museum of Art is adding to this week's excitement with the premier of two exhibitions celebrating light, shapes and forms, and the color pink.

Robert Parker's "The Zoot Suits Are All Gone" will be a month-long feature in the museum's Studio 238 pop-up gallery, while "Harnessing Light," featuring artists Marietta Patricia Leis, Debbie Long, and Mary Shaffer, will illuminate the Peter and Madeleine Martin Gallery through October 7.

On Friday (Aug. 3) visitors to the Harwood, located at 238 Ledoux Street, will have the opportunity to meet Parker at a reception from 4-6 p.m., when the artist will be on hand to introduce his witty, colorful abstract paintings and sculptural works.

Then, on Saturday (Aug. 4), the Harwood will welcome the artists of "Harnessing Light" with a reception from 3-5 p.m. Also, mark your calendar for their roundtable artists' discussion hosted by Dr. Anna Novakov on Tuesday (Aug. 7) at 7 p.m.

All events are free and open to the public.

"In the past few years there has been a resurgence of the color pink in both art and architectural design. The reason for this resurgence is that pink is a polychromatic color, no longer just the domain of feminine aesthetic," noted Parker in explaining his choice of this and the other vibrant hues used in his graphic, hard-edge acrylic paintings.

The tongue-in-cheek collection was inspired by Parker's fondness for the early mid-century apparel, which the Taos artist-architect admitted to owning. ("It was a black suit, but I wore it with a pink shirt.") The drapes, folds and pleating of zoot suits are captured in the movement inherent to both his paintings and his stainless steel sculptures which, likewise, boast his exuberant palette.

"There are architectural influences in my art, and vice versa. Both reflect my appreciation for pattern, color, linearity and spatiality, which are main elements in each of my disciplines," Parker said, and notable in the vivid pink chair -- replete with strawberry milkshake -- that will be on display.

"The Zoot Suits Are All Gone" will be available for your enjoyment through Aug. 26.

In curating "Harnessing Light," J. Matthew Thomas, the collections manager of the Harwood, said, "I selected these three New Mexican artists who, by different paths, converge on a common focus: light on surface." Working with glass and other media such as found objects, stone, clay, and graphite, the three challenge our perceptions of the most basic natural phenomena: light and darkness.

Taos artist Debbie Long said, "I work with glass, but light is my medium."

"I use glass and (a) labor intensive process to access light in my work. Glass catches light in extraordinary ways. It acts a strong collector and amplifier of light, allowing light collection in my work, even under low-light conditions like twilight," she explained.

"I am particularly interested in building works for the slow read, inviting viewers into environments that shift and unfold over time, and in how the language of light and color communicate through channels outside the language of words."

Long's installation is a large-scale compilation of cast-glass sculptures, the casting of which destroys the individual mold and therefore ensures each piece is unique in texture and translucency. Long is also known for her retrofitted RVs whose roofs and interiors are constructed of glass and whose ambience change as light shifts throughout the day, sunrise to sunset, or as clouds move across the sky. "It's about creating a light and color environment."

Mary Shaffer's works, culled from her collection aptly named "Tool Wall," is a whimsical exploration of the "idiosyncratic character of discarded tools juxtaposed with the clarity of liquid glass," she said.

Shaffer is associated with the founding of the American studio glass movement, which was pivotal in removing glass art from the commercial and industrial arenas and affording artists the freedom to design one-of-a-kind work. In her Taos studio, "I take lovingly crafted, hand-forged tools -- the epitome of American invention -- and recycle them in my work," Shaffer explained. "The challenge is to make the glass look as honest and straightforward as the original tool."

Her pieces are in the permanent collection of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and other prestigious museums throughout the world. As to the success of her decadeslong career, Shaffer thinks her work "involves a strong element of play, of losing oneself in another world not unlike the one we knew as children."

Wherever there is light, there will be darkness, and the inclusion of Marietta Patricia Leis provides that contrast to the exhibit with pieces from her collection entitled "Lost and Found in Iceland." Having spent a winter residency in a small Iceland town, Leis was struck by the barely there sun, and long, uninterrupted hours of darkness.

"I moved into the mystery and beauty of darkness," she said, and has captured its moodiness with her process of mixing acrylic medium with graphite, sanding and layering the medium until the work before her captures the surreal and shimmering Icelandic landscape.

The multimedia artist will also exhibit prints on metal, oils on wood, and sculptures, with "each piece being another statement of my experience there."

Leis has participated in residencies worldwide, indulging her fascination with the sense of place and the language of color, and will soon head to the Mark Rothko Art Center in Latvia, to which she was invited. "I'm in awe of this planet, and I want to bring its beauty into view," she said. "Art crosses borders. It's the universal language."

For more information on both exhibits, contact the Harwood Museum of Art at (575) 758-9826, or visit [harwoodmuseum.org](http://harwoodmuseum.org).