

# Abstract expressionism at Artwalk

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Special to this week's Friday Uptown Butte Artwalk is an installation that combines films, prints, photography and sculpture.

The works are by New York City artists Beryl Sokoloff and Crista Grauer. Both artists were a part of the abstract expressionism movement that began in the 1950s.

"Two Lives in Motion" includes photography, prints and sculpture at Silver Bow Art, 6 W. Copper St., seven short films shown at the Original Mine Yard and a film on loop at the Foreground Gallery, 66 W. Park St.

Richard Nelson of Silver Bow Art said that Sokoloff and Grauer were hugely influential in his own life as an artist. Though Sokoloff died a few years ago, his wife Grauer will be in Butte Friday for the Artwalk.

"They opened up the art world to me," Nelson said. "Beryl lived in Hells



Kelley Christensen, The Montana Standard

Richard Nelson of Silver Bow Art gives one of artist Crista Grauer's metal heads a spin. The installation is part of a multi-platform presentation at the Friday Uptown Butte Artwalk Sept. 5 including films, photographs, sculptures and prints.

Kitchen. Many famous artists passed through that place."

The installation, curated by Monica Saviron, includes photographs Sokoloff took while working as a press

photographer, avant garde films he made and prints, a film and sculpture by Grauer.

"Abstract expressionism was abstractly trying to convey emotions," Nelson said. "It's the experience

of walking down a street, traveling, any topic and how to portray random neurons firing in the brain while all that is happening."

It could also be said that abstract expressionism

puts the focus on the creation of art as the art form.

Nelson said the Sokoloff and Grauer's works are important to Butte because they capture New York City during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, when the city was newly post-industrial and largely vacant.

"(Sokoloff) chronicled the same thing Butte went through (in New York City) with fires, arson and economic downturn," Nelson said. "He was part of the artistic revival in New York City that is now happening in Butte."

The Sokoloff film at the Foreground Gallery is his most famous. "My Mirrored Hope" is about Clarence Schmidt, a pioneer of monumental environmental sculpture. Schmidt's most famous work was "Miracle on the Mountain," which was constructed of found objects and recycled materials in Woodstock, N.Y.

In addition to the press photos, the front of Silver

Bow Art is an installation of Grauer's spinning heads, which have different expressions dependent on their orientation.

And at the Original Mine Yard, six of Sokoloff's films and one of Grauer's films will be shown beginning at dusk — about 8:30 p.m.

"When you have (outside) artists come (to Butte), they disrupt the status quo," said Julia Crain, special projects planner for Butte-Silver Bow. "It allows you to put your existence in context. It expands your worldview."

And the backdrop of Butte is one that continues to attract artists from all over the world to this city.

"(Butte) is gorgeous visually," Nelson said. "It's full of these ghosts. The artists who come here appreciate the spirits here."

The Friday Art Walk is on the first Friday of the month at numerous venues throughout Uptown. It runs 5 to 9 p.m.