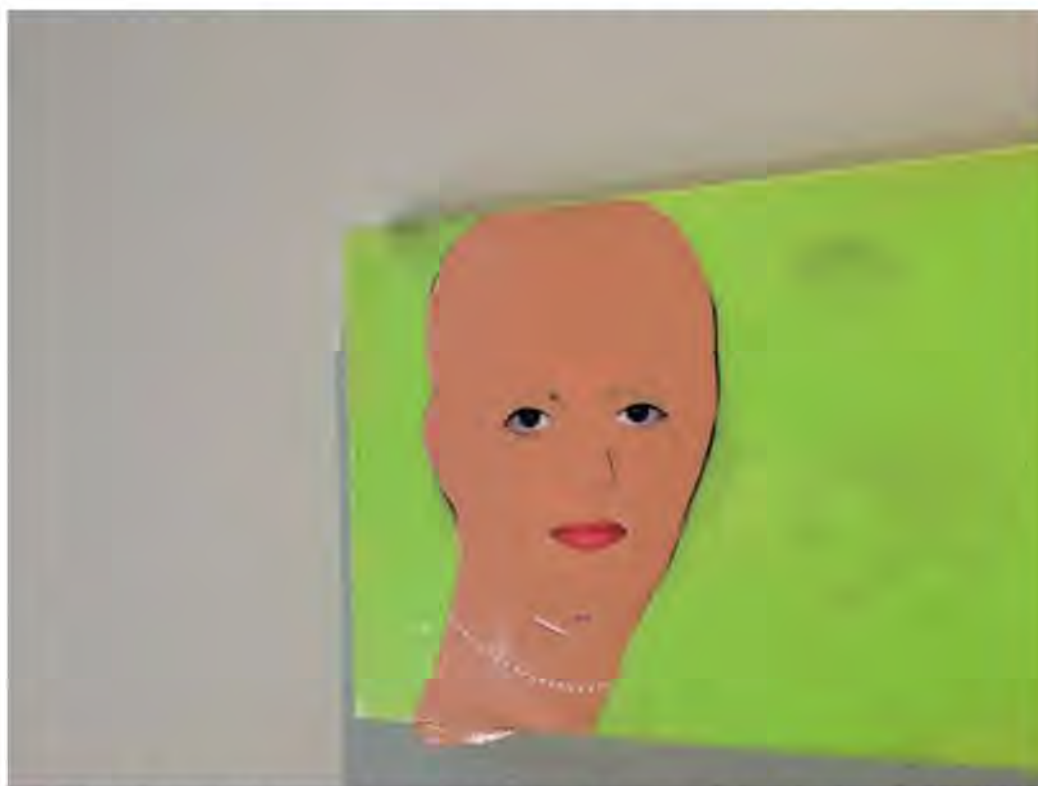


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ARTS

# Downtown Gallery exhibit explores portraits by Knoxville artist Marcia Goldenstein, three others



Judith Page's "Portraits in Plasma" series is one of the series shown in the exhibit "Persona: Process Portraiture" at the University of Tennessee Downtown Gallery.

By *Amy McRary* of the *Knoxville News Sentinel*

Posted: *Sept. 09, 2016*

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An exhibit showing this month at the University of Tennessee Downtown Gallery illustrates how four contemporary artists, including one from Knoxville, explore the photographic image.

"Persona: Process Portraiture" shows images created by four female artists and displayed in forms from paintings to collages.



Knoxville artist Marcia Goldenstein's intricately done, hand-embroidered series of female artists includes this image of Frida Kahlo. The series "Women in Stitches" is part of a



Photos by Amy McRary/News Sentinel This close-up shows art by Maine-based mixed-media artist Gail Skudera in the exhibit "Persona" Process Portraiture" at the University of Tennessee Downtown Gallery. The exhibit shows how four female contemporary artists use photographs and portraits in their work.



Former model and dancer Leah Schrage often uses selfies or portraits of herself in her art; she covers or alters part of the image using paint, glitter, glue or other materials.

images.

Among the works is the "Women in Stitches" series by Knoxville artist Marcia Goldenstein, who is a University of Tennessee professor emeritus of painting and drawing. Goldenstein's "Women in Stitches" depicts a series of female artists from Georgia O'Keeffe to Knoxville's Catherine Wiley.

Each painter, sculptor or photographer is portrayed in a miniature portrait Goldenstein hand-embroidered in shades of black, gray and white thread. Each intricately detailed portrait, set in a 8-by-10 black-bordered frame, is less than five inches square.

"Persona: Process Portraiture" was created by T. Michael Martin, a UT graduate who previously worked at UT's on-campus Ewing Gallery and is now the director of university galleries at Murray State University in Murray, Ky. "Persona: Process Portraiture" will be on exhibit at a Murray State gallery after its time in Knoxville.

The exhibit's three other artists are New York painter and sculptor Judith Page, Maine mixed-media artist Gail Skudera and New York photographer Leah Schrage. The show illustrates how all four artists "use portraits and how they manipulate a found or selected image to create a new one," Martin said in a telephone interview.

Page's series "Portraits in Plasma" includes 21 images of bald women displayed on neon green backgrounds and shown on 4-by-6 to 12-by-16-inch canvasses. Only the women's faces are portrayed; often they appear to stare straight ahead. Each "Portrait in Plasma" starts as a photograph Page painted over using thick, gel-like paint. Bits of the original photos, including the image's eyes or mouth, can be seen through the paint layers.

Skudera uses photos in mixed media works in which she often adds found objects like fabric, buttons or beads and incorporates techniques of silk-screening, painting, weaving and drawing. One of Skudera's three displayed series of work shows 8-by-10 framed mixed media abstracts that began with 4-by-4 portraits of artists. Another woven mixed media series shows works



artwork and designs in muted rust, brown and gray tones.

Schrager was a model and modern dancer when she started creating art using self portraits. Her current works start with portraits of her taken as "selfies" or by studio assistants. The photos become studies about selfies' artistic value as well as censorship in art, according to Martin. "Persona: Process Portraiture" includes photos of a lingerie-wearing Schrager she altered or partly covered using paint, glitter or glue.

The exhibit is at the 106 S. Gay St. gallery through Sept. 30. The gallery is open 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Wednesday through Friday and 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday. Admission is free.

#### About Amy McRary

Amy McRary writes about the arts, people, animals, history and more as a features/entertainment/general assignment reporter for The News Sentinel.

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