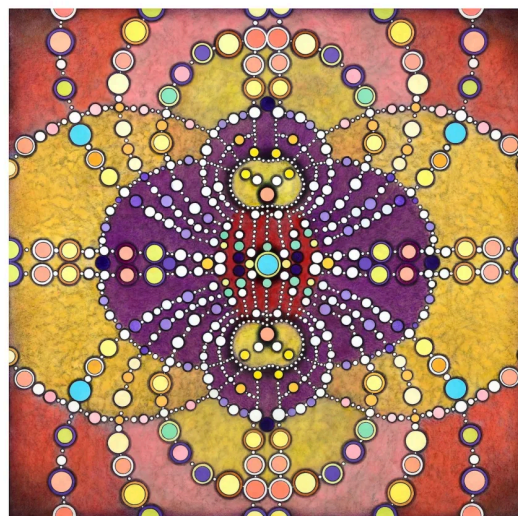
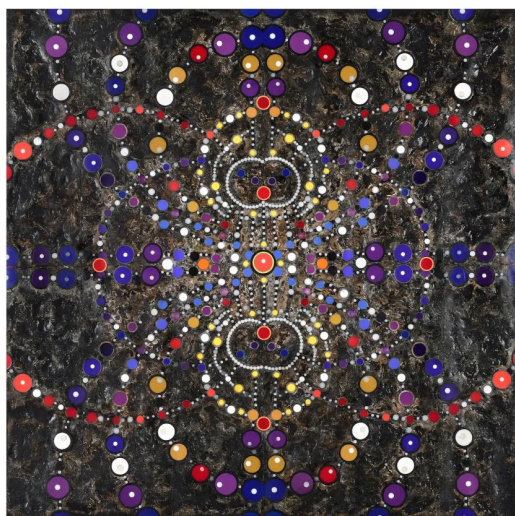


This artist uses cowboy hats, pill bottles and jawbreaker candies in her work

Terry Maker has a new solo show at Robischon Gallery



Two of Terry Maker's works paired together at Robischon Gallery. The first is an earlier work titled "Field Lines." The second is "Field Lines Drawings," which was made from a rubbing the original piece that was embellished with more color and patterning. Photo by Chris Rogers, provided by Terry Maker.



By **RAY MARK RINALDI** | media@rayrinaldi.com | The Denver Post

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Artist Terry Maker likens her recent work to a journey through deep space, an adventure “out of this world and into a place of wonder.” It’s a bold metaphor to suggest about two-dimensional objects that hang flat against a wall in a gallery in downtown Denver.

But it is a helpful way to see the fantastical objects she is making these days, to look beyond the surface and explore something deeper and immersive. Maker is inviting us to jump aboard some rocket ship and trek through these paintings as if they were constellations of planets existing in a far-off universe. Viewed that way, they are a wild trip.

Maker is a familiar name on the Colorado art scene, and her shows are always highly anticipated. One reason is that she is known for the hardcore physicality required to craft her complicated objects. She often makes pieces from existing materials — I remember, over the past few years, works made from shredded medical documents, cowboy hats, empty pill bottles, the barrels of old rifles — that she shapes into new concepts using everything from paint brushes to power tools.

Her best-known pieces consist of spherical, candy jawbreakers in various sizes, which she embeds into blocks of resin or recycled paper. She then cuts the works into thin slices, using electric saws, creating flat “paintings” dotted with rainbow-colored circles arranged into intricate patterns. They are chunky and hand-hewn, but their perfect, symmetrical arrangements also give them the aura of mandalas. They are meditative, spiritual, mesmerizing.

Knowing the background of Maker’s work helps viewers to appreciate the new pieces featured in the solo exhibit “Traces” at Robischon Gallery. They are, in a sense, new editions of existing pieces. They resemble the originals but take on a life of their own.

Maker starts by creating “rubblings” of works she made in the past, laying paper over the top of them and using graphite to capture the marks that exist on their surfaces. It’s not so different from the way people make rubbings of grave markers in cemeteries.



Terry Maker's "Sprial" is made from shredded documents, resin and jawbreaker candies on panel. (Photo by Chris Rogers, provided by Terry Maker)

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When she removes the paper, she is left with a skeletal version of the original, a sketch that picks up the patterns — which, in Maker's artworks, usually means carefully arranged circles. Maker appreciates both the simplicity of circles but also the way they evoke heavenly bodies and all of the possibilities of the universe.

Then she goes a step farther — off into the deep end. She uses colored pencils or paint to add seemingly endless volumes of color, and layers and layers of decoration.

That goes for the circles inside the works, which she fills in with hypnotic arrangements of even more circles that appear as dots arranged in intricate, psychedelic patterns.

But she also takes a free hand to the background sections of the pieces, adding more circles, new patterns and even more colors.

Good examples are the paired works "Spiral" and "When Galaxies Collide," which are displayed next to each other at Robischon. "Spiral" is the original work and "Galaxies" is the new edition made from rubbings.

The relationship between the pieces is impossible to miss — they have the same basic form (though their personalities are far apart). The earlier work is earthy, straightforward and easy to read. The copy is mind-bending.

What is true about both versions — and the other coupled works in this show — is that

First, they take incredible amounts of labor to produce, a process that is easy to imagine starting with sparks flying in a workshop and ending with the the sort of delicate, fine art touches that can only happen under bright lights in a pristine artist's studio. They are rugged and dainty simultaneously.

Second, they are intellectually rigorous, even when they do not always appear that way. For sure, these works can be appreciated for their looks, full of color and shape and whimsy. There is entertainment value to the way they jump off the surface and dance in front of you.

But Maker, through both her raw materials and her relentless execution, also wants us to think about the experiences of both our brains and bodies as we make our way through the world. Each time I see one of her exhibits, I go on a different adventure, sometimes internal, other times into the unknown.

She does that thing that dedicated artists do compulsively: work through an idea until there is nothing left, until all of the possibilities have been explored.

Interestingly, she has taken us all along with her. Maker has produced exhibitions at many of the major galleries in the region. She has had sizable shows at places like the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, the Longmont Museum, the Fulginiti Pavilion on the Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora. This is her ninth solo exhibition at Robischon.

For many artists, making work about their own work might seem like an inside job, a self-indulgent ego trip. But local art audiences know her output so well that seeing "Traces" is more like reading the next chapter of a book you can't put down. It's interesting, connected.

With "Traces," Maker is inviting us, metaphorically, to outer space, but she has also in the past toured us through science, medicine, geometry, religion and more. Truth is, it has been one wild trip after another.

Ray Mark Rinaldi is a Denver-based freelance writer who specializes in fine arts.

IF YOU GO



"Dust Devil" is one of the pieces in "Traces," Terry Maker's ninth solo exhibit at Robischon Gallery. Photo by Chris Rogers, provided by Terry Maker.