

THE DAILY WILDCAT

Artist brings Tucson back to the past with new exhibition

The University of Arizona Museum of Art celebrated the opening of three exhibitions Thursday, Nov. 8, including (What is the color, when black is burned? The Gold War. Part 1.), created specifically for Tucson by L.A.-based Frohawk Two Feathers. The Daily



Daily Wildcat: What inspired you to become an artist?

Frohawk Two Feathers: I've been making art since I was a kid, but basically what influenced this was my love for storytelling. I wanted to be able to tell stories visually without going into the realm of television or film. I really wanted to give back to the original essence of art, which is just communicating ideas through pictographs.

DW: Which one of the pieces from your exhibition has resonated with you the most?

FTF: There's several pieces: the collaborative work I did with my friend Ivan called "I Found the A," "The Portrait of the Twins" and "Sombre Vengeance." "Sombre Vengeance" talks about vengeance and what happens when vengeance and ambition reach their apex and how it cumulates into this kind of ball with trippy color and a massive mess. It represents beautiful chaos. For the collaborative piece, I've never shown a piece where I put

somebody else's name on it. My friend Ivan has been my buddy for a long time, he's a glass artist, and we finally got a chance to collaborate on a piece.

DW: What is the inspiration behind "Frenland"?

FTF: I'm always thinking about history, I'm always thinking about politics, and I'm always thinking about the way people interact. So "Frengland" is this place that I invented to kind of level the playing field so to speak, but also just to see what would happen if you take two superpowers and combine them into one. "Frengland" represents transformation, and it represents an idea of how the most power you can have can still never be enough.

DW: What is the story behind What is the color, when black is burned? The Gold War. Part 1.?

FTF: In 2010, I started doing more site-specific stories, which is actually really cool. Initially, I didn't want to do it. My gallerist asked me if I had a story about this place, and I said that I have a story about anything, because I can do the research and I can make it fit. I studied the 18th century and late-18th-century history of Tucson, which didn't have much information. I just wanted to show Tucson as it was and Tucson kind of as it is, by extension. So, first it was New Spain, then it was Mexico, then it was America, and now it's just the same power dynamic. It's almost a metaphor, aside from the whole vengeance narrative, because the cultural dynamic doesn't change. So I wanted to create something about a place that I have never been to and try to see if I can actualize and visualize that narrative.

DW: How does the exhibition examine the problem of how history is recounted?

FTF: The history can change, the players can change, but the game remains the same. Most people don't see it that way; people see history as just old, but things come back. Things never really truly die, and it's the same thing with history. We think of history as separate from ourselves, but that is false, because history is us. We are the sum total of everyone that has come before us. I'm not really working any magic over here, I'm just basically creating a path from the past to the present, and that tendril will work its way into the future.

DW: What do you want the audience to feel when they look at the exhibition?

FTF: I want them to feel what they are going to feel. I'm not the thought police, I try to avoid thought police actions anytime. I don't want people to think like me — I just want them to be open, ready and willing to receive things. There's no overt message that I want people to take away from this. I want you to take it in for the artwork that it is, for the imagination of it, and formulate your own opinion.

DW: What are your plans for the future?

FTF: I'm going to Miami after this, and I'll be exhibiting at NADA, New American Art Dealers, with a gallery out of Brooklyn called Housing NYC. I'll be exhibiting some other micro-narratives of the larger Frenglish narrative there, along with some sculptures and other things. Next year, I have a couple of shows on the east coast and in the Caribbean and will just continue the narrative.