

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Susan Avila

Susan Avila is an artist and designer who uses textiles to enhance perception of contemporary culture. She focuses on repurposing waste from the garment industry into new textile structures and combines traditional handcrafts with technology. She has exhibited her fashion designs and textile art in Argentina, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Finland, Hong Kong, Lithuania, Mexico, Spain, Swaziland, Turkey, UK, and Ukraine as well as in numerous exhibitions in the United States. Her creative work is included in several books and periodicals and she has published articles in *Fiberarts*, *Ornament*, *Surface Design Journal*, and *Textile Forum*. She was a Chutian and Sunshine Scholar at Wuhan Textile University in Wuhan, China from 2009 to 2015 and a recipient of a 2010 Center for Cultural Innovation "Investing in Artists" Grant.

Avila is currently a Professor of Design at the University of California, Davis. She received her MFA in Textile Arts and Costume Design from U.C. Davis in 1996, a Postgraduate Diploma in Textile Art from Goldsmiths College, University of London, in 1986 and her B.A. in Design from UCLA in 1982. Her work is included in the collections of the Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, the University of California, Berkeley, the Alameda County Public Art Collection, Kaiser Permanente in Santa Clara, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the De Young Museum, and the City of Richmond, California, Public Art Collection. She is the recipient of numerous awards and honors for her work.

Mark Galt

Mark Galt is a native of 1960s Northern California, raised in a patchwork family of eight children by inventor/puppeteer/humorist/engineer/poet/farmer/ukulele-playing parents and grandparents. He started designing electronic circuits at age twelve, and initiated a lifetime of metalworking in a high school machine shop at sixteen.

Having studied engineering in college for two-and-a-half years, Galt began a long technical/engineering career in a series of physics laboratories at Stanford University and the Naval Postgraduate School. The creative demands of the laboratory environment refined in him the kinds of skills and sensibilities that fashion fine instrumentation and mechanism. Since 2007 he has concentrated on mechanical sculpture, and his work has received acclaim and award in a variety of galleries, shows, and private collections.

Galt says of his work, "While machines have become essential expressions of our utilitarian and industrial impulses, my inquiries into design and the human condition find language in the machinery of automata, toys, and amusement. I examine and exploit the idea of sympathetic machinery: mechanical systems that, by virtue of their rhythms or aesthetic, achieve a sort of kinship with the human psyche. This approach is exemplified in my treatment of the human figure in motion: its elegance and power

compel me to fashion the moving body (or parts of it) in materials that include gear and lever, cam, crank, and wheel. For me, machinery becomes the central metaphor of figurative sculpture, to the extent that machine elements are not only expressive, but also voluptuous. My intent is to enlist clockwork as a storyteller or choreographer that translates raw mechanical force into brief depictions of beauty and whimsy in the moving human form.”

“Petit Mal” is a variation one of Galt’s early walking studies. Its head is comprised of a cold-cathode numerical indicator tube that counts each step as the figure walks. Periodically the automaton halts midstride as the numerals in his head flash haphazardly, a sort of mechanical seizure, until he recovers his orderly walking and counting. Galt describes his inspiration for the work, saying, “I am intrigued by the idea that a robot might suffer some of the same maladies as we humans. I seem to be attached to the tragi-comical notion that our inventions, while emerging from human brilliance and goodness, must also reveal or endow some measure of human pathology”.