

## The Belt Buckle Expo

July 26 - October 12, 2019

**Opening Reception:** Friday, July 26, 5-7 pm

*Metalsmith Bryan Petersen curates an exhibition that examines the perception of objects, the hierarchy of jewelry formats, and the meaning of craft—through the lens of the belt buckle. Buckles incorporate from QR codes to manta teeth to 3-D printing.*



Santa Fe, NM—“I like challenging perceptions of an object, or how we create hierarchies of format,” says metalsmith Bryan Petersen. Art is constantly in flux—different mediums fall in and out of favor, dropping and adding qualifiers like “wearable” or “sculptural.” While earrings, necklaces, and brooches have ascended to artwork status, the belt buckle has been largely overlooked.

In response, Petersen founded the World Champion Belt Buckle Competition. Since its founding in 2012, the competition has sought to upend outdated stereotypes. Utilizing the belt buckle as canvas, artists crafted compelling visual structures that commented on an array of themes: gender, mortality, politics, technology, and much more.

“It’s funny how there are hierarchies in the art world,” Petersen says. “Artists are making these poignant statements, but it happens to be on art that can be worn on the body. It isn’t just jewelry, it’s a craft-based art object.”

*Buckle Expo: Selections from the 2019 World Championship Belt Buckle Competition* shatters expectations of contemporary craft, utilizing non-traditional materials such as 3-D printing, leather, poker chips, manta teeth, vintage dollhouse tins, auto body paint, and coral. “It’s a fun play on what the buckle can be,” Petersen says. “But it also asks, ‘What is contemporary craft?’ And I believe it’s taking advantage of all these diverse mediums.”

*Buckle Expo: Selections from the 2019 World Championship Belt Buckle Competition* will open in conjunction with *Six Years Smitten*, a cumulative exhibition of past participants of the Smitten Forum jewelry residency, as well as the inaugural *The Bench: Southwest Makers Symposium*.

### Artists.

Nancy Anderson. Laura Fulton. Maja Houtman. Marissa Saneholtz. Mark Thone. Mia Hebib. Suenos Artlette Kiefer & Kaspar Ruegg. Tanner Billis. Tom Muir. Victoria Altepeter.