

“Dallas Medianale Returns to The MAC on Saturday,” Natalie Gempel, D Magazine. 17 May 2019.
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**“Dallas Medianale Returns to The MAC on Saturday”
It's a chance to see artwork you'd never usually see in Dallas.**



There are many occasions to celebrate the talent of local artists, but the Dallas Medianale is not one of them. The biennial exhibition of film, video art, and installation seeks to fill a void in the Dallas arts space by bringing in work that wouldn't usually be found here. This weekend, the 2019 exhibit comes to The MAC in the Cedars with five internationally recognized artists whose works explore the history and evolution of media.

The Medianale started as a program of The Video Association of Dallas in 2011, and has since grown beyond film and video to include all kinds of time-based art. This year, curator Charles Dee Mitchell chose pieces that range from light-based sculpture to claymation. The MAC's new location prompted some of these changes in the presentation. “The space didn't allow for a lot of video projects to go in because of the smaller scale of it, and the sound spill is always a problem where there's a group show of video,” says Mitchell.

The gallery's dedicated viewing room for video will be given to Samson Kambalu, a Malawi-born artist who resides in London and makes silent films. He'll have five video clips—all less than a minute long—playing simultaneously in the room. The sepia-toned films refer to the earliest moments in filmmaking history.

“I started with Samson Kambalu because I knew I wanted to show his work. They all play simultaneously on different sides of the room on loop. They look almost like they could've been made by Thomas Edison, but they're about experiences of the African Diaspora,” says Mitchell. “He was the artist I knew I definitely wanted to show, and from there I thought of Penelope [Umbrico], because she deals with old media as well.”

Umbrico is fascinated with outdated media—her strange inspirations include people trying to sell their old TVs on Craig’s List. Mitchell insists that the show doesn’t have a theme, but he says that “all the work addresses old media and new media in some way.”

Allison Schulnik, best known as a painter, will show a claymation film at the Medianale, alluding to the medium’s important role in the history of animation. Barry Stone, the lone Texan in the exhibit, works in a more futuristic mode, manipulating the code of digital landscape photos.

Luke Murphy, a light-based artist, is the curveball of the group. His LED light displays are quite different from the work usually shown at the Medianale.

“I wanted something kind of dazzling to put in the show,” explains Mitchell. “They’re smart, they’re very smart. They’re minimalist sculptures turned into this light phenomena.”

As a group, the artists should create an interesting narrative about technology and time-based media—even if that’s not exactly the theme.

“If you put two things next to each other, there’s some kind of relationship, and if you put five... someone’s going to find a theme.”

The opening reception for the Dallas Medianale 2019 is Saturday, May 18 from 6-9 p.m. The exhibition will be on view at The MAC through July 14.

