

Biennial showcases Nebraskans' 'best' work

▾ **PAINTING, DRAWING,** printmaking, photography, ceramics, pottery, sculpture and multimedia. Starting this weekend, the public can see examples of each created by Nebraska artists in Gallery 1516's second biennial.

Biennials — art exhibitions held every two years — aren't new in Nebraska. The first began in 1932 with Grant Wood, famous for his "American Gothic" painting, who served as judge. The Joslyn Art Museum held regular biennials through the late 1980s, until Gallery 1516 resurrected the event after close to three decades in 2017.

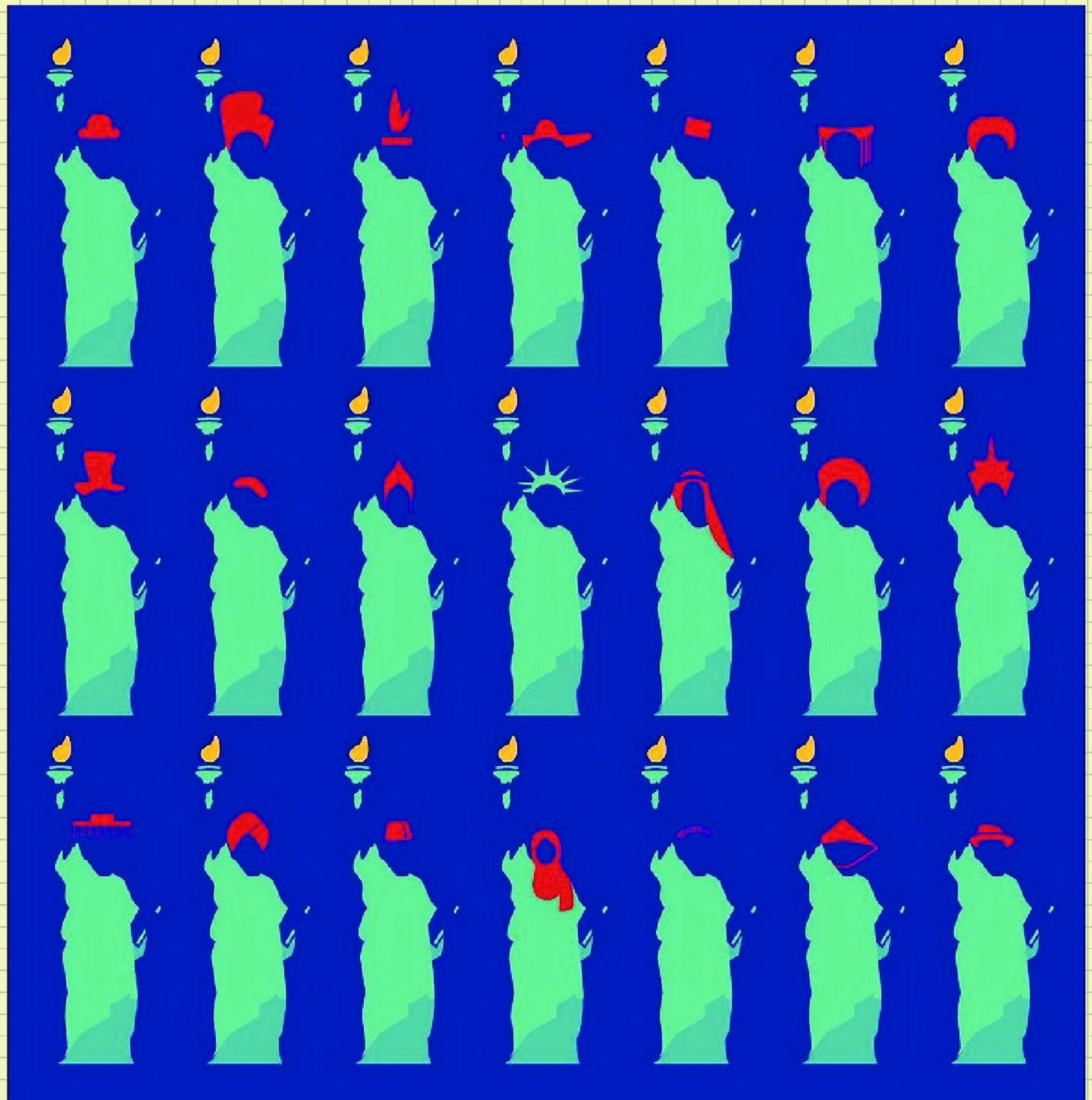
"It's a showcase for the best work by Nebraska artists," gallery director Patrick Drickey said. "It's a platform for artists so that they might step onto a larger stage."

Close to 200 Nebraska artists applied. The criteria required that artists living outside the state have a strong tie, such as having been born, studied or worked in Nebraska. Anne Pagel (curator for international collectors Robert and Karen Duncan), Linda Rajcevich (former Joslyn Art Museum deputy director for operations and planning), Russ Erpelding (ARTreach curator for the Museum of Nebraska Art) and John Thein (full-time artist and former Creighton University art professor) were this biennial's jurors and reviewed close to 650 works of art in a blind judging process before selecting the final 100.

Artists won \$500 each for first-place prizes in distinct categories. These included: Daniel Bruggeman (painting), Gabriellia Quiroz and Joseph Broghammer (tie in drawing), John Dennison (ceramics), Mark Hartman (mixed media), James Scholz (photography), Watie White (printmaking), Chad Fonfara (sculpture) and Mark Sabaliauskas (student). A \$2,500 first-in-show prize was also awarded to landscape painter Jennifer Homan.

Drickey said the breadth of work on view is impressive.

"I don't care who you are, you'll find something you like," he said. "The biennial



"Nation of Immigrants," by Rajiv Fernandez, from Gallery 1516's biennial exhibit.

shows such a diversity of what's being produced in the state."

The director also wants the public to know that the works on view will be for sale and that the gallery doesn't charge artists commissions.

"We want people to start buying art from living artists. That's our goal," he said. "You

can build an original collection and meet and support Nebraska artists. And you get to 'live with' them, in a way."

Gallery 1516, 1516 Leavenworth St. "2019 Nebraska Artist Biennial." Opening reception: 6:30 to 9 p.m. Friday. Through Aug. 4. gallery1516.org or 402-305-1510.