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## PHOENIX RISING ART CAR artist statement (b. August 5, 2013)

PHOENIX RISING is Houston artist Sarah Gish's third art car, following Hubba Hubba (2011-2013) and Artmobile (2004). The story of PHOENIX RISING is not a simple one since she was born out of a crazy set of circumstances. Hubba Hubba caught on fire in August 2013 while Sarah and artist Amanda Smith were on an IGNITE YOUR LIFE! road trip ([www.igniteyourownlife.com](http://www.igniteyourownlife.com)) that took place in the summer of 2013 and traversed from Houston, Texas to Carmel, California and back to Houston. On the return trip, right outside of Phoenix, Arizona, Hubba Hubba began blazing under the hood and the double irony of literally igniting on the IGNITE YOUR LIFE! road trip as well as having that ignition happening in Phoenix, a symbol of renewal by flames, was not lost on Sarah and Amanda. Hubba Hubba was a car that was difficult from the beginning, so Sarah sadly traded her in to purchase a gently used white Toyota Corolla that became PHOENIX RISING. It was then that Sarah started using a mantra that's helped her with many things in her life since the death of Hubba Hubba: "Does it have to be on fire before you make a change?"

PHOENIX RISING is a car of transformation. Sarah was not at all expecting to be creating a brand new art car in the fall of 2013, but the challenge of a new white canvas was exhilarating and terrifying at the same time. All of Sarah's art focuses on conceptual assemblages – creating new images and meaning out of found materials such as hubcaps, bottle caps, broken glass, and mirrors, and out of words, drawing upon her skill as a writer. But with this new project, Sarah decided to move beyond being an expert at using repurposed materials (Hubba Hubba had almost 2,000 bottle caps, 600 mirrors, and 7 hubcaps) and she decided to primarily use paint. The very act of that decision transformed Sarah's art to a different level of discovery and skills. The paintings on her new canvas are centered around the theme of fire – flames billow and become floral shapes while also looking very feminine and swirly, something like a cross between Peter Max and Georgia O'Keeffe. Glass rocks adorn the dashboard while hand-painted rocks have been placed in various areas on the car. Like both her other art cars, Sarah enlisted friends to help and add to the design – in PHOENIX RISING, she invited her girlfriends to her house to paint rocks, symbolizing the collaboration of friendship and art. Four colors were chosen for the car to correspond to the body's chakras/energy centers: red (the first chakra, focused on security and grounding); orange (the second chakra, focused on creativity and sensuality); yellow (the third chakra, focused on decision-making and courage); and turquoise (the fifth chakra, focused on self-expression).

PHOENIX RISING is softer in look and materials than Hubba Hubba and the car already seems more sturdy and reliable than Hubba Hubba – transformation is often a good thing! The story of the Phoenix bird is incorporated into the car through the use of an Isis hood ornament in which Isis is depicted with fully unfurled wings. Isis was the powerful ancient Egyptian goddess worshipped as the ideal mother and wife as well as the patroness of nature and magic. She was a friend to all, no matter their station in life, and she was also known as the protector of the dead and the goddess of children. It is her power that will guide the car and the theme for its art. Fire is also a very powerful force and will be explored throughout the car – the fire of rejuvenation, the fire of endings and beginnings, the fire of an ignited spirit – and on and on. The vanity license plate even explores the theme of transformation: the word "ignite" is spelled "I9NITE" since the number 9 is a symbol of beginnings and endings. Much more shall be revealed as the car continues to be created!

PHOENIX RISING art car is driven on a daily basis all over Houston and leaves a ripple of smiles in its wake. She made her debut on August 31, 2013 in the Marfa Lights Festival parade and it was a day of much joy and reflection since that was the anniversary of the death of Sarah's brother, Geoffrey. From the very beginning, PHOENIX RISING has changed the world by encouraging people to connect, be happy, and to contemplate life on a deeper level.

Sarah Gish is a lover of life who is an artist, mama, connector, and igniter. She has been a marketer and educator for various companies since 1985, including Blaffer Art Museum; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and most recently, Landmark's Greenway and River Oaks movie theatres. She left that job in 2000 when her younger son Matthew was born to start a business where she could spend more time with him and her other son, Alexander. This decision led to the birth of her third "child": Gish Creative ([www.gishcreative.com](http://www.gishcreative.com)). Gish Creative is a personal, family, and business enrichment company that ignites lives, champions culture, and creates connections.