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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Starbursts Invade the Stairwell of the Visual Arts Center of NJ



Rhia Hurt, detail of *Star Bursts*, 2016, acrylic on canvas and synthetic silk over wire, dimensions variable.

Summit, NJ (January 18, 2017)—Opening on Thursday, January 19, the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey will debut *Stair- Gazing: Rhia Hurt*, a site-specific art installation responding to the space in the Art Center’s main stairwell.

Defying the conventional rectangular canvas, Hurt’s colorful organic shapes can be considered both painting and sculpture. The artist takes her inspiration from nature, materials in her studio and color field paintings that originated in the 1950s. She creates multiple elements by stretching canvas over three-dimensional wire forms. Hurt uses improvisational techniques to construct and apply color to her work, often soaking the canvas in kiddie pools to blend the pigments. “There is an element of surprise and discovery that is captivating,” said the artist. These organically shaped canvases seem familiar—suggesting images of sea anemones, flowers or

starbursts—but they are abstract forms. Hurt has a personal connection to nature that centers her. She comments, “You can have a connection to nature no matter what is going on—no matter how challenging—no one can take that away from you. There is a lot of strength in that.”

Currently based in New York City, Hurt received her MFA in Painting at the San Francisco Art Institute in 2009. She has shown her art in California, New York, Berlin, and Toronto. Her work is in private collections throughout the United States. In addition to her studio art practice, Hurt is the Executive Director of Brooklyn Art Space & Trestle Gallery, an arts organization in Brooklyn, NY.

Stair-gazing is a series curated by Katherine Murdock located in the Visual Art Center of New Jersey’s main stairwell. The series highlights work by one artist.

Opening Reception: Thursday, January 19, 6:00 – 8:00 pm, free event open to all.

Also on view through March 19, 2017: *From There to Here: Encaustic Paintings by Students of Lisa Pressman*; *From the Ground Up: Emerging Ceramicists at the Art Center Part II* and continuing exhibitions: *Rachel Beach: Touchstone* and *Renee Stout: At the Crossroads*.

Gallery Info: Suggested admission \$5, students/seniors \$3, members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult free. Hours: Monday – Wednesday and Friday: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm; Thursday 10:00am – 8pm; and Saturday & Sunday 11am – 4pm. Please call 908-273-9121 to confirm holiday hours. Adult and children’s group tours for the Art Center’s exhibitions are available throughout the year. For more information, call 908-273-9121 or visit www.artcenternj.org.

Support

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