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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Urban Teens Create Gravity-Defying Art at the Visual Arts Center of NJ



Image: Lis Quiles, *Cascade*, 2016, mixed media.

Summit, NJ (December 13, 2016)—On Thursday, January 19, from 6:00 – 8:00 pm, the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey will host a reception celebrating the opening of *Balancing Act*, an exhibition featuring art work created by students from the Jefferson Arts Academy in Elizabeth, NJ.

The exhibition will be the culmination of a year-long relationship the students have had with the Art Center as part of the Arts Alive Initiative. This program, which has been ongoing since 2009, provides arts enrichment to approximately 300 underserved students per year. Groups of about 50 students at a time make 3 trips to the Art Center touring the galleries and making projects inspired by the work of professional artists they have seen.

The current group of 100 Jefferson Arts Academy students studied the exhibition *Rachel Beach: Touchstone*, currently on display in the Main Gallery through March of next year. *Touchstone* is a multi-media exhibition featuring freestanding abstract sculptures, video, and large-scale photographs. The students then created their own painted foam core sculptures, which were curated by Executive Director, Melanie Cohn, and Interim Director of Education and Community Engagement, Daniel Bergman. Twenty-four student sculptures will be displayed in the Community Gallery for the duration of the show, January 19 - March 19, 2017.

Also opening on January 19 at the Art Center: *Between Instances: A Collaborative Project* by Lisa Pressman and Krista Svalbona; *From There to Here: Encaustic Paintings* by Students of Lisa Pressman; *From the Ground Up: Emerging Ceramicists at the Art Center Part II* and *Stair-Gazing: Rhia Hurt*.

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

Major support for the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey is provided by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the WJS Foundation, the Wilf Family Foundations and Art Center members and donors.



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About the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey

For more than 80 years, the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey has been dedicated to viewing, making and learning about contemporary art. Recognized as a leading non-profit arts organization and accredited by the American Alliance for Museums, the Art Center's renowned studio school, acclaimed exhibitions, and educational outreach initiatives serve thousands of youth, families, seniors and people with special needs every year.