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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Students from Elizabeth Get “Hands-on” Education



Summit, NJ (December 20, 2016)—On Monday, several Elizabeth public school 8th grade students spent the day at the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey immersed in projects related to the Art Center’s current exhibition, *Rachel Beach: Touchstone*. Programs with the Art Center have opened up student’s eyes and given them new experiences with both contemporary art and in the classroom. Because of the nature of the Rachel Beach exhibition this week’s project was literally hands-on as the students made expressive images with their fingers and hands using colored ink pads.

For more than seven consecutive years, the Art Center has provided students at a public high school in Elizabeth, NJ with an in-depth sequential, arts education program that expands their knowledge and understanding of contemporary art. In 2015, the Art Center

expanded that program significantly, by rolling out a sister program for middle school students to reach hundreds of younger students.

The program is led by professional artists and art educators and based on the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey’s exhibitions. It is intended to help this segment of the public school population to expand the scope of their interests as well as knowledge and learning experiences in preparation for high school. This initiative also supports the National Core Arts Standards as well as other standards.

Thanks to donor support this year, over 400 students from inner city Elizabeth traveled to the Art Center by bus for a special day of arts enrichment. “We are particularly excited about this program because we believe it can serve as a model for other communities in the state,” says Cynthia McChesney, Director of Development and Marketing, “especially poorer districts with little or no funding for art education.”

To find out more about support for this program and the Art center Annual Fund please contact Cynthia McChesney at 908.273.9121 x241 or cmcchesney@artcenternj.org. Contributions to the Annual Fund help fund exhibitions, programs, and services, as well as the general operation of the Art Center.

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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.

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.



Image: Elizabeth public school 8th grade students explore the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey's current exhibition *Rachel Beach: Touchstone*. Photo credits Sarah Walko.