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GETTING GRAPHIC: NOVELS, MEMOIRS & COMICS

The Visual Arts Center Gets Graphic on December 2nd

Summit, NJ (November 16, 2017)—The attention paid to graphic novels and comic books has grown in recent years and an increasing number of people, whether artists or readers, are recognizing their potential for expressive and personal stories. Once dismissed as a genre for children, the medium has truly become an art form worthy of recognition and attention. The Visual Arts Center of New Jersey has heeded that call with “Getting Graphic: Novels, Memoirs & Comics,” conceived in conjunction with the exhibition *Drawing it Out*, currently on display in the Center’s Eisenberg Gallery. “In delving into the genre of graphic novels and memoirs, our staff and artists discovered so many interesting and unique stories,” said Sarah Walko, Director of Programs at the Visual Arts Center. “We wanted to create an event where the audience would be exposed to as many of these works as we could manage and could then meet the artists themselves.”



The all ages, free event will take place on **December 2 from 12-5pm**. Graphic novelists and comic book artists will be set up throughout the art center, showcasing and discussing their work, offering workshops and book signings, and selling merchandise. Following a brief welcome and introduction, four artists will participate in two talks in the main gallery. The first, running from 2-2:30pm, will include artists **Howard Saunders** and **Julia Alekseyva**. Saunders spent 30 years as an illustrator, cartoonist, animator and a writer and created his alter-ego and the main character of his work, AxeMan, as a way to express his artistic independence post-retirement. Alekseyva, born in the USSR

but raised in Chicago, is a cartoonist and illustrator who specializes in multi-media drawing. She won awards for illustrating the first graphic novel legal brief ever created (written by Bob Kohn). Her first full-length graphic novel, titled “Soviet Daughter” was published in January, 2017. The second talk, which will take place between 4-4:30pm, will feature **Darrell Goza** and **Dana Walwrath**. Goza was a studio assistant for 15 years before becoming a creative director for Beatnik Productions and Dreadlockedninja Publications. For the past ten years he’s self-published through his own imprint Goza Creative/ScriptGraphics. Walrath is a writer, artist, and anthropologist and has won recognition and numerous awards for her writing, including her graphic memoir series “Aliceheimer’s: Alzheimer’s Through the Looking Glass,” about life with her mother, Alice, before and during her struggle with Alzheimer’s disease.

Additional Artists appearing include:

- Michael Parla
- Lauren Purje
- Amanda Scurti
- Seamus Liam O’Brien
- Criss Madd
- Doug Baron
- Glenn Whitmore
- Neil Vokes
- Kirsten Kramer
- Edward Dippolito

In addition to the two artist talks, children will have the opportunity to create comic book covers to use as holiday cards in one of the day’s two workshops. The first session is for children ages 6-9, and runs from 12:30 – 2pm at a cost of \$35. The second session is for children ages 9-12, and runs from 2:30 – 4pm at a cost of \$50. Food and drink will also be available for purchase. For more information on “Getting Graphic” visit artcenternj.org. To preregister for either workshop, please contact Sarah Walko at swalko@artcenternj.org. Drop-ins are also welcome.

About the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey

For more than 80 years, the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey has been exclusively dedicated to viewing, making, and learning about contemporary art. Recognized as a leading non-profit arts organization, 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.

The Visual Arts Center of New Jersey is located at 68 Elm Street in Summit, New Jersey. Adult and children’s group tours are available throughout the year. Gallery Hours: Monday to Wednesday and Friday: 10AM to 5PM; Thursday 10AM to 8PM; and Saturday & Sunday 11 AM to 4 PM. Please call 908-273-9121 to confirm holiday hours. Visit www.artcenternj.org for more information.

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