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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Kevin Sampson
USS Enterprise, 2018
Mixed media
27 x 36 x 29 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Cavin-Morris Gallery, NY

Art Center Fall Exhibitions Open on September 28

Summit, NJ (September 12, 2018)—The work of artists Kevin Blythe Sampson, Fred Scruton, and Theda Sandiford will take center stage as the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey opens its fall exhibitions with a reception on Friday, September 28, from 6:30–8:30 PM.

Sampson's work will be shown in the Main Gallery, under the exhibition title *Kevin Blythe Sampson: Black and Blue*. Sampson is a sculptor, painter, and muralist who transforms discarded objects and ephemera into intricate vessels and memorials that have personal significance to him or his subjects. His sculptures draw spiritual energy from the community at large and reflect an intimate understanding of the contemporary African-American experience. Born and raised in Elizabeth, NJ, Sampson served for 18 years as a New Jersey police officer, and has lived and worked in Newark for the past two decades. This exhibition incorporates mixed-media sculptures, drawings, a site-specific mural, and a recent series of porcelain sculptures responding to the Black Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter movements. Sampson addresses these complicated issues from his perspective as an African-American artist as well as a retired police officer. This exhibition, which was made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, is held in dialogue with the exhibition *Olde Soul* on display through February 23, 2019, at Paul Robeson Galleries at Rutgers University, Newark. Sampson will also participate in an artist talk with artist Renee Stout on Thursday, October 25, from 6–8 PM at Paul Robeson Gallery.

Scruton's two-part exhibition, *Messages from the Interior*, highlights the artist's work as a photographer, videographer, and writer, documenting visionary and other non-mainstream artists and the environments they create. Traveling extensively throughout the United States and periodically revisiting many of the artists and sites, Scruton shines new light on artists whose work is often overlooked. A series of his photographic portraits of the artists and their environments will be on view in the Marité & Joe Robinson Strolling Gallery I. Selected

artworks from Scruton’s personal collection—some of them made by artists he has photographed—will be displayed in the adjacent Mitzi and Warren Eisenberg Gallery.

Our fall Stair-gazing exhibition features the work of Theda Sandiford, a collage, mixed media, and installation artist based in Jersey City. In her piece *Wonder Women*, Sandiford combines drawing, photography, digital media, and found objects to make a large-scale self-portrait on fabric. In the tradition of the sewing circle or quilting bee, she invited members of the community to help her sew embellishments such as buttons, beads, artificial flowers, and other ephemera.

Kevin Blythe Sampson: Black and Blue, Messages from the Interior, and Stair-gazing: Theda Sandiford will run from September 28, 2018–January 27, 2019. The opening reception is free and open to the public. Visit artcenternj.org for more information.

About the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey

For 85 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, 10 AM–5 PM; Thursday, 10 AM–8 PM; and Saturday & Sunday, 11 AM–4 PM. Please call 908-273-9121 to confirm holiday hours. Visit artcenternj.org for more information.

Support

Major support for the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey is provided in part by the Peter R. & Cynthia K. Kellogg Foundation; the Wilf Family Foundations; and Art Center members and donors.



Made possible by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.





Fred Scruton

Charles Wince; Columbus, OH, 2015

Chromogenic print

24 x 30 in.

Courtesy of the artist



Theda Sandiford

Wonder Women, 2018

Mixed media on fabric, 10 x 8 feet

Courtesy of the artist.