



PRESS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

New Exhibit Showcases Diverse Approaches Artists Take with Graphite

PALO ALTO, CA – *Pencils Down*, a new exhibition opening Jan. 25 at the Palo Alto Art Center, explores the creative potential of this most accessible material—graphite. Featuring drawings, sculptures, and installations by eight artists from the Bay Area and beyond, the exhibition will ensure viewers never look at a pencil the same way again.

Pencils Down showcases the work of eight diverse artists, who each utilize graphite in dramatically different ways. **Libby Black** (Berkeley) combines graphite with other media to create still lifes with deep personal significance. **Judith Braun** (New York) dips her fingertips into a mixture of graphite and charcoal to mark directly on the wall, in the process creating installations that evoke the natural world. **Kevin Chen** (San Francisco) finds inspiration in architecture to create intimately scaled drawings rendered with such precision that a magnifying glass is required to see all the details. **Dalton Ghatti** (Bridgeport, CT) transforms pencil sharpening into an art form, sculpting the tips of pencils into recognizable forms such as animals, letters, tools, and symbols. **Francesca Pastine** (San Francisco) in her “Invisible Woman Series,” uses graphite to burnish pages of *The New York Times*, revealing only subtle details. **Hilary Sanders** (Oakland) designs meticulously crafted, one-of-a-kind, wearable graphite jewelry which she uses as “drawing objects” in performances. In his monumental sculptures, **Chris Sicat** (San Jose) meticulously coats locally found wood branches and stumps completely in graphite. The wall installations of **Valerie Wilcox** (Los Angeles) combine graphite powder, acrylic and clay, to explore the migratory patterns of plants, animals, and people.

“The Palo Alto Art Center is pleased to present *Pencils Down* as a showcase of the creative potential of graphite—a seemingly mundane, but artistically rich material,” remarked Karen Kienzle, director of the Palo Alto Art Center. “We hope that this exhibition encourages our visitors to take up a pencil and be inspired create their own artwork.”

The exhibition runs through April 13.

Opening Celebration & Reception

Friday, January 24, 6 – 9 p.m.

Free Admission

Cash Bar provided by the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation

View extraordinary works in graphite, meet some of the featured artists, and make your mark! Join artist Kevin Chen and turn your own a micro-sized drawing into a wearable button, use graphite to burnish a log in collaboration with artist Chris Sicat, and earn a free drink ticket. Add bling to a pencil that will become the envy of your friends and colleagues, stencil your way onto the studio walls, snap a “selfie” with a giant pencil, and enjoy a live musical performance by The Mark Arroyo Trio.

For more information about upcoming programs scheduled in conjunction with *Pencils Down*, please visit our website: cityofpaloalto.org/artcenter.

MEMBERS-ONLY PROGRAM

Preview and Walkthrough with the Curator

Thursday, January 23, 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Palo Alto Art Center, Main Gallery

PUBLIC PROGRAM

Life/Drawing: A Conversation with the Artists

Moderated by Independent Curator and Writer Christian L. Frock

Saturday, March 8, 4 p.m.

Palo Alto Art Center, Meeting Room

Join exhibiting artists Libby Black, Kevin Chen, Francesca Pastine, and Chris Sicat for a public conversation with Christian L. Frock.

About The Palo Alto Art Center:

The Palo Alto Art Center is your place to discover art. See, make, and be inspired because everyone is an artist. Created by the community, for the community in 1971, the Palo Alto Art Center provides an accessible and welcoming place to engage with art. We serve approximately 70,000 people every year through a diverse range of programs.

The Palo Alto Art Center is owned and operated by the City of Palo Alto as a program of the Division of Arts and Sciences, Department of Community Services. The Palo Alto Art Center Foundation was founded in 1973 and is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides financial support and advocacy to the Art Center through a public/private partnership that allows us to enhance our reach and impact in the community.

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