



PRESS RELEASE



Contact:

Ken Heiman, Marketing Coordinator
650.617.3511
ken.heiman@cityofpaloalto.org

Sept. 3, 2015

For Immediate Release

Exhibition Explores Community through the Work of 15 Artists at Palo Alto Art Center



From left: Tracey Snelling, *Last House on the Left*, 2007, mixed media, image courtesy of the artist; Arne Svenson, *Workers #14*, 2014, pigment print, 11 x 14 in., image courtesy of the artist, Western Project, Los Angeles, and Julie Saul Gallery, New York; Matt Gonzalez, *Came the abruptness of fiery dawn*, 2014, found paper collage, 14 x 11 in., image courtesy of Lisa Chadwick.

PALO ALTO, CA –Through the themes of mapping, sustainability, landscape and population, a new fall exhibition at the Palo Alto Art Center will encourage viewers to reconsider their relationships to the places in which they live, work and play.

The exhibition, *Front Yard/Backstreet*, explores the connections between people and their communities through photographs, drawings, installation and new media works by a range of contemporary artists from the Bay Area and beyond. Artists in *Front Yard/Backstreet* encourage us to see our communities in new ways, by showcasing unique and unexpected features of our landscapes, neighborhoods, blocks and parks, and the businesses and people who inhabit them. Through themes of mapping, landscape, and population, the exhibition reveals the unseen or undiscovered parts of our communities, encouraging us to reconsider our relationships to the places in which we live, work, and play.

The exhibition is free to the public and on view from Sept. 19-Dec. 13, 2015 at the Palo Alto Art Center, 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto, CA. A special Opening Celebration will be held on Sept. 18, 7-10 p.m., at the Art Center, featuring live music, food truck fare and drinks for purchase and artmaking activities. Visit www.cityofpaloalto.org/artcenter for more information.

(more)

“The Palo Alto Art Center hopes that *Front Yard/Backstreet* will provide the entire community with a new perspective on the places around us and the communities we inhabit,” said Art Center Director Karen Kienzle. “We are especially honored that the exhibition features several site-specific and specially commissioned works—including Kate Pocrass’ *This is Happiness: Palo Alto*, a mural painted with Baylands mud by Tanja Geis, and a body of work produced by artist-in-residence Joel Daniel Phillips.”

Artists in *Front Yard/Backstreet* find inspiration in the form of maps to create new and innovative artworks that explore our relationship to place. **Val Britton** refers to her complex mixed-media works as “emotional landscapes” that suggest imagined roadways, land masses and oceans. **Craig Dorety in collaboration with Jim Campbell** creates an illusion of a three-dimensional urban landscape in a two-dimensional format in *Inverted Pixel Array—Street Scene NYC*. In her laser-cut works, installations, and FRICKbits app, **Laurie Frick** tracks and visualizes personal data—including her walking and sleep patterns. **Matt Gonzalez** assembles street-grid collages from found materials to create his urban landscapes. **Lordy Rodriguez** uses the language of cartography to explore the cultural and historic identities of our community.

Kate Pocrass encourages viewers to see the everyday in a new light in her *This is Happiness: Palo Alto* map, which will be available free for all. In July, Pocrass asked residents to identify places—known and hidden—that make them happy. Participants provided input through an electronic survey and interviews, which was interpreted by Pocrass and used to create her unique map.

Deeply concerned with the environmental fragility of our coasts and marshes, artist **Tanja Geis** presents a site-specific installation created from mud collected from the nearby Baylands. **Amanda Marchand’s** compelling photographs offer us a rarely-seen view of gardens at night. **Tracey Snelling** plays with scale in her miniature dwellings, adding video to suggest alternate narratives. Incorporating traditional photographic processes with satellite imagery culled from Google maps, **Greg Stimac** addresses the power of landscape in shaping community identity.

Artists in *Front Yard/Backstreet* highlight the populations in our community that we may not, or choose not to see, or provide novel perspectives on the people we see every day. **Robin Lasser and Adrienne Pao** create dress tents that humorously blend performance, sculpture and photography to challenge representations of women by exploring what lies underneath the façade (or under the dress). **Whitney Lynn’s** video documents famous San Francisco street performer, Greg Jacobs (a.k.a. Bushman). **Arne Svenson** employs unique compositional techniques to elevate the manual laborers who are his subjects.

In meticulously detailed pencil drawings, **Joel Daniel Phillips** spotlights residents of the Buena Vista Mobile Home community, work produced during a residency at the Palo Alto Art Center. Phillips is interested in highlighting communities that are often overlooked. His artistic process begins by spending time with individuals and families from those communities that are open to having their stories told through visual means.

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 80,000 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.

###