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For Immediate Release

Palo Alto Art Center Explores the Devastating and Transformative Power of Fire
“Fire Transforms” Exhibition Kicks Off Year-Long Series of Climate-Related Art



Images from left to right: Samantha Fields, “10 Santa Monica,” 2012, acrylic on canvas, courtesy of the artist; Brian Fies, “A Fire Story,” 2019, ink on Bristol Board, courtesy of the artist; Jeff Frost, “King Fire Self Portrait,” 2018, inkjet print on archival paper, edition 1/1, courtesy of the artist.

PALO ALTO--The Palo Alto Art Center is pleased to present the “Fire Transforms” exhibit Sept. 17-Dec. 10, 2022. Featuring the work of more than 19 artists from the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond, the exhibition showcases a broad range of artistic responses to the phenomenon of fire, through work in photography, painting, installation, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, and digital media.

The artists featured in “Fire Transforms” show us ways to explore, reflect, and make sense of our questions about our new environmental era, in which we face a “fire season” that starts earlier, lasts longer, and is more devastating. Guest curator Rina Faletti, PhD, organizes exhibitions and public programs about wildfire as a direct response to a need for community gathering, processing, and healing after catastrophic wildfire events.

“Art offers a safe place of solace after the trauma of the firestorm has passed,” said Faletti, who acknowledges that these devastating wildfire events are now an ongoing and escalating global reality. “How can we learn to transform our fear, sadness, loss, anger, and confusion into something more comforting and clear? How can we rest from climate fatigue, even as we face the real and tragic losses that fire causes in the face of global-scale change? Thankfully, we have artists to help us.”

“Fire Transforms” explores three themes: “Living with Fire,” in which artists explore how fire transforms lives and landscapes; “Learning with Fire,” focusing on how artists’ responses to science and social issues can transform our understandings of fire; and “Creating with Fire,” showcasing how artists use fire as a medium to transform artmaking.

Artists in the exhibition include: **Kim Abeles, Marion Coleman, Samantha Fields, Brian Fies, Jeff Frost, Linda Gass, Tamara Murphy, Erika Osborne, Norma I. Quintana, Felicia Rice, Gregory Roberts, Adrien Segal, Adam Shaw, Kala Stein, Young Suh, Beth Ames Swartz, Jonah Ward, Mirang Wonne, and Rouben Mohiuddin and students of SCU Chico Interior Architecture and Design Internships.**

“Fire Transforms” is a component of “Climate Connections,” a year-long series highlighting the power of art to promote reflection, dialogue and action on climate change. Climate Change—Protection and Adaptation is one of the City of Palo Alto Council Priorities for 2022. It reflects the City’s ongoing commitment to sustainability, outlined in its Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (S/CAP). Updated in early 2020, the plan develops the strategies needed to meet our goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2030 and other community-wide sustainability goals.

FREE PUBLIC PROGRAMS PRESENTED AT THE PALO ALTO ART CENTER AND ONLINE:

In conjunction with “Fire Transforms,” the Palo Alto Art Center will provide the following free public programs:

Friday Night at the Art Center opening reception—Friday, Sept. 23, 2022, 6-8 p.m., FREE

Join us at the Art Center for a special celebration of “Fire Transforms.” This event will feature hands-on art activities, a chance to meet the exhibiting artists, and a specialty cocktail and cash bar provided by the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation.

Family Day—Sunday, Oct. 23, 2022, 2:09-4:30 p.m., FREE

Learn about fire prevention and safety, make art, and more at this special event for children and families.

“Fire Transforms” Virtual Artist Talks—Friday, Nov. 18 and Friday, Dec. 9, FREE

Hear from artists in the “Fire Transforms” exhibition about their work and processes in these virtual conversations.

For more information and to register, visit www.cityofpaloalto.org/artcenter.

About the Palo Alto Art Center:

The Palo Alto Art Center is your place to see and make art, activate your creativity, and expand your community. 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 engage approximately 150,000 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.

The Palo Alto Art Center Foundation gratefully acknowledges support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Yellow Chair Foundation, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, Acton Family Giving, the Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund, the Palo Alto Community Fund, The Morrison & Foerster Foundation, SVCcreates, in partnership with the County of Santa Clara, private donations, and members.

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