



Media Contact: Casey Blake, (480) 644-6620, casey.blake@mesaartscenter.com

Five New Exhibitions Opening in Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum

Opening reception to be held February 10

January 3, 2017 (Mesa, AZ) – Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum (MCAM) will celebrate the opening of five exhibitions at a free reception on Friday, February 10, 7-10 p.m. Spring exhibitions include *Alternative Beauty: The Work of Karen Jilly* (open now); *Rethinking Fire*, by Bryan David Griffith; *High Tension*, by Bonnie Lambert; *The Undesirables*, by Katy Bergman Cassell; and the *38th Annual Contemporary Crafts* exhibition, juried by Stefanie Jacobson Kirkland, Director of Exhibitions and Artists-In-Residence Programs at Craft Alliance Center of Art + Design. The reception will feature musical entertainment, light refreshments, cash bar and an opportunity to meet and visit with the artists whose work is on view.

Alternative Beauty: The Work of Karen Jilly

A Twenty-Five Year Survey

December 9, 2016 – March 19, 2017

A 25-year survey, this exhibition features the career of artist Karen Jilly. Known for her beautiful yet gritty paintings, drawings and prints of urban landscapes, Jilly captures architectural elements that are often ignored or overlooked in a metropolitan setting. Focusing on the lines and structures created by freeway columns, telephone poles, and construction scaffolding, her images evoke a sense of time and transformation, and serve as a metaphor for the fragility of life. *Karen Jilly is a 2016 proposal winner.

Rethinking Fire

Bryan David Griffith

January 20 – April 9, 2017

Flagstaff artist Bryan David Griffith explores the issues behind the rise of catastrophic wildfires by using fire itself to create abstract paintings, sculptures and installations. Griffith challenges traditional Western notions of opposed dualities, like light vs. darkness, life vs. death, and forest vs. fire. He argues that these forces are not in conflict, but instead, work together as a necessary part of nature's continuous cycle—a cycle that has been dangerously disrupted by human impacts ranging from land management policies to climate change. *Bryan David Griffith is a 2016 North Gallery proposal winner. His work appears courtesy of Bentley Gallery.

High Tension

Bonnie Lambert

January 20 – April 9, 2017

A cityscape oil painter from Los Angeles, Bonnie Lambert is inspired by the intense color and energy found in Southwestern cities. With a vibrant palette and expressive brushstrokes, Lambert captures the essence of an urban experience as well as the tension between nature and man-made structures on the landscape. Lambert focuses on objects that are so common that they've become invisible, including powerlines, telephone poles and transmission towers, portraying them during the "magic hour" so they are viewed in a new light. *Bonnie Lambert is a 2016 proposal winner.

38th Annual Contemporary Crafts

February 10 – April 23, 2017

Highlighting the finest in contemporary crafts from across the country, Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum's Annual Contemporary Crafts exhibition has become a benchmark for innovation and quality. Representative of traditional craft mediums including ceramics, fibers, basketry, metals, wood, glass, jewelry, papermaking and book arts, this exhibition showcases 52 artworks by 48 artists, representing 19 states. *Guest Juror for the 38th Annual Contemporary Crafts exhibition was Stefanie Jacobson Kirkland, Director of Exhibitions and Artists-In-Residence Programs at Craft Alliance Center of Art + Design in St. Louis, MO.

The Undesirables

Katy Bergman Cassell

February 10 – April 23, 2017

South Carolina artist Katy Berman Cassell's jewelry explores the interdependence of humans with the biological and botanical worlds. In her latest series, *Undesirables*, Cassell refers to fungus, fossils, wilted flowers and insects – the parts of nature that humans oftentimes find unpleasant. By transforming these “base” forms into jewelry, which are conventionally seen as enhancing adornments, her work becomes a reminder of our ephemeral existence and the beauty found in the unending cycle of life. *Katy Bergman Cassell is the 37th Annual Contemporary Crafts exhibition Juror's Choice winner.

[END]

Editor's Note: Images are available for download via Mesa Arts Center's online Press Room at <http://www.mesaartscenter.com/index.php/media> (Password is macmedia).

About Mesa Arts Center

Mesa Arts Center, owned and operated by the City of Mesa, is a unique, architecturally stunning facility located in the heart of downtown Mesa. Arizona's largest multidisciplinary arts center is home to four theaters, five art galleries in the MCA Museum, and 14 art studios. Guests, patrons, and students come to Mesa Arts Center to enjoy the finest live entertainment, performances and festivals, world-class visual art exhibitions, and outstanding arts education classes. The Mesa Arts Center mission is to inspire people through engaging arts experiences that are diverse, accessible, and relevant. For more information, visit [mesaartscenter.com](http://www.mesaartscenter.com).