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Large-Scale Inflatable Sculptures to Invade Downtown Mesa

Mesa Arts and Culture Department to present U.S. Debut of *Fantastic Planet* by Amanda Parer

April 12, 2018 (Mesa, AZ) – Six gigantic inflatable and illuminated humanoid figures created by Australian artist Amanda Parer will land in downtown Mesa, AZ May 4-13, 2018. The monumental sculptures make up *Fantastic Planet*, a temporary public art installation making its premiere in the United States. Planned to be viewable for free across several blocks in the heart of downtown Mesa, three sculptures will be at Mesa Arts Center, and the remaining three will be at Milano's Music, i.d.e.a. Museum and Federal Building on 26 N Macdonald Street.

The installation will kick off on Friday, May 4, 2018, with a free community celebration 6-10 p.m. at several sites in downtown Mesa, coinciding with the monthly *Motorcycles on Main* event. That evening on Mesa Arts Center's North Patio, visitors will experience dance performances choreographed by Liliana Gomez-Dieckman, performances by musician Elise Trouw, Vessel Project's *Transfix*, screenings of the *Fantastic Planet* film that shares the name of the installation, and a first look at the illuminated inflatable sculptures.

Several free events will be offered in downtown Mesa during the installation. Highlights include:

- FIGURE it OUT, outdoor painting and drawing sessions among the sculptures on Mesa Arts Center's North Patio, May 5, 8, and 10, 6-8 p.m.;
- All-levels yoga class among the sculptures, offered for free by Sutra Studios on Mesa Arts Center's North Patio, May 8, 7:30-9 p.m.;
- Second Friday Night Out: Sci-Fi Friday, May 11, 7-10 p.m.;
- and free admission at i.d.e.a. Museum, Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum and the Arizona Museum of Natural History, May 11, 6-10 p.m.

On Friday, May 11, Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum will celebrate five new exhibitions of figurative work (free reception 7-10 p.m.), complemented by the *Fantastic Planet* installation. Exhibitions include, *Transitory Conversations*, by ceramic artist Patti Warashina; *Adventure and Control*, by Arizona artist Rachel Bess; *Life & Death Portraits*, by Arizona artist Marilyn Szabo; *It is Important to be Nobody*, by Arizona artist Colin Chillag; and *We the People*, a curated exhibition of Contemporary American figurative art highlighting exceptional figurative artists who capture an aspect of the American experience.

Creator of the *Fantastic Planet* installation Amanda Parer says, "These giants from afar will give audiences the impression that they have just landed and are quietly and gently exploring our 'fantastic planet'."

Mesa Arts Center is located at One East Main Street in downtown. More information can be found at MesaArtsCenter.com.

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About Mesa Arts Center

The Mesa Arts Center mission is to inspire people through engaging arts experiences that are diverse, accessible, and relevant. Owned and operated by the City of Mesa, Arizona's largest arts center is recognized as an international award-winning venue. The unique and architecturally stunning facility is home to four theaters, five art galleries, and 14 art studios and an artist cooperative gallery. For more information, visit mesaartscenter.com.