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**Mesa Arts Center kicks off 18-19 season with Jazz-themed community celebration
Season Kickoff Festival: *Get Jazzed*
Friday, September 14**

Mesa, AZ (August 9, 2018) – Mesa Arts Center will mark the start of its 2018-19 season with a free, family-friendly festival titled *Get Jazzed*, Friday, September 14, 2018, 6-11 p.m. The event is inspired by five, jazz-themed exhibitions opening in Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum that same evening.

Features of the festival include: performances by Sidewalk Chalk, a Chicago-based ensemble whose music transcends the genre of jazz with a sound that blends elements of funk, hip-hop and R&B; additional performances by Dennis Rowland and Friends featuring Jesse McGuire, Blaise Lantana, a roving brass band and the Let Freedom Swing All-Stars; five contemporary art exhibitions in the Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum; artist demonstrations in glass, jewelry, ceramics, printmaking and blacksmithing/welding studios; shopping in The Store, an artist's cooperative gallery, featuring items by Arizona artists; hands-on activities; food vendors such as Soundbite Food Truck (and Short Leash Hot Dogs), Paletas Betty, WB's BBQ, Firehouse Kettle Corn and more.

Events to celebrate jazz will continue throughout the season, including free screenings of *Jazz*, a film series by Ken Burns, in the Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum; a three-part series of ticketed outdoor jazz concerts offered in partnership with The Nash; and several Performing Live jazz concerts including Jazz at Lincoln Center with Wynton Marsalis.

A schedule of jazz events along with descriptions and details of each upcoming exhibition are listed below.

***Jazz Stories*, by Faith Ringgold, Sept 14 – Nov 25, 2018**

A cultural icon, Faith Ringold is renowned for her unconventional quilts, which narrate events from her life as well as the Black-American experience.

***KO MO – Not Knowing*, by Joe Willie Smith, Sept 14, 2018 – Jan 6, 2019**

Joe Willie Smith is a Phoenix-based visual and performance artist, whose interests span music, art, design and innovation. Smith is known for his playable musical instruments, fabricated from found materials.

***Eras of Jazz: The Visual*, by Reyes Padilla, Sept 14, 2018 – Jan 6, 2019**

Born with synesthesia, New Mexico artist Reyes Padilla uses his remarkable ability to paint music. Padilla's site-specific installation transforms a gallery into a visual expression of jazz.

***Crazy Vibes and Thangs*, by Frank Morrison, Sept 14, 2018 – Jan 13, 2019**

Atlanta artist Frank Morrison is an acclaimed illustrator. Through the lens of hip-hop culture and urban iconography, Morrison's newest jazz focused paintings feature underrepresented people within a cityscape as well as the visual rhythms that choreograph everyday life.

***Jazz It Up!*, Jazz Inspired Art from Today, Sept 14, 2018 – Jan 20, 2019**

Jazz It Up! looks at the enduring impact of this important form of artistic expression on contemporary art as well as the celebrated musicians, who have become significant icons in American popular culture.

Curatorial Spotlight: Rudy Gutierrez

Incorporating a variety of cross-cultural references, New York artist Rudy Gutierrez uses vivid colors and broad-brush strokes to dynamically capture the energy of his subjects.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Season Kickoff Festival: <i>Get Jazzed</i>	September 14, 2018, 6-11 p.m.	Free
<i>Jazz</i> screening: Gumbo	September 20, 2018, 7 p.m.	Free
<i>Jazz</i> screening: The Gift	September 27, 2018, 7 p.m.	Free
Jazz at Lincoln Center w/Wynton Marsalis	October 4, 2018, 7:30 p.m.	Ticketed
Sound in the Ground: Nash Nights at MAC	October 5, 2018, 8:30-11 p.m.	\$20
<i>Jazz</i> screening: Our Language	October 11, 2018, 7 p.m.	Free
<i>Jazz</i> screening: The True Welcome	October 18, 2018, 7 p.m.	Free
<i>Jazz</i> screening: Swing: Pure Pleasure	October 25, 2018, 7 p.m.	Free
<i>Jazz</i> screening: Swing: The Velocity of Celebration	November 1, 2018, 7 p.m.	Free
Sound in the Ground: Nash Nights at MAC	November 2, 2018, 8:30-11 p.m.	\$20
<i>Jazz</i> screening: Dedicated to Chaos	November 8, 2018, 7 p.m.	Free
<i>Jazz</i> screening: Risk	November 15, 2018, 7 p.m.	Free
<i>Jazz</i> screening: The Adventure	November 29, 2018, 7 p.m.	Free
<i>Jazz</i> screening: A Masterpiece by Midnight	December 6, 2018, 7 p.m.	Free
Sound in the Ground: Nash Nights at MAC	December 7, 2018, 8:30-11 p.m.	\$20

Mesa Arts Center is located at One East Main Street in downtown Mesa. There is no charge to attend the Season Kickoff Festival or the Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum's opening, and parking is free. More information can be found at MesaArtsCenter.com or by calling 480-644-6500.

The season kickoff event is generously sponsored by Celerion and Crescent Crown Distributing.

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Editor's Note: High res images of art and to represent the festival are available immediately upon request.

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 arts center is home to four theaters, five art galleries, and 14 art studios. Guests, patrons, and students come to Mesa Arts Center to enjoy the finest live entertainment and performances, 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](https://www.mesaartscenter.com).