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Mesa Arts Center to Receive \$25,000 Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts

In support of Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum

Mesa, AZ — Mesa Arts Center, an entity of the City of Mesa, has been approved for a \$25,000 Grant for Arts Projects award to a collaborative exhibition in Mesa Contemporary Arts (MCA) Museum's Visionary Art season. MCA Museum will use the Visionary Art Movement as a catalyst to aid in the necessary healing of collective trauma, loss, and grief inflicted by the COVID pandemic.

Headlining are the vivid works of **Alex Grey & Allyson Grey**, internationally renowned leaders and educators in the Visionary Art Movement and founders of the Chapel of Sacred Mirrors, a place of contemplation and worship for a community that honors the practice of art as a spiritual path. The exhibition will showcase solo works by the Grey's as well as collaborations. Some of the works were created during live performances at Burning Man and international music and art festivals.

"I think most would agree that the pandemic has had a tremendous impact on humanity. It has dominated our discourse and caused both national and personal introspections unlike anything I have seen in my lifetime," explained Tiffany Fairall, Chief Curator for MCA Museum. "Our Visionary season was originally slated for Fall 2020. 2020 already seemed like it was going to be a pivotal year of self-reflection, and we were planning to play with the whole "hindsight is 20/20" expression. It was also supposed to be a commentary on our fractured country and our need to heal our collective consciousness in order to move forward. Ironically, this need still exists, but we also faced an external threat that changed everything, including our timeline and intentions. I think the original concept for the line-up still exists, but I now think it is important for us to accept that the healing needs to go deeper. Those of us who work in the arts see how the arts can heal the deepest of psychiatric wounds, and the Visionary art movement is the perfect catalyst for that process. Its transcendental and colorful nature conjures joy, and its human-centered subject matter reflects on our existential experience and our relationship with the world we inhabit."

In addition, MCA Museum's Fall 2021 season will showcase the transformative paintings of Colorado artist **Amanda Sage** and complex, mysterious narratives of Arizona creative **Wiley Wallace**. Fourteen Visionary artists from across the country will be highlighted in the invitational ***Divine Paradigm***. Throughout the season, MCA Museum will host several community engagements aimed at empowering participants with tools that will facilitate healing, coping strategies, and reconnecting in a post-COVID-world. The season will launch on Friday, September 10 at 5 pm and coincide with Mesa Arts Center's Season Kick-off Festival, which centers on the theme ***Wonderland***. As part of the museum's programming, Mesa Arts Center will screen *Metamorphosis*, an environmental documentary by Canadian filmmakers **Velcrow Ripper** and **Nova Ami** at the Season Kick-off Festival. Ripper and Ami's social justice film *Occupy Love* will be shown the following night (Saturday, September 11) at the museum and be followed by a Q&A with the filmmakers. The exhibition season and programming are intended to foster community conversations and raise awareness of the deliberate, collective efforts necessary to bring about sustainable change as we emerge from our pre-pandemic ways of thinking into a visionary, healthy future.

MCA Museum's project is among the more than 1,100 projects across America, totaling nearly \$27 million that were selected during this second round of Grants for Arts Projects fiscal year 2021 funding. The Art Works funding category supports projects that focus on public engagement with, and access to, various forms of excellent art across the nation; the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence; learning in the arts at all stages of life; and the integration of the arts into the fabric of community life.

"As the country and the arts sector begin to imagine returning to a post-pandemic world, the National Endowment for the Arts is proud to announce funding that will help arts organizations such as Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum reengage fully with partners and audiences," said NEA Acting Chairman Ann Eilers. "Although the arts have sustained many during the pandemic, the chance to gather with one another and share arts experiences is its own necessity and pleasure."

For more information on the projects included in the Arts Endowment grant announcement, visit arts.gov/news.

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About Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum at Mesa Arts Center

Mesa Arts Center's (MAC) mission is to invite all people to create and discover entertaining, challenging and diverse art and arts experiences within joyous, dynamic and welcoming environments. As part of Mesa Arts Center, Mesa Contemporary Arts (MCA) Museum showcases the best in

Contemporary Art by emerging, nationally and internationally recognized artists. MCA Museum provides support and advancement to artists through solo, group and juried exhibitions. MCA Museum's free admission and strong engagement programs provide visitors with free school and public tours, a robust docent program and free artist talks.