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MUSEUM/HEALTHCARE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM ON DISPLAY IN SAMA-JOHNSTOWN EXHIBITION

Johnstown – The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Johnstown is pleased to announce the opening of its latest exhibition, *The Art of Healing: Reflections 2016*. On view March 28 through June 3, the exhibition features 85 works created by patients during SAMA’s Museum/Healthcare Partnership Program residencies at the John P. Murtha Neuroscience and Pain Institute. The works in *The Art of Healing Exhibition*, now in its fifth year, were created during three residencies with SAMA directory artists Tom McCarty and Susan Novak.

McCarty has sculpted a successful career as a SAMA rostered artist. A sculptor, McCarty has been associated with SAMA’s Artist-in-Residence program since its inception with the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts 16 years ago. His workshops and residencies are designed to teach students of all ages and abilities the basics of wood sculpture. He also incorporates live music into many of his residencies, especially those for veterans and seniors.

His recent residency at the John P. Murtha Neuroscience and Pain Institute taught wood-carving skills and resulted in amazing works of art that are even more remarkable considering some of the health issues plaguing the artists. According to McCarty, the true power of this art form is best seen in the way the participants get caught up in the creative process as their pain and stress diminishes. McCarty also provided a rhythm and singing component with the class to create a feeling of community and well-being.

Novak has a diverse background of education and experience, having taught in alternative educational settings as well as health-related fields. She holds a master’s degree in counseling from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and is also a board certified art therapist. She has taught in various community and school settings, including special needs settings. Traditional Chinese brush painting and silk painting are among her specialties.

In her recent residencies at the John P. Murtha Neuroscience and Pain Institute, Novak guided participants through creating clay projects, the simple craft of hand-

painted paper flowers, and the creation of the “functional” and fashionable art of Japanese silk Shibori scarves.

“By using art to communicate and help others express themselves, I finally found a way that honored each person’s experience and helped them find tools to continuously rediscover themselves,” she said.

SAMA’s Museum/Healthcare Partnership Program debuted in 2003 in an attempt to help area residents suffering from mental and physical disabilities. Through the program, SAMA’s trained artists and educators work with health care providers to develop residencies and workshops aimed at providing relief for patients dealing with physical pain and discomfort. In recent years, the program has been expanded to include working with disabled veterans and children with autism spectrum disorder, as well as place a greater emphasis on citizens with mental handicaps. By 2015, the program has benefitted more than 15,000 individuals throughout central and western Pennsylvania.

The Museum will host an opening reception from 6 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, April 12. The reception is open to the public free of charge, though reservations are requested by April 8. For reservations or more information, please call the Museum at (814) 269-7234.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Johnstown is located in the Pasquerilla Performing Arts Center on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. Hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Museum is a handicapped-accessible facility and is open to the public free of charge. For more information, please call the Museum or visit www.sama-art.org.

This project was made possible through the AIE Partnership of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency. State government funding for the arts depends upon an annual appropriation by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and support from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. The PCA Arts-in-Education Partner in this region is the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art.