

March 17, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:

Jessica Campbell, Education Coordinator

(814) 472-3920

Travis Mearns, Public Relations Coordinator

(724) 238-6015

### **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 2017*. On view March 24 through June 2, the exhibition features approximately 80 works created by patients during SAMA’s Museum/Healthcare Partnership Program residencies at the Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center. The works in *The Art of Healing Exhibition*, now in its sixth year, were created during residencies with SAMA directory artists Deb Bunnell and Susan Novak.

Bunnell has been a rostered artist with SAMA and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts since 2014. She has degrees in art/liberal arts from Millersville University and illustration from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. She has worked as an illustrator, commissioned painter and mural painter.

Her residency employed the mediums of scratchboard and acrylic paint to create animal art that explored symbolism. According to Bunnell, animals may be used to symbolize family heritage, religious beliefs or ideas such as love, freedom and beauty. At the end of the residency, she played the William Blake poem, *The Tyger*, for the group and then led them on a group project where each participant contributed their very own square painting that reflects the power of the tiger.

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 in the creation of the functional and fashionable art of Japanese silk Shibori scarves. According to Novak, participants not only enjoyed creating and wearing their scarves, but would examine the intricate Shibori patterns,

much like one would tea leaves or a Rorschach test, and talk about the imagery they saw in them and how they connected to it.

SAMA Education Coordinator Jessica Campbell said the exhibition highlights the excitement and impact of the Museum's healthcare initiative. "SAMA's Museum/Healthcare Partnership Program is really booming this year," she said. "We are excited to host this exhibition in partnership with Conemaugh Health System. The artistic expressions featured in this exhibition will leave you feeling inspired and wanting more."

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 Wednesday, March 29. The reception is open to the public free of charge, though reservations are requested by March 27. 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](http://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.