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SAMA TO OFFER BIGGER, BETTER BIENNIAL

Loretto – For more than three decades, the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Loretto’s Biennial has been one of the region’s premier venues for the exhibition of contemporary art from the commonwealth of Pennsylvania and beyond. Attracting a diverse array of talents, the exhibition features juried work in many media, including painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, photography and fine crafts.

Originally established in 1982 as the *Triennial*, the exhibition eventually morphed into its present biennial format. In celebration of the Museum’s 40th anniversary, *Biennial 2016* – opening October 28 - will offer a bigger, better exhibition than in recent years. For the first time in recent memory, awards jurying will be performed in person, and SAMA has revamped its merit awards, this year offering significantly higher cash prizes. Add in the Loretto Museum’s new state-of-the-art gallery lighting system and visitors will be in for a new Biennial experience.

“We have addressed a longstanding problem with our jurying process and have made it possible for the juror to be in the gallery to make awards decisions,” said SAMA Curator Dr. Scott Dimond. “This results in a fairer show, which, together with increased prize amounts, has attracted a greater number of artists. More artist participation means a better exhibition, which we hope will be very much evident to all who attend *Biennial 2016*.”

The new exhibition format was met with an enthusiastic response and the 310 submissions from 117 artists were nearly double that of *Biennial 2014* (177 entries by 63 artists). Competition was greater which made the selection process more rigorous.

Serving as juror for *Biennial 2016* is Joyce Robinson, curator at Penn State University’s Palmer Museum of Art for nearly 20 years and affiliate professor in the University’s department of art history. Robinson received her Ph.D. in 19th- and 20th-century European and American art at the University of Virginia. She has previously taught at Kenyon College, Davidson College, the American University in Paris and the University of Virginia. During her tenure at the Palmer, Robinson has organized more than 30 exhibitions and authored exhibition catalogues primarily in the fields of contemporary art, photography and American art.

Those artists selected to *Biennial 2016* will vie for seven awards totaling \$2,350: Best of Show (\$1,000); Moyer/Crans Director’s Award for First Place (\$500); Dr. Magdi and Karen Azer Second Place Award (\$250); Cassandra and David Davies Third Place Award (\$100); Dr.

Owen K. and Marian Morgan Third Place Award (\$100); Barbara and Ed O'Brien Third Place Award (\$100); and, at the conclusion of the exhibition, Chantel Ventura People's Choice Award (\$300).

On view through January 28, *Biennial 2016* offers 124 works by 96 artists and represents some of the finest art in our region. The Museum will celebrate the exhibition with a reception from 6 to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, November 9. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres will be served and live music will be provided by The Amigos. Cost is \$25 per person or \$20 for SAMA members and exhibiting artists. For more information, call the Museum at (814) 472-3920.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Loretto is located on the campus of Saint Francis University. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturdays. The Museum is open to the public free of charge. For more information, visit www.sama-art.org.