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SAMA-LIGONIER VALLEY OFFERS JURIED PASTELS EXHIBITION

Ligonier – The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Ligonier Valley is pleased to announce the opening of its latest exhibition, *Pastel Expressions*. On view May 1 through August 23, the exhibition features 40 works by members of the Central Pennsylvania Pastel Society (CPPS) and Pittsburgh Pastel Artists League (PPAL).

Each organization juried in 20 of the other's paintings to ensure the utmost quality and expertise. The CPPS and PPAL are the two leading pastel societies in Pennsylvania, both renowned for the quality and excellence of their producing artists, as well as their efforts in promoting and educating the public about pastel as a fine art medium. *Pastel Expressions* showcases a variety of subjects and genres including landscapes, still lifes, portraits, and both abstract and figurative works. Twenty-nine artists are represented in the exhibition.

“SAMA is pleased to be showcasing the art of our region's talented pastel artists,” said SAMA-Ligonier Valley Coordinator Sommer Toffle. “Visitors will have an opportunity to enjoy the exhibition and experience the diversity the pastel medium has to offer.”

Technically, pastel is a powdered pigment rolled into round or square sticks and held together with methylcellulose, a non-greasy binder. It can be either blended with finger and stump or left with visible strokes and lines. Generally, the ground is toned paper, but sanded boards and canvas also are popular. If the ground is covered completely with paste, the work is considered a pastel painting; a pastel sketch shows much of the ground. When protected by glass and/or fixative, a pastel is the most permanent of all media because it never cracks, darkens or yellows.

Historically, its origin can be traced back to the sixteenth century, when Guido Reni, Jacopo Bassano, and Federigo Barocci were notable practitioners. Rosalba Carriera, a Venetian female artist, was the first to make consistent use of pastel. Jean Baptiste Simeon Chardin did portraits with a hatching stroke, while Maurice Quentin de la Tour preferred the blended, velvety finish. Thereafter, artists including Mengs, Nattier, Copley, Delacroix, Millet, Manet, Renoir, Toulouse-Lautrec, Redon, Vuillard,

Bonnard, Glackens, Whistler, Chase and Hassam used pastel as a finished work rather than merely for preliminary sketches.

Degas was the most prolific user and champion of pastel, raising it to the full brilliance of oil. His protégé, Mary Cassatt, introduced the Impressionists and pastel to her wealthy friends in Philadelphia and Washington, and thus to the United States.

The Museum will celebrate the exhibition with a Lunch a l'Art featured exhibiting pastel artist Marianne Fyda on August 20. The program, which begins at noon, includes lunch and a presentation by the artist. Cost is \$15 or \$12 for SAMA members. Reservations are requested by August 14. Please call the Museum at (724) 238-6015 for reservations or additional information.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Ligonier Valley is located at One Boucher Lane and Route 711 South in Ligonier. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 5 p.m. weekends. The Museum is a handicapped-accessible facility and is open to the public free of charge. For more information, call the Museum or visit www.sama-art.org.