



NEWS RELEASE

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OUTSIDE IN: PAINT FOR PEACE, A POWERFUL COMMUNITY COLLABORATION, KICKS OFF COCA'S 30th ANNIVERSARY SEASON

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The Millstone Gallery at COCA is presented by the
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ST. LOUIS – [COCA \(Center of Creative Arts\)](#) announced today [Outside In: Paint for Peace](#), an unprecedented collaborative community exhibition featuring a selection of the original murals painted on the boarded-up storefronts by amateur and professional artists in the days and weeks following the 2014 protests in Ferguson, Mo. The exhibition brings together multiple partners from across the St. Louis region to pay homage to the art, the artists, and how their story helped create conversation, understanding and healing.

On August 9, 2014, the St. Louis community was forever changed when 18-year-old African American Michael Brown was shot and killed by a white police officer in Ferguson. A national movement was launched that day, and St. Louis remains in the spotlight.

Something else powerful emerged – the Paint for Peace movement. Hundreds of artists and volunteers responded and showed up in Ferguson and on South Grand to transform boarded up windows into works of art with messages of hope, healing and unity. Together with its partners, COCA will showcase these works for the St. Louis community.

Outside In: Paint for Peace, will launch COCA's 30th anniversary season in the Millstone Gallery on Saturday, August 27, 2016, during the annual Taste of COCA: Family Style Open House at 10:00am. Additional works will be on view at the Ferguson Youth Initiative, Gallery 210 at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Missouri History Museum, Sheldon Art Galleries, and Vaughn Cultural Center.

"The arts play an important role in helping people process major change and giving voice to complex issues. We hope this exhibition will provide a means to foster conversation in our community," said Kelly Pollock, COCA Executive Director. "As COCA celebrates 30 years of connecting St. Louisans to the arts, we're excited to launch our gallery season with this powerful collaboration."

The exhibition is guest curated by Jacquelyn Lewis-Harris. Lewis-Harris is Director of the Connecting Human Origin and Cultural Diversity program at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, an Associate Professor of both Anthropology and Education and former curator at the St. Louis Art Museum. She has lived and worked around the world – from Tucson, Arizona to Liberia, West Africa to Papua New Guinea – where she has seen first-hand the power of the arts and culture in communities.

"Taking art into the street created a social diary and provided people of all ages an outlet for raw emotions and a way to express their concerns. They navigated their reactions and views in the days and weeks following the protests," said Lewis-Harris. "This exhibition is meant to both conserve and preserve these meaningful works of art – ranging from simple drawings of love and peace to challenging calls for social change. We hope to

provide historical and technical context and allow the works of art to be preserved as part of the growing international canon of graffiti art.”

Outside In: Paint for Peace was inspired by “[Painting for Peace in Ferguson](#),” the award-winning children’s book by Carol Swartout Klein.

“In November 2014, hundreds of artists and volunteers in Ferguson, Mo., and South St. Louis created just as many colorful paintings to bring hope to a community in shock – they helped to transform a landscape of fear and pain into one of hope and healing,” said Klein. “It was their story I set out to share in ‘[Painting for Peace in Ferguson](#),’ and I hope that visitors to this exhibition will find their own inspiration as they reflect on where we’ve been and where we are going – as a community and as a society.”

COCAedu is also offering educational programs—in-school residencies, field trips, and a professional development workshop—to extend participation to students, teachers and families.

A schedule of gallery talks, artist panels and family events planned around the exhibition will be released in the weeks leading up to the opening.

The exhibition will be free and open to the public at COCA and all partner locations.

***Outside In: Paint for Peace* will be on view at locations around the community:**

- August 27 – October 30, 2016: [The Millstone Gallery at COCA](#), 524 Trinity Ave., St. Louis, MO 63130
- August 27 – October 30, 2016: [Gallery 210 at the University of Missouri-St. Louis](#), 44 East Drive, One University Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63121
- August 27 – October 30, 2016: [Missouri History Museum](#), Lindell and DeBaliviere in Forest Park
- September 2 – November 4, 2016: [Vaughn Cultural Center](#), 3701 Grandel Square, St. Louis, MO 63108
- September 2 – October 30, 2016: [Ferguson Youth Initiative](#), 110 Church Street, Ferguson, MO 63135
- October 7 – November 19, 2016: [The Sheldon Art Galleries](#), 3648 Washington Blvd, St. Louis, MO 63108

[COCAedu Outside In: Paint for Peace Educational Programs:](#)

- In-school, 4- and 8-week arts residencies
- Field trips to see *Outside In: Paint for Peace* in COCA’s Millstone Gallery
- Online materials for teachers and families

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ABOUT COCA

Founded in 1986, COCA is the fourth largest multidisciplinary community arts center in the country and a national leader in innovative arts education. With a mission to enrich lives and build community through the arts, COCA serves 50,000 people of all ages and skill levels, from enthusiastic amateurs to emerging professionals—all taught by a faculty of distinguished arts educators. We provide meaningful arts experiences in our own studios, gallery and theatres as well as in schools, community centers and corporate settings in order to build a vibrant St. Louis that is creative, connected and inclusive. To ensure diversity and inclusion in all of our programs we are committed to eliminating economic and social barriers to participation in the arts.