



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## BREATHE, ARTIST LAUREN YOUNGE'S SOLO EXHIBITION, OPENING IN THE MILLSTONE GALLERY AT COCA

**ST. LOUIS (January 17, 2023)**—*Breathe*, a solo exhibition by St. Louis based artist Lauren Younge, opens in the Millstone Gallery at COCA on Friday, January 20 at 6:00 p.m. Featuring a collection of large-scale abstract paintings created through the unconscious combination of bold colors and free movement, Younge uses acrylics to design irregular patterns that could motivate unexpected associations and memories in her audience. The exhibition runs January 20–March 15, 2023.

**WHAT:** *Breathe* encourages viewers to take a moment of breathing to reflect on the works of art and their own lives; to find a moment or memory that makes them feel joy; to decide what they see and what seems to them, in the pieces, beautiful and comforting. In a present of overworking, high stress and anxiety levels, Younge believes art witnessing can encourage a pause. Because of this, *Breathe* includes both a corner of mindfulness, where visitors can have an intimate moment of meditation and grounding, and a collaborative experience of journaling, where they can locate their stories of gratitude and rest next to the artists' framed writings.

Younge creates colorful abstracts by experimenting with colors, patterns, and textures with the intent of brightening people's lives. She is drawn to abstract art because it allows her to express herself more freely. Her acquired sense of style incorporates bold colors, texture, and movement. She uses acrylics, acrylic mediums, and inks to create her paintings because of the flexibility that these give her style. The result is an unintentional body of work, created almost by accident. Because her intentions are never set in stone, people's perception of her work is not either.

Additional educational programming for *Breathe* includes two workshops: Expressive Painting (Ages 12+) on February 12 and Expressive Painting for Teens (Ages 11–16) on February 25. In these hands-on workshops, participants use acrylic paint to explore thoughts, feelings, and ideas to focus on free form movement and texture. A gallery-inspired discussion also will be held on March 2.

**WHEN:** Exhibition is free and open to the public January 20–March 15, 2023, during COCA's regularly scheduled business hours.

Exhibition Opening Night Reception is Friday, January 20 from 6:00–8:00 p.m., with a member preview from 5:30–7:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Millstone Gallery at COCA  
6880 Washington Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63130

**AVAILABLE INTERVIEWS:** Lauren Younge, [laurenyounge.com](http://laurenyounge.com)

**EVENT WEBSITE:** [cocastl.org/calendar/breathe/](http://cocastl.org/calendar/breathe/)

**SPONSORS:** The Millstone Gallery is made possible by The Arthur and Helen Baer Charitable Foundation, Bernoudy Foundation, and The Millstone Foundation.

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## **ABOUT COCA**

COCA's mission is to *enrich lives and build community through the arts*. With a commitment to equity and access, COCA serves as a regional hub for learning in and through the arts for all ages from all backgrounds. One of the most diverse cultural institutions in St. Louis, COCA serves more than 50,000 students, audience members, artists, and families from more than 200 zip codes across the St. Louis region every year. The fourth largest multi-disciplinary arts organization in the country, COCA is committed to supporting the vitality and creativity of more than 200 artists at the heart of their work in schools, community centers, local business, cultural organizations, and onsite at its campus in University City.

## **COCA HEALTH & SAFETY PROCEDURES**

COCA continues to monitor current COVID-19 conditions in the St. Louis region, and protocols are subject to change, as necessary, to address the conditions. To review COCA's current Health & Safety Procedures, visit [cocastl.org/our-campus/health-safety-procedures/](http://cocastl.org/our-campus/health-safety-procedures/).