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## **SAMA-JOHNSTOWN EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS MUSEUM'S HEALTHCARE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

Johnstown – The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art's seventh annual *The Art of Healing Exhibition* returns to the Johnstown Museum this spring. Opening March 23, the exhibition highlights artwork created during SAMA's Museum Healthcare Partnership Program residencies at Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center. This year's installment offers works created during residencies with SAMA teaching artists Deb Bunnell and Jaime Cooper. *The Art of Healing Exhibition: Reflections 2018* features more than 100 works and will remain on view through May 3.

Artists explored color through acrylic painting and paper mosaics in Bunnell's residency. They also experimented with shading as they worked on scratchboard drawings that were eventually printed as notecards. Bunnell has been a teaching artist with SAMA and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts since 2014 and was one of the resident artist for last year's *The Art of Healing Exhibition*.

Through Cooper's residency, participants completed their own still life and landscape paintings, while also creating a large-scale group collage.

"I wanted to choose a broad subject for the Arts for Healing participants to allow them plenty of latitude to express themselves as individuals and to allow them to choose the difficulty of the project they wished to tackle," said Cooper, a nationally recognized artist who recently joined the Museum as a teaching artist. "I decided landscapes and still lifes would be an excellent fit without being too intimidating."

Cooper said the unique challenges in creating a work of art can be invaluable to those suffering from physical pain and discomfort.

"I find in my own journey with multiple sclerosis, the more challenges I face and overcome, the more empowered I feel, and therefore the happier I am," she said. "I wished to pass along this sense of achievement to the participants. Our group landscape collage fostered a sense of community and mutual support among all of us struggling with chronic illness or injury. This sense of empowerment and community support is where the Arts for Healing program does its best work in our world."

SAMA's Museum Health Partnership Program debuted in 2003 in order 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, children with autism spectrum disorder, and citizens with mental handicaps. The program has benefitted more than 18,000 individuals throughout central and western Pennsylvania.

The Museum will host an opening reception from 6 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, April 3. The reception is open to the public free of charge, though reservations are requested by April 2. For reservations or additional 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).

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