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PALO ALTO ART CENTER PUBLIC GROUNDBREAKING CELEBRATION SAT., JULY 16

HANDS-ON PUBLIC MURAL PROJECT, FOOD AND ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES

OFFICIAL START OF \$7.9 MILLION TRANSFORMATION

Palo Alto, June 9, 2011—The public is invited to celebrate the official groundbreaking of the Palo Alto Art Center's \$7.9 million transformation with participatory art projects including a construction wall mural, tours of Patrick Dougherty's beguiling, large-scale willow sculpture, free ice cream and other activities for all ages on Saturday, July 16, from 1 to 3 pm. The event is free of charge, and the Palo Alto Art Center is located at 1313 Newell Road in Palo Alto. For more information about the Groundbreaking and Palo Alto Art Center, visit www.cityofpaloalto.org/artcenter , www.facebook.com/paloaltoartcenter and www.twitter.com/paloaltoartctr .

The afternoon will feature Mayor Espinosa and Palo Alto City officials and dignitaries officially breaking ground on the construction phase of the Palo Alto Art Center's transformation, which will substantially enhance its facilities and programs to better serve a growing public. Artist Judy Gittelsohn will lead the public in the creation of a mural that will later decorate the construction fence of the Center. Community members of all ages will be able to paint portions of the vibrant mural. The mural will remain on view throughout the construction and re-opening of the Art Center in the summer of 2012. Free ice cream from Foster Brothers Ice Cream will be provided courtesy of the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation, which provides support and advocacy for the Art Center.

About the Palo Alto Art Center Transformation

The nationally acclaimed Palo Alto Art Center temporarily closed its doors to the

public on April 4, 2011 through the summer of 2012 to undergo a substantial \$7.9 million transformation of its facilities and re-envisioning of its extensive programs in order to serve a broader public in its mission to engage the community in the arts as both observers and creators through exhibitions, studio arts and education activities.

"The renovation of the Palo Alto Art Center facility is an opportunity for us to reflect on our mission and programs, and to re-envision how we can better serve the community that has engaged with us for 40 years in the seeing and making of art of all kinds," says Karen Kienzle, Palo Alto Art Center Director. "During this time our public programming will continue, and we are excited about bringing exhibitions and participatory activities for all ages directly into the community while we ready the Center itself to welcome more of the public next year."

The Palo Alto Art Center's transformation is inspired by the Center's mission to engage the community in the creative process as both observers and creators through exhibitions and studio and education programs. The transformation will enable the Palo Alto Art Center to expand its programs and services to a broader base while maintaining its high level of quality and enhance its reputation as a leading regional art center.

The Palo Alto Art Center has been one of the country's most popular and unusual facilities since it opened its doors to the public in 1971. Serving 70,000 residents annually, it combines both an internationally acclaimed exhibitions program with studio art, art instruction in painting, drawing, ceramics, glass, media arts, extensive art activities for school children including *Project LOOK!*, publications and a variety of public events including lectures, interpretive programs and meet-the-artist opportunities.

The Palo Alto Art Center's acclaimed exhibition program brings the work of internationally acclaimed and important emerging artists to the community. The Art Center maintains a strong program of traveling exhibitions and publications, through the support of the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation. *The Miniature Worlds of Bruce Metcalf*; *Big Idea: The Maquettes of Robert Arneson* were organized by the Palo Alto Art Center and traveled throughout the country, to institutions such as The Contemporary Museum in Honolulu and the Racine Art Museum. The Art Center also presented the first exhibition of nationally recognized artist Nathan Oliveira's bronze sculptures, *The Painter's Bronzes*.

The 2011-2012 renovation will be the first physical update of the Center since it opened 40 years ago as a retrofit of a former City of Palo Alto government office building. Undertaken by the firm of Mark Cavagnero and Associates, the

transformation of the Center will feature:

- Transformed exhibition spaces including raising the ceiling on the main gallery, a refreshed glass gallery
- State-of-the-art gallery lighting.
- Upgraded ventilation and climate systems.
- Reconfigured studio and classroom spaces to better serve the needs of today's artists of all skill levels.
- New landscaping by SWA Group (who designed the living roof on San Francisco's California Academy of Sciences) making outdoor spaces more usable, sustainable and beautiful.
- A new Palo Alto Art Center Gallery Shop
- A special wing dedicated to children and youth with a new dedicated entrance on Newell Road, four classrooms, community exhibition space and street turnaround and drop-off for parents.
- A redesigned entry with lounge area, information kiosks and way-finding signage.
- Fully ADA compliant access for disabled visitors.
- New flooring throughout the Center.
- LEED Silver certification for green design and use of sustainable materials and practices.

***On the Road* Events Bring Palo Alto Art Center's "See and Make" Approach into the Community During the Transformation**

During the transformation, Bay Area residents will be able to continue to discover, learn, create and inspire by participating in its innovative *On the Road* programs that will bring the Center's popular and acclaimed "see and make" approach to the arts directly into the community. *On the Road* will continue during the Center's transformation with a variety of activities throughout Palo Alto.

On the Road events are designed to give the public opportunities to see art in exhibitions and site-specific art installations, and to make art in a variety of participatory classes, demonstrations and programs for all ages. Spring *On the Road* activities will include the Art Center's new Art Truck at locations throughout the community, *Double-Take*, Patrick Dougherty's beguiling environmental sculpture made of willow branches, on the grounds of the Center at the corner of Embarcadero and Newell Road through July, 2012; art making at the Lucille Packard Children's Hospital 20th birthday party June 26; 19th annual Palo Alto Clay and Glass Festival, July 9 and 10; *Clear Story*, a site-specific installation by Mildred Howard August 20, 2011-August 2012 with an opening conversation with the artist on Saturday, September 10 at 3pm with a reception to follow; kids' art studio at Palo Alto Celebrates the Arts, August 27 and 28; art classes at various locations in

Palo Alto and more. A regularly updated schedule of *On the Road* events may be found at www.cityofpaloalto.org/artcenter .