



Academy of Visual and Performing Arts At Culver City High School

Contact: Kristine Hatanaka
Co-Executive Director
Phone: 310-842-4200 x6001
kristinehatanaka@ccusd.org

AVPA Art Students and Elana Mann Present "Retirement Bash" in Association with MOCA

For immediate release:

Culver City, CA – October 15, 2009: In this time where "change" is the word of the year, artist Elana Mann and 30 art students from the Culver City High School Academy of Visual and Performing Arts (AVPA) program will be throwing "Retirement Bash," an interactive performance event, in partnership with the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA). AVPA art students will present, "Retirement Bash," on Saturday, October 24th from 6:30-9:30 p.m. at The Culver City Senior Center located at 4095 Overland Avenue in Culver City. The event is FREE and open to the public.



During a ten-week workshop with artist, Elana Mann, AVPA art students attended field trips to MOCA and Machine Project, an alternative art space in Echo Park, Los Angeles. The students and Mann will present a paradigm-shifting event in which outdated sayings, symbols, images, and mottos will be performatively "retired." At this event new ideas and sayings will also be invented and introduced. The "Retirement Bash" event will promote the idea that artists of all ages have a vital role in the community as agents of social change.

The program has included several components. Initially, the students focused on how artists have been promoters of social change from the 1940's through the present. They studied examples of artwork from the MOCA exhibitions, A Changing Ratio: Painting and Sculpture from the Collection, and Collecting History: Recent Acquisitions, that have been catalytic cultural instigators. Mann also showed artwork to the students with a focus on performative interventions that have activist or political content. Next, the students conducted field research within the community of Culver City, to generate material for "Retirement Bash." AVPA art students and Mann have collected mottos and images to be "retired" from their family, friends, teachers, students, librarians, priests, rabbis, politicians, etc. Mann and the students have generated a series of questions and prompts to help elicit material, questions like "What icon do you hope to never see again?" and "What motto do you think needs retiring?" The collected



materials reflect ideas or histories that are now over, or that the community hopes will soon pass. Through exercises and experimentation in the classroom, students have invented creative and safe ways to performatively "retire" the material they have amassed. In addition, the students will be creating costumes, decorations and sets for "Retirement Bash." Finally, the students have learned about producing a performance event, with advice and inspiration from a visit to Machine Project, a space that often creates large-scale performance projects. Mark

Allen, Director of Machine Project, discussed a highly successful event that he presented at LACMA in 2008. Mann and the students collaborated on all parts of making "Retirement Bash," from the PR to the scheduling.

"Sony Pictures has been a proud sponsor of MOCA's education initiatives, Contemporary Art Start (CAS) and First Visit and Beyond since 1997," says Janice Pober, Senior Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility at Sony Pictures Entertainment. "These in-depth programs are a testament to how much Culver City supports the future of the arts." AVPA art student, Slaveya Minkova says, "The MOCA 'experience' is one of the most amazing opportunities I've ever been involved. I feel lucky to be able to work with an artist, such as Elana Mann, and the AVPA artists as well. Preparing a performance art exhibition this year will be something really fun and really new. Performance art is a new type of art for most of us. The nature of the museum program will allow us new ways of expressing ourselves and new ways of presenting our ideas."

AVPA's Co-Executive Director and The Director of the Visual Art Program, Kristine Hatanaka, also takes pride in the students' work. "I am always grateful for the support and programming from MOCA's Education Department including Contemporary Art Start. Each year, students are engaged on a deeper level to learn about Contemporary Art and develop an understanding of their creative process. Working alongside artist, Elana Mann, has been an especially exciting and rewarding experience. Advocating for the Arts has been important this year. What better way to advocate for the arts than to express it with performance and involve our community to participate. Understanding the importance and value of the arts is in critical need. Because of Elana's expertise as an artist, she helped cultivate the ideas of AVPA art students to create original works. The performance aspect of art making is something completely unique for my students to express and experience."



About the Academy of Visual and Performing Arts

The Academy of Visual and Performing Arts (AVPA) at Culver City High School has been inspiring and empowering students to build a compassionate, creative community through innovative and challenging arts education since 1996. AVPA enjoys tremendous support from Sony Pictures Entertainment and other area businesses as well as from the Culver City community. For more information about the Academy, go to <http://avpa.org> or contact Tony Spano at 310-842-4200 x6094 or Kristine Hatanaka at 310-842-4200 x6001.

Photo caption: (caption applies to all 3 photos)

Artist Elana Mann leads AVPA art students in gallery discussions at The Museum of Contemporary Art

#####