



NEWS

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For Immediate Release

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El Camino College Art Gallery to Present “Centripetal Force”

The El Camino College Art Gallery will present an exhibit titled: “Centripetal Force” featuring the work of Dennis O. Callwood and Keiko Fukazawa.

The show opens Feb. 12 and runs through March 9 in the El Camino College Art Gallery, 16007 Crenshaw Boulevard, near Torrance. (Gallery closed Feb. 19.) An opening reception is scheduled for 7 to 9 p.m. Feb. 15 at the gallery.

In the hands of husband and wife, Dennis Callwood and Keiko Fukazawa, the world of graffiti takes a break from the expected. Graffiti is not a neutral subject. Commonly linked with gang culture and territorialism, even the word connotes a certain negativity.

“Centripetal Force” was created by Callwood and Fukazawa, in collaboration with inmates from Camp McNair. An artist and deputy probation officer, Callwood heads a creative arts program at Challenger Memorial Youth Center, a locked-down rehabilitative facility in Lancaster, California. Born in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, he is educated in both social work and art – he has both an MFA in photography from USC and a bachelor’s degree in sociology from UC Santa Cruz.

Callwood photographs the youths in his rehab arts program with an unflinching honesty. He then mounts the black and white photos on framed boards and hands them over to the young men to respond to, in words and drawings applied to the boards. The resulting works are vital and sometimes excruciating depictions of the youths as they see themselves, with graffiti, gang symbols and tattoos. The images provide a window into their world, illustrating at once, tremendous fierceness and vulnerability.

“It was thought that allowing these juveniles to express themselves freely in a designated space would help to maintain a graffiti-free camp, and at the same time instill in them the self-discipline needed to start and complete an art project,” said Callwood of the Challenger Memorial Arts Program at Camp McNair. “An added bonus for most was a relief from the boredom associated with an overly regimented life.”

Fukazawa, a native of Japan, now lives in Pasadena where she teaches ceramics at Pasadena City College. Trained in classical Japanese brush work, Japanese painting and traditional ceramic techniques, Fukazawa came to Los Angeles to study art at

Otis/Parsons where she earned an MFA and totally reinvented her approach to art making.

Currently Fukazawa creates oversized, classically shaped ceramic vessels (such as a 4'x4' pitcher), which she breaks apart with a hammer. She disperses these fragments to the incarcerated youth in the Challenger Memorial program.

“To me, graffiti is a wonderful art form,” she said. “How about using it in a more positive way?”

Within established parameters, the young men independently decorate the shards with graffiti, images inspired by pop culture, Japanese erotic painting and Italian majolica painting. She then reassembles the large forms, creating vessels covered with puzzle pieces of juxtaposed images that cross boundaries of time and culture.

Additionally, Fukazawa and Callwood purchase clothing-bags, shoes, T-shirts, jackets and kimonos and pass them out to the incarcerated youths. Together they created wildly imaginative patchworks of imagery and graffiti. At a given event or party, Dennis and Keiko are easy to spot in their elegantly colorful gear.

The El Camino College Art Gallery is open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays and Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays, and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Fridays. For more information, call Susanna Meiers at 310-660-3543 or 3010.

Admission to the El Camino College Art Gallery and gallery events is free. On-campus parking is \$2.

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