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**For Immediate Release**

November 29, 2016

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**Winners of “Discovered: Emerging Visual Artists” Program Announced  
Exhibition set for opening January 21, 2017 at Petaluma Arts Center**

SONOMA COUNTY, Calif – Five Sonoma County artists are being recognized through the fourth annual “Discovered: Emerging Artists from Sonoma County” program, produced by Creative Sonoma and the Petaluma Arts Center. The five winners’ work will be shown in a professionally juried show at the Center, opening on **January 21<sup>st</sup> from 5:00 to 7:00 pm**. Winners will also receive a \$2,000 stipend.

These five artists reflect the tremendous diversity of the county’s visual arts community in genre, style and philosophy. Yet, they share several common themes. These works explore a culture that has less to do with the intrinsic value of things, and more to do with providing a felt experience.”

Winners include: **Jenny Harp** (Santa Rosa), whose beautiful drawings remind us of the power and permanence of physical, rather than digital images; **Dayana Leon** (Santa Rosa), whose fluorescent paintings document the extreme, physical changes women go through to feel included in today’s society; **Catherine Sieck** (Occidental), who uses meticulously cut paper to illustrate her fascination with earth’s sustainability; **Kala Stein** (Sonoma), who uses ceramic sculpture to assemble a view of the skies; and **Jayne Watson** (Petaluma), whose installations use dramatic manipulation of materials to transform emotions and feelings into physical objects.

“The Discovered program is a great vehicle to shine a spotlight on some of the individual artists in our county whose work hasn’t yet received well deserved recognition,” said Supervisor Efren Carrillo, Chair of the Board of Supervisors. “Receiving this award will be an important credential for all of these artists as they move their career forward in Sonoma County or beyond.”

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The winners were selected through a highly competitive process. Initial recommendations were made for 80 artists to participate leading to 46 applications which were juried down to 12 finalists. Jurors made site visits to the studios of all finalists and selected the 5 winners.

“The immense diversity of subject matter, medium and insights for the many exceptional artists living and working in Sonoma County is simply astounding. From concern and respect for the natural world, to gender politics, technology and beauty, the quality is very exciting.”

The Petaluma Arts Center is located at 230 Lakeville Street in Petaluma. A series of workshops connected to the show will be scheduled from January through March. Updates on this program and the scheduled events can be found at <https://petalumaartscenter.org/>.

Jurors for the awards include lead curator Kate Eilertsen, Michael Schwager from Sonoma State University, and local visual artist Jessica Martin.

This program is made possible by The Artist Awards Endowment Fund at the Community Foundation Sonoma County which was created by more than 50 donors from 2007-2011 with support from the James Irvine Foundation.

For more information on the Discovered program, please contact Kristen Madsen at [kristen.madsen@sonoma-county.org](mailto:kristen.madsen@sonoma-county.org). For information on the Petaluma Arts Center, please contact Val Richman at [vrichman@petalumaartscenter.org](mailto:vrichman@petalumaartscenter.org).

### **Creative Sonoma**

A division of the County of Sonoma’s Economic Development Board, Creative Sonoma supports and advances the creative community of Sonoma County. Creative Sonoma was established in 2014. More information can be found at [creativesonoma.org](http://creativesonoma.org).

### **Petaluma Arts Center**

Housed in the historic Railroad Station freight building, next to the Petaluma Visitors Center, Petaluma Arts Center hosts art exhibitions, performances, art classes, literary and film lectures, and events. The Arts Center grew out of the grassroots Petaluma Arts Council, founded in 1998 with a goal of acknowledging and celebrating local artists and their contributions. Located next to the upcoming SMART commuter train station in developing Midtown Petaluma, the arts center is experiencing a renaissance along with the growth of the arts in Sonoma County.