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**'Monumentally Fragile' Art Exhibition Now Open on Campus**

*The show features large-scale works on paper by California artists*

PALM DESERT (March 7, 2023) – The Walter N. Marks Center for the Arts at the College of the Desert presents *Monumentally Fragile*, a new exhibition of large-scale paper works on display now through March 24.

The show is curated by Ray Beldner, an artist and Director of Startup Curatorial, and brings together large works on paper by artists Catherine Ruane of Morongo Valley, David Tomb of Marin, and Holly Wong of San Francisco.

The title of the show refers both to the scale the artists employ in making their work, and to the fragility of their material. The theme also refers to the precariousness of their subject matter, which is often nature: trees, birds, water—even our “life force.” The artists use multiple smaller paper pieces to build their compositions and, in the process of installation, map out, occupy, and define space.

Paper, which is both a humble and mutable material, is a perfect metaphor for the tenuous state of the world in which the artists find themselves. Working passionately and insistently, they ask us to consider the beauty of this world and what we may be close to losing.

The gallery is open to the public Monday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. An artists' reception will be held Saturday, March 4, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.; and a closing reception and artist walkthrough is set for Friday, March 24, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The Walter N. Marks Center for the Arts is located on the College of the Desert campus at 43500 Monterey Ave. in Palm Desert.

Press kits are available upon request.



David Tomb: *Rock and Rockfowl*, 2018, mixed media on paper (Strangler Fig tree sculpture plywood) approximately 12 feet high by 28 feet wide

#### About the Artists:

- The drawings and paintings of **Catherine Ruane** address the complexities of living a robust life. Her detailed images are defined by careful renderings of the wilderness using selected charcoals. Nature-forms operate as metaphors illustrating how the persistence of survival is ubiquitous.

Her work has been collected and exhibited the world over, including Frosinone and Naples, Italy, Stockholm, Sweden, Kyoto, Japan, and state-side at museums in San Diego, Riverside, Oceanside, San Bernardino, San Luis Obispo and Lancaster, Calif. Her work has been reviewed in the Huffington Post, Artillery Magazine, Los Angeles Times, Art and Cake, and LA Diversions and featured in KCET Outbound, the Emmy Award-winning arts and culture series in Los Angeles.

- The work of Bay Area artist **David Tomb** reflects his lifelong interest in birds and his significant commitment to the conservation of species and habitats. The images he creates are huge in scale. They are collage and mixed media works on paper installations. Tomb says of his work, "Making artwork of birds is a way to connect and personalize my experience of seeing birds. The ultimate goal is to have people think: That animal is incredible... we need to save them!"

Tomb received a BFA in Painting and Drawing from California State University, Long Beach. David has exhibited in more than 100 group exhibitions and nearly 40 solo exhibitions in galleries and museums throughout the United States. His work is in many public collections, including: embassies of the United States, Manila, Philippines and Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea; in art collections of the Consulate General of

the United States, Ciudad Juarez and Tijuana; and the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Oakland Museum of California, the Huntington Library Art Collections, the Arkansas Arts Center, the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the Fresno Art Museum, among others. David's work has been widely published and reviewed in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Harper's*, *Art LTD*, *Three Penny Review* and *the San Francisco Chronicle*.

- **Holly Wong** creates installations, assemblages and works on paper that summon protection and celebrate female energy. Using materials such as colored pencil, drafting film, paint and candle smoke, she strives to reconnect in herself what has been fragmented. Much of Wong's work is constructed with ephemeral materials that are both strong and fragile simultaneously. Working often within the context of memory and impermanence, she gathers images and patterns. When discussing the titles of her work, Wong states, "I often name my pieces after goddesses because my work once completed becomes a form of drawing down eternal energy and life force." Furthermore, the artist feels she is "calling upon those forces of protection through the practice of making artwork. Art is my form of magical practice which reveals the sacred in myself."

Holly lives and works in San Francisco. She was educated at the San Francisco Art Institute, where she graduated with a Master of Fine Arts with a concentration in New Genres. She has been awarded visual arts grants from the Integrity: Arts and Culture Association, Barbara Deming Memorial Fund, the George Sugarman Foundation, the Puffin Foundation, and a Gerbode Foundation purchase award. She is a Presidential Scholar in the Arts and has had more than 70 group exhibitions and 10 solo exhibitions.

#### About the Guest Curator & Startup Curatorial

- **Ray Beldner**, developer of Startup Curatorial, is a sculptor and mixed media artist whose work has been exhibited nationally and internationally and can be found in many public and private collections. Born in San Francisco, Beldner received a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and an MFA from Mills College.

Since 2015, [Startup Curatorial](#) has been dedicated to connecting art lovers to exciting up-and-coming artists from across the country. Startup streamlines the process of buying art by connecting individuals, interior designers, art consultants, and businesses to our expert curatorial team and our highly skilled group of artists working in all media, including painting, drawing, photography, printmaking, and sculpture. We also develop rental programs for a wide range of uses, from rotating art displays for hotels, wineries and restaurants to home staging and film projects. With access to hundreds of artists, we work closely with you to acquire original and limited-edition art works, special commissions, site specific projects and other unique collaborations.