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**Fourth Annual Artie Awards Presented by Mission Federal ArtWalk
Recognizes Local Arts and Culture Influencers**

*–A night to celebrate San Diego leaders of the arts and reveal Mission Federal ArtWalk 2017's
featured artists–*

SAN DIEGO, Calif. (Jan. 19, 2017) – Last night at The Westgate Hotel the fourth annual Artie Awards honored three San Diego arts influencers and [Mission Federal ArtWalk](#) announced the featured artists of this year's 2017 Mission Federal ArtWalk "Vivid Expression" themed event. The Artie Award winners included Kinsee Morlan, engagement editor and author of the Arts and Culture Report at Voice of San Diego; Scripps Health, a leader in healthcare in San Diego and long-time arts supporter; and Jane Wheeler, philanthropist and ArtReach supporter.

"The Artie Awards honor local influencers who are making a difference in enhancing the arts and culture landscape in our community," said Sandi Cottrell, director of ArtWalk San Diego. "Mission Federal ArtWalk has been able to return year after year for 33 years because of the great community support behind the tradition and it would not be the same without the support of these individuals."

Along with recognizing the Artie honorees, the eight 2017 Mission Federal ArtWalk featured artists were announced. These local, regional and international artists were selected from over 350 participating artists at this year's festival, and represent the unique and inspiring passion that Mission Federal ArtWalk supports. The featured artists are as follows:

Moni Blom:

Moni Blom's one-of-a-kind hand built ceramic sculptures are often whimsical and fanciful in nature, featuring fairy tale references, children's literature characters and imaginary people drawn from contemporary life. Moni's artistic theme uses humor and visual contrast inspired by children's games, candy, circus life, clothing, fairy tales, architecture and toys. The San Diego artist is a full time studio ceramic artist.

Franco Forte:

Born and raised in Milan, Italy, Franco Forte studied journalism and architecture at Politecnico University. Forte is an artist, music producer and musician, who constantly strives to express his creativity in new ways. Guitar and painting were his first passions as a child, and from a young age, he developed the ability to represent emotions with colors and forms whether on canvas or wood. Over the last decade, he has dedicated his time to the creation of surrealistic photography, aiming to create something that stirs the imagination while fusing and manipulating real photos.

Mildred Gil Parada:

Mildred Gil Parada was born in Merida, Venezuela in 1972. After earning her degree in fine arts from the School of Arts Armando Reveron in Barcelona, she came to Mesa, AZ. She is one of the main representatives of a very small group of contemporary Venezuelan women sculptors working in stone, a medium Mildred Gil Parada has worked in for more than 16 years. Mildred Gil Parada's initial influences were the abstract works of her mentor and friend, Valentin Malavar, and the work of the master Pedro Barreto—both renowned Venezuelan sculptors. Her work represents deep and secret feminine thought, molding the natural stiffness of stone into abstract and curved shapes, textures and shadows. Her work has been exhibited in numerous venues in the United States and Venezuela, and has been recognized with numerous awards.

Matthew Grabelsky:

Born in Los Angeles and raised in New York, Matthew Grabelsky grew up surrounded by artists. In college he studied astrophysics, which taught him how to observe the world and art, allowing him to express his relationship to it. After graduating from Rice University in 2002 with both a Bachelors in Art and Art History and a Bachelors in Astrophysics, he moved to Florence, Italy where he spent four years studying the techniques of classical drawing and painting. In creating his paintings, he draws inspiration from childhood memories—riding the subway in New York City; visiting the Bronx Zoo and the animal dioramas at the Natural History Museum; and hours of listening to his parents reading myths and stories.

Jason Humphrey:

Jason Humphrey grew up in culturally diverse Los Angeles in the 80s. He spent his teenage years spraying graffiti across the city with the wrong crowd and he credits his mother for saving his life by making him join the Navy at the age of 17. He was fortunate enough to travel the world at an early age and today, he finds his artwork is influenced by these travels. He loves working in pen and ink stipple, creating works of art primarily with dots. He is inspired by the many different cultures he grew up with in the 70s and 80s, Saturday morning cartoons, and early hip hop.

Iris Scott:

Represented by Adelman Fine Art, New York artist Iris Scott paints vivid oil paintings with just her fingertips, a technique she stumbled upon while living in Taiwan during 2010. Scott accidentally discovered the advantages of using her fingertip technique by deciding to not clean her paint brushes once and used her hands instead. Today, Iris has traded in brushes for latex gloves. Scott is history's first artist to abandon brushes altogether and focus entirely on finger painting, and legitimizing it in the world of fine art. She is also part of an entirely new art movement in Brooklyn called Instinctualism—a revival of pre-war art; think of it as Impressionism with a twist.

Ivano Stocco:

Ivano Stocco's mixed media paintings explore the strange and unconventional beauty of built environments and indeterminate zones where culture and nature meet and intermix. Examples of

spaces and architecture that have interested Ivano have included alleys, ravines, underpasses, garages, hydro poles and wires, storm sewers, greasy spoons, and weathered walls. Born in Toronto, Canada, Ivano is a former plasterer and high school teacher. He has lived and worked in several countries, most recently in Italy.

Michael Summers:

Born in Los Angeles sometime during the Carter administration, Michael Summers grew up in Joshua Tree, Calif., surrounded by a cavalcade of eccentric art commune—inhabiting social dropouts, idealistic dreamers and rural American free thinkers. Art and creativity surrounded Michael from an early age and has been a pivotal part of who he is. His unorthodox use of intense saturation and color encourages the viewer to look a little closer, a little longer. The recognizable subjects of animals, automatons and humans suddenly become magical and extraordinary. Yet, they somehow still retain the nostalgia of a childhood memory that was once forgotten.

The 33rd annual Mission Federal ArtWalk will take place on Saturday, April 29 and Sunday, April 30, 2017. More information can be found at www.artwalksandiego.org.

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About Mission Federal ArtWalk:

Mission Federal ArtWalk in San Diego's Little Italy is the City's first outdoor fine art festival and will celebrate its 33rd anniversary this year. Mission Federal ArtWalk will run from Saturday, April 29 and Sunday, April 30 featuring professional artists from across the globe. Mission Federal ArtWalk offers collectable and approachable art from all kinds of media, such as drawings, jewelry, sculpture, paintings, photography, metal work, wood work and much more. More than just a visual arts festival, the event also features 6 performance venues for music and dance, as well as interactive art projects for both adults and children. For more information on Mission Federal ArtWalk, the featured artists or other details, please visit www.artwalksandiego.org. Become a fan at Facebook.com/ArtWalkSD or follow us on Twitter and Instagram @ArtWalkSD for updates.

About Mission Federal Credit Union:

Mission Federal Credit Union is a not-for-profit organization providing a wide variety of financial services to meet the needs of its customers. With more than \$3 billion in assets, 30 local branches, and more than 200,000 members, Mission Fed is the largest, locally based credit union exclusively serving San Diego County. Mission Fed enhances the lives of its customers through financial education and financial services. In addition, Mission Fed contributes to hundreds of nonprofit educational and community organizations. At Mission Fed, your success is our bottom line. All San Diegans are welcome. Federally insured by NCUA. To learn more, visit www.MissionFed.com.