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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 12, 2015

Contact: Jeff Van Kleeck

805-756-1571; jvanklee@calpoly.edu

Cal Poly University Art Gallery to Feature Interactive Exhibit Feb. 20-March 13

Artist lecture and gallery opening reception set for Feb. 20

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Cal Poly's University Art Gallery will present "Making Space for Free-Play," an interactive and collaborative installation by internationally renowned artist Sheila Pepe and Cal Poly students to run Feb. 20 through March 13.

The exhibit will open with a talk by Pepe at 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 20, in Room 150 of the Dexter Building (No. 34) on campus. A reception will follow in the gallery, located on the ground floor of the Dexter Building.

"Making Space for Free-Play" creates a place for inspiration and exploration between Pepe and the student participants. Much of the gallery space will be empty when the show opens. The student-audience-turned-participants will slowly transform the space with new pieces during the course of the show.

"The students will direct these activities as part of the work," Pepe said. "The idea is for them to fill it with things that they are interested in."

Led by Pepe, the students will create chair-like sculptures covered with knitted material. Fabric, yarn and mixed materials will be used in the pieces.

As the name of the exhibit indicates, the collaborative installation focuses on the aspect of free play, or unrestricted activities — in this case expressed through creative endeavors.

Collaborative art is a growing trend, said Jeff Van Kleeck, coordinator of the University Art Gallery. "In this emerging genre, artists, viewers and artmaking are mixed, resulting in an experimental event that could be categorized as a classroom, community organizing, and art 'happening.'"

"Scientists have found that free play is critical for becoming socially adept, coping with stress, and building cognitive skills such as problem solving. We hope student viewers will interact with the space and spend some time making things to add their own touch."

Pepe is a New Jersey-born [artist](#) who lives and works in New York City. She has an extensive art background and holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in ceramics and a Master of Fine Arts. She is also trained in blacksmithing, painting and sculpture. Her work has been displayed in solo exhibitions, collaborative shows with other artists, and exhibitions where the community of viewers is invited to interact and make art.

The University Art Gallery is free and open to the public from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

Links

- University Art Gallery: artgallery.calpoly.edu/

- Art & Design Department: artdesign.calpoly.edu/

- College of Liberal Arts: cla.calpoly.edu/

About the Cal Poly University Art Gallery

The University Art Gallery is a venue for helping to nurture creativity, empathy, innovation, design skills, storytelling, and big-picture thinking by bringing bold thinkers, emerging and established artists, and creative professionals to campus. Providing a venue for five exhibitions each academic year, the University Art Gallery serves Cal Poly and the surrounding area. The gallery showcases nationally and internationally known artists, as well as student, alumni and faculty artwork.

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Phone: 805-756-1111