



Media Contact: Casey Blake, 480-644-6620, casey.blake@mesaartscenter.com

For immediate release: Feb. 20, 2015

**spark! Mesa's Festival of Creativity at Mesa Arts Center
Wednesday, Mar. 18 - Saturday, Mar. 21**



Mesa, AZ – spark! Mesa's Festival of Creativity is a free, immersive event for all ages held at Mesa Arts Center. The 2015 festival weaves the elements – earth, air, fire and water – into numerous captivating and interactive experiences in celebration of the arts, innovation and creativity. Held during spring break for many Valley school districts and in the heart of Cactus League Spring Training month, **spark!** will offer participatory activities, delicious foods, live music, original performances, collaborative art and more.

The festival, which features the work of Arizona artists and performers as well as internationally renowned touring and visual artists, is open Mar. 18 and 19 noon – 5 p.m. and Mar. 20 and 21 noon – 10 p.m. On Friday and Saturday evening at 7 p.m., the campus will transform into **spark! After Dark**, with night-time performances and festivities culminating in a fireworks display on Saturday night.

Descriptions of festival offerings are listed below.

Earth

Sandboxes of Life, by Casey Scalf, Bellingham, WA

Play in three different sandboxes in which the moving of the sand with brushes and other tools lets participants “paint” with light in the sand.

Clay City, by Patricia Sannit, Phoenix, AZ

Design and create an ever-changing cityscape using hundreds of clay shapes and objects.

Animal Land, by Lauren Strohacker and Kendra Sollars, Scottsdale, AZ

View a series of projections that reimagine simulations of wildlife native to Arizona.

Spun Chair, by Thomas Heatherwick, London, UK

Rock and spin in the fascinating spun chair that looks more like a sculpture than a seat.

Air

Migration, by Saskia Jorda, Scottsdale, AZ

Stroll through a migrating flock of birds, in a site-specific installation co-commissioned by Scottsdale's Canal Convergence Festival.

Shade Music, by Mouna Andraos and Melissa Mongiat, Daily tous les jours, Montreal, Canada
Shadows from those who stop and play will generate sounds of different kinds as they move across markers in the environment.

What We Have Lost, What We Have Gained, by Matthew Mosher, Tempe, AZ

The pressure-sensitive display will feature singing mouths that, when pressed, sing to you.

Fire

Path, by Hailey Featherstone, Tempe, AZ

Installed in two retrofitted freight containers, *Path* will offer participants a journey through the history of man-made light.

Stretchy Canvas, by Christian Cammarota and Trisha Gonzales, Tempe, AZ

Press and manipulate the stretchy, framed canvas and "paint" it with light and colors.

Aurora: Painted Night Desert, by Rachel Bowditch/Vessel Project and Scott London, *Rolling Stone* photographer, Tempe, AZ and Santa Barbara, CA

Subtly illuminated artists in desert-inspired costumes will inhabit spark! The buildings of MAC will become the canvas for projections of desert images by photographer Scott London.

Fire Juggling and Glow in the Dark Juggling will be provided by Martin Taylor (Mesa, AZ) and James Reid (Mesa, AZ), respectively.

Water

Water Light Graffiti, by Antonin Fourneau, Paris, France

A large panel of LED lights will respond to water brushed, sprayed or splashed on its surface, enabling festival goers to write and draw in light.

In Dark Waters by Joe O'Connell of Creative Machines, Tucson, AZ

Play music by touching this large glowing sculpture featuring bioluminescent sea creatures who respond to the musical notes with shimmering colored lights that move across their bodies.

Rain Play: Rippling Water, by Christine Lam and Vincy Zhao, Phoenix, AZ

Under a dome-topped umbrella, experience rain indoors with the feeling and sound of droplets falling and streaming.

The Incredible Shrinking Mural, by Kyllan Maney, Tempe, AZ

Images of an aquarium will be the tapestry for a colorful mural of shrinky dink art that festival visitors will color and build throughout the four days.

All Elements

Equinox, by Vessel Project, Tempe, AZ

Daytime atmospheric theater performances will feature specially designed costumes, each highlighting one of the four Greek elements: earth, air, water and fire.

Element 5, by Hank Fries and students from The New School for the Arts, Tempe, AZ

Exploring the junction between open-source technology and common materials, this suspended installation pays tribute to the four elements with a nod toward the modern age.

Face Flip, by David Tinapple and Shahab Sagheb, Tempe, AZ

Swap faces with a companion in a fun, creative and interactive game for all ages.

Human + Emotion, by Nora Welthy, Pat Pataranutaporn, Thomas Kirwan, Rowan Burkam, Tom Trauberman and Diana Ishak, Tempe, AZ

Interacting with this project interchanges parts of the observer's visage with the facial features of others in a constantly changing digital tapestry of humans and their emotions.

Live Music in Wells Fargo Garden

Musical acts performing at the spark! festival include (listed in order of appearance): Trio Rio (southwestern American acoustic music); Sherry Finzer & Mark Holland (flute flight); Kirsten Plambeck (pop/jazz vocalist); Hans Olson (western blues and original music); Rocksmith (classic rock and blues); Yourchestra (eclectic folk boogie); Upper Strata (alternative indie roots band); Phoenix Afrobeat Orchestra (afrobeat and originals); Exit 40 Band (variety); The Sugar Thieves (blues); Teneia (folk/soul with a pop twist); Radio La Chusma (reggae, latin, cumbia).

Performances on South Lawn and Studio Samplers

Nonstop free performances by Valley performing artists and artist groups will take place on the South Lawn of MAC. Performing groups include Young Voices Rise/Phonetic Spit with Taylor Junior High School students, Southwest Shakespeare Company, East Valley Children's Theater, Storyteller Miranda Giles, Mesa Encore Theatre, The Soul Justice Project, Elements (a community dance created by the participants in partnership with choreographer Elizabeth Johnson, Simply EPIK, and Westwood High School Dance students.

Festival goers will be able to try their hand at studio art classes with \$5 one-hour workshops. Workshops include: Making Plates, Flameworking Beads, Watercolor, Shrinky Dink Jewelry, Improv with Names from a Hat and Enameling on Metal.

Mesa Arts Center is located at 1 E. Main Street in downtown Mesa. There is no charge to attend **spark! Mesa's Festival of Creativity** and parking is free. More information can be found at MesaArtsCenter.com.

###

Editor's Note: Images are available for download via Mesa Arts Center's online Press Room at <http://www.mesaartscenter.com/index.php/misc/about/press-room/login> (Password is macmedia).

About Mesa Arts Center

Mesa Arts Center, owned and operated by the City of Mesa, is a unique, architecturally stunning facility located in the heart of downtown Mesa. Arizona's largest arts center is home to four theaters, five art galleries, 14 art studios, and an artist cooperative gallery. Guests, patrons, and students come to Mesa Arts Center to enjoy the finest live entertainment and performances, world-class visual art exhibitions, and outstanding arts education classes. The Mesa Arts Center mission is to inspire people through engaging arts experiences that are diverse, accessible, and relevant. For more information, visit [mesaartscenter.com](http://www.mesaartscenter.com).