

PRESS RELEASE - The Healthy Artists Movie Poster Exhibition

January 4th-25th 2013 @ Modern Formations

4919 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15224

Opening night event: January 4th 2013, 7-11pm

On January 4th, 2013 from 7-11pm at Modern Formations Gallery, Healthy Artists will kick-off the new year and their month-long, juried exhibition, **“The Healthy Artists Movie Poster Exhibition”** with an arts/social justice event unprecedented for Pittsburgh’s First Friday Unblurred Art Crawl, if not, the entire country.

Inspired by a love of classic movie posters and Criterion Collection DVDs, the Healthy Artists team, sponsored by a **Sprout Fund Seed Award**, is mobilizing 15 of Pittsburgh’s professional artists and 5 student artists, to design a movie-style poster around their documentary series.

The Professional Artists are Crystala Armagost, Stephanie Armbruster, David Bernabo, Seth Clark, Doug Dean, Corey Escoto, Jenn Gooch, Mundania Horvath, Jasen Lex, Steph Neary, Jim Rugg, Andy Scott, Lizzee Solomon, Laurie Trok, and Hyla Willis. **The Student Artists** are Megan Kopke, Jing Liu, Jeremy Marshall, Ben Quint-Glick, and Abby Ryder.

“The Healthy Artists Movie Poster Exhibition” bridges the gap between Pittsburgh’s artists, college students, and health care advocates and educators. In collaboration with **Be Well! Pittsburgh** (Health Care Options for the Uninsured) and the University of Pittsburgh’s **Original Magazine**, the Healthy Artists team is hosting an opening night event on January 4th with free food, drink, and music from the **Harlan Twins**, at which health care advocates and educators, representing organizations such as **Health Care 4 All PA** and **The Thomas Merton Center**, will speak to a room full of young people and artists - two demographics heavily affected by the health care crisis. Health Care 4 All PA will also be announcing the release of their **economic impact study** – demonstrating how single-payer would benefit the Pennsylvania economy as well as offer affordable, quality health care to all Pennsylvanians – a report that took nearly a decade to finance.

At the opening night event, the top three winners of the exhibition will be announced, the artists, awarded cash prizes, and the 1st place design, branded the official representation of the Healthy Artists documentary series.

The Esteemed Judges of the exhibition are Nicholas Chambers, Milton Fine Curator of Art at the **Warhol Museum**, Eric Skillman, graphic designer for **The Criterion Collection**, Lisa Smith-Reed, producer of the **Steeltown Film Factory**, and Brett Yasko, Director of Design for **MASS MoCA**.

BACKGROUND

Healthy Artists is a digital venue speaking out against the injustices of the U.S.'s current broken healthcare system through an ongoing documentary series focused on individual Pittsburgh artists discussing their current lifestyles, creative work, and frustrations and struggles with healthcare. The creative team behind the documentary series is led by **Julie Sokolow**, a Pittsburgh filmmaker, who started as a lo-fi musician with a self-produced album praised by **Pitchfork**, **Wire**, and the **Washington Post** when she was only 19.

Sokolow has been channeling her ambition to engage young people and artists in the health care reform debate. Sick of the “starving” and “tortured” artist cliché, she spent last January assembling a team of young filmmakers and creatives to shed light on an unexposed issue: most artists are without access to affordable, quality healthcare, because they work nontraditional, freelance, and part-time jobs that don't provide health insurance. The Healthy Artists team is comprised of creatives in the most affected age bracket, as **30% of the 49 million uninsured Americans are young adults, ages ranging from 19 to 29.**

Healthy Artists can be seen as a grass-roots effort, taking a tip from Vermont, to pave the way for single-payer reform on the state level. However, Sokolow also hopes that this Pittsburgh-based effort will strike a universal chord and inspire young people and artists to advocate for health care reform in their cities, which doesn't seem out of the question, as national attention for Healthy Artists grows. Back in June, when The Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) was under the threat of repeal, Healthy Artists made a video that caught the eye of **Huffington Post** journalist, **Wendell Potter**, and in October, their video “American Artist” won 3rd prize at the **Disposable Film Festival's** Health Create-a-thon, with partners such as **Adobe** and **Vimeo**.

The Healthy Artists website (www.healthyartists.org) has also begun to feature written interviews (forthcoming) with artists across the nation who have Pittsburgh roots, such as Chicago painter, Adam Grossi, New York poet, Claire Donato, and Indianapolis novelist, Salvatore Pane. The documentary series itself features some of Pittsburgh's most prominent artists, ranging from musicians, actors, professors, cartoonists, painters, writers, and beyond.

Sokolow attributes the success of Healthy Artists to inspiration derived from **Obama's 2008 campaign**, which was powered by **Shepard Fairey's** graphic design around the concept “Hope”. While often exposing grim and harrowing health care struggles, The Healthy Artists documentary series also provides a glimpse into the lives of inspiring people and their artistic processes. Sokolow half-jokingly calls it **“indie cribs for social justice”** and **“hipsters for health care”**. The series is both entertaining and informative and evidences the potential to mobilize young people around health care reform, while doubly, promoting the artists involved to a broader audience.

Sokolow believes that activism should be **“sympiotic and sexy”**, if it intends to capture the hearts of a youth audience and “The Healthy Artists Move Poster Exhibition” represents the organization's most ambitious effort to date.

Learn more at www.healthyartists.org

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