

For Immediate Release:

April 4, 2018

Media Contact:

Brandon McKinley, Public Relations and Partnerships Specialist

University of Florida College of the Arts

Office: 352.273.1489

bmckinley@arts.ufl.edu

Local artist living with ALS breaks through physical boundaries through art

Screening of new film April 19 at the Harn Museum of Art

Gainesville, Fla.—In 2014, local artist Sandra Murphy-Pak began losing functionality of her hands and arms due to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as ALS or Lou Gehrig’s disease.

Since then, the artist has embarked on an extraordinary journey of creating works of art that reflect her inner universe. Instead of using her hands to draw, she uses her feet.

“No Fear, Only Joy” is a new 20-minute film that portrays how Murphy-Pak breaks the bounds of physical limitations to create works of art that express her inner creative universe and illustrate the cyclical nature of all things in life.

The Arts in Medicine Programs at UF will be hosting a free film screening and discussion of “No Fear, Only Joy” on April 19 at 5:30 p.m. at the Harn Museum of Art. Refreshments will be provided starting at 5:30 p.m., and the film will begin at 6 p.m. Audience members will have the opportunity to ask the artist questions immediately following the screening.

“When my hands and arms were fully functioning, I was a hand talker,” Murphy-Pak said in her artist statement. “Now I find I am doing more of these motions with my feet. I hope to create works that reflect my love of abstract form and forms in nature.”

Her recent exhibit, “Footwork,” includes about 20 original works with a few storyboards and process photo series.

“There is pleasure in the process, but the overall physicality takes a lot of effort,” Murphy-Pak said. “My condition only allows me to work short periods of time.”

Murphy-Pak holds a B.F.A. in painting from the Atlanta College of Art and a master's in arts education from the University of Florida. She is the mother of three daughters and has worked with UF Health Shands Arts in Medicine for more than a decade as an artist in residence at the hospital, creating community driven projects in the United States and Africa.

Center for **ARTS IN MEDICINE**

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA / COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

About the Center for Arts in Medicine

The University of Florida Center for the Arts in Medicine is committed to advancing research, education and practice in arts in medicine, locally and globally. The Center undertakes work in three primary areas of focus: education and training, research, and outreach. Established in the College of the Arts in 1996, the Center provides a framework for interdisciplinary collaboration among University of Florida faculty and students, healthcare providers, clinical artists, and our local and global communities. The Center develops and effects interdisciplinary research studies and educational curricula on all levels and serves as a national model for the arts in medicine research, education and training.

About the College of the Arts

The College of the Arts, previously known as the College of Fine Arts, is one the 16 colleges and more than 150 research centers and institutes at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida. The College of the Arts offers baccalaureate, master's and Ph.D. degree programs in its three fully-accredited schools — the School of Art and Art History, School of Music and School of Theatre and Dance. The college is home to the Center for Arts in Medicine, Center for World Arts, Digital Worlds Institute, University Galleries and the New World School of the Arts in Miami. More than 100 faculty members and more than 1,220 students work together daily to engage, inspire and create. The college hosts more than 300 performances, exhibitions and events each year. Faculty and students also exhibit and perform at other local, national and international venues. To learn more, visit www.arts.ufl.edu.

###