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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**APRIL FIRST FRIDAY ART OPENING FEATURES CORPORATE
PARTNER SHOW,
SILK PAINTERS AND STUDENT ANIME ART**

OCEAN CITY, MD — *March 30, 2017* — The First Friday opening at the Ocean City Center for the Arts features diverse styles of artwork, from the traditional to the highly futuristic. The public is invited to the free opening reception on April 7 from 5 – 7 p.m.

To honor the corporate partners of the Art League of Ocean City, a juried show — where the artwork is judged and limited to the best submitted — will be on display in the Thaler Gallery. The Art League receives support from over 45 local businesses that have signed up to be corporate partners.

“Our corporate partnerships are vital to keeping the Ocean City Center for the Arts up and running,” Rina Thaler, executive director, said. “We are always looking for more businesses to participate in this program.”

At the opening reception, the Art League will present the supporting businesses with a framed piece of art created by the 2016 winner, Norman Johansen. Cash prizes will be awarded to the winning artists.

Work by members of the Silk Painters International (SPIN) will be on display in the Galleria, coordinated by Mitzi Ash of Berlin. An organization of silk artists, painters, practitioners and educators, SPIN's mission is to promote the fine art of silk painting around the world.

Student artwork done in the contemporary Magna and Anime styles will be on display during the opening on First Friday and through the weekend. Students in middle, high school, and higher education in Worcester, Wicomico, and Sussex counties submitted entries that will be judged by Brad Hudson, professor at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Cash prizes sponsored by Art League board member John Sisson will be awarded.

Hudson will display his own Anime artwork in the Spotlight Gallery, along with artist Erin Timmons. Anime is a style of [animation](#) originating in Japan characterized by stark colorful graphics depicting vibrant characters in action-filled plots often with fantastic or futuristic themes. The Art League developed this show to promote creativity among students outside formal art programs and to increase community awareness of Anime as an art form.

The abstract art of Gwen Lehman of Ocean Pines occupies Studio E in April. Lehman retired from teaching in 2015 after 46 years at Stephen Decatur High School, primarily as the director of the theatre department. During her time at SDHS, she was named Worcester County Teacher of the Year, Maryland State Drama Teacher of the Year, and the Governor's Art Award winner, among others. Lehman graduated from Hood College in Frederick, Md. and received her MA from Washington College in Chestertown, Md.

Kate Hammen is April's artisan in residence. A resident of Ellicott City, Md., she considers Ocean City her second home. Her hand-crafted jewelry uses patterns she finds in nature, and all of her creations are one-of-a-kind.

The Ocean City Center for the Arts at 502 94th Street is the home of the Art League of Ocean City, *a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing the visual arts to the community through education, exhibits, scholarship, programs and community art projects. Financial support comes primarily through membership dues from individuals and corporate sponsors. Funding for exhibits is also provided by the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, the Worcester County Arts Council, Maryland State Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts, organizations dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive.*

More information is available at 410-524-9433 or www.artleagueofoceancity.org.

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EDITORS: Photo attached.

CAPTION: Abstract artist and former SDHS drama teacher Gwen Lehman occupies Studio E during April at the Ocean City Center for the Arts.

