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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Bakersfield Museum of Art Urges Newsom Administration to
Activate and Employ Creative Industries in Service to Public Health**

December 14, 2020 (Sacramento, CA) – More than 450,000 jobs and an estimated \$45 billion in accumulative job loss to the arts in all sectors are due to the pandemic. A statewide task force of artists, venue operators, and unions has been mobilized by Californians for the Arts (CFTA) to develop safe guidelines for reopening live events in light of COVID-19 and a statewide awareness campaign with the message to #RestartArtsCA. While bars, shopping malls, gyms, museums and many other industries have received state issued protocols to reopen as part of California’s Blueprint for a Safer Economy, the performing arts sector has been sidelined. “The first to close and the last to reopen” has become the mantra but many in the industry are fighting back.

According to a report from the Brookings Institution, California’s arts, culture and entertainment industry suffers from one of the highest unemployment rates with one-third of the sector out of work. On November 30, the Governor announced a \$500 million grants program for “small businesses, nonprofits and cultural institutions”, making this the first time since the pandemic that the impact on the arts and culture industries has been specifically addressed by the Governor.

“We want to see the arts be part of the solution here in Kern County,” says BMoA Executive Director Amy Smith. “The recent reversion to purple tier in Kern County coupled with the new stay-at-home order, creates hardships for everyone. We believe that the arts can be part of the solution, providing an outlet that alleviates stress and anxiety. The governor’s grant for the arts is great but it just scratches the surface. We also hope the Newsom administration will issue guidelines that allow the arts sector to reopen safely, and have parity with other sectors such as shopping malls, cultural ceremonies, and fitness centers.”

The pandemic has changed the way we do almost everything, including the way we access and experience art. This Spring, BMoA quickly began delivering arts experiences online. Smith continued, “Our staff worked remotely for months developing original content for our #MuseumAtHome initiative and continuing to plan for exhibitions in the near and long term. We also migrated our annual fundraiser, ARTMIX, to an online platform and modified our Via Arté Italian Street Painting Exhibit to conform to state

requirements in place at the time. Our work continues despite having no revenue from on-site visitors.”

“We do this because our work matters. The arts matter. We believe the arts are a catalyst for community, and for preserving and invigorating mental and emotional health. We hope the Governor comes to realize this and develop guidelines for arts and cultural institutions to have parity with other enterprises that are far more crowded than museums.”

The arts in California are an economic engine, representing \$650.3 billion in output per year, and 15.4% of the state’s jobs. The arts are fundamental to both the human experience, and to the economic well-being of our community. BMoA looks forward to the day when all visual and performing arts institutions in California have guidelines to safely reopen.

ABOUT BMoA

The Bakersfield Museum of Art’s mission is to inspire and engage diverse audiences by providing a broad spectrum of creative visual arts experiences through the exhibition and preservation of fine art, educational programs, community outreach and special events. Visit www.bmoa.org or call (661) 323-7219 for more information. Connect with BMoA on Facebook and Instagram @thebmoa and Twitter @bmoa.

Location: 1930 “R” Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301