

News Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 2, 2017



Absurdity Series #6, 4" x 8"
by Peter & Pavel Mester



Absurdity Series # 16, 4" x 8"
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Untitled, Mural for CCSC
by Peter & Pavel Mester

The Freed Spirit

Art by the Peter Mester Family

— Exclusive Art Event Benefits Refugees and Immigrants —
Free Admission

Exhibit & Reception: May 18, 6:00 pm, San Jose City Hall Rotunda

SAN JOSE, CA – May 2, 2017 – Recognized fresco artists Peter Mester and his family fled their native Slovakia in 2012. They have painted and shown their art in Slovakia, England, Denmark, and France—at universities, churches, hospitals, public plazas, government buildings, and private homes. Before immigrating to the United States, the Mesters were commissioned by Gerard Depardieu to produce fresco art for the famous actor's winery Chateau de Tigne.

In the midst of their struggles to establish themselves in a new country, the Mester family are now giving back to refugees through their art. Catholic Charities' Refugee Resettlement and Immigrant Integration program are honored to be the beneficiaries of this exclusive art sale event. **The Freed Spirit is a one-day exhibit and reception on May 18, 2017, from 6:00-8:00 pm, at the San Jose City Hall Rotunda. Admission is free.**

In today's political climate with regulations aimed at limiting the migration of refugees and immigrants, along with daily detainments and deportations, Catholic Charities' ability to help displaced people has become more difficult. The agency's work serving the most vulnerable in the community—including refugees and immigrants—has reached a new urgency.

For 38 years, Catholic Charities has had the opportunity to assist in the care and comfort of refugees. The agency's Refugee Foster Care program is the only program in Northern California that serves unaccompanied (often orphaned) refugee children fleeing terror, poverty, and oppression. To date, Catholic Charities helped resettle more than 7,000 refugees from around the world.

Proceeds from **The Freed Spirit** art event will help Catholic Charities create new opportunities for refugees and immigrants who desperately need the help.



Untitled, Mural for CCSCC
by Peter & Pavel Mester

Curator Tierney Sneeringer remarks, “The Mester family bring a long line of artistic expression to the United States. Painting and artistry have been in their family for hundreds of years. Each member of the Mester family was an artist in some form, including Peter's parents, grandparents, and now his children. Today, Peter collaborates with his son Pavel on public frescoes and panel paintings full of dramatic brushstrokes and spirituality—as evidenced by the figures in the painting and by the Mesters’ desire to give back.”



Untitled, Archival
by Peter Mester

Sneeringer continues, “The Mesters also look to international literary figures for inspiration. San Francisco Beat poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s poem on artistic creation ‘Constantly Risking Absurdity (No. 15)’ inspired many of the artists’ large expressive panels included in the exhibit. It is this intersection of the arts and culture that shows how creative expression transcends boundaries. It also demonstrates how refugees and the exchange of ideas add to the richness and diversity of the American experience.”

**High res images available upon request.*

Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County has worked to strengthen families and build economic self-reliance for the poor and vulnerable in the county for 61 years. Each year, more than 500 employees and 1,000 volunteers serve more than 40,000 individuals of all cultures and beliefs through 40 programs at more than 80 sites. Program areas include behavioral health, youth and family services, economic development, employment, financial education, housing, immigration legal services, in-home and long-term care, older adult services, refugee resettlement, refugee foster care, and more. The agency is working to reduce poverty with social change goals that target the alleviation, prevention, and reduction of poverty in our communities.

Register by visiting: <http://CatholicCharitiesSCC.org/TheFreedSpirit>. Admission is free.

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