PROJECT SAVING ARTISTS’ LEGACIES LAUNCHED IN NEW YORK CITY AND WASHINGTON DC

New York, NY. September 10, 2015 – As retirement gets reevaluated, and baby boomers search for engagement, older artists are models of lifelong learning, resilience and passion about their work. In a society that exalts reality shows on hoarders, and entices people to bring the junk from their basement to find it appraised at thousands of dollars, it’s difficult to know what to preserve. Vital works of art, and the creative histories that comprise an important component of American cultural heritage, are imperiled by the lack of a functional, sustainable model for documentation and preservation. Artists (who don’t retire) are participating for the third time in an inter-generational project that teaches them to document their work, learn new technology, and engage in a life review.

ART CART: SAVING THE LEGACY jury-selected and matched 10 artists in NYC and 10 in Washington DC ranging in age from 62 to 89 with advanced students in the arts, health and aging to organize, label and document their work. Their records are then archived at Columbia University’s open source archive, Academic Commons, as “The Art Cart Collection.”

The artists are: (NYC) Zigi Ben-Haim, Terry Berkowitz, Amaranth Ehrenhalt, Harriet FeBland, Arlene Gottfried Barbara Hammer, Morton Kaish, Mary Miss, Marilyn Schwartz, and Adele Shtern; (DC) Alonzo Davis, Cheryl Edwards, Annette Fortt, Cianne Fragione, Barbara Frank, Pauline Jakobsberg, James Landry, E.J. Montgomery, Annette Polan, and Terry Svat.

Created by the Research Center for Arts and Culture as part of THE LEGACY PROJECT at The Actors Fund, the two-site nine-month project features artists whose media include film, video, mixed media, painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, printmaking, collage, watercolors, installation, conceptual art, and urban landscape art. They represent a living history of America – from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to the Civil Rights and the Women’s Movements. Culminating exhibitions will be held in both cities in fall 2016.

The project, ART CART: SAVING THE LEGACY, grew from research conducted by the Research Center for Arts and Culture. Above Ground revealed that artists are in many respects a model for society, maintaining strong social networks and an astonishing resilience as they age. Yet 61% of professional visual artists age 62+ have made no preparation for their work after their death; 95% have not archived their work; 97% have no estate plan; three out of every four artists have no will and one in five has no documentation of work at all. An additional resource for all artists to consider their wills and estate plans was developed this year with Columbia University’s Law School at www.elderartistslegalresource.org.

This celebration of the resilience and tenacity of people who have spent a lifetime making art is a testament to creative aging and learning through the lifespan.

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The Research Center for Arts and Culture at The Actors Fund, founded at Columbia University, provides data, information, and programming in service of artists and the arts. It has examined the condition and situation of living artists for almost three decades. www.artsandcultureresearch.org. The Actors Fund (AF) was founded in 1882 and is dedicated to providing programs and services for those who are in need, crisis or transition in the entertainment industry and the performing arts. www.actorsfund.org