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Translate Vascular Health Research Back to the Community Through an Interactive Art Project in Historic Northeast Kansas City

KANSAS CITY, MO (July 2, 2020) — Researchers, Kim Smolderen, PhD, FAHA (Project Lead, Yale University), Christina M. Pacheco, JD, MPH (Saint Luke's Mid America Heart Institute), and Janette Berkley-Patton, PhD (University of Missouri Kansas City), received funding through the Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Awards Program to create innovative ways to disseminate research findings back to communities. One of those innovative ways is through an interactive community-participatory art project located in the Paseo Gateway neighborhoods in Historic Northeast Kansas City, MO.

This art project will aid in giving back information from Dr. Smolderen's earlier work that was also funded by PCORI*. This earlier work studied patients' quality of life as they navigated care for a new diagnosis of peripheral artery disease (commonly known as PAD). Patients from the Kansas City area and across the U.S. took part in that study. This new project focuses directly on community involvement and informing members of the community about PAD and its risk factors.

Saint Luke's Hospital has partnered with Mattie Rhodes Art Gallery to engage local artists to work collaboratively to create a unique, community interactive multi-faceted art installation. Earlier this year, Mattie Rhodes issued a competitive call to artists. After careful consideration, four community artists were selected to collaborate on this art endeavor. The four artists are: Carmen Moreno, Jason Wilcox, Isaac Tapia, and Rodrigo Alvarez. The themes for this art installation will be generated from community members in Northeast Kansas City, MO. Residents are being asked to share their "Movement Stories", and these narratives will be used to inspire the artists' work. These stories will describe how physical activity, its barriers and facilitators, have impacted residents over the course of their lives.

Movement and physical activity are integral to preventing, diagnosing, and treating PAD. "PAD affects over 8.5 million Americans. It narrows the arteries of the legs, can cause pain while walking, and is associated with a higher risk of cardiovascular disease," Dr. Smolderen explains. Previously, the project leaders held town halls in the community that helped prioritize topics that the community felt were important to them. Exercise in the community was one of them, against a backdrop of navigating other competing challenges, mental health concerns, recognizing heart disease, and access to affordable medications.

The artists are gathering movement stories and then will enter a planning and drafting phase. In the era of COVID-19, Mattie Rhodes, the artists, and researchers are brainstorming how to

maximize community participation in the art making process while keeping everyone safe. To learn more about the project and its progress, visit <https://showme-pad.org/blog/>.

Learn More About the Artists

Carmen Moreno

As the daughter of an immigrant farm worker, Carmen Moreno is inspired by the natural world, science, and art. The early years of her life were spent in the open Midwest fields where she learned about the world through nature and solitude. It was during these times that she studied natural movement – lines, flow and migrations.

Carmen is a visual artist, poet, performer, and ecological designer. She received her BFA in 2010 from the Kansas City Art Institute in Interdisciplinary Art and Creative Writing with a certification in Community Arts and Service Learning. She currently works as an independent artist in Kansas City and her work is driven by her interests in science, art, ecological theory, and Latinx Futurism. She is also a community gardener and arts educator, and she works with refugees and immigrant populations throughout the Historic Northeast Kansas City. She was recently accepted to the Rhode Island School of Design, where she will be working towards her Master's in Nature, Culture, and Sustainability. You can follow her work on Instagram at @carmenchristinamoreno or learn more about her work at her website: <http://www.ccmoreno.com/>.



Jason Wilcox



A Kansas City native, Jason Wilcox has always been a passionate about art. From an early age, art was a strong influence in his life. His artistic mission is to entice viewers to escape reality and live an alternate life within his paintings. J Art Pro is born out of Jason's creative mind, and influenced by a collaboration of painting, graphic design, video production, and music. Jason attended Paseo Academy of Fine and Performing Arts in Kansas City, Missouri where he was awarded Best Visual Artist of his Senior class of 2000. His current media include acrylic, gold, silver, copper and green leaf, ink, paint marker, oil pastel, spray paint and watercolor. Jason's work shows a contemporary outlook on realism, abstract, and pop art styles. You can follow his work on Instagram at @jasonjartpro or learn more about his work on his website: www.jartpro.com.

Isaac Tapia

A Kansas City, MO based muralist and painter, Isaac Tapia's work is a visual tribute to the many stories of struggle and triumph within his community. Using a blend of classical techniques and bright, fluid imagery, he exalts the narratives of individuals that have been erased throughout history. Through his art, Isaac strives to honor the least visible members of society and carve out a space for their stories in the world of fine art. Isaac's diverse body of art is united by themes of representation and dialogue, reminding his audience that a voice is a voice; even when it isn't speaking English.



Isaac was born in Mexico and moved to the U.S. when he was 9. As he was learning English, art became his tool for mediating the confusion and isolation he felt. Isaac attended the Paseo Academy of Fine and Performing Arts. Isaac went on to attend the Kansas City Art Institute, where he studied painting. In 2019, he attended the Illustration Academy by the National Endowment for the Arts and Interurban Arthouse. Isaac is also a Youth Development Specialist for the Mattie Rhodes Center. You can follow his work on Instagram at @tapia.isaac.

Rodrigo Alvarez



Born in Uruguay in 1988, Rodrigo Alvarez lived most of his life in the state of Colonia until he moved to Kansas City, MO on October 29, 2002. He graduated from the Paseo Academy of Fine and Performing Arts in 2007. He continued his studies at the Metropolitan Community College where he studied graphic design. His education furthered his interest in the field of art. Also known as “Rico”, Rodrigo centers his work on organic natural figures and takes those concepts to create three-dimensional metal sculptures. His work showcases the persistence and relentless nature of mother earth; bending, melting, and bracing commonly used metals into harmonic organisms that portray the resiliency and power of nature. You can follow his work on Instagram at @alvarezrodrigo4.

IT-RA

Together, Isaac and Rico make up the muralist duo “IT-RA”. IT-RA has completed over 36 murals in the Kansas City Metropolitan area since their founding in 2017. Notable works include the “Troost Angel,” in the Troost corridor, Café Corazón’s “Frida” and the Olathe Library’s “Sunflowers.” You can follow their work on Instagram at @itandrigo, FaceBook @Rico and It, or learn more about their work on their website: <https://ricoandit.wixsite.com/website>



PCORI

[PCORI](https://www.pcori.org) is an independent, nonprofit organization authorized by Congress in 2010 to fund comparative effectiveness research that will provide patients, their caregivers, and clinicians with the evidence needed to make better-informed health and healthcare decisions. PCORI is committed to seeking input from a broad range of stakeholders to guide its work.

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For more info on Dr. Smolderen’s research:

<https://www.pcori.org/research-results/2019/promoting-easy-step-program-take-charge-vascular-health-greater-kansas-city>

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<https://showme-pad.org>

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