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All Different Colors

June 12, 2014 – August 30, 2014

All Different Colors is the title of a drawing by Jenny Cox featured in Fleisher/Ollman's Summer 2014 exhibition, and also a metaphor for the polychromatic vitality and diversity of artistic practices evident in the show. The exhibition features nineteen artists from three Delaware Valley studios that foster the creativity of people with developmental disabilities and behavioral health disorders. The art centers—The Center for Creative Works, Wynnewood; The Creative Vision Factory, Wilmington; and Oasis, Philadelphia—while specific in their missions, all share the common goal of nurturing the creative potential of the artists they serve through the guidance of professional artists/studio workers, and the integration into the local community through exhibitions, workshops, and employment opportunities.

The art centers participating in *All Different Colors* are obliquely indebted to the art and disabilities movement of the 1970s, in particular the visionary leadership of two San Franciscans, Florence Ludins-Katz and Elias Katz, who initiated an innovative approach for supporting artists with developmental disabilities. The Katzs emphasized a group studio environment, professionalism, and engagement with the broader art community, including placing studio artists' work in private and public collections. The three Bay Area centers that the Katzs founded in the early 1970s through early 1980s, Creative Growth, Creativity Explored, and the National Institute of Arts and Disabilities, serve as foundational benchmarks for the Delaware Valley art centers whose artists are featured in *All Different Colors*, and all such centers nationwide.

The community-spirited environment offered by the art centers participating in the Fleisher/Ollman exhibition is the antithesis of that envisioned by the art critic Roger Cardinal, who, in 1972, coined the term "outsider art" to identify the work of artists who had no contact with the art world and who were physically or mentally isolated. While the artists showcased in *All Different Colors* share these traits to differing degrees, the art centers provide an environment for working alongside one another, discussing art with their instructors, and engaging with the world around them. Their work touches on popular culture, life experiences, friends and family, and the figures they look up to or denounce. Guidance and environment notwithstanding, the artists featured here adopt aesthetic strategies each his or her own, just as mainstream contemporary artists freely roam the highly personal realms of idiosyncratic free expression.

Art centers and artists included in *All Different Colors*:

The Center for Creative Works

Jenny Cox
Brandon Spicer-Crawley
Cindy Gosselin
Paige Donovan
Tara Johnson
Helene Milestone
Tim Quinn
Carl Trunk

The Creative Vision Factory

Carl Bailey
Geraldo Gonzalez

Knicoma Frederick
William Slowik

Oasis

James Jameir Andrews
"Queen" Nancy Bell
Dwayne Boone
Alonzo Troy Humphrey
Sasha Price
Samuel Abu Sesay
Arthur Eric Stewart