

For immediate release

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Wells&Barnes: *Seats of Power*
April 21 – June 18, 2016

Reston, VA: The Greater Reston Arts Center (GRACE) is pleased to present Wells&Barnes: *Seats of Power*, a collaborative exhibition featuring artists Gayle Wells Mandle and her daughter, Julia Barnes Mandle. Gayle and Julia use the motif of chairs as a vehicle to examine society's eternal power struggle. Inspired by events in the Middle East and the United States, this exhibition explores political and economic inequality through a variety of media, including large-format photography, painting, sculpture, installation, and embroidery. This exhibition features individual works by Julia and Gayle, as well as collaborative work produced under the name Wells&Barnes, referencing the artists' middle names. *Seats of Power* will be on display April 21—June 18, 2016, at the Center, located at the Reston Town Center.

Julia Mandle currently resides in the Netherlands and has worked as a conceptual visual artist with a socially-related art practice for over a decade. Her work is inspired by current events and its impact on individuals, a direction furthered by living in New York during the 2001 September 11th attacks. Julia works in a variety of media, from charcoal to sugar; performance to embroidery; and photography to installation. She recently received support from the prestigious Mondriaan Fund.

Gayle Wells Mandle is based in Massachusetts. Her work explores human rights issues and world events that affect our well-being, specifically the environment and the safety of our water supply. Gayle's works are large-scale mixed media paintings on canvas, but she also works in a variety of other media, including sculpture and photography.

Together, the artists explore power struggles through the motif of chairs, ranging from the plainest stool to the most ornate throne. In the massive installation titled *Study for a Monument*, dozens of charred and distressed ordinary chairs are piled upon one side of a seesaw, an object that embodies the challenging struggle for equilibrium. The artists have referred to these chairs

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as “portraits of revolutionaries,” symbolizing the lives sacrificed in the global fight against inequality. Surrounding the installation are additional chairs depicted in photographs, embroidered onto canvas, conjured in paint and charcoal, and cast in the round as “trophies.” Ranging from ornate thrones signifying the powerful elite, to scruffy mundane folding chairs for the less privileged, the chairs retain a ghostly memory of their occupiers.

Opening reception: Friday, April 22, 6-8pm

Image credits:

Wells&Barnes, *Portrait of a Revolutionary One*, 2012, photograph, 21” x 14”

Wells&Barnes, *Portrait of a Revolutionary Four*, 2012, photograph, 21” x 14”

Gayle Wells Mandle, *Stacking the Odds*, 2012, multimedia acrylic painting on canvas, 60” x 48”

Julia Mandle, *Rising and Falling*, 2012, embroidery on canvas, 39” x 18”

Wells&Barnes, *Group Portrait Three*, 2012, photograph, 84” x 44”

Wells&Barnes, *Study for a Monument*, 2012, wood, steel, cloth and paint, variable dimensions

The Greater Reston Arts Center is dedicated to enriching community life by promoting involvement and excellence in the contemporary visual arts. Its gallery showcases exceptional emerging and established artists from the mid-Atlantic region and beyond; its GRACE Art program delivers art enrichment experiences in over 40 schools regionally, impacting over 20,000 students; and its annual Northern Virginia Fine Arts Festival is among the top such events in the country. The Greater Reston Arts Center is always free and open to the public.

For more information please contact Holly McCullough at hmccullough@restonarts.org or (703) 471-9242.

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For more information please visit www.restonarts.org

Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 11am – 5pm

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Seats of Power is sponsored in part by:



The Greater Reston Arts Center gratefully acknowledges the leadership of its Board of Directors and the support of its sponsors, members, and patrons. GRACE programs are supported in part by the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Arts Council of Fairfax County, and the Reston Community Center.

