

For Immediate Release

Two New York artists converse in clay, sand and heat; their glass and ceramic collaboration brings "healing light" to Kaiser Permanente's state-of-the-art DC medical center

(2011, Washington, DC) In January, leading nonprofit health plan and care provider Kaiser Permanente opened the doors to its new Capitol Hill Medical Center, in the Station Place complex adjacent to Union Station in Washington, DC. Gracing one of the main entrance lobbies is a large installation of an art piece in glass and ceramic by accomplished New York artists Barbara Galazzo and Janine Sopp, the third in a series of collaborations between the two that has been receiving national attention. The piece, entitled "Mandalas of Light" consists of almost 50 ceramic and glass circular mosaic "mandalas" (a contemporary take on ancient Hindu sacred circular design forms) from four to 16 inches in diameter dancing across the entire wall of the lobby. The interplay between the combined satin and gloss carved designs on ceramic circles by Sopp are given further light and power by the intense jewel-toned fused glass circles by Galazzo. Both elements, the work of master artisans that bring out the best in each medium, echo each other in color and motif and pattern, often overlapping in clusters as light shines through the glass discs pouring additional color onto the ceramic beneath. To further liberate the piece from the large curved wall it occupies, the artists have mounted each circle at various distances from the wall itself, some discs as far out as four inches from the surface, lending a true floating feeling to the entire piece, like so many champagne bubbles racing toward freedom. The piece, a main anchor in the collection of 130 original art works that grace the public spaces of the new medical center, supports Kaiser Permanente's "Total Health Environment" initiative in its utilization of "full spectrum color" as part of a healing methodology. In keeping with the idea that pure light contains all colors, the artists have used a full spectrum of rich colors throughout the work.

Jennifer Baldwin, Area Administrator for DC and Suburban Maryland for Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, says, "this initiative is about infusing total health into our members' experience, (to create) a place that nurtures the mind, body and spirit in sickness and in health. Full spectrum color embodies the use of many colors, from cool to warm tones, throughout all spaces. The Galazzo/Sopp art pieces are colorful and whimsical, and create visual and emotional relief and help to lighten the serious nature of health care, as well as helping members find their way to different departments and waiting areas."

Established, highly sought after and collected in their own right, Hudson Valley glass artist Barbara Galazzo and New York City ceramic artist Janine Sopp have each found a new way to extend the visual power and reach of their medium through this new collaboration, which has already seen installations exhibited at such renowned events as the Architectural Digest Home Show in New York City and the Taos Walking Glass Tour in New Mexico. Co-owners for years of a successful gallery in the now tony

Cobble Hill section of Brooklyn, New York, Galazzo and Sopp found themselves in deep conversation about the range and limits of their individual mediums on trips to several art and decorating industry events. Galazzo, a professional ballet dancer for years, had first begun creating art in clay through ceramics and pottery. She appreciated and enjoyed the earthiness, texture and carving possibilities, but was always looking for more powerful ways to capture color in the medium and after taking a class at a glass convention became possessed with the vibrancy of color that only glass can accomplish. Two decades later Galazzo's intricately patterned fused glass creations can be found in fine galleries nationwide and have become the "go to" art staple for many high-end home and hospitality decorators. Her signature color blocking patterns may beckon the viewer, but it is the delicate layering of translucent color upon translucent color, sometimes up to 10 layers deep, which bends and deepens the light that shines through, to intense hypnotic effect.

Sopp came to clay and ceramics from a rich background in fashion and textile design, which clearly shows in her carved patterns and repeated motifs literally dug out of her surfaces. Contrast is her hallmark: each work pushes and pulls against itself, between smooth and rough, dull and shiny, natural clay and bright glaze. Her patterns bring to mind both the ancient traditions of world pottery and the playful lines and shapes of modern masters like Paul Klee and Joan Miró. Like Galazzo, Sopp also tried glass work, but found that while she appreciated the techniques and the outcome, she missed the truly hands-on experience of digging and carving and pushing clay that glass simply cannot offer. Her eye for bright color, which she found best expressed in low fire techniques that allow for the most colorful end products, led her to take small pieces of actual colored glass and embed them in her clay surfaces, and the exciting dichotomy of the two materials proved the genesis for the collaboration with her long time friend and colleague.

With both clay and glass, working in larger sizes quickly becomes an issue, and as Sopp began to create larger works by grouping "tiles" or other smaller shapes together, Galazzo herself was exploring multiples as a way of creating more visual space at a larger scale and giving more presence to what is, for both of them, intensely close hand work to achieve the patterns and effects they sought after. And the end result has changed the work and understanding of each artist, both of their own and the other's medium. "I've learned that the bigger clay gets the more complications can ensue, but clay is more forgiving than glass which is more rigid," says Galazzo. "I've learned that I love the airiness and brilliant transparency of glass more than ever, but I also love that the glass can cast shadows of color onto Janine's pieces when installed on the wall, and how the textures in her ceramics bring out the design in mine even more than on their own." Sopp concurs, citing a deep love and new respect for glass while appreciating even more her own medium of clay and its particular strengths. "To form, sculpt, carve, converse, push, pull, poke, mark, channel, become one with;" says Sopp, "clay is the most responsive medium that could receive this kind of immediacy and spontaneity."

Their latest collaboration at the Kaiser Permanente Capitol Hill Medical Center demonstrates the power of these two sets of skills in conversation, and the way in

which their bubbly energy and rhythm has real life advantages in addition to being highly decorative. The medical center is housed in a LEED Silver certified building by Pritzker Award winning architect Kevin Roche, and offers 79 provider offices staffed by approximately 400 employees and physicians, boasting primary care, specialty care, full-service imaging, laboratory, pharmacy and 24/7 urgent care services. The center also utilizes alternative medicines such as acupuncture, relaxation exercises, meditation, guided imagery and nutrition services in addition to the traditional medical services offered. Their commitment to a total health environment also employs "full spectrum color" as part of a healing methodology. Since opening in January, Kaiser Permanente has received many positive reactions about the art in the medical center from staff, patients and visitors, who have requested the center produce an "Art Walk" brochure that viewers can use to tour the art and learn about the specific artists and pieces.

Galazzo and Sopp are continuing their collaborations in addition to their individual projects, and are currently in discussion with other public and private clients for further large scale projects like the one at the Kaiser Permanente Capitol Hill Medical Center. For more information about the artists or to commission a work, contact Barbara Galazzo at 845-265-3618 or via email at gGLASSsCERAMIC@gmail.com.