



**For immediate release: Creative Women's Symposium**

**Benicia-Vallejo American Association of University Women and Arts Benicia present:  
*Spheres of Influence, 8th Creative Women's Symposium***

When: March 11, 2017, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Where: Arts Benicia Gallery  
991 Tyler Street, Suite #114  
Benicia, CA, 94510

Contact: Mary Shaw, Exhibitions & Program Manager  
mary@artsbenicia.org  
707-747-0131

Schedule: 12:00 noon Arts Benicia Gallery opens for viewing of presenters' artwork  
1:00 pm Musical performance by Jazz Guerilla  
2:00 pm Panel Presentation

**Benicia, CA** - Although as a young girl she led a nomadic life due to her father's employment building bridges in rural parts of California, Pearl Jones Tranter discovered an entirely new world in high school art classes once her family finally settled in Vallejo. While the crayon drawings of a child gradually became the sketches of a young artist, it was the gift of a camera, a Rollei from her first husband, that shaped the way she preferred to look at the world and her future path as an artist. A career in art was not a given, however. While her parents admonished her from time to time to get a "real" job, Pearl was lucky to land her first photography show as a last minute replacement while working as a dishwasher for a restaurant in the basement of a museum. Looking back on her life as photographer, painter, and writer, Pearl represents one of four generations of women artists participating as exhibitors and panelists discussing ***Spheres of Influence***, who and what shaped and influenced them as artists. The four panelists will also talk about how they "pay it forward" to influence and advocate for the work of other artists. The program is a collaboration between the **Benicia-Vallejo American Association of University Women (AAUW)** and **Arts Benicia**. AAUW is a national organization that advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education and research.

Moderated by **Susan Street**, the four panelists include **Sarah Barsness**, visual artist and educator; **Genea S. Brice**, Poet Laureate of Vallejo; **Maria Stats**, performing artist; and **Pearl Jones Tranter**, visual artist. The event takes place March 11 in the Arts Benicia Gallery and will feature a pop-up art exhibit of visual, word, and performing art by the four panelists and a musical performance at 1 p.m. by Jazz Guerrilla. The panel presentation begins at 2 p.m. The program is free and open to the public.

**Susan Street**, of Benicia, is a graduate of Grinnell College. Painting since the 1960s, she has worked in real estate and interior design. She currently displays her oil paintings at Benicia Plein Air Gallery.

**Sarah Barsness**, born and raised in the American West, is a graduate of the San Francisco Art Institute and the Photographic Center Northwest in Seattle. Her photographs, installations

and mixed media pieces have been exhibited throughout the US, Greece, Mexico and Japan. Previously she taught in the School of Photography at the Academy of Art University; she currently heads the department of photography at Solano Community College.

Poet, author, public speaker, and teacher, **Genea S. Brice** was raised in Vallejo. She is a graduate of Patten University and the Sacramento Theological Seminary and Bible College. In addition to numerous literary publication credits, Genea has worked as a classroom teacher. Active in local poetry groups, in 2015, Genea was named the first Poet Laureate of the City of Vallejo.

**Maria Stats**, born and raised in Northern California, is a graduate of the Academy of Visual and Performing Arts and the California College of the Arts teaching institute. She is the founder and managing and artistic director of On The Fringe Visual and Performing Arts, and currently the lead teacher for the organization's youth programs. Maria has taught art and drama in Solano County for the last 10 years.

**Pearl Jones Tranter**, of Vallejo, is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, San Francisco State University, and the San Francisco Art Institute. A lifelong learner, she currently studies multi-media at Berkeley City College. She worked as a photography facility manager for the SF Art Institute and academic administrator for the College of Engineering at UC Berkeley. Her numerous photographic exhibits, often focused on regional subjects and the West, have been displayed throughout the Bay Area and California.

The pop-up artwork display for the event will be on exhibit from March 4 through 19. Arts Benicia Gallery hours are 12 – 5 pm, Wednesday through Sunday.

Arts Benicia is wheelchair accessible from Jackson Street.

**Arts Benicia** is a community-based non-profit organization that provides quality exhibitions in its gallery and at other venues in Benicia, engaging public programs, stimulating workshops for adults, and inspiring family and youth arts programs. For 30 years, Arts Benicia has been a vital part of the local and regional arts community, furthering and supporting artistic development, and enriching the larger community. For more information regarding this event: please call 707-747-0131, e-mail [info@artsbenicia.org](mailto:info@artsbenicia.org), or visit [www.artsbenicia.org](http://www.artsbenicia.org).

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