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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## Step Into a *Wonderland* of Five Regional Artists at Albany Center Gallery



*Albany, New York* - From **June 1 to July 13, 2018**,

Albany Center Gallery (ACG) will present *Wonderland* featuring the work of regional artists **Gabe Brown, Vanessa Mastronardi, Gina Occhiogrosso, Kelsey Renko, and Nicholas Warner**. An artists' reception will be held from **5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on 1st Friday, June 1, 2018**, and the public is invited to attend.

**Gabe Brown** uses watercolor, ink and pencil to create paintings that reflect her search for meaning in the unknown. Her process of painting is her “portal for adventure” and, inspired by elements of the natural world that often go unnoticed, “everyday events such as conversations between birds, forces that drive water, or the cellular structure of plant life,” she uses a visual vocabulary to “begin to reinvent reality.” She uses the idea that something seen in a new context alters the original meaning and creates metaphor to demonstrate that “the natural world is not unlike our own man-made realm, an alternate universe filled with an active power to recognize desire, temptation, and frailty.” Gabe Brown lives and works in the Hudson Valley, and is an Adjunct Professor in Painting and Drawing at Fordham University and SUNY New Paltz.

**Vanessa Mastronardi** is a sculpture artist whose “work infuses everyday artifacts with theatrical symbolism” to create installations that play with the balance of “uncanny harmonies between disparate objects.” The island installations in her series “New Patio Sets” are each a “sculptural collage of an immersive space which mirrors our own,” and their potential to be rearranged enables Vanessa to experiment with the relationships between elements and “tap into the peculiar exchanges that happen between different combinations of objects; responding to the way they interact.” She is a Canadian artist from Edmonton, Alberta is currently working in Albany, NY as a Candidate for the Master of Fine Arts Degree at the University at Albany.

**Gina Occhiogrosso** is an artist “exploring the intersection of illusion and reality,” who has recently combined collage with painting, as “collage allows for the disruption of form, line and space.” She uses line as her primary visual language, using “it to tie, weave, bind, connect or stitch to create tension, humor, support or pattern” and thus, shaping the content in her work through the link of metaphor and method. She lets chance and spontaneity play a role in her process and explains that she challenges her control by “setting myself up for some open-ended process, leaving just enough room for slippage and random occurrences or outcomes, a metaphor for life itself.” Occhiogrosso is a Troy-based artist who has been in numerous group and solo exhibitions, and since 2006, has been an Associate Professor of Art in Painting and Drawing, and Foundations Coordinator, at The College of Saint Rose, Albany, NY.

**Kelsey Renko** makes paintings that are “memories of everyday moments.” She conveys the essence of a human shape “posing, scratching, jumping, reaching or hanging,” portrayed with immediacy using imperfect lines and messy patterns. Her playful use of neon and pastel colors further abstract the subject, and as a result “a shape may feel recognizable but the color palette pushes the work further into abstraction making the viewer question the reference.” Renko is an artist living and working in upstate New York, received her BFA in Painting from The College of Saint Rose in 2015, and was one of the founders of The Church, an artist collective based out of an old church in Troy.

**Nicholas Warner** is a painter who considers his work “color drawings” due to his use of watercolor and his studies of a calligraphic approach to brushwork under Chinese master James Kuo. His work is rooted in landscape, leaning toward abstraction, with figures and profiles recently making appearances. He embraces the spontaneity of watercolor and allows the colors to mix in a “stream of consciousness” while working through a wet drawing. Warner received his BFA from Daemon College in 1980 and his MFA from SUNY Albany, and currently lives in Porter Corner, NY.

*Wonderland* will be on display at Albany Center Gallery from Friday, June 1 to Friday, July 13, and will feature the work of five regional artists: Gabe Brown, Vanessa Mastronardi, Gina Occhiogrosso, Kelsey Renko, and Nicholas Warner. The exhibit will kick off with an Opening Reception on 1st Friday, June 1 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. The reception and exhibit are free and open to the public. The exhibit is sponsored by Carlsbury Gonzalez & Patricia Triller; Park Albany, New York State Council on the Arts, and The Albany Wine and Dine for the Arts Festival.

#### **About ACG**

Albany Center Gallery is a non-profit art space dedicated to exhibiting skillful contemporary art of the Mohawk Hudson region and to building a strong, knowledgeable audience for the visual arts. The mission of Albany Center Gallery is to promote and exhibit contemporary visual art produced by emerging and established artists living primarily in the region and to inspire interest and provide enjoyment to an increasingly diverse audience.

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