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*****For Immediate Release*****

JCTC-KIDS Workshops: Art, Creativity & Life Lessons

Jersey City Theater Center (JCTC) is expanding its programming by instilling art appreciation and creativity in young people. JCTC has always embraced multiple arts disciplines in its community-oriented mission, and the latest project from JCTC-KIDS, the children's theater and arts division of JCTC, is JCTC-KIDS Workshops –innovative, interactive and affordable classes in the arts, specifically designed for children 6 -to-12.

JCTC-KIDS Workshop Visual Arts Class is the first JCTC-KIDS Workshop, held 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM at Merseles Studios, 339 Newark Avenue. Workshops in theater, writing and other arts to be announced. JCTC-KIDS Workshop Visual Arts Class is taught by Gabriel Pacheco, a Jersey City-based artist and arts educator.

In its authentic marionette theater at Merseles Studios, JCTC-KIDS has presented two successful productions, Cinderella and Pinocchio by Puppetworks, and will open a double-show, Emperors' New Clothes/Snow Queen in August. Building on the following Puppetworks has gained in Jersey City – and filling a need families have expressed about the lack of educational activities for their children – JCTC developed the JCTC-KIDS Workshop program.

“We’ve always planned to expand JCTC-KIDS with educational programs,” said Olga Levina, Artistic Director. “Gabriel Pacheco is a talented artist and certified arts teacher. He has long been dedicated to making the arts available to every child in Jersey City, regardless of background or income, which is a goal JCTC shares. We are very excited that Gabriel is bringing his expertise as an artist and teacher to our new JCTC-KIDS programming.”

JCTC-KIDS Workshops are held at the newly upgraded Merseles Studios, a warm and comfortable space that features an Art Gallery, 11 Resident Artist Studios, and Black Box Theater. The classes are an ideal introduction to visual arts, encouraging creativity, self-expression and art appreciation. The mediums taught include: acrylics, sketch, pastels, water-colors, mixed-medium and found art. Students have the opportunity to interact with resident artists, tour their studios and be part of a special gallery exhibition at Merseles Studios that will showcase the work students produce through the JCTC-Kids Workshop program

“JCTC is committed to growing the art as a positive influence in our community,” said Levina. “Not only do our workshop students improve their artistic skills, but children learn about the process of creativity by meeting and working with professional artists.”

For Pacheco, who was also an instructor and curator at the Distillery Gallery in Jersey City, JCTC-Kids Workshop Visual Arts Class, held in a creative art environment with direct access to a gallery, studios,



artists and their work, is a unique opportunity for the children of Hudson County to have an ongoing, one-of-a-kind educational experience.

“The art gallery is a learning tool,” said Pacheco. In addition to experiencing a professional art gallery, classroom activities that utilize the gallery include students producing a study of a gallery painting, providing a hands-on situation, where students learn technique and style. Pacheco also arranges with artists to sit-in on classes – especially the Resident Artists at Merseles Studios – and discuss art and creativity with the kids.

“At most galleries, the artists show their work but they’re only at the gallery during the opening,” said Pacheco. “At Merseles, the artists are working in their studios and they love talking to kids. When the kids can see the work and talk to the artist about the work in front of them, it is a very-well rounded educational experience.”

JCTC-KIDS Workshops hone emerging skills and nurture creativity, but they are also designed to inspire self-esteem and personal growth in young people. “The classes teach life lessons,” said Pacheco. “The kids learn how to explore ideas and reach goals. Every class ends with a critique by all the students, when we as a group discuss what was accomplished, how well our ideas were expressed and what we learned from the work we did for that class.”

Pacheco holds an MA in Arts and Arts Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, B.F.A. in Visual Arts from Purchase College, State University of New York. His nearly 20 years experience as an Art Teacher has included positions with RUSH Arts, Transfiguration School, St. Jude School, St. Joseph’s Yorkville, East Village Community School – P.S. 315, Charles Dorsey School, P.S. 67, Choir Academy of Harlem, Weeksville Heritage Center and Caribbean Cultural Center in New York. Pacheco specializes in mixed medium painting and sculpture, and his work has appeared in group shows at galleries and museums internationally.

Pacheco, whose often difficult childhood included time spent in the foster care system, knew he was an artist at an early age. He began his professional career when the art-world was finally recognizing the importance of artists like Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat, who were dissolving arbitrary divisions between fine art and street art. This optimistic, inventive, and energetic attitude towards self-expression Pacheco is committed to keeping alive at JCTC-KIDS Workshops Visual Arts Class. “I would make art with whatever I had available,” said Pacheco. “I like turning excuses into opportunities for creativity. The more children create, the more they grow as individuals.”

JCTC-KIDS Workshop

Visual Art Class

Saturdays: 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM.

**Merseles Studios,
339 Newark Avenue
(201) 795-5386**

Tuition Per Student

Online advance tuition - \$20

Purchased at the door - \$25



(Financial aid available for qualified students. Package rates available for groups and/or multiple classes)

Tuition includes all art materials. A short-break period is part of the two-hour class. Beverages and a light snack are provided to students, included in the fee.

To purchase tickets and for more information, please visit: Jctcenter.org

In related new programing, JCTC has added Figure Drawing (for adults) at Merseles Studios, also led by Gabriel Pacheco, held Thursday evenings at Merseles Studios.

Figure Drawing

Thursdays: 7:30 PM – 9:30 PM

***Merseles Studios,
339 Newark Avenue
\$17 per class***

Photo Caption

JCTC-KIDS Workshop Visual Arts Class is the first JCTC-KIDS Workshop, held 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM at Merseles Studios, 339 Newark Avenue.

Additional photographs are available. To arrange an interview with Gabriel Pacheco and Olga Levina, a tour of Merseles Studios or to visit a workshop, please contact: Timothy Herrick (201) 736-1884.

Jersey City Theater Center, Inc. (JCTC) manages Merseles Studio and the adjacent White Eagle Hall, currently under construction. JCTC is a nonprofit, 501c3 arts organization committed to presenting innovative and progressive performing & visual arts as well as educational arts programs that embrace the multicultural identity and preserves the rich history of Jersey City, bringing its community closer together and enhancing its quality of life. > jctcenter.org