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Colorful installation transforms courtyard at SCVMC Women & Children's Center

*Montalvo Arts Center alum Leah Rosenberg debuts color-inspired "Like a Multivitamin"
at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center thanks to National Endowment of Arts grant*

SAN JOSE - The outdoor courtyard on the 3rd floor of the Women & Children's Center at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center is a special place. Situated between Labor & Delivery and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, it's a natural gathering spot for families celebrating the birth of a child. It's also a space for staff to take a break from their busy day or get some sunshine without leaving the building.

First opened in 1998, its' glass, concrete and metallic look was beginning to show its age – and did not fit with the building's new identity as a Women & Children's Center. Revamping the space was a priority for hospital planners.

Thanks to the work of San Francisco-based artist Leah Rosenberg, in collaboration with SV Creates and the Montalvo Arts Center in Saratoga, a process to beautify the courtyard was initiated in 2018. Funded by a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts, "Like a Multivitamin" was completed in early October. Using vinyl film in 30 colors and short, haiku-based messages, Rosenberg has brought dramatic transformation to the space.

[Click here to see the space and meet the artist.](#)

The incorporation of haiku, much like color, offers a sense of a specific moment in time – a special event, a change of season – something that encourages one to pause, take notice, to come to attention. The courtyard, now full of color, provides an opportunity to share a moment or experience of awareness by including colors that produce emotions in us; helping to lift the burden and stresses of the daily experience, whether visiting just once or returning every day

The colors were not picked at random, as the "multivitamin" name suggests. The various palettes speak to the range of emotions that visitors may experience while there; from celebration to sorrow. As a multivitamin provides various sources of nourishment, each color can respond to different emotions. The installation is designed such that each moment of the day, each season creates its own dynamic visuals. That combined with the alchemy of light, shadow, color and reflection ensures the space is not only enchanting but also continuously evolving.

“It was important to me that the installation could be experienced from various vantage points,” said Rosenberg. “Walking around it, sitting in its glow, meditating on one, and then another, taking them all in at once; gazing down from above or looking up from below.”

Completion of this installation could not have come at a more opportune time, when hospital staff are under unprecedented pressure and stress due to the physical and psychological demands of serving at the frontline of the Covid-19 pandemic. Rosenberg’s color-filled inner courtyard, provides a space of sanctuary; one that fosters mindfulness, rest and resilience for caregivers and patients alike.

The project is the result of a collaboration with SV Creates, the Montalvo Arts Center – where Rosenberg was a participant in their highly regarded artist residency program, and the Valley Medical Center Foundation.

“SV Creates believes in the healing power of the arts and the transformative qualities of color,” said SV Creates CEO Connie Martinez. “Leah’s installation is inspiring and will bring joy and healing to patients, visitors and SCVMC staff for years to come. This installation could not have happened without the collaborative leadership of SCVMC, VMC Foundation and Montalvo Arts Center. And we are so excited to have been part of it.”

Angela McConnell, Montalvo Arts Center Executive Director said, “We are thrilled to be a part of such a successful and inspiring partnership, and a model for future collaborations, that engages artists to create spaces that ignite curiosity and lift the spirit.”

“I haven’t stopped smiling since I’ve seen the completed project,” said VMC Foundation Executive Director Chris Wilder. “Anything that brings joy and comfort to visitors and staff is important, especially during this time when any visit to a hospital building comes with a bit of extra stress.”

“Like a Multivitamin” is part of a larger effort to transform public and family areas in the Susan B. Wilson Women & Children’s Center into a vibrant and welcoming space for children and families. In partnership with SV Creates, additional art exhibits and interactive installations are planned as the building undergoes major renovations.

To see video images of the courtyard and an interview with the artist, visit <https://youtu.be/SR4tnNJeJx4>

For more information visit www.imaginevmc.org.