

For Immediate Release:

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THINGS

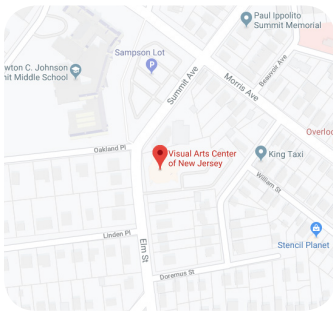
EXHIBITION BY ELISABETH SMOLARZ

OPENING RECEPTION: SATURDAY, FEB. 29TH 2020 2^{PM} - 4^{PM}



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THE VISUAL ARTS CENTER OF NEW JERSEY

is located at 68 Elm St, Summit, New Jersey, 07901

www.artcenternj.org

Visual Arts Center of New Jersey

Exhibition: 2/29 – 6/7/20

Opening Reception:
Saturday Feb. 29th, 2020
2pm - 4pm

Guttenberg Arts in conjunction with the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey and the Town of Guttenberg is pleased to present the first of several exhibitions featuring work created by artist **Elisabeth Smolarz**. The exhibition titled *The Encyclopedia of Things*, spotlights the community based photographic "Our Town" project funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. The exhibition will be on view February 29th - June 7th, 2020 at the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey, located at 68 Elm St. Summit, NJ. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, February 29th from 2pm – 4pm, open and free to the public.

Since 2017, The Encyclopedia of Things provide the Town of Guttenberg's populous and diverse community with it's own unique "self-portrait". **Elisabeth Smolarz** utilized objects as portals to memory by collaborating with individuals to create shrine like installations of their own precious objects thus creating a distinct self-portrait. The installation of their irreplaceable objects which embody their sense of self-hood and identity, tells the story of each individual, and forms a series of intricate non-concrete portraits following the tradition of symbolism of early still-life paintings. This project has offered resident participants the chance to take part (free of charge) in this intimate portrait of the diverse and populous community of Guttenberg, New Jersey.

Smolarz explains, "For the ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THINGS photography series I collaborate with individuals in their home environments. Each participant selects personal objects as portals to memory that are both precious and meaningful, they are then arranged for the camera in a temporary installation. The installations of the participants' most treasured objects embody their sense of self-hood and identity, and tell the story of each individual. Since starting this long term project in 2014 I collaborated with individuals in North America, Europe, the Middle East and most recently in East Asia. The final result is series of intricate non-concrete portraits consisting of a prevalent vocabulary made out of ubiquitous objects that echo the universality of the human condition."

Guttenberg Arts programming is made possible by a grant from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a division of the Department of State, and administered by the Hudson County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, Thomas a. Degise, Hudson County Executive & the Hudson County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

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