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“AMERICAN MADE” ART SHOW OPENS SUNDAY WITH LOCAL STORIES

Lansing, MI (Nov. 5, 2010) – “American Made: Stories from UAW Local 602” comes to Otherwise Gallery in Old Town (1210 Turner St.) November 7-30, starting with an opening reception Sunday, November 7, 1-5pm, during First Sunday Gallery Walk. After the opening reception, the gallery will be open 9am-5pm Monday through Friday or by appointment (call 517-371-4600).

American Made: Stories from UAW Local 602 is the product of a collaborative project between students enrolled in the RCAH creative workshop on “The Power of Photography” and members of the United Auto Workers Local 602 in Spring 2010, brought to Otherwise in a collaboration with the Michigan Institute for Contemporary Art.

“When we went to the UAW meeting, I really felt a sense of why US factories and companies are so vital to the Michigan economy,” said artist Ellina Stein. “Thousands of people have grown up with someone in their family working for a company such as GM and many have followed in their footsteps and now have been working there for 30 years.”

“They have a passion for what they do. They have a passion to keep jobs in the US and to improve Michigan’s economy. Our project was to project their voice to other mediums they might not have access to. We wanted to express their stories of working for GM and what their life has been like. Not many, especially students, know what it is like for these workers.”

The project was inspired by the work of Dorothea Lange and other photographers employed by the Farm Security Administration of the U.S. government, who used the camera to educate the populace about the plight of rural farmers during the Great Depression of the 1930s, and the desire to learn more about how the recent economic recession and restructuring of General Motors has impacted the lives of auto workers in our community.

Each student met with a volunteer from the Local 602 who was interested in sharing his/her story and presenting a different perspective to that provided by national media. These are the stories told in this exhibition – in the form of image and text that have been transcribed from oral interviews or in animated presentations.

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The Residential College in the Arts and Humanities (RCAH) at Michigan State University is a unique undergraduate degree program for students interested in literature, history, ethics, the visual and performing arts, and the study of languages and cultures. See rcah.msu.edu for more information.

The Michigan Institute for Contemporary Art (MICA) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to quality arts programming, the preservation of historic buildings and economic development. See www.oldtownarts.org or call 517-371-4600 for more information.

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