

## **Exciting New Project Engages the Allentown Community**

Allentown, PA –

The Allentown Art Museum is pleased to announce “Rise Together Allentown”, a collaborative site-specific and community based sculptural project with artist Charlie Brouwer. This project will engage the greater Allentown community by asking them to lend their ladders to make a large-scale, temporary installation to be built in the Arts Park, located at Fifth and Linden Streets in Allentown, across from the art museum.

Everyone (individuals, families, businesses, schools, churches, organizations) will be invited to participate. Brouwer hopes to borrow many ordinary real ladders of all sizes, but stepstools, toy ladders, and creative ladders made of any material in any size will also be welcome. Lenders may personalize, or decorate their ladders and they may lend them in the name of someone or something they wish to memorialize. In the artist’s words, “Each ladder represents the hopes and dreams of a part of the community, but when they are all connected, supporting and being supported by each other, they will be able to rise together to create a metaphor for community”.

Each ladder will be recorded and tagged, and its lender will be added to the “List of Ladder Lenders” on the project website – [www.risetogetherallentown.org](http://www.risetogetherallentown.org), and on a sign in the Arts Park. All ladders will be returned after the month-long exhibition, but if owners do not want theirs returned, they will be donated to Habitat for Humanity of the Lehigh Valley for resale.

The project’s goal is to include hundreds of ladders from as many people and parts of the greater Allentown community as possible so the metaphor of a true community rising together will be complete. The artist regards the entire project - from informing and engaging the public, to borrowing ladders, to building the sculpture in September and returning the ladders in early October - to be the artwork. “The beauty”, he says, “will be in the participation, cooperation, and community togetherness.

The Allentown Art Museum will begin collecting ladders starting September 2nd and construction of the sculpture will begin the following week. A celebration will be held when the last ladder is added on September 13th. Visitors will be able to walk into and around the installation, read the names of lenders on the tags, and find their own ladder within the sculpture.

Ladders can be dropped off in the designated area in the Allentown Art Museum visitor parking lot, located behind the building on the corner of Penn and Linden Streets. Drop off times are weekdays 9am-5pm, 11am-4pm Saturday, and 12-4pm on Sunday, or you can call (540) 250-2966 and arrange for pickup within a 10-mile radius. All ladders will be returned the week of October 13th following the culmination of the project. If you have questions or would like to get involved with the project, please contact the Allentown Art Museum at (610) 432-4333 ext. 127 or email [RiseTogether2014@gmail.com](mailto:RiseTogether2014@gmail.com).

Visiting artist Charlie Brouwer earned his MA in painting and MFA in sculpture from Western Michigan University. He was a professor of art from 1987-2008 at Radford University in Virginia. Since retiring from teaching, Charlie has dedicated himself to creating and exhibiting his own artwork. He has completed similar ladder installations in communities around the country including Atlanta, St. Louis, Roanoke, and Wilmington, NC. Information and images of all his projects can be seen at [www.risetogether.info](http://www.risetogether.info)

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