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**Artist Derek Hess announces the return of Acting Out! Fest, a 4-day
Arts for Mental Health and Addiction Awareness Festival.**

*Free series of comedy, talk, film, art and music events
in Gordon Square Arts District, September 13th - 16th*

Acting Out! Fest, the four-day arts festival for mental health and addiction awareness returns to Cleveland with an expanded lineup of free stand-up comedy, talk, film, music and art events happening in the Gordon Square neighborhood, September 13 – 16, 2017.

Participants include nationally known and local experts, comedians, artists, and musicians, and advocates, all putting the spotlight on mental health and addiction issues.

All events are free and open to the public. Acting Out! Fest consists of more than 15 events over four days, with highlights including:

- Free waterfront afternoon concert with nationally renown artist **Andrew W.K.** at Whiskey Island;
- Special screening of the documentary, "**Mind/Game: The Unquiet Journey of Chamique Holdsclaw,**" followed by a talk with former WNBA player, **Chamique Holdsclaw** and **Dr. Sam Manier** (*Professional sports psychologist*);
- Stand-up comedy showcase with headliner, **Aparna Nancherla** (*Late Night with Seth Meyers, Inside Amy Schumer, Jude Apatow's "Love", and more*) and local comedy favorites;
- Heroin Storytelling: My First Time, featuring former heroin users in recovery, sharing their personal stories and a roundtable discussion with **Dr. Joan Papp & Judge Joan Synenberg**;
- Special presentation by **Dr. Joseph Calabrese** (with artist **Derek Hess**) detailing the connection between Vincent Van Gogh's psychiatric symptoms and artistic productivity;
- Recognized keynote speaker, author, Buddhist teacher, and counselor, **Noah Levine** will deliver a talk on spirituality and recovery, followed by guided group meditation;
- Musician **Monique Powell** (front-woman, of the band, Save Ferris), along with local musicians and recovery professionals will discuss the difficulties artists face while in recovery;
- Panel discussions on mental health and addiction topics including mental health stigmas in the African American community, Mental Health First Aid, After Treatment, and more;

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- Art exhibition with works from 30+ artists from across the country who have been diagnosed with or have been affected by mental illness or addiction;
- Mac's Back-Books Pop Up Mental Health & Addiction Book Shop and Provider Festival Village

Mental health and addiction professionals involved in festival events include:

Dr. Joseph Calabrese (University Hospitals), **Dr. Joan Papp** (MetroHealth), **Judge Joan Synenberg** (Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas), **Dr. Jason Joyce** (Recovery Resources), **Dr. Sam Maniar** (Center for Peak Performance), **Joseph Penola**, (The You Rock Foundation), **Dr. Julius Bailey** (Author & Wittenberg University Professor) and more to be announced.

Other artists include Angelo Merendino, David Smeltz, Archie Green, Lawrence Daniel Caswell, Dana Norris, and more to be announced. Live music and after parties featuring local talent happening at the Happy Dog (West) throughout the event series.

The events are free but tickets are required for entry to most events. A full schedule with times, complete descriptions and ticket information can be found at www.actingoutcle.com

About Acting Out! Fest / Mission Statement

Acting Out! Fest is the brainchild of artist Derek Hess and his long-time business agent, Martin Geramita, along with Cleveland marketing / events guru, Angie Hetrick. Breaking down the stigmas that surround mental illness and addiction is a matter that's especially important to Hess, whose struggles with bipolar disorder and substance abuse are not only well known, they're integral subjects to his emotionally charged artwork.

Our core arts programming includes collaboration with local experts and nationally known celebrity mental health and addiction advocates, sharing their stories to help us deliver our message to a larger audience.

After Acting Out! 2016 we realized the greater need to connect the public and those in need with mental health and addiction resources. We strive to achieve this goal through programming partnerships with leading mental health and addiction organizations. Acting Out! 2017 is presented with generous support from The Centers for Families and Children, The Woodruff Foundation, Cleveland Clinic, Recovery Resources, Signature Health / Connections, Ohio Guidestone, Jakprints, and Gordon Square Arts District.

About Derek Hess

Artist Derek Hess's work has been recognized in both the music and art world for more than 20 years. Hess began creating promo flyers for live rock shows in Cleveland, OH in the 1980s. These flyers soon gained the attention of a multitude of national and local bands and are part of the permanent collections of the Grammy Museum, The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and the Louvre in Paris. In addition to countless album covers and gallery shows all over the world, he has been featured on TLC, MTV, Fuse, VH1, Alternative Press, Newsweek and Juxtapoz to name a few. The award-winning documentary 'Forced Perspective' chronicling his art, life and struggles with dual diagnosis was recently released.