

ON EXHIBIT

'Breathing Lights' focus on Schenectady

BY KAREN BJORNLAND
Gazette Reporter

For three weeks, "Breathing Lights" has illuminated hundreds of vacant houses in the Capital Region.

And this weekend, Schenectady will step into the spotlight with free "Breathing Lights" events.

You can go on a guided tour of the public art project, hear the stories of people who have weathered the housing crisis and join a conversation about an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would guarantee adequate housing.

The storytelling and conversation happen Saturday when Michael Premo and Rachel Falcone of Storyline Media in New York City open the exhibit "Housing is a Human Right" in the McChesney Room at Schenectady Central Library.



Barbara Nelson

A reception is scheduled at 6 p.m. with the open discussion following at 7 p.m. The exhibit will run through Nov. 30.

"People will see large-scale photographs and an hour of audio from people who experienced the housing crisis and are fighting back," Falcone said by phone earlier this week.

"We're trying to bring people together. And it's not just about the housing crisis. It's how it relates to family and community."

Falcone and Premo gathered their stories in Brooklyn, Philadelphia and South Africa, a country where there is an amendment that guarantees the right to housing and the right to due process if one is evicted.

"They tackle the issue of housing" and give "a voice" to the illuminated dwellings, says Barbara Nelson, the Troy architect who co-created the "Breathing Lights" concept with Troy artist Adam Frelin.

Last spring, Nelson and Frelin put out a call for arts programming that would be commissioned to en-



PETER R. BARBER/GAZETTE PHOTOGRAPHER

During October, the lights have been on every night in the windows of these two vacant houses on Stanley Street in Schenectady. "Breathing Lights," a public art project, continues through November.



Rachel Falcone and Michael Premo

travel around the country, was one of eight selected from 60 entries. "Most were local, but this was compelling," says Nelson.

Falcone is a documentary producer/director whose work has been broadcast internationally. She has traveled across the United States with StoryCorps, the Peabody award-winning national oral history project. Her own interac-

and shipping containers.

Premo, who grew up in Albany, is an artist and activist who was involved in the Occupy Wall Street and Occupy Sandy movements. His Sandy Storyline documentary won the inaugural Transmedia award at the 2013 Tribeca Film Festival.

For more info on "Housing is a Human Right" visit www.housingishumanright.org, www.rachel-falcone.com or www.michaelpremo.com

On Premo's website, you'll see and hear the story of Mary Lee Ward, an 82-year-old Brooklyn woman who was threatened with eviction from her home of 44 years in a real estate scam that preyed on older people.

REGIONAL AT HYDE

Sunday is the opening of the much-anticipated 80th annual Artists of the Mohawk-Hudson Region at The Hyde Collection in Glens Falls.

Juried by Troy artist Michael Oatman, the exhibit is a big one – 126 works by 106 artists – and artworks appear not only in the galleries but all over the Hyde campus: on the lawn, in the rotunda and in historic Hyde House.

The show is also organized by themes that have to do with how artwork has been shown through history: site, vault, salon, cube, mirror/grid and land view.

Admission is \$15, \$13 for seniors and free for children 12 and under.

Reach Gazette reporter Karen Bjornland at 395-3197, kbjornland@dailygazette.com



The schedule for Schenectady's 'Breathing Lights' weekend:

6:30-9:30 Friday, Boys & Girls Club of Schenectady, 400 Craig St.: **Halloween Party** for neighborhood kids and youth, premiere of media projects created by youth in workshops at Proctors Mediaworks, guided walking and shuttle tours of "Breathing Lights."

1-4 p.m. Saturday, Boys & Girls Club of Schenectady, 400 Craig St.: **Poetry workshop.** Write about a vacant building in Albany, Schenectady or Troy.

6-9:30 p.m. Saturday, Schenectady Central Library, 99 Clinton St.: **"Housing is a Human Right,"** exhibit opening and discussion. Admission is free but please send RSVP to info@mediasanctuary.org. The exhibit runs through Nov. 30.

The "Breathing Lights" houses in Schenectady, Albany and Troy will continue to be illuminated from 6 to 10 p.m. daily through the month of November.

You'll find a map and so much more at www.breathinglights.com.

nance Breathing Lights. Falcone tive installations have appeared in Falcone.com or www.michaepr- Bjorn Gunnarsson@dailygazette.net or
and Premo's project, which they laundromats, vacant storefronts mo.com. on Twitter @bjorngazette