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**RAMAPO COLLEGE EXHIBITION FEATURES INSTALLATION BY NJ POET
AND MEDIA ARTIST GERD STERN**

(Mahwah) – Ramapo College of New Jersey presents a special Photo Lounge exhibition featuring an installation by Cresskill poet and media artist Gerd Stern, in collaboration with engineer Michael Callahan, both founding members of the 1960s communal art group USCO, on Wednesday, September 14 and continuing through October 21. An opening reception and artist’s talk will be held at 6:30 p.m. on September 14.

USCO, “The Company of Us,” functioned during the 1960s and ‘70s as a communal group of artists, poets and engineers, headquartered in an old church building in Garnerville in Rockland County, NY. They toured museums and universities in the U.S. and abroad with their media productions and kinetic installations. Their work, which incorporated multiple slide projectors, film, channels of sound, strobes and oscilloscopes, helped define the psychedelic era. Although communal in concept and presentation, founder Stern emerged as a spokesperson for the group and USCO continues through Intermedia Foundation, an umbrella organization that supports USCO activities through grants from private and public sources.

The exhibition at Ramapo College, organized by Shalom Gorewitz, a professor of video art at the College, will feature a selection of work from the ‘60s as well as more recent pieces that represent USCO, including electronic pieces, word collages, video and

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sculpture. Gorewitz, whose father was a colleague of Stern's, says, "A lot of this was happening just a few miles from here." Work by USCO members is featured in the *Summer of Love* exhibition at the Tate Liverpool Museum in England through September 25 and will move to Frankfurt, Vienna and the U.S.

Life Magazine featured "The World" on its cover, the first discotheque using visual media to accompany live and recorded music for dancing. USCO was chosen from among artists including Andy Warhol to design and produce the media for the discotheque. The Roosevelt field hangar from which Lindbergh took off was fitted with a surround of 24 changing images and three professional television cameras were trained on the stage and floor and projected on a super sized screen, the first such use of then new video technology.

Stern and USCO co-founder Michael Callahan, with whom he is collaborating on the Ramapo College exhibit, combined art and enterprise and delved into commercial ventures. USCO created and produced psychedelic posters and other graphics, electronic machines and devices including strobe lights and programming units, electronic audio-visual aids, mixed-media presentations for corporate sales conferences, a mixed-media discotheque, artistic informational displays and sound and light effects for counterculture and pacifist benefits.

Stern has published books of poetry, has served as a panel member for the New York State Council on the Arts, consulted for both the National Endowment on the Arts and the Humanities, The Rockefeller Foundation, General Electric and Summa Corporation, and taught at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education and the University of California at Santa Cruz.

This program is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Photo Lounge is located on the first floor of the Berrie Center for Performing and Visual Arts at Ramapo College. Hours are noon to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and noon to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. For more information, call 201.684.7147.

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