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Civic Art

PRESS RELEASE

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MEDIA PLEASE NOTE:

Downloadable high resolution photos of "Drop-in Distraction:"

<http://lacountyarts.org/civicart/projectdetails/id/17> (scroll to bottom of page)

"Drop-in Distraction" can be viewed at the Southwest Building and Safety Permit Office,
1330 West Imperial Highway, Los Angeles, CA 90044, during business hours, Monday-
Thursday, 7:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Biographical information is at the end of this release.

More information about Ball-Nogues Studio: <http://www.ball-nogues.com/>

For Immediate Release

January 19, 2010

**FIRST PERMANENT PUBLIC ART COMMISSION
FOR BALL AND NOGUES IS IN L.A. COUNTY'S COLLECTION**

**"Drop-in Distraction" at the Southwest Building and Safety Permit Office
exemplifies artists' experimental approach to sculpture**

The only permanent artwork by Benjamin Ball and Gaston Nogues, the much talked about duo that has been hailed for their temporary structures, is to be found in a most unlikely location - a Los Angeles County government office. "Drop-in Distraction," composed of over one thousand individual nickel and brass plated bead chains hanging from custom-made aluminum ceiling panels, is seen by engineers, architects, and contractors as part of their daily business at the Southwest Building and Safety Permit Office.

Ball and Nogues have built their reputation with commissions from the New York Museum of Modern Art, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Los Angeles, Tiffany & Company, Frank Gehry and the 2008 Architecture Biennale in Venice, Italy. Their "Feathered Edge" installation for MOCA's Pacific Design Center branch was recognized among the Best of 2009 by the Los Angeles Times' Christopher Hawthorne. The duo "used little more than colored string to create an installation of intelligence, keen craft and unapologetic beauty," said Hawthorne. Ball and Nogues will be represented in "Contemplating the Void: Interventions in the Guggenheim Museum," opening in February as part of the museum's 50th anniversary celebration. Los Angeles County's "Drop-in Distraction" is the pair's only permanent artwork to date.

Ball and Nogues' suspended sculpture in the building and safety permit office lobby expresses

the artists' desire to blur art and architecture and their inventive approach to sculpture. While light-weight and diaphanous, the sculpture has a voluminous and undulating presence intended to intrigue the waiting clientele. Ball and Nogues developed custom software to determine the form of the sculpture, manage the chains, and expedite the cutting of the bead chains. This software-generated design made for a simple fabrication process and an efficient installation.

In an August 2009 Los Angeles Times interview, Ball explains that they like to produce sculptural forms that enhance the "atmospheric, the sensorial and the spectacular. . . That's one of the things about architecture -- the sensation and feeling that can incite in the viewer."

"Drop-in Distraction" was commissioned under Los Angeles County's Civic Art Program, administered by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission. Letitia Fernandez Ivins of the Arts Commission staff was project manager. Under the Civic Art Program, one percent of the design and construction costs of County capital projects is dedicated for the incorporation of civic art. The budget for the sculpture was \$27,000.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Benjamin Ball grew up in Colorado and Iowa where his mother's involvement in theatre proved influential. While studying for his degree at the Southern California Institute of Architecture, Ball logged stints at Gehry Partners and Shirdel Zago Kipnis. Upon graduation, he sought work as a set and production designer for films (including the Matrix series) as well as music videos and commercials with such influential directors as Mark Romanek and Tony Scott. His experience ranges from work on the Disney Concert Hall and small residential commissions for boutique firms to complex medical structures and event design. In his current collaboration with Gaston Nogues, Ball is exploring the intersection of architecture, art and product design through physical modeling and the use of digital and more traditional forms of production. A major goal of his design endeavors is to create experiences; because of this, he feels "a building that is not built is not architecture."

Gaston Nogues was born and raised in Buenos Aires before moving to Los Angeles at age 12. Frequently accompanying his father to his job as an aerospace engineer, Nogues acquired a fascination with the hands-on process of building. An honors graduate in architecture from SCI-Arc, he moved directly from school into a position at Gehry Partners where he worked in product design and production and became a specialist in creative fabrication. He remained there until 2005 except for a one-year stint in 1996 as an assistant curator at a fine arts publishing house, Gemini GEL. In his current collaboration with Benjamin Ball, Nogues is focused on fabricating what they visualize; on process as it relates to the built object. In his spare time, Nogues builds custom automobiles.

In 2006, Ball-Nogues Studio was awarded the Best of Category distinction for Environments for their installation Maximilian's Schell by ID Magazine. Ball-Nogues is the recipient of two Los Angeles AIA Design Awards and Interior Design Magazines Best of Year Award for their installation Rip Curl Canyon. In 2007 their installation Liquid Sky was the winner of the Museum of Modern Art / P.S.1's Young Architect's Program competition. They are recipients of grants from the Durfee Foundation, the Graham Foundation, UCLA Arts Initiative, Otis College of Design and United States Artists. In 2008 their site specific installation Echoes Converge appeared at the 11th Venice Biennale of Architecture and an exhibit of their work appeared at

the Beijing Biennale. Their installation Feathered Edge debuted at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles in 2009. The partners have taught in the graduate architecture programs at SCI Arc, UCLA and USC. Their work has appeared in publications worldwide including the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, Architectural Record, Architectural Digest, Interior Design, Icon, Log 10, Sculpture, and Surface.

The **Los Angeles County Arts Commission**, Laura Zucker, Executive Director, provides leadership in cultural services of all disciplines for the largest county in the United States, encompassing 88 municipalities. In addition to overseeing the County's Civic Art Program, the Arts Commission provides leadership and staffing to support the regional blueprint for arts education, *Arts for All*; administers a grants program that funds more than 300 nonprofit arts organizations annually; programs the John Anson Ford Theatres; and supports the Los Angeles County Cultural Calendar on ExperienceLA.com. The Commission also produces free community programs, including the L.A. Holiday Celebration broadcast nationally, and a year-round music program that funds more than 40 free concerts each year in public sites. The 2009-10 President of the Arts Commission is Araceli Ruano.

For more information please consult the Arts Commission online press kit:
<http://lacountyarts.org/page/pubnewspress>