

Enriching Lives



## Civic Art

### PRESS RELEASE

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### **FOUR, COLOSSAL PHOTO MURALS BY ARTIST KEN GONZALES-DAY FEATURED IN NEW L.A. COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING IN SOUTH L.A.**

**The tiled murals, part of a public art project, will be unveiled at the building  
dedication Friday, Dec. 14 at 10:30 a.m.**

LOS ANGELES — Images of idyllic California landscapes by photographer Ken Gonzales-Day scaled to the size of large movie screens will be unveiled today during the dedication of the new Los Angeles County Administrative Building, located on Vermont Avenue between 83<sup>rd</sup> and 84<sup>th</sup> Streets in South Los Angeles.

The colorful art work entitled "California Landscape, Variation 1 through 4" were completed this year as Gonzales-Day's first public art commission. The ceramic-tiled murals are on both interior and exterior walls of the building. The largest of these photographic murals — a kaleidoscopic arrangement of oak trees — is 54-feet high, 15-foot wide and appears on the parking structure adjacent to an open-air plaza and the office building.

"I am extremely proud that this is the first of many Civic Arts-funded projects in my District to come to fruition," said 2<sup>nd</sup> District Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke. "It is truly a labor of love and collaboration among the artist, representatives of the County family, and members of the surrounding community. I want to remind the community that these County facilities exist in order to provide services to those individuals who need them, and they should feel welcomed and encouraged to seek these services when needed."

The new office building together with the art mural installations are intended to be a catalyst for urban renewal efforts in south central Los Angeles.

Gonzales-Day explains that California's native oaks once grew throughout the region but today these trees could only be found in a handful of public green spaces. Acknowledging the state's many native species, his art project provides glimpses of open, natural landscapes and seeks to bring the oak trees back into the urban landscape — symbolically, if not literally.

“It is hoped that the imagery will positively impact clients and community members in a region of the city that provides residents with limited opportunities to experience either art or green space,” said Gonzales-Day in a statement about the project. The artist is a featured speaker at the dedication.

New developments in digital technology make this photographic mural project possible. Gonzales-Day worked with a specialty fabricator, Tile Artisans of Oroville, Calif., to transfer high-resolution photographic imagery into glazes. The glazes then are fired in extreme heat on to 12-square-inch commercial grade ceramic tiles. The result is a detailed photograph made in lasting glaze, resistant to wear and graffiti.

The art project was administered by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission’s Civic Art program, in cooperation with the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles.

Gonzales-Day’s photographic murals will be installed in four locations:

- \* North end of building with photographic tile  
<http://www.kengonzalesday.com/projects/lacadministrative/01.htm>
- \* Interior Lobby with photographic tile  
<http://www.kengonzalesday.com/projects/lacadministrative/05.htm>
- \* Parking structure with photographic tiles  
<http://www.kengonzalesday.com/projects/lacadministrative/03.htm>
- \* South end with photographic tile  
<http://www.kengonzalesday.com/projects/lacadministrative/08.htm>

Gonzales-Day is an associate professor and chair of the Department of Art at Scripps College in Pomona. He received a nomination for the Pulitzer for his debut book, *Lynching in the West 1850-1935*.

Developed by ICO Vermont , LLC, the Los Angeles County Administrative Building contains 220,00 square feet of offices with a childcare center, retail spaces on the ground floor and a six-level parking structure.

The facility will be leased to Los Angeles County and house County departments that handle the highest number of social services caseloads in the region. More than 1,200 workers and 1,400 daily visitors are expected to use the facility.

Some local residents were concerned that the building would attract too many of the neediest citizens to the area, while others hoped to see a shopping mall or restaurant instead of another office building. Segments of Vermont Avenue, marked by properties with bolted pull-down grates or spiked fences, are dotted with vacant lots after violence and fires from the 1992 riots engulfed the area.

The County's new building stands as a contrast to nearby dilapidated properties. Businesses and residents are hopeful that the new office building will help anchor businesses and serve as a bellwether for positive change.



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 directing the County's Civic Art Program for capital projects, 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; funds the largest arts internship program in the country in conjunction with the Getty Foundation; 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 2007-08 President of the Arts Commission is Rosalind Wyman.

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