

Enriching Lives



Civic Art

PRESS RELEASE

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**CIVIC ART TAKES ROOT IN NEWLY REMODELED
REGISTRAR RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK
ELECTIONS OPERATION CENTER**

LOS ANGELES – October 23, 2008 – A new art installation titled “Tree by tree, from sea to mountains” was dedicated today in a ceremony from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Registrar Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) Elections Operation Center (EOC) in Santa Fe Springs. The imposing photographic banner, designed by Mexico City-born artist Rebeca Méndez, celebrates the majestic nature of Los Angeles County’s diverse tree population. The banner, stretching 132 feet wide by 15 feet high, provides a 180-foot skyward pan from the Pacific Ocean to the San Gabriel Mountains. “Tree by tree,” part of a major remodel of the EOC by Lehrer Architects, provides a major dramatic element in the work environment of the facility’s 100 employees.

The Los Angeles County Art Commission’s Civic Art Program administered the “Tree by tree” project in concert with County departments and community stakeholders to provide artwork that reflects the County and honors the vital work done by the operations center.

“Artwork helps transform our County facilities into inspiring places for the public and employees to do business,” said First District Supervisor Gloria Molina. “Rebeca Méndez’ photographic banner is a fitting tribute to Los Angeles County that will be appreciated and enjoyed for generations to come.”

The concept for the artwork is inspired by the central image on the Los Angeles County seal, a dignified Native American woman holding a plate of nourishment in her hands and standing on the shore of the Pacific Ocean with the San Gabriel Mountains in the background.

The timeless image of trees and nature characterizes the spirit of Los Angeles County. As noted by Méndez in her design proposal, “In the 21st century Los Angeles is home to an urban forest

where over 1,000 different species, varieties and cultivators co-exist, and, like its people, LA's tree population is known as among the most diverse in the world."

In creating the work, Mendez addressed the project committee's desire to offer an artistic source of reinvigoration and pride for the employees. The artist's expectation is that employees will consciously or subconsciously identify with the trees as contributors to the greater good.

The breathtaking scenic images provide a "...trajectory, in which the viewer encounters branches, tree trunks, full canopy of diverse tree tops and the immensity of the open sky," said Méndez. "In a sense, the viewer is the woman in the seal. She is the trees, she is mother earth."

Méndez has a history of exploring the dialogue between the weather and the landscape as a way to address issues of time and space in relation to human beings. Her research and practice cross different media and disciplines through her photography, videography and installations.

Méndez holds a master's degree in fine arts from Art Center College of Design, Pasadena. She has participated in numerous exhibitions worldwide and her work is represented in public and private collections including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, The National Design Museum in New York, Denver Art Museum and Museo Jose Luis Cuevas in Mexico City. Méndez is a professor at UCLA in the Design|Media Arts department. She consults and lectures internationally, and has been reviewed extensively by renowned publications worldwide. She lives and works in Los Angeles.

The project was created under the County's Civic Art Policy, which sets aside one percent of construction costs of all County capital projects over \$500,000 for the incorporation of civic art.

More information on the Civic Art Program can be found on the Arts Commission web site, www.lacountyarts.org.

To find out how the one percent art allocation process works, visit www.lacountyarts.org/civcart.htm

To read the Civic Art Policy, go to www.lacountyarts.org/civcart_policy.htm



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. The Arts Commission, in addition to overseeing the County's Civic Art Program for capital projects, 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 50 free concerts each year in public sites. The 2008-09 President of the Arts Commission is Betty Haagen.

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