

For immediate release: May 23, 2012

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EXHIBITION IMAGES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST



ARTPACE AND WASHINGTON IRVING ACADEMY UNVEIL NEW PUBLIC ARTWORK ON CAMPUS

San Antonio, Texas – Artpace San Antonio announces the unveiling of its sixth Semester Program public art project on the campus of **Washington Irving Academy**. In collaboration with San Antonio artist **Mari Hernandez**, 8th grade students at Irving Academy created *Photoality*, a 12x8-foot artwork composed from a selection of their stunning photographs. Featuring extraordinary images of their community, neighborhood, friends, family, and issues important to their lives, the installation showcases unique light effects typical of the hand-built plastic film cameras they used. A public unveiling ceremony is planned for **Wednesday, May 30, 2012, at 4pm** to honor their work.



Students built a 35mm twin lens reflex camera from a kit of over 50 tiny, intricate plastic parts.

Artpace's Semester Program places a local artist "in residence" in the classroom to mentor students and help them create a publicly sited work for their campus, offering practical experience in their studies while encouraging creativity. The students selected for this Semester Program are part of the Irving 8th Grade Partners Program, which offers the courses required for graduation from the 8th grade as well as accelerated 9th grade course credits needed to enter 10th grade, as appropriate for their age. Over the course of the spring semester, Hernandez led discussions about contemporary photography, encouraged dialogue about social issues, and taught students how to build their own cameras. The 8th Grade Partners also visited Artpace to participate in a guided tour and study contemporary art.



Artist Mari Hernandez guides students to build their twin lens cameras.

The process of building their own cameras enabled students to follow directions, work together to solve problems, and understand camera mechanics and how an image is made on film. Accustomed to digital cameras with instant viewing capabilities, they had to hone their skills for crafting careful photographic compositions. They learned to take advantage of a range of light levels, to shoot from different perspectives and angles, and how to position their subjects to create visual interest. Group critiques empowered students with the knowledge that they were too part of a creative community of individuals who can present powerful messages through their art. The stories told with their film share a process of discovering beauty and significance in often overlooked details of their environments; their pictures feature lamp posts, graffiti, or a

stuffed animal on the counter. The participating photographers will keep their hand-built cameras, and are encouraged to continue taking pictures on their own.

On the last day of the program, Hernandez helped each student select a suite of five photographs to present in the final project. They brainstormed which media to use for their installation, recalling myriad materials they learned about during their Artpace visit. Their images are exhibited as a strip of film much like the negatives they viewed in the process of developing their photos. They decided to emphasize the unique, albeit serious permanence of film—which they compared to aspects of life and school—by using a film strip as the backdrop. One student stated: "*Film is like life. If you make a mistake in film, like life, you can't go back.*"

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Photoality will be dedicated on Wednesday, May 30 from 4-4:30pm with a presentation and unveiling in the main hall and cafeteria on the campus of Washington Irving Academy, 1300 Delgado Street, 78207. **The public and media are welcome to attend.** Contact Artpace Assistant Curator of Education Lindsey Smith at 210.212.4900 x319 or lsmith@artpace.org to RSVP.



Students leave a lasting legacy on their campus through a highly personalized film photography installation showcasing images of their community, neighborhood, friends and families. Above are three examples of the students' work.

Stevens, Gary Sweeney, and Luis Valderas. This photographic installation, *Photoality*, is a part of a growing collection of collaborative works permanently installed on the Irving Academy campus as a result of Artpace's Semester Program.

The spring 2012 Semester Program was made possible by the Kronkosky Charitable Foundation; The Brown Foundation, Inc.; anonymous; Elizabeth Huth Coates Charitable Foundation of 1992; H-E-B; and Texas Commission on the Arts.

ABOUT ARTPACE

Artpace is a contemporary art center located in San Antonio, Texas, with residencies, exhibitions, and education programs that nurture the creative expression of emerging and established artists, while actively engaging youth and adult audiences. Renowned for its International Artist-in-Residence (IAIR) program, Artpace annually hosts three residencies, each of which features one Texas artist, one national artist, and one international artist, who are selected by a notable guest curator. Each eight-week residency culminates in a two-month exhibition on site. The mission of this program is to provide artists with unparalleled resources that allow them to experiment with new ideas and take provocative risks. **"Artpace is really head and shoulders above any other organization of its kind right now,"** states **Dan Cameron, Founder of Prospect New Orleans.** The work created at Artpace goes on to show at some of the world's most distinguished venues, often presenting a pivotal moment in an artist's career. **"Projects that began at Artpace are still exhibited all over the world,"** explains **Jeffrey Deitch, Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles.** **"Artpace really makes art happen."**

Artpace is located in downtown San Antonio at 445 North Main Avenue, between Savings and Martin streets. Free parking is available at 513 North Flores Street. Artpace is open to the public Wednesday through Sunday from 12-5pm, and by appointment. Admission is free.

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