

Arts Ministry Interviews Ronald Lopez, Curator of LA Show 'Does Religion Kill?'

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(EMAILWIRE.COM, February 09, 2007) San Clemente, CA -- The Grove Center for the Arts announced the launch of its new website with a video interview of Ronald Lopez, artist and curator of the Los Angeles-based 18th Street Arts Center gallery show "Does Religion Kill?" According to a 1999 report, Los Angeles has surpassed London and New York as the world's most religiously pluralist metropolitan region. Lopez stated that the purpose of the show is a response to the more than 600 separate faith communities in Los Angeles neighborhoods. Interviewed by The Grove executive director, Joey O'Connor, the videocast features Lopez explaining the show, his work, and the dialogue he hopes to promote among people of differing belief systems. The videocast and photos of the show are available online at www.thegrovecenter.org

Made possible through a grant by The James Irvine Foundation, the show featured the works of 12 artists and photographers, including Christine Morla, Raymond Pettibon, Bill Barminski, Melissa Trochez, Burt Payne, Katrina Erickson, Noah Haytin, Marquis "Retna" Lewis, Zara Kriegstein, Ramsey Robinson, Amitis Motevalli, and Samira Yamin. The show included an interactive dialogue wall in which people were invited to write their response to the question, "Does religion kill?" Lopez stated, "My whole purpose in this show is to promote a dialogue among people of different faiths. Too often, we know and understand so little about what other people believe." Lopez acknowledged that the 18th Street Arts Center show asks a very provocative question that many people might be uncomfortable with. "That is one of the main purposes of art." Lopez continued, "Art is supposed to get us out of our comfort zones by challenging us to look at a work and ask deeper questions." Mr. Lopez has worked in the public art arena for over 10 years and has implemented city art programming in Los Angeles and in Istanbul, Turkey, where he is the director of the Aden Art Center. He currently curates art shows in both of these cities and represents artists. His social art project "Does Religion Kill?" was first held in conjunction with the 9th Istanbul Biennial in 2005.

Ronald Lopez is also a grant recipient of The Grove Foundation for the Arts. Founded in 2003, The Grove Center for the Arts offers retreats, programs and online resources to nurture the spiritual development and creative vision of artists in the Church. The non-profit ministry is currently working on developing a national retreat center for arts in the Church at its twelve acre avocado and lemon ranch located in Valley Center, California (North San Diego).

Contact:

The Grove Center for the Arts

Joey O'Connor

Tel: 949-369-6767

joey@thegrovecenter.org

www.thegrovecenter.org

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