



AMA

ART MUSEUM of the AMERICAS
ORGANIZATION of AMERICAN STATES

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The OAS AMA | Art Museum of the Americas Launches Bi-National Project to Serve Salvadoran Youth in Washington D.C. and El Salvador

Press Conference:

Friday, September 30th at 10 am at
AMA | Art Museum of the Americas
Organization of American States
201 18th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006

The Art Museum of the Americas (AMA) of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Museo de Arte de El Salvador (MARTE) announced today **Two Museums, Two Nations, One Identity**, a year-long initiative linking youth in El Salvador with those of Salvadoran origin in Washington, D.C. The program is part of the U.S. Department of State's strategic efforts to strengthen people-to-people connections through museums worldwide.

"We are proud and grateful to have won this grant from the State Department and AAM," said AMA director Lydia Bendersky. "This project is a step forward in AMA's renewed mission of becoming a hub that connects museums, artists, people and communities from the OAS' 34 member countries throughout the Americas, and beyond."

Youth, Art and New Technologies: Building Communities

Students aged 12-15 in El Salvador and Washington, D.C. will participate in artistic activities (photography, video, painting, and writing) designed to bolster awareness of personal and collective identity as well as understanding of cultural heritage and the power of art.



Participants will relate their experiences with one another through a customized online social media platform, developing connections and friendships between those in D.C. and El Salvador with the potential to last through life.

“Museums everywhere are catalysts for building cultural identity and community engagement,” said AAM president Ford W. Bell. “This project, and the MCCA program as a whole, are emblematic of that. It is what museums are all about: building bridges and forging bonds across neighborhoods, communities and even across the globe.”

“The open dialogue that is established by this museum exchange initiative strengthens people-to-people relationships,” said Ann Stock, who serves as Acting Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. “With stronger relationships and greater collaboration, the Museums & Community Collaborations Abroad initiative will achieve shared goals for the benefit of the global community.”

One + One = Three

In El Salvador, participants will be youth from the towns of Intipucá, Sensuntepeque, Chirilagua and Ciudad Victoria- all known for migration to the D.C. area. In D.C., participants will hail from Columbia Heights, a diverse neighborhood that has maintained a strong Salvadoran population since the 1960s.

The program in El Salvador will take place in Casas de la Cultura, government-administered centers that promote cultural and artistic activities and a strong sense of local heritage. MARTE will connect with youth of the Casas de la Cultura, welcoming those who are interested to take part in **Two Museums, Two Nations, One Identity**.

In D.C., AMA will draw from the Art + Media House of the Latin American Youth Center (LAYC) in Columbia Heights, an organization serving low-income youth and families by providing educational advancement, social services, workforce investment, and art and media programs.

Youth participants, while learning painting, photography, and video art, will engage in a series of workshops on the themes of Self, Family, Tradition, School, Neighborhood, Community, Migration and Bilingualism.

AMA selected Salvadoran-American artist and Corcoran Chair of Photography and Associate



Professor Muriel Hasbun to be the lead artist and curriculum advisor for the project. Hasbún's expertise as an artist and as an educator focuses on issues of cultural identity and memory, and on promoting cultural exchange through art. A Fulbright Scholar to El Salvador, Hasbún and a group of Corcoran College of Art + Design students, in collaboration with the LAYC and the AMA, will facilitate the workshops in Washington, D.C. Artist and teacher Guillermo Araujo and photographer Sandro Stivella will work with the students in El Salvador.

Two Museums, Two Nations, One Identity seeks to spark communication between Salvadoran youth in D.C. and El Salvador, to discover hidden talents, and to increase self-esteem and cultural pride via fun and enriching workshops and piquing of artistic curiosities and development of techniques. In addition to providing a safe haven, it will engage vulnerable youth and provide them with learning and creative experiences that will increase engagement with their common cultural heritage and reinforce their sense of pride. The program will end in the Summer of 2012 with bi-national exhibitions of the works by participants at both AMA and MARTE. In-progress exhibitions will take place at the Corcoran's Gallery 31 and White Halls during FotoWeek DC in November 2011, with generous in-kind support by Nikon, and at the LAYC's Art and Media House in December.

Two Museums, Two Nations, One Identity, is made possible by the Museums & Community Collaborations Abroad (MCCA) grant awarded for this joint project between AMA and MARTE.

The program, the first of its kind between AMA and any other museum in the region, will engage underserved youth through art and museums and builds on the OAS efforts to promote the values of peace, democracy, and development. It is also a key component in its outreach to young people, which first began during the OAS Youth Orchestra Program that provides musical equipment and after-school instruction for underserved youth in the Caribbean.

The MCCA program is an initiative of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. It is administered in partnership with the American Association of Museums (AAM).

This program is made possible through the participation of the Museo de Arte de El Salvador (MARTE), the Latin American Youth Center (LAYC), and Casas de la Cultura, the Corcoran College of Art + Design; the support of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and its Museum & Community Collaborations Abroad (MCCA) program, administered by the American Association of Museums; and the generous contribution of Nikon.

