



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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City of Walls, City of People

Exhibition opens March 20-April 22, 2007

Free Admission

Oakland, CA

Pro Arts is pleased to announce *City of Walls, City of People*, an international student exchange between California College of the Arts (CCA), Oakland and Istituto Universitario di Architettura, Design e Arti (IUAV) in Venice, Italy featuring new works by 12 artists documenting urban life. The exhibition is co-curated by Lewis Baltz, photographer and Professor at the School of Visual Arts at IUAV and Mariella Poli, artist and Adjunct Professor at CCA, and will include photography, painting, video and mixed media. *City of Walls, City of People* is on view March 20 – April 22, 2007 and will celebrate CCA's Centennial Anniversary. An Artists' Reception will be held on Friday, April 6 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. The exhibition and events are free and open to the public.



City of Walls, City of People investigates the cultural perceptions and representations of the modern urban experience in both Oakland, California and Venice, Italy. According to Mariella Poli, "the exhibition showcases work from artists from both cities; individually exploring and addressing the urban experience in ways that examine personal, cultural and social identities within their respective settings, as well as the delineation between public and private space. Each artist established physical or imaginary perimeters within the city (Oakland/San Francisco and Venice, Italy) where they explored and developed a body of work based on their interests and experiences in that area."

In his *Muslim in America Series* (2006) Sean Donnelly photographs the daily life of urban American Muslims. As a Jewish man and photographer, the photographs provide the artist with a means of reconciliation between two religions that have long been in conflict, while fostering a positive counterpart to the ample negative representations of Islam since the events of September 11th. The series also encourages the viewer to question widely held ideas about the religion while questioning the definition of American culture and public representation in regard to media and world events.

In his work, Nicholas Basta recalls one of his favorite childhood past times of playing and exploring transient spaces. *Richmond Hallmark Factory* (2006), an enamel on found metal painting, re-envisions the history of place with found objects while simultaneously memorializing a changing landscape. It is through these discarded materials, that the artist builds his canvas, employing the patinated areas to better define his composition while gaining a better understanding of the past.

Selected artists include: Christ Aivalioti, Nicholas Basta, Ned Brauer, Sean Donnelly, Elizabeth Malaska, Geoff Melville, Michael Meyer, Michael Sullivan, Alessandro Laita & Alberto Tadiello, Michele Lamanna, Carlo Zambon, Marco Zamarato and Lucilla Pesce.

About Pro Arts

Pro Arts is a nonprofit artist-based membership organization that supports the diverse cultural communities in the Bay Area by exhibiting artists' work and providing a venue for furthering communication in the arts. Pro Arts is located at 550 Second Street, Oakland, CA, 94607. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday, Noon - 6pm; and Sunday, Noon - 5pm. The exhibition is free.

More information and images are available upon request. Contact Erica Mohar, Exhibitions and Programs Coordinator. Phone: 510/763-4361. E-mail: erica@proartsgallery.org

Above photograph: SEAN DONNELLY, *Muslim in America Series*, 2006, c print, 20x24