Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAJOR PUBLIC ARTWORKS INSTALLED AT NORTH NATOMAS LIBRARY

DATE: April 27, 2010

WHAT: Monumental public artworks installed at North Natomas Library, Sacramento

WHERE: North Natomas Library 4660 Via Ingoglia, Sacramento

WHEN: April 27, 2010

CONTACT: Shelly Willis, (916) 808-3971, e-mail:swillis@cityofsacramento.org

Sacramento, CA – The installation of a giant eye and a 10-foot tall sculpture of a book by Joe Scarpa is one of three monumental artworks recently installed at North Natomas Library in Sacramento, California. Other artworks by local artists Ray Gonzales and James Piskoti are installed inside the library. Together the three works celebrate reading, literacy, and the Sacramento region.

The interactive artwork by Joe Scarpa, titled "Authors of our own Destiny", is an iconic marker for the library. Installed in front of the library and adjacent to a major thoroughfare, the artwork is visible from a distance, but is also meant to be seen and used by people on foot. It consists of three components: a massive painted steel book with a red cover and blank white pages; a steel and bronze sculpture of an eye that is suspended from an 18' high steel post; and a gigantic pair of steel reading glasses.

The artist purposefully designed the book sculpture as a blank canvas to be painted or drawn on by the general public, patrons of the library, and students attending the adjacent high school and community college. The artist imagines that the book's surface will be spontaneously painted over and over again with images, writings, and stories -- providing the community with a temporary platform for their ideas and artworks. The paintings and drawings will only be preserved until the next person paints the surface. The bronze and stainless steel eye that hovers over the book is intended to represent the reader and is symbolic of knowledge, exploration, and discovery.

The artworks located in the library's interior include a hand-made ceramic tile mural in the lobby by Lincoln artist Ray Gonzales and four interactive, mixed media wall hangings by another local artist located in the children and adult reading rooms by James Piskoti.

Ray Gonzales wove elements of the building location, the library, and the community it serves into a tile mural titled “Kokomo Joe and Kokomo Colleen Surfing the Stacks.” It features a pair of stylized surfing coyotes riding waves in water that are surrounded by a background of Northern California valleys and mountains. Indigenous to this area, the coyote honors the Nisenan, a Native American tribe that once inhabited the area. The coyote was a legendary figure to the Nisenan who saw them as mischievous tricksters. Using the coyote in this way, Gonzales pays tribute to the late Sacramento born Native American Artist Harry Fonseca, who put coyotes in unexpected, contemporary settings in his artwork. Gonzales’ mural also includes a beaver (mascot of American River College), a tiger (mascot of Inderkum High School), and a salmon that is native to the Sacramento River.

Local artist James Piskoti has installed 3 interactive wall hangings in the main library area with L.E.D. accents that visually dramatize the themes: “Reading Inspires”, “Reading Sparks the Imagination”, and “Reading is Discovery”. In the Children’s area, he has created a 9’ wide by 8’ high, curved interactive wall hanging titled “Reading is an Adventure” that depicts children peering down from a magic carpet flight to see a world filled with their favorite storybook characters.

The artwork at the North Natomas Library was commissioned by the City of Sacramento, Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission, Art in Public Places.

The Art in Public Places Program was established by the City and County of Sacramento to provide visual art experiences in public locations through a percent-for-art program which reserves a portion of the construction dollars from City, County or Redevelopment projects for public art.

The Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission (SMAC) is devoted to supporting, promoting and advocating for the arts in the region. For further information on programs and opportunities through the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission go to: www.sacmetroarts.org. SMAC is funded by the City and County of Sacramento.

AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW: Please contact Shelly Willis at (916) 808-3971, e-mail: swillis@cityofsacramento.org to schedule interviews.

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PHOTO CAPTION: Joe Scarpa's Interactive Sculpture at North Natomas Library titled, "Authors of our own Destiny" Photo by Joe Scarpa

PHOTO CAPTION: James Piskoti's wall hanging inside North Natomas Library titled, "Reading Sparks the Imagination" Photo by James Piskoti

PHOTO CAPTION: Ray Gonzales' ceramic tile mural inside North Natomas Library titled "Kokomo Joe and Kokomo Colleen Surfing the Stacks." Photo by Suzy Vose

(See larger photo files attached individually.)