



## Academy of Visual and Performing Arts At Culver City High School

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### AVPA Art Exhibition at Corey Helford Gallery

For immediate release:

**Culver City – March 5, 2009:** The Culver City High School Academy of Visual and Performing Arts (AVPA) is pleased to announce an exhibition of artworks by 34 students at the Corey Helford Gallery, located at 8522 Washington Boulevard in Culver City. The exhibition, *Let Me Tell You About My Boat*, is the culmination of the students' participation in weekly art workshops through the First Visit & Beyond program of The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA). The opening reception is Monday, March 16 from 6–9pm. The event is FREE and open to the public.

For fifteen weeks, MOCA Educators Raúl Flores and Mariah Johnson facilitated explorations of conceptual art based on the 2008 MOCA exhibition, *Index: Conceptualism in California from the Permanent Collection*. Students were exposed to conceptualism through interactive discussions, art-making activities, and a museum visit. Cindy Bernard, a Los Angeles-based artist featured in *Index*, also led the students through a special walkthrough of the exhibition.

Intellectually rigorous and often humorous, conceptualist practices emphasize the primacy of ideas over objects, often employing language, repetition, documentation, and historical and cultural references. Additionally, conceptual art often includes critical positions in relation to



mass culture and institutional authority. With more than 200 works on view, *Index* included work in collage, drawing, film, installation, photography, printmaking, sculpture, and video.

Inspired by such diverse media, AVPA students have created their own conceptual artworks using painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, installation, video, animation, and mixed media. The students also addressed a wide array of themes in their artworks, from identity and social relations to





politics, the environment, and questioning the methods and media of art. Central to all of the artworks, however, is the importance of the idea in making art.

The exhibition title, *Let Me Tell You About My Boat*, comes from the 2004 Wes Anderson film, *THE LIFE AQUATIC WITH STEVE ZISSOU*. The phrase opens a scene where the main character (played by Bill Murray) holds a small boat with an image of a boat behind him. The image becomes a curtain and rises to reveal a three-dimensional cross-section of a boat as a stage set. People and animals move within it as the narrator describes the boat's unique spaces and history. For the students, this play between object and representation

resonated with the works they saw at MOCA and their own creations.

"Sony Pictures has been a proud sponsor of MOCA's education initiatives, Contemporary Art Start (CAS) and First Visit and Beyond since 1997," says Janice Pober, Senior Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility at Sony Pictures Entertainment. "These in-depth programs have culminated in exhibition opportunities for AVPA's visual art students. Since 1997, we have taken enormous pride in seeing the artwork produced by Culver City High School's talented students. The unveiling of this year's exhibition will be exciting to see."

AVPA's Co-Director and The Director of the Art Program, Kristine Hatanaka, also takes pride in the students' work. "I am always grateful for the support and programming from MOCA's First Visit & Beyond and CAS. Each year, students are engaged on a deeper level to learn about Contemporary Art and develop an understanding of their creative process. It's incredible to see how the educators cultivate the ideas of AVPA art students, create original works of art, and make the entire art making experience more meaningful."



MOCA Educator Mariah Johnson expresses her enthusiasm, "Working with the students has been an amazing experience. They bring a fresh perspective to thinking about and making art, and I think that pushes us as educators to look at art in new ways, too. At the same time, I know that we are introducing the students to art techniques that most high school students don't get to experiment with, so we are helping them to expand their notions of what art can be."

MOCA Educator Raúl Flores also notes, "It is an honor to be a part of this long-standing collaboration between MOCA and AVPA. This year, we wanted to bring the culminating exhibition back to Culver City, so that the students have a direct connection to the great cultural center in which they live. We are very grateful to Corey Helford Gallery, especially co-owners

Bruce Helford and Jan Corey Helford, for hosting the exhibition. It is a testament to how much Culver City supports the future of the arts.”

For more information about MOCA and First Visit & Beyond, go to [moca.org](http://moca.org).

**About the Academy of Visual and Performing Arts**

The Academy of Visual and Performing Arts (AVPA) at Culver City High School has been inspiring and empowering students to build a compassionate, creative community through innovative and challenging arts education since 1996. AVPA enjoys tremendous support from Sony Pictures Entertainment and other area businesses as well as from the Culver City community. For more information about the Academy, go to <http://avpa.org> or contact Tony Spano at 310-842-4200 x6094 or Kristine Hatanaka at x6001.

Photo captions:

- 1 Elhaam Mesghali preparing her artwork for "Let Me Tell You About My Boat" Art exhibition at Corey Helford Gallery in Culver City
- 2 AVPA Art students critiquing their work for "Let Me Tell You About My Boat" Art exhibition at Corey Helford Gallery in Culver City
- 3 Charlotte Sabet (on right) prepares a series of work for "Let Me Tell You About My Boat" Art exhibition at Corey Helford Gallery in Culver City
- 4 Jonathan Smith (left) works with MOCA artist/educators Mariah Johnson and Raúl Flores (right)

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