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## **Eleven Local Teens Examine Concerns of Our Times Through the Arts in DSN: *Do Something New***

### **Installation is the Culmination of a 10-week workshop with LA-based artists Mario Ybarra and Karla Diaz**

SARATOGA, Calif. – Montalvo Arts Center announces its next installation in Project Space starting June 15, the DSN: Do Something New Project. The DSN group is made up of 11 local teenagers under the direction of artists Mario Ybarra and Karla Diaz, who sparked the creative process during the 10-week workshop by asking a series of questions provoking the DSN'ers to identify themes of concern to them. This installation is the end result of exploring the themes and features objects and media created by the them, including t-shirts, sound pieces and publications, as well as an oral history project capturing the stories of 10 members of the Montalvo Service Group, an auxiliary that has supported Montalvo since 1954. In addition, the installation will include a hands-on, art-making area where visitors can create their own art pieces. Members of the DSN Teen Council will serve as volunteers in Project Space on select dates during the shows run, June 15 through Sept. 30.

Ybarra and Diaz were commissioned by Montalvo to develop a series of programs and installations addressing the theme *Concerns of Our Times*, as identified by teenagers. They are serving as collaborators/mentors to the DSN while they are in-residence at the [Lucas Artists Programs](#) this spring. The DSN Teen Council consists of eleven teens, all of whom applied and were selected from various schools throughout the Bay Area. They used arts to explore issues and concerns to today's youth and the installation will display art created by this group and tell the story of their work with Ybarra and Diaz.

"Our goal for the first half of the DSN project was to give the students an opportunity to develop their skills and learn to collaborate with each other and with the community," said Ybarra. "Every student has different strengths and ideas to bring to the group and it has been very interesting learning what these students see as concerns of our times. The second half of the program focused on giving the students sounding boards for voicing their concerns and what they wanted to learn about, then creating projects that focused on these things."

Like most artistic projects, Montalvo's DSN group has evolved since its execution. Originally the group was just called Teen Council, but Ybarra, Diaz and the students wanted the name to represent the group's mantra for making decisions and creating projects that meant something to them – the name Do Something New was born.

Four main themes surfaced from the DSN Teen Council – friends, family, technology and violence. Ybarra and Diaz tailored their weekly sessions to include different artistic exercises that allow the students to create projects that include these themes. Ybarra and Diaz felt it was important for the students to have motivation in the form of control over their craft, so through group exercises the students learned how to collaborate with each other, while still maintaining their own identities through their artistic endeavors.

“Aside from having the students create their projects, we also wanted them to experience real-world applications,” said Diaz. “We’re hoping the students will develop a sense that what they are producing in class can be transferred to their experiences outside of the DSN. We’ve taken the students on a couple field trips to various locations in the Bay Area, so they can see how art is portrayed in this part of the world.”

Students were chosen for the DSN after applying for the program in February, providing reasons why they wanted to learn about art and also including a sample of art that means something to them. All of the students selected from various high schools in the Bay Area expressed an interest in art, whether it is in the form of music, visual art or writing, and all were asked what changes they would like to see at Montalvo. The students met with Ybarra and Diaz once a week for three hours, with different projects taking place every week.

Executive Director of Montalvo Arts Center, Robert Sain, noted, “The next generation is an important part of Montalvo’s new initiative for thematic programming. It is important for young people to see Montalvo as a place where they can learn about art as well as express themselves. Hopefully these students will find value in their experiences at Montalvo with Mario and Karla and apply this knowledge in ways that positively impact their futures.”

For more information, call (408) 961-5800 or visit [www.montalvoarts.org](http://www.montalvoarts.org).

Montalvo’s Project Space is open from Fri-Sun, June 15-Sept 30, Noon-3 p.m., Free

## **About the Artists**

**Mario Ybarra Jr.** lives and works in Los Angeles. He received his MFA from the University of California, Irvine and is a founding member of the artist’s collective Slanguage. His work has been featured in a number of institutional exhibitions, recently including *Alien Nation* at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, *Uncertain States of America*, curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, and the *2006 California Biennial*, at the Orange County Museum of Art. In 2007 he will participate in *The World as a Stage*, curated by Jessica Morgan at the Tate Modern, London, and the *Prague Biennial 3* in the Czech Republic.

**Karla Diaz** is a poet, performer and art critic. She has read her work and exhibited projects in venues throughout Southern California including the Getty Art Museum, REDCAT and the Natural History Museum in Los Angeles; the Center for Curatorial

Studies Bard College, Hunter College in New York, the Serpentine Gallery in London and at the Zocalo in Mexico City. Karla writes for several art magazines including Beautiful Decay and the Journal of Aesthetics and Protest. She is a founding member of Slanguage, an artists' collective in Wilmington, Calif., where she instituted an education program for teens. She lives and works in Los Angeles where she is associate director for the New Chinatown Barbershop gallery.

### **About Montalvo Arts Center**

Montalvo Arts Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to forging meaningful connections between art, artists and the communities it serves through creation, presentation and education in extraordinary ways and settings. Located in the Saratoga hills, Montalvo Arts Center occupies a Mediterranean-style villa on 175 stunning acres, which Senator James Phelan left to the people of California for the encouragement of art, music, literature and architecture. In January 2005, the organization changed its name from "Montalvo" to "Montalvo Arts Center" to commemorate its 75th year as an arts center and to better communicate its mission to expanding local, national and international audiences. For more information about Montalvo Arts Center, call (408) 961-5800 or visit [www.montalvoarts.org](http://www.montalvoarts.org).

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