

FAIRMOUNT PARK ART ASSOCIATION

1616 Walnut Street, Suite 2012

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www.fpaa.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Fact sheet enclosed)

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PRESS RELEASE**NEW PUBLIC ART PROJECT FOR PHILADELPHIA'S LATINO COMMUNITY**

The Fairmount Park Art Association will unveil a new public art project, *I have a story to tell you...*, created by artist Pepón Osorio for Congreso de Latinos Unidos (216 West Somerset Street in North Philadelphia). The project transforms the Congreso facility into a community photograph album. *I have a story to tell you...* will be dedicated at a ceremony on Wednesday, June 18 from 4:30 to 6:30 PM at Congreso. The dedication will include presentations by community members who contributed family photographs to the project.

I have a story to tell you... is the first permanent public art commission for Osorio, an internationally renowned artist who was born in Puerto Rico and currently resides in Philadelphia. Osorio was awarded a prestigious MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Fellowship in 1999 and was featured in the PBS television series, *Art:21 – Art in the Twenty-first Century*. His work has appeared in the Whitney Biennial and has been exhibited worldwide, including biennials in Havana and Johannesburg. For *I have a story to tell you...*, Osorio worked with clients and staff from Congreso to gather photographs from personal collections, selecting images that reflect shared experience and depict local events that have impacted community life. These photographs were enlarged and transferred to glass panels, which were installed in the building as windows and also used to create an outdoor "casita" or "little house" in the adjacent courtyard.

"My principal concern," says Osorio, "is to return art to the community. My creative process is one of listening to stories, uncovering histories, channeling collective experiences, and transforming these into artworks that can serve as reflections of the group."

I have a story to tell you... was commissioned through the Fairmount Park Art Association's ongoing program *New•Land•Marks: public art, community, and the meaning of place*. *New•Land•Marks* works with artists and communities to plan and create new works of public art. *New•Land•Marks* was

selected for a 2002 Place Planning Award by the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) and the design journal *Places. I have a story to tell you...* was made possible with the generous support of the William Penn Foundation, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and the Independence Foundation.

Osorio creates installations that incorporate images and artifacts from daily life in Latino communities, and his work explores the processes of cultural transmission and the construction of social and cultural identity. His installations often grow out of a dialogue among underserved communities, social service providers, and the commissioning institution. He is currently the first artist-in-residence for the Department of Human Services (DHS) in Philadelphia, and his recent installations at Ronald Feldman Fine Arts (NY) and the Bernice Steinbaum Galllery (Miami) recreated the DHS offices, using actual and created materials with dramatic video segments.

Osorio has received many awards including the Skowhegan Medal for Sculpture, the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Biennial Award, and the Cal Arts/Alpert Award for Visual Arts. His collaboration with local artist Iris Brown is currently on view at the 2200 block of North Palethorpe Street (between Dauphin and York Streets) in Philadelphia as part of the group exhibition *Urban Sanctuaries* sponsored by the Philadelphia Art Alliance and Taller Puertorriqueño, Inc.

Congreso de Latinos Unidos is the leading provider of social, economic, health, and educational services to the Latino community of Philadelphia. Congreso's broad range of programs offers a holistic approach to community development and social services.

Chartered in 1872, the Fairmount Park Art Association is the nation's first private, non-profit organization dedicated to integrating public art and urban planning. The Art Association works to promote the appreciation of public art through programs and advocacy efforts that commission, interpret, and preserve public art in Philadelphia.

Enclosed: Fact Sheet about *I have a story to tell you...* (1 page)

Available: A fully illustrated publication of the *New•Land•Marks* proposals (Aerial Editions, an imprint of Grayson Publishing, 2001)

To request photographs or arrange an interview with the artist, please call (215) 546-7550.

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