

PRESS RELEASE

El Otro Lado: The Other Side - Albuquerque Storytelling Event & Exhibit Opening

WHEN: Event: **Saturday, November 13, 7pm**
Exhibit Dates: November 13, 2010 - January 21, 2011
(note closing date extended)

WHERE: **National Hispanic Cultural Center**
Pete V. Domenici Education Center
1701 4th St. SW, Albuquerque
505-246-2261, www.nhccnm.org

INFO: 505-242-1445, www.516arts.org, www.elotroladoproject.org
www.aloveoflearning.org

HOW MUCH: Free

INTERVIEWS: Chrissie Orr, Lead Artist, 505-699-7269, chrissie@metamorfosis.com
Michelle Otero, Lead Writer, 505-9701, kmotero@gmail.com



516 ARTS, The Academy for the Love of Learning and the National Hispanic Cultural Center present a community storytelling event and exhibit for *El Otro Lado: The Other Side*, a collaborative, interdisciplinary art project led by artist Chrissie Orr and writer Michelle Otero. The event is emceed by Michelle Otero and features project participants and New Mexico poets.

El Otro Lado: The Other Side uses the creative process to address issues of migration, human rights and sense of place. The project empowers the universal need to see and witness ourselves clearly in the world, as well as to be seen and known by others. Orr and Otero have led workshops over the past year with four communities in Albuquerque: El Centro de Igualdad y Derechos, Native American Community Academy (NACA), Barelvas Senior Center and Westside Community Center. Sharing their stories has given *El Otro Lado* participants a sense of freedom through this experience of being seen and heard. The expression of their personal identity is revealed through the distinctiveness of their art and handwriting, and by their literal voices in the oral storytelling.

In addition to hearing and viewing participants' work, attendees will have an opportunity to share their own reflections on where they come from, both at the event itself and on the 516 ARTS blog:

www.516arts.blogspot.com

This community arts process culminates in an installation of visual and audio representations and oral storytelling at the National Hispanic Cultural Center's Pete V. Domenici Education Center. The event celebrates the opening of the exhibit, which runs through January 21, 2011. Then next year, 516 ARTS will launch a series of public art installations for *El Otro Lado* around the City as part of the City of Albuquerque's 1% for Art Program.

Lead artist Chrissie Orr says, "The comings and goings of peoples and cultures are part of our collective history. The crossing to el otro lado (the other side) has been with us since the beginning of time. This passage can be from one country to another or from the rural desert terrains to the urban environment or the disorientation that comes from seeing your ancestral home misused and destroyed. Our interaction with the landscape, wherever and whatever that might be, informs and shapes our narratives in ways we often cannot touch or express. My hope is that by remembering and sharing these land-based visual and audio stories, the borders that separate us will dissolve, silenced voices will be heard and new horizons will be uncovered."

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Alicia Lueras Maldonado, who has worked as part of a team of artists under the direction of Chrissie Orr and Michelle Otero, says "I have always been fascinated by stories. There is such strength and beauty in our stories and exploring the places and people we come from. Atrisco, Carrizozo, Raventon, Chilili...some of my places in New Mexico. *Lugares* that shape who I am and hold the bones of my ancestors. The *El Otro Lado* project offers a unique opportunity to take the time to reflect on our stories and find creative and powerful ways to share them."

The writing and art in *El Otro Lado: The Other Side - Albuquerque* explores sense of place and roots, longing for home and nostalgia. The question of "where I am from" has provided a point of focus and dialogue for the participants. Here are some of their responses:

"I am from untold stories that you cannot deny."

"I am from the cherry tree in my nana's backyard *y los nueces* at Tia Andrea's house."

"I am from Hunkpapa Lakota clans, turtle and buffalo."

"I am from two quilts from two grandmothers."

"I am from Highway 602 where the post office of Joe Milos and Sabinas are in the middle of nowhere."

"I am from *los vestidos tejidos de mi abuelita Chole* to riding the 66 Central bus to Walmart."

"I am from two sides of the story."

ABOUT THE LEAD ARTISTS:

CHRISSIE ORR, born in Scotland, Chrissie Orr received a M.F.A. degree from Edinburgh College of Art and then proceeded to develop her skills as an artist in unconventional places and ways. She was a circus performer throughout Europe, a muralist in Corsica and has created community arts projects in Australia, Iran, Turkey, Europe, Mexico and America. She was co-director of Arran Community Arts Project, Isle of Arran, Scotland, which was one of the first rural arts projects to be funded by the Scottish Arts Council. She was Community Artist for East Lothian, where she developed innovative projects gathering stories from diverse communities. As founder of the nationally acclaimed Teen Project in Santa Fe, New Mexico, her vision and skills were recognized by the U.S. Congress and N.E.A. and she has been nominated for numerous awards for her work with youth. She has lectured internationally on her work and process, especially the Bridge Project that addressed issues on the border between El Paso, Texas, U.S. and Juarez, Mexico.

MICHELLE OTERO is a writer, teacher and performer. She is the author of *Malinche's Daughter* (Momotombo Press, 2006), an essay collection based on her work with women survivors of sexual assault in Oaxaca, Mexico. Her work has appeared in *Artful Dodge*, *Brevity*, and *Puerto del Sol*, and she has been a featured reader and presenter at universities and communities throughout the U.S. and Mexico. She is a co-founder of Connecting Community Voices, an Albuquerque-based organization that combines creative expression and digital media to drive positive social change. She has received numerous fellowships, including from the McCune Foundation, the Anderson Center, the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund and a Fulbright. She is a member of the Macondo Writers Workshop and performs with Las Meganenas, a repertory theatre troupe that uses performance to raise awareness of issues facing Latinas. She is tenth-generation New Mexican and Creative Director of Valle Encantado, an organization promoting sustainable development initiatives in the Atrisco historic core in Albuquerque.

El Otro Lado: The Other Side - Albuquerque is presented through a partnership between The Academy for the Love of Learning, 516 ARTS, La Plaza de Encuentro, the National Hispanic Cultural Center and Connecting Community Voices. This event is made possible in part by the New Mexico Humanities Council, New Mexico Council on Photography, Albert I. Pierce Foundation, the City of Albuquerque Public Art Program and McCune Charitable Foundation.

For more information, visit www.elotroladoproject.org

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