



City of Austin
Art in Public Places - Cultural Arts Division
Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office



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Art in Public Places announces new public artwork for the
The César E. Chávez Memorial Project

Public Art Dedication: Tuesday, May 12, 2009; 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Austin, TX– The City of Austin Art in Public Places (AIPP) program announces the public art dedication ceremony for ***Rayo de Esperanza – A Beacon of Hope: Sculpture, Community Information Kiosk and Benches***, by Connie Arismendi and Laura Garanzuay. The artwork was commissioned for the **César E. Chávez Memorial Project** at the Terrazas Branch Public Library located in the heart of east Austin. AIPP will host a public art dedication and community celebration **Tuesday, May 12, 2009, 6:30–8:30 p.m.**, at the Terrazas Library, 1105 E. César Chávez Street. The event is free to the public and will include live music by Conjunto Aztlan and other community programming.

The City of Austin **Art in Public Places** (AIPP) program commissioned artists **Connie Arismendi** and **Laura Garanzuay**, through competitive selection, to create permanent public art for **The César E. Chávez Memorial Project**. This project is an Austin City Council initiative that called for a commemorative public artwork to honor the civil rights and labor leader at the Terrazas Library, which is to be the repository of Austin's largest collection of books and videos regarding the life and work of Chávez.

Rayo de Esperanza – A Beacon of Hope:

Sculpture, Community Information Kiosk and

Benches is a sculptural and symbolic beacon, announcing the entrance into east Austin and commemorating the spirit and philosophies of the civil rights and labor leader whose work reflected his commitment to social change. Working with aqua jet cut aluminum, the artists depict Chávez holding a book and explain, "He was a strong proponent of education and said to have died holding a book in his hand." On the base of the sculpture, Chávez's quote, "*The answer lies with you and me. It is with all men and women who share the suffering and yearn with us for a better world,*" is cut out and layered with perforated metal. Rising 25 ft. high behind the figure and visible from a distance are the stylized wings and silhouetted head of an Aztec eagle, Chávez's symbol of courage for the United Farm Workers. The soaring bird is also meant to allude to the mythical Phoenix rising from the ashes, a concept that Arismendi and Garanzuay further through an LED lighting program that slowly cycles through fiery colors of reds, oranges and yellows. The artists designed a total of three lighting



© Arismendi Garanzuay 2009; Photo: David Omer Photography



programs for the piece corresponding to historic events in Chávez's life. On nights that Chávez fasted to bring attention to the plight of farm workers, the sculpture will be lit in shades of purple, the color of penance and sacrifice. On his birthday, the lighting will be colorful, festive and celebratory. Adjacent to the sculpture, the artists created an area for the community to gather with benches and information kiosk.

Connie Arismendi and Laura Garanzuay have worked collaboratively for the past six years. Arismendi Garanzuay Studio combines a multidisciplinary approach to producing large-scale public artwork. Connie is a nationally recognized sculptor and Laura has a background in structural engineering and industrial design. They are known for innovative large-scale architectural installations and freestanding sculptures that combine a wide variety of materials. In 2007 they completed *Water Tree* an elegant site-specific sculptural installation at 360 Condominiums that incorporates sculpture, photography, painting, and LED programmable lighting. They are currently at work on *Night Song*, a 100 ft. tall light sculpture that sits atop the Rolling Hills radio tower in the City of Fort Worth. *Rayo de Esperanza* the Cesar Chavez Memorial is their third large scale sculpture with lighting. The artists extended their work beyond the sculpture to create an area for the community that includes benches and an information kiosk.

Connie Arismendi is a nationally recognized sculptor and installation artist living and working in Austin, TX. She received a BFA from The University of Texas and an MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work is in major public and private collections in the United States and Mexico. She recently completed three public artworks for the *Roy Montelongo Scenic Overlook*, *Nash Hernandez Sr. Road*, and *Perez and Ramos Plaza* along the *Trail of Tejano Legends*. Arismendi has been awarded public art commissions in Austin, Fort Worth and Chicago.

Laura Garanzuay has a BS Degree in Structural Engineering from the University of Texas and extensive experience in the field of Industrial Design. Her work as an Industrial Designer has been prominently featured in the catalogs of Crate & Barrel and Pottery Barn. Through the use of restraint, simplicity and naturalness she creates sculptural work that is stylish and streamlined. She has created large scale public art projects and numerous private commissions that have culminated in a body of work defined by an elegant fluidity and strength.

César E. Chávez is recognized as one of the most heroic figures of our time. For a more information on the life and legacy of Chávez, visit *Life and Legacy of César Chávez*, a comprehensive biography by the University of Texas at Austin at www.utexas.edu, or the César Chávez Foundation at www.chavezfoundation.org.

For photographs or more information about Austin's Art in Public Places program visit, www.cityofaustin.org/aipp or contact Megan Crigger, Administrator, at 974-9312.

The City of Austin's Art in Public Places acquires and maintains works of art for City facilities and parks through commissions, donations and loans for the cultural enrichment of Austin's community. AIPP is part of the Cultural Arts Division within the City of Austin's Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office.

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