



## New Orleans Museum of Art

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# *Coping With Katrina* to Showcase Children's Art Therapy Initiative

**Hang Your Wish for New Orleans on the "Tree of Rebirth" Aug. 30**

**NEW ORLEANS, La. (Tuesday, August 19, 2008)**—From August 27 to November 2, the New Orleans Museum of Art will present *Coping with Katrina: Artwork from the Hyogo-NOMA Children's Art Therapy Initiative*, an exhibition of artworks by children who lived through the 2005 hurricane and subsequent flooding. All of the pieces were produced by participants in the Hyogo-NOMA Children's Art Therapy Initiative, which has offered art therapy sessions at schools throughout the New Orleans area and at free day camps at the Museum.

"The works express sincere emotions about the children's experiences with Hurricane Katrina," said Holly Wherry, the professional art therapist who has been on staff at NOMA since 2007 and who coordinated the sessions that led to this exhibition. "You see how they are coping three years after the storm, and you see their immense pride in New Orleans."

All of the participating children have given permission for their art to be exhibited publicly in order to communicate their experiences and educate the public about art therapy.

A public reception in honor of the participants will be held at the Museum on Wednesday, September 3, from 6-8 p.m.

### **The Tree of Rebirth Project**

In conjunction with *Coping with Katrina*, a special art-making event will take place in the Museum's Great Hall on Saturday, August 30, from 1-4 p.m. in the Museum's Great Hall. Three years after the flood, New Orleanians of all ages are invited to contribute to this public art project by creating an artistic rendering of their wish for the city, then hanging it on the "Tree of Rebirth," a six-foot papier mâché tree. No artistic ability is required.

Admission to Coping With Katrina and the Tree of Rebirth Project, as well as all other current exhibitions and public programs, is free to Louisiana residents courtesy of The Helis Foundation.

**About the Hyogo-NOMA Art Therapy Initiative**

Through a generous gift from the Hyogo Prefecture of Japan, NOMA has been providing art therapy services to the children of New Orleans. Art therapy is a mental health profession that helps people use art to process their emotions when they have difficulty expressing themselves verbally, and over 250 New Orleans public school children have received weekly art therapy services as part of the Hyogo-NOMA Children's Art Therapy Initiative. In total, almost 800 children, educators, mental health professionals, and parents have benefited from the program over the past year by learning to use art to process, share, cope with, and express their Hurricane Katrina experiences. The program provided art therapy groups for children who may not otherwise have had access to mental health services and were often traumatized, uncertain, frightened and living in communities in transition.

**About NOMA and the Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden**

The New Orleans Museum of Art, founded in 1910 by Isaac Delgado, houses more than 30,000 art objects encompassing 4,000 years of world art. Works from the permanent collection, along with continuously changing temporary exhibitions, are on view in the Museum's 46 galleries Wednesdays from noon to 8 p.m. and Thursdays to Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission to the Museum is free to Louisiana residents through the generosity of The Helis Foundation.

Admission to the adjacent Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden, featuring work by 57 artists, including several of the 20th century's master sculptors, is always free during regular Museum hours.

The New Orleans Museum of Art and the Sculpture Garden are fully accessible to handicapped visitors and wheelchairs are available from the front desk.

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