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STUDENTS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY EXPLORE THEMES OF CULTURE, DEMOCRACY AND DIVERSITY IN A NEW SUMMER ART EXHIBITION AT THE CHINESE AMERICAN MUSEUM

**National Art Competition Exhibition
June 20, 2009 – Sept. 27, 2009**

Exhibit Reception: Sunday, June 28, 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

(LOS ANGELES, June 1, 2009) - In 2007 and 2009, students in grades K-12 from across the country participated in a national art competition, hosted by the Chinese American Museum (CAM) and the Chinese American Citizens Alliance (CACA), based on the themes of “*Growing Up Chinese American*” and “*Democracy and Diversity*,” respectively. The winning entries and honorable mentions from both competitions will go on public display for the first time in a spirited new art exhibition opening on June 20 to Sept. 27, 2009, celebrating the artistic perspectives and cultural expressions of these student-artists.

Featuring over fifty colorful artworks spanning two gallery floors, the dual-themed exhibit will reflect an intersection of art, culture, politics and diversity as seen through the eyes of America’s youth. All of the winning entries were selected by a panel of community members and artists who judged the artwork based on several criteria including creativity and originality, artistic presentation, use of color and contrast, technical skill, and appropriateness of topic.

The inspiration for this year’s art competition theme, *Democracy and Diversity*, was based largely on the excitement and history-making events of last year’s presidential election. Submitted entries explored the issues of voting, immigration, and freedom interpreted with an underlying sense of optimism towards the future. Many of the submissions also pay tribute to the United States’ 44th President Barack Obama, which will be highlighted in a special section of the exhibit devoted entirely to Obama’s historic election win. A voting station in the gallery will provide visitors with a hands-on opportunity to cast their vote for their favorite artwork. Conceived as a light-hearted way for visitors to engage with the exhibit, the voting interactive is also a reminder that the singular act of voting illustrates a significant tenet of American democracy and culture.

In 2007, *Growing Up Chinese American* was selected as the competition-theme to promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity and improve racial harmony among the many diverse groups in the United States. The contest sparked a delightful deluge of images of family gatherings, cultural celebrations, and whimsical portrayals of the multi-faceted experience of growing up in a multi-cultural America. In essence, the student-artists, who may or may not have been of Chinese descent, were encouraged to interpret from personal perspectives, some of the diverse experiences a typical Chinese American youth may encounter as a child growing up in America today, and how those distinct experiences differ or reflect the artist’s own unique childhood experiences.

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[High Resolution Digital Images For This Exhibit Are Available Upon Request]

OPENING RECEPTION

An invitation-only reception for museum members, donors, exhibit participants and media will be held on Sunday, June 28, 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. at CAM. The program will include an awards ceremony for the winners of this year's *Diversity and Democracy* art competition.

ABOUT THE CHINESE AMERICAN MUSEUM

The Chinese American Museum (CAM) is jointly developed and operated by the Friends of the Chinese American Museum (FCAM) and El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, a department of the City of Los Angeles. Located within the El Pueblo Plaza in downtown Los Angeles, CAM is housed in the last surviving structure of the City's original Chinatown. CAM's mission is to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of America's diverse heritage by researching, preserving, and sharing the history, rich cultural legacy, and continuing contributions of Chinese Americans.

VISITOR INFORMATION

The Chinese American Museum is located at 425 North Los Angeles Street in El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, across from Union Station. Hours are 10 a.m.– 3 p.m., Tuesday – Sunday. Admissions are suggested donations of \$3 for adults and \$2 for seniors and students. Members are admitted free. For more information about the Museum, please visit our new website at www.camla.org or follow up on:

Facebook: search for "Chinese American Museum"

Flickr: http://www.flickr.com/photos/camla_org

Twitter: ChinAmerMuseum

ABOUT THE CHINESE AMERICAN CITIZENS ALLIANCE (CACA)

CACA was founded in the state of California in 1895 and was originally known as the "Native Sons of the Golden State." The organization was initially formed to fight against anti-Chinese sentiment and discriminatory laws established during the 19th century. Now, the organization has evolved to improve and protect the welfare and civil rights of Chinese and Chinese Americans throughout the nation.

The National Art Competition was created in 1995 by the C.A.C.A. Los Angeles Lodge to encourage students of all ages to think about the possibility of entering the professional art field in the future. The theme of the 1995 National Art Competition was *Festivals & Celebrations of Chinese Americans* and was developed into an exhibit displayed at the Chinese American Museum (CAM) in 2006.

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