



## Santa Fe Art Institute

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# INSTIGATING CONVERSATION: PUBLIC ART IN SANTA FE

## **The Migration Project**

### ***El Otro Lado, Proyecto Collectivo: The Other Side***

**A community based public arts project conceptualized and directed  
by Chrissie Orr**

**Supported by the Santa Fe Art Institute**

Art plays a dynamic role in the formation of a community. Especially in times of social strife, it is the artist's job to address the issues. For Santa Fe artist Chrissie Orr, who has been working with social and political issues through her art for more than 30 years, now is one of those times.

In Santa Fe, the issues of identity and place are major sources of community strife. To whom does Santa Fe rightfully belong? Who are we as a community? How did we get here, and where are we going? How do we learn to respect each other and treat one another better?

Although the myth of Santa Fe declares that we are a city of three separate, equal and distinct groups of people (Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo) a quick look around will tell you that this is no longer true. After the initial waves of colonization that brought in the Spanish, and then the Anglo, there have been smaller, successive and continuous influxes of people to this desirable little mountain town. Santa Fe is now a place where people move from all over the world, whether by choice or as a means of survival, coming together to raise a new generation of Santa Feans.

If we wished, we could maintain this tri-cultural myth forever, but denying what is under the sur-  
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The Santa Fe Art Institute, an independent educational non-profit organization founded in 1985, is committed to programs that nurture artists and enhance and promote the arts as an essential element of American culture and society. Visit our website at [www.sfai.org](http://www.sfai.org).

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face has created a boiling underbelly of violence that runs throughout our community. The Migration Project El Otro Lado Proyecto Collectivo: The Other Side, led by artist Chrissie Orr is a public arts project that uses the creative process of the interdisciplinary arts to address issues of migration, human rights, boundaries and sense of place. The intergenerational cross cultural participants are actively involved in developing symbolic maps and drawings, visual representations of their stories, their journeys, their landmarks, their boundaries and their sense of place and home. It is our hope that through creating a deeper understanding of each other and our journeys we can help relieve social, economic and racial tensions.

Chrissie Orr is currently leading an intensive series of workshops at Charter School 37, (Santa Fe's only bilingual high school) The Santa Fe Public Schools ADELANTE! Program (which supports homeless students and their families in the public schools), and with Monte Del Sol's Youth Radio program. The workshops are long-term engagements in storytelling, photography, drawing, writing and mixed media collage. The goal is to encourage participants to explore the role of migration in local and global history, cultivate respect and listening skills, and teach young people not only how to tell their own life stories, but that their stories are important.

The workshops are specifically designed to provide a safe space for all to be able to share and express delicate stories and topics in relation to migration, journey and human rights. Whether they are the physical migrations from Mexico to Santa Fe, the emotional migrations of struggling with domestic violence, or of proving yourself to a city that expects little of you - these stories are incredibly powerful, and combined with their visual images have the potential to change the way we think about each other.

This change of perception is necessary not only for our community, but for the nation as a whole as political debate (especially around issues of immigration policy) become more and more polarized. By understanding each other on a deeper level we can change not just the direction of the political debate, but also the very nature of the debate itself.

The written, visual, and oral works created in this series of workshops will be brought to the public in a variety of ways including a Public Art Installation. The installation will be a series of large panels which will be assembled in layers from the visual images, photographs and text created in the various workshops. This series will be strategically placed in various outside locations around Santa Fe to take the viewer on a new migratory journey through diverse areas of Santa Fe. The community will also engage with the artwork via Radio and Newspaper Dispatches, Community Dialogues, an Exhibition at the Santa Fe Art Institute, and as a Book.

Public Art can be a powerful form of communication reaching people who would not go out of their way to experience it otherwise, and bringing vital conversations out of classrooms or lecture halls and back into the public space of our streets where it belongs. If we are to be successful breaking down the social economic and racial tensions of our community, it is a conver-

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sation in which we all have to engage. It is our hope that The Migration Project will help to kick start this conversation, and open our eyes to new ideas and new perspectives.

The Migration Project is part of the Santa Fe Art Institutes 2008 program  
OUTSIDER: Tourism, Migration, Exile. ([www.sfai.org](http://www.sfai.org))

Team: Chrissie Orr, artist/activist.  
Pablo Ancona, student of documentary studies College of Santa Fe.  
Melissa Briceno, program officer for the Academy for the Love of Learning  
Amaryllis deJesus Moleski, Education Assistant, Santa Fe Art Institute  
Johanna Kohout, Education Director, Santa Fe Art Institute.  
Laura Elena Moreno, educator, Charter School 37  
Judy Goldberg, director of Youth Radio and Backroads Radio.  
Victoria Ferrar, immigration lawyer.  
Allegre Love, 4th grade bi-lingual teacher, immigration activist.  
Helga Ancona, radio producer and photographer.  
David Gordon, Academy for the Love of Learning  
Marcela Diaz, Somos Un Pueblo Unido  
Patrick Kelly, public relations.  
Jamie Becerril, community organizer.

Partners: Santa Fe Art Institute  
Somos Un Pueblo Unido  
Santa Fe Youth Radio Project.  
Academy for The Love of Learning

Workshops: Charter School 37  
SFPS ADELANTE! Program  
Monte Del Sol Charter School

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