

ARTS&CULTURE

Border woes make for an original, avant-garde exhibition

By Melissa Barbagallo
LA JOLLA LIGHT

The Mexican-American border just below San Diego has long been a source of controversy. Illegal immigration, drug trafficking and crime are constant topics of concern for law enforcement and civilians alike.

But on April 2, with the help of artists, curators, writers, professors and theoreticians from around the globe, this divider will become a symbol of unity, awareness and art as the highly anticipated InSite 05 Preview exhibition gets under way.

InSite 05 is the latest installment brought forth by InSite, a nonprofit organization renowned for its socially conscious, often politically charged artwork. This free exhibition will offer a sneak peek at the multimedia pieces that will be officially unveiled Aug. 26 at both the San Diego Museum of Art and the Cultural Institute of Baja California in Tijuana.

Although no final projects will be on display until then, visitors will have the chance to preview filmed, photographed, hand-drawn and written proposals of the 24 designs from April 2 through May 8 at the Athenaeum Music and Arts Library and the Cultural Institute of Baja, California.

"We are a nontraditional organization," said Michael Krichman, the director of InSite 05, "and with this preview, we are trying to give people insight into what



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The InSite 05 preview offers visitors a sneak peek at a forthcoming \$3.5 million exhibition.

we do."

What InSite does is commission artists from around the world — including those from Mexico, Brazil, Holland, Finland, Canada, Cuba, Turkey and even San Diego — to develop new works to be displayed in public places. These projects range from documentary-style

films to a new public park where the fence goes into the ocean at the border.

"But, you can't just plonk a sculpture down anywhere," Krichman said. "These artists have long-term engagements with the (community)."

In most cases, these artists — most of whom are mid-career — have been invit-

ed by the InSite organization to complete two-year residencies, which are typically conducted over the course of five to six visits to the San Diego-Tijuana region.

"These artists are all seasoned professionals," said Krichman. "And they really do a wide range of projects."

Among the more eccentric creations are a Mexican artist's plan to shoot human cannonball Dave "The Bullet" Smith across the border with the help of patients from a mental hospital in Mexico, a Canadian artist's choir comprised solely of the spouses of servicemen currently stationed in Iraq, a Dutch artist's film featuring the less-traveled canyon areas of Tijuana, and another artist's idea to increase porters' — the men who transport baggage at the border — visibility by supplying them with new uniforms, carts and signage.

"I feel that these are all very original projects that really show what cultural institutions could do for the area," said Osvaldo Sanchez, art director for the 12-year-old InSite. "They are all very important for the city."

They are so important that the organization's \$3.5 million budget is met by some of the discipline's biggest names, including the Athenaeum Music and Arts Library, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Arts, the city of San Diego Commission for the Visual Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the

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Centro Cultural de La Raza, the Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego State University, the University of California, San Diego, and the Mexican Cultural Institute of San Diego.

A number of individuals also contribute funds to the organization, helping to cover artists' materials and living costs.

"We really do get a lot of support,"

Krichman said.

While the InSite 05 display is intended to be a preview of coming attractions, the official exhibition will be nothing short of elaborate, with four main divisions: Interventions, Scenarios, Conversations and Museum Exhibitions.

Interventions will feature at least 24 full-scale projects. Scenarios will address new works in three arenas not traditionally associated with art, in-

cluding an interactive online exhibit. Conversations will present lectures, dialogues, publications and other works of practitioners within the field. Museum Exhibitions will represent the largest collaboration between the SDMA and the Centro Cultural de Baja, California, in the history of InSite.

"InSite 05 will allow people to see parts of the city fabric that are not highly visible," said Sanchez, adding that InSite 05 will run from Aug. 26

through Dec. 13. "This public phase is very important."

The InSite Preview exhibition will be open to visitors from April 2 through March 8 at the Athenaeum, located at 1008 Wall St. Hours are Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. An opening reception will be held Friday, April 1, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

For more information, call (858) 454-5872, or visit www.InSite_05.org.