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The House Is Small But the Welcome Is Big
Photography Exhibit to Premiere in Denver at GALLERY M

Denver, Colo. – May 12, 2008 – Over the past two years an unlikely group of amateur photographers has documented the life and death struggle of HIV/AIDS in Africa. Eighteen children from Maputo, Mozambique, orphaned by AIDS, and 15 HIV-positive women in Cape Town, South Africa, pointed cameras at images in their communities to tell the uncensored story of their lives. The result is a stirring exhibit of 41 photographs premiering in Denver at GALLERY M this June.

The photos are tragic and hopeful, lively and compelling. Some are difficult to look at. All of them are hard to dismiss. The exhibit, along with biographical panels about the photographers, opens at GALLERY M in Cherry Creek North on June 14th and ends July 13th.

“We gave these women and children professional digital cameras, taught them the basics of how to use them and provided a little encouragement. What emerged is a glimpse of what life is like day-to-day when you’re an orphan or a mom living with HIV,” says Lynn Warshafsky, co-founder of *the house is small but the welcome is big* social art program.

The name of the project comes from one of the photographs taken by 28 year-old Funeka Nceke of Cape Town. On the wall of her friend’s home hangs an embroidered cloth that reads, “The House Is Small But the Welcome Is Big.” Funeka lives in a shack with no electricity or running water with her two children and two additional family members. Funeka learned she was HIV-positive in 2003.

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Denver native and Emmy-nominated writer/executive producer of *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*, Neal Baer, M.D., is co-founder of the project.

“These children, as young as 10 and no older than 18, have a lot to say through these images about living on their own and raising younger siblings by themselves,” says Baer. “That’s the harsh truth about AIDS in Africa. Millions of children are growing up alone, a generation without the guidance or love of parents.”

One of the most beautiful photographs is titled, “My Memories” and is a pair of hands gently touching old black and white photographs. “Photographs of my parents are displayed, which show their past. I show everyone my parents [when they were] alive through these photos, which is a joy for me,” says Joaquim Macamo, the 16 year-old photographer. Macamo lost both of his parents to AIDS in 2001 and lives with his 20 year-old sister.

The photographs will be available for sale starting at \$400 each. Proceeds from sales of the prints will be used to establish a photographic institute in Maputo so the young photographers can continue to document their lives. The exhibit will also be held in New York and Los Angeles, as well as traveling internationally.

“GALLERY M is honored to premiere this exciting international event,” says GALLERY M Managing Director Myrna Hayutin. A special open house for the public is scheduled from 4 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, June 14th. The benefit show continues through June and July on and offline at GALLERY M.

About Venice Arts

The House Is Small is a project of Venice Arts, a nonprofit organization running innovative programs in documentary photography, filmmaking, and digital media/arts, primarily targeting low-income youth in the Los Angeles area since 1993. The organization also implements regional, national and international participant-produced photo documentary projects with adults and children. In 2007, Venice Arts joined with the USC Annenberg Center for Communication Leadership to create the Venice Arts/USC Institute for Photographic Empowerment. Since its inception 15 years ago, Venice Arts has come to be recognized as an Exemplary Arts Organization and has been the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions for its unique Media Art Mentoring programs and its innovative integration of technology into arts learning.

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About GALLERY M

Established in November 1996, GALLERY M brings to Denver contemporary fine art, photography, and sculpture that is the quality and diversity found in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Europe. Located in the heart of Denver's prestigious Cherry Creek North district, GALLERY M features the work of more than thirty national and international artist, many of whom are museum credited. GALLERY M specializes in 20th and 21st century photography (vintage, later and modern prints) with an emphasis on photojournalism, fashion and social documentation. Since 1996, photography representation primarily includes: Howard Schatz, Charles Dwyer, Jr., Allen Birnbach, Howard Bingham, Ted Williams, Walter Rosenblum, vintage and modern prints from Alfred Eisenstadt, Margaret Bourke-White, Carl Mydans, Ralph Morse, Andreas Feininger, John Loengard, Hank Walker, Joe Rosenthal, Nina Leen, Peter Stackpole, Bill Eppridge, the Associated Press Archive and the Pulitzer Price collection. GALLERY M is decidedly different, and its industry reputation for almost two decades is a testament to its service, knowledge, experience and continually growing base of satisfied collectors.

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