

## MEDIA ALERT

**Contact:**

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**WHAT:** **Through the Eyes of Haitian Children**, photographs of Haitian life taken before and after the devastating earthquake by youth participants in the Haiti-based project Zanmi Lakay (Haitian Creole for Friend's Home). The project has been working with street children in Haiti for over 13 years, and was recently featured on "Lens," the photo blog of the *New York Times*. **The Price of Sugar**, a film screening about Haitians working in slave-like conditions in the Dominican sugar industry, will augment the exhibition. Open to the public and free-of-charge.

**WHEN: Exhibit:** Gallery Talk, Saturday, August 14, 2010, 4-5pm, Artists' Reception to follow, 6-8pm; open through September 24, 2010.

**Film screening:** Wednesday, September 22, 2010, 7pm

**WHERE:** Venice Arts Gallery, 1702 Lincoln Boulevard, Venice, CA 90291 | 310-392-0846

**WHY:** While image making in the digital age is nearly ubiquitous, participant-photography programs around the globe seek to develop the visual storytelling skills of participants so that they may create images that offer unique community and personal stories. Says Zanmi Lakay's Executive Director, Jennifer Pantaléon, "We treated them as student journalists" and worked with them to develop themes and stories that explored various aspects of life after the earthquake. "They are still working through trauma, so engaging them and making them come face to face with it through a lens was one way to soothe it and take it outside themselves" while engaging their community and bringing an insider's access and perspective to a tragedy that has largely be portrayed through the eyes of outsiders. The compelling photos in this exhibit are testament to the potential power of the participant genre, and to the importance, especially in the digital age, of teaching young people how to create images that are concerned with meaning and aesthetic.

**WHO:** The **Venice Arts Gallery**, a program of Venice Arts, has been in operation since 2003, showcasing outstanding art by youth, as well as photography and visual art by professional artists. In 2010, the Gallery refined its curatorial focus to feature both professional and participant-produced documentary photography and film, including documentary work in experimental genres. This fall, it will launch its first, free Public Programs in conjunction with the Venice Arts-USC Institute for Photographic Empowerment to include a series of presentations, conversations, and special events about documentary photography, photojournalism, and storytelling in the digital age. Since 1993, Venice Arts has been running innovative programs in documentary photography, filmmaking, and digital media targeting low-income youth in Los Angeles, for which it has received numerous awards and recognitions. Venice Arts 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 on Communication Leadership to create the Institute for Photographic Empowerment.

**MORE INFO:** Venice Arts: [www.venice-arts.org](http://www.venice-arts.org)  
Institute for Photographic Empowerment: [www.joinipe.org](http://www.joinipe.org)