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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

THE ARTS FUND IN COLLABORATION WITH
THE PATRICIA HENLEY FOUNDATION
EXHIBITS AEROSOL ARTISTS

AGAINST THE WALL: LAYERS REVEALED
JANUARY 23 – MARCH 6, 2009

Alexia, *Layers of Graffiti* (series); Vanae Mary Rivera, *In Soul...I didn't want to*; Forrest Rucker, *The Who*.

January 9, 2008 – *AGAINST THE WALL*, a group exhibition, featuring Alexia, Gary Bradley, Brett Hammond, Dave Matsick Jr., Larik Mezey, Daniel Ochoa, Mac Oliver, Vanae Mary Rivera, Forrest Rucker, and Think Tank, will be on view at the Arts Fund Gallery January 23rd through March 6th, 2009. A reception for the artists will be held on the evening of Friday, January 23rd from 5:30-7:30 pm in the Gallery, located at 205C Santa Barbara Street. Gallery hours are 1:00-5:00 pm, Tuesday through Saturday, and by appointment.

Aerosol art is a controversial medium, yet when one realizes the nuance and imagery an artist can achieve by manipulating a “burst” of paint, a spray can becomes a tool of immense creativity. Influenced by street art, pop culture, mural painting, advertising, and calligraphy, aerosol art is as diverse in reference as it is in representation. From ballpoint pen drawings that resemble fine woodcuts to layers of photographic montage, from custom stencils and handmade tools, from canvas, ceramic and cloth,

AGAINST THE WALL explores the practices of aerosol art.

Gallery visitors may be surprised to discover portraits of James Joyce, album covers from Rock ‘n’ Roll legends and provocative social commentary emerging from a spray of paint. As this diverse group of artists demonstrates, the spray can is not the “exclusive” brush of aerosol art. What connects these artists is an assertive graphic sensibility, a willingness to be patient in craft and quick in application, and the independence to appropriate unconventional materials and images. Aerosol art, by its very nature, alters the designation of art object. Through juxtaposition, layers of meaning are revealed.

Identifying themselves as self-taught and self-motivated, these Santa Barbara artists have developed unique solutions in both approach and technique. Together, the body of work on view is a collective effort to bring visual language “from the street” to the gallery wall. For the majority of participants, *AGAINST THE WALL* is the first presentation of their work in a professional space. The exhibit hopes to provide a deeper understanding of aerosol art and appreciation for this community of artists.

In conjunction with the exhibition, a community forum and panel discussion will be held at the Santa Barbara Public Library (Faulkner Gallery) on Friday, February 20th from 5:00 - 7:00 pm. “Giving Voice to a Conflicted Art: Artists, Civic Leaders and Community Members in Conversation” will be emceed by Judi Weisbart, CEO of the Patricia Henley Foundation. The event is free and open to the public. Seating will be limited to first-come, first-served.

The Arts Fund would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Laura Inks who is serving as Creative Producer and Artist Liaison on this collaborative project. “I am very excited that the Arts Fund Board has given these artists an opportunity to take the path towards professionalism. This is the beginning of a process of mutual understanding and education, of bridging the gap, and highlighting the talent of these artists as part of a viable urban art movement,” emphasizes Ms. Inks. The Arts Fund also wishes to thank the Patricia Henley Foundation for co-sponsoring *AGAINST THE WALL* and its associated community forum, “Giving Voice to a Conflicted Art: Artists, Civic Leaders and Community Members in Conversation.”

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Organization Background:

The Arts Fund (www.artsfundsb.org) was established in 1983 with a mission to create, fund and administer programs and projects that foster the arts for the people of Santa Barbara County, to act as a catalyst maximizing the effectiveness of arts resources, and to nurture collaborative relationships amongst arts organizations.

The Arts Fund is best known as the sponsor of the annual Individual Artist Awards (IAA), a juried competition open to local artists, and the Teen Arts Mentorship Program, which, for over a decade, has paired promising young artists with professional master artists in a workshop setting. In 2001, The Arts Fund opened its own gallery, located at the corner of Yanonali and Santa Barbara Streets. Gallery sales and private donations are an important and essential source of funding for the organization so please visit www.artsfundsb.org to learn more about supporting the arts in Santa Barbara. The Arts Fund gallery is open Tuesday – Saturday from 1-5 pm or by appointment.

The Patricia Henley Foundation (www.patriciahenleyfoundation.org) is a non-profit organization that has created a place where children feel heard and feel that their voice matters. The Foundation's mission is to serve children, through the arts, who otherwise would not be heard. All children are welcome, although we concentrate on youth whose voices may be marginalized by trauma, illness, poverty, or any circumstance, which may make it especially important for them to experience the empowerment and self-assurance that artistic expression can provide.