

## New Downtown Gallery Opens With 'Descartes' Exhibit Featuring Installations By Mexican Artists

■ By **AMY DEMPSEY**  
Staff Writer

The Collaborative art gallery – the brainchild of a partnership between the Museum of Latin American Art (MoLAA) and the Arts Council for Long Beach – opened downtown on September 18 with an inaugural exhibit entitled “Descartes.”

The Collaborative is on the ground floor of the new Gallery 421 Apartment Community located at 421 W. Broadway. Lyon Management Company provided funding for the gallery through the Long Beach Redevelopment Agency’s Percent for Public Art Policy, which requires developers to contribute one percent of a project’s cost to the creation of public art.

In Spanish, “descartes” refers to something that has been rejected, thrown away or excluded. Artists Gabriel Boils, Camilo Ontiveros, Jaime Ruiz Otis and Dream Addictive (Leslie García and Carmen González) – all from Tijuana – used discarded objects like washing machines, decals and puzzle pieces to

create installations that relay messages about social issues like immigration, consumerism and utilizing solar energy.

The show’s curator, Idurre Alonso, traveled to Tijuana to commission the artists and decided on the concept after seeing that young artists in the area are working with discarded materials in their art to send a social message. “[The exhibit] tells you about the value of something you threw away and that it can actually have another meaning,” she said. “It also tells you about some social issues of the artists working in Tijuana. One of them is the change of value among objects, depending on where the objects are.”

“Restrain,” an installation of a washing machine bound to the floor with ropes, represents washing machines that are bought in L.A., repaired and sent to Tijuana, where they are sold at a much higher value, all through an underground system employing undocumented immigrants. In another work, artist Jaime Ruiz Otis covered the gallery’s windows with decals

from “maquiladoras,” or assembly factories, to show that recycled industrial materials can be turned into art. Dream Addictive, an artistic group that explores the fusion of art, technology and science created “Solar Garden,” two of the show’s interactive pieces that are powered by solar energy.

“I hope this space and this exhibition gives people in Long Beach the opportunity to see how interesting the arts in Tijuana are right now, and how these young artists are creating interesting pieces,” Alonso said.

MoLAA is responsible for two of four exhibits at The Collaborative. The next one shows in April, but Alonso expects it will be another installation series since there is a lack of wall space in the gallery. The Arts Council is responsible for the other two exhibits.

“Descartes” ends January 23, 2011. Admission to The Collaborative is free to the public. Hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. ■



(Left) Idurre Alonso is the curator for the “Descartes” exhibit at Gallery 421 apartments in Downtown Long Beach. Alonso came up with the show’s concept after visiting Tijuana, where artists use discarded materials to send messages about social issues and the environment. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Thomas McConville)



(Right) The Arts Council for Long Beach and the Museum of Latin American Art present “Descartes,” The Collaborative’s inaugural exhibition at Gallery 421 apartments in Downtown Long Beach. The show features artwork by four groups from Mexico that used materials including factory waste, puzzles, used mattresses and used appliances. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Thomas McConville)