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PRESS RELEASE

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living room art: **ART CAR SPRAWL IN THE FIRST WARD**

Featuring David Cisneros, Eric Hester, Paul Hester, Abro Khuda Bux, Mark Lacy, Sehba Sarwar, Yunuen Perez Vertti, Ilona Yusof, Maheen Zia, del monte films, Pakistani Artisans with Anj Rana + Many More

5 - 9 pm, Saturday, May 1, 2010

Home of Emily Sketch Haines + Zach Haines, 1800 Edwards St., Houston 77007

\$ Free

HOUSTON, TX (March 25, 2010): VBB's *living room art* production, *Art Car Sprawl in the First Ward*, located in Houston's historic First Ward at the home of Emily and Zach Haines, is a celebration of culture, global connections, history, labor, and the power of movement. The show will feature Houston art car and Pakistani truck art history, and include a preview of VBB's first art car, ***Digital Meets Pakistani Truck Art***, designed by **Eric Hester** and **Sehba Sarwar**. Decorations on the car include video screens showing VBB's history, truck art designs from Karachi collected by Sehba Sarwar on a recent trip to Pakistan, and an open mic podium welded out of the passenger seat. Writers are invited to bring their work to the *living room art* show and the Orange Show's Art Car Parade on May 8 to perform in the car. The May 1 show will include: a documentary of art car history in Houston by **Carlton Ahrens** and **Ford Gunter** of **del monte films**, another documentary on Pakistani truck art by **Maheen Zia**, installations by **David Cisneros**, **Yunuen Perez Vertti**, and **Pakistani Artisans** led by **Anj Rana**. Photographs by **Abro Khuda Bux**, **Paul Hester**, **Mark Lacy** and **Ilona Yusof** will be exhibited, documenting the history of art cars and Pakistani truck art. And like all VBB living room art productions, there will be food, drinks, community, conversation, and open mic.

"I've had a wonderful time mixing my two homes through VBB," says Sehba Sarwar, VBB Founding Director. "This *living room art* production is very special – we'll be showcasing my retired '93 Honda by decorating it with pieces of my life that I value greatly: the digital history of VBB recorded by many inspiring artists such as Paul and Eric Hester, Yunuen Perez Vertti and Faroukh Virani, alongside folk art decorations that have led to an international celebration of trucks in Pakistan. We specially chose to hold the show on May 1 (May Day) as a celebration of International Workers' Day to honor those who pour so much into creating the vehicles that move us."

This show is cosponsored by KPFT Pacifica Radio 90.1 FM, The Houston Institute for Culture, The Orange Show for the Visual Arts, and Geo TV. This project is part of VBB's Pakistan Live Broadcast productions that aim to shed an alternative light on Pakistan, and to recognize neighborhoods where shows are installed.

About VBB's First Art Car: VBB's first art car, a '93 Honda Civic hatchback, was donated to VBB by Founding Director Sehba Sarwar who has long been seen whizzing around Houston in the spunky red car. For over 15 years, the Honda has visited spaces including Austin, Big Bend, Mexico, Santa Fe, New Orleans and many more. The car, often viewed as a VBB member, was retired in Fall 2009 after

a long exhausting history of transporting hundreds of high-schoolers, many out-of-town artists and activists, and the VBB board, staff and volunteers. VBB will be honoring the car by entering it in the Orange Show's art car parade on May 8, and VBB's in-house artist Eric Hester will be welding out the hatchback to create space for a microphone. Other additions to the car will include videoscreens, decorations used on Pakistani trucks, and VBB's logo, the world map viewed from another lens.

About the Artists:

David Cisneros (Houston, USA): Born in Houston, Texas. 11/22/62 indigenous to Texas. Influenced from culture from everywhere on Earth.

Eric Hester (Houston, USA) has been involved with VBB since its inception as a graphic design artist and a teenage Board Member. Currently, he serves as the organization's documentary artist, technical assistant, and also produces art for shows. Outside of his work with VBB, he is a freelance artist based in Houston working in multiple dimensions. He has exhibited at DiverseWorks, Project Row Houses, BNIM Architects, Rice University, Voices Breaking Boundaries and the Solar Decathlon in Washington D.C.

Paul Hester (Houston, USA) has exhibited his photographs all over the world. Currently he is working on a design project for Houston's market square and lectures at Rice University in the Department of Visual and Dramatic Arts. He has been encouraged by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Thomas J. Watson Foundation; exhibitions at the Menil Collection, Rice University, University of Houston College of Architecture, Williams Tower, the Houston Public Library, and Congregation Emanu El, among others. He enjoys photographing churches and other buildings in his day job as an architectural photographer. He is currently enjoying a return to his roots, teaching a beginning photography course in the Department of Visual Arts, Rice University.

Abro Khuda Bux (Karachi, Pakistan) is an illustrator and photographer, and currently works as an illustrator for *Dawn News*. Over the past two decades he has exhibited extensively around Pakistan in shows including "16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Exhibition of Graphics and Photography" (Nomad Art Gallery, Islamabad), "The Image of Flame" Exhibition of paintings on Women Issues (T2F, Karachi), Solo Exhibition of Cartoons (published in Martial Law Period), at Karachi Press Club. His images of Pakistani truck art are featured in a coffee table cookbook entitled *Cuisine Along the Grand Trunk Road*.

Mark Lacy (Houston, USA), executive director of Houston Institute for Culture, is a journalist and artist. His work has appeared in numerous publications and exhibits. His photography work has covered Houston music, protests and counter-cultural movements, diverse religious and ceremonial activities, and immigration issues throughout the southwestern United States. His areas of research include economic issues in the U.S. and Mexico, and the historic conquest of Mexico and the western states, including use of modern technology to survey the route of Álvar Núñez Cabezas de Vaca. Lacy published a classroom text of Cabezas de Vaca's journal, *La Relación: A Fateful Expedition to Conquer the Territory from Florida to Mexico, 1527-1536*.

Sehba Sarwar (Karachi, Pakistan / Houston, USA) is a multidisciplinary artist whose prose, poetry, video, and performance art tackle race, class and gender issues. Sarwar's writings have appeared in anthologies, newspapers, and magazines in India, Pakistan, and the US in publications including *The New York Times' Sunday Magazine*, *Callaloo*, and a Feminist Press anthology. A lifetime member of Sandra Cisneros' Macondo Writers' Workshop, Sarwar's work straddles two continents, moving between South Asia and the USA. She serves as VBB's founding director and conceptualizes and produces VBB's *living room art* productions, for which she creates video, sound, image installations, and selects artists from Pakistan and the US to participate in productions. Her first novel *Black Wings* was published in 2004 (Alhamra Publishing, Pakistan).

Yunuen Perez Vertti (Mexico D.F., Mexico / Houston, USA) moved to Houston 10 years ago and has extensive training in video production through the Art Institute of Houston. She has worked with many Houston-based companies and non-profit organizations including Rice University, University of Houston, Nimbic Systems, Society of Iranian American Women for Education, and VBB. Perez Vertti has created video projections of dance on camera designed to overlap with sections of live dance for Michele Brangwen Dance Ensemble. Her video created to accompany composer Arthur Gottschalk's work for percussion and electro-acoustic sound environment, *Voices in My Head*, was described by Linda Phenix in her review for Dance Source Houston as: "an elegant pairing of music with visual art." This collaboration was featured as part of FotoFest's 2006 Biennial dedicated to the themes of The Earth & Artists Responding to Violence.

Ilna Yusuf (Islamabad, Pakistan), a published poet who considers writing her primary talent, has had a long career in crafts. She later turned her skills to designing lighting and furniture, using techniques from her crafting days including decoupage and printing. For the last three years she has been making prints using collages of her own photographs as well as free hand collagraphs, and intends to combine these to make book works complementing her poems.

Maheen Zia (Karachi, Pakistan) is a film director and film editor. She teaches at the Department of Visual Studies at the University of Karachi, and has worked as an editor at a production house and made documentaries and short films on social issues. She is one of the founder members and is on the organizing board of Pakistan's young, international film festival - The KaraFilm Festival. Zia, is the winner of India EU Film Initiative - Berlin Today Award 08 for the film *Match Factor* and has worked as Juror for Afghanistan Competition of 2nd Kabul Documentary & Short Film Festival. She also won the third prize of this festival for her documentary work *The Women of Lahore* in the international competition section.

del monte films: Carlton Ahrens and Ford Gunter were both born and raised in Houston, graduating from Lamar High School. A long-time independent businessman, Carlton is a master's candidate for sociology at the University of Houston. Ford has been working in journalism for the better part of a decade, covering music, travel and business. In 2008 Carlton and Ford brought these unique skill sets to del monte films and have been making films ever since. *Art Car: The Movie* is their first feature-length documentary.

Pakistani Artisans with Anj Rana: Anj Rana has worked closely with Pakistani artisans for the past seven years. She has made it her goal to bring Pakistani truck art into the mainstream, into homes, and give it the recognition it so richly deserves. Rana has worked in close association with the master craftsmen, and she directs them in painting their richly textured motifs on objects that are usually connected in some way with the everyday life of the truckers. Lamps, lanterns, mugs, kettles, trays, boxes, watering cans, buckets etc become collectable home accessories.

About VBB's Living Room Art Productions: Four years ago, under the guidance of VBB artist Oskar Sonnen, VBB began a new series called *Living Room Art*, an innovative approach designed to bring art directly into residential communities around Houston and beyond. *Living Room Art* productions are "one night stands," open to the public and take place in private homes. The goals of *Living Room Art* are: to bring together disparate neighborhoods and communities; to bring together diverse populations who may not ordinarily go to a gallery/museum; and to address social issues through art. All VBB *Living Room Art* shows are theme-based, multidisciplinary, and allow space for spoken word artists, writers, visual artists, performance artists, and musicians, and generally draw audiences ranging from 250-400. The shows are conceived and directed by Founding Director Sehba Sarwar with Yunuen Perez Vertti, Mark Lacy and Eric Hester.

For more information about VBB's programming, email info@vbbarts.org or visit our website at www.vbbarts.org.

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