

## PRESS RELEASE - CUENTOS FOUNDATION - TEN YEAR CELEBRATION MAY 17, 2008

Cuentos Foundation is celebrating its tenth year anniversary! In the fall of 1997 Cuentos Artistic Director, Michele Feder-Nadoff went to live and study with a master coppersmith in the traditional copper-smithing community of Santa Clara del Cobre, in the highlands of Michoacán, Mexico. Shortly after her return, she began founding the Cuentos Foundation with an outstanding team of artists and community activists.

Since then, Cuentos has been striving to fulfill its vision: the Global is Local and its Mission: to give voice to the stories (cuentos) of our diverse communities. Cuentos creates and facilitates artistic projects which document, express, and share transforming cultural traditions. Its Global/Local programs utilize the arts to create intercultural exchange. Cuentos' major founding project Ritmo del Fuego/ Rhythm of Fire has been dedicated to Santa Clara del Cobre and has produced a major publication and video documentary, plus numerous interdisciplinary artistic projects bringing together the Chicago community through arts and artists.

Saturday May 17th beginning at 6PM Cuentos will celebrate its tenth anniversary with a nightful of art, music, community stories, and good company. Cuentos invites you to attend a performance, panel discussion, followed by Rocambu Jazz and DJ Leyva – accompanying the exhibition "inside, outside & across", selected works 1997–2008 by Michele Feder-Nadoff. The exhibit is a highlight of the art created by Feder-Nadoff inspired by her work with the foundation.

In celebrating its Tenth Year Anniversary Cuentos is gathering community voices/stories to incorporate into a performance kicking off its Celebration Party at Cuentos on May 17th, @ 6PM at the Cuentos studio/ gallery space, 6321 North Clark Street, Chicago, 60660.

Cuentos is working with WBEZ's [VOCALO.ORG](http://VOCALO.ORG) site to record, document, and upload community voices/ stories which will be woven into the interactive multidisciplinary performance facilitated by Jayve Montgomery, Michele Feder-Nadoff, Mariko Ventura, and with the help of WBEZ's Shannon Heffernan and VOCALO.ORG. Participants are requested to answer the following questions:

1. Define Cuentos.
2. Tell us about your role in your community. What do you bring?
3. Tell us about the community you identify with. Where do you come from? Who are you?
4. Tell us how you want to change your community? Where are you going?

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## Celebration SCHEDULE DETAILS:

### SATURDAY MAY 17TH 6-10 PM

#### **“Inside, Outside, & Across” Exhibition Runs April 5- June 5**

Call 773 761-4165 or e-mail [info@cuentosfoundation.org](mailto:info@cuentosfoundation.org) to visit!

Catalogue Available w/Essay by Lannie Silverman, Curator Chicago Cultural Center

**6PM Inside/Outside & Across PERFORMANCE COLLABORATION** -- by JayVe Montgomery, Michele Feder-Nadoff, and Bethlehem Hailu Dejene. WORKING WITH WBEZ's VOCALO. ORG to gather stories from the community to weave into the Clark Street performance!

#### **7PM PANEL DISCUSSION- ARTISTS WORKING (WITH) IN COMMUNITY**

Moderator Gonzalo Escobar with artists/ panelists: JayVe Montgomery, Chicago Park District's Inferno Mobile Recording Studio; Michele Feder-Nadoff, Cuentos; Giselle Mercier, School of the Art Institute of Chicago; and Laura Crotte, Molecula Artistica; Mariko Ventura, arts educator and performance artist.

#### **8:30 - 9:30 ROCAMBU JAZZ with Yves Francois**

#### **9:30 - DJ LEYVA spins Afro-Cuban Music**

(SEE INFORMATION BELOW AND ATTACHED FLYER)

**YVES FRANCOIS ET ROCAMBU JAZZ** was formed in 2001 by jazz trumpeter Yves Francois Smierciak and several other like minded musicians. The mission of Rocambu Jazz is to explore the rhythms of African and Afro Diaspora musics. We are finding the common bonds between music from West Africa (highlife and the Guinean and Malinky music of Senegal and Mali), Congo (old school rumba, soukous), Martinique (biguine), Haiti (compas), Cuba (son, conga ), Jamaica (ska), Trinidad (calypso), Brazil (choro, samba, bossa nova) and New Orleans (early jazz/dixie land). Rocambu Jazz exploits the common bonds of the musics in our unique interpretations of the various forms. Essentially we are speaking of the various creoles all these nations provided when the African rhythms and phraseology met the melodies of Europe (France and Spain). The African musicians reshaped the great popular music vocabulary of the 20th century musics. These musical forms have many names, but they are all a musical creole broadly known as jazz.

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**DJ LEYVA** says that his goal is to play music that is the roots of Salsa music. This is the Cuban music that no longer gets the recognition it deserves – from the sophisticated Danzon, to the horn driven Mambo, to the percussive Rumba, to the heart of Salsa, the Cuban Son, as well as classic 70's salsa and Latin Jazz.

**LAURA CROTTE** is an actress, vocalist, educator, and director of Mexican theatre. Crotte is a member of Teatroviva and the founder of the group Moleculartística Nido de Mar. Crotte has realized numerous productions with the Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf, Teatroviva in a variety of Chicago theaters, such as the Hot House, Old Town, Mexican Fine Arts, and also an infinity of programs for schools, libraries, and community centers with her costumed mythological personages. In Mexico she founded the company Publik Teatro contemporáneo with Boris Schoemann whose productions toured nationally and internationally. Currently she is directing the play AL SON QUE ME TOQUES, LORCA an allegory that takes place in Veracruz an allegory entitled Bodas de Sangre/ Blood Wedding with MoleculARTística which will be presented at the Goodman Theatre's Latino Theatre Festival in August 2008.

**BETHLEHEM HAILU DEJENE** immigrated to the US from Ethiopia in 1996. Bethlehem lived in Boston and went to Columbia University in New York, where she graduated with a degree in anthropology. Currently, she is a second year graduate student at Northwestern University in the same discipline. Her various interests include the study of spirit possession, exorcism, Greco-Roman magic, music, and spirituality.

**GONZALO ESCOBAR** is an Extension Educator in prevention at the Countryside Extension Center. Escobar works with organizations and agencies to develop educational programs for youth, teachers, parents, youth service personnel, and other community members. In a joint effort between University of Illinois Extension and independent community radio station WLUW, Escobar produces and hosts a weekly Spanish language radio program, Si Se Puede (Yes, It Can Be Done). The program provides a forum for Extension Educators and others, including young people, to present topics pertinent to the needs and interests of the audience. Currently, he serves as co-chair of the Latino Coalition for Prevention. He is a community representative on the Local School Council of Philip Rogers School, and a board member of the Alliance of Latinos and Jews. He is a member of the National Association of Extension 4H Agents and the Illinois Extension Professionals for Youth Education. Gonzalo Escobar earned a

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Licenciado degree and a secondary school teaching certificate at the Department of Psychology, Universidad de San Carlos, Guatemala. He completed an MA degree in sociocultural anthropology at the University of Illinois, Urbana.

**MICHELE FEDER-NADOFF's** installation and time-based works incorporate an unrestricted range of simple to complex materials and processes, from embroidery to lost-wax casting, examining the raw and the cooked, the transforming of matter into meaning. She has been creating sculptural installations in-doors and out, temporary and permanent, collaborative and solo, since the mid-eighties, often utilizing water as a tangible physical element and to produce sound. She is a member of Piece process, a national collective of Israeli, Palestinian, Muslim, and Jewish artists, and has been collaborating with artist Kanaan Kanaan since 2001 on installation/performance works. She has been deeply involved with the Santa Clara del Cobre community in Mexico since 1997— through her work at Cuentos where she is the Artistic Director and Creative Founder.

**GISELLE MERCIER** is an Instructor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She received her degrees in Art Education (2002). BFA, 1986, and MFA, 1989, School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Concurrent Position: Administrative Director, Departments of Arts Administration, Art Education and Art Therapy, School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Exhibitions: The Art Center, Highland Park, Illinois, Huellas, Panama Rep. of Panama, Polvo Art Studio, Chicago; C33 Gallery, Columbia College, Chicago; Humboldt Park Stables, Chicago; Collage de las Americas, Chicago; Prospectus Art Gallery, Chicago. Publications: Co-author, Metropolitan Universities Journal: Trust Building: The Secret to Highly Collaborative Partnerships; Author, New Art Examiner, Speak Easy: 'Reality' Beyond Labels: blind faith in the power of words. Bibliography: La Raza, El Panamá América, ¡Exito!, Chicago Journal. Awards: Governor's International Arts Exchange Program, Illinois Arts Council Grants; Department of Cultural Affairs Grants.

**JAYVE MONTGOMERY** is a sound artist. Currently he is Program Facilitator for the Chicago Park District's Inferno Mobile Recording Studio. He is also a member of the collective that runs Brown Rice, a performance space in Albany Park.

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**MARIKO VENTURA's** work has been in ceramic sculpture as well as performance. Her sculptural work has been exhibited at Evanston Art Center and The Block Gallery, Northwestern University. Ventura's performance work has been shown in venues such as the Guild Complex and Chicago Cultural Center as well as internationally. Her work is featured in the book, **PERFORMANCE ON THE EDGE, TRANSFORMATIONS OF CULTURE**, by Johannes Birringer.