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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Photojournalists' Documentation of Haitian Traditional Artists in South Florida on Display at Historical Museum

MIAMI, FL (October 2, 2006) – Almann Ulysse chisels sculptures out of steel drums. Andre Fouad delivers Creole and French poems in local cafes. Marie Montes bakes vanilla wedding cakes in her converted garage. Gabriel Fleury creates kites to fly on Easter and other celebrations. These and other local Haitian artists are the subjects of a new photographic exhibition at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida. *Haitian Community Arts: Images by Iris PhotoCollective* is on display at the downtown Miami museum through January 14, 2007.

“Some of these artists struggle to eek out a living from their work. Many have other full-time professions, and continue practicing their art not for money but for tradition. It’s essential for them to express and honor their Haitian heritage,” says Curator for Community Research Dr. Joanne Hyppolite, who organized the exhibition. Luis Rios, *The Miami Herald’s* Director of Photography assisted with editing photographs for the exhibition.

Museum visitors will see a rare view of artistic, festive and religious traditions in South Florida, home to the largest Haitian community in the United States. Featured art forms include *fè koupe* (steel drum sculpture), woodcarving, sewing, baking, drumming, dancing, singing, poetry, kite-making and children’s games. One of the exhibition goals is to show how everyday photographs often invoke more questions than seek to define a moment.

Award-winning photojournalists André Chung (*Baltimore Sun*), Carl Juste (*The Miami Herald*) and Pablo Martínez Monsivaís (Associated Press) formed Iris PhotoCollective in 1998 out of an artistic vent. “We were frustrated with the lack of soul and substance in photographs of people of color,” explains Juste. “We wanted their voices to be heard. They’re not victims, and we’re not their saviors. We’re their apostles.”

The members of Iris PhotoCollective fulfill their mission through extensive travel, capturing images in places such as Cuba, Haiti, Mexico, Pakistan, South Africa and the United States. They also teach, give lectures, and present exhibitions in universities and museums around the country.

Haitian Community Arts: Images by Iris PhotoCollective was funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information about the exhibition, please call 305.375.1492 or visit www.hmsf.org.

About Iris PhotoCollective

As artists of color, the members of Iris have collaborated to create a new context in order to explore and document the relationship of people of color to the world. Free from the overriding influence of the dominant culture, they examine this relationship in their own voices, while preserving the integrity and principles of photojournalism. For more information, visit www.irisphotocollective.com.

About the Historical Museum of Southern Florida

The Historical Museum of Southern Florida tells the stories of South Florida and the Caribbean. The museum promotes understanding of the past in order to inform the present and create a better quality of life. The Historical Museum hosts a permanent exhibition gallery and a special gallery with several changing exhibitions each year. In addition, the museum houses the Research Center, a non-circulating library and archives open to museum visitors, and The Indies Company, the museum's store, which offers a unique array of Florida-themed books and gifts. The Historical Museum is located in downtown Miami in the Miami-Dade Cultural Center, across the street from Metrorail's Government Center Station at 101 West Flagler Street, Miami, Florida 33130. Hours are Monday - Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., third Thursdays 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. and Sunday noon - 5 p.m. Admission for adults is \$5, children (ages 6-12) is \$2, and children under 6 are free. Saturday is free admission, and Sunday is by contribution.