



## **ALJIRA**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Reception: 5:30-6:30pm**

**Artists Panel: 6:30-7:30pm**

#### ***The Crystal Land Revisited: New Art in New Jersey***

**An artist panel discussion, a collaboration of Aljira, a Center for Contemporary Art & Rutgers, The State University of NJ**

**NEWARK, NJ, November 17, 2004** - In conjunction with the current exhibition on display at Aljira, *The Crystal Land Revisited: New Art in New Jersey*, a panel discussion will be held on Thursday December 9 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Join us for a reception 5:30-6:30pm prior to the discussion. This exhibition, curated by Raul Zamudio, is Aljira's contribution to the statewide project *Transcultural New Jersey: An Arts and Education Initiative*. Participants in the discussion will include exhibition curator Raul Zamudio and three of the artists in the exhibition: Manuel Acevedo, Jonathan Calm and Dahlia Elsayed.

*The Crystal Land* (1966), written by influential American conceptual artist Robert Smithson (1938-1973), provides the conceptual framework for the exhibit and its relevance to the changing cultural landscape in New Jersey. "New Jersey is not simply a place west of New York City, but its own destination rich with inspiration for artist expression," said exhibit curator Raul Zamudio. "The goals of Transcultural NJ are to showcase our state's rich diverse cultural communities and in so doing, gain insight into our diverse populations. The show at Aljira masterfully achieves them," said Isabel Nazario, the driving force behind the Transcultural NJ Initiative. The artists will address the role of New Jersey as backdrop for architectural explorations that highlight the uneven dynamics of urban politics, urban space and its modernist failures, identity politics and the politics of location, the dynamics and intersections between the local and global, past and present, and nature and culture. The exhibition is composed of site-specific installations, video, sculpture, painting, photography and works on paper.

Manuel Acevedo is a Puerto Rican artist who was born in Newark and studied at the School of Visual Arts as well as the International Center for Photography. He is a multi-media artist who has exhibited in various national and international institutions. African American artist Jonathan Calm received his MFA from Columbia University in 2000. Solo installations of his work have appeared in Barcelona and Berlin, with a significant solo exhibition at Caren Golden Fine Art, New York in 2002. Dahlia Elsayed was born in New York and received her MFA from Columbia University School of the Arts in 1994. Elsayed's paintings and artist books have been shown at galleries and art institutions throughout the United States and internationally, including a solo exhibition at the Jersey City Museum.

Aljira is located in the downtown Newark, New Jersey arts district at 591 Broad Street. Directions to the center can be found on our website at [www.aljira.org](http://www.aljira.org). The panel discussion is free to the public with a suggested donation of \$5 for admittance into Aljira. For more information, call (973) 622-1600. The exhibition will remain on view through February 9, 2005.

Funding has been made possible, in part, by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, A Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts; Johnson & Johnson; Prudential Foundation, The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, and individual contributions. Special thanks to Newark Downtown District and Lowenstein Sandler PC.

Aljira's exhibition, educational and public programs are supported by a leadership grant from JPMorgan Chase.

"Transcultural New Jersey: An Arts and Education Initiative" is a yearlong, statewide project documenting the contributions of Latino/Hispanic, African American, Asian American and Native American New Jersey artists through more than 20 exhibitions at museums, galleries and arts organizations. The program is designed to highlight the achievements of artists from historically underrepresented populations and provide insight into the state's diverse population, foster cross-cultural dialogue and understanding, and impact curriculum development and education.

"Transcultural New Jersey: An Arts and Education Initiative" was developed by Rutgers University's Office for Intercultural Initiatives and the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum in partnership with New Jersey Network (NJN) Public Television. It is supported by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Merrill Lynch, JPMorgan Chase, The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, Johnson & Johnson, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, and the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Rutgers University. The exhibition schedule and additional information are available at [www.transculturalNJ.org](http://www.transculturalNJ.org).

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