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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**TO THE POINT:** 24 N.J. venues unite for yearlong “Transcultural New Jersey” initiative spotlighting work of state’s diverse visual arts community

NEW BRUNSWICK/PISCATAWAY, NJ — A report from the U.S. Census Bureau has inspired the December 2003 launch of the “Transcultural New Jersey Arts and Education Initiative,” a yearlong, statewide initiative spearheaded by Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, the Office for Intercultural Initiatives, and the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, in partnership with New Jersey Network (NJN) Public Television. The project is designed to move local visual artists from underrepresented populations into the mainstream art world, provide insight into the state’s immigrant population and enrich school curricula.

A “Census 2000” report released by the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers underscored the fact that New Jersey stands in the midst of a profound demographic transformation. Over the last five years, the state’s Asian community increased 71 percent, the Latino community 39 percent and the African-American community 15 percent, resulting in an additional 2.5 million residents.

“These census statistics, combined with the older African-American and multiethnic population already residing here, position New Jersey as one of the most diverse states in the nation,” said Isabel Nazario, director of the Office for Intercultural Initiatives and the Latino Arts and Cultural Center at Rutgers. “Further research revealed that N.J. artists from these ethnic groups were also underrepresented and highlighted the need to recognize their contributions in shaping the state’s culture and communities,” Nazario added.

Transcultural New Jersey is believed to be the first art exhibition program in the country to carry a central statewide theme. Twenty-four N.J. educational institutions, arts organizations, museums, galleries and libraries have collaborated to explore and promote the works of African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic/Latino and Native-American Garden State artists. The first exhibit opens at the Morris Museum in Morristown Dec. 23. Additional exhibitions, educational programs and community events will take place at venues in Atlantic, Bergen, Camden, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Passaic and Union counties.

“New Jersey is rich in its ethnic diversity and cultural heritage,” said Gov. James McGreevey. “The Transcultural New Jersey initiative makes important contributions to the social and cultural fabric of the Garden State.”

Transcultural New Jersey also will feature educational programs and NJN broadcasts designed to promote cross-cultural awareness of and appreciation for diverse artists. “As the only broadcast network that reaches the entire state, NJN is pleased to be partnering with Rutgers and area museums to help increase awareness of and appreciation for a broad spectrum of cultures and to provide a forum where members of our diverse ethnic and racial communities can give voice to their experience,” said Elizabeth G. Christopherson, NJN’s executive director.

Jeffrey Wechsler, senior curator of the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, along with Nazario and colleagues from the university's Center for Innovative Print and Paper as well as cultural centers at Rutgers, developed Transcultural New Jersey with NJN and the Jersey City Museum.

Exhibit themes explore, for example, how works by recently emigrated artists compare to those who have lived here many years, how these works embody their former and new homelands, and the role played by multiethnic artists and teachers in educating the next generations of artists. Corresponding activities include panel discussions with the artists, artist-in-residence programs and performances. A two-volume publication with images and essays will accompany the initiative.

Rutgers, NJN and the New Brunswick school system also are developing a Transcultural New Jersey compact disk for N.J. teachers, which will examine aspects of culture such as architecture and religion. A lesson plan and other materials will link the works of art on display to the state's curriculum areas, including arts, languages and social studies.

Transcultural New Jersey is supported by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Johnson & Johnson and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. An exhibition schedule and more information is available at <[www.transculturalNJ.org](http://www.transculturalNJ.org)>.

### **EXHIBIT SCHEDULE**

12/23/03 – 3/7/04	Morris Museum (NJ Artists' Series)/MORRISTOWN	
1/20 – 3/5/04	Paul Robeson Gallery, Rutgers University/NEWARK	
March – May '04	Newark Public Library/NEWARK	
3/7 – 5/16/04	Hunterdon Museum of Art/CLINTON	
3/28 – 5/26/04	New Jersey Center for Visual Arts/SUMMIT	
4/17 – 7/31/04	Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers/NEW BRUNSWICK	
5/1 – 6/30/04 (or 8/4)	Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Paper/NEW BRUNSWICK	
6/16 – 8/29/04	Newark Museum/NEWARK	
June – Oct. '04	Douglass College Library Galleries, Rutgers/NEW BRUNSWICK	
6/2 – 10/3/04	Morris Museum (NJ Artists' Series)/MORRISTOWN	
7/1/04 – 1/2/05	Jersey City Museum/JERSEY CITY	
7/23 – 9/5/04	Monmouth Museum/LINCROFT	
9/11/04 – 1/5/05	Noyes Museum/OCEANVILLE	
Sept. – Oct. '04	Montclair State University Galleries/UPPER MONTCLAIR	
Oct. – Nov. '04	Bergen Museum of Art & Science/PARAMUS	
10/17 – 11/24/04	Ben Shahn Galleries, William Paterson University/WAYNE	
10/22 – 11/19/04	Numina Gallery, Princeton High School/PRINCETON	
Fall 2004	Aljira, a Center for Contemporary Art/NEWARK	-Myhelan Cultural Arts Center/LONG VALLEY
	Art Guild of Rahway/RAHWAY	-New Jersey City University/JERSEY CITY
	Johnson & Johnson Galleries/NEW BRUNSWICK	-New Jersey State Museum/TRENTON
	Kean University/UNION	-Stedman Gallery, Rutgers/CAMDEN

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