



SORAYA SARAH NAZARIAN CERAMICS ACADEMY ESTABLISHED AT INNER-CITY ARTS

Acclaimed artist to visit Skid Row arts campus on November 16th to mentor fourth grade class

Los Angeles, CA (November 10, 2015) – Inner-City Arts, a vibrant arts education campus and oasis of learning, achievement and creativity for underserved children in the heart of Skid Row, will welcome acclaimed artist Soraya Sarah Nazarian to campus on November 16th (10:15am – 11:45am) to work alongside fourth grade ceramics students from Wadsworth Avenue Elementary School. Students will have the opportunity to both learn from and share their creative process with a true master sculptor. A generous supporter of Inner-City Arts, Soraya Sarah Nazarian was honored at Inner-City Arts’ 2011 Imagine Awards for her exceptional artistic achievements, her dedication to pursuing her own creative path and her willingness to support young artists in developing their own voice.

The November 16th on-campus experience will include the dedication of the Soraya Sarah Nazarian Ceramics Academy. The result of a leadership gift from the Y&S Nazarian Family Foundation, the naming of the ceramics program represents a unique creative synergy between art, philanthropy and cultural exchange. The day will be a celebration of the Nazarian family’s remarkable support of Inner-City Arts’ ceramics programs for elementary, middle and high school youth.

“We are honored to announce the naming of the Soraya Sarah Nazarian Ceramics Academy and to welcome Mrs. Nazarian back to campus to experience our ceramics program in action and work alongside some of the students who benefit directly from her foundation’s support,” said Bob Smiland, Inner-City Arts’ President & CEO. “She is such an incredible role model for our students. Her artistic spirit and commitment to serving her community is a true inspiration.”

Mrs. Nazarian is an Iranian-born, Los Angeles-based artist who, in her more than 25-year-career, has become a master in the medium of direct carving in stone. She is one of the most renowned Jewish artists in the world, and her art is reflective of her roles as a wife, mother, and Iranian immigrant adjusting to life in America. In 2000, she and her husband, Younes Nazarian, founded the Y&S Nazarian Family Foundation. Enriching the lives of others through the arts and culture is an area of great importance to the family.

Mrs. Nazarian’s art and life embodies resilience and passion, characteristics that Inner-City Arts’ students develop and hone while attending the organization’s intensive art programs. Her direct participation with students in our studios exemplifies Inner-City Arts’ priority to couple financial support from leadership partners with tangible mentoring and engagement. “The special thing about the arts is that they require no language to express feelings or creativity,” said Soraya Sarah Nazarian. “Art is essential to the human spirit.”

About Inner-City Arts

Inner-City Arts’ mission is to use arts education to positively affect the lives of underserved youth, improving their chances to lead productive and fulfilling lives by developing creativity, expanding learning skills and building self-confidence. Founded in 1989, Inner-City Arts cultivates a sense of agency and possibility within Los Angeles’ youth through the transformational power of creativity. Under the guidance of professional teaching artists, Inner-City Arts’ students engage in a variety of visual, media and performing art forms in an authentic studio setting. Services include core classes during the instructional day for K-8 students, after-school and weekend workshops for middle school and high school students, diverse and innovative performances in the Rosenthal Theater and creativity-based professional development training for educators. Learn more at www.inner-cityarts.org.

About Soraya Sarah Nazarian

A master of direct carving into stone, Soraya Sarah Nazarian's art carries themes of motherhood, family, spirituality and Iranian culture. As part of her philanthropic work via the Y&S Nazarian Family Foundation, Mrs. Nazarian has launched the Soraya Sarah Nazarian Artists Initiative. This initiative supports young and emerging artists with their work, studio and exhibition space as well as arts education and classes, with an emphasis on ceramics and sculpture, to children and youth in the greater Los Angeles area.

Mrs. Nazarian's work is held in numerous private collections. Large-scale sculptures have been commissioned by cultural institutions in Israel and the United States. Recent commissions include *Sound* (2002) at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance; *Reflections* (2007) at Sapir College, near Sderot, Israel; *Legacy* (2009) at the University of Haifa, Israel; *Identity* (2010) at Saperstein Middle School in Los Angeles; and *Wings* (2014) at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She lives and maintains a studio in Los Angeles, California.

Strength Revealed, her latest solo exhibition, was a 25-year retrospective of her work organized by Barbara Gilbert, curator emerita of the Skirball Cultural Center. Accompanying the show was a catalogue titled *Strength Revealed: The Sculpture of Soraya Sarah Nazarian* including essays by Ruth Weisberg and Cynthia Burlingham and an interview with Gloria Gerace. The retrospective and publication centered on a desire for art to be used as a tool to create opportunities to dialogue.

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