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## "31K Portraits for Peace" Photography Exhibition Shares Stories and Spreads Hope

Posted: September 13, 2012 by Sarah Luginbill - No Comments



By Sarah Luginbill. ART Magazine. San Antonio, Texas

"In 2011, Diego Huerta and Daniela Gutierrez began the 31K Portraits for Peace project. The objective of their journey was to photograph 31,000 people to represent the breadth of drug-war related deaths in Mexico. In an effort to spread a message of peace, Diego and Daniela traveled throughout Mexico photographing individuals with a blue paper dove in their hands." (Extract from the *31K Portraits for Peace* exhibition description)

The recent *31K Portraits for Peace* exhibit at the UTSA Satellite Space was comprised of large digital photographs on vinyl. Each

image portrayed different people and surroundings, but the exhibit was tied together by a blue origami dove, pictured in every scene.

In addition to the photographs hanging on the walls, the exhibit was also incorporated three video displays and an origami station. The videos showcased the "31K Portraits for Peace" project, providing information on the campaign. The origami station, complete with instructions and blue paper, was "an interactive component in which San Antonioans can contribute to fostering messages of peace by submitting photos of blue paper doves to a social media archive." (Excerpt from the *31K Portraits for Peace* exhibition description)



Blue doves for peace in the *31K Portraits for Peace* exhibition.

The photographs in the UTSA Satellite Space showed children, adults, workers, dancers, shopkeepers, and bakers. The colors and textures in each setting embraced the viewer, a fact aided by the massive scale of the images. The title of every piece was merely the location the photograph was taken. This simplicity allowed the viewer to imagine the story behind each scene, instead of being told who the person was, what they were doing, and the extent to which their life was affected by drug wars.

*Aphrodite*  
AND THE GODS OF LOVE

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The photos show everyday people who stopped their tasks to hold a paper dove. The idea behind the "31K Portraits for Peace" project is straightforward: capture individuals in their daily lives to raise awareness and hope about casualties of drug wars. The pictures in the *31K Portraits for Peace* exhibition went a step further, and displayed people who were willing to take the time to stand up for peace. Their message is as powerful and impressive as the massive vinyl images mounted on the walls.

"From rural to urban life, each 31K scene captures the intricacies of the cultural patrimony and the resilient individuals that believe that their country is not defined by its tragedies but by its daily triumphs." – *31K Portraits for Peace* exhibition description



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