

Venice Arts continuing work in Mozambique on documentary about the impact of HIV/AIDS on African women and children

A team of photographers and filmmakers from Los Angeles-based Venice Arts will travel to Maputo in Mozambique next month as part of a two-year photo documentary project.

The project, titled *The House is Small but the Welcome is Big*, tells a story of HIV/AIDS and its impact on African women and children.

Launched last year in Cape Town, South Africa with 15 women, including mothers and mothers-to-be living with HIV/AIDS, the documentary project continues next month in Mozambique.

The Venice Arts team will teach 15 children — who were orphaned by AIDS and are now raising their younger siblings on their own — how to tell the story of their lives through the lens of a camera. The children's images will be used to raise awareness, educate others, and help erode the stigma of HIV/AIDS, according to Venice Arts.

The first exhibit from Cape Town has been featured at ten venues, including major universities such as Stanford, Harvard and UCLA, as well as the International AIDS Conference in Toronto. It was also featured during the keynote speech of First Lady Laura Bush at the Clinton Global Aid Initiative Conference

in New York last year, according to Venice Arts.

Unique this year, photos, audio, video, and blogs will be uploaded to a specially designed, interactive Web site at www.thehouseissmall.org/, regularly allowing the interested public to watch the project as it unfolds, as well as share their comments about the images and stories with participating youths.

Once the exhibit is compiled in the fall, the photographs will be taken throughout the provinces of Mozambique by a youth advocacy organization partnering on the project and will also be showcased in the U.S. and internationally by Venice Arts.

"We feel very fortunate to have been invited by the African Millennium Foundation to come to Mozambique and to support the efforts of Mozambicans to use cutting edge and innovative methods, such as documentary photography and film created by youths, to educate and inform their communities," said Lynn Warshafsky, Venice Arts executive director.

Venice Arts creative director Jim Hubbard added, "Our work with Mozambican youths, and our growing international work, generally, provides a dynamic contrast to the work that we do with local youths, who also live



VENICE ARTS TEAM members (from left) Joanne Kim, lead artist; Malena Ruth, African Millennium Foundation president and co-founder; Russell Baer, a native of Mozambique now living in Los Angeles; and Jim Hubbard, Venice Arts creative director, will travel to Africa next month to continue a photo documentary project telling the story of HIV/AIDS and its impact on African women and children. (Photo by Lynn Warshafsky)

economically disadvantaged lives.

"Regardless of where we work, or who we work with, we are strongly committed to the value of giving people the oppor-

tunity to tell their own stories through the lens of a camera, and to promoting their stories through exhibits, books, and media exposure."

The House is Small is the first in a series of international projects planned by Venice Arts to raise awareness about global health issues. It will be exhibited this fall in Los Angeles at the USC Annenberg School of Communications, in conjunction with the launch of Venice Arts' and

the Annenberg School's new Institute for Photographic Empowerment, as well as at the Venice Arts Gallery, before traveling nationally and internationally.