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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: *First Bloom: Dialogues in Exuberance* opens March 23 at Victoria Price Contemporary Art & Design

SANTA FE— *First Bloom: Dialogues in Exuberance*, an exhibition of works by nine painters, sculptors and photographers from around the country, opens with a 5-7 p.m. reception Friday, March 23 at Victoria Price Contemporary Art & Design, 550 S. Guadalupe St., in the Railyard Galleries. The exhibition closes May 4.

First Bloom is a collaboration between Victoria Price Contemporary Art & Design and Allison Hays Lane, curator and owner of Olana Group, based in San Antonio, Texas.

The nine artists included in the exhibit work in a variety of media and styles, but in all of their artwork are references to the natural world and how we perceive and react to it.

***First Bloom: Dialogues in Exuberance* Participating Artists**

John Cross, a wood sculptor who lives in Elizaville, N.Y., has shown his work continuously in New York City for 35 years. His interior and exterior sculptures have been reviewed in *Sculpture* magazine and the *New York Times*, and his work is in many collections, including those of Absolut Vodka, Garrison Keillor, Ali McGraw and the American Museum in Britain.

Linda Norford Cross, a painter and sculptor who also lives in Elizaville, N.Y., likewise has shown extensively in New York and on the East Coast for the last 35 years. She often makes her drawings of rocks, riverbeds and canyons in acrylic, colored pencil and oil pastel on paper. Cross earned her master of fine arts degree at University of New Mexico. Her work has been reviewed in many publications, including the *New York Times*.

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Brad Ellis, a painter who lives in Dallas, Texas, works in encaustic, oil, acrylic and paper on board, layering paint and paper – pages from books – in order to build up a richly historic surface. His work for *First Bloom* will include one of these works from the series “Currents,” in which he intends to capture “that moment before thoughts become either written or spoken...that in-between period when those ideas are still formulating and gaining momentum.” Ellis’s works are in the collections of Southwest Airlines, AT&T, GTE, Neiman Marcus, Motorola, Southwestern Bell, and many other corporations.

Doug Fogelson photographs images of the natural and urban worlds as overlapping multiple exposures on a single roll of film that he then prints, using a drum scanner, as large Lambda C-prints ranging from one to four feet tall and four to eight feet long. Fogelson, who lives in Chicago, hopes his work draws attention to the human threat to the Earth. His work is in the collections of the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Palm Springs Art Museum, the Walker Art Museum and others. He has worked extensively with interior designer Nate Berkus of HGTV and *The Oprah Winfrey Show*.

Larry Graeber is a painter and sculptor whose nonobjective works are in the collections of the Dallas Museum of Art, the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio, Texas, Continental Airlines and many other institutional and private collections. His works in *First Bloom* will include his bright, energetic acrylic paintings and works on paper.

Rebecca Koury lives in Yuba City, Calif., and earned a master of fine arts in sculpture from the University of Texas. Her abstracted landscapes reveal textures and patterns taken from nature, fabric designs, ancient ruins, written languages and symbols. She works primarily in acrylic on canvas. Koury’s work is in the collections of numerous hotels in Japan and Saudi Arabia, and in corporate collections including Cisco Systems, the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas, Nev., the Wilshire Grand Hotel in Los Angeles, and Harrah’s in Atlantic City, N.J.

Paula Owen makes intimate acrylic paintings that reflect her fascination with the lyrical aspects of abstraction and animated patterns in nature – dust motes in the morning light, schools of fish, migrating birds, rippling water. Often her works are painted in two segments, representing the artist’s inner and outer realms and an attempt to reconcile the two. Owen is president of the Southwest School of Art and Craft in San Antonio. Her work is in corporate collections including Capitol One., Nynex, Pioneer Seed and Moritoshi Fukada of Tokyo.

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Kate Ritson grew up in upstate New York but now lives in San Antonio, Texas, where she carves wooden totems, vessels and other iconic forms into works both structural and organic. Her work for *First Bloom* is made of reclaimed virgin redwood she recycled from a former train tunnel in California. Ritson has created wall hangings of redwood discs that she patterned using branding irons.

Trish Simonite is a photographer who makes images of the natural world and manipulates them, both in color and form, before reproducing them as digital images on silk or linen in a collaboration with a fine art printmaker. For *First Bloom*, she is creating large silk banners of her altered images of exuberant plants and flowers. She has had solo shows in the United States and Europe, and is on the faculty at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas.

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Note to editors: Images and image cutlines attached. Please call Hollis at 982-8632 if you have further questions or want additional images.