

# The Abstract Mind Mural

*"Art Exploring Individuals Living with Mental Illness"*

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*Living in a Bubble*  
Jesus Eduardo Rocha (Mexico, 2006)



*Mad Sadness*  
MK, Client Artist (United States, 2006)

## Art Exhibit on Mental Illness Premieres at O'Hare Airport

*Cutting-Edge Display Breaks Barriers and  
Gives Travelers Intriguing Look at Mental Illness*

*"This is how I feel when I am mad. These are special feelings. Art helps me express my feelings."*  
MK, Neumann Client Artist

CHICAGO — Neumann Association is today unveiling at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport a fascinating and inspiring new art exhibit that explores the depths and impact of mental illness. A unique collaboration of professional artists from more than 20 countries and amateur artists from Chicago living with mental illness, the ***Abstract Mind Mural: Art Exploring Individuals Living with Mental Illness*** captures the tremendous impact that mental illness can have on individuals and their families. It promotes positive awareness and understanding of individuals living with mental illness and demonstrates that art is a powerful healing tool. The Mural is on display through January 2, 2007 in O'Hare's Rotunda between Terminals 2 and 3. The premiere coincides with National Mental Illness Awareness Week (Oct. 1-7) and World Mental Health Day (Oct. 10).

"This 'first-of-its-kind' exhibit is making great strides to inspire dialogue about mental illness and remove the shame and stigma often associated with it," said Neumann Association CEO Eileen Durkin. "The exhibit is on display in a high-traffic section of the airport for maximum exposure. The walls are painted a vibrant orange, reflecting the possibility that people living with mental illness can move from the shadows and grayness to enjoy wonderful, fulfilled lives as part of the community."

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“Artists across the globe answered the call to contribute to the Mural,” said original curator Aldo Castillo. “So many of the artists have been touched by mental illness, either through a family member, a friend or personally. We hope the viewers are as moved by this exhibit as the artists were when they created it.”

Neumann’s ties with O’Hare go beyond the Mural: two Neumann clients work for a contracted firm that oversees baggage handling operations at O’Hare. They began in Neumann’s supported employment program, where they received intensive job training and on-the-job support from Neumann staff. They are now competitively employed at O’Hare.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, nearly 58 million adults in the U.S. – more than one in four – suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. This includes such things as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. Mental disorders are the leading cause of disability in the U.S. for people aged 15-44.

The Mural includes 60 pieces by professional artists, as well as art by clients of Neumann Association who are living with chronic and severe mental illness. Displaying professional art alongside that of people living with mental illness reflects the importance of the human bond, and suggests that people living with mental illness must stay connected with the rest of society.

Neumann Association, a Chicago-based not-for-profit organization that serves people with mental illness and developmental disabilities, created the mural in collaboration with the Aldo Castillo Arts Foundation, which provides art education and programming by highlighting diverse cultures and international artists. Neumann’s mission is to integrate persons with disabilities and other life issues into the community and enrich their quality of life with choice and independence. Neumann operates 20 group homes and provides life-enriching classes and day programs to clients. Original curator Aldo Castillo operates an art gallery in Chicago’s River North district. The Mural was created as part of the 2006 Chicago Festival of Disability Arts & Culture.

The exhibit is located beyond the security checkpoints. Members of the news media who wish to view the exhibit should contact Wendy Abrams at 773/686.3700. To view the Mural or for information about the exhibit or Neumann Association, go to [www.neumannassociation.org](http://www.neumannassociation.org).

**Contributing Artists:** Francisca Blazquez (Spain), Magdalena Fernández Merino (Spain), Aisen Chasin (Venezuela), Maya Kulenovic (Canada), Alejandro Quijano (Mexico), Vicente Vertiz Pani (Mexico), Sonya Rademeyer (South Africa), Hugo Palma Ibarra (Nicaragua), Efrain Rodríguez Rios (Spain), Gabriela Robin Constancio (Chile), Amalia Padilla-Gregg (Guatemala), Jorge Restrepo (Colombia), Julio Quiroz (Chile), María José Fort (Uruguay), Kim von Arx (Norway), Jaromir Svozilik (Norway), Jesús de la Barrera (Mexico), Jesús Eduardo Rocha (Mexico), Jordi Pedrola (Spain), Martín Carbajal (Argentina), Daniel Nolan (USA), George A. Colón (USA), Rosa Segura Sanz (Spain), Sergio Lastres (Spain), Louise Pappageorge (USA), Magdalena Lis (Poland), Klara Chavarría (Guatemala), Pedro Baldriche (Cuba), Mónica Sarmiento (Ecuador), Tono Galán Fuentes (Spain), Paul Sierra (Cuba), Paco Sanz (Spain), Verónica Riedel (Guatemala), Oswaldo Vígas (Venezuela), Rodolfo Opazo (Chile), Elena Climent (USA), Lorna Marsh (South Africa), Ingrid Moya (Spain), Eurico Borges (Portugal), Luis Fernando Uribe (Colombia), Salvador Calvo (Spain), Marcos Carrasco (Spain), Moses Morales (USA Virgin Islands), Sydia Reyes (Venezuela), Helena Engel (Uruguay), Gretchen Minnhaar (Argentina), María Bonomi (Brazil), Esperanza González Perlado (Spain), Luis Alberto López Cruz (Peru), Renata Castilho (Brazil), Federico Lepe (Mexico), Rigoberto Martínez Martínez (Mexico), Pedro Roque Hidalgo (Spain), Mario René Madrigal-Arcía (Costa Rica), Oscar Romero (Mexico), Antuan (Cuba), Aldo Castillo (Nicaragua). **Artists/Clients of Neumann Association:** Brandon Jackson (USA), Brinker Payton (USA), Cathy Craigs (USA), Danny Hannah (USA), Gene Smith (USA), Lucy Roan (USA), Martha Rodríguez (USA), MK (USA), Robert Soto (USA), Rufino Mariano (USA).

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