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CELEBRATING 25 YEARS – THE OJAI STUDIO ARTISTS

CONTINUING TO CONTRIBUTE THROUGH ARTS EDUCATION OUTREACH

100% funding derived from ticket sales of Fall Tour and Reception Raffle

(Ojai, CA – May 12, 2008) The Ojai Valley has sheltered artistic temperaments and free spirits since the early 1900s. Residents including Aldous Huxley, Krishnamurti, Beatrice Wood, Maynard Ferguson and Anthony Hopkins have migrated to Ojai for its beauty, serenity, and low-key lifestyle. Vital to the community is its artistic soul, celebrated through music, theater and visual arts with a multitude of internationally recognized painters, sculptors and designers. Only ten miles in length, the valley fosters the highest concentration per capita of nonprofit visual and performance arts groups in America.

Twenty-five years ago, three prominent artists, Bert Collins, Gayel Childress and Marta Nelson, created the Ojai Studio Artists Tour with twenty artists joining to open their studios to art lovers and collectors. The original concept was to bring the many talented painters and sculptors together since many had lived for years in the valley but did not know each. The result is a vibrant organization that not only produces the annual tour, but also hosts a spring exhibition to benefit the Ojai Valley Museum. The annual October pilgrimage now brings nearly 2,000 people to over forty artists' studios to see their new creations, view works in progress and enjoy a weekend steeped in fine art conversation.

In the beginning, it was a small group, who used the proceeds from the Tour to buy art books for the local library, contribute art supplies to area schools and support the Ojai Art Center. Things changed in 1993 with the creation of the OSA Art Scholarship. Beatrice Wood presented the first scholarship to a talent animation student from Ojai, Walt Dohrn, who went on to fame and fortune as director and animator of the "Shrek" films. With the presentation of this year's scholarships, OSA will have awarded over \$135,000 to art students and programs.

With OSA's involvement growing through members teaching special art classes in K-12 valley schools, the group became an official California 501 (c) 3 corporation. Plans are underway to expand fundraising so that members can bring art into classrooms where programs have been cut due to reduced public funding.

This year the 25th Annual Tour takes place October 11 & 12. For many years now, the second weekend in October has been a frenzy of artistic activities throughout the Ojai Valley with the Ojai Art Center on Montgomery St as its hub. Again this year the Art Center will present an exhibition of works by the Ojai Studio Artists, host the Artists Palette Reception Saturday evening and be the starting place where visitors can review a sample of work by each artist participating in the Ojai Studio Artists Tour that weekend.

The Saturday night Reception caps off the weekend. Held after the studios close, the reception is a place where all of the artists gather to meet visitors and continue the conversations. This year the reception theme is Mandarin Lounge, transforming the Art Center patio into an oriental garden. A special raffle featuring themed gift baskets, each created around an original piece of artwork and including other items from Ojai merchants and farms. Additionally, an Auction of members' work will be held with all proceeds from the evening benefiting the OSA Scholarship Funds. Tickets are available in advance at the Ojai Valley Chamber of Commerce,

201 S. Signal St, or by calling (805) 646-8126. They may be purchased the day of the tour at the Ojai Art Center; 113 S Montgomery St. Tickets can be purchased online beginning July 1 at ojaistudioartists.com.

TOUR FACTS: October 11 & 12, 2008, Saturday & Sunday, 10am to 5pm. Artist Palette Reception, 6 to 8 PM, October 11 at the Ojai Art Center. Tickets are \$30 each in advance or \$35 each during the tour weekend. Children 12 and under are free. Call (805) 646-8126 from 10am to 4pm or fax (805) 646-9762 for ticket assistance. Tickets can be purchased online beginning July 1 at ojaistudioartists.com.

The Ojai Studio Artists is a nonprofit volunteer-based organization comprised of professional artists who are juried into the group based on the quality of the work, experience in the field, exhibition history and commitment to the community. Many are represented nationally and internationally in museum collections. For more information, visit OSA's website at www.ojaistudioartists.com.