

France Honors Antoine Guerrero, Eleanor Heartney, John C. O'Neal and Jane Flatau Ross

GUERRERO AND HEARTNEY AWARDED ORDER OF ARTS AND LETTERS, O'NEAL AND ROSS AWARDED ORDER OF ACADEMIC PALMS

New York, May 21, 2008—On Tuesday, May 27, Kareen Rispal, Cultural Counselor of the Embassy of France, will confer upon **Eleanor Heartney** and **Antoine Guerrero** the **Order of Arts and Letters**, and upon **Jane Flatau Ross** and **John C. O'Neal** the **Order of Academic Palms**.

As the **Director of Operations and Exhibitions at the P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center**, **Antoine “Tony” Guerrero**, a French national, is one of the key actors of the contemporary art scene. He has produced more than **120 exhibits at P.S.1**, including last year’s “Adel Abdessamed: Dead or Alive,” the France-based artist’s first solo show in New York; “Woman of Many Faces: Isabelle Huppert” in 2005; and “Chen Zhen, A Tribute” in 2003. Tony Guerrero has **helped bring many emerging artists to worldwide attention**—as the Director for the former International Residency Programs at P.S.1, he was instrumental in helping 10 young French artists gain a foothold in the United States.

Eleanor Heartney is an **award-winning art writer, independent critic and curator** who has taken a great interest in the international contemporary art scene, particularly that of France. She has written numerous **monographs on contemporary French artists**, such as Orlan, Frédéric Robert Bouché, Michèle Blondel and Michel Gérard, and she played a very active role when ***Étant Donnés, the French-American Fund for Contemporary Art***, was founded 15 years ago. Eleanor Heartney teaches at Montclair State University and is a regular contributor to the bilingual French art magazine *Art Press*, as well as to *Art in America*.

John C. O'Neal, the **chair of the French Department at Hamilton College**, is a **leading expert on French literature of the 17th and 18th centuries**. He has penned three books and numerous articles on the subject, several of which were originally written in French, and he has regularly been invited to give lectures at prestigious French universities, including the Sorbonne and the Ecole Normale Supérieure. In 2004, John O'Neal was named an associate member of the **Centre d'Etude de la Langue et de la Littérature Françaises des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles**, and he is now researching the poetics of confusion in the French enlightenment and the emergence of modernity. With this ceremony, Professor O'Neal is being elevated to the **rank of Officer** of the Order of Academic Palms; he was named a Chevalier of this order in 1998.

As the **Vice President of the Alfred and Jane Ross Foundation**, **Jane Ross** has worked closely with grantees to establish and support multiple educational and arts-related initiatives, including most recently the **French Heritage Language Program**, a program of **French-language support** for recent Francophone immigrants studying in New York City high schools. She has had a lifelong interest in education and was a professor of English and History at the **Lycée Français of New York** for thirty years. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, she helped develop the lycée’s curriculum so that it would meet both American and French educational standards. Jane Ross is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in International Education at New York University.

The **Ordre des Arts et des Lettres** (Order of the Arts and Letters) was created in **1957** to recognize eminent artists and writers, as well as individuals who have contributed to the **recognition of French culture in the world**. The Order is given out twice annually to only a few hundred people worldwide. Several Americans have received the award, including Paul Auster, Ornette Coleman, Agnes Gund, Marilyn Horne, Jim Jarmusch, Richard Meier, Robert Paxton, Robert Redford, Meryl Streep and Uma Thurman.

The **Ordre des Palmes Académiques** (Order of Academic Palms) was founded by **Napoleon Bonaparte in 1808**. A brilliant administrator, Napoleon appreciated the importance of education, and he established the honorary titles of *Titulaire*, *Officier de l'Université*, and *Officier d'Académie* as awards for devotion and accomplishment in the areas of teaching scholarship, and research. In more recent times, this award was made a ministerial Order under the French Minister of Education and now has three ranks—*Chevalier*, *Officier*, and *Commandeur*.

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