

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NO ORDINARY PARKING GARAGE

Manhattan Beach, April 28, 2006



While garages have been the launching pads for many famous musicians, Manhattan Beach's new parking garage at the former site of the Metlox Potteries plant is launching the subterranean talents of a fine young artist, Daniel Lara, 32. Lara celebrates the history of Metlox Potteries, established in 1927, through his unusual murals in the Metlox parking garage. The graphics are composed of salvaged pottery shards that were discovered during excavation and are brought to life in the underground levels. During a stroll through the garage, you will be inspired and awed by the gigantic irises and wild poppies that are reinterpretations of the original designs from the 1970s. You will also find traces of the Provincial Blue line and the California Provincial line from the 1950s.

METLOX PARKING GARAGE MURALS

These designs on the murals in the parking garage are derived from Metlox Potteries motifs. The Metlox Pottery Factory was recognized as one of the leading manufacturers of American ceramic dinnerware and art ware, and was an important piece of Manhattan Beach's history. The pottery shards that are incorporated into the murals were collected on the site during demolition and construction of the parking garage. Daniel Lara, who began the project on September 19, 2005, spent approximately 6 months of painting and tiling the parking lot to create the design.

One of the most interesting and challenging things about the construction of mural designs is that the artist was creating them while the Metlox town square was in operation. During his time working on the project, Lara was encouraged by the constant support of all the people walking by and commenting. Many individuals recognized the shards' origins and became nostalgic as they remembered the times when they once used Metlox plates, cups and saucers for dinners, parties and everyday use in the 50s, 60s and 70s. One woman recalled when she purchased a new set of dishes for \$8 in the 60s. Another warm moment for Lara was when he was painting the ramp in an extremely noisy day and a parking meter attendant approached him with noise-canceling headphones and told him that she really appreciated what he was doing for the city. All the positive experiences at Metlox helped to keep him motivated on the project. Daniel Lara, appreciative of the kindness he has received by those who pass by, comments "one night somebody with a bag full of bread from Le Pain Quotidien offered me croissants and muffins. Another night a cop stopped by to talk about the designs." The murals are beautiful and the pottery shards that are intertwined into the design remind us a little bit about the history of this place that will never be forgotten and can still be enjoyed today.

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