Aug. 31, 2006
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cal Poly Architecture Alumna Wins Coveted Rome Prize

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Former Cal Poly architecture student Adriana Cuellar will take up residence in Rome this fall as one of 30 winners of the 109th annual Rome Prize Competition of the American Academy in Rome.

Adriana Cuellar won the prestigious award for her proposal to study the city’s virtual and physical blind spots by testing procedures of perception and movement.

"I am interested in revealing today's invisible systems as generators of Rome's transformative aspects through the mapping of trajectories," said Cuellar. "My hope is that project will help architects and city planners ask the correct questions about how best to approach architecture as it relates to the city by suggesting new cultural interpretations and new forms of adaptation."

Cuellar will spend 11 months in the Italian capital living and working with the other 2006-2007 winners at the American Academy’s 11-acre site on Rome’s highest hill. Other winners include architects, landscape architects, visual artists, writers, composers, historic preservationists and scholars with interests ranging from the ancient world to modern Italy.

Previous Rome Prize recipients include composer Samuel Barber, writer Ralph Ellison and architects Michael Graves and Robert Venturi.

Cuellar worked with fellow Rome Prize winner Teddy Cruz for three years where she designed and investigated housing projects and urban issues at the border of Tijuana-San Diego.

In 2004, she graduated from Harvard University Graduate School of Design with a Master's in Design Studies, where she won the Annual Award for Excellence in Housing Design for architectural and urban proposal for Huixquilucan, Mexico. Cuellar also worked in New York’s Rafael Viñoly Architects in the development of The Cleveland Museum and Acqua, a Housing Project in Punta del Este, Uruguay.

What became the American Academy in Rome was established in 1894 by a group of prominent Americans to provide an opportunity for American artists and scholars to pursue independent study in the ancient city, and the academy has become what some consider America’s leading overseas center for advanced research in the arts and humanities. The Rome Prize is awarded through an open competition juried by leading artists and scholars.

Editors: A photograph of Adriana Cuellar is available for use in your publication. Please contact Ray Ladd in Cal Poly's College of Architecture and Environmental Design at 805-756-7432 or rladd@calpoly.edu.

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