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Border Crossing Art and Tradition at Northeastern Seminary

WHAT: Northeastern Seminary presents, "When the Gods Prayed Back: Contemporary Ex Votos" for its third annual faculty invitational. This year Heather Layton, a professor from the University of Rochester, blurs the boundaries between art and tradition in her contemporary *ex votos* series. This bilingual exhibition investigates one aspect in the breadth of religious traditions. It combines the historical practice of Mexican votive painting with a contemporary reinterpretation. *Ex-votos* are small paintings that give thanks to specific patron saints after a miracle has been granted. Layton's series of paintings on steel uses an identical structure to that of the *ex-voto* except the roles have been reversed. Instead of the people expressing gratitude to the saints for a wide range of personal miracles, the patron saints pray back to the people often marginalized by issues, such as health care, domestic violence, infertility, drug addiction, or the rising prices international collectors are paying—and thus exploiting--artist's original works of art. Further, "the pressures of globalization," Layton writes, "have forced the *ex-voto* tradition into an increasingly vulnerable state...[forcing artists] to leave their professions for modern, 9-5 office jobs." Traditional themes of *ex votos* includes near death experiences, injured children, village and rural life, or natural disasters. Layton's work invites the viewer to learn, respect, participate in and even rediscover the vitality of this Mexican cultural tradition.

WHEN: "When the Gods Prayed Back: Contemporary Ex Votos," by Heather Layton will be on display at B.T. Roberts Memorial Hall Art Gallery from April 25 through June 26, 2009. The public is invited to attend the reception on Saturday, April 25, from 4 p.m. – 6 p.m. Admission to the gallery is free and open to the public.

WHERE: B.T. Roberts Memorial Hall Gallery is located in Roberts Hall, Northeastern Seminary on the campus of Roberts Wesleyan College, 2265 Westside Drive, Rochester, NY 14624.

HOURS: B.T. Roberts Memorial Hall Gallery is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

ABOUT B.T. ROBERTS MEMORIAL HALL ART GALLERY:

Supported by the faculty at Northeastern Seminary since 2004, the B.T. Roberts Memorial Hall Gallery operates for the purpose of engaging the seminary and campus community in interactions with visual art bringing to the students' experience a more fully integrated education while encouraging students to develop habits of contemplation and habits of responding to art reflectively. The gallery schedule includes two to three exhibits per year running four to six weeks in duration, hosting local and national artists, juried and non-juried shows. All exhibitions are accompanied by gallery discussions, tours, or lectures that are free and open to the public.

ABOUT NES:

Since opening its doors in 1998, Northeastern Seminary on the campus of Roberts Wesleyan College has continued to grow in prominence as a significant training center for the church community in upstate New York. NES is an independent, non-sectarian seminary in its approach to theological training leading to an academically and professional accredited Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Theological Studies, or

Doctor of Ministry degree. It now has more than 30 different Christian faith traditions represented among 130 students and 200 graduates ministering in 21 states and five foreign countries. For more information visit www.nes.edu or call 1-800-777-4792.

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