

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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www.intotheopen.org

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NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER TO HOST GROUNDBREAKING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT EXHIBITION, *INTO THE OPEN*

Philadelphia, PA (June 30, 2009) – From July 15 to September 7, 2009, the National Constitution Center will host *Into the Open*, an innovative exhibition featuring the work of 16 architectural groups. Through vibrant installations and displays, *Into the Open* explores the original ways architects are collaborating to foster civic engagement and build better communities. Immersive, bold, and interactive, the exhibition aims to inform, as well as encourage discussion and participation.

Chalkboard walls will line the exhibition, making it possible for visitors to share their comments, reactions, and ideas in response to the projects. In the interactive spirit of the exhibition, the Center will also engage the community by extending the exhibit experience outside the museum walls. The projects featured in the exhibition will be showcased at the National Constitution Center and the Slought Foundation on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania. Additionally, off-site community programming related to the exhibition is planned, in partnership with local organizations.

“Philadelphia is proud to be the home of numerous civic organizations taking the lead in our nation’s move towards sustainability and positive community engagement,” said Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter. “This exhibition will highlight how individuals from all walks of life can play an integral role in creating transformative change.”

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ADD ONE/INTO THE OPEN

“This provocative intersection of architecture and activism allows the Center to highlight the importance of civic engagement in the community,” says National Constitution Center President and CEO Linda E. Johnson. “It is fitting that *Into the Open* will be displayed in Philadelphia, where the American experiment was born, and where the Center continues to promote the power of individuals to create positive change.”

"This exhibition explores how local grassroots initiatives are generating new forms of social responsibility and activism. By highlighting America's rich history of architectural experimentation, we hope to define architecture not just as a physical infrastructure, but also as a social relationship," says Aaron Levy, Executive Director of the Slought Foundation.

The National Constitution Center will feature eight of the 16 architectural projects, with the exhibition experience beginning on the Center's front lawn on Independence Mall, where visitors can pass through Estudio Teddy Cruz's 89-foot photo narrative of the U.S.-Mexico border. Cruz's fence installation explores the dynamics of urban conflict on both sides of the U.S. and Mexico border, from San Diego's affluence to homelessness in Tijuana.

Visitors will also encounter Alice Waters' Edible Schoolyard, part of the Yale Sustainable Food Project. Waters, a renowned chef, created this project in response to the lack of nutritious food served in California public schools. A model garden, located in front of the Center, will feature local seasonal vegetables and flowers. Campers attending the Center's American Adventure Summer Camp will help plant and tend to the garden throughout the summer. The Center's model garden is developed in partnership with The Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative at the University of Pennsylvania and Pedal Co-Op.

[Please note: Estudio Teddy Cruz's fence installation and the Edible Schoolyard will only be on display through August 15, 2009.]

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ADD TWO/INTO THE OPEN

On display in the Center's Posterity Hall, visitors can view the following projects:

Rural Studio, Auburn University: Hale County Animal Shelter

Rural Studio provides dignified, community-based housing and municipal structures in rural Alabama, mitigating the effects of a poverty-stricken region. Students at Auburn University are invited each year to leave the typical college environment and live in rural Alabama. Working closely with the client and local welfare agencies, students learn about the importance of architectural improvisation and social responsibility. Rural Studio has built over 75 houses and structures in this manner, including the \$20,000 House, a series of low-cost homes, and an animal shelter. Photographs of the animal shelter, a model of the \$20,000 House, and a projected slideshow of Rural Studio's work are on display in the exhibition.

Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP): The Subsidized Landscape

A non-profit organization located in Brooklyn, CUP promotes a new kind of civic education by working with inner-city youth to create collaborative projects that explore the urban environment. One such project, The Subsidized Landscape, diagrams the complex financial underpinnings that determine the construction of housing in the United States. The interactive model explores how financial incentives flow among tenants, investors, developers, and builders. This teaching tool is used in Affordable Housing Workshops, where tenants learn how to become better advocates for their interests. The Subsidized Landscape interactive model and a large photo montage of the urban landscape are on display in the exhibition.

**Spatial Information Design Lab/Laura Kurgan:
Architecture and Justice: Million Dollars Blocks**

The United States comprises less than five percent of the world's population, but it houses almost one-quarter of the world's prisoners. The number of incarcerated Americans has exploded over the last 25 years, from 200,000 in 1974 to 2,300,000 in 2008. Ninety-five percent of people sent to prison are eventually released, and each year, about 600,000 are sent back to their communities. Almost two-thirds of these released prisoners are sent back to prison within three years. In census blocks 253 and 254, located in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, the state of New York regularly spends more than one million dollars to incarcerate prisoners who live within a single census block. Advocacy organizations, city planners, and community groups working with released prisoners are asking where these "million dollar blocks" exist, and why more resources aren't allocated for settlement rather than displacement. The Spatial Information Design Lab illustrates, through complex mapping and animation, the relationship between demographics and the penal system, analyzing the money spent on incarceration versus the investment in housing and neighborhood infrastructure in parts of New York City. The Lab hopes to transform the urban conditions from which prisoners come and to which most of them ultimately return. A map of Bedford Stuyvesant prisoner migration patterns and a powerful PowerPoint presentation, *Architecture and Justice: Million Dollar Blocks*, are featured in the exhibition.

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ADD THREE/INTO THE OPEN

Jonathan Kirschenfeld Associates: The Floating Pool

At the turn of the 20th century, New York had as many as 15 floating bathhouses along the East and Hudson Rivers. Inspired by these historical structures, The Floating Pool, a mobile swimming pool, reuses a decommissioned barge to bring summertime recreation to underserved populations. The Pool opened in 2007 at Pier 4 in Brooklyn, hosting over 50,000 swimmers during its first season. Now integrated into New York's Department of Parks and Recreation, the pool's success and visibility in the media has helped provoke action to improve waterfront access, water quality, and recreational and educational activities. A wood model and accompanying photograph of the Pool are featured in the exhibition.

Studio 804: Sustainable Prototype for Greensburg, Kansas

The town of Greensburg, Kansas was destroyed when a major tornado struck on May 4, 2007. Stretching 1.7 miles wide, the tornado took 10 lives, destroyed nearly 1,000 homes, and caused over \$1 billion in damage. In response, students from Studio 804, a program at the University of Kansas, collaborated with the town to construct a visionary prefabricated arts and culture building. Produced in a large warehouse, the building was deconstructed, shipped in modules to Greensburg, and completed in time to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the tornado. The sustainable prototype was made from reclaimed lumber from the retired Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant, photovoltaic arrays, wind turbines, and geothermal heating and cooling systems. A FEMA photograph of Greensburg after the storm and a photograph of the sustainable prototype are juxtaposed in the exhibition to show the sense of urgency and need.

The Heidelberg Project: Heidelberg Street

The Heidelberg Project has transformed a derelict Detroit neighborhood into a site of renewal. Armed with paintbrushes, brooms, and assorted refuse, volunteers have treated the vacant buildings and houses of Heidelberg Street as a canvas for a massive public art project. Today, the Heidelberg Project is recognized as the third most visited cultural tourist site in Detroit, with over 275,000 visitors annually. Photographs of the work on Heidelberg Street are on display in the exhibition.

For the full exhibition experience, guests are encouraged to visit the Slought Foundation on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania at 4017 Walnut Street in Philadelphia, where the following projects will be on display:

Design Corps: Migrant Housing and Bath House

Over 12,000 migrant workers in North Carolina live in housing with inadequate plumbing. They rely on ground water polluted from faulty septic systems and are 40 times more likely to contract tuberculosis. Through conversations with farm workers, community members, government regulators, and service agencies, Design Corps was inspired to improve bathroom facilities at labor camps. Design Corps also developed housing for a migrant farm worker camp in Adams County, Pennsylvania. The prototypes are designed for four single male workers who come to Pennsylvania to pick apples, peaches, and cherries from August through October. Photographs of these projects are on display in the exhibition.

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ADD FOUR/INTO THE OPEN

The Center for Land Use Interpretation (CLUI):

Post-Consumed: The Landscape of Waste in Los Angeles

CLUI explores our society's complex formation and denigration of land through development. A 30-minute slideshow explores the path of waste in Los Angeles from curbside to landfill.

Gans Studio: Roll Out Houses

Made of lightweight, flexible materials, the Roll Out House offers a humane solution to families uprooted from their homes. A prototype on display in the exhibition is intended for portable use on refugee camps.

Rebar: Panhandle Bandshell

The Panhandle Bandshell is a full-scale performance stage constructed almost entirely of repurposed materials, including 65 automobile hoods, hundreds of computer circuit boards, 3,000 plastic water bottles, French doors, reclaimed wood, and recycled structural steel. Photographs and a playful video chronicle the construction of the Bandshell in San Francisco's Panhandle Park.

Kyong Park/International Center for Urban Ecology (ICUE): The New Silk Road

Artist and urban theorist Kyong Park retraced the Old Silk Road, traversing today's rapidly expanding and transforming global cities. His resultant photo essay, *A New Silk Road*, sheds light on the changing geo-political boundaries, explosion of migration and urbanization, and shifting socio-cultural demographics in contemporary Asia. A two-screen panoramic slideshow showcases Park's work. The exhibition also features a video profile of the artist.

Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC): FireBreak

Detroit is a city defined by its shrinking population and continued disinvestment. FireBreak treats shrinkage and decay as opportunities rather than problems. Inspired neighborhood residents joined DCDC to transform old "crack houses" into houses that store bundles of hay. Photographs of the "hay houses" are on display in the exhibition.

Project Row Houses: Row House Community Development

Nearly 25 houses mysteriously burned down in the Northern Third Ward of Houston last year. A photograph in the exhibition documents the burning of one such house, marking the otherwise unacknowledged transformation of the neighborhood. The work of Project Row Houses demonstrates how residents can fend off commercial development through neighborhood restoration. The organization develops housing, public space, facilities, and programs for low to moderate income residents to preserve and protect the historic character of the Third Ward. A photograph showing new row house renovations alongside old row houses in the Third Ward is also on display.

Smith and Others: Merrimac Building

Since the 1980s, Smith and Others has experimented with affordable housing models, helping to transform the city of San Diego into an epicenter of alternative housing prototypes. At Smith and Others, architects develop their own projects, re-shaping the way the city grows and changes by emphasizing quality of life for residents over

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ADD FIVE/INTO THE OPEN

maximum profit for developers. One such development, the Merrimac Building, is an important example of an alternative housing model that can be built in an open market with limited capital. Photographs of Smith and Others' projects are on display, along with a video profile of the company.

Visitors can view these projects at the Slought Foundation during public hours from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, and by appointment (call 215.701.4627).

Into the Open debuted at the Venice Biennale in 2008 as the official United States representation, where it offered international audiences insight into the ways America's architects are reinventing public space. The exhibition is organized by William Menking, Editor-in-Chief of *The Architect's Newspaper*, Aaron Levy, Executive Director and Senior Curator of the Slought Foundation, and Andrew Sturm, former Director of Architecture for the PARC Foundation. It was conceived in collaboration with architects Teddy Cruz and Deborah Gans.

Admission to *Into the Open* is FREE with regular museum admission to the National Constitution Center and FREE at the Slought Foundation. iPod audio tours cost \$4. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

Exhibition Credits

Into the Open is presented by the National Constitution Center, and organized by the Slought Foundation and PARC Foundation.

The exhibition was commissioned by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. for the 11th International Architecture Exhibition at La Biennale di Venezia, in cooperation with the Peggy Guggenheim Collection.

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ADD SIX/INTO THE OPEN

Public Programming Partner: Community Design Collaborative.

National Media Partner: *The Architect's Newspaper*.

Local Print Partner: *Philadelphia Weekly*.

About the Slought Foundation

Slought Foundation is a non-profit cultural organization that highlights inventive and interdisciplinary practice by collaborating with leading artists and architects in an intimate and participatory environment. Based on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania at 4017 Walnut Street, Slought Foundation encourages new forms of sociability and activism through programs, publications, and local and international partnerships that respond to the particular issues and challenges our communities face today. From Vito Accconci to Werner Herzog, the archives of the Slought Foundation feature today's pioneers in conversation about contemporary art, architecture, and social theory. For more information, call 215.701.4627 or visit www.sloughtfoundation.org.

About the National Constitution Center

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising". The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. Also, as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional discourse, the Center presents – without endorsement – programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

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