

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER PRESENTS SPECIAL COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING IN CONJUNCTION WITH *INTO THE OPEN* EXHIBITION

Philadelphia, PA – The National Constitution Center, in conjunction with the Slought Foundation, will present a series of public programs to complement the *Into the Open* exhibition and to encourage community activism. These engaging, thought-provoking activities will take place at the Center and at non-traditional, urban settings throughout Philadelphia.

Events include:

A Vegetable Party

Friday, August 7, 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

FREE

The public is invited to join in a celebration of edible education on Independence Mall. Visitors will learn about the origins of the food Americans consume, and the principles of modern ecology, as the Center showcases the efforts of local urban farmers, chefs, and activists who are working to inform students and the public about what we eat and where it comes from. Participants include The Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative at the University of Pennsylvania, the Pedal Co-Op, and Slow Food USA.

This event is inspired by the work of Alice Waters and 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. As part of *Into the Open*, a model garden, located in front of the National Constitution 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.

Architecture in Conversation

Friday, August 7, 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

FREE

As part of "First Friday," visitors can participate in an informal discussion with designers featured in the *Into the Open* exhibition, including Laura Kurgan of the Spatial Information Design Lab at Columbia University, and Damon Rich, founder of the Center for Urban Pedagogy in Brooklyn, NY, who also serves as an urban designer and waterfront planner for the City of Newark, NJ. The conversation will take place in the Center's Posterity Hall alongside the designers' contributions to the exhibition.

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ADD ONE/PROGRAMS

Architecture in Conversation

Friday, August 7, 6:00 p.m.

FREE

As part of "First Friday," visitors can participate in a public conversation with architect Teddy Cruz, whose photo narrative of the U.S.-Mexico border will be prominently displayed on the front lawn of the National Constitution Center. The conversation will take place in the Center's Kirby Auditorium and features respected architecture professor and critic Michael Sorkin.

Repurpose! A Community Workshop

Saturday, August 22, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

611 North 40th Street, West Philadelphia

FREE

In the spirit of the civic activism promoted by the architects and designers featured in the *Into the Open* exhibition, the National Constitution Center will host a one-day community workshop and design competition highlighting the creative possibilities of urban revitalization in the Mantua neighborhood in West Philadelphia. The event will take place on a vacant lot at 611- 627 North 40th Street, currently slated to become the site of new affordable housing units.

Throughout the day, participants will learn about ongoing neighborhood civic initiatives aimed at revitalizing West Philadelphia. Presentations will be made by Rosten Woo and Damon Rich of the Center for Urban Pedagogy, Deborah Gans of Gans Studio, and Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss of the Normal Architecture Office. The day will culminate with workshop participants creating temporary structures out of reclaimed materials such as recycled plastic bottles.

The workshop is made possible through the support of the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, the City of Philadelphia's Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy, and the City of Philadelphia's Office of Sustainability, in partnership with the People's Emergency Center and the Community Design Collaborative. The 1,787 (a reference to the year the Constitution was signed) plastic bottles used during the workshop are provided courtesy of Blue Mountain Recycling.

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.

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ADD TWO/PROGRAMS

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.

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. 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.

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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