

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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FEATURED DESIGNERS FROM *INTO THE OPEN* EXHIBITION DISCUSS THEIR PROJECTS AT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

Philadelphia, PA (July 20, 2009) – The National Constitution Center, in partnership with the Slought Foundation and the Community Design Collaborative, will host public conversations with featured designers from the *Into the Open* exhibition on Friday, August 7, 2009, as part of “First Friday.” **Jonathan Kirschenfeld**, principal of Jonathan Kirschenfeld Architects; **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, will speak about their contributions to the exhibition at 5:00 p.m. in the Center’s Posterity Hall. **Teddy Cruz**, whose photo narrative of the U.S.-Mexico border is prominently displayed on the front lawn of the Center, and **Michael Sorkin**, respected architecture critic and professor, will speak at 6:00 p.m. in the Center’s F.M. Kirby Auditorium. Admission is free, but reservations are required and can be made by calling 215.409.6700.

Teddy Cruz’s work explores the dynamics of urban conflict on both sides of the United States-Mexico border, from the affluence north of San Diego to homelessness and neglect in Tijuana, Mexico. Cruz has been recognized internationally, in collaboration with community-based non-profit organizations such as Casa Familiar, for his work on housing and its relationship to an urban policy more inclusive of social and cultural programs. Cruz received the Rome Prize in Architecture from the American Academy in Rome. He currently serves as an Associate Professor in public culture and urbanism in the Visual Arts Department at University of California at San Diego.

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ADD ONE/ARCHITECTS IN CONVERSATION

Jonathan Kirschenfeld is the principal of Jonathan Kirschenfeld Architects, an internationally recognized firm for design excellence over a wide range of public and private architectural commissions. The firm's most recent large-scale project, The Floating Pool, drew major media coverage during its inaugural summer season at Brooklyn Bridge Park. The 20,000 square-foot facility hosted more than 50,000 visitors during its eight week season, and won an international 2007 Award of Excellence from the Waterfront Center, a 2008 Masterwork Award, and a 2008 Building Brooklyn Award. Kirschenfeld has taught graduate programs at Columbia University's School of Architecture Planning and Preservation, Pratt Institute, and New Jersey Institute of Technology.

Laura Kurgan teaches architecture at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, where she is Director of Visual Studies and the Spatial Information Design Lab (SIDL). SIDL is currently collaborating with the Justice Mapping Center on a project called "Graphical Innovations in Justice Mapping" in selected states, including Arizona, Kansas, Los Angeles, Louisiana, New York, and Rhode Island. This project illustrates, through complex mapping and animation, the relationship between demographics and the penal system, analyzing the money spent on incarceration versus investments made in housing and neighborhood infrastructure. Kurgan has also followed the declassification of satellite imagery and GPS technology in a series of research projects about the significant political events of the last decade. This work, which has been exhibited internationally, is collected in *You Are Here: Post-Military Technology and the New Landscape of Satellite Images*.

Damon Rich is an artist and designer whose exhibitions use video, sculpture, graphics, and photography to investigate the political economy of the built environment. In 1997, Rich founded the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people understand and change the places they live. His project, The Subsidized Landscape, diagrams the complex financial underpinnings that determine the construction of housing in the United States, and explores how financial incentives

ADD TWO/ARCHITECTS IN CONVERSATION

flow among tenants, investors, developers, and builders. Rich has been awarded a New York State Council on the Arts award for his work with adult literacy and architecture, as well as a fellowship from the MacDowell Colony for his work on the history of urban renewal.

Michael Sorkin is Distinguished Professor of Architecture and Director of the Graduate Program in Urban Design at the City College of New York. From 1993 to 2000, he was Professor and Director of the Institute for Urbanism at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Sorkin's long academic career has also included professorships at Cooper Union, Harvard University, Yale University, Cornell University, Columbia University, University of Pennsylvania, University of Texas, University of Minnesota, University of Illinois, Michigan University, and University of Nebraska. For 10 years, he served as the architectural critic for the *Village Voice*, and he currently serves as contributing editor for *Architectural Record*. Sorkin also serves as President of Terreform, a non-profit organization engaged in urban research and advocacy, and President of The Institute for Urban Design.

From July 15 to September 7, 2009, the National Constitution Center is hosting *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.

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.

ADD THREE/ARCHITECTS IN CONVERSATION

The projects featured in the exhibition are 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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