

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

525 Arch Street | Independence Mall
Philadelphia | PA 19106 | T 215 409 6600 | F 215 409 6650
www.constitutioncenter.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACTS: Ashley Berke
Senior Public Relations Manager
215.409.6693
aberke@constitutioncenter.org

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER PRESENTS A DAY OF COMMUNITY ACTIVISM AIMED AT URBAN REVITALIZATION

In conjunction with the Into the Open exhibition

Philadelphia, PA (July 31, 2009) - The National Constitution the Center, in partnership with the Slought Foundation, the Community Design Collaborative, and the People's Emergency Center, will present *Into the Open: Repurpose!*, a day of community activism with architects and members of the Mantua neighborhood in West Philadelphia. On Saturday, August 22, 2009, beginning at 10:00 a.m., participants will take part in community workshops and learn about ongoing neighborhood civic initiatives aimed at revitalizing West Philadelphia. Admission is free, and the public can get more information about the day's events by calling 215.409.6700.

Inspired by the work of architects and designers featured in the *Into the Open* exhibition, this program will highlight creative possibilities for urban revitalization. The workshops will take place on a vacant lot at 611- 627 N. 40th Street, currently slated to become "Jannie's Place," the site of new affordable housing units named after Philadelphia Councilwoman **Jannie L. Blackwell**. The day will begin at 10:00 a.m. with a community workshop titled "What is affordable housing?" led by **Rosten Woo** of the Center for Urban Pedagogy. Presentations will be made at 12:00 p.m. by Councilwoman **Blackwell** and **Gloria Guard**, President of the People's Emergency Center. Following their remarks, architects **Dave Beuge** of the University of Arkansas, **Lindsay Bremner** of Temple University, and **Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss** of the Normal Architecture Office will lead workshops resulting in the creation of temporary structures, including an outdoor movie theater and shelter made from repurposed plastic bottles. The day will culminate with the presentation of videos from the Precious Places Community History Project, a community oral history initiative produced by Scribe Video Center, beginning at 8:00 p.m. in the movie theater.

- MORE -

ADD ONE/REPURPOSE

The *Repurpose!* day of community activism has been organized in partnership with 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. The plastic bottles used during the workshops are being provided courtesy of Blue Mountain Recycling.

Lindsay Bremner is a professor of architecture at the Tyler School of Art at Temple University. She previously worked and taught in Johannesburg, South Africa, where she was involved in a number of community-driven projects, including the Tamboville Creche and the Sans Souci Cinema in Kliptown, Soweto. Professor Bremner has published and lectured widely on the transformation of post-apartheid Johannesburg. She is currently working on two books and conducting research on the geopolitics of the Indian Ocean.

Dave Beuge is the Fay Jones Visiting Chair in Architecture at the University of Arkansas, where he previously served as director of the architecture program for many years. He has taught at Auburn University, Mississippi State University, and the New Jersey Institute of Technology. He also taught Auburn's Rural Studio for several years and served as Interim Director in 2007-08.

Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss is the founder of Normal Architecture Office and the co-founder of the School of Missing Studies, a network for cultural and urban research. His recent book, *Almost Architecture*, explores the roles of architecture in relation to democratic processes, abrupt political changes, and the architectural appearance of post-Communist ideologies. He is an assistant professor at the Tyler School of Art at Temple University, and lectures at Harvard University Graduate School of Design and the University of Pennsylvania School of Design.

Rosten Woo is the Executive Director of the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), where he has produced public education projects since 2001. He teaches design history and theory at Parsons, the New School for Design, and produces historical research and writing on history, design, and public policy for *Place Matters*, *Municipal Arts Society*, *Metropolis Magazine*, and *The Village Voice*. He has also worked as a researcher and

ADD TWO/REPURPOSE

policy analyst for a variety of non-profit organizations, including Common Ground Community and the Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center. He serves on the board of like-minded non-profits, Place in History and Groundswell Community Mural Project.

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. The model garden project on the front lawn of the Center is sponsored by the Philadelphia Eagles Go Green Initiative.

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

ADD THREE/REPURPOSE

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.

###