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VAN ALEN REPORT AUGUST 2002

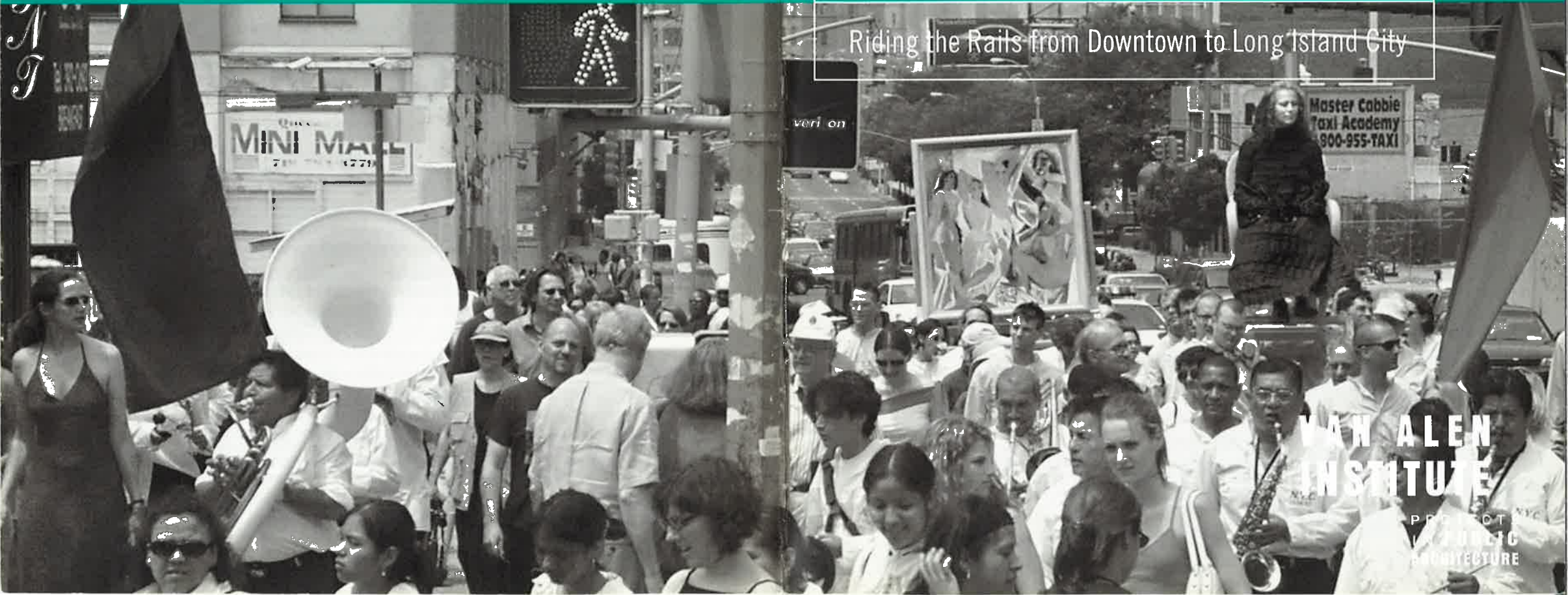
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take the ® train

Riding the Rails from Downtown to Long Island City



VAN ALEN
INSTITUTE
PROJECT
PUBLIC
ARCHITECTURE

Van Alen Institute is committed to improving the design of the public realm.

Our program of Projects in Public Architecture promotes education and action through design competitions, workshops, studies, forums, web sites, and publications including the Van Alen Report.

While the Institute grounds its work in New York City, we structure our projects to engage an interdisciplinary and international array of practitioners, policy-makers, students, educators, and community leaders.

editor's letter

This issue of the Van Alen Report invites you to "Take The R Train." The nexus between Lower Manhattan and Long Island City, the R has by chance become the "arts" train. Projects such as SHoP's **Rector Street Bridge** (p6) are helping renew downtown, while Brian Tolle's **Irish Hunger Memorial** (p5) allows for a moment of contemplation. In Long Island City, new inhabitants such as **MoMA QNS** (p11), as well as longstanding residents such as **Socrates Sculpture Park** (p11), which has a festive summer of film and music, are transforming the industrial landscape.

Given VAI's engagement in projects in Lower Manhattan, which include planning a **center for information exchange and public participation** (p4), and efforts in LIC, such as an **ideas competition for Queens Plaza** (p10), (entries are currently on view in an exhibition at the Institute), for this VAR we have taken the prerogative to celebrate these cultural districts. As in VAR 10 "Recreating The City," where we focused on one of Brooklyn's cultural centers, BAM, this issue looks at the arts as a generator of discussion and ideas helping us to move forward as well as look back and reflect.

Upcoming this fall, VAI will publish "**Renewing, Rebuilding, Remembering.**" a special VAR that forms the catalogue to VAI's recent exhibit of the same name (www.vanalen.org), which will travel to The Lighthouse, Glasgow, in early 2003. In addition, a series of forums on internationally significant public spaces lead up to a major exhibition on the same theme organized by VAI to open next spring, for which VAI has received major support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the Stephen A. & Diana L. Goldberg Foundation.

At the recent "**Berlin-Info-Box-New York**" VAI forum, Alexander Garvin from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation noted that we already have a vehicle for information exchange about downtown, "it's called your computer." We agree, but also believe that models, drawings, maps, and even Van Alen Reports are a critical way to exchange information about how cities change. E-mail us your ideas: zryan@vanalen.org **ZOË RYAN**

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Raymond W. Gastil
Executive Director

Zoë Ryan Editor

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Van Alen Report is published seasonally. Subscriptions are a benefit of membership and are also independently available to libraries and universities. Individual issues can be purchased at our gallery, in bookstores, and at www.vanalen.org.

Cover: *The Modern Procession*
Photo: Marcus Woollen

Billy Strayhorn composed, and Duke Ellington made famous, *Take the "A" Train*, which identifies the subway line through Harlem along St. Nicholas (9th) Avenue.

William Van Alen (1882-1954), the Institute's namesake and historically most significant benefactor, was the architect of New York City's 1930 landmark Chrysler Building.

BERLIN—INFO-BOX—NYC

by ZOË RYAN

IN 1994, the Berlin City Administration asked investors engaged in construction on Potsdamer Platz to organize and fund an invited, international design competition for a temporary information and exhibition center, an Info-Box, to engage residents and visitors in the rebuilding of Potsdamer Platz.

On June 5, 2002, Van Alen Institute hosted a forum to ask: "How can New York design and distribute information on the changing future of Lower Manhattan?" Cognizant that downtown New York faces not just a challenge for the future design and realization of its built environment, but an information challenge, the Institute invited Till Schneider, Principal of Schneider-Schumacher Architekten, designers of the Info-Box; landscape architect Diana Balmori, head of New York New Visions' Temporary Memorial Committee; Alexander Garvin, Vice President for Planning, Design and Development, Lower Manhattan Development Corporation; and architects Laurie Hawkinson and Hugh Hardy, co-chairs of NYNV's Cultural & Historic Resources Team to consider how residents, workers, and visitors to Downtown can gain comprehensive information to learn, understand, and participate in the rebuilding process.

www.architect.org/lower_manhattan
www.batteryparkcity.org
www.cb1.org
www.civic-alliance.org
www.downtownny.com
www.empire.state.ny.us
www.gothamgazette.com/rebuilding_nyc
www.hudsonriverfestival.com
www.imageny.org
www.listeningtothecity.org
www.lmcc.net
www.mcny.org
www.newyorknewvisions.org
www.ny1.com
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www.nycvisit.com
www.nyhistory.org/historyresponds.html
www.panynj.gov
www.reconstructionreport.org
www.renewnyc.com
www.rivertorivernyc.com
www.skyscraper.org
www.southstreetsreport.com
www.state.ny.us
www.thebattery.org
www.wallstreetrising.org
www.worldfinancialcenter.com

VIRTUAL INFO-BOX



Info-Box, Berlin PHOTO COURTESY © JÜRGEN HEINDEL

The consensus from both the panel and audience was that a place for public participation was fundamental. Garvin stressed the overwhelming need for "New Yorkers to regain what was lost by participating in the process of replacement," which was emphasized by Schneider who advocated for a physical space in which the public can come together to discuss developments and hear decision-makers speak about the process. Garvin stressed, however, that "We all have an Info-Box; it's called your computer!" An important point – see below for just a few of the many websites that have emerged giving information and a forum for critical exchange. Yet, as VAI's recent exhibit *Renewing, Rebuilding, Remembering* showed, (through photographs, plans and drawings of design proposals and master plans for seven international cities including Berlin, Beirut, Manchester, Sarajevo, Oklahoma and Kobe, that have come back after man-made and natural disasters), hard data and the opportunity to review developments is essential to a process and design that the City will be proud of. Rosalie Genevro, Executive Director of the Architectural League who together with Van Alen Institute and the Battery Park City Authority are championing New York's own information system, asserts that, "The Internet is extremely useful for quickly exchanging lots of information, but it is no substitute for the possibility of studying drawings and models and talking with other people about the ideas expressed," continuing she explains the critical need for a central space. "It could be a very large room, or a small building, but it must be a physical place where the enormous outpouring of ideas, visions and schemes, official and unofficial, can be displayed and analyzed, and anyone interested in

"Information sharing is probably the most important theme and objective to be achieved over the next six months"

AMANDA BURDEN,
CHAIR, CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

"Information sharing is probably the most important theme and objective to be achieved over the next six months. An information exchange, NYC's own Info-Box, would be a remarkably important and symbolic gesture. It would not only enhance understanding and public dialogue, it would bring the public, designers and decision makers to the site to make decisions."

what will happen downtown can go to look at proposals and plans." Amanda Burden, Chair, City Planning Commission, speaking at The Center for Architecture's 6.11 conference a week later expressed that,

WTC CONSTRUCTION FENCE BECOMES A "VIEWING WALL"

by SUSI SÁNCHEZ

Recognizing that a construction fence at the World Trade Center site would inevitably be built, New York New Visions' Temporary Memorials Committee (NYNV) saw the opportunity to make it function on many levels, and combine it with a "temporary memorial since it would always receive people," says Committee member and VAI Trustee Diana Balmori. Following the announcement of a 30-foot opaque fence in The New York Times in March, a multi-disciplinary team of NYNV members

"It is inspiring that talented design professionals are providing effective leadership and thinking when New York needs it most"

ALEX GARVIN,
THE LOWER MANHATTAN
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

organized a Saturday design charette at VAI to propose something in lieu of the proposed fence. Alex Garvin, of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) who invited NYNV to prepare design concepts, noted that "It is inspiring that talented design professionals are providing effective leadership and thinking when New York needs it most." The group's recommendations included lowering the fence's height and constructing it of a material that would allow people to witness the site's development. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANY&NJ) and the LMDC are working cooperatively to adopt these and other proposed features, such as message panels, shelves for offerings, and niches for individuals to retreat from the sidewalk, in a revised design called "The Viewing Wall," to be underway this August. At street intersections, PANY&NJ is designing "lanterns," which will serve as markers to approaching visitors, as well as an elaborate system of lighting.

As an element that will surround the site for several years, the fence is a response to the need to provide—as stated by architect Laurie Hawkinson—"vehicles for discourse and display about the redevelopment of the site."

Church Street Tribute Zone section of WTC Viewing Wall KINETIC MEDIA, INC.



HUMAN NATURE

by ZOË RYAN



Irish Hunger Memorial HUGH L. CAREY BATTERY PARK CITY AUTHORITY 2002
RENDERING: BRIAN CLYNE

"Memorial making has historically served to make permanent the connection between the commemorated event and the moment of commemoration," asserts artist Brian Tolle, designer of the Irish Hunger Memorial in Battery Park City. "My goal was to break with tradition by making the monument responsive to changing events and circumstances," he says of his design, which includes a facsimile of an abandoned potato field planted with dozens of species of native Irish plants and grasses. The

"My goal was to break with tradition by making the monument responsive to changing events and circumstances"

BRIAN TOLLE, ARTIST

design for a memorial to the hundreds of thousands who died during the Irish famine of 1845-50 opened in July. Covering a half-acre site, the memorial rises 25-feet on its western end, symbolically overlooking the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island where many Irish immigrants escaping persecution entered America. "Our attention was drawn to the deep, complex connection between the soil and the people who live on it," notes Juergen Riehm, Principal, 1100 Architect who was part of the design team chosen by Tolle that included landscape architect Gail Eileen Wittwer. "Literally lifting earth above the ground was a way to make the memorial evoke that relationship."

Tolle's design is strikingly in contrast to other memorials in Battery Park City, which include the current temporary memorial in the World Financial Center Plaza dedicated to the uniformed officers killed on September 11th, as well as the Museum of Jewish Heritage: A Living Memorial to the Holocaust (1997). Entered through a passage in the base, visitors can read about the history of the Irish famine on wall texts displayed behind alternating bands of frosted glass and limestone. An opening in the passage directs visitors up into a ruined fieldstone cottage (shipped from Ireland) and out onto the inclined landscape.

BRIDGING THE GAP

by ZOE RYAN

The myriad challenges that faced SHoP architects when they were approached by Battery Park City Authority (BPCA) to design a bridge to cross West Street have thankfully not deterred them from creating a new piece of infrastructure that breaks up the otherwise barren, southernmost stretch of West Street with an interesting interlude. Reconnecting Battery Park City with Rector Street and the World Financial Center (WFC), the bridge is crucial for pedestrians, who would otherwise have to negotiate the throng of heavy traffic (the former northern World Trade Center pedestrian bridge was destroyed on September 11, and a second, the WFC South Bridge, which survived at Liberty Street was only reopened in April). The Sam Schwartz Company-initiated study secured the fate of the bridge by showing it was much needed and would be trafficked by approximately 4,000 people a week. However, the opening of the \$3.5 million project, scheduled for November, was delayed until July in part by lengthy negotiations between the numerous city factions involved, including the BPCA, The WFC, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and The Port Authority of New York

and New Jersey. Project manager, Heather Sporn, from the New York State Department of Transportation, says "It required a lot of cooperation from many different groups in a short amount of time. Despite this the bridge is

exemplary. It has provided a vital service and is aesthetically distinct." Even so, the temporary structure, planned to be in use for two years, has not precluded controversy. "The local community did not want the bridge to be a viewing platform so we made a conscious effort to conceal any openings," says Bill Sharples, a partner at SHoP. Instead, to provide light, their design, which wraps around a heavy-duty, prefabricated steel construction made by the industrial manufacturers MABEY, incorporates five-foot-long "light planks" that are inserted between the steel framework emitting fluorescent light. "The lighting helps make the bridge feel less like part of a construction site," explains Sharples.



Rector Street Bridge under construction late June 2002. SHoP

"...the bridge is exemplary in that it has provided a vital service and is aesthetically distinct"

HEATHER SPORN, THE NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DOWNTOWN ART

by ZOE RYAN



Primal Graphics 2002, by Jim Campbell, featured February-September, 2002 in Art on the Plaza, a Creative Time program PHOTO: WWW.CHARLIESAMUELS.COM

"My work connects to September 11 in an optimistic way by trying to bring energy to an area that has been very quiet," says Jim Campbell of his installation *Primal Graphics 2002*, on view in the plaza of the new Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park. Organized by Creative Time, a non-profit organization with a long history of public art projects in downtown Manhattan (including Art on the Beach, see 20th Century History p14), *Primal Graphics 2002* is made from a steel box inset with 386 flashing light bulbs set on two 10 x 13-foot grids that generate the shadowy image of a human figure walking. The first of 10 projects that will run for six months each over a five-year period, Campbell says, "It is part of a series I have been working on that deals with physical struggle through the metaphor of running and falling." Anne Pasternak, Creative Time's Executive Director explains that the timeless themes of rebirth, trial and error and memory and loss explored in Campbell's work give residents of the neighborhood the opportunity "to pause and reflect and have a new daily experience." Continuing, she adds, "We have had lots of positive in-person feedback." Also

"The important message generated by these art projects is that New York is about moving forward but at the same time allows for contemplation"

ANNE PASTERNAK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CREATIVE TIME

in Lower Manhattan is ART DOWNTOWN, organized by Wall Street Rising. Located in five buildings in the Financial District, work by artists including Louise Bourgeois, Julian Schnabel, Nan Goldin and Donald Judd, among others, is on view through September 15. "The important message generated by these art projects is that New York is about moving forward but at the same time allows for contemplation," says Pasternak.

See further projects by Jim Campbell in "Walk Ways" by Stuart Horodner, out this fall, published by Independent Curators International.

R13.6

LMCC AND MTA LOOK TO ART

by SUSI SÁNCHEZ

In a savvy strategy to reuse vacant retail space, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) is taking over empty storefronts along one Tribeca block (Murray St./Church St./Park Place/West Broadway) and converting them into temporary exhibitions and performance spaces. Aptly titled, "Looking In," the project, which is

"Looking In is designed to enliven the streetscape of lower Manhattan and offer both artists and the public an opportunity to explore the transitional nature of the area"

MOUKHTAR KOCACHE, LMCC'S DIRECTOR OF VISUAL AND MEDIA ARTS

scheduled to run from early August through January 2003, "is designed to enliven the streetscape of lower Manhattan and offer both artists and the public an opportunity to explore the transitional nature of the area," says Moukhtar Kocache, LMCC's Director of Visual and

Media Arts.

With approximately 15 semi-permanent installations, and several rotating performance projects, the LMCC hopes to attract people downtown and "highlight the survival of small businesses, cultural groups and the residential and business community" in Lower Manhattan.

Similarly, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's ongoing venture, MTA Arts for Transit has also recently requested reflective proposals from artists. Seeking photography-based work, the MTA will reproduce the work as duratrans, or large color transparencies, for display in light boxes at selected subway stations including Bowling Green in Lower Manhattan. The installations will relate to some facet of traveling on the MTA, or some character of the neighborhood in which they are located.

Vacant storefronts on West Broadway PHOTO: SUSI SÁNCHEZ



VIEW FROM THE RISE

by CLAIRE R. NELSON



View of New York harbor from the Rise bar on the 14th floor of the new Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park PHOTO: CLAIRE R. NELSON

From a plush club chair on the 14th floor of the new Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park, one has a sweeping panorama of the whole gamut of New York development stories — from dreams deferred to hopes

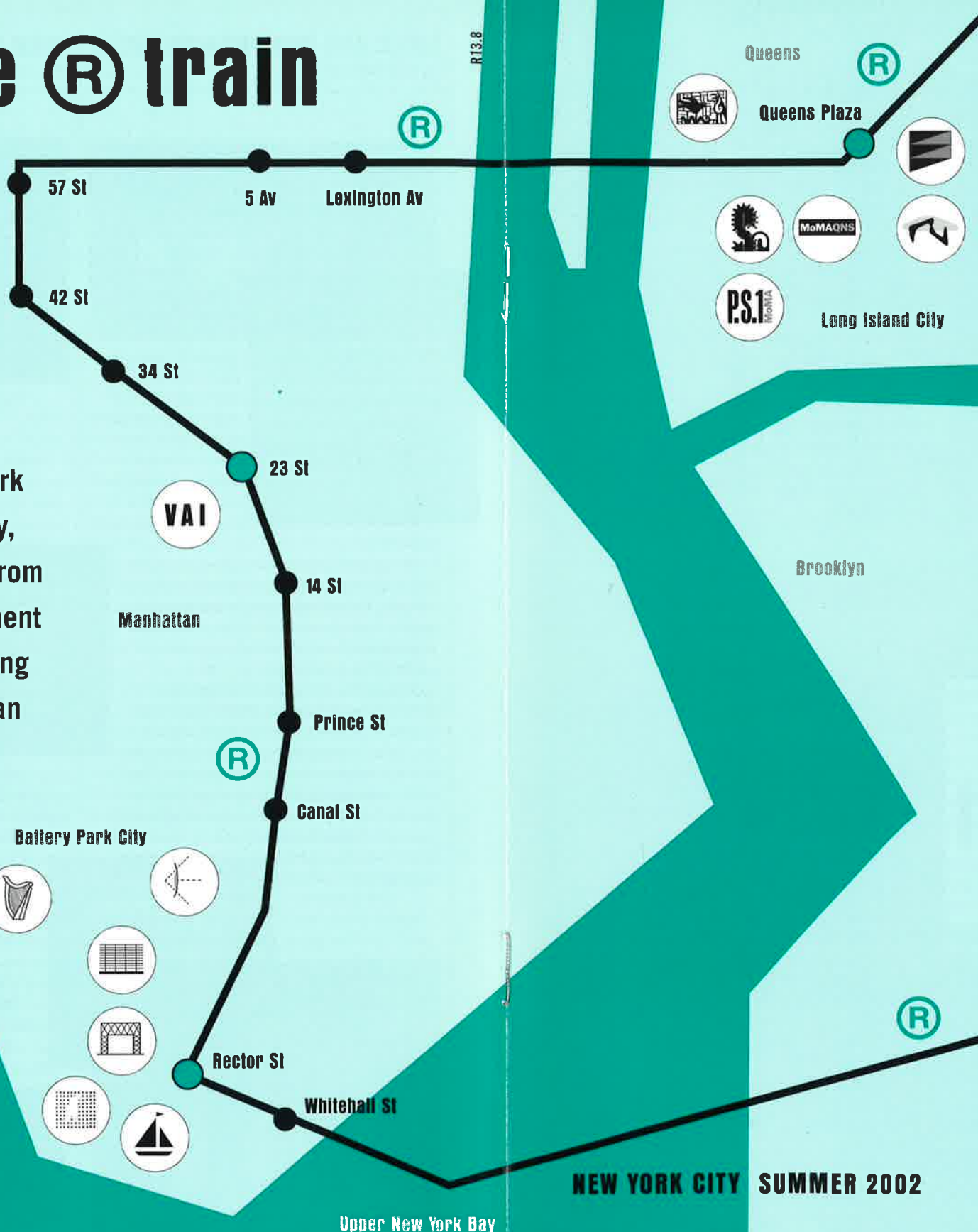
Scanning the harbor, one becomes entranced by the rhythm of the ferries docking and embarking, jet skis skipping across the water, and the Circle Line circling.

renewed. And this is looking away from the World Trade Center site. Scanning the harbor, one becomes entranced by the rhythm of the ferries docking and embarking, jet skis skipping across the water, and the Circle Line circling. Lady Liberty presides over it all, from the industrial shores of Southwest Brooklyn, to the scaffolding-clad Whitehall Ferry Terminal (opening late fall 2003) and Pier A at the tip of the Battery, to the rising towers of New Jersey. At the center of the scene sits the stoic Governors Island, patiently awaiting its fate. With President Bush's April decision to transfer the Island back to New York (with the National Monument to remain under the auspices of the feds), and the city's commitment to a new campus for the City University of New York, the Island's future no longer hangs in the balance. Now, for dedicated activists like Rob Pirani of the Governors Island Alliance, the next chapter is about making sure the deal is consummated and the island is opened to the public — as soon as possible. "We are pleased that CUNY will be the anchor tenant rather than the only tenant — that it won't be 'CUNY Island' where one must have an ID card to get in," says Pirani. "We are supportive of CUNY as they sort out their options."


In the meantime New Yorkers will be watching from across the harbor.


take the **(R)** train

Connecting Battery Park City to Long Island City, the R train takes you from temporary and permanent projects that are helping revive Lower Manhattan to institutions that are transforming Queens.

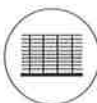


LEGEND

- 

Looking In
 (August - January)
 50 Murray Street
www.lmcc.net
- 

New York Harbor view
 Robert Wagner Jr. Park and
 Battery Park
www.thebattery.org
- 

Primal Graphics 2002
 Art on the Plaza
 The Ritz-Carlton, Battery Park
www.creativetime.org/artonplaza
- 


The Viewing Wall
 (in development)
 Perimeter, World Trade Center site
www.renewnyc.com
- 

Rector Street Bridge
 Pedestrian overpass
 West Street @
 Rector Street
- 

Irish Hunger Memorial
 Vesey Street @
 North End Avenue
 Battery Park City
- 

P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center
 22-25 Jackson Ave., LIC
 718 482 9454
www.ps1.org
- 

MoMA QNS
 45-20 33rd Street, LIC
 212 708 9400
www.moma.org
- 

Sculpture Center
 44-19 Purves Street, LIC (opens Nov)
 718 361 1750
www.sculpture-center.org
- 

Museum for African Art
 36-01 43rd Ave., LIC (opens Sept)
 212 966 1313
www.africanart.org
- 

Socrates Sculpture Park
 Broadway @ Vernon Blvd., LIC
 718 956 1819
www.socratessculpturepark.org
- 

The Isamu Noguchi Museum
 36-01 43rd Ave., 2nd Fl, LIC
 718 204 7088
www.noguchi.org
- 

Van Alen Institute
 30 West 22nd St., 6th Fl
 212 924 7000
www.vanalen.org

NEW YORK CITY SUMMER 2002

Upper New York Bay

queens >

CHALLENGING ARTISTS, architects and designers to conceive of a Queens Plaza whose form would again signify its important role of entry point to a thriving Long Island City, VAI's Queens Plaza Ideas Competition generated a diverse response. Ideas for the plaza, located at the terminus of the 59th St Bridge, include: strategically positioning screens, which will deliver information to pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers alike; using dumpsters as mobile flowerbeds; and attaching small transformable buildings onto the elevated subway tracks. The winning designs first presented in LIC, will be joined by the full range of entries on view at VAI through early fall. Thanks to the generosity of the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, they will also be re-displayed in Queens.

TICKET TO QUEENS PLAZA

by NATHANIEL H. BROOKS

Given the recent surge of interest and activity in this urban crossroads, means to calm inter-modal transport conflict, address issues of environmental quality and generate a public dialogue about the future of this neighborhood are increasingly vital.

"The competition generated a broad range of innovative and creative design ideas for celebrating and enhancing the plaza's infrastructure and at the same

"The competition generated a broad range of innovative and creative design ideas for celebrating and enhancing the plaza's infrastructure and at the same time taming its chaotic street life"

PENNY LEE, NYC DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

time taming its chaotic street life," says Penny Lee of the Department of City Planning (DCP). At the invitation of the office of the Queens Borough President, VAI initiated the competition in the spring of 2001. In the early 20th century, with its wide tree-lined streets Queens Plaza's physical

form aptly symbolized its function as a gateway to Long Island City and midtown Manhattan. By century's end, however, its physical form had lost its symbolic qualities and its frenetic environment with six subway lines (both elevated and subterranean) and 180,000 car trips a day, coupled with indecipherable pedestrian and bike routes, had created a dangerous conflict between different modes of transportation.

Concurrent with the competition, the DCP implemented several initiatives in and around Queens Plaza including zoning changes to allow for buildings with larger FARs, a traffic congestion improvement program, a renovation of Queens Plaza's two subway stops, and an urban design RFP (estimated release date of Fall 2002), which will encourage an interdisciplinary approach to proposals for redesigning the area's streetscape. "These ideas and the enthusiastic public support for the competition are critical to the city's effort to create a more positive image for Queens Plaza and ultimately a new design," notes Lee.

R13.10

MoMA MARCHES TO QUEENS

by MARCUS WOOLLEN

At 9am on Sunday, June 23, the band began to play, rose petals were strewn ceremoniously on the streets and a regal, black-clad Kiki Smith was hoisted high into the air on a wooden throne and carried off along West 53rd Street. *The Modern Procession* had begun. Borrowing from the tradition of a Saint's Day procession, MoMA paraded replicas of its most famous works through the streets of Midtown Manhattan, across the Queensboro Bridge, down Queens Boulevard, and through Queens Plaza to the museum's new 33rd Street home in Long Island City. While no one mistook the stately Kiki Smith for an empress, more than one tourist gasped, believing the replica of Marcel Duchamp's *Bicycle Wheel*, seemingly precariously balanced aloft a wooden stool, as well as Picasso's *Demaiselles d'Avignon* and Giacometti's *Tall Woman*, to be real. Bystanders along the route joined in the celebration, following the procession across the bridge and throwing red roses into the East River.

Public Art Fund in collaboration with MoMA commissioned Belgian-Born, Mexico City-based

While no one mistook the stately Kiki Smith for an empress, more than one tourist gasped, believing the replica of Marcel Duchamp's *Bicycle Wheel*, seemingly precariously balanced aloft a wooden stool... to be real.

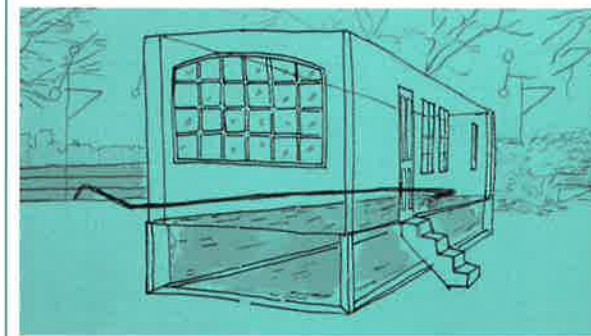
artist Francis Alÿs to organize the formal procession to signal this significant chapter in MoMA's history. The unique event is the first *paseo* Alÿs has organized in New York City, and a resulting video of the day will be shown at MoMA QNS through September 16.

The Modern Procession PHOTO: MARCUS WOOLLEN



SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK BRANCHES OUT

by ZOË RYAN



Rendering of *Con "temporary" Permanence*, an art project by Yoko Inoue and Troy Richards COURTESY YOKO INOUE AND TROY RICHARDS

Socrates Sculpture Park, one of the few spaces where you can watch artists working on the site where their pieces will eventually be displayed, is a 4.5 acre waterfront park that was founded in 1986 by the collaborative efforts of artist Mark di Suvero, Enrico Martignoni, and local residents. In 1998, Socrates officially became part of the NYC Dept. of Parks & Recreation giving it permanent status in Queens. The lengthy walk from the N train is worth stretching your legs for to see Stephan Apicella-Hitchcock's summertime pavilion, on view until August 18 in the group show *View - part welcoming, part sinister* - the wooden form is loosely based on the structure of a roach trap. Also this summer, for the fourth year running, Socrates hosts their popular Wednesday-night festival of international film, music, dance and food in collaboration with the American Museum of The Moving Image and Partnerships for Parks. *On The Waterfront: Celebrating the Cultural Diversity of Queens* will feature films screened on the side of a 60-foot tractor-trailer truck.

On first sight, Yoko Inoue and Troy Richards' artwork, *Con "temporary" Permanence*, also on view in the park until October 6, seems hardly worth exploring. Yet on closer inspection the inconspicuous prefabricated build-

"We want to expand the notion of what a sculpture park can be and hope that collaborative projects between artists working in various media and scale can help foster this notion"

ALYSON BAKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK

ing, reminiscent of a mobile home, begins to echo with the sound of water. Peeking through one of the closed windows viewers are struck by the interior, which is half full of water, pumped from the East River. "This project initiates a new program," says Alyson Baker, the Park's Executive Director. "We want to expand the notion of what a sculpture park can be and hope that collaborative projects between artists working in various media and scale can help foster this notion."

Designing Queens Plaza, Van Alen Report #1

SPECIAL VAN ALEN REPORT JANUARY 2002

\$4.00

11

designing queens plaza

A Design Ideas Competition



VAN ALEN INSTITUTE

PROJECTS IN PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE

NATURAL CAR ALARMS SOUND OFF IN QUEENS

by ZOË RYAN

Natural Car Alarms bumper sticker COURTESY: NINA KATCHADOURIAN



The ubiquitous car alarm, the bane of many city dwellers' existence, yet profoundly quotidian urban music to others, was unlikely inspiration for artist Nina Katchadourian who has incorporated it into a public art project for the Sculpture Center, presented in Queens through November 30. Omnipresent, the maddening sirens, blasting at high-pitched decibels fissure the urban fabric. So an implausible, and certainly more off-putting place to hear one would be deep in the Trinidadian jungle, or this was the sound Katchadourian presumed she heard on a visit there. "It was a ridiculous misunderstanding," she explains. But not so farfetched as she found out. One of the sections of the six-part car alarm that jolts one awake at night in fact derives from the call of a native bird of Trinidad. "The idea occurred to me to try to deliberately invert the situation, and design a

"The idea occurred to me to try to deliberately invert the situation, and design a car alarm siren made from various bird calls," she asserts. Triggered so often, car alarms have become a "natural" part of the urban soundscape.

NINA KATCHADOURIAN, ARTIST

car alarm siren made from various bird calls," she asserts. Triggered so often, car alarms have become a "natural" part of the urban soundscape. Katchadourian's project – a favorite with the neighbors? – calls into question what we consider natural and how we ascribe meaning to sound. Katchadourian describes the bird calls that make up her alarms as "both beautiful and disturbing." As loud as a real car alarm, Katchadourian hopes they will confound passersby who may mistake them for the real thing, therefore blurring what we perceive as "natural" and manmade. For the Sculpture Center whose physical space, being designed by Maya Lin and David Hotson, will not reopen until November, the outdoor project made sense. "The project responds to our transient situation, as well as to Queens', which has a dominant car culture," explains Executive Director, Mary Ceruti. The "flock of car alarms" is invisibly attached to cars parked at heavily trafficked sites around Queens (see www.sculpture-center.org for locations). The only indication that they are part of an art project is their bumper stickers. "I want the Natural Car Alarms to behave like other car alarms in every way," says Katchadourian. "They should surprise you when they go off, and they should sometimes go off erratically and for no apparent reason."

THE MUSEUM FOR AFRICAN ART JOINS THE EXODUS TO QUEENS

by SUSI SÁNCHEZ

Why is the Museum for African Art moving from Manhattan to Queens? For the same reason everyone does—your lease is up, rent is cheaper, and your friends are already there, so it just makes sense. In September, Queens, which is already home to P.S.1, the Socrates Sculpture Park, the American Museum of the Moving Image, the Noguchi Museum, and most recently MoMA QNS, will add the Museum for African Art to its notable list of residents. From September 2002 until early 2005 the museum will be at 36-01 43rd Avenue, in Long Island City before moving to its permanent home at 5th Avenue and 110th Street.

While waiting to move to its new location, designed by Bernard Tschumi and studioSUMO, the museum will reside on the third floor of a warehouse, just above the interim site of The Noguchi Museum, which is provisionally located on the second floor (see p13).

"Compared to the SoHo museum, the temporary space will feel light, airy, and industrial"

YOLANDE DANIELS, studioSUMO

Working independently, studioSUMO will convert the 12,500-square-foot industrial space with a slim budget of \$200,000. "Compared to the SoHo museum," says Yolande

Daniels of studioSUMO, "the temporary space will feel light, airy, and industrial."

The idea of a "temporal" architecture was most explored in the design of the museum's entry and store, which incorporates a modular system of moveable parts that "transform" the daytime spaces into a reception area for after-hours events.

The main gallery space will open with an exhibition called *Facing the Mask*, while a smaller "Focus Gallery" will rotate pieces from the Museum's permanent collection that have previously been rarely exhibited.

The entrance to the main gallery of the Museum for African Art with gallery display light-boxes PHOTO: studioSUMO



RT13.12

OUTSIDE IN

by CLAIRE R. NELSON

MoMA isn't the only museum "moving forward," as their new motto goes. The Isamu Noguchi Museum has undertaken an uproot-and-upgrade venture of its own. For this pioneer institution founded by sculptor Isamu Noguchi – who rewrote the future of Long Island City four decades ago by moving his home and studio there – a temporary relocation was precipitated not so much by the Modern's arrival on the scene (though its new space is conveniently closer), but by a master plan for much-needed structural renovations to its 1927 converted factory building on Vernon Boulevard, scheduled to reopen in Spring 2003.

Leaving behind its serene galleries and garden for a 12,000 sq ft loft space presents the museum with the creative challenge of transposing Noguchi's out-of-the-gallery-and-into-the-garden exhibition strategy by infusing natural environmental elements – including rock from the original garden – into an interior industrial space. (*Noguchi: Sculpture & Nature*, a survey of works from the permanent collection, is on view through November 25.) This shift in setting, explains Administrative Director Amy Hau, offers Noguchi disciples an

"The parameters of the temporary space are giving us an opportunity to do new exhibitions and bring new attention to the range of Noguchi's work"

AMY HAU, NOGUCHI MUSEUM'S ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR

opportunity to rediscover the artist's work, while introducing neophytes to his interest in the contrast between natural and manmade forms and materials. "The parameters of the temporary space are giving us an opportunity to do new exhibitions

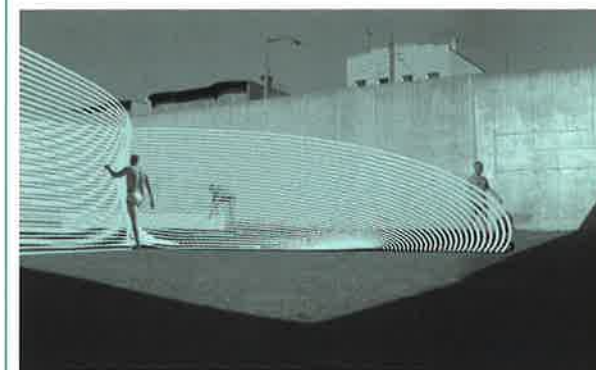
and bring new attention to the range of Noguchi's work," says Hau. "It's very exciting."

Installation view of "Zen No Zen," the first exhibition in The Noguchi Museum's temporary space COURTESY: THE ISAMU NOGUCHI FOUNDATION, INC



URBAN PLAYGROUND

by ZOË RYAN



Rendering of Playa Urbana/Urban Beach at P.S.1 COURTESY: WILLIAM E. MASSIE

One of the most anticipated events of the summer is MoMA/P.S.1's "Warm Up" music series presented in the 40,000 square foot gravel courtyard of P.S.1, every Saturday afternoon through August 31. The event, staged since 1998, took on a new dimension three years ago when the Young Architects Program was introduced, a competition for an outdoor environment. In July and August, music lovers and architecture devotees cohabit the courtyard vying for a spot on the freshly constructed installation – memorable previous interventions include SHoP architects' curvaceous wooden cabana. Since it was initiated, Alanna Heiss, P.S.1's founding director explains that the annual invited competition juried by MoMA and P.S.1 directors and curators, has been decided "by considering issues such as crowd movement and thematic relevance." In contrast, this year, Heiss believed, "without having specific details of his vision, that Bill

"Without having specific details of his vision... Bill Massie's plan was so compelling that it had to be realized, if only to satisfy my own curiosity"

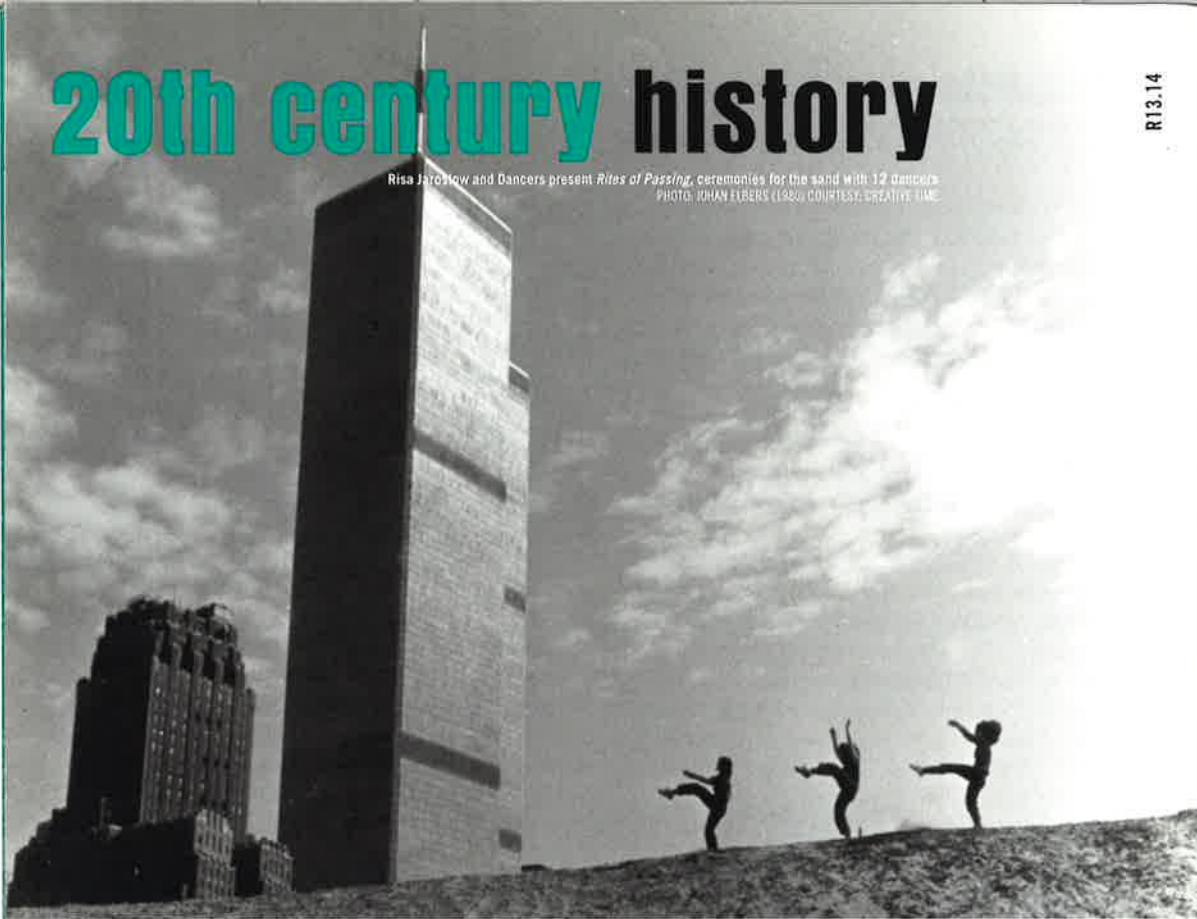
ALANNA HEISS, P.S.1'S FOUNDING DIRECTOR

Massie's plan was so compelling that it had to be realized, if only to satisfy my own curiosity." Derived from the theme, Playa Urbana/Urban Beach, which neatly complements P.S.1's concurrent exhibit of art by young Mexican artists, Massie's design, which includes contoured shades made from bent sections of PVC tubing sealed with phosphorescent rubber, incorporates "the transposition of urban landscape data from Mexico City to the courtyard via digital mapping technology." Interpreting the data into the forms of the steel frames he creates "a direct dialogue between the exhibit (inside P.S.1) and the urban space of Mexico City (outside)."

20th century history

Risa Jirofow and Dancers present *Rites of Passing*, ceremonies for the sand with 12 dancers
PHOTO: JOHAN EKBERS (1980) COURTESY: CREATIVE TIME

R13.14



ART ON THE BEACH

This "outdoor" issue of the Van Alen Report focuses on Lower Manhattan, especially at its extremes, and Long Island City, underscoring how important Downtown remains to generating and creating art, architecture, and design, and how important Long Island City, Queens has become to that endeavor. The connection between them is not just the R train: it is also historical. Creative Time's Art on the Beach program started in the late 1970s at the north end of Battery Park City, and then, as that huge development moved from plan to implementation, decamped for Hunters Point at the East River edge of LIC, in the late 1980s, where the Port Authority lent their property at what would become Queens West.

It may be too soon for an oral history of Art on the Beach, but it is high time to start the memory work. The projects were purposefully temporary, yet their ideas and ideals of collaboration and the necessary relationship of art, architecture, performance, the city, and the waterfront deserve a prominent chapter in the permanent record of New York's public art in the twentieth century. So many durable talents experimented on the ten acres the BPCA lent them, from artists Alice Aycock and Tom Otterness to architects Diane Lewis, Diller+Scofidio, and Billie Tsien, to performers like percussionist David Van Tieghem and choreographer Yoshiko Chuma. In memory, dancers seem to have understood better than anyone how to harness the sandy site's charge of urban drama.

Many of the photographs of AOTB have a terrible poignancy now, with the World Trade Centers' towers as a backdrop presented as two ineluctable forces of nature as imposing in scale as the harbor itself. The waterfront figures prominently in the record, too, revealing a river still dominated by relics of once-working docks, today's watery playground almost unimaginable. Yet for all the change, both within the arts and within the city, there is every reason in this century to muster the same respect for the temporary, the same intelligence and drive, whether in a bridge over West Street, or in an Information Exchange Center for downtown, or in reoccupying Governors Island with public purpose. It was an inspired move in the 1970s and 1980s for public authorities to allow arts-related uses of their property. Every generation needs proving grounds for urban culture, and there is nothing to match the power and occasional beauty of being right there in a changing place, while ideas are tested against its horizon.

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