

INSTITUTE FOR URBAN DESIGN

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Spontaneous Interventions and Common Ground

U.S. Pavilion at the 13th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale Announces Exhibition Designers and Participants

(New York, NY – May 2012) — The U.S. Pavilion at the 13th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, organized by the Institute for Urban Design on behalf of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, will be devoted to the theme *Spontaneous Interventions: Design Actions for the Common Good*. The exhibit will feature 124 urban interventions realized in U.S. cities in recent years. The selection was narrowed down after a search process that included an open call for projects, which yielded over 450 submissions.

"The selection was difficult because there are so many projects that deserve attention," said Cathy Lang Ho, commissioner and lead curator of the U.S. Pavilion. "It's evident that there is a growing desire among people everywhere—not just in the U.S.—to play an active, hands-on role in shaping the cities they live in."

Spontaneous Interventions focuses on projects initiated by architects, designers, planners, and everyday citizens, aimed at bringing positive change to the urban realm. It captures one of the most compelling contemporary urban trends, wherein individuals are taking it upon themselves to create projects that expand the amenities, comfort, functionality, inclusiveness, safety, and sustainability of cities. From parklets to community farms, guerrilla bike lanes to urban repair squads, outdoor living rooms to pop-up markets, sharing networks, and temporary architecture, *Spontaneous Interventions* highlights viable citizen-led alternatives to traditional top-down urban revitalization tactics.

Spontaneous Interventions resonates on many levels with the overall *Common Ground* theme of the Biennale conceived by director David Chipperfield. The projects featured in *Spontaneous Interventions* are characterized by their interest in collaboration, in serving the collective needs of a community, and in improving the literal common ground - public space.

Participants include: Architecture for Humanity, Barkow Leibinger Architects, The Better Block Project, Candy Chang, Center for Urban Pedagogy, Chicago Loop Alliance, City Repair, COMMONstudio, Nicholas De Monchaux, DoTank, envelope A+D, Freecell, Futurefarmers, GOOD, Fritz Haeg, Hester Street Collaborative, HOK, The Hypothetical Development Organization, Interboro, Kaja Kuhl/youarethecity, Macro Sea, MAS Studio, Mike Lydon, Popularise, popuphood, Public Media Institute, Rebar, Quilian Riano/#whOWNSpace, Rockwell Group, Mark Shepard, Stamen, WORKac, and many others.

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ABOUT THE EXHIBITION DESIGN

For the first time, the U.S. Pavilion will feature an installation rather than a conventional exhibition of projects. Brooklyn design studio Freecell, founded by John Hartmann and Lauren Crahan, conceived of a lively system of banners to present an archive—a collection of 124 actionable strategies aimed at bringing immediate improvements to the urban public realm. Freecell is collaborating closely with Sausalito-based communication design studio MAD, led by Erik Adigard and Patricia McShane, to design an enveloping environment that puts *Spontaneous Interventions* in a broader historical and cultural context. Adigard, this year's recipient of the Rome Prize in Design, has conceived of a supergraphic that is an installation in and of itself, and serves as a bold counterpoint to the banners.

COURTYARD

Brooklyn-based studio Interboro, winner of last year's MoMA/PS1's Young Architect Program, has designed an "outdoor living room" that will serve as the pavilion's hang-out and workshop space. The space will feature movable components that allow it to serve a range of functions (informal conversations, lectures, workshops, and play space).

About the Institute for Urban Design

Since 1979, the New York-based Institute for Urban Design has served as a central platform for debate among architects, planners, policy-makers, developers, academics, journalists, and urbanists. The Institute operates as a think tank and advocacy group, drawing on the collected experience and knowledge of its large fellowship to bring important issues into wider public debate through lectures, events, and publications.

About the U.S. Representation at the Venice Biennale

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs supports and manages official U.S. participation at the Venice Architecture Biennale.

The selection of the Institute for Urban Design resulted from an open competition and followed the recommendation of the Federal Advisory Committee on International Exhibitions (FACIE), convened by the National Endowment for the Arts. U.S. representation at this global event ensures that the excellence, vitality, diversity, and innovation of architecture in the United States are effectively showcased abroad, and provides an opportunity to engage foreign audiences to increase mutual understanding.

Media Partner

Architect magazine is the official media partner of the U.S. Pavilion.

Keep up to date with *Spontaneous Interventions* on Twitter @S_Interventions.

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