

Art in America

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Big Ideas: New Museum's Festival for Cities

by Tracy Zwick 04/29/13

The New Museum's four-day Ideas City Festival, exploring the theme of "Untapped Capital," starts Wednesday, May 1st. Including a conference, workshops, projects, tours and exhibitions, it ends with a "StreetFest" on the Bowery and in Sara D. Roosevelt Park this Saturday. The festival aims to "create an opportunity for organizations, artists and forces that already exist in our community to come together, share skills, collaborate and both recognize the richness of what is right here around us and create something new," said Aimee Good, director of education and community programs at New York's Drawing Center and a member of the Ideas City organizing committee.

The biennial festival's second installment addresses human and natural resources, focusing on finding more effective ways to tap this "capital." It features partnerships and collaborations with politicians, artists, businesses, community groups and arts organizations including Storefront for Art and Architecture, the Architectural League of New York and the Drawing Center.

What follows is a run-down of a few of the festival's more ambitious offerings:



"After Hours 2: Murals on the Bowery," presented by the Art Production Fund (through Sept. 2): Mel Bochner's eye-catching, smirk-inducing contribution, *Blah*, characterizes the latest edition of "After Hours," in which commissioned artists (and one contest winner) graffiti the roll-down steel shutters of more than a dozen of the Bowery's commercial supply shops. A map at artproductionfund.org identifies the 15 works along the Bowery from Houston Street to Grand Street. Daniel Buren, Adam Pendleton and Nao Uda offer particularly appealing if disparate takes, in a range of keys from graphic to clever to sweet. Accompanying each mural is a telephone number viewers can dial to hear the artists talk about their projects.

"No Shame: Storefront for Sale" (Apr. 30-June 1, Storefront for Art and Architecture, 97 Kenmare St.): Nearly a century ago, beginning in his book *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), Hungarian Marxist writer György Lukács identified commodities as the central, structural problem of capitalist society. This exhibition examines the dystopian possibilities of commodified, capitalist museum and gallery culture, questioning the practice of celebrating arts donors in a scenario where every corner of the exhibition space—from office chairs to the director's title—is available for naming rights to the highest bidder.

Keynote address by Joi Ito, director of the MIT Media Lab (May 1 at the Great Hall, Cooper Union, 7:30): The MIT Media Lab developed the technology behind Amazon's Kindle and Activision's Guitar Hero game. Ito will talk about the "untapped capital" of the Internet as a force for social change.

"The City and Untapped Capital: Mayoral Panel" (May 2 at the Great Hall, Cooper Union, 7:30): Moderated by author and Studio 360 host and creator Kurt Andersen, this discussion will include current and former mayors, including Manny Diaz (Miami, 2001-09), Jim Gray (Lexington, Ky., 2011-present) and Christophe Girard (deputy mayor, Paris, 2001-12), who will discuss the importance of culture and the arts in the future of cities.

Little Free Library/NYC (May 4, 1:00-5:00): The PEN World Voices Festival and the Architectural League of New York have collaborated with local architects and community organizations to place small, innovatively designed "book shelters"-shelves, nooks, cubbyholes and other containers-throughout the East Village and Lower East Side. Take a book; return a book. Maps will be available online and at the Architectural League's booth at the Ideas City StreetFest.

"Terry Smith: Capital Revisited" (Artist-led tours on Saturday, May 4 at 12:00 and 3:00; exhibition at the Drawing Center's Lab Gallery, June 18-Aug. 18): In 1995, British artist Terry Smith created his first "Capital," a large-scale drawing at the British Museum referencing both the museum's principal architectural motif, its Ionic capital, and the fact that Marx wrote his best-known treatise in the museum's reading room. Smith has produced an even larger, puzzle-like iteration of "Capital" that viewers are invited to put together individually or communally. Activating six local windows, walls and, in once case, a sidewalk, Smith is wheat-pasting segments of a grand capital drawing throughout the Bowery area. Viewers can photograph the individual sections, share them and put the pieces together to see the whole. Hand-drawn maps will be available. Signup (first-come, first-served) for Smith's tour will be at the Drawing Center's booth at StreetFest, where the artist will also give away drawings and collaborate with visitors interested in making their own work.

StreetFest (May 4, 11:00-6:00, on the Bowery and Chrystie Street between East Houston and Spring Streets, and in Sara D. Roosevelt Park): Practice parkour with local practitioners the Movement Creative, make your own solar-powered radio using recycled materials with help from NYC arts collective the Canary Project, or explore artist Kim Holleman's *Trailer Park: A Mobile Public Park*, in which she has created a portable park in a trailer, complete with benches, a fish pond, flowers and fauna.

"Change of State" (May 4, 8:00.-midnight at the New Museum, 235 Bowery): A series of site-specific projections will animate the facade of the New Museum and signal the end of the festival. Commissioned by the New Museum and curated by the designers and producers of Nuit Blanche New York (which organizes nighttime public art events at waterfronts of cities internationally), "Change of State" will encompass work by Krzysztof Wodiczko, Nicolas Guagnini, Agathe de Bailliencourt and Cecil Balmond highlighting the untapped communicative potential of New York's buildings and public spaces.

PHOTO: Rendering of Michael Craig-Martin's mural for "After Hours."