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DESIGN TRUST FOR PUBLIC SPACE SELECTS FIVE FINALISTS FOR THE 2017 CALL FOR PROJECT IDEAS, PUBLIC FOR ALL: RETHINKING SHARED SPACE IN NYC

On July 11, an independent jury will choose the next Design Trust projects to shape the future of New York City with and for the community.

NEW YORK, NY (Friday, July 7, 2017) – The Design Trust for Public Space is excited to reveal the five finalists for the 2017 Call for Project Ideas, entitled Public for All: Rethinking Shared Space in NYC. The finalists, in alphabetical order, include: Community Land Trust as a Model for Public Space; Return of the Stanton Building; StalledNYC!; When the Going Gets Tough...Addressing Equity & Quality of Life in Community-Managed Public Spaces; and Yes Loitering.

The winners, selected by an independent jury as the next Design Trust projects, will be announced at a public program on Tuesday, July 11, from 7 to 8 pm at the J.M. Kaplan Fund, 71 West 23rd Street #903, New York, NY 10010. Design Trust executive director Susan Chin, FAIA, Hon. ASLA, will moderate a conversation with the winners and the jurors. To attend the press preview at 6:30 pm and the public program at 7:00 pm on July 11, 2017, please RSVP to Ozgur Gungor at ogungor@designtrust.org or (212) 695-2432 x6.

Out of 105 initial responses from community groups, city agencies, and individuals across the five boroughs, Design Trust invited 30 proposers to submit full citywide research, design, and planning proposals. Major themes emerging from the Call to ensure that the city’s public spaces remain democratic and welcoming for all New Yorkers include:

- Advancing community strategies to mitigate gentrification;
- Reframing stewardship practices in non-traditional public space;
- Affirming the right of youth, especially youth of color, to congregate in public space;
- Desegregating the gendered space of public restrooms;
- Adapting underutilized buildings as community space for all, including homeless people;
- Designing safe and resilient places for vending, play, and integrated aging.

An independent jury will choose up to two winners from the five finalist project proposals during a private deliberation session on July 11. Jurors include: Kitty Hawks, Kitty Hawks Interiors, Design Trust Founder’s Circle; Walter Hood, Hood Design Studio; Patti S. Lubin, Office of U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand; Kerry A. McLean, Women’s Housing and Economic Development Corporation; Zack McKown, Tsao & McKown Architects, Design Trust Board [non-voting]; Justin Garrett Moore, NYC Public Design Commission; José Serrano-McClain, NYC Mayor’s Office of Tech + Innovation; Claire Weisz, WXY Architecture + Urban Design, Design Trust Founder’s Circle; and Andrea Woodner, Design Trust Founder and President Emeritus.

The Design Trust will develop and implement the winning project ideas in partnership with their proposers, engaging community stakeholders from the get-go. Design Trust projects create tangible impact by changing the system, by producing replicable models or tools, by creating a catalyst, and by building a well-informed constituency.
The top five proposals include (in alphabetical order):

**Title:** Community Land Trust as a Model for Public Space  
**Proposer:** South Bronx Unite, in collaboration with New York City Community Land Initiative and the Mott Haven-Port Morris Community Land Stewards including Birthing Project, Community Connections for Youth, Friends of Brook Park, Rollin Together, Radical Health, and South Bronx Farmers Market, and UpBeat NYC:

This project would create a comprehensive urban development plan for the Mott Haven-Port Morris area in the Bronx and advance the community land trust as a sustainable community-owned development model citywide.

“Over the last two years, my office has supported the efforts of South Bronx Unite in examining the feasibility of converting a vacant, 25,000 square foot, city-owned building located at 349 East 140th Street in the Bronx into a community center. The H.E.ARTS Center could house a dozen local organizations focusing on health, education and the arts. Having the Design Trust lend its weight to this project would be an important step toward bringing this project across the finish line. I support the idea of Community Land Trusts (CLT) as a way to strengthen local capacity and ensure local oversight over land. As South Bronx Unite continues working to expand community input into local design and developments processes, I fully support their efforts to build a platform for greater community understanding and stewardship of local assets,” said Melissa Mark-Viverito, NYC Council Speaker and the Council representative for District 8.

**Title:** Return of the Stanton Building  
**Proposer:** The Stanton Task Force including Green Map System, Sara Roosevelt Park Community Coalition, and University Settlement

The Stanton Building of Sara Roosevelt Park in the Lower East Side of Manhattan was one of the many NYC Park Houses (40 in Manhattan alone), which were community centers until the 1970s, when the City almost went bankrupt and could no longer maintain them. Today the Stanton Building is used as storage for the NYC Parks. This project would redesign the Stanton Building as a multi-use community hub assisting homeless people, serving as a climate emergency education and response center, or a flexible meeting space for a myriad of neighborhood needs, while envisioning a citywide model for reclaiming underutilized public space.

“Planning for the future use of the Stanton Street Park Building will allow the community to play an active role in the building’s design and future use and maximize public space while integrating community members who often do not see the interconnectedness of their lives. Designing the Stanton Street building to serve as a resource for our homeless neighbors, while also providing programming to the larger community, can serve as a future model for how to use public space to foster greater community integration and understanding,” said Laura Timme, Associate Executive Director, University Settlement.

**Title:** StalledNYC!  
**Proposer:** Joel Sanders, Principal of Joel Sanders Architect and Professor of Architecture at the Yale School of Architecture, in collaboration with the American Institute of Architects New York

The need for inclusive public restrooms irrespective of age, gender, religion and disability is a pressing civil rights issue of our times. Often overlooked, it is equally a spatial design challenge that this project addresses by aiming to prototype an equal-access, sustainable, safe, and city-vetted public restroom that can be adopted and deployed across the five boroughs, and become a national model.

“StalledNYC! is one of the most potentially transformative social justice projects I have encountered in the past three decades. It uses design to address—and actually resolve—the contentious debates now roiling out culture over equitable access to public toilets. The current debate over ‘transgender toilets’ is merely the latest iteration of a persistent struggle by working women, people of color, religious minorities, and people with disabilities to be equitably
accommodated in the public sphere. [This project proposal] abolishes the notion of the public toilet as a sex-segregated cul-de-sac behind closed doors, and radically transforms the toilet’s relation to public space,” said trans activist theoretician Susan Stryker.

Title: *When the Going Gets Tough…Addressing Equity & Quality of Life in Community-Managed Public Spaces*

Proposer: Neighborhood Plaza Program of the Horticultural Society of New York in collaboration with Uptown Grand Central

Close to half of NYC’s 70 pedestrian plazas are in under-served communities. New Yorkers love these plazas, so even struggling organizations are willing to invest the time, money and sweat equity to privately manage them. This project will explore innovative strategies for addressing the challenge of operating and programming public space in neighborhoods where resources are scarce, organizational capacity is low, and quality of life infractions are frequent.

“The sociological, anthropological, policy and design aspects of what goes on in the blocks surrounding our community plaza are complex, multilayered, and most definitely worthy of study. What core factors are we and our neighborhood partners missing in all the work that we do? Are there lessons we can learn from pulling back and observing the systems and factors as a whole? Having worked closely with the Neighborhood Plaza Program of the Horticultural Society of New York in years past, we are excited and would be grateful to deepen our work together—to begin to find answers that can apply not only to our 125th Street Plaza, but also for plazas across the city, especially those in other high-need areas,” said Carey King, Director, Uptown Grand Central

Title: *Yes Loitering*

Proposer: Chat Travieso, artist, designer, and educator, in collaboration with Women’s Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDco)

If young people, especially people of color, congregate in parks, fast food restaurants, streets, train stations, shopping malls, and parking lots, they regularly run into conflict with police, business owners, and other groups. Whether they are viewed as criminal threats or a nuisance, young people are often the victims of legal, spatial, and social restriction through such means as anti-loitering laws, curfews, park closing times, surveillance, lack of seating, skate deterrents, spikes on ledges, restaurant time limits, and cost. This project would create and advocate for a comprehensive and actionable set of policy and design recommendations that the city could adopt to make public spaces more youth-affirming and youth-powered.

“The aim of Yes Loitering is the perfect intersection of the work that WHEDco strives to do every day; pushes our students to see themselves as agents of change in their communities, fosters a pride of place, and advocates for access for all community members, regardless of age, to the best and most beautiful spaces city has to offer. It has been truly magical watching the students build their own awareness surrounding this issue, as well as the awareness of their peers,” said Katie Aylwin, Senior Director of Educations and Youth Development, Women’s Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDco)

“We were looking for project ideas that have the potential to really change the way public spaces are created and managed citywide. The five finalists creatively strive to include our city’s ever more diverse population in the public realm and the related decision-making processes. At the same time, they also consider increasing the civic capacity to better manage and sustain the shared urban spaces in the face of climate change, aging infrastructure, growing population, and dwindling public resources,” said Susan Chin, FAIA, Hon. ASLA, Executive Director, Design Trust for Public Space.
Design Trust for Public Space
The Design Trust for Public Space is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the future of public space in New York City. Our projects bring together city agencies, community groups and private sector experts to make a lasting impact—through design—on how New Yorkers live, work and play. Our work can be seen, felt and experienced throughout all five boroughs—from parks and plazas to streets and public buildings. The Design Trust saved the High Line structure, jumpstarted NYC’s first custom-built Taxi of Tomorrow, developed the Community Design School for Flushing Meadows Corona Park, and created the city’s first comprehensive sustainability guidelines that became the precursor to Local Law 86 and PlaNYC, now OneNYC. http://designtrust.org/

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