

Midtown Under a Microscope

Made in Midtown project to examine the Garment District in-depth

1/25/2010 7:36:00 PM

(NEW YORK) Fashion Week may be moving away from the Garment District to Lincoln Center come September, but Save the Garment District advocates have another project in the works. Made in Midtown, a joint study by the CFDA and the Design Trust for Public Space, will kick off with Project Fellows Sarah Williams of Columbia University's Spatial Information Design Lab, independent video producer and director Jordan Alport, journalist Tom Vanderbilt (author of *Traffic: Why We Drive the Way We Do*), and architecture and urban planning firm Interboro Partners. The task ahead? Studying the area and its residents (from designers to garment workers to suppliers)--as well as other cities' fashion districts--in the hopes of improving it.

"While the garment industry has been intrinsically linked to the cultural identity of the city, its inner workings have never been transparent," said designer and CFDA general secretary Yeohlee Teng. "This is an opportunity for the public to understand and appreciate the process of how clothes are created and how they end up on our backs." Graphics and maps illustrating the results of the group's findings, slated for completion at the end of March 2010, will make up a Made in Midtown booklet and interactive website, intended to make the garment district's "industrial ecosystem" more visible to the public--including New York City officials.

"The extraordinary team we've assembled will articulate a convincing vision for the future of creative industries in New York City," said Deborah Marton, executive director of the Design Trust for Public Space. "Examining the fashion industry through an urban design lens will reveal the network of people and places--trim and button stores, pattern makers, elite design ateliers--that support innovation and enable our city to retain its identity as the fashion capital of the world."

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