



## **The Alliance for Downtown launches Re:Construction: program transforms construction sites in Manhattan**

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The Alliance for Downtown New York continues to reinvent public art with the launch of the next phase of its groundbreaking Re:Construction initiative. The program enhances Downtown's rebuilding process by recasting construction sites as canvases for innovative public art and architecture.

Four new art projects-Rainbow Conversation, Botanizing on the Asphalt, Poster Project at 50 Trinity and Flying Animals-have been installed at four separate Lower Manhattan construction sites to bring color, movement and scenic beauty to Downtown streetscapes. The exhibits use the city as their backdrop and turn construction infrastructure such as chain-link fencing and jersey barriers into components for exciting and thought-provoking art projects that celebrate rebuilding and progress.

"These installations beautify our streets, and increase foot-traffic and economic activity Downtown," said Elizabeth Berger, president of the Downtown Alliance. "Adding a public art component to our civic improvement, economic development and construction mitigation efforts provides a clear benefit to pedestrians and the community. I thank the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation for helping us expand this idea throughout Lower Manhattan."

"What could be more fun than a riot of colorful flowers popping up from Hudson River Park's Tribeca construction site!" said Connie Fishman, president of the Hudson River Park Trust. "There's been so much construction and neighborhood disruption in the area nearby; it's wonderful to have something visually beautiful and exciting to look at while we all anxiously await the completion of the new park next year."

"The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation is proud to fund Re:Construction which will bring innovative public art to construction sites throughout Lower Manhattan," said Avi Schick, chairman of Lower Manhattan Development Corp.

"We are pleased to collaborate with artists like Rachel Hayes to enhance the areas surrounding temporary construction zones as we continue to rebuild the streetscapes of Lower Manhattan. The community will certainly benefit from these wonderful installations." said David Burney, commissioner of the city of New York's Department of Design and Construction.

Artist Rachel Hayes has created Rainbow Conversation for Louise Nevelson Plaza, located at the corner of William Street and Maiden Lane. The artist has turned the 41 chain-link fences that surround the construction zone there into an animated and vibrant experience of color and form.

Some of the pieces will flutter in the wind so that observers will see dynamic color from either end of the Plaza, encouraging the viewer to explore the periphery of what will eventually be a lively public space.

Artist Nina Bovasso installed her piece, *Botanizing on the Asphalt*, at Hudson River Park along West Street, beginning at the northern end of Stuyvesant High School. More than 400 feet of concrete jersey barrier have been transformed into a rich, vivid, and multihued landscape, covered in Bovasso's signature groovy flowers and dense eye-popping imagery. Bovasso renders intense and euphoric explosions of color and form, employing a strategy of layering and accumulating the most basic marks — a dot, a line, color, shape and surface texture.

In her Poster Project at 50 Trinity, artist Ellen Berkenblit presented a series of six new ink and graphite drawings that have been enlarged and printed on a vinyl banner to cover the construction barricade at Trinity and Rector Streets. Blown up to nearly 7 feet high, these images allow one to be immersed in the elegance of Berkenblit's lines and brushstrokes and to glimpse the intricacies of her graphite under drawings. Featuring the graceful female protagonist who frequently appears in Berkenblit's work along with some of her signature animals, the drawings are sequenced and repeated, like the stills in a black and white silent film from the 1920's.

*Flying Animals*, by artist Caitlin Hurd, is displayed on the corner of Washington and Rector streets. The exhibit was inspired by suburban and rural landscapes, and domesticity to symbolically weigh the promises of happiness and predictability against every day's complicated realities. The mural creates a contrast between the hectic city and the tranquility of rural life. Hurd, intrigued by the particulars of the suburbs, questions the expectations of the culture in which she grew up. Using a painting vocabulary rooted in modernist, figurative tradition, she explores what it means to be conditioned towards the idealized nuclear family and traditional work-life, and what happens when one deviates.

Launched in November 2007 with the publicly and critically acclaimed *Fulton Fence*; *Best Pedestrian Route* and *Concrete Jungle* installations, *Re:Construction* generates excitement about the rebuilding process and improves the quality of life in Lower Manhattan by creating places of cultural attraction, curiosity and anticipation.

For this next round of projects, the Downtown Alliance is collaborating with independent curators, gallerists, and other creative specialists and artists to identify and select artistic installations for specific sites. BravinLee Programs, LLC is the consultant for these two works. Over the next three years, the Downtown Alliance will produce up to thirty artistic installations on public and private sites throughout the district and beyond. The other teams include independent curators Abby Messitte and ADA Art Consulting, as well as Colab Projects.

*Re:Construction* is funded by a \$1.5 million Community Enhancement Fund grant awarded by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation. These projects would not be possible without extensive cooperation and assistance from the Hudson River Park Trust, City of New York, NYC Department of Transportation, Department of Design and Construction, Department of Buildings and NYS

Department of Transportation.

The mission of the Alliance for Downtown New York is to be the principal organization that provides Lower Manhattan's historic financial district with a premier physical and economic environment, advocates for businesses and property owners and promotes the area as a world-class destination for companies, workers, residents and visitors. The Downtown Alliance manages the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Business Improvement District (BID), serving an area roughly from City Hall to the Battery, from the East River to West Street.

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