

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 31, 2013

## Background & Biographies *Spontaneous Interventions* at the Chicago Cultural Center May 24–September 1, 2013

### BACKGROUND:

*Spontaneous Interventions* was organized by Cathy Lang Ho for the Institute for Urban Design and selected by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) to represent the United States in the U.S. Pavilion at the 13<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition at La Biennale di Venezia (2012).

Original curatorial team (Venice): Commissioner of the U.S. Pavilion and lead curator, Cathy Lang Ho (CLHoffice); co-curators David van der Leer (Van Alen Institute) and Ned Cramer (*Architect* magazine); curatorial advisors Erik Adigard (M-A-D), Paola Antonelli (Museum of Modern Art), Anne Guiney (Institute for Urban Design), Michael Sorkin (Sorkin Studio, Terreform, and Institute for Urban Design), Zoe Ryan (Art Institute of Chicago); research managers Gordon Douglas and Mimi Zeiger. Exhibition designers: Lauren Crahan and John Hartmann of Freecell; Erik Adigard and Patricia McShane of M-A-D. Courtyard designers: Tobias Amborst, Daniel d'Oca, and Georgeen Theodore of Interboro Partners. For details on the original Venice presentation and full list of team members and sponsors, please see [www.spontaneousinterventions.org](http://www.spontaneousinterventions.org).

### CHICAGO PRESENTATION:

#### Curatorial Team

**Cathy Lang Ho** is an independent architecture critic, editor and curator based in New York. She is a contributing editor to *Architect* magazine and founding editor-in-chief of *The Architect's Newspaper*. She has published hundreds of articles in publications worldwide. She is the winner of the Rome Prize (2008–09), a member of the American Academy in Rome's Society of Fellows Council (2012–15), and a board member of the Institute for Urban Design. Her company CLHoffice produces editorial and curatorial projects.

**Samantha Topol** is a writer, editor, and artist based in Chicago. She is currently the programmer-in-residence at threewalls in Chicago, and recently curated a four-part event series including performances, video screenings, lectures and installations. She is co-founder of Original Features, a project-driven collaboration that supports multiple forms of artistic and discursive production. Her writing has appeared in *The Believer*, *Art Lies*, and *The Architect's Newspaper*.

**Gordon Douglas** is a writer and researcher based in New York. As a Ph.D. candidate in sociology at the University of Chicago, he studies issues of local cultural identity, urban development, and people's interactions with the built environment through "DIY urban design" contributions. His articles and photographs have appeared in *Architect*, *GOOD*, *Urban Studies*, *Sociological Perspectives*, and *Streetsblog*.

Spontaneous Interventions: design actions for the common good



13. Mostra  
Internazionale  
di Architettura  
Partecipazioni nazionali

U.S. Pavilion at  
the 13th International  
Architecture Exhibition  
la Biennale di Venezia  
Aug 29 - Nov 25, 2012

from the Biennale jury:  
**Special Mention**  
FOR NATIONAL PARTICIPATION

**MAY 24 - SEP 1, 2013**  
**Chicago Cultural Center**  
**Michigan Ave. Galleries**  
**78 E. Washington St.**  
**Chicago, IL 60602**

chicagoculturalcenter.org  
open daily, closed holidays  
free admission



City of Chicago  
Mayor Rahm Emanuel

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF  
**DCASE**  
CULTURAL AFFAIRS & SPECIAL EVENTS

**INSTITUTE  
FOR  
URBAN  
DESIGN**



Additional support: Anne Guiney, executive director of the Institute for Urban Design (administration); Michael Sorkin, Sorkin Studio, Terreform and Institute for Urban Design (advisor); Toni Griffin, director Bond Center for the Just City at City College New York (advisor); Stéfan Jonot, partner of CLHoffice (advisor); Kelly Loudenberg (film); and researchers Justin Allen, Anne Quito, Kyle Ryan Riley, and Matt Shaw.

### **Exhibition Design**

**Freecell** is a Brooklyn-based design and fabrication studio founded by Lauren Crahan and John Hartmann. The company’s diverse skill set, which includes design fabrication, photography and drawing, enables their search for creative and innovative solutions. They strive to create site-specific three-dimensional installations that transform and question the use and perception of space. Recent work includes custom furniture for the fashion designer Alexander Wang, interior fixtures for the West Village jewelry store Vasa and interior design of the Diesel Black Gold store in SoHo.

**M-A-D** is a Berkeley-based interdisciplinary communication design firm that focuses on the convergence of cultural and technological change. Founders Erik Adigard and Patricia McShane are recipients of the Chrysler Award for Innovation in Design for a body of work that ranges from corporate branding to multimedia exhibitions. They have taught at California College of the Arts, and Adigard frequently writes on design and media for industry publications, serves on juries, and lectures internationally. Adigard is the winner of the Rome Prize in Design (2012–13).

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### **S.I. Pop-Up in Millennium Park**

**MAS Studio** is a collaborative architecture and urban design firm directed by Iker Gil. MAS Studio takes a multidisciplinary approach to its work, inviting collaborations with architects, urban designers, researchers, graphic designers, and photographers among others, in order to provide innovative and comprehensive ideas and solutions. The studio develops its work with an emphasis in research, built work, publications and exhibitions. Gil worked with Andrew Obendorf, Julie Michiels and Andrew Clark on the design of *Spontaneous Intervention’s* “outdoor living room” in Millennium Park. MAS Studio’s work has been exhibited nationally and internationally in venues such as the Art Institute of Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, WUHO gallery (Los Angeles) and pinkcomma gallery (Boston).

**Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP (SOM)** is one of the leading architecture, interior design, engineering, and urban planning firms in the world. The firm was founded in Chicago in 1936 by Louis Skidmore and Nathaniel Owings, who were later joined by John O. Merrill. Today, SOM has offices in 10 cities, including New York, London, Shanghai, Abu Dhabi, and Mumbai. The firm’s longstanding leadership in design and building technology has been honored with more than 1,700 awards for quality, innovation, and management. Benton Johnson and Dave Horos of SOM’s Chicago office collaborated with Freecell on the exhibition’s banner structure and with MAS Studio on the Millennium Park structure.

**Coopersmith** was founded in 1998 by Joshua Cooper, Coopersmith develops and fabricates furniture designs and interiors projects, offering both design and planning with hands-on building. Mr. Cooper received degrees in both Fine Art (BFA) and Architecture (MArch) and has worked across disciplines ranging from urban planning and super-tall architectural design to photography and fine art, all of which inform his projects. Mr. Cooper has worked in the Chicago offices of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) and Adrian Smith+Gordon Gill Architecture.

**Dilettante Studio** was founded by John Preus is a Chicago-based artist, builder, and musician whose work explores the overlapping territories of craft, art, and community life. Through his workshop Dilettante fStudios, he designed and built the seats in the *Spontaneous Interventions* workshop/reading room and in the Millennium Park pop-up using reclaimed material. His work has been exhibited at Documenta 13 in Kassel, Germany, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, the Heilbronn Kunstverein-Germany, the Portland Museum of Contemporary Craft, the Hyde Park Art Center, and the Smart Museum of Art, Chicago.

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**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, directed by Anne Guiney, 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 2012 Venice Architecture 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 *Spontaneous Interventions* for the U.S. Pavilion in 2012 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.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:  
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