

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 2014

Award-winning exhibition *Spontaneous Interventions: Design Actions for the Common Good* in Residence, Governors Island, New York Harbor, Summer 2014



(New York, NY) — *Spontaneous Interventions: Design Actions for the Common Good*—the official U.S. presentation at the 13th International Architecture Exhibition at the Venice Biennale (2012)—makes its first New York appearance on Governors Island, New York City’s newest public park. A former military base, the island is home to dozens of historic buildings and 125 acres of open space. *Spontaneous Interventions* (S.I.) joins dozens of organizations, including FIGMENT, Brooklyn Public Library, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Come Out & Play, Jazz Age Lawn Party, and more, that bring exhibitions, events, installations, and activities to the island’s audience, which last summer neared 400,000. The 2014 season opened on May 24 with the unveiling of 30 acres of new park space designed by noted Dutch landscape architecture firm West 8 with Diller Scofidio + Renfro, achieving record-breaking attendance of 13,000 on peak weekend days.

Spontaneous Interventions is devoted to the global movement of architects, designers, artists, and everyday citizens acting on their own initiative to bring improvements to the urban realm, creating new opportunities and amenities for the public. A condensed version of the original exhibition is presented in Building 403 on Colonel’s Row, a former officer’s residence adjacent to the Parade Ground, and will be on view through September 28.

“We feel very fortunate to have the chance to bring *Spontaneous Interventions* to Governors Island, whose recent evolution into a public park perfectly reflects the values promoted in the exhibition, specifically, the need for flexible public space that is not overly prescribed or controlled—as is the case for so much public space—and instead is open to a wide range of user-driven activities,” says Cathy Lang Ho, the show’s original curator who organized the Governors



Spontaneous Interventions: design actions for the common good

Island presentation with Stefan Jonot and Office Ho Jonot, a cultural consultancy. "Citizens all over the world are devising and implementing clever, low-barrier urban interventions to make their cities more inclusive, sustainable, safer, pleasurable—and the good news is that city leaders and design professionals are looking at these actions for inspiration."

"Governors Island is the island created by and for New Yorkers," said Leslie Koch, president of The Trust for Governors Island. "We are delighted to welcome *Spontaneous Interventions*, which provides visitors with even more opportunities to create and experiment in New York City's shared space for art and play."

Brooklyn's Freecell Studio devised a simple freestanding frame that weaves through the house, displaying project banners featured in Venice and Chicago. Berkeley-based communication design firm M-A-D created new graphics for *S.I.*'s Governors Island residency. In response to exhibition's location, a former officer's home, and the island's summer crowd, the Rockwell Group provided creative direction for an outdoor installation that inverts the traditional house, converting surrounding lawns into an outdoor living room, dining room (with a long communal picnic table), playroom, recreation room, and kitchen (*S.I. Café*). The Rockwell Group's Imagination Playground, an innovative portable "playground in a box" which was featured in *S.I.*, animates the site. Proceeds from our on-site "kitchen," *S.I. Café* (operated by L'Île aux Enfants) fund *S.I.*'s residency on Governors Island.

Residencies Within a Residency

As part of our summer residency, we will present case studies and mini-exhibitions on several artists featured in *Spontaneous Interventions*. Each team will be spotlighted in rooms on the second floor of Building 403; displays will include documentation of each practice's design processes and additional recent work. Featured artists (confirmed to date) include: DSGN AGNC, BroLab, Center for Urban Pedagogy, 596 Acres, Ghana Think Tank, Design That Moves You, with others to be announced. Residencies start late June and will run through September 28, and will be detailed in a separate release.

Public Programs (July 19 to September 14)

As with Venice and Chicago, *S.I.*'s Governors Island residency will include a full roster of public programs for two months, mid-July to mid-September, and will include talks, workshops, screenings, skills exchanges, design charrettes, and more. Sessions will explore such topics as urban vacancy, citizen science, participatory and community-based urban design processes, the Right to the City movement, collaborative and sharing economies, open-source tools, city data mapping, and more. Participants include artists featured in the exhibition, plus noted designers, planners, thinkers, and activists working to improve public space. A program schedule will be released in early July. Updates will be posted at spontaneousinterventions.org/calendar and www.facebook.com/Spontaneousinterventions.

S.I. / ESPN Official 2014 FIFA World Cup™ Public Viewing Zone



As part of S.I.'s summer residency, Office Ho Jonot, in partnership with Governors Beach Club, has organized New York's largest public 2014 FIFA World Cup Viewing Zone. All over the world, during the World Cup, cities transform their most important public spaces—their squares, plazas, parks, beaches—into public viewing zones where their citizens can come together and share the experience of cheering their teams on. Games will be broadcast live at Governors Beach Club (adjacent to the Soissons Landing on Governors Island) or at the S.I. site (Building 403, Colonel's Row). ESPN and Barco are lead sponsors of this month-long event. A full schedule with broadcast times and screening locations is downloadable from spontaneousinterventions.org, and updates on screenings, ferries, and events will be posted at www.facebook.com/WorldCupPartyNYC. For updates via Twitter, please follow @S_Interventions and @GovBeachClub.

Background on *Spontaneous Interventions*

Spontaneous Interventions was organized by Cathy Lang Ho on behalf of the New York nonprofit Institute for Urban Design as the presentation of the U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale (2012). The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs supports and manages official U.S. participation at select international events. The selection of *Spontaneous Interventions* 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. The original curatorial team included: David van der Leer, Ned Cramer, Michael Sorkin, Erik Adigard, Paola Antonelli, Zoe Ryan, Gordon Douglas, and Mimi Zeiger.

The U.S. Pavilion received over 178,000 visitors in Venice, and earned a Special Mention from the Golden Lion jury, the first time the United States has been honored in the history of the Venice Architecture Biennale. The exhibition design was also named Best Exhibition Design of 2012 by the editors of *Architectural Record* and won a silver medal in the 2012 Spark Awards in the communication design category. At the invitation of the City of Chicago, the show made its U.S. debut at the Chicago Cultural Center in Summer 2013, and received nearly 80,000 visitors. The *Chicago Tribune* included it in its "Top 10 Art Shows in Chicago in 2013."

Partners and Sponsors

The organizers of *Spontaneous Interventions* are grateful to the following companies for their kind support of its residency and programs on Governors Island: **Coloredge**, a leading graphic production company; **Fermob**, French manufacturer of outdoor furniture; **Rockwell Group**, a renowned cross-disciplinary design studio; **Freecell**, an award-winning architecture and design studio; and **M-A-D**, an award-winning branding and communication company. The World Cup Viewing Zone has been organized by **Office Ho Jonot**, a New York cultural consultancy, in partnership with **Governors Beach Club**, a waterfront entertainment venue. This undertaking would not have been possible without the generous support of **ESPN**, official U.S. broadcaster of the 2014 FIFA World Cup; **Barco**, global technology company specializing in visualization products; **I-Mag Video**, industry leader in live video production and equipment rental; **NYC FC**, New York City's professional Major League Soccer (MLS) club; and **Picture Farm**, a Williamsburg-based creative agency. We are indebted, too, to the **Trust for Governors Island** for welcoming our programs.

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