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## COOPER HEWITT TO PRESENT “BY THE PEOPLE: DESIGNING A BETTER AMERICA” THIRD EXHIBITION IN A SERIES ON SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE DESIGN ON VIEW SEPT. 30–FEB. 26, 2017



**APRIL 19, 2016**

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum will present “By the People: Designing a Better America,” the third exhibition in its series on socially responsible design, from Sept. 30 through Feb. 26, 2017. The first exhibition in the series to focus on conditions in the U.S. and its bordering countries, “By the People” will explore the challenges faced by urban, suburban and rural communities. Organized by Cynthia E. Smith, Cooper Hewitt’s curator of socially responsible design, the exhibition features 60 design projects from every region across the U.S.

Smith conducted more than two years of field research—traveling to shrinking post-industrial cities, sprawling metro regions, struggling rural towns, along border regions, areas impacted by natural and man-made disaster and places of persistent poverty—in search of collaborative designs for more equitable, inclusive and sustainable communities. The exhibition will highlight design solutions that expand access to education, food, health care and affordable housing; increase social and economic inclusion; offer improved alternative transportation options; and provide a balanced approach to land use between the built and natural environment.

“As America’s design museum, Cooper Hewitt empowers visitors to see themselves as designers—not just of objects, but also of ideas, strategies and solutions that improve our daily lives,” said Director Caroline Baumann. “By the People’ will showcase the innovative and impactful actions generated through design, and inspire creative problem-solving at local, regional, national and even international levels.”

On view in the third floor Barbara and Morton Mandel Design Gallery, the exhibition will be divided into six themes: act, save, share, live, learn and make. To orient the visitor, the complexities of poverty, prosperity, innovation and design in the U.S. will be addressed in an introductory section that will feature a captivating video by Cassim Shepard, an interactive data visualization, “Mapping the Measure of America” and graphics that chart social and economic inequalities.

The exhibition will continue in the museum’s groundbreaking Process Lab, which offers immersive experiences for visitors of diverse ages and abilities, from families with small children to design students and professionals. Cooper Hewitt will invite visitors to address challenges in their own communities using design thinking and propose solutions.

The accompanying 256-page book, *By the People: Designing a Better America*, will be published by Cooper Hewitt and distributed in the U.S. by Artbook | D.A.P. and worldwide by Thames & Hudson. Designed by Other Means, *By the People* will contain essays and interviews with featured designers and architects, in addition to highly illustrated project profiles. Retail: \$29.95.

In fall 2016 and winter 2017, a series of public programs will inspire conversation about innovative and systemic approaches being developed through design. Planned events include a lecture focused on affordable housing and design (Oct. 13), Designing Resilience (Nov. 10) and Defiant Jewelry with Rebel Nell founder Amy Peterson and a participating artisan (Jan. 26).

“By the People: Designing a Better America” is made possible by the generous support of the Ford Foundation. Additional support provided by New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature and The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation.

## ACT

Addressing entrenched environmental, economic and social issues, design can act as a catalyst for change. Featured work includes **Building Dignity**, a dynamic collaboration between domestic violence advocates and architects to improve security for families facing domestic violence in Washington state; **Cross-Border Community Station**, bi-national Tijuana River watershed, which provides a platform for user-inspired problem-solving research joining science, education, design and community outreach; and the compact **OPEN HOUSE**, which was designed to unfold and transform a previously blighted property in rural York, Ala., into a public outdoor theater.

## SAVE

By building on existing assets—culture, natural and built environments—design can help save what is authentic and essential for communities to thrive. The projects on view in this section include the **Harlem Hospital Pavilion Façade**, New York, which celebrates the building’s historically significant Works Progress Administration murals at a civic scale and establishes a strong community connection; **Belt Line Atlanta**, a grassroots effort to save and transform four old rail lines into a 22-mile green loop that will connect 40 diverse neighborhoods with transit lines, walking trails, bike paths, parks and adjacent permanent affordable housing; and the **LaSalle Cultural Corridor**, which helps to preserve one of New Orleans’ indigenous cultural art forms through the revitalization of a major street in the historically significant Central City neighborhood.

## SHARE

The design of civic spaces helps under-represented communities and new voices share, both in the physical and digital commons. Works on view include **Las Abuelitas Kinship Housing**, an affordable housing community in Tucson, Ariz., designed for and by low-income grandparents raising grandchildren; **Underpass Park**, an urban park that activates left-over derelict space underneath Toronto's elevated roadways, creating a multigenerational community commons that includes public art, recreational and green open spaces; and **Farm Hack Tools**, designed by an open-source community that nurtures the development, documentation and manufacture of farm tools and skill sharing for more resilient and sustainable agriculture.

## LIVE

This section focuses on improving access to healthcare, clean water and food. Among the works on view are **Humane Borders Water Stations**, a network of emergency water stations placed in known desert migration routes along the U.S. and Mexico border; **Fresh Moves Mobile Markets**, which transforms former city buses into mobile produce markets bringing fruits and vegetables to "food deserts"—communities with limited access to fresh produce—in underserved Chicago neighborhoods; and **Firehouse Clinics** in California's Alameda County that are located on the grounds of fire stations to provide a new accessible model of health care provision for the 65 million Americans who live in primary care shortage areas.

## LEARN

Featured works in this section provide wider access to learning and knowledge to help build more resilient individuals, neighborhoods and regions. Projects on view include **D.C. Neighborhood Libraries**, local branches that have been renovated or rebuilt in Washington to create new civic spaces for numerous historically underserved neighborhoods; **Red Hook WIFI**, a community-led project to close the digital divide, generate economic opportunity, facilitate access to essential services and improve quality of life for families via the deployment of a wireless Internet mesh network; and **Public Access 101: Downtown L.A.**, an initiative that mixes urban hikes, interactive field exercise and critical cartography and other interpretive tools to spark creative explorations of everyday habitats.

## MAKE

Projects on view examine strategies to engage and develop creative and manufacturing industries. The exhibition will feature works such as **RAPIDO Rapid Recovery Housing** in Brownsville, Texas, which begins with a 400-square-foot core unit erected immediately after a natural disaster and home expansion designed in collaboration with returning families; **Raleigh Denim Workshop**, which enlisted the aid of master pattern makers, sewers and farmers from the surrounding area to craft classic American jeans with one of the smallest carbon footprints in the world; and **Rebel Nell**, a design initiative in Detroit that offers job training, life management and financial guidance for women transitioning out of homeless shelters.

## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

A geographically and culturally diverse Advisory Committee helped to hone the scope and exhibition content that Smith compiled over years of research. Moorhead + Moorhead will serve as the exhibition designer. Tsang Seymour will design the exhibition graphics.

## **ABOUT THE SERIES**

Organized by Cooper Hewitt, the exhibition series demonstrates how design can address the world's most critical issues. "Design with the Other 90%: Cities," on view at the United Nations in 2011, explored design solutions to the challenges created by rapid urban growth in informal settlements, commonly referred to as slums. The first exhibition in 2007, "Design for the Other 90%," focused on design solutions that address the most basic needs for 90% of the world's population not traditionally served by professional designers.

## **ABOUT COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM**

Founded in 1897, Cooper Hewitt is the only museum in the United States devoted exclusively to historic and contemporary design. On Dec. 12, 2014, Cooper Hewitt reopened in the renovated and restored Carnegie Mansion, which offers 60 percent more exhibition space to showcase one of the most diverse and comprehensive collections of design works in existence. The renovation of the Carnegie Mansion and museum campus was recognized with LEED Silver certification. Currently on view are 9 exhibitions and installations featuring hundreds of objects throughout four floors of the mansion, including the fifth installment of the museum's contemporary design exhibition series, "Beauty—Cooper Hewitt Design Triennial;" "Thom Browne Selects" and "Pixar: The Design of Story." Visitors can experience a full range of new interactive capabilities, including the opportunity to explore the collection digitally on ultra-high-definition touch-screen tables, draw and project their own wallpaper designs in the Immersion Room and address design problems in the Process Lab.

Cooper Hewitt is located at 2 East 91st Street at Fifth Avenue in New York City. Hours are Sunday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. The Arthur Ross Terrace and Garden and Tarallucci e Vino cafe open at 8 a.m., Monday through Friday, and are accessible without an admissions ticket through the new East 90th Street entrance. The museum is closed on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. Public transit routes include the Lexington Avenue 4, 5 and 6 subways (86th or 96th Street stations) and the Fifth and Madison Avenue buses. Adult admission, \$18; seniors, \$12; students, \$9. Cooper Hewitt members and children younger than age 18 are admitted free. Pay What You Wish every Saturday, 6 to 9 p.m. The museum is fully accessible.

For further information, call (212) 849-8400, visit Cooper Hewitt's website at [www.cooperhewitt.org](http://www.cooperhewitt.org) and follow the museum on [www.twitter.com/cooperhewitt](http://www.twitter.com/cooperhewitt), [www.facebook.com/cooperhewitt](http://www.facebook.com/cooperhewitt) and [www.instagram.com/cooperhewitt](http://www.instagram.com/cooperhewitt).

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## FACT SHEET: FEATURED PROJECTS

### ACT

Building Dignity, Washington state  
Cross-Border Community Station, Laureles Canyon, Tijuana, Mexico  
Divining LA, Los Angeles  
Field Guides to Ensuring Voter Intent, U.S.  
Future Cycles, Ann Arbor and Grand Rapids, Mich.  
High Speed Rail Map and Board Game, U.S.  
Mapping the Measure of America, U.S.  
Occuprint, Brooklyn, N.Y.  
OPEN HOUSE, York, Ala.  
Quixote Village, Olympia, Wash.  
Resist, Delay, Store, Discharge, Hoboken, Jersey City and Weehawken, N.J.

### SAVE

Belt Line Atlanta, Atlanta  
Collinwood Community Center, Cleveland  
Dudley Neighbors Community Land Trust, Roxbury, North Dorchester, Boston  
GRAY AREA, Philadelphia  
Greenprint, The Hill District, Pittsburgh  
Harlem Hospital Pavilion Façade, Harlem, N.Y.  
Higher Ground, Harlan County, Ky.  
LaSalle Cultural Corridor, Central City, New Orleans  
Museo Urbano, El Segundo Barrio, El Paso, Texas  
Owe'neh Bupingeh Preservation Project, Ohkay Owingeh, N.M.  
Project Row Houses and Rice Building Workshop, Third Ward, Houston

### SHARE

The Chattanooga Public Library's 4th Floor, Chattanooga, Tenn.  
Detroit Future City, Detroit  
Edcouch-Elsa Fine Arts Center, Edcouch, Texas  
Evergreen Cooperatives, Cleveland  
Fallen Fruit Public Picnic Tables, York, Ala.  
Farm Hack Tools, California, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Canada, United Kingdom  
Las Abuelitas Kinship Housing, South Tucson, Ariz.  
Outside In Outreach Center, Portland, Ore.  
Underpass Park, West Don Lands neighborhood, Toronto  
U.S. Land Port of Entry, Van Buren, Maine



## LIVE

Atlas of Tomorrow, Philadelphia  
Crest Apartments, Van Nuys, Los Angeles  
Designing Justice+Designing Spaces, San Bruno, Santa Rita, San Quentin, Calif.; Chester, Philadelphia; Virginia; Manitoba, Canada  
Firehouse Clinics, Alameda County, Calif.  
Fresh Moves Mobile Markets, South and West sides, Chicago  
Humane Borders Water Stations and Warning Posters, Arizona/Mexico border  
Polis Station, North Lawndale Chicago  
Superblock Retrofit, Brownsville, Brooklyn, N.Y.  
Text4baby, U.S.  
Urban Housing Design Principles, San Francisco

## LEARN

City Digits: Local Lotto, Brooklyn, N.Y.  
D.C. Neighborhood Libraries, Washington  
Probation Resource Hubs, New York  
Public Access 101: Downtown L.A., Los Angeles  
Red Hook WIFI, Red Hook, Brooklyn, N.Y.  
Remix, U.S.  
SEEDclassroom, Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania, Washington state  
SuperUse Pavilion, Starkville, Miss.  
Vroom, U.S.  
What is Affordable Housing? and Rent Regulation Rights, New York, San Francisco  
Where's Daryl? Toolkit, Los Angeles

## MAKE

Nuestro Lugar Productive Public Space and Biciteca Bikeshare, North Shore, Eastern Coachella Valley, Calif.  
Raleigh Denim Workshop, Raleigh, N.C., U.S.  
RAPIDO Rapid Recovery Housing, Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy counties, Texas  
Rebel Nell, Detroit  
TechShop Incubating Ideas: Kicker Helper and Infinite Socket, Chandler, Ariz.; Los Angeles, Redwood City, San Francisco, San Jose, Calif.; Pittsburgh; Detroit; St. Louis; Round Rock, Texas; Arlington, Va.; Paris; Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; Tokyo  
Thunder Valley Regenerative Community, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, S.D.  
Woodwise Urban Designs and Glass House Collective, East Chattanooga, Tenn.



## FACT SHEET: ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Hadley Arnold, Executive Director, Arid Lands Institute, Woodbury University, California**

**Teddy Cruz, Director, Center for Urban Ecologies and Co-director of the Blum Cross-Border Initiative, University of California-San Diego**

**Clifford Curry, Co-founder, international Curry Stone Design Prize**

**Mindy Thompson Fullilove, MD, Research Psychiatrist at New York State Psychiatric Institute and Professor of Public Health at Columbia University**

**Toni L. Griffin, Founder, Urban Planning for the American City and Professor in Practice, Harvard Graduate School of Design**

**Theodore Jojola, PhD, Director, Indigenous Design + Planning Institute, School of Architecture + Planning, University of New Mexico**

**Michael Kodransky, Global Research Manager, Institute for Transportation & Development Policy, New York**

**Marc Norman, Director, UPSTATE: A Center for Design, Research, and Real Estate, Syracuse**

**Cao K. O, Founding and Former Executive Director, Asian American Federation, New York**

**Joseph Schroeder, Director, Farm Sustainability Program, Rural Advancement Foundation International- USA, North Carolina**

**J. Phillip Thompson, PhD, Associate Professor of Urban Politics, Urban Studies and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology**

