

CREATIVETIME

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IGNITING PARTICIPATION AND INTERROGATING THE ROOTS OF DEMOCRACY FROM LOCATIONS ACROSS AMERICA



Mark Tribe. *Port Huron Project 3: We Must Name the System*, 2007

DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA: THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

SHARON HAYES, RODNEY MCMILLIAN & OLGA KOUMOUNDOUROS, STEVE POWERS, MARK TRIBE
Austin, LA, Denver, Minneapolis, Oakland, and New York, June to September, 2008

CONVERGENCE CENTER, NYC: Group Exhibition, Speeches, and Events
September 21 to 27, 2008 at the Park Avenue Armory

(July 1, 2008 New York, NY) Responding to the extensive history of political art in the U.S. and the past eight years of cultural production and activism, Creative Time presents *Democracy in America: The National Campaign*, a program investigating artists' relationship with and reactions to the historic roots and practical manifestations of the American democratic tradition. The *Democracy* project will present events and performances taking place across the country, and aims to promote active participation and open discourse around democracy during the 2008 election season and beyond. A multifaceted project on a national scale, *Democracy* will engage a diverse community of artists, activists, thinkers, and citizens to create spaces for dialogue, exploration, and congregation. The project will include an array of artistic strategies including "Town Hall Meetings," commissioned projects around the country, and the "Democracy

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Convergence Center,” a project and event space bringing it all home to the Park Avenue Armory in New York City in September. *Democracy in America* is curated by Nato Thompson.

NATIONAL COMMISSIONS, JUNE–SEPTEMBER 2008

Rodney McMillian and Olga Koumoundouros organized a mobile project in Austin, Texas on June 5 exploring a multiplicity of perspectives on the issue of capital punishment. **Mark Tribe** will stage reenactments of protest speeches from the 1960s and 70s including César Chávez in Los Angeles and Stokely Carmichael in New York City. These re-presentations will bring to light the contemporary relevance of history’s most poignant words of resistance. **Steve Powers** will investigate the practice, problems, and practicalities of torture today. **Sharon Hayes** will intervene at the Democratic National Convention in Denver, CO, and the Republican National Convention in Minneapolis, MN by instigating readings of texts addressing the relationship between political and personal desire, and queer issues, by 75 to 100 people in unison. Blending the techniques of performance art and political rallies, she will address the complex historic construction of love and politics. An artist talk will take place to correspond with select commissions.

CONVERGENCE CENTER, SEPTEMBER, 2008

After traveling across the country gleaning perspectives from artists and activists on the state of democracy, Creative Time’s *Democracy in America* culminates in a large “Convergence Center” at the Park Avenue Armory from Sept 21 to the 27. Operating as an exhibition, participatory space, and meeting hall, the Convergence Center will offer an opportunity to see the presentation of the national commissions alongside numerous works by artists from New York City and beyond. The event will be punctuated by speeches by political thinkers as well as community activists and leaders. The convergence provides an activated space to both reflect on democracy as well as perform it. Artists participating in the Convergence Center so far include Eric Beltrán, The Center for Tactical Magic, Hassan Elahi, Chitra Ganesh, Sharon Hayes, Sofia Hernandez Chong Cuy, Kenneth Tin-Kin Huang, Magdalena Jitrik, Paul Ramirez Jonas, Rodney McMillian and Olga Koumoundouros, Rachel Mason, Carlos Motta, Trevor Paglen, Greta Pratt, Red76, Duke Riley, Dread Scott, Allison Smith, Valerie Tevere and Angel Nevarez, Mark Tribe, and The Yes Men.

TOWN HALL MEETINGS

“Town Hall” conversations were held in Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, New Orleans, and New York City in March 2008. Selected organizers, artists, and activists across a broad spectrum of cultural communities discussed five questions pertaining to strategic local and national activist concerns. The results of these intensive conversations will be posted on the Creative Time website and presented at the Convergence Center to foster greater understanding of less visible regional art activists as well as to catalyze an effort for greater national coordination for social change.

PARTNERSHIPS

Creative Time is partnering with local organization in each city, including the Walker Art Center and The Unconvention in Minneapolis, MN; Dialog:City in Denver, CO; Lace in Los

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Angeles, CA; The Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX; and The Oakland Museum of California in Oakland, CA. For additional partnerships and further information, please visit creativetime.org.

DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA PUBLICATION, SEPTEMBER 2008

A reader containing artists' projects and written contributions that address the political art and activism of the past eight years will follow the *Democracy in America* project. The book will provide a platform for artists and thinkers to consider the current state of affairs, and the pervasive cultural interest in the history of American democracy.

ABOUT CREATIVE TIME

After 34 years of New York based projects, *Democracy in America* continues Creative Time's national program, which was launched with Paul Chan's *Waiting for Godot in New Orleans* in 2007. By bringing *Democracy in America* to communities around the nation, Creative Time deepens its commitment to artists working outside New York City, sharing our belief in the transformative power of public art with the broadest possible audience. During the lead-up to the 2004 election season, Creative Time presented the *Freedom of Expression National Monument*, a giant megaphone for public address, and Jenny Holzer's *For New York City*, in which the artist's truisms—including "ABUSE OF POWER COMES AS NO SURPRISE"—were pulled by airplanes over the skies of New York City. Recent projects include *Tribute in Light*, which served as a gesture of hope and healing after 9/11; *Doug Aitken: Sleepwalkers*, a film projected on the Museum of Modern Art, NY; and *Who Cares*, a series of projects that explored art and social action.

SUPPORT

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Additional support for *Democracy in America: The National Campaign* is generously provided by Altria, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Emily Glasser and Billy Susman, Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation, The Peter Norton Family Foundation on behalf of Eileen Harris Norton, and The National Endowment for the Arts.

Detailed announcements about the individual parts of *Democracy in America: The National Campaign* are available. For more information please contact Nicholas Weist at nickw@creativetime.org.