

CREATIVETIME

BACKGROUNDER



Since 1974, the New York City-based Creative Time has collaborated with artists and others to present ambitious art projects in public spaces. Guided by the belief that artists and their ideas matter in society, that artists need opportunities for experimentation and innovation, and that public spaces are places for creativity and free expression, Creative Time commissions, produces, and presents work that challenges the status quo, catalyzes civic engagement, and inspires people in New York City and across the globe to look at the world in new ways.

Creative Time projects transform, rather than adorn public spaces, ranging from iconic buildings like Grand Central Terminal to unique landmark sites like Park Avenue Armory, and such neglected urban treasures as Coney Island's famous boardwalk and the Lower East Side's historic Essex Street Market. This has been achieved in partnership with hundreds of artists, cultural producers, and social-justice advocates, including art-world luminaries, rural community organizers, and international activists. Notable artistic collaborators have included Marina Abramovic, Doug Aitken, Tania Bruguera, Kara Walker, Spencer Finch, David Byrne, Paul Chan, Jeremy Deller, Jenny Holzer, Ragnar Kjartansson, Suzanne Lacy, Maya Lin, Marilyn Minter, Takashi Murakami, Rashaad Newsome, Tom Sachs, Sonic Youth, and Mickalene Thomas, among many others.

Creative Time also regularly collaborates with well-known cultural institutions. These have included Queens Museum, MTA Arts for Transit, MTV Networks, The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), Friends of the High Line, the Times Square Alliance, the New York Public Library, the Classical Theater of Harlem, the Central Park Conservancy, Dia Art Foundation, Lincoln Center, The Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

HISTORY

Creative Time was established at a seminal moment, when artists were exploring new forms and mediums that took their works beyond the confines of galleries and other traditional exhibition spaces and into the public sphere. The concept for the organization emerged in 1973, during an informal discussion among three friends in New York City: Karin Bacon, Susan Henshaw Jones, and Anita Contini. In an effort to revitalize the South Street Seaport area, the three women organized a summer arts festival that brought together two rarely intersecting communities: the artists who lived in the neighborhood and the people who worked there. Creative Time soon became known as the leading facilitator of experimental public art in New York. In the forty-plus years since then, Creative Time has worked with thousands of artists to produce more than 350 pioneering works that engage diverse audiences.

ART MATTERS

XENOBIA BAILEY, SIMONE LEIGH, OTABENGA JONES & ASSOCS., AND BRADFORD YOUNG

Funk, God, Jazz, and Medicine:

Black Radical Brooklyn, 2014

CO-PRESENTED WITH WEEKSVILLE HERITAGE CENTER

From September 20 to October 12, 2014, Creative Time and Weeksville Heritage Center presented *Funk, God, Jazz, and Medicine: Black Radical Brooklyn*, a walkable month-long exhibition of community-based art commissions by Xenobia Bailey, Simone Leigh, Otabenga Jones & Associates, and Bradford Young. *Black Radical Brooklyn* launched from the site of Weeksville, a Brooklyn community established by free and formerly enslaved Black citizens 11 years after abolition in New York State. *Black Radical Brooklyn* drew inspiration not only from this story – achieving self-determination through the claiming and holding of a neighborhood – but also from radical local battles for land and dignity from the 1960s to today.



KARA WALKER

A SUBTLETY, 2014

In late spring of 2014, Creative Time presented the first large-scale public project by Kara Walker. Sited in Brooklyn’s legendary Domino Sugar Factory, Walker’s physically and conceptually expansive installation—a massive, sugarcoated sphinx-like woman—responded to the building and its history. As is her custom, the artist gave this work a title that is at once poetic and descriptive:

A Subtlety or the Marvelous Sugar Baby, Homage to the unpaid and overworked Artisans who have refined our Sweet tastes from the cane fields to the Kitchens of the New World on the Occasion of the demolition of the Domino Sugar Refining Plant.



NICK CAVE

HEARD•NY, 2013

CO-PRESENTED WITH MTA ARTS FOR TRANSIT

For *HEARD•NY*, Chicago-based artist Nick Cave transformed Grand Central Terminal’s Vanderbilt Hall with a herd of thirty colorful life-size horses that broke into choreographed movement—or “crossings”—twice a day, accompanied by live harp music. The project was presented by Creative Time and MTA Arts for Transit as part of a series of events celebrating the centennial of Grand Central.



TANIA BRUGUERA

IMMIGRANT MOVEMENT INTERNATIONAL, 2011

CO-PRESENTED WITH QUEENS MUSEUM

This long-term art project takes the form of an artist-initiated socio-political movement. In the first year of Immigrant Movement International, Tania Bruguera, launched a flexible community space in the neighborhood of Corona, Queens. The Corona space continues to serve as the movement's headquarters, engaging both local and international communities, as well as social service organizations, elected officials, and artists focused on immigration reform. Through the project, Bruguera examines growing concerns about the political representation and living conditions of immigrants. IMI also delves into the role of art in society, examining what it means to create "useful art," or "arte útil," and addresses the disparity of art experiences between informed audiences and the general public.



PAUL CHAN

WAITING FOR GODOT IN NEW ORLEANS, 2007

When artist Paul Chan visited New Orleans for the first time in November 2006—a little more than a year after Hurricane Katrina—he was struck by the disquieting stillness: no sounds of hammers banging in the distance, no construction crews shouting to one another, no cranes visible on the skyline. His immediate response to the state of the city was to imagine an outdoor performance of Samuel Beckett's legendary play, *Waiting for Godot*. Chan's production comprised four site-specific outdoor performances in two New Orleans neighborhoods. The project further evolved into a larger social production involving free art seminars, educational programs, theater workshops, and conversations with the community.



DOUG AITKEN

SLEEPWALKERS, 2007

CO-PRESENTED WITH THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MoMA)

A cinematic art experience, Doug Aitken's *sleepwalkers* comprised eight large-scale moving images projected onto the exterior of MoMA. The multiple screens collectively animated the building's architecture with the nocturnal journeys of five city dwellers: a bicycle messenger, an electrician, a postal worker, a businessman, and an office worker. Conceived by Aitken specifically for the Museum's broad expanses of glass, steel, and granite, *sleepwalkers* was inspired by the densely built environment of midtown Manhattan and portrayed the metropolis as a living organism fueled by the desires, energies, and ambitions of its inhabitants. While the installation thus suggested an inner life of the buildings, it also reclaimed modern architecture for personal expression and imbued anonymity with fluid human presence.



JENNY HOLZER *FOR THE CITY, 2005*

Jenny Holzer's *For the City* continued the series of light projections Holzer presented with Creative Time in late 2004. Here, moving projections of poems by Wisława Szymborska, Yehuda Amichai, Henri Cole, Mahmoud Darwish, and other celebrated writers, scrolled across the nighttime facades of the New York Public Library and buildings in Rockefeller Center, demonstrating the power of language to educate and console. At the same time, at New York University's Bobst Library, Holzer projected declassified government documents that had been released under the Freedom of Information Act, referencing America's struggle to achieve an equitable balance between transparency and secrecy, public and private.



CREATIVE TIME REPORTS

CREATIVETIMEREPORTS.ORG

Creative Time Reports (CTR), a dynamic multimedia website dedicated to artists' commentary on contemporary issues and news from around the world, was launched in October 2012. Founded on the belief that artists' voices are critical elements of the public discourse that is vital to democracy and civil society, CTR provides a platform through which artists in all disciplines may bring their unique observational and investigative skills to the issues that affect our daily lives and our future. CTR stories, which come from places across the globe, may take the form of audio interviews, narrative articles, video, or still images. In addition to appearing on creativetimereports.org, they are available for publication by other media outlets free-of-charge.



CREATIVE TIME SUMMIT

CREATIVETIME.ORG/SUMMIT

The annual Creative Time Summit, initiated in 2009, brings together a dynamic group of artists, activists, writers, curators, and others to engage with one another—and an international audience—about issues related to social justice and socially engaged art. Participants range from art world luminaries to those purposefully obscure, from grassroots activists to philosophers and scholars, providing a glimpse into the growing community of those concerned with the political implications of socially engaged art. In bringing so many different practitioners together, the Summit provides the opportunity to uncover the tensions that such a global form of working presents, while also enabling new coalitions and sympathetic affinities to blossom.



LEADERSHIP

ANNE PASTERNAK **PRESIDENT AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

Since she joined Creative Time in the fall of 1994, Anne Pasternak, the organization's president and artistic director, has been committed to initiating projects that give artists the opportunity to innovate their practice and reflect on contemporary society while engaging millions of people. Under her leadership, the organization has collaborated with thousands of artists to produce hundreds of projects nationally and globally, making it the only public arts organization with programs that have reached from New York to New Orleans, Haiti to Hanoi, and Dubai to Denver. In addition to her work at Creative Time, Pasternak curates independent exhibitions, consults on urban planning initiatives, and contributes essays to cultural publications. She lectures extensively throughout the United States and Europe, and has served as a guest critic at Yale University. As of May, Anne Pasternak has been appointed Director of the Brooklyn Museum and will assume the directorship in September 2015.

NATO THOMPSON **CHIEF CURATOR**

Nato Thompson joined Creative Time in January 2007. Since then, Thompson, has organized major Creative Time projects as The Creative Time Summit, Living as Form, Trevor Paglen's The Last Pictures, Paul Ramirez Jonas's Key to the City, Jeremy Deller's It is What it is, Democracy in America: The National Campaign, and Paul Chan's Waiting for Godot in New Orleans, among others. Previously, he worked as Curator at MASS MoCA, where he completed several large-scale exhibitions, including The Interventionists: Art in the Social Sphere (2004), with a catalogue distributed by MIT Press. His writings have appeared in numerous publications, BookForum, Frieze, Art Forum, Parkett, Cabinet, and The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest among them. In 2005, he received the Art Journal Award for distinguished writing. For Independent Curators International, Thompson curated the exhibition Experimental Geography, with a book available from Melville House Publishing. His book Seeing Power: Socially Engaged Art in the Age of Cultural Production is due to be published by Melville House in 2013.

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