

CREATIVETIME



CREATIVE TIME IN ASSOCIATION WITH PARK AVENUE ARMORY PRESENTS:
CONVERGENCE CENTER AT PARK AVENUE ARMORY, a part of
DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA: THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

***ARTISTS EXPLORE DEMOCRACY IN PARK AVENUE ARMORY'S
HISTORIC ROOMS AND 38,000-SQUARE-FOOT DRILL HALL***

**EXHIBITION FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
SEPTEMBER 21 TO 27, 2008
NOON TO 10 PM DAILY *
643 PARK AVENUE AT 66TH STREET**

EXHIBITION, PARTICIPATORY SPACE, AND EVENT SERIES WITH OVER 40 ARTISTS INCLUDING:
Erick Beltrán, Center for Tactical Magic, Critical Art Ensemble and Institute for Applied
Autonomy, Annabel Daou, dBFoundation, Hasan Elahi, Feel Tank, Luca Frei, Chitra
Ganesh + Mariam Ghani, Group Material, John Hawke, Sharon Hayes, Kenneth Tin-Kin
Hung, InCUBATE, Magdalena Jitrik, Matt Keegan, Jon Kessler, Olga Koumoundouros +
Rodney McMillian, Steve Lambert, Ligorano/Reese, Pia Lindman, Rachel Mason, Carlos
Motta, Angel Nevarez + Valerie Tevere, Trevor Paglen, Cornelia Parker, Jenny Polak,
Steve Powers, Greta Pratt, Paul Ramírez Jonas, Red76, Duke Riley, Martha Rosler, Dread
Scott, Allison Smith, Chris Sollars, Chris Stain, Mark Tribe, United Victorian Workers, Chu
Yun, and more.



Rachel Mason, *Kissing President Bush*, 2004.

* The Convergence Center will be open from 2 to 10 pm on Sunday, Sept 21, and 12 to 6 pm on Tuesday, Sept 23.

59 EAST 4TH STREET 6E
NEW YORK NY 10003
T 212 206 6674 F 212 255 8467
WWW.CREATIVETIME.ORG

MEDIA CONTACT: NICHOLAS WEIST, 212 206 6674 x205 OR NICKW@CREATIVETIME.ORG

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(August 25, 2008) After traveling across the country to glean perspectives from artists and activists on the state of democracy, Creative Time's year-long program *Democracy in America: The National Campaign* culminates in the "**Convergence Center**": a major exhibition, participatory project space, and meeting hall mounted in New York City's Park Avenue Armory just in time for election season. The Convergence Center at Park Avenue Armory will provide an activated space to both reflect on and perform democracy and will be punctuated by speeches by leading political thinkers as well as community leaders and activists throughout the run of its program. As one of the largest unobstructed spaces in New York, the non-traditional setting of the Armory features interiors—such as its vast drill hall and historic period rooms—that are ideal for artists presenting multifaceted visual and performing arts productions.

EXHIBITION

Work by over 40 artists will fill the historic rooms on the first, second, and fourth floors as well as the Wade Thompson Drill Hall of the Park Avenue Armory. Some of the projects featured include giant, silvered surveillance balloons by **Jon Kessler**; wearable art by **dBFoundation**; an installation by **Critical Art Ensemble and Institute for Applied Autonomy** of the physical artifacts of the 2004 FBI investigation of **Steve Kurtz**; a 20-foot-tall surveillance tower by **Jenny Polak**; a nine-foot wooden hobbyhorse sculpture by **Allison Smith**; and **Duke Riley**'s functional replica of America's first submarine.

Historic documents and early reproductions of texts from the birth of our nation will be exhibited at Park Avenue Armory. These foundational texts include: the first facsimile printing of the **Declaration of Independence**, commissioned by John Quincy Adams in 1823; a copy of **The Emancipation Proclamation** hand-signed by Abraham Lincoln; a copy of **The U.S. Constitution** reproduced in *The Gazette of the United States* on October 1, 1787, just 2 weeks after it was ratified; and a 1789 printing of the **Bill of Rights**.

In addition, curator **Sofía Hernández Chong Cuy** organized the inclusion of work by four international artists—**Erick Beltrán** (Mexico City/Amsterdam), **Luca Frei** (Malmo), **Chu Yun** (Beijing), and **Magdalena Jitrik** (Buenos Aires)—that will offer incisive viewpoints on the notion of democracy and some of its core principles: nation building, freedom of speech, and labor rights.

As part of *Democracy in America*, two mobile, participatory projects by **The Center for Tactical Magic** and **Angel Navarez + Valerie Tevere** will travel to parks in Queens and Brooklyn in early September before convening at the Convergence Center. These projects, including an anarchist ice cream truck and protest karaoke, will be installed at the Convergence Center as islands of participation. Each of Creative Time's performative national public art commissions, by **Sharon Hayes**, **Rodney McMillian + Olga Koumoundouros**, **Steve Powers**, and **Mark Tribe**, will be presented at the Convergence Center.

For detailed information about Creative Time's mobile projects and national commissions, please contact Nicholas Weist at nickw@creativetime.org.

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SPEECHES + PERFORMANCES

A diverse group of political thinkers, writers, theorists, cultural producers, and activists will be invited to deliver speeches and give performances. These orations will address topics that change day to day, and punctuate activity in the Wade Thompson Drill Hall—a 38,000-square-foot participatory and social space akin to a public park in scale and accessibility during the course of the show. As speakers approach the front of the hall, they will be invited to select a podium from an array designed by artist **Paul Ramírez Jonas**—from a modest soapbox to an intimidating rostrum. A 40-foot backdrop by artist **Chris Stain** will frame the speakers in a social realist scene rendered through the technique of hand-cut stencils. Speakers will include **The Yes Men, Reverend Billy, Karen Finley**, and others. In addition, select artists from the show—including **Rachel Mason** and **Pia Lindman**—will give special performances. The daily topics addressed include **Ethics in the Art World, Citizens Produce Cities, We Will Not Accept the War, Cultural Production + Neoliberal Capital**, and others. Select speeches were organized in collaboration with **The Nation Institute**.

Please check www.creativetime.org/democracy for scheduling details.

ACTIVIST + COMMUNITY INFORMATION TABLES

Local activist organizations will be invited to distribute information from tables set up throughout the space.

ABOUT DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA: THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

Democracy in America: The National Campaign is one of the largest public art initiative in Creative Time's 34-year history: a multifaceted project on a national scale that includes a 7-day exhibition at the landmark Park Avenue Armory, performative artist commissions from coast to coast and at the RNC and DNC, mobile projects visiting communities in Queens and Brooklyn, and a publication giving artists a platform to reflect on democracy in this country. *Democracy in America: The National Campaign* is curated by Nato Thompson.

ABOUT PARK AVENUE ARMORY

Built between 1877 and 1881, Park Avenue Armory is unique in two respects: it contains what the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission calls "the single most important collection of 19th-century interiors to survive intact in one building" with rooms by Louis Comfort Tiffany, Stanford White, Herter Brothers, and other prominent designers of the period; and its Wade Thompson Drill Hall—reminiscent of a 19th-century European train shed—is one of the largest unobstructed spaces in the city. Part palace, part industrial shed, it offers an alternative space for visual and performing arts that fills a void in the cultural landscape of New York.

In its first year of partnering with other cultural organizations, Park Avenue Armory demonstrated its capacity for accommodating extraordinary work best realized in a non-traditional setting. It began with Aaron Young's Greeting Card produced by Art Production Fund, a 9,216-square-foot action painting created by the skid-marks and tire burnouts of 10 choreographed motorcyclists. For the 2008 Whitney Biennial, the Armory hosted site-specific installations and performances by 37 artists, creating an

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experience that one critic called “this Biennial’s best surprise.” An evening of Stravinsky’s *Sacred Masterpieces* presented in association with Columbia’s Miller Theatre drew rave critical reviews as did the epic production of the opera *Die Soldaten*, presented by Lincoln Center Festival in association with Park Avenue Armory, in which the audience moved “through the music.”

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 who make work outside New York City, and who share 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.

PARTNERS

The *Democracy in America* Convergence Center is produced in association with Park Avenue Armory, with generous media support from WNYC and flavorpill, and beverages by Grolsch.

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