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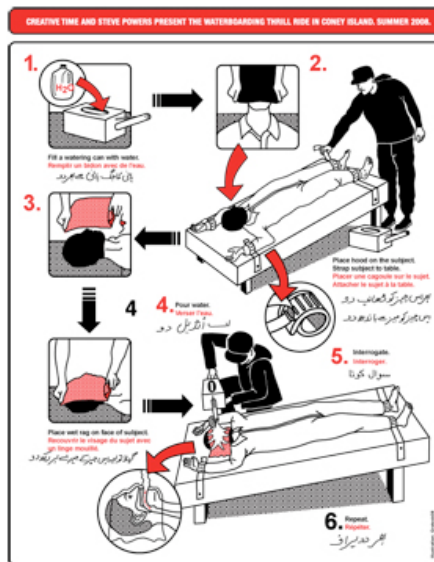
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ARTIST STEVE POWERS' *WATERBOARDING THRILL RIDE* TO BE UNVEILED JULY 26 IN CONEY ISLAND



Instructional rendering by Steve Powers, 2008.

(July 14, 2008 New York, NY) On Saturday, July 26 **Creative Time** and artist **Steve Powers** will open *The Waterboarding Thrill Ride*, an animatronic diorama depicting a prisoner being waterboarded, installed in the Coney Island arcade, presented by **Creative Time** as part of its national public art initiative *Democracy in America: The National Campaign*. *The Waterboarding Thrill Ride*, which will boldly raise awareness of the issue of torture in the United States, will be open all summer long and is available for public viewing. In mid-August, the artist will produce a private performance wherein he and several lawyers will be waterboarded by a trained professional in a secret location in the heart of Coney Island.

The Waterboarding Thrill Ride will occupy a former photo booth on West 12th Street in Coney Island, redesigned to look like a jail cell. When a dollar is fed into a machine standing outside, viewers can peer through cell bars to see the waterboarding scene. “[In the process of waterboarding,] a person believes they are being killed,” John Sifton of Human Rights Watch has said, “and as such, it really amounts to a mock execution, which is illegal under international law.” Powers hopes to use the inherent spectacle of Coney Island to broaden public awareness of and spark debate about a human rights issue that has received minimal weight in the public sphere.

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“Humor has long been a strategy for speaking the unspeakable,” says Anne Pasternak, President and Artistic Director of Creative Time, “and it is vital that we as a nation begin a dialogue about the implications of waterboarding. There has been a critical shift in American ideology, where previously it was unthinkable that the United States would condone the practice of torture.”

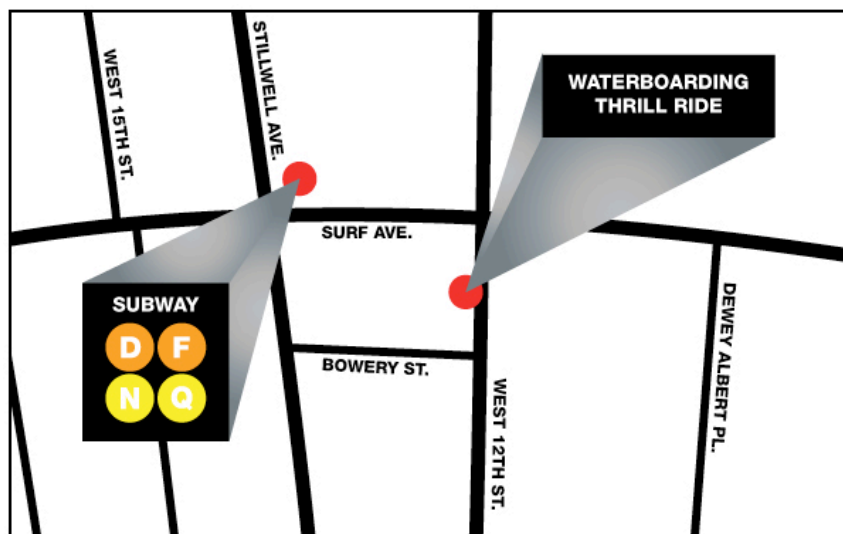
Powers puts it more ironically: “It’s about time that this uniquely American ritual of intense water horror, a practice long reserved for New England witches and Al-Qaida brass, was made available to the people,” he says. “This project will give some everyday New Yorkers the chance to experience—for a few brief, bone-chilling seconds—all the thrills of being a prisoner under interrogation at Guantanamo Bay. And the installation is fun for the whole family.”

In mid-August, Powers will produce a private performance in an undisclosed location in Coney Island, wherein he and several lawyers will volunteer to be waterboarded by a trained professional. “Is waterboarding torture? No, say the administration and the courts. Yes, say human rights activists,” Powers says. “Now actual waterboard riders will reveal, in their own words, exactly what a taste of death by water feels like.” Documentation from the performance will be featured on www.creativetime.org. **For inquiries regarding this private performance, please contact Nicholas Weist at nickw@creativetime.org.**

The *Waterboarding Thrill Ride* diorama will be reinstalled in the *Democracy in America* Convergence Center at the Park Avenue Armory from September 21 to 27.

DIRECTIONS TO THE PROJECT

Take the D/F or RN/Q to Coney Island/Stillwell Avenue. Take a left out of the station and follow Surf Avenue 1 block. Take a right on West 12th Street. *The Waterboarding Thrill Ride* will be on the right, halfway down the block.



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ABOUT *DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA: THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN*

Powers' project is one of 4 commissions (in addition to those of Sharon Hayes, Rodney McMillian & Olga Koumoundouros, and Mark Tribe) made by Creative Time as a part of its public art initiative *Democracy in America: The National Campaign*. This program offers platforms for artists to address the shifting nature of democracy in this country— from probing fundamental questions about the nature of war, freedom, justice, and the social contract to encouraging open and public dialogue on timely issues from red states to blue, rural communities to urban centers, classrooms to town halls, and artists' studios to public squares. *Democracy in America* will unfold in four parts:

—TOWN HALL TALKS

Democracy in America launched in 5 cities across America in March 2008 with artist-led "town hall"-style gatherings, in which 5 questions were put to local artists and activists in order to gain understanding of strategies and goals for each city, transcripts of which will be published on www.creativetime.org and in print.

—NATIONAL COMMISSIONS

Performative public art commissions—by Sharon Hayes, Rodney McMillian & Olga Koumoundouros, Steve Powers, and Mark Tribe—will take place in six cities across the nation and will examine the roots of American democracy as well as the progressive political ethos of the 1960s and 70s.

—CONVERGENCE CENTER

From September 21 to 27 at the Park Avenue Armory, *Democracy in America* comes home to New York City in the form of a "Convergence Center," a headquarters for a week of numerous art performances, documentation from the national commissions, a group show, and speeches by key artists and thinkers.

—*DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA* PUBLICATION

Finally, a comprehensive reader containing artists' projects and critical essays that address the political art and activism of the past eight years will be published by Creative Time Books in September 2008, released at the Convergence Center.

ABOUT STEVE POWERS

Steve Powers worked previously with Creative Time in Coney Island on *The Dreamland Artist Club*, a project that he conceived and co-organized with Creative Time (2004 and 2005), in which he and dozens of local and international artists created signs for Coney Island's amusement district rides and games. Powers also realized his dream of painting the Cyclone rollercoaster. Powers is the author of *The Art of Getting Over*, and was represented at the Venice Biennale in 2001 and the Liverpool Biennial in 2002. He has exhibited his work at such venues as Deitch Projects, New York, and The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Powers is a 2008 Fulbright scholar, and a West Philadelphia native who has lived and worked in New York City for the past fifteen years.

For more information about The Dreamland Artist Club, please visit:

www.creativetime.org/programs/archive/2005/dreamland/powers.php
www.creativetime.org/programs/archive/2004/dreamland/new/

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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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