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Alliance for Downtown New York Unveils “half awake, half asleep”, a Re:Construction Public Art Project



New York, NY (September 2, 2011) - The Alliance for Downtown New York and the Hudson Square Connection today announced the installation of Maki Kaoru’s ***half awake, half asleep*** at Lower Manhattan Cultural Council’s (LMCC) *LentSpace*, a temporary project made possible by a Trinity Real Estate development site at Varick and Canal streets in Hudson Square.

The new Re:Construction project was initiated by the Downtown Alliance in collaboration with LMCC, Trinity Real Estate and the Hudson Square Connection, a Business Improvement District (BID) that has been tasked with promoting the Hudson Square neighborhood on behalf of area stakeholders. The groups reviewed proposals from several artists and selected Kaoru’s work to display on the fencing around *LentSpace* for the next year.

The installation – part of the wildly popular Re:Construction program beautifying construction sites with artwork in Lower Manhattan – is an approximately 265-foot-long design, flanking two sides of *LentSpace* and printed on transparent mesh. Lisa Shimamura of Colab Projects served as curator and consultant for the piece.

Half awake, half asleep explores perceptual responses to nature, presenting layers of abstracted, ephemeral images of blossoms, rays of light, and leaves that interact with the surrounding natural elements of *LentSpace*, drawing attention to the public space. ***Half awake, half asleep*** was created to play off of the subtle shifts in the natural light throughout the day, shadows of people passing by, or leaves and foliage behind the fence interacting with the artwork - encouraging the public to perceive these fleeting and mutable interactions which change throughout the day.

“Now residents, workers and visitors in Hudson Square can enjoy artwork such as Maki Kaoru’s wonderful new addition to our program recasting construction sites as canvases for innovative public art and architecture,” said Elizabeth H. Berger, President of the Downtown Alliance. “Thanks to the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, and organizations like the Hudson Square Connection and Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, our program is available anywhere south of Houston Street. Re:Construction is an ongoing opportunity for government, artists, curators, property owners and business people to work together to make something beautiful. It’s a win-win for everyone.”

“*LentSpace* and Re:Construction create visually stunning environments in places where people usually turn a blind eye,” said Sam Miller, President of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. “Artists like Maki Kaoru should be applauded for presenting beautiful public installations in a daring and unfamiliar setting.”

“We are delighted to provide a public showcase in Hudson Square for this creative work and continue our support of the Downtown Alliance’s Re:Construction program as this site awaits development,” said Jason Pizer, President of Trinity Real Estate.

“We are excited to work with the Downtown Alliance and LMCC to bring the Re:Construction public art program to Hudson Square,” said Ellen Baer, President of the Hudson Square Connection. “Maki Kaoru’s colorful installation is a perfect complement to this vibrant neighborhood and the hundreds of creative businesses in the district.”

Re:Construction is produced by the Downtown Alliance and funded by a \$1.5 million grant from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation. Engaging, thoughtful and whimsical, the temporary artworks create colorful landmarks and brightened streetscapes as they help mitigate the impact of Lower Manhattan’s numerous building projects. Re:Construction began in 2007 and has since produced 26 other pieces, about half of which are up for viewing.

A model for citywide land use, *LentSpace* is a temporary project in Hudson Square that creates an “in the meantime” activity for a site awaiting future development. *LentSpace* is a free outdoor cultural space open to the public from 7 AM to dusk, and made possible by the LMCC. You can learn more about *LentSpace* at www.LMCC.net/lentspace.

Half awake, half asleep has been installed on two portions of fencing that face Canal and Varick streets.

“After carefully observing the *LentSpace* site, I knew I wanted to create an artwork with ethereal and timeless imagery. This is an experiential piece as opposed to an ‘immovable’ work on a gallery wall,” Kaoru said. “I want to make work that allows viewers

to 'see' not just through their eyes, but to experience 'seeing' perceptually – evoking an emotional response to nature.”

Maki Kaoru grew up in the countryside of Japan, where her family still owns a farm and runs a horse riding club. This intimate connection to nature and relationship to a transient sense of space had a great influence on her development as an artist. She came to the United States by herself at the age of 15.

Kaoru initially studied photography at Otis College of Art and Design. She earned her M.F.A. in Photography from Ohio University and received numerous awards and fellowships including the New York Foundation for the Arts for Immigrant Artist Project. Kaoru was a semi-finalist for Hyeres Festival de Photographie and was awarded multiple residencies from the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts. Her work has been featured in various arts organizations and educational institutions, including the Humble Arts Foundation, Newspace Center for Photography, Harvard University, and Maryland Institute of College and Art. Her work has been shown in galleries in New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Portland, Ann Arbor, Dallas and Baltimore, and was featured in a solo exhibition in Canada. Visit her website at www.makikaoru.com.

Previous Re:Construction projects were installed at:

- 24 John Street: *Drift**
- 55 Liberty Street: *Monk Parakeets with Mourning Doves and Red Wings**
- Nassau and Fulton streets: *Sour Gum Tree: Seasonal Glory**
- Hubert Street between Washington and Hudson streets: *Aquatic Dream*
- Grand and Lafayette streets: *Downtown Dogs**
- 50 West Street: *Life, Actually**
- Hudson Street between Franklin Street and Ericsson Place: *Star Sun Burst**
- W Hotel New York – Downtown: *Hours of the Day*
- Chambers Street: *Secret Gardens**
- Fiterman Hall: *Restore the View**
- Titanic Park, Fulton and Pearl streets: *Water Movements*
- East River Waterfront Esplanade, South Street: *Fence Embroidery with Embellishment*
- 99 Church Street: *Walking Men 99**
- 56 Leonard Street: *Rendering Leonard*
- West Thames Park, Battery Park City: *It Takes Time to Turn a Space Around*
- Hudson River Park: *Botanizing on the Asphalt**
- 99 Washington Street: *Flying Animals**
- 50 Trinity Place: *Poster Project at 50 Trinity*
- Louise Nevelson Plaza, Maiden Lane and William Street: *Rainbow Conversation*
- AIG building, 175 Water Street: *Green Gate, Summer*
- Street reconstruction site at Houston and Broadway: *Houston Fence*
- Goldman Sachs headquarters, 200 West Street: *Untitled*
- Fulton Street Transit Center, John Street at Broadway: *Best Pedestrian Route*
- Fulton Street reconstruction site, between Broadway and Nassau: *Fulton Fence*
- Fulton Street Transit Center, Broadway between Ann and John streets: *Concrete Jungle*

* Currently up for viewing

The Downtown Alliance also is establishing signage to assist visitors to Lower Manhattan in reaching their destinations. In the last several weeks, such wayfinding – featuring Downtown Alliance maps – has been installed at 26 Federal Plaza and 50 Trinity Place. The Downtown Alliance previously installed wayfinding at Broadway and Dey Street, and Broadway and Fulton Street.

Re:Construction is just one of the ways the Downtown Alliance is showcasing the area. Recently, the non-profit issued the State of Lower Manhattan 2011 report – www.downtownny.com/solm – to provide a comprehensive review of the district's remarkable economic and demographic changes, leasing, development, and market trends over the last decade.

Additionally, Lower Manhattan's extraordinary growth and momentum is displayed in a new video – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJ7urgEWIk> –featuring New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. The video highlights Lower Manhattan's history, heritage and culture while promoting top area businesses and unparalleled neighborhood amenities.

About the Downtown Alliance

The Alliance for Downtown New York is the principal organization that provides Lower Manhattan's historic financial district with a premier physical and economic environment, advocates for businesses and property owners and promotes the area as a world-class destination for companies, workers, residents and visitors. The Downtown Alliance manages the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Business Improvement District, serving an area roughly from City Hall to the Battery, from the East River to West Street. You can learn more at www.DowntownNY.com.

About the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council

For nearly 40 years, LMCC has been the leading voice for arts and culture in Downtown New York City, producing cultural events and promoting the arts through grants, services, advocacy, and cultural development programs. LMCC offers a range of funding opportunities and support services for artists working in all artistic disciplines across Manhattan, and a broad range of free programs in the visual, performing and media arts that help cultivate new arts audiences and improve the quality of urban life. LMCC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization supported by a range of foundations, corporations, individuals and government entities. For more information visit www.LMCC.net.

About the Hudson Square Connection

The Hudson Square Connection is a 501(c)(3), funded primarily through the payment of an incremental property tax on commercial property. The New York City Department of Finance disburses these funds to the BID through a contract with the Department of Small Business Services. The Hudson Square Connection's mission is to put the Hudson Square neighborhood on the map while simultaneously improving local traffic congestion, beautifying and enlivening the streets, and reinforcing a socially, culturally and environmentally connected community. For more information, visit www.HudsonSquareBid.com.

About Trinity Wall Street and Hudson Square

Trinity Wall Street, one of New York City's largest and oldest commercial property owners, maintains a portfolio of more than six million square feet. Situated in Lower Manhattan between the Hudson River on the west, Avenue of the Americas on the east, Houston Street on the north and Canal Street on the south, Hudson Square is one of the city's most dynamic and creative business districts. Formerly an industrial warehouse and loft district, Hudson Square is now home to a diverse roster of high-profile organizations that includes advertising agencies, broadcasters, designers, architects, software businesses, publishers and other major companies and institutions. Visit www.trinitywallstreet.org to learn more.

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