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Lower Manhattan's *Walking Men 99™* welcomes Mumbai, Minsk and Marseilles (and 21 other cities!)



New York, NY (May 23, 2011) – Mumbai. Arequipa. Antwerp. Minsk. Marseilles.

They may be oceans apart but now they're steps away from each other in Lower Manhattan.

All are cities now represented in the Downtown Alliance's stunning *Walking Men 99™* - 2nd Edition public art installation at 99 Church Street. The 24 new figures from cities around the globe were added last weekend at the site, which is one of the most celebrated pieces in the Downtown Alliance's Re:Construction program.

Created by artist Maya Barkai, *Walking Men 99™* is a site-specific installation that joins together 99 iconic pedestrian traffic lights from cities around the world, a photographic collage stretching along the 500 feet of plywood walls that form three street façades facing Church Street, Park Place and Barclay Street. The project is curated by Ayelet Danielle Aldouby and Elinor Milchan from Artea Projects.

"Re:Construction is an ongoing opportunity for government, artists, curators, property owners and business people to work together to make something beautiful, and what's a better example than *Walking Men 99™* - 2nd Edition," said Elizabeth H. Berger, President of the Downtown Alliance. "*Walking Men 99™* - 2nd Edition highlights Lower Manhattan as a global center with 99 versions of the international 'walk' symbol. How wonderful in a neighborhood where more than a third of people walk to work!"

“The ‘walking man’ is an international celebrity that appears in various forms, and is one of our most recognizable figures,” Barkai said. The project began six years ago in New York City as she noticed one of the city’s most familiar street icons in the pedestrian traffic light, and gradually began photographing the various traffic-light-characters in other countries. “Standardized yet diverse, they commonly show us the safe way to travel,” she said.

Re:Construction is produced by the Downtown Alliance and funded by a \$1.5 million grant from the LMDC. 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. Since starting in 2007, the program has produced 22 pieces, 11 of which are up for viewing.

The Downtown Alliance launched Walking Men 99™ in January 2010. The project is being updated amid a flood of responses and image contributions received through www.walking-men.com, an interactive platform created by Barkai to further expand the project. The first Walking Men 99™ was followed by other exhibitions under the Walking Men Worldwide Project, and has caught international attention since it was launched in Lower Manhattan.

Over the past year, Barkai has been collecting new images of ‘walking men’ figures from a number of new cities. The new additions are: Tigre (Buenos Aires Province, Argentina); Buenos Aires (Argentina); Cordoba (Argentina); Marseilles (France); Minsk (Belarus); Rio de Janeiro (Brazil); Pucon (Chile); Coyhaique (Chile); Punta Arenas (Chile); Tianjin (China); Calcutta (India); Mumbai (India); Arequipa (Perú); Cuzco (Perú); Lima (Perú); Puno (Perú); London (England); Vinnytsia (Ukraine); and Atlanta (USA).

Those that have been removed are: Florence (Italy); Vancouver (Canada); Santiago (Chile); Dublin (Ireland); Georgetown (Guyana); Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina); Reykjavik (Iceland); Bourges (France); Manchester (England); Baltimore (Maryland, USA); Rhodes (Greece); Krasnoyarsk (Russia); Hamilton (New Zealand); Singapore; Belo Horizonte (Brazil); Bangkok (Thailand); Bogota (Colombia); Hoi-An (Vietnam); and, Beirut (Lebanon). Additional icons such as the one from London and Sao Paulo were updated with their newer versions.

“Walking Men 99™ explores various representations of the universally rendered ‘man’, and attempts to examine its inherent conundrum; why is it that while we all consider these icons to be typologically identical, they appear to add such a unique character to our urban identity?,” Barkai said. “These two-dimensional ‘men’, omitted of all idiosyncratic detail, repeatedly reveal themselves in multiple forms on traffic lights and street signs on every corner, as this photographic collage unveils a rich and fascinating world within the confines of a coherent, multi-lingual graphic vocabulary.”

Born in Jerusalem, Israel, Barkai is a graduate of the School of Visual Arts’ Photography Department (BFA, Honors 2005), and has been based in New York City for the past nine years. She spent her military service in the Israeli Defense Forces as a military photographer for the IDF Official Magazine, “BaMachaneh”. Her photographs have been exhibited worldwide, and she is the recipient of the National Press Photographers Foundation Grant (2005). Barkai’s work was included in the Sony World Photography Awards (2008), W Magazine’s Next Fashion Photographer’ showcase, as well as

Penguin, Nerve, and Foam Magazine among other publications. Maya's most recent projects include Walking Men PERMM, a public art installation in collaboration with the PERMM Museum of Contemporary art in Russia, and Men at Work as part of the Bat Yam International Biennale for Landscape Urbanism in Israel.

For more information about Maya Barkai and the Walking Men Worldwide™ Project, please visit www.mayabarkai.com and www.walking-men.com.

Previous Re:Construction projects have been installed at:

- 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*
- 99 Church Street: Walking Men 99*
- Hudson River Park: Botanizing the Asphalt*
- 50 Trinity Place: Poster Project at 50 Trinity*
- 99 Washington Street: Flying Animals*
- East River Waterfront Esplanade, South Street: Fence Embroidery with Embellishment*
- 56 Leonard Street: Rendering Leonard
- Titanic Park, Fulton and Pearl streets: Water Movements
- West Thames Park, Battery Park City: It Takes Time to Turn a Space Around
- The 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
- Goldman Sachs headquarters, 200 West Street: Untitled
- AIG building, 175 Water Street: Green Gate, Summer
- Street reconstruction site at Houston and Broadway: Houston Fence
- Louise Nevelson Plaza, Maiden Lane and William Street: Rainbow Conversation

* currently up for viewing

For more information on the Re:Construction program and high-resolution images of the projects, [click here](#).

The mission of the Alliance for Downtown New York is to be 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 (BID), serving an area roughly from City Hall to the Battery, from the East River to West Street.

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