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First-of-its-kind Day Labor Station unveiled at Cooper-Hewitt Museum: Public Architecture's project featured in *Design for the Other 90%* exhibition

San Francisco, Calif. (May 1, 2007)—Public Architecture, a national nonprofit design organization, has introduced the "Day Labor Station" to advance the debate about day laborers and the spaces they inhabit. A full-scale replica of part of the Day Labor Station goes on view May 4 at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York, as part of the museum's *Design for the Other 90%* exhibition, which runs through September 23, 2007.

"The plights of day laborers and other underrepresented populations have been of interest to Public Architecture since our inception," says architect John Peterson, who founded Public Architecture in 2002. "We believe architecture has a great deal to offer to this 'other 90%' of the population, which rarely benefits from the services of design professionals."

According to a recent UCLA/Ford Foundation study, on any given day there are more than 110,000 day laborers looking forward in U.S. cities, more than half of which are hired by individual home owners or renters. Seventy-nine percent of day laborers seek work at informal hiring sites. A relatively small (approx. 65) number of official day labor centers have been established in recent years, but informal gathering sites, such as street corners, gas stations, and home improvement store parking lots, remain the norm. As they are spaces designated for other uses, these sites frequently lack even the most basic of amenities (shelter, water, toilet facilities, etc).

The Day Labor Station was designed in response to the more than 200 (est.) informal day laborer gathering sites across the country, particularly home improvement store parking lots and similar settings. "Our solution is based on the realities of the ways in which the day labor system operates, and responds to the needs and desires of day laborers themselves, as our clients," says Peterson.

Public Architecture is currently working to locate a permanent site for the first Day Labor Station. Ultimately, the Stations will be deployed across the country. The sustainably-designed structure utilizes green materials and strategies and is meant to exist primarily, if not completely, off-the-grid. The Station provides a sheltered space for the day laborers to wait for work as well as basic amenities such as drinking water and restrooms.

"In addition to day laborers themselves, the Day Labor Station was also designed with other stakeholders in mind, such as major corporations like Home Depot and Lowe's as well as local businesses and municipalities. Although most of these groups have clear 'no solicitation' policies, day laborers continue to seek work and contractors as well as homeowners continue to hire workers on their properties. Our responsive solution is cognizant of these realities," notes Peterson. "We believe the Day Labor Station presents a tremendous, positive public relations opportunity as well as a clearly needed public service."

The Day Labor Station project is documented online at www.daylaborstation.org.

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Although the actual Day Labor Stations are intended to be assembled on-site by day laborers themselves, the Cooper-Hewitt exhibition piece was constructed pro bono by Ryan Associates, a construction company with offices in New York, Honolulu, and San Francisco. Other contributors included artists, filmmakers, graphic designers, green design consultants, photographers, solar panel providers, and web designers.

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About Public Architecture

Established in 2002 and based in San Francisco, Public Architecture is a national nonprofit organization that identifies and solves practical problems of human interaction in the built environment and acts as a catalyst for public discourse through education, advocacy, and the design of public spaces and amenities.

We're a Model

Public Architecture is a new model for architectural practice. Supported by the generosity of foundation, corporate, and individuals grants and donations, Public Architecture works outside the economic constraints of conventional architectural practice, providing a venue where architects can work for the public good.

We're a Method

Rather than waiting for commissions that represent well-understood needs and desires, we take a leadership role, identifying significant problems of wide relevance that require innovative research and design. We seek needs and desires that are palpable but poorly defined, in circumstances where both client and financing must be imagined in new ways.

We're a Motivator

We don't just do our own projects; we encourage architecture firms nationwide to formalize their commitment to the public good. While many--perhaps most--architects give of their expertise from time to time, the profession as a whole has not structured its pro bono endeavors as clearly as has, say, the legal profession. Our national "1% Solution" program, through which firms pledge 1% of their billable hours to matters of public interest, aims to institutionalize and celebrate pro bono practice in the design professions.

Organization

Public Design Studio (dba: "Public Architecture") is incorporated in the State of California and registered as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with the Internal Revenue Service.

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