



## PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

### **AIGA/NY Announces the Launch of Catch — & — Release**

*a participatory design project which is part of its Design/Relief initiative,  
conceived by its South Street Seaport Team*

**New York, NY, January 6, 2014** – AIGA/NY is pleased to announce the launch of Design/Relief's Catch — & — Release, an interactive installation that is part of a participatory design initiative aiming to help the neighborhoods of South Street Seaport, Red Hook, and the Rockaways imagine a more vibrant future for themselves as they overcome the lingering effects of Superstorm Sandy. This special project of the New York chapter of AIGA (the nation's leading professional association of graphic designers) explores the potential of design in defining and expanding creative placemaking to positively transform communities. Design/Relief is supported by an innovation grant from ArtPlace America.

Catch — & — Release aims to capture, make visible and celebrate the resilient spirit and agency of the South Street Seaport community, one of the areas hardest hit by Superstorm Sandy. The Catch — & — Release installation is temporarily set up, in a vacant space under the FDR at John Street, from January 11 until February 2, 2014. It offers a physical respite where neighbors, visitors and all are invited to share messages of gratitude. In this interactive space, visitors are performing a sort of ritual by which their written "Thank You" notes will be publicly "caught," and elevated to create an installation that will become the visual symbol of this place. "As messages accumulate, this installation will become a visible symbol of the unity, shared visions and social network of the South Street Seaport community," explains Yeju Choi, lead designer on the Catch — & — Release project.

A system of cordons and pulleys symbolizes the collective activation of relationships, an act that will help participants rediscover what makes them uniquely resilient. The design of the installation was largely inspired by the vernacular materials of the Seaport's maritime activity. As a tangible design experience and a community engagement tool, the installation's form encourages the expression of aspirations while fostering social bonds, creating new opportunities to shift perception about South Street Seaport's future.

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"With Catch & Release, we are embarking on a partnership with the seaport community while offering an intimate community engagement model beyond the community board. We are hoping to yield valuable insights to shape a longer-term dialog and help to imagine the Seaport as a more vibrant place," says Laetitia Wolff, Design/Relief's Program Director.

With information and emotions collected and shared throughout the box installation's limited time and space, Catch&Release hopes to create a method to empower its community to have a say in its future. By "Catching" acknowledgements of gratitude through various related community engagement programming, and a mapping project, the project aims to "Release" this information for a second phase of design development and community engagement.

"Design is as much about the collaborative process and act of creating as it is the final artifact –and it is always about people. As AIGA enters its centennial year, the New York chapter is thrilled to celebrate design's influence in society through community efforts such as our Design/Relief initiative in Lower Manhattan's South Street Seaport," says Wily Wong, President of AIGA/NY.

Catch — & — Release was prepared for the New York State Department of State Office of Coastal, Local Government and Community Sustainability with funds provided under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund. Catch — & — Release was developed by Yeju Choi of NowHere Office (designer), with Francesca Birks and Josh Treuhart of ARUP (community engagement strategists), and Cristian Fleming and Stephanie Lukito of The Public Society (storytellers). This installation was designed and built by Yeju Choi, with Chat Travieso, Heechan Kim, and Chris Fox. Special Thanks to NYC&Co.

[www.aigany.org](http://www.aigany.org)

### WHEN:

OPENING PARTY SAT JAN 11, 2014, 2-6 PM

Opening remarks and presentation at 3:00PM

CLOSING PARTY SAT FEB 1, 2014, 2-6 PM

WHERE: Design/Relief box is under the FDR (at South St & John St)

WHAT: Catch — & — Release, Jan 11- Feb 1, 2014, hours of operation, MON-SAT, 11-7

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### About AIGA/NY

AIGA/NY is the largest chapter of AIGA, the nonprofit professional association for design. Founded in 1914 and headquartered in New York City, AIGA has brought design to the world, and the world to designers. The New York Chapter aligns with AIGA's overall mission to advance design as a respected craft, strategic advantage and vital cultural force. From content that defines the global practice to events that connect and catalyze, AIGA/NY works to enhance the value and deepen the impact of design on business, society and our collective future. Learn more: [www.aigany.org](http://www.aigany.org) and follow us on Twitter at [@aigany](https://twitter.com/aigany).

### About DESIGN/RELIEF

**Design/Relief** is a participatory design initiative to help three New York City neighborhoods—Red Hook, the Rockaways and Lower Manhattan—imagine a more vibrant future for themselves as they overcome the lingering effects of Superstorm Sandy. DESIGN/RELIEF aims to demonstrate design's role in creative placemaking, to help these neighborhoods be more navigable, visible and vibrant. The project includes a Red Hook team, a Rockaway Team and a South Street Seaport Team, all of whom will present their work in progress on Tuesday January 14, 2014 at 630PM at Parsons, 55 West 13<sup>th</sup> Street. The project is overseen by Laetitia Wolff, Program Director, with a project Board composed of Willy Wong, Glen Cummings and Manuel Miranda. For the complete list of team members and updates please check [www.aigany.org](http://www.aigany.org) and Twitter at [#aiganydesignrelief](https://twitter.com/aiganydesignrelief)

### About ArtPlace America

ArtPlace America provides grants and loans, supports research, and conducts outreach and advocacy. To date, ArtPlace America has awarded 134 grants totaling \$42.1 million to 124 organizations in 79 U.S. communities (and a statewide project in the state of Connecticut). Foundations participating in ArtPlace America include Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Ford Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The William Penn Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, Rasmuson Foundation, The Surdna Foundation, and two anonymous donors. ArtPlace America also seeks advice and counsel from close working relationships with various federal agencies, including the National Endowment for the Arts, the departments of Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, Education, and Transportation, along with leadership from the White House Office of Management and Budget and the Domestic Policy Council. ArtPlace America is also supported by a \$12 million loan fund capitalized by six major financial institutions and managed by the Nonprofit Finance Fund. Participating institutions are Bank of America, Citi, Deutsche Bank, Chase, MetLife, and Morgan Stanley.

If you are interested in receiving dedicated emails regarding DESIGN/RELIEF please update your email preferences [here](#).

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