



Art Helping Cities Recover From Violence

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September 8, 2005

As the city prepares to mark the fourth anniversary of the tragic events of 9/11 by pausing to reflect on the lives lost that day, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) has convened an international summit of artists and cultural leaders to consider the ways in which violence has transformed cities around the world and the role art has played as part of the healing process.

Artists' summit considers the role art can play in recovery from violence

Entitled "What Comes Next: Cities, Art, and Recovery," the four-day summit brings together more than 60 international artists, performers, writers, architects, lawyers, scholars, activists, and community and political leaders to exchange ideas about the impact violence has had on cities like Beirut, Sarajevo, Phnom Penh, and New York. Participants include such luminaries as Paris and Beirut architect Jad Tabet and Johannesburg artist and curator Clive van den Berg.

Featuring provocative visual art exhibits and films, roundtable discussions, homages to Susan Sontag and Edward Said, performances by vocalist, pianist, and composer Diamanda Galás, and a political cabaret at Joe's Pub, "What Comes Next" upholds the LMCC's commitment to providing large-scale opportunities for the public to crisscross international boundaries and look at how other cultures have recovered from tragedy and, specifically, how art can be employed to help resurrect the "life fabric" of urban centers.

The summit kicks off on Thursday, September 8, at 6 p.m. with an opening exhibit at the South Street Seaport Museum of *A Knock at the Door...*, which invites viewers to consider just where the controversial line between art and "un-American" activity should be drawn.

Later, at 8 p.m., Galás delivers the first of two performances of her work entitled *Defixiones, Orders from the Dead*. Named for small lead charms engraved with curses that are placed by relatives on graves throughout the Eastern Mediterranean to discourage desecration, this moving performance addresses the Armenian, Assyrian, Anatolian, and Pontic Greek genocides that occurred between 1914 and 1923. The acclaimed performance artist weaves together poetry, searing vocals, and virtuoso piano playing to produce a work that has already delighted sold-out crowds at London's Royal



Galás' moving work addresses genocide in Turkey

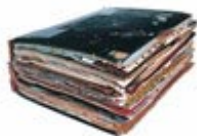
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September 2005

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Festival Hall, the Sydney Opera House, Athens National Opera, and Moscow's Gogol Theater, among others.



An after-performance reception at 15 Nassau Street will feature *book*, an exhibition showcasing a sketchbook passed between artists in Brooklyn and Belfast in which each artist had five days to respond to the previous artists' entry. Over the course of 36 weeks of exchange, *book* traveled a staggering 60,000 miles.

Passed between artists, *book* traveled 60,000 miles

On September 9, the roundtable series gets underway. In six discussions spread over three days, artists and cultural leaders will come together to examine topics ranging from the political and aesthetic challenges of rebuilding after disaster to the

relationship of memory and forgetting to the recovery process.

In addition to *A Knock at the Door...* and *book*, the summit will feature four other visual art exhibitions, including *Greetings Without Flowers*, an exhibit of portraiture of Iraqis taken by an Iranian artist and displayed at various outdoor sites through Lower Manhattan, and *Chat the Planet*, a TV show and internet community designed to bring youth from around the world into direct dialogue so that they can get to know one another.

Additional events over the course of the weekend include film screenings, an informal evening of political cabaret featuring poetry, music, and theater, and tours of the WTC site organized by the Tribute Center, one of two interim memorials under construction at Ground Zero.

All roundtable discussions will be held at the Tribeca Performing Arts Center at Borough of Manhattan Community College, 199 Chambers Street at West Street. Tickets for Diamanda Galas's *Defixiones* range from \$15 to \$35 and can be purchased at <http://www.ticketcentral.com/> or by telephone at (212) 279-4200. All other events are free, but interested participants are asked to please register in advance at the [LMCC website](#), where additional information about participating artists and scheduled exhibits can also be found.

*Images courtesy of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, September 8

- 6 p.m. Opening reception at the Melville Gallery, South Street Seaport Museum
- 8 p.m. Performance: Diamanda Galás *Defixiones* at the Michael Schimmel Center for the Arts, Pace University
- 9:30 p.m. After-performance reception, 15 Nassau Street (*book* on exhibit)

Friday, September 9

- 9 a.m. Welcome Breakfast
- 10:30 a.m. Arts Tours: *What Comes After*
- 2 p.m. Roundtable: The Design of Recovery
- 4:30 p.m. Homage to Susan Sontag

6 p.m. Reception, World Financial Center, Hosted by WFC Arts and Events

7:30 p.m. Film screening

**Saturday,
September 10**

9 a.m. Keynote Breakfast: United Nations speaker

10:15 a.m. Roundtable: Afterword: The Language of Recovery

1:30 p.m. Roundtable: The Arts of Emergency

3:45 p.m. Homage to Edward Said

5 p.m. Roundtable: Revenge, Reparation, Reconciliation

8 p.m. Performance: Diamanda Galás *Defixiones*

Sunday, September 11

10 a.m. Roundtable: Remembrance, Repetition, Residue

12 p.m. Walking Tours of the WTC site organized by the Tribute Center

3:30 p.m. Roundtable: The Arts of Possibility

9 p.m. Performance: Urban Voices - Rebirth of Political Cabaret, Joe's Pub

11 p.m. Closing party at Joe's Pub

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