



QUEENS MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Queens Museum presents *Never Built New York*

The metropolis that could have been, featuring 150 years of the boldest, most far-reaching urban designs that never made it past the drawing board by architects like Richard Morris Hunt, Harvey Wiley Corbett, Frank Lloyd Wright, I.M. Pei, Steven Holl, Daniel Libeskind, and Diller Scofidio + Renfro.

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Buckminster Fuller, *Dome Over Manhattan*, 1961

Queens, NY – The Queens Museum presents *Never Built New York*, an exhibition of never-realized architecture curated by Sam Lubell and Greg Goldin and designed by [Studio Christian Wassmann](#) with support from [Gensler](#). *Never Built New York* presents plans, renderings, and models from 150 years of visionary architectural and urban designs that never saw reality. The plans are drawn from over 40 different public and private

archives and collections. From Frank Lloyd Wright, to Robert Moses, to Diller Scofidio + Renfro, *Never Built New York* presents a wide range of architectural styles and periods. Most of these ideas, proposed by renowned architects such as Sanford White, Louis Kahn, Marcel Breuer, Moshe Safdie, Venturi Scott Brown, Frank Gehry, Rem Koolhaas, and Zaha Hadid, have never been seen by the public and will be displayed together at the Queens Museum for the first time. The exhibition is accompanied by the widely-acclaimed book, published by Metropolis Books.

In cataloging these unbuilt projects, *Never Built New York* underlines the complex and varied challenges that architects face in getting innovative ideas from concept to development. Some of these ideas did not die completely, as this exhibition will illustrate; upon facing opposition, many of them were adapted and realized in less ambitious forms. For example, Howe and Lescaze's layered tower plan for the Museum of Modern art (1930) certainly helped influence the design of their seminal PSFS building in Philadelphia (1932), known as the country's first Modern skyscraper.

"The exhibition will take visitors beyond the limitations of reality, into an alternate history of New York. The show is designed as a dense urban dreamscape, revealing in all directions pure urban inventions that would have changed the city beyond recognition--both for better and for worse," says co-curator Sam Lubell. "Visitors get a sense of how ephemeral built visions (and realities) can be, and are transported from the minute they enter the galleries."

The exhibition is organized in three parts. In the Rubin Gallery, whose long tapering shape resembles that of Manhattan, original materials will be organized geographically, and mimicking the height and density of the vibrant cacophony of Manhattan. A 13-foot-tall model of Steven Holl's Parallax Towers (1990) a composition of multiple skyscrapers that would have risen out of the Hudson River and have been connected by horizontal elevators, sets the tone in this section, as does John Rink's massive 1858 plan in which Central Park would have emerged as a twin to the gardens of Versailles.

On the Queens Museum's famed *Panorama of the City of New York*, the world's largest architectural scale model, more than 70 *Never Built* projects will be installed in their originally -intended locations. The model of William Zeckendorf's Midtown Airport, which would have stretched roughly from 30th to 70th Street on the west side of Manhattan, will convey the limitless scope of Never Built ambitions. These 3D-printed and Plexiglas models were designed and produced by students at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation to the 1:1200 scale of the Panorama.

In the Skylight Gallery, visitors will experience unbuilt projects that were intended specifically for Flushing Meadows Corona Park. This includes an inflatable, and usable "bouncy castle" version of Eliot Noyes' unbuilt Westinghouse Pavilion for the 1964 World's Fair, as well ambitious proposals for the United Nations, Flushing Meadows Park, several stadiums, and an unbuilt version of the Queens Museum itself.

Never Built New York is neither wistful nor nostalgic about what could have been. Instead, the exhibition seeks to stimulate dialogue about the problems that architects were trying to solve, shedding light on how some of the most pressing issues of our time—ecological sustainability, population displacement, and economic inequity—are inextricably linked to our built environment. The new obstacles turn out to be very much like the old obstacles.

About Sam Lubell

Sam Lubell is a contributing editor at The Architect's Newspaper. He has written seven books about

architecture for Monacelli Press, Rizzoli, Metropolis Books, and Phaidon. He also writes for *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Los Angeles Magazine*, *The Atlantic*, *Architect*, *Architectural Record*, *Architectural Review*, *Wallpaper**, *Contract*, and other publications. He co-curated the A+D Architecture and Design Museum exhibitions *Never Built Los Angeles* (2013) and *Shelter: Rethinking How We Live in Los Angeles* (2015).

About Greg Goldin

Greg Goldin was the architecture critic at *Los Angeles Magazine* from 1999 to 2011. In 2011, he was awarded a Getty Institute Research Grant which led to his exhibition *Windshield Perspective*, A+D Architecture and Design Museum (2013), a study of vernacular Los Angeles architecture. In summer 2013, he co-curated and co-authored *Never Built Los Angeles*. His last curatorial contribution was to the Getty Museum's *No Further West* (2014), an exhibition about the making of Los Angeles's Union Station. His writing has appeared in *The Los Angeles Times*, *Architectural Record*, *Architect's Newspaper*, and *Zocalo*, among many others.

About Christian Wassmann

Exhibition designer Christian Wassmann is an architectural designer and the exhibition designer of *Never Built New York*. Studio Christian Wassmann develops designs influenced by art, geometry, and the cosmos. Projects range from buildings, interiors, site-specific installations, exhibitions, furniture, and lamps. The studio has designed projects such as East Village Radio, Lisson Gallery New York, and the Sun Path House in Miami Beach. Wassmann's career began as an architectural draftsman in Switzerland at age 15 and since 1997 he has collaborated with like-minded artists and architects. In 2010, Wassmann received the Swiss Art Award in architecture, and in 2012 the studio won the AIA New York New Practice Award.

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About the Queens Museum

The Queens Museum in Flushing Meadows Corona Park features contemporary art, events of hyperlocal and international impact, and educational programs reflecting the diversity of Queens and New York City. Changing exhibitions present the work of emerging and established artists, both local and global, that often explore contemporary social issues, as well as the rich history of its site. In November 2013, the Museum reopened with an expanded footprint of 105,000 square feet, a soaring skylit atrium, a suite of daylight galleries, nine artist studios, and flexible event space. The Museum works outside its walls through engagement initiatives ranging from multilingual outreach and educational opportunities for adult immigrants, to a plethora of community led art and activism projects. The Museum's educational programming connects with schoolchildren, teens, families, seniors as well as those individuals with physical and mental disabilities. The Queens Museum is located on property owned in full by the City of New York, and its operation is made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

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