

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT *Young designers take to the streets at C-H*

Using Elmer's glue, Popsicle sticks, string, pipe cleaners and an array of colorful construction and tissue papers, 15 New York City public-high-school students are working in teams to develop design solutions to revitalize Brooklyn's culturally diverse Fulton Street Mall.

Through the Cooper-Hewitt's Design Directions program, Design Your 'Hood, these teens willingly devote six Thursday evenings to taking photographs, making sketches, writing proposals, building models and preparing presentations under the supervision of Youth Programs Coordinator Madeline Diaz and Education Programs Assistant Barbara Pierce.

"Design Your 'Hood is part of Design Directions, an overall program that reaches out to New York City public-high-school kids and coincides with the school year," C-H Director of Education Caroline Payson explains. The Design Directions program is just one element of the museum's three-tiered approach to design education.

Design Directions appeals to a broad range of skill levels as it teaches kids how to think like designers—identify a problem, propose solutions, make models, collaborate, problem-solve and give professional presentations—through visits to professional design studios and hands-on projects.

Before the participants in Design Your 'Hood were given blank pieces of mounting board and asked to build architectural models, "they had to investigate the neighborhood's past and learn about its current problems by going on walking tours, creating a sensory collage and talking with a guest historian," Pierce says.

When asked why she attends the after-school program, Jorven Thorpe, a

student at the Urban Assembly School of Music and Art in Brooklyn, says, "The program gives you early

program, introduces select high-school juniors and seniors to the fundamentals of design thinking in workshops

opportunities that they may not otherwise have," Payson says.

LSP students participate in portfolio review workshops and visit admissions offices at highly acclaimed universities and design schools, such as Parsons School of Design and Pratt Institute in New York, the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, R.I., and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab in Cambridge, Mass.

Payson says that she is often touched by the enthusiasm of the students served through Design Directions programs.

"In one application essay that I received for the LSP, the applicant talked about how she had never been able to take a career-internship because they are usually unpaid," she says. "This program gives people like her new opportunities."

The third facet of the museum's approach to education, City of Neighborhoods, is a community-based design education and advocacy program for youth, educators, designers and civic leaders working with young people.

Its mission is to foster civic engagement by recognizing the right of all citizens, especially young people, to be involved in the design of their neighborhoods.

The program applies design education to a neighborhood context, providing access to primary resources, such as architecture, street-scapes, maps, and historic and cultural materials, in order to explore a neighborhood's past, analyze its present and plan for its future.

Beginning this summer, Cooper-Hewitt's Education Department will bring the City of Neighborhoods program to a number of New Orleans schools devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

As Payson explains the importance

of teaching design in the region, she points out, "The children of New Orleans will be rebuilding the city for the rest of their lives."

This multiyear initiative was kicked off in June when a group of 40 New Orleans public-school teachers came to New York for a five-day program.

New York's Chinatown was chosen as the model for the program because, like New Orleans, it is on the water, is home to many immigrants and—just 10 blocks from the World Trade Center—has endured a serious disaster. The teachers will apply what they learned in the City of Neighborhoods program when they return to their New Orleans classrooms this fall.

The museum's education staff also will travel to New Orleans several times in the next few years to help create a model of community-focused, project-based learning that can be replicated in schools throughout the Gulf region.

"Teaching design is about teaching 21st-century skills like problem-solving and collaborating," Payson says. Through Design Directions, "we are providing children with skills that will prove invaluable throughout their lives." ■

—Mara Jonas



Madeline Diaz, left, offers guidance as student Jorven Thorpe constructs an architectural model during a Design Your 'Hood program at Cooper-Hewitt earlier this year. (Photo by Mara Jonas)

experience so you're ready when you go to college."

Ye Yan, also a student at Urban Assembly, adds, "It's also a good way to meet people and make friends."

Another component of Design Directions, the Lehman Scholar's Pro-

gram and provides them with intensive pre-professional design training through paid internships with top-notch firms like Anne Klein and Herman Miller.

"The idea is to provide New York City public-high-school kids oppor-

## STAFF ON THE MOVE

**Adam Rogers** has joined the Office of Safety, Health and Environmental Management as a fire protection engineer. He recently graduated from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts with a master's degree in fire protection engineering.

### American Art

**Mary Ellen Guerra**, permanent collection database administrator, recently retired after 23 years at SI. She plans to spend time traveling, exercising and reading.

### SI Libraries

After 42 years of service, Library Technician **Willie "Mickey" Dillard** has retired. He was instrumental in automating the department's ordering procedures in the 1970s. In recent years, his duties were primarily centered on receipt and distribution of purchased library materials.

### Special Events and Protocol

Two new special events coordinators have joined the staff. **Sarah Pope** previously worked as a program coordinator with the Justice at Stake campaign in Washington, D.C., and **Burcu Uzer** was a program assistant for The Smithsonian Associates.

### American History

**Nancy Ellen Davis** has joined the staff as a curator in the Division of Home and Community Life. She has been deputy director of the Maryland Historical Society, director of The Octagon in Washington, D.C., and an adjunct professor at George Washington University.

### Contributing Membership

Production Associate **Mary Anne Walker** has left to take a position at OMP, a direct marketing firm, where she will be responsible for both marketing and account management.

### Latino Center

**Henry Estrada**, director of exhibitions and public programs, has left to take a similar position at the soon-to-open La Plaza de Cultura y Artes, a Smithsonian Affiliate in Los Angeles.

### External Affairs

Development Operations Assistant **Elisa Pittman** has left the Gift Registrar's Office to take a position with the Nature Conservancy.

Senior Research Associate **Tarri Ryan** has left the Office of Development to relocate to Pittsburgh. ■

—Mara Jonas

## Publishing chief Tom Ott is new head of SBV

Tom Ott, president of Smithsonian Publishing since October 2005, was named acting chief executive officer of Smithsonian Business Ventures on Aug. 1.

Ott will oversee the revenue-generating activities of SI, which include Smithsonian and Air & Space magazines, 29 museum stores, the mail-order gift catalog, restaurant businesses, three IMAX theaters, and all licensing and media enterprises, including travel programs and Smithsonian Networks.

As president of Smithsonian Publishing, Ott continues to be responsible for directing overall operations and strategy for Smithsonian and Air & Space magazines and goSmithsonian, as well as the three publications' respective Web sites.

Ott's accomplishments to date within the publishing group include an editorial redesign, the launch of online business units, the creation of a special 13th issue of Smithsonian magazine and the implementation of a cost management structure that resulted in contract renegotiations



Tom Ott

with outside suppliers that saved SI millions of dollars.

Prior to joining the Smithsonian, Ott was general manager of the Home and Garden Division of Reader's Digest North America Publishing Group. He was group publisher of Time4 Outdoors from 2001 to 2005.

Ott, who earned his bachelor's degree from Providence College in Rhode Island in 1981, began his career with Hearst Magazines as an advertising manager, business manager and circulation manager.

Ott replaces SBV founding Chief Executive Officer Gary Beer, who resigned on July 31. ■

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Cooper-Hewitt is one of only six public institutions in the United States to hold a work by Italian master painter Michelangelo Buonarroti. The unsigned drawing of what appears to be a menorah was found with a group of goldsmith drawings purchased by the museum in 1942 for \$60.